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# *The Gist of Romans*

**An exposition of the principal doctrines  
of the epistle to the Romans**

*by*

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*The Way of Salvation***

**GOSPEL LIGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY  
DELIGHT, ARKANSAS**

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## Preface

It seems presumptuous to offer to the public another work on *Romans*. I am willing for this study to be its own justification. This is not a verse-by-verse exposition of this great epistle. It is not an effort to sermonize. Its sole purpose is to help the student to grasp the great doctrines discussed by one of the greatest apostles of the Lord.

*Romans* is confessedly profound. Many have never attempted a serious study of it. Even many preachers do not attempt to teach it. Only a few verses are ordinarily used, and these are sometimes torn from their context.

Rather than a verse-by-verse or word-by-word study, this work is an attempted exposition of the fundamental doctrine of salvation through Christ. *Romans* was written in defense of Christ as sin-offering and Saviour. The discussions of grace and faith have in view the defense of the cross. "I am set for the defense of the gospel," not merely of some condition of salvation, or some theory.

*Romans* is necessary to an understanding of *The Acts*. For example, Peter on Pentecost preached a crucified Christ. But, so far as the record goes, he said not a word concerning the purpose of Christ's death. Perhaps he did so when "with many other words he testified" concerning Christ. We know that he later wrote regarding the redeeming power of the blood. (I Pet. 1:18,19.) In *The Acts* we learn *what* was done in becoming a child of God. In *Romans* we learn the *meaning* of what was done. A physician is not prepared to practice medicine when he has learned a few prescriptions. He must know the human body. So the teacher and preacher should under-

stand the fundamental doctrine of the atonement, of grace, and of faith.

With a sincere desire to be helpful to students of this epistle, and a prayer that it may exalt the Saviour, the author sends forth this study.

June 15, 1957

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# Introduction

Before beginning the study of the epistle to the *Romans*, it is thought profitable to study the meaning of salvation and the conditions of salvation. Among those who have studied these subjects, more or less, there are those who have been definitely handicapped in their conclusions by false assumptions. What some of these assumptions are will be mentioned as we proceed. Let us inquire,

1. *What is meant by salvation?* (a) Salvation is the release of the penalty of sin. Whatever may be the penalty resulting from sin, salvation signifies freedom from it. That this is true, and that it will not be questioned, I shall take for granted.

(b) Salvation is freedom from the power of sin in one's life. This question is given a thorough discussion in chapter seven. It is enough here to remember this significant statement from Paul: "But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." Certainly this applies to the sinner, whether to any one else or not. One can easily see, therefore, that a salvation which does not include freedom from "the law of sin," which causes all the difficulty in doing what is right, would leave man crying for deliverance. (Rom. 7:24.)

(c) Involved in salvation is the establishment of certain spiritual relationships with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. God becomes our Father and we become his children. "And I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters." (2 Cor. 6:18.) "But ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.” (Rom. 8:15,16.)

The saved are “in Christ,” that is, “in union with Christ.” (2 Cor. 5:17—Goodspeed.) “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” “Abide in me, and I in you.” (John 15:4,5.) “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Cor. 5:17.)

To the saved God promises the Holy Spirit. “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38.) “The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 3:16.) Those who possess the Spirit are said to have “the mind of the Spirit,” and to be “after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:5,6.) It is by the Spirit that one bears the fruit of love, joy, etc. (Gal. 5:22.)

2. *The qualifications of the Saviour.* In order to save sinners and to establish the above named relationships, God uses means which are naturally suited to these ends. Hence it was necessary for the “Word” to be made flesh. (John 1:14.) This Son of God and Son of man is qualified to represent both God and man. He, and he alone, can be mediator between God and man. “There is one God, one mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) This arrangement is based on reason. Our Saviour must be divine that he may bear our sins. He must be “man” that he may be our merciful High Priest. (Heb. 2:17,18; 4:14-16.)

Man’s Saviour is (a) the source of life (John 1:4; I John 5:11,12), (b) the master of life and death (John 10:18; 11:25), (c) sinless (Heb. 4:15; 7:25), (d) worthy to receive “power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory and blessing” (Rev. 5:12), (e) worshipped by both men and angels (Rev. 5:11; Heb. 1:6); and finally, (f)

our Saviour is at "the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) He is also represented as the "heir of all things," the agent of creation, "the effulgence of his (God's) glory, and the very image of his substance." and the upholder of all things "by the word of his power." And above all, he "made purification of sins." (Heb. 1:2,3.)

Now, unless God did many unnecessary things, unless he made a sacrifice too great, no one but the Son of God, the Son of man, could possibly have become man's Saviour.

3. *What did Jesus do to become man's Saviour?* We might safely and reasonably answer that he did what was necessary. A God of wisdom, justice, and mercy would not require more or less. What constitutes sin is not an arbitrary matter. And that sin deserves punishment is also a reasonable thing. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "The wages of sin is death" are verdicts based on the nature of sin and the justice of God.

If man bears the penalty of his own sins, he cannot be saved. Another must, therefore, bear his iniquity. Consequently "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Jesus gave his life for the life of the sinner. "The Son of man came . . . to give his *life* a ransom for many." Jesus gave his life for us when he "died for our sins." "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life." (Lev. 17:11.) Here we see that God proceeded upon the basis of "reason." "By reason of the life" blood is suited to make atonement. And that life should redeem life is also according to both reason and justice. That Jesus alone was qualified to give his life for our life has already been seen.



Jesus redeemed us, therefore, by his blood. "In whom we have our redemption through his blood." (Eph. 2:7.) Other passages are too familiar to need quoting here.

4. *The conditions of salvation.* What is meant by the conditions of salvation? The expression does not mean that man can *earn* or *achieve* his salvation. He can do neither, *with* or *without* a Saviour. If man could do either, he would need no Saviour. Because man *must* have a Saviour, Jehovah provided one.

It follows, therefore, that, since man can neither earn nor achieve his salvation, the *source* of his salvation, the *ground* of his redemption, is not in the conditions of salvation. The power to save is in the blood of Christ, not in conditions on man's part. For example, we know that faith is a condition of salvation. But man is not saved because of his faith, that is, he is not saved because there is redeeming power in faith.

Since we are saved by Christ, by his death for our sins, *faith* is required. One is not merely to give credence to the story about the death of Jesus, he is to depend upon Christ crucified for his salvation. There is nothing arbitrary about faith. It is the name of the act of accepting the atonement for sin. Faith is not a mere principle of action that leads one to do the things that save! "Faith in God, in Jesus, and in the Bible will lead one to do with a trusting heart what these require for salvation from past sin of those who believe." Is not faith *itself* for the remission of sins? Peter so taught: "To him bear all the prophets witness that through his name everyone that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43.) If faith in Christ is not itself for the remission of sin, then justification is not by faith, but

by acts of faith! It is a great struggle to rule out the blood of Christ, but some are able to do so!

Repentance is the turning away from sin, and the assumption of the attitude of heart that prepares one for divine mercy. There is nothing arbitrary or meritorious here.

As for baptism, it is the function of this ordinance to express or embody faith and repentance. It is never considered apart from these two conditions. It is, as to significance, faith and penitence. Christ crucified is the consideration of baptism. And any design it may have stems from the fact that it is "in the name of Jesus Christ."

The conditions of salvation are, therefore, means of turning from sin and of accepting the crucified Saviour. They are not a "plan" or "scheme" arbitrarily demanded by one in authority, but the natural responses, as to signification, to the blood of Christ.

One of the most difficult truths for man to accept is that he has a *real* Saviour. He desires that Jesus tell *him what to do to save himself!* It is astonishing how many and who they are who have such an idea.

5. *The principles of grace or mercy.* Since man cannot save himself, he must be saved by another. Hence he is saved upon the principle of grace. God has mercy upon sinners because of the death of Christ on their behalf. (Of course, Christ crucified must be accepted by sinners.) *The cross is the basis of grace.* It determines the principle of grace. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood" . . . (Rom. 3:24,25.) Note the connection between justification by grace and redemption by the blood of Christ.

6. *The principle of faith or trust.* Grace and

faith are correlative terms. What God offers by grace is received by faith. As it relates to Christ as *sin offering*, faith is receptive. Hence, "By grace have ye been saved through faith." Man must depend upon that which saves him, or rather upon *him* who saves him. This dependence is faith. Faith is determined, therefore, by the cross and by the principle of grace.

7. *The relation of the conditions of salvation to Christ crucified.* It is Christ who *saves*. Hence the conditions of *salvation* must relate to him. But they must relate to Christ as *sin bearer*, not to him as the mere *author* of the conditions. The conditions of salvation are responses to Jesus as "Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.) Christ, not mere duty, is the consideration of the conditions of salvation. This point is of the utmost significance. It must be conceded or the cross is logically nullified.

Christ crucified is the object of saving faith. (John 3:16; Rom. 3:25.) Repentance is "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) And baptism is likewise "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) Every condition relates directly to Christ as *sin offering*. The implication follows that all express faith or trust in him. *One goes through the conditions to Christ crucified, not through Christ crucified to the conditions.* It is meaningless to preach the conditions apart from Christ as *sin offering*. One can no more believe or trust apart from one in whom to believe or to trust, than one can eat without food. *How often have sinners been invited to "eat" apart from any reference to Christ crucified as the "bread of life."*

8. *The conditions of salvation have not been arbitrarily chosen.* If faith is a condition of justification, there is a *reason* for faith. And so with other conditions. Some claim that Christ, having been

given "all authority," had the right to make anything a condition that pleased him! This is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural. It is the *cross*, not the *authority* of Jesus, that determines the conditions of salvation. He would be a foolish physician who would prescribe for a patient on the basis of his *diploma*, rather than on the ground of his *diagnosis*. Jesus has "diagnosed" man's trouble as *sin*. We are saved from sin by the crucified Saviour. Hence, man's part in salvation is determined by the cross. The nature of *bread* determines whether it shall be *eaten* or *drunk*. The nature of the ground of salvation determines man's response.

It would be most difficult to find a more unphilosophical and unscriptural theory than that Christ arbitrarily selected certain things as conditions of salvation. This is a modern discovery! It was begotten by a legalistic conception of Christianity. If Jesus is merely a law-giver, then sinners can afford to forget *him*, if only they obey the *law*. It was unnecessary that Israel remember Moses, if they kept the commands given through him. It so happens that the commands given sinners relate most directly to Christ by way of expressing trust in him as Saviour. But Jesus did not bring *law*, nor did Moses bring *grace*. (John 1:17.) There is a reason why the conditions of salvation are sometimes preached as a "law" without any reference to the blood of Christ!

Some have the strange notion that the principle of faith excludes all reason. It is said that if one can see a good reason for faith, or repentance, then these are not tests of loyalty to God. So some contend! According to this theory, when one considers the miracles of Jesus, and *reasons* like Nicodemus: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him," our faith is vain! Jesus should not have

furnished *reasonable* proof of his Sonship! He should have *demand*ed faith in himself upon a mere command that one believe! Why did Jesus “show himself after his passion by many *proofs*”? Why did he not *demand* that people have faith? Jesus said to Thomas: “Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but *believing*.” After Thomas had believed because of *proof*, Jesus said to him: “Because thou hast *seen* me, thou hast believed.”

When one knows the meaning of repentance, for example, he knows that there are the very best of reasons to repent. So with faith. Of course, this whole theory was originated in the interest of baptism. It is assumed that there is no reason in baptism, and that especially this command should be obeyed because, and only because, Christ commanded it. It is compared to Naaman’s dipping, and Joshua’s marching around Jericho. No connection between the act and the desired end! Such teaching will do more to turn discerning people away from baptism than to cause them to accept it.

Naaman’s dipping made no reference to the work of another in his behalf that would cause the dipping to accomplish a desired result. Baptism is “in the name of Jesus Christ” who came between God and the sinner. It signifies faith in Christ. If the cross means nothing, then the parallel between Naaman’s dipping and one’s baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ” stands! When the cross is left out one reverts to legalism. Some are much more concerned about making a place for baptism than in magnifying the cross. Bad arguments bring bad results. Baptism needs no such defense. (Concerning the theory that the atonement and the conditions of salvation are but

arbitrary decrees of God see question No. 6, chapter thirteen.)

9. *The relation of the conditions of salvation to the remission of sins.* Nothing is “for the remission of sins” in the same sense as the blood of Christ. The blood *procures* salvation, while the conditions *appropriate* it. Christ *achieved* redemption and man *receives* it. Sometimes Matt. 26:28 and Acts 2:38 are paralleled thus: “This is my blood . . . poured out for many unto the remission of sins,” and “Repent ye, and be baptized . . . unto the remission of sins.” The phrase “unto the remission of sins” is common to both passages. While this phrase shows that repentance and baptism are made conditions of the remission of sins, one is not to think that they stand related to salvation in the same sense as the blood of Christ. If they do relate to remission of sins in the same sense, then one is *redeemed* as much by repentance and baptism as by the blood of Christ. I am sure no one believes this.

Note these statements from Paul: “Being therefore justified by *faith*,” and “being now justified by his *blood*.” (5:1,9.) Is there no room for discrimination here? Are we to rely upon our *faith* just as we depend upon the *blood* of Christ? Mere words do not tell the whole story. Jesus never made a more positive statement than “This is my body,” referring to the bread of the Lord’s supper. Yet we believe that he *meant* “This *represents* my body.” In Rom. 5:1 Paul evidently meant that one is justified on the principle of faith, because faith, in the sense of trust, is the natural response to the blood of Christ. By “justified by his blood” the apostle meant that the blood is the *ground* or *reason* for the mercy of God. In Rom. 3:25 Paul joins the blood of Christ and the faith thus: “Whom God set forth to be a propitiation,

through faith, in his blood.” Christ is a “propitiation” by means of his blood. The blood of Christ, not man’s faith, is the “propitiation.”

Note these translations: “Whom God put forward as the means of propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.” (Moffatt.) “For God showed him publicly dying as a sacrifice of reconciliation to be taken advantage of through faith.” (Goodspeed.)

It is contended that so-called “positive” or arbitrary commands test one’s faith in God. Granted, under certain circumstances. But do they test one’s faith in God “that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead”? (Rom. 4:24.) “We should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.” (2 Cor. 1:9.) “Who through him (Christ) are believers in God, that raised him (Jesus) from the dead.” (I Pet. 1:21.) Simply to believe in God is not enough. Saving faith is faith in God, the Father of Christ, and the resurrecter of Christ from the dead. This involves faith in Christ. Naaman had no such faith in God. His was a purely physical blessing conditioned solely on obedience to a command of God. Our salvation is a spiritual blessing conditioned on faith in God “who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Naaman seemed not to believe very much in God in any sense. What faith he had was only in the sovereignty of God. Unbelievers in Christ have this faith.

If Christ is merely another law-giver; if Christianity is but another legal system; and if the cross means nothing, then the sinner’s baptism is analogous to Naaman’s dipping! And upon the same premises one need not understand why he obeys in any respect! No one ever conceived of baptism as a foolish requirement until recent years. The unbelieving Jews mistakenly pronounced the cross to be foolishness. They simply did not know. For the

same reason baptism is considered a foolish act from man's viewpoint. It is no more foolish than the Lord's Supper, for obvious reasons.

But what is the relation of the conditions of salvation to the remission of sins? *They have no relation except through the blood of Christ.* They would not be conditions, in the first place, if they did not have direct reference to Christ crucified. Justification is "by faith" that means trust in Christ as sinoffering. Faith, then, is said to be for remission of sins: "Every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43.) Likewise repentance and baptism are for "the remission of sins" because, and only because, they are "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) Of course, if any condition is considered apart from the cross, if it is made a mere legal enactment, then it has no relation to remission of sin. It has, in this case, no relation to the blood of Christ.

There is no inconsistency in any condition and the cross, no incompatibility in any condition and the grace of God, provided it is made a response to the blood of Christ. But when the conditions are made responses to the sovereignty of God or of Christ, and are not related to the cross by way of expressing trust in Christ as sinoffering, or faith in God "who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead," they are but legal enactments and logically nullify the cross and make void the grace of God. The cross does not call for mere obedience, but an obedience that means reliance upon Christ crucified. The most effective manner of arraying the commands of God against the grace of God, is to preach them apart from a direct reference to the blood of Christ. Conditions are means of appropriating the saving power of the blood. They were never designed as mere acts of



obedience to test one's respect for the authority of God or of Christ.

But the reference to the blood by the conditions of salvation is one that signifies trust or reliance. There is no necessity of inventing an imaginary, figurative, or legal "contact" with the blood. It is *faith* in the blood, or *faith* in Christ who shed his blood that is required. Christ as our propitiation is to be received by faith. (John 3:16.) "For so greatly did God love the world that he gave his only Son, that every one who *trusts* in him . . . may have eternal life." (Weymouth's translation.) "For God showed him publicly dying as a sacrifice of reconciliation to be taken advantage of through faith." (Rom. 3:25 —Goodspeed.)

10. *What is the meaning of the gospel invitation?* When sinners are given the gospel invitation, what precisely is intended by it? Some kind of proposition, so to speak, is made, and sinners are invited to make some kind of response. If the correct preaching has been done, *Christ* has been preached. Sinners have been told *who Christ is, and what he has done for them, and what he proposes to do*. *Christ* is being offered to sinners — *Christ, the Son of God, who is man's sinoffering, and who is, therefore, man's Saviour*. The *blood* with its cleansing power is offered to man whose soul has been stained by sin. *Whether sinners will accept or reject this Saviour is the real issue confronting them*. In other words, sinners are being offered *mercy*; they are being offered the "free gift" of salvation! *Will they accept it?*

Why was *Christ* preached by the apostle and others? Why did not the inspired preachers go forth and preach the sinner's obligation to be honest, moral, benevolent, etc.? Why was not mere obligation preached? Simply because obligation was not the

need of sinners. They were already under obligation. *But man has sinned. He is lost. He needs a Saviour, a Redeemer!* Duty to a lost man is no Saviour.

When Peter on Pentecost cried, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation," he was but exhorting his hearers to accept the Saviour whom he had just preached.. He was not simply trying to induce them to render obedience *per se*. He was not exhorting sinners merely to repent and be baptized as a test of their submission to Christ as *king*. But he was asking them to repent and be baptized "*in the name of Jesus Christ,*" thus accepting Jesus as their *sinoffering* as well as their king.

Note this from the apostle John: "And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." (I John 5:11,12.) When one buys an automobile he possesses an automobile. When one is *offered Christ* (He is not for sale!) and he is accepted, one has Christ, the Son of God. He has life. He has a Saviour, not a mere teacher or ruler.

What should sinners consider has been accomplished by them when they have obeyed the Lord? Can they say "We have now done our part, we have rendered obedience"? It is greatly feared that many do not realize *that they now have a Saviour*. All their hope, all their rejoicing, should be based on the fact that they now have *Christ*, the Son of God who is their "righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." Just as one glories in the possession of an automobile, Christians should glory in the possession of *Christ*. Paul counted everything "loss for *Christ*." He exchanged law for *Christ*. He laid claim to *him*. He believed that he had gained *Christ*. (Phil. 3:8.)

Christ crucified, Christ man's sinbearer, Christ the Saviour — he is the issue of the gospel invitation. Everyone should exchange his own righteousness, his morality, and his despair for Christ, for a Saviour. When one responds to the gospel invitation he is not offering his obedience in exchange for salvation. He is accepting Christ as sinbearer, Saviour, Redeemer.

A good salesman sells the prospective customer on the *automobile*, not on the "terms." A poor "salesman" sells sinners on "terms of pardon," instead of *Christ*. Inspired "salesmen" sold *Christ as Saviour*, not the *conditions* leading to him. They converted sinners to *Christ*, not to a "law of pardon." A convert should be ready, in turn, to "sell" Christ to sinners.

What is here said must not be interpreted as an effort to minimize the conditions of salvation, but rather an attempt to exalt the Saviour. After all, the conditions of salvation are not *saviours*. Let us be careful not to place the emphasis on them that belongs to Christ.

Note the emphasis Christ placed on *himself*: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by *me*." (John 14:8.) "I am the bread of life." "He that eateth *me*, he also shall live because of *me*." (John 6:35,57.) "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:25.) Hence, one is not led to Christ, that Christ may in turn lead him to the conditions of salvation. Instead, one through the conditions is led to *Christ*. *He* is Saviour.

But it is different under *law*. Moses led the people to the *Ten Commandments*. The Ten Commandments did not lead the people to *Moses*. Law brings *obligations*; grace brings a *Saviour*. Sinners are invited to accept this Saviour. *This is the issue of the gospel invitation.*

11. *The key to the understanding of salvation.*

The key to the understanding of salvation, as well as the key to a proper conception of *Romans*, is found in *Christ*. Jesus, not dogma, is the center of the Bible. Some seem to regard a condition of salvation as the center of Christianity! But conditions are significant only because they are responses to Jesus as "Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.) One's conception of justification that is not in harmony with Paul's discussion of it in the third and fourth chapters of *Romans*, is bound to be wrong. Certainly a proper understanding of the atonement is essential to a correct exegesis of *Romans*.

*Hence, Jesus, the Son of God and man's sinoffering, is the key to a proper conception of salvation.* Any passage of scripture relating to the justification of sinners that is not interpreted in the light of these two basic truths will be misunderstood. How often Matt. 7:21 and Heb. 5:9, for examples, are expounded as though the cross did not exist! That the chief characteristic of the new covenant, as distinguished from the old covenant, is a new set of commandments given by another lawgiver, is an error that has scarcely been paralleled.

Salvation is a gift based on the sacrifice of Christ. Conditions of salvation constitute man's acceptance of this salvation. To represent the conditions of salvation as arbitrary commands, and having no logical relation to Jesus as *sinoffering*, but given to test the sinner's willingness to obey God, is a colossal and a tragic error.

Most errors relating to justification are the results of losing sight of the atonement. Hence, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" is the key to a proper conception of salvation. The chief value of the *Roman* epistle lies in its explanation of the sacrifice of Jesus.

12. *The Outline of Christianity.* Paul's outline of Christianity as revealed in *Romans* is as follows: sin, guilt, condemnation, atonement, grace, faith, justification, sanctification, and glorification. If there is no sin, there is no guilt; if there is no guilt, there is no condemnation; if there is no condemnation, there is no need of atonement; if there is no atonement, there can be no grace; if there is no grace, there is no place for faith in the gospel sense; if there is no faith, there is no justification; if there is no justification, there is no sanctification; if there is no sanctification, there can be no glorification.

*Christianity makes sense. It is no arbitrary matter.* In Christianity the actual needs of the sinner have been supplied. And they have been provided in a logical way. Sin is real. It naturally results in guilt, and guilt, in condemnation. Condemned sinners can be saved only by an atonement on their behalf. Based on the cross, grace is possible; and grace demands faith. God saves sinners the only way possible.

No one is prepared to teach who is not informed in the above items. Memorizing a few prescriptions does not prepare one to practice medicine. Those who train men to preach are under obligation to instruct them in the outline of religion. One does not know Christ who knows him only as a teacher or lawgiver.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Gentiles' Need of a Saviour

1. *Paul: A Jew and a Pharisee.* (Acts 22:3; 26:5:) First a persecutor, then the persecuted and sufferer. (Acts 26:11; 1 Cor. 4:10-13; 2 Cor. 4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11: 24-28.) As a Pharisee he was "exceedingly zealous." (Gal. 1:14.) Paul relied upon fleshly relationships, circumcision, and law-righteousness. (Phil. 3:4-6.) Before he knew Christ these things were considered "gain". (Phil. 3:7.) But when he learned of Christ he regarded these "gains" as "loss" and "refuse." He was delighted to exchange *law* for *Christ*. (Phil. 3:8,9.) The legalist glories in law, human righteousness, and rituals until he learns of Christ, grace, faith, and the spiritual. Then law becomes "refuse." Being apprehended in the act of persecuting Christ, and yet shown mercy, Paul was deeply impressed with Christ and grace, and never ceased to preach them. (1 Cor. 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:12-17; Eph. 2:4-7.) He gloried only in the cross. (Gal. 6:14.) He was never ashamed of the gospel. (1:16.) He is its chief defender. (Phil. 1:16.) Practically all of Paul's writings constitute a defense of the cross. For Paul to live and to preach was Christ. (Phil. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:2.) Christ was the source of Paul's strength. (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:29.) Paul lost himself in Christ. The Lord appeared to Paul; Paul saw; the Lord conquered.

*Called to be an apostle.* Paul was called and instructed by Christ, not by human instrumentality. (Acts 9:3-6; Gal. 1:11, 12.) Ananias was not sent to preach the gospel to Paul, but to map his future work. (Acts 9:12,17,18; 22:10-16.) An apostle is

one sent on a mission. Paul's mission was to preach *Christ*. (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:2.)

*The gospel of God.* Gospel means glad tidings. Here it means glad tidings of salvation by means of the death and resurrection of Christ for our sins. (1 Cor. 15,3,4.) The word gospel is not a synonym of truth. Neither does it refer to the word of God in general. Much truth is not glad tidings. The gospel concerns God's Son and what he did for sinners. The good news of salvation is called "the gospel of God," denoting its origin (1:1); "the gospel of Christ," because Christ is its subject (Gal. 1:7); "the gospel of salvation," for it is God's power to save (Eph. 1:13; Rom. 1:16); and "the gospel of peace," because by the gospel God and man are reconciled, and Jews and Gentiles are made one. (Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-22.)

3. *Seed of David — Son of God.* How this relationship is possible is seen from Matt. 1:21. The incarnation was a necessity, because only by this means could Jesus qualify as man's mediator. (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14-18.) Only the Son of God can be the "Lamb of God." (John 1:29.) Only the Son can bring saving grace (John 1:17), and become man's saviour. We are made sons of God through God's Son. (Gal. 3:26.) The Sonship of Jesus is the central truth of Christianity, and those who deny it are called "anti-Christ." (1 John 2:18,22; 4:2,3.)

5. *The obedience of faith.* This phrase states the purpose of Paul's apostleship. It is, therefore, significant. With Paul faith has Jesus Christ and him crucified as its object, and signifies trust in, or reliance upon Christ for salvation. How, then, is it proper to speak of the "obedience of faith"? To believe in Christ is a command. (Acts 16:31.) The proper response to a command is obedience. Hence

when one believes on Christ he is obeying God. In the next place, obedience is both inward and outward. Love and forgiveness, for examples, are spiritual and they are commanded. When one loves and forgives he is obeying God. Faith, then, can also be considered obedience.

The expression, "the obedience of faith," can mean, therefore, (a) obedience produced by faith, (b) faith itself as obedience, and (c) acts as the expression or the embodiment of faith. But faith as the response to Christ as *sinoffering* must signify *trust*. Faith is a principle of action that leads to obedience, but it is much more. Unless we let it signify trust, faith is no response to the blood of Christ. Weymouth translates "believeth" in John 3:16 "*trusts.*" So do other translators. This point is most important. Merely to recognize Christ as one in authority, and so obey him, is not enough. The obedience rendered must signify trust in, or reliance upon Christ for salvation. On Pentecost Peter represented Jesus as "both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.) As *Christ*, Jesus is our *sinoffering*. Thus the phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ" signifies trust in Jesus as *sinoffering*, as certainly as it means submission to Jesus as Lord or king. The cross demands a special response, and that response is trust or reliance.

Such passages as Matt. 7:21 and Heb. 5:9 must be understood in the light of the cross. Else one can easily revert to legalism. God's will that must be done in reference to the crucified Son certainly includes faith in the sense of trust. "This is his commandment that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ." (I John 3.23.) "The will of the Father" in Matt. 7:21 certainly does not exclude the above passage. Believe the gospel, and obey the



gospel, are scriptural expressions; but never do we find the expression *believe and obey the gospel*. To believe is obedience, and the obedience demanded of sinners signifies faith in Christ.

6. *Called to be Jesus Christ's*. The saved belong to Christ, for he bought them. (1 Cor 6:19; Acts 20:28.) Christians are God's "own possession." (Tit. 2:14.) Hence we should "glorify God in our bodies." (1 Cor. 6:20.)

7. *Beloved of God*. God has special love for his children. (1 John 3:1.) Divine love is the fountain from which flows the "river of life." Christianity has its roots deep in the love of God. Nothing is more important to sinful man.

8. *Your faith is proclaimed*. Paul makes much of faith. It is not merely one of the conditions of salvation, but *the principle answering to Jesus as sin offering*. Faith in the sense of relying upon the Saviour is something new. "The law is not of faith" because under it there was no sacrifice that could take away sins. There was no sin offering in which to trust. This was "before faith came." (Gal. 3:23.) Since faith is so fundamental, the apostle spoke of the faith of the Roman Christians as signifying their conversion to Christ. In *The Acts* the saved are denominated "believers" more often, perhaps, than by any other designation. The saved are those who rely upon Christ for salvation, not those who are attempting to achieve their own salvation.

11. *I Long to see you*. Not for selfish, but for unselfish reason. "That I may impart." Paul was aware of the spiritual needs of the Roman Christians, and he was eager to supply them. He was not desirous of causing divisions among them, entertaining them, or making Paulites by stressing some trivial matter which might mark him as a spiritual hero.

Children of God need to be “established.” In doing this, Paul and they would mutually comfort each other.

12. *I am debtor.* Divine mercy brought Paul, and brings us, under obligation to others. Every unsaved person was Paul’s concern. Paul’s “I am debtor” is followed by “I am ready,” a fine combination.

15. *To preach the gospel.* This is what Paul was ready to do. This is the way he *paid*, so to speak, his *debt*. These four words, *to preach the gospel*, translate one Greek word. Paul was not sent merely to preach *something*. “We preach Christ crucified.” (1 Cor. 1:23.) One Greek word names not only Paul’s obligation to preach, but implies the *content* of his preaching. Paul preached Christ, not merely something that Christ said. Both are necessary. But to fail to preach Christ as God’s Son, the source of life, the master of life and death, the sin offering upon whom “Jehovah hath laid the iniquity of us all,” is to fail. To preach the sinner’s obligation apart from Christ as sin offering is meaningless. Philip preached Christ from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah before he expected any response from the eunuch. Apart from Christ crucified one cannot believe. (Rom. 10:17.)

## THE THEME OF ROMANS

16, 17. *For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the just shall live by faith.*” The doctrinal part of this epistle is but an elaboration of these verses. There is no doubt about what Paul meant by the *gospel*. “For Christ sent me

— to preach the gospel.” (1 Cor. 1:17.) “We preach Christ crucified.” (1 Cor. 1:23.) See also 1 Cor. 2:2; 15:3,4. What Jesus did to save sinners is the gospel. This must first be preached, or God’s power to save is not preached. Now, *to preach* something is not merely to refer to it, but to take it for one’s subject and explain it. Unless Christ crucified is preached (See Isa. 53), there is nothing to which sinners are to respond. Christ as sin offering, not an arbitrary command, demands the response of faith, repentance, and baptism. The meaning of faith is studied in chapters three and four, and the significance of baptism is considered in chapter six. For a discussion of “a righteousness of God” see under 3:21.

18. *For the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man.*” Note that sin is negative. It is antagonistic to God. Hence sin is “*ungodliness*.” It is “*unrighteousness*.” Righteousness is positive. It is *godliness*. “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.” Sin is a personal offense against God. Hence his wrath is against sin. The wrath of God is unlike man’s anger or wrath. It is the natural reaction of an absolutely holy God against that which is unlike himself, and which is, therefore, unholy. Sin is missing the mark. This “mark” is, first of all, *God himself*, and then the *will* of God. God’s will is the transcript of his character. Hence, Peter wrote, “Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:16.) Peter states the obligation, “Ye shall be holy.” Then he gives the reason for the obligation, “For I am holy.” This agrees with Paul’s statement in Rom. 8:7: “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God.” Sin is “enmity against God,” because “the law of God” is based upon his character.

God’s will is not arbitrary. God does not step

“out of character” in the realm of religion. Nothing makes sin so ugly and so deserving of punishment as the fact that it is “ungodliness.”

Modern man tries to believe that sin is unreal. Sin is made nothing more than non-conformance to custom. But this teaching that sin is unreal logically destroys the moral government of God. As certainly as God is, he is a *holy* God. Since God is holy, he approves only conduct compatible with his character. But, if there is nothing *inherently* wrong, then the holiness of God is unreal. If divine holiness is unreal, then God possesses no inherently holy character. When God is robbed of his attributes he ceases to be the God of the Bible. If holiness as an attribute of God is unreal, and if sin is unreal, why and how could God ever be pleased or displeased with man? And upon what principle could he exercise government over man? One has every right to suspect the motives and the character of him who denies that sin is real. The teaching is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural.

19-23. Gentiles were sinners not because they had no knowledge of God. Creation reveals his “everlasting power and divinity.” But despite any revelation of God which the Gentiles had, they exchanged God for mere images of “corruptible man — birds — beasts — and creeping things.” Read Psalms 8:1; 19:1-6. Pity the “fool” who says “there is no God.” (Psa. 14:1.) Sin perverts the intellect so that man in his wisdom rejects God. (1 Cor. 1:21.) How generous of some wise men to acknowledge some kind of supreme force governing the universe! Note that man fell from monotheism into polytheism. The former is not the result of a religious evolution.

“*God gave them up.*” An alarming thought! Three times Paul wrote these awful words. (verses

24, 26, 28.) *Where there is no faith in God there is no effective restraining power.* Idolatry and sin encourage each other. When verses 24-32 are considered, one trembles for this age when millions have wilfully forgotten God. "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."

Now, what did the Gentile world need? How could Gentiles be saved? Did they need the law of Moses? Did they need any legal system? Law simply cannot cope with the problem of sin. Law can neither furnish an atonement for sin nor provide a basis of holiness. Sinners need a Saviour, a sin-offering, a propitiation, and mercy. "Schemes" and "plans" legalistically conceived avail nothing. *Sinners need Christ.*

## Obeying the Gospel

Since the gospel is the theme of this epistle, and since the gospel must be obeyed, serious consideration should be given to the matter of obeying the gospel. Both Paul and Peter speak of obeying the gospel. (Rom. 10:16 A.V.; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17.) Hence, the gospel *can* be obeyed. If the gospel cannot be obeyed, Paul and Peter did not know it. Furthermore, if the gospel cannot be obeyed, then either it is not the power of God to save, or else obedience to it is not necessary to salvation. The power to save was not transferred from the gospel itself to a mere "form" of it.

The primary idea in obedience is *submission*. One must submit to Christ as *sin-offering* to be saved by him. Obedience to Christ as *teacher* and *king* is not enough. One must obey, submit, to him as *sin-offering*, or sacrifice for sins.

But how can one obey the *gospel* unless in his

obedience he is responding to Christ as *sinoffering*? How can one obey the gospel unless his obedience relates directly to the gospel? Impossible! Why did not Paul and Peter simply demand obedience to Christ as one in authority? Because they knew that Christ saves by means of his death on man's behalf, not simply by his authority. The authority of Christ can be recognized in obedience with no thought of his death as a propitiation.

When, therefore, are believing in Christ, repenting, and being baptized obedience to the gospel? The gospel is Christ crucified for our sins. (I Cor. 15:3,4.) The above conditions, therefore, constitute obedience to the *gospel* when they are responses to, and express reliance upon Christ crucified. To obey in the above respects simply because one has been commanded to do so, is to ignore the cross and render it void. Faith in Christ, is faith or trust in him *as the sacrifice for our sins*. Merely to believe in him as God's Son with no thought of the cross is not enough. See Rom. 10:9. Likewise, to repent with no thought of Christ crucified, and to be baptized, except as a response to his death for our sins, are not enough. Luke 24:46,47 and Acts 2:38 definitely relate each to the cross. And Paul in Rom. 6:3,4 connects baptism with the death of Jesus. In all of his obedience the sinner should know that he is responding to the blood of Christ, not merely recognizing the right of Christ to demand obedience.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER ONE

1. Discuss the religion of Saul of Tarsus. Phil. 3:4-6.
2. Contrast this with the religion of Paul, the

**Christian. Phil. 3:7-10.**

3. Give three possible meanings of the expression, "the obedience of faith."

4. Which of these meanings is most naturally required by the cross?

5. Discuss Matt. 7:21 and Heb. 5:9 apart from, and in relation to, Christ as sin offering. See 1 John 3:23.

6. Note: "To preach the gospel" translates one word in the greek. Paul was not only expected to *preach*, he was told what to preach. His obligation to preach and the content of his message are both in one word. See also 1 Cor. 1:17,23.

7. Study with care the theme of Romans, 1:16, 17. The "power" of the gospel is contrasted with the weakness of the law. (8:3.) "Unto salvation" is opposed to condemnation under law. (3:20.) "To every one" points out the universality of the gospel as opposed to the law for Jews only. "Believeth" is in bold contrast to keeping commandments or works of law. (10:4,5.) The gospel saves because it reveals "the righteousness of God." "The righteousness of God" is most important.

8. What is sin in relation to God? v. 18. See 8:7.

9. In this chapter Paul convicts the Gentile world of sin. Why?

10. In 1:24-32 we see what happens to man when he forgets God.

## CHAPTER TWO

# The Jews' Need of Righteousness or Justification

1. *Thou art without excuse.* Paul surprised the Jews by charging that they stood in need of justification the same as the Gentiles. "For thou that judgest dost practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth." All the external advantages of the Jews brought upon them the greater condemnation, because they did not profit by them. If obedience to God means blessings to the "Jew first," then he was the "first" to come under the condemnation of God because of his sins. Hence, the Jewish sinner under law, which he did not keep, and the Gentile without law, were equally in need of divine mercy. The law was not intended as a mere keepsake, but it demanded obedience.

6-11. *Who will render to every man according to his works.* "Every man" included the Jew as well as the Gentile. But has Paul reverted to legalism by affirming that man will be judged by his works? No. He is considering in a practical way the final judgment. The sinful and corrupt will be punished while those of opposite character will be blessed. He does not stop here to consider the basis of either holiness or sin. He is removing any hope which the Jew might have that was based upon mere possession of the law apart from obedience which it required. Not the hearer but the doer of the law is blessed. Even uncircumcised Gentiles who kept the moral law were favored above the circumcised Jew who possessed, but did not obey the law. Under either law or grace one's life will count in the judgment.

17. *Thou bearest the name of a Jew.* The



apostle names certain grounds of confidence of the Jew to divine approval. He depended more upon a *name* than reality. It is not enough to be properly designated. One must be what the designation implies. To wear even the name of Christ amounts to nothing, unless one is actually a Christian. As we have seen, the Jew gloried in the possession of the law. But the law condemned him because he did not keep it. The Jew also gloried in his superior advantages, and regarded Gentiles as blind, foolish and babes. The Jew knew so much more than the Gentile, but he forgot to teach himself! Jesus charged that "They say, and do not." Even circumcision, the chief pride of the Jews, availed nothing, if they kept not the law. And the uncircumcision of the Gentiles was reckoned as circumcision when they kept "the ordinances of the law." Thus the apostle swept from under the Jew the very foundation upon which he relied for divine approval. Jew or Gentile, every sinner needs a Saviour, not merely another law.

28,29. *He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, --- but he is a Jew who is one inwardly.* The apostle asserts the same thing of circumcision. Here is one of the most significant truths of this epistle. In few words Paul states the vital difference between legalism and Christianity, a spiritual religion. The Jew relied upon fleshly relationship and external advantages. He was a son of Abraham; he was a circumcised man; he had the law; and he gloried in the law-righteousness which he imagined he possessed. Yet he sadly neglected the spirit. To a noted Jew Jesus taught that fleshly birth amounts to nothing, and that even he, Nicodemus, needed the birth of the Spirit. (Yet even in this teaching of Jesus many see only what a Jew would have seen, a new legalism!)

The religion of Christ is preeminently spiritual. "God is Spirit." (John 4:24.) "True worshippers" worship God, who is Spirit, "in spirit and truth." The kingdom is spiritual: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17.) Entrance into this spiritual kingdom is by a birth of the Spirit: "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) God's people constitute a "spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice." (1 Pet. 2:5.) In Christ there is a spiritual "circumcision": "Ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands." (Col. 2:11.) "We are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God." (Phil. 3:3.)

It is not here contended that nothing is external under Christ. That which is seen, however, expresses something inward and spiritual. The real "eating" and "drinking" of the Lord's Supper express the spiritual "communion of the body of Christ," and the "communion of the blood of Christ." (1 Cor. 10:16.) Formalism and ritualism have no place in a spiritual religion. Purity of heart and holiness of life are to be sought rather than a scrupulous cleansing of the "outside of the cup." (Matt. 23:25.) Not the mere knowledge of the letter, but serving God in "newness of the spirit," constitutes one a faithful servant of God. (Rom. 7:6.) Not mere orthodoxy of dogma, but bearing the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control," is proof of citizenship in a spiritual kingdom. (Gal. 5:22,23.)

This spiritual principle holds true in conversion also. A spiritual death to sin, a spiritual resurrection with Christ, and a trust in the blood of Christ, rather

than a talismanic performance of certain, "steps," make one a child of God. Even baptism has a spiritual signification, being the embodiment of death to sin, of a resurrection to a new life, and of trust in Christ as sin offering, rather than an arbitrary command having no logical relation to the end sought!

Nothing so offended the legalistic Jew as the spiritual teaching of Jesus. They were unwilling to exchange fleshly relationships, the circumcision of the flesh, and their legal righteousness for spiritual realities. And from the day of Christ to the present, nothing has so effectively hindered Christianity as the carnal, legalistic conception of religion.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER TWO

1. The Jews were ever ready to condemn the Gentiles. vv. 19,20.
2. But the Jews were sinners also. vv. 1-6.
3. The principle of divine judgment condemns Jewish as well as Gentile sinners. vv. 2-12.
4. Upon what did the Jew rely for divine approval? vv. 17, 18, 25-27.
5. Contrast the "inward" and the "outward" Jew. vv. 27-28. This is one of the most important passages in Romans. Relate it to John 3:1-3.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Advantages of the Jew

1. *What advantage then hath the Jew?* Here Paul anticipates a Jewish objection to his charge that Jews as well as Gentiles were sinners and stood in need of a Saviour. They remembered that they had been chosen a "people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth." (Deut. 7:6.) In 9:4,5 the apostle recites many of the advantages of the Jews: "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the services of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh." Now, if in spite of all these advantages the Jew found himself under the same condemnation of the Gentiles, what is the profit of being a Jew?

But Paul is unwilling to admit that Jewish advantages were not real. He insisted that there was profit "much in every way." The Jews were the custodians of divine revelation: "First of all — they were entrusted with the oracles of God." They had been schooled for centuries for the coming of the Messiah. Note also the advantages above cited.

5. *Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath?* If Israel's unfaithfulness did not hinder, but rather furnished an occasion for the display of divine mercy, is not God unrighteous, if his wrath is upon the Jews? Paul answers by showing the inconsistency of the Jews who freely admitted that God does have the right to judge. But his judgment is according to truth and not based on superficial distinctions, such as race and fleshly circumcision. Some even slan-

dered the apostles by charging him with the teaching, "Let us do evil, that good may come."

9. *What then? Are we better than they?* This is a delicate point. If the Jew thought that he was certain of anything, it was that he was much superior to Gentiles. The charge that he was no better than they was intolerable in his sight. The legalist refuses to come to grips with the reality and the enormity of sin. He does not understand why carnal ordinances "cannot as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect." (Heb. 9:9,10.) He sees no difficulty in saving sinners by arbitrary means. He thinks God could have saved the world by animal blood, at least "by some other sacrifice than Christ." He reasons that God has the right to save by various means, if he should see fit, forgetting that God is a God of wisdom and logical order. "God is not a God of confusion."

The phrase, "all are under sin" is most significant. In chapter seven the apostle deals with the "law of sin which is in my members," and which dominates the lives of the unregenerate. A law religion cannot deal effectively with this "law of sin." This is proved by the fact that the Jews who were under the law were still *under sin*. The connection of law and the judgment of God is briefly shown in verses 19 and 20. The result of the application of law to the sinner is "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God." Law can convict man of sin, but it can neither overcome the power of sin in the soul nor furnish a sacrifice that can take away sin. And if grace is but another name for a legal religion, then man is still under condemnation. The surest way to nullify grace is to make it law. "But if it is by grace, it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more

grace. (11:6.) "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law." (Gal. 3:13.) It was as necessary that man be freed from a law religion as it was that he have a Saviour. "Ye were also made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." (7:4.)

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

21. *A righteousness of God hath been manifested.* Paul has now come to the main part of his argument against the legalist. One is reminded of 1:17. "For therein (in the gospel) is revealed a righteousness of God." What is meant by the "righteousness of God," and what are its characteristics?

Considered negatively, the apostle is not referring to an attribute of God. That God is holy is not a peculiar revelation of the gospel. The law reveals this truth. Under 4:3 "righteousness" is shown to be the equivalent of justification. Hence, "the righteousness of God" is the justification of God. Now note some of the characteristics of this righteousness or justification.

*It is not a law-righteousness.* It is realized "apart from the law." The apostle had just said, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." (v. 20.) Law can justify only the innocent. But "all have sinned." Hence, righteousness or justification cannot come by law. God was not experimenting with law. It was given as a temporary measure until Christ should come. (Gal. 3:19.) Law can furnish no sacrifice that can become the ground of mercy. Mercy annuls the operation of law, just as law makes void mercy. The two principles of law and grace cannot exist together. Law demands that

the guilty be punished; grace offers mercy. The law was "nailed to the cross" where the ground of mercy is found. *Law ended at the cross and by the cross.* (Col. 2:14.) Salvation is not offered upon arbitrary conditions. Christ died for sinners and placed them under an administration of grace because there is no other means of salvation.

*The righteousness of God is a grace-righteousness.* "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." (3:24.) Note what has just been said above.

*The righteousness of God is a faith-righteousness.* This is in contrast to the law-righteousness which is a works-righteousness. "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses writeth that the man that *doeth* the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby." (10:4,5.) Then in the next verse the apostle sets forth the "righteousness which is of faith." Elsewhere Paul speaks of this righteousness of God: "That I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." (Phil. 3:8,9.) To receive justification or righteousness "by faith" is to receive it in reliance upon Christ as sin offering. Christ *achieves* and man *receives* justification. If man is justified upon the principle of works, that is, on the basis of his personal holiness, he is not justified by faith. "The law is not of faith; but, He that *doeth* them shall live in them." (Gal. 3:12.) Grace and faith are correlative terms. Hence, "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be

according to grace.” (4:16.) “Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.” (4:4.) Faith is not merely one of the conditions of salvation, but the principle answering to the principle of grace. It is the natural response to Christ as sin offering. Faith as a principle is seen in all the conditions of salvation.

*The righteousness of God is in contrast to the righteousness of man.* “Not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.” (Phil. 3:9.) “For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” (10:3.) It is true that God gave the law, but it was man who had to keep it. Hence, the resultant righteousness was man’s own.

From all that has been learned, we see that Paul was advocating a new kind of righteousness or justification. He was not contending for a new source of the same kind of righteousness as that of the law. If righteousness under Christ is based upon the principle of works, that is, upon the basis of man’s character, it is of the same kind as that of the law. The issue of this epistle goes much deeper than finding a new source for the same kind of righteousness that resulted from keeping the law. Law-righteousness is for the righteous person, but the righteousness of God is for the “ungodly” who accepts Christ. “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.” (4:5.) This is the same as affirming that salvation is for the lost. Christ came to save sinners, not the righteous person. He calls “not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”



Paul's great doctrine of "the righteousness of God," which he teaches as a revelation of the gospel, is sometimes explained after this fashion: "What is the 'righteousness of God'? David tells us that 'All thy commandments are righteousness.' (Psa. 119: 172.) Hence, the commandments of God are the 'righteousness of God.'" This is a strange example of exegesis. In the first place, Paul and David did not use the word 'righteousness' in the same sense. Paul uses the word in the sense of justification. (See under 4:3.) David uses 'righteousness' as an attribute of the commands of God. In the next place, this interpretation makes Paul contradict himself. He distinctly states that 'righteousness' did not come by the law: "I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." (Gal. 2:21.) "For if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law." (Gal. 3:21.) But the commands of the law were the commands of God. Hence, according to the above interpretation of Paul's teaching concerning the "righteousness of God," "righteousness" did come by the law! Furthermore, since Paul uses the word "righteousness" in the sense of justification, Paul is arrayed against Paul again, because the apostle denies that justification came by the law. (Rom. 3:20.)

The habit of looking to some other writer to *explain Paul's explanation* is a strange procedure. It invariably results in a misrepresentation. Other writers may confirm Paul's teaching, and they may even throw some light on Paul's teaching, but there is no better explanation of justification than Paul gives in the book of *Romans*. Paul was a specialist in this line, and *Romans* was his greatest effort to set forth the great doctrine of justification by grace

through faith in a crucified Saviour. Paul's use of David is quite different from much we hear today. "Even David also pronounceth blessings upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." (Rom. 4:6.) Note the words, "apart from works." They remind one of Paul's words at the very introduction to the discussion on the "righteousness of God." Paul affirms, "apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested." Yet the commandments of the law were the commandments of God. If "righteousness" is the commandments of God, as some say, then Paul contradicts himself, and makes David guilty of the same offense.

24. *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" Justified, that is, pronounced righteous, forgiven. The justification of one who is a sinner cannot be upon the ground of merit. It is of grace. Hence, sinners are justified "freely." But the principle of grace must rest upon the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption is based, not upon the mere *authority* of Jesus, but upon him as a *sinoffering*. Hence, Paul adds:

25. *Whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood.* Jesus as a "propitiation," that is, a satisfactory sinoffering, is the ground of mercy. But Jesus is the "propitiation for our sins." (1 John 2:2.) Hence salvation is a "free gift." (Rom. 6:23.) It is not something achieved by man, but something bought by Christ. The purchase price is the blood of the Lamb of God. (1 Pet. 1:18,19; Acts 20:28.) Salvation is, therefore, not given on the bases of works or merit, but "through faith" in Christ as sinoffering.

Sin offends God, and is deserving of punishment. God is just and cannot ignore sin. Some one, therefore, must answer to him for sin. If man suffers the consequence of sin, he cannot be saved. Christ takes the sinner's place and dies in his stead. This death of Christ satisfies the demands of divine justice. Hence, Christ is a "propitiation."

The results of this "propitiation" simply cannot be received upon the principle that gives the credit for his salvation to man. And the Saviour of sinners does infinitely more than "devise some plan by which man can save himself!" Christ died, not to devise plans, but to pay the consequences of man's sins. His death is a "propitiation," not the basis of plans and schemes. Christ crucified as a "propitiation for our sins" is God's plan of salvation.

26. *That he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.*" God must not surrender the attribute of justice, even in the salvation of sinners. Christ's death as the ground of the sinner's justification vindicates God's justice in saving him who deserves to be punished. If the state justifies or acquits a criminal, the basic principles of law are violated. Yet God pronounces *not guilty* the person who is guilty. That is, God, on the ground of Christ as a "propitiation" "justifieth the ungodly." He saves the "lost." He forgives the sinner. In all this work of grace God is within the bounds of justice, because he himself set forth his Son as a "propitiation for our sins." No, justification is not based on fiction. Nor, which would be as bad, is justification grounded on the achievement of man. It is not, therefore, by law through works, but "by grace through faith" in Christ as sin offering. The conditions of salvation, signifying trust in Christ crucified for salvation, do not constitute an effort to achieve salvation. They

are an expression of man's inability to save himself, and the embodiment of his reliance upon Christ as a "propitiation" for his sins. But to bring them down to the level of legal enactments given by a new law-giver, and assign to them no logical reference to the blood of Christ, is scarcely without parallel in all the misconception of justification. This not only annuls the grace of God and the cross of Christ, but manifests an inexcusable lack of intellectual and spiritual discrimination.

27. *Where then is the glorying?* That is, where is the glorying on the sinner's part? What sense of triumph for the cause of salvation through Christ must the apostle have felt when he asked this heart-searching question? This query was directed to those who contended for justification by law through works. Paul gloried only in the cross. "But far be it for me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. 6:14.) The Jew gloried in his fleshly relationships, his fleshly circumcision, and his law-righteousness. (Phil. 3:4-6.) These things were "refuse" to Paul who had learned Christ. Nothing so quickly or certainly destroys the basis of legalistic glorying as a correct knowledge of Christ as man's sin-offering. And when the real meaning of the cross dawns upon one, he has no further interest in legal observances as the ground of salvation. But the principle or "law" by which one seeks justification determines whether glorying is ruled out or not. Hence, Paul inquires,

27. *By what manner of law?* There are only two "laws" by which man can seek salvation, the "law of works," and the "law of faith." The Jew held to the former. He was shut up to this method of attempted justification, because of the very nature

of law that demands perfect obedience. And had he succeeded in achieving salvation by law through works, he would have had ample ground for his glorying.

The word "law" is used, not in the sense of a code, but in the sense of *principle*. It is so translated by Goodspeed and others: "Then what becomes of our boasting? It is shut out. On what principle? What a man does? No, but whether a man has faith." (Goodspeed.)

The *principle* of trusting in, or relying upon, the work of another as the ground of salvation is here called the "law of faith," or the "principle of faith." To make the word "law," surrounded as it is by all of Paul's teaching concerning redemption through the blood of Christ, merely another legal system, is one of those examples of perversion caused by an erroneous conception of the cross. It is to be identified with the perverted gospel of Gal. 1:7. Justification through the blood of Christ cannot be enjoyed upon the basis of human excellence, but upon the "law" or "principle" of trusting in the blood of Christ.

31. *Do we then make the law of none effect through faith?* That is, does the introduction of a principle foreign to law make the law useless? Paul answers in the negative. The law was not given as a means of salvation. It was a temporary measure given to prepare those under it for the coming of Christ. When the principle of faith under Christ supplanted that of works under law, faith did not make the law of none effect. The law was not against "the promises of God" based on faith in Christ. Justification could not come by law. (Gal. 3:21.) "The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

**Law prepares for grace, and works show the necessity of faith. Hence, grace and faith "establish the law." They are the ends toward which the law was given.**

## **QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER THREE**

- 1. Why does Paul stress the advantages of the Jew over the Gentile?**
- 2. Consider carefully the significance of verse 9.**
- 3. Note the two expressions, "under sin," and "have sinned." vv. 9,23.**
- 4. This chapter is the heart of Romans. No one can understand salvation through Christ sufficiently to teach it who does not understand Paul's teaching in this chapter. Be sure you understand "the righteousness of God."**
- 5. Relate the principle of grace to the sacrifice of Christ. v. 24.**
- 6. Define the word "propitiation." What constituted Christ our propitiation?**
- 7. Connect "through faith" with Christ as a "propitiation."**
- 8. Does the word "propitiation" suggest the principle of faith, trust in the crucified Saviour, or the principle of works, the attempt to achieve salvation?**
- 9. *Do you trust in the blood of Christ for salvation? Or do you trust in your own holiness and service?***

10. How can God be just, if he justifies him who deserves to be punished? v. 26.

11. When you contemplate your salvation, do you give credit to yourself or to your Saviour? In eternity will the redeemed magnify the mercy of God, or will they celebrate their own achievement? Are you afraid to magnify the mercy of God?

12. Discuss the meaning of “law” in v. 27.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Justification of Abraham

1. *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?* The apostle turns to Abraham's justification to verify his conclusions that justification is enjoyed, not on the principle of works, but on that of faith. Abraham was the "forefather" of the Jews. Hence, his justification should be accepted by the Jews as standard.

Let us note first what it is that Paul is *not* attempting to prove by the case of Abraham. He is not trying to prove to the Jews that Abraham was not justified by the law of Moses. They knew that this patriarch lived more than four hundred years prior to the law. (Gal. 3:17.) He is not trying to prove that Abraham was justified on the principle of works. This the apostle categorically denies. Moreover, the Jews would have been sympathetic to such a purpose because they were thus attempting to be justified under the law. The writer of Romans is not proving that Abraham was justified by law and works, or by some new law, or new set of commands. The issue goes much deeper than any of these things. In other words, the issue is not one of different dispensations. Had this been the case the apostle could have settled the question by a simple statement of fact.

What is the real problem in the fourth chapter? Paul is dealing with principles. He had just stated that glorying is excluded by the *principle of faith*, that is, trusting in Christ as sin offering or propitiation. Paul finds in Abraham an example of this principle. Abraham is not merely an example of the principle of faith, but his justification is set forth



as a type of the justification enjoyed under Christ. That anyone should doubt this, is incredible. "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was reckoned unto him; but our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." (4:24.)

*Paul is here defending the cross.* Justification by law and works would nullify the cross. "I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness (justification) is through the law, then Christ died for nought." (Gal. 3:21.) Law and works are correlative terms just as are grace and faith. (See 3:20, etc.) Paul is here contending for the principles of grace and faith, because these principles are compatible with the cross. Back of grace and faith stands the cross. The cross determines the principle of grace, and grace calls for faith. When the "grace of God" is made "void" "Christ died for nought." It is clear that Paul is interested, first of all, in the cross. He is not interested in a mere condition of salvation that happens to suit him. The cross was not made for conditions, but conditions for the cross. No condition of justification can be understood apart from its relation to Christ crucified. To be concerned primarily in some condition, instead of the cross, is to "put the cart before the horse." Any attempt to expound Romans in the interest of any condition, except for the reason that this condition is the natural response to the cross, is doomed to failure.

That the writer of *Romans* is dealing with principles is seen when we note that he takes as an example of his principle, one who never lived under the law, and applies it to those who were, or who had been, under the law. It is significant that no Jew seems to have objected to this procedure. The Jews were evidently logical enough to see the point.

It does seem that we should be as wise as they. Now let us note what Paul taught concerning Abraham's justification.

2. *For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory.* But glorying has been ruled out. Hence Abraham was not justified by the principle of works. This is settled once for all, if Paul can be relied upon as teacher.

3. *Abraham believed God.* Believing God is opposed to the principle of works. This truth is fundamental. And Paul has never taught anything more clearly. He has used his greatest intellectual powers to prove this proposition. For a detailed study of Abraham's faith see verses 17-21.

3. *It was reckoned unto him for righteousness.* That is, Abraham's faith was reckoned for righteousness. We have just seen what is signified by faith. There are two other important words in this verse, *righteousness* and *reckoned*.

*Righteousness.* Students of this epistle generally recognize a peculiar use of this word *righteousness*, especially in chapters three and four. Paul uses it in the sense of *justification*. In this verse faith "reckoned for righteousness" is equivalent to "justified by faith" in verse 2. In verse 5 righteousness is the result of believing in God "that justifieth the ungodly." Then in verse 6 that man unto whom God "reckoneth righteousness" is the man "whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered." And the man reckoned righteous is in verse 8 the man to whom "the Lord will not reckon sin." It is clear, therefore, that Paul uses the word *righteousness* in this context in the sense of justification.

Thayer says of the Greek word *dikaiosune* translated righteousness, that it has "a peculiar meaning, opposed to the Jews" who sought justification upon

the ground of works or obedience to the law of Moses. Thayer further says that righteousness is "the state acceptable to God which becomes the sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ."

*Reckoned.* Thayer defines *logidzomai* translated *reckon* as follows: "To reckon, count," etc. Metaphorically Thayer says the word means "to pass to one's account, to impute." Hence Abraham's faith was reckoned or counted to him for righteousness or justification. In other words, Abraham was justified on the ground of his faith. His complete reliance upon the power of God to revive his and Sarah's bodies so they could have a son was the condition of his being pronounced acceptable to God. His faith brought him into right standing with God. Whatever this acceptable state meant to Abraham, Paul teaches that it is a type of the justification of the sinner. Sinners are brought into right standing with God through their faith in Christ as sin offering.

Let it be noted that by "reckoned for righteousness" Paul does not mean that God merely recognizes the justification of one already justified. "It is God that justifieth" and it is God who reckons faith for righteousness. The words of *The Expositor's Greek Testament* are appropriate here: "It is sometimes argued (on the ground that all God's actions must be 'ethical') that God can only pronounce just, or treat as just, those who are actually just; but if this were so, what gospel would there be for sinful men? This 'ethical' gospel is identical with Phariseeism in which Paul lived before he knew what Christ and faith were, and it led him to despair. It leads all men either to despair, or to a temper which is that of the Pharisee rather than the publi-

can of Luke 18. What it can never beget is the temper of the gospel." How true! God must refuse to reckon to the sinner what is actually his, namely, his transgressions. Paul affirmed of sinners that God is "not reckoning unto them their trespasses." Some seem afraid of what God does for sinners. Christianity is not legalism, and salvation is not achieved by man!

As we have seen under 3:21 "righteousness" in this context is used in the sense of justification. It does not refer, therefore, to the personal righteousness of God or of Christ. The personal righteousness of God or of Christ is not transferred to the believer so that he is made subjectively righteous, and, hence, acceptable to God. The ungodly who believes on Christ as sin offering is justified. He is without guilt. And in the sense of being in a justified state he is "righteous." "Newness of life" or subjective holiness follows justification. But holiness is not the cause of justification.

4. *Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.* Paul here appeals to a universal principle. It is true in all dispensations. It is true in temporal affairs. A agrees to pay B ten dollars for a day's work. B does the work and receives his pay, not as of grace, but as of debt. This is true regardless of who does the work or who does the paying. The fact that the reward was given because, and only because, of the work performed is the determining factor. In the story to which Paul refers (Gen. 15:6.), it was not a list of things done by Abraham, but his faith in God that brought his justification. Any one can read the story and verify this statement. Paul always goes to the same story when he is discussing Abraham's justifi-

cation. The time of Abraham's justification is most significant, as we shall see.

Let it be said in advance of any discussion of the conditions of salvation under Christ, that justification is not bestowed because of, and only because of, obedience rendered. The obedience rendered by the sinner is of value, not merely because one has submitted to the authority of a King, but because his obedience relates directly to the crucified Saviour by way of expressing trust in the power of the blood to save.

5. *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.* The sinner who does not attempt to achieve salvation by means of his good life (Where is the sinner's good life?), but relies upon Christ as his sinoffering, his faith is reckoned for justification. That is, he is justified on the condition of his faith. Note that it is the "ungodly" who believes and who receives justification. It is the sinner who is saved.

Note David's testimony. According to him, God reckons righteousness "apart from works." That is, apart from any effort to earn justification. Justification or having "righteousness" reckoned to one is equivalent to forgiveness of sins. (vv. 7,8.)

9. *Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also?* That is, was Abraham's circumcision a condition of his justification? Was Abraham justified as a circumcised man or as an uncircumcised man? This apparently unimportant point is most significant. Paul answers his own question. Abraham's faith was not reckoned to him *after*, but *before*, his circumcision. "Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." Then the apostle explains that Abraham's circumcision

served as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision."

Abraham's justification as an uncircumcised man was for the purpose "that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them." That is, that he might be the "father" of the uncircumcised Gentiles as well as the circumcised Jews.

This is a good place to say that the justification mentioned by James (ch. 2) refers to a much later date than the time of Paul's reference. Abraham was a circumcised man when he offered Isaac on the altar; and Paul makes it an important point that Abraham was justified *before* his circumcision, as we have just seen. Note these dates: "And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." (Gen. 17:24.) "Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him." (Gen. 21:5.) But Abraham was approximately one hundred and twenty years old when he offered Isaac on the altar. In other words, his offering of Isaac followed by twenty years or more his circumcision. But his justification preceded his circumcision, according to Paul and the Genesis record. Hence, his justification preceded his offering of Isaac by twenty years or more. Hence to attempt to explain Paul's explanation by James is a great and significant error. It is a plain contradiction of Paul to say that Abraham was not justified until he offered Isaac. Abraham was "justified," that is, he was brought into right standing with God in some sense, when he offered Isaac. But the time of Paul's and James' reference is twenty years apart.

13. *For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of*

*the world, but through the righteousness of faith.* This truth is fundamental. Note that *law* is opposed to the "righteousness of faith." So it is again in verse 14. In Gal. 3:12 Paul writes: "For the law is not of faith." He goes on to say that law demands *doing*, not *faith*. "He that *doeth* them shall live in them."

But what is the significance of verse 13? In the first place, since the promise to Abraham was not to be realized through law, the promise was not restricted to the Jewish nation. The Jews were twice wrong. They considered themselves alone the heirs of the Abrahamic blessings, and they expected these blessings through law. But the promise to Abraham involved the abrogation of the law-principle and the works-principle, and the introduction of grace and faith. Hence "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17.) "Ye are not under law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14). Law and grace mutually nullify each other. "For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect." (v. 14.) Law administers justice while grace offers mercy. Since Christ came to bestow mercy, law leaves no room for him. But the Saviour was promised to Abraham. Hence, the promise could not come through law. Circumcision is also ruled out.

What a lesson this should be for those who regard Christianity as another legal religion, and who have much to say about a "new law" taking the place of the "old law."

16. *For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.* This is the apostle's

conclusion, and it is the essence of the doctrinal part of this epistle. Grace and faith are inseparable. So are law and works. *But the promise to Abraham is tied to Christ, grace and faith.* There is nothing arbitrary about this arrangement. The very nature of law and works rules out the Saviour, while the nature of grace and faith is compatible with the Redeemer. No legal system can serve the cause of man's redemption. Grace and faith by nature suggest universality. There is nothing sectarian about them. They cannot be monopolized by any one nation. The cross is the basis of grace, and grace calls for faith. This is the reason the writer is so much concerned about them. He was defending the cross. (Phil. 1:16.)

16. *The faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.* Imagine the writer saying, "The circumcision of Abraham, who is the father of us all!" Common sense plus some spiritual discernment is required to deal with the problem of salvation, and the book of Romans. The apostle proceeds to describe the faith of Abraham which constituted him the father of us all.

*Abraham believed in God "who giveth life to the dead."* We too must believe in God "that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." (v. 24.) This makes Abraham's faith a typical one. Such a faith is mentioned in other places. See 2 Cor. 1:9; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 13:20. A volume could not add to the importance of this truth.

*Abraham believed in God "who calleth the things that are not as though they were."* (v. 17.) This is the God of creation, and the God who foresaw the great natural and spiritual posterity of this patriarch. He spoke of each as though they existed at the time of the promise.

*Abraham "in hope believed against hope."* Na-



ture denied, but God promised Abraham a son. Note that the promise of a son was tied to the promise that Abraham should be “the father of many nations.” It is also joined to what Paul calls “the righteousness of faith.” All this, of course, involved Abraham’s special seed “which is Christ.” (Gal. 3:16.)

God’s promise of a son to Abraham was believed while Sarah was still barren and while Abraham’s body “was as good as dead.” This should make one stand in awe of this patriarch’s faith. Faith, confidence and reliance upon God, could be no stronger or sublime.

It is easy to miss the chief points in Abraham’s faith. His faith was the result of two factors, namely, Abraham’s deep awareness of his and Sarah’s physical impotence, and the power of God to fulfill his promise to give them a son under such peculiar circumstances. If they had been blessed with normal bodies, having a son would have required neither a divine intervention, nor such faith as Abraham had. Millions of children are born apart from a special intervention of God, or special faith in the power of God.

It was not by accident that God made Abraham a promise of a son under the peculiar circumstances which have been noticed. Abraham well understood that the matter of having a son was entirely in the hands of God. God must revive their bodies. And Abraham believed that God would do this. So strong was his trust in the power and the faithfulness of God that his faith never wavered. He “waxed strong through faith” in the face of the most outwardly discouraging circumstances.

God did not present himself to Abraham as his Sovereign who had the right to give commands, but as the Almighty who had power to “give life to the

dead.” And upon the basis of this power he made his promise.

*Now, what was God seeking from Abraham under these peculiar circumstances? Was he looking for holiness? Was he determining whether Abraham would perform a list of good works? What did the circumstances require? Here are bodies as good as dead. And here is the promise of a son. God was seeking exactly what Abraham gave — faith, trust, reliance. Promises require faith. Nothing more honors the infinite God than faith or trust on the part of finite man. The physical impotence of Abraham and Sarah contributed to Abraham’s strong faith.*

No better description of faith has ever been given than that found in Rom. 4:16-21: “For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; yet looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Notwithstanding the handicaps of nature, Abraham had complete confidence in God who promised him a son. *This is faith.* It is faith that

is the appropriate response of an impotent man to the infinite power of God. Nothing pleases God more than such faith.

Now, note the case of the sinner. He too is "dead." But in *sin*. He is as helpless and hopeless as Abraham was. Such a condition is conducive to trust in the power and the mercy of God. In spite of his guilt God promises him salvation through Christ. Faith in a Saviour means one hundred per cent renunciation of self-reliance. Anyone who understands something of the enormity of sin knows that salvation is possible only through the mercy and the power of God. One must, therefore, depend solely upon the sacrifice of Christ on his behalf. He dare not plead his own righteousness. *This would insult God, nullify the cross, and be offensive to good sense.*

Being deeply convicted of his sin and guilt, the sinner is ashamed to look up to God, but smites his breast and cries, "Be thou merciful to me a sinner." He relies on Christ as *sin offering*. *Faith is the cry of the convicted soul unto God for mercy through Christ.* Yes, the convicted sinner instinctively cries for *mercy*, not a set of commands by which he might earn his salvation.

The mere knowledge of what the conditions of salvation are, is not enough. It is not the knowledge that one must repent that really matters. It is being so deeply convicted of sin that one repents "in the name of (in reliance upon) Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38.) It is not the knowledge that faith is for the remission of sins (Acts 10:43) that brings salvation, but being so aware of one's guilt and condemnation that one trusts in the blood of Christ for justification. (John 3:16; Rom. 3:25.) Likewise, merely to be able to quote Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 does not qualify

one for baptism, but being baptized "in the name of (in reliance upon) Jesus Christ" meets the Lord's demand concerning this ordinance. To "ask," "seek," and "knock" through the crucified Saviour brings salvation. Every condition must signify dependence upon the blood of Christ. The order is, conviction, and the appeal for mercy through Christ.

22. *Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.* This is Paul's conclusion, not man's. He made it freely, and triumphantly. He did not feel that man's part in the matter of salvation was being discredited. Only a legalist is afraid to magnify the power and the mercy of God toward sinners. For the meaning of the phrase "reckoned unto him for righteousness," see verse 3.

23, 24. *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.* This both happened and was written "for our sake." This shows that Abraham was a type in regard to his faith. The conditions of his faith and of his justification are identical in principle to those of the sinner who believes on Christ. In Abraham's case, fleshly bodies were dead and in need of being revived. In the sinner's case, he is "dead" through "trespasses and sins." God promised Abraham a son against all indications of nature. God promised justification to the guilty. Abraham responded naturally and rightly — he believed God! Sinners must respond to God's promise of life through the death of his Son by faith — absolute dependence upon Christ and the power of God.

That justification or "righteousness" was reckoned to Abraham on the condition of his faith is difficult for some to understand in the light of the scriptures that demand repentance and baptism on

the part of the sinner under Christ. This difficulty arises from a failure to discern principles. Abraham's response by faith fully answered the demands in his case. Had God required him to perform some act by way of expressing his faith, he would not have refused. But this hypothetical act would have changed the principle of relying upon God not a whit. While in Abraham's case moral issues were not directly involved, we know that he was far from possessing an impenitent spirit. In other words, he was humble and penitent. Such a faith as his would rule out impenitence. Consequently, if this attribute of penitence had been emphasized, the principle of his being blessed upon the condition of his faith would not have been altered.

And so it is with the sinner. The power to save is in the blood of Christ. The principle by which the benefits of the blood are to be enjoyed is that of *trust*, or *reliance*. Paul based his whole argument in the Roman letter on this truth. In 3:25 Christ as our propitiation is to be received "through faith." In chapter four this principle of faith is seen in the case of Abraham. And Paul writes that this was written "for our sake also" unto whom righteousness will be reckoned when we respond to God with a faith like Abraham's. Then in chapter five we read, "Being therefore justified by faith."

This faith must not be restricted to signify a principle of *action only*. While the faith of Abraham would no more falter at the *command* of God than it did at the *promise* of God, it was the element of *trust* that made it the acceptable form of response. *It is as much the function of faith to receive, to rely, as it is to lead to action.* Even in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews where so many acts are attributed to faith we read, "By faith even Sarah herself *received*

power to conceive.” It was a divine *promise* to which Abraham responded. His response of absolute reliance upon the power of God to revive their “dead” bodies is what the apostle calls faith. Faith in this epistle, as well as the epistle to the Galatians, is tied to the *promise* of God. “For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of *promise*.” (Gal. 3:18.) “But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the *promise by faith* in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Gal. 3:22.) “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are *children of promise*.” (Gal. 4:28.) The word *promise* here involves a divine interposition on behalf of man. God intervened in giving Abraham a son. Christ “interposed his precious blood” in our case. But promise calls for faith in the sense of trust or reliance.

Now, faith in the sense of trust in, or reliance upon God is impossible apart from repentance. This is true not simply because repentance is specifically required, but because of the very nature of things. Just as love cannot exist where there is hate, trust in Christ for salvation cannot exist in the impenitent heart. Hence, where faith is made the condition of receiving the grace of God, one knows that repentance is present.

Just so “baptism in the name of Jesus Christ” may accompany trust in the blood of Christ. It is made an exponent of faith and repentance. It is related to faith, not as something different to faith, but as the expression or the embodiment of faith. Hence, as to signification it is faith. This is why only a believer *can* be baptized. God did not *prohibit*, by special legislation, baptism of the unbeliever. The unbeliever *cannot* be baptized. Baptism pictures one’s faith in Christ as sinoffering. It would, to an unbeliever, be meaningless and a pretense.

The New Testament furnishes many examples of acts as the embodiment of faith. After the woman with “an issue of blood — came in the crowd — and touched his garment” (Mark 5:25-34), Jesus said to her, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” All she did was the expression of her faith. When the man “sick of the palsy” was brought, with much difficulty to Jesus, it is said, “And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son — thy sins are forgiven.” (Matt. 9:2.) Jesus observed their acts and called them faith. Again, “Crispus — believed in the Lord —, and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8.) Did Crispus do *less* than other Corinthians? Only his faith is mentioned, but of others it is recorded that they “believed and were baptized.” It can as well be said of those who believed and were baptized, that they “believed in the Lord,” as it was of Crispus. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul states that he baptized Crispus. (1 Cor. 1:14.) The significance of all that Crispus and the other Corinthians did was faith in the Lord. After the jailor had been baptized Luke wrote that he had “believed in God.” (Acts 16:34.) To be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38), is to be baptized in reliance upon Jesus Christ. Peter said Jesus had been made “both Lord and Christ.” The official title *Christ* or *Messiah* involves his sacrificial death. The result of Paul’s work in Iconium is stated thus: “A great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed.” (Acts 14:1,2.) These are contrasted with those “that were disobedient.” When Paul returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to confirm the disciples, he “commended them to the Lord, on whom they had *believed*.” Their faith comprehended all that they did. Paul had “preached the gospel” to them and “had made many disciples.”

According to the Great Commission, baptism was included. Still, they had only "believed in the Lord." After the death of Ananias and his wife, Luke writes, "And believers were the more added to the Lord." (Acts 5:14.) The saved were designated "believers" repeatedly in *The Acts*. Christians are those who have trusted in the crucified Lord. They are trusters, reliers, that is, "believers."

*But let it be distinctly noted that, though faith comprehends certain acts of obedience, it is not because it is a principle of action that leads one to obey, but because those acts so comprehended signify trust in Christ crucified. Faith is still the significant principle that gives obedience its peculiar characteristic of faith or trust when it relates to Christ as sin-offering. Man does not believe merely in order to obey, but he obeys as an embodiment of his faith.*

In order properly to understand and to evaluate baptism it is necessary to note that it is an exponent of faith that means *trust in the blood of Christ for salvation*. Baptism is not something added to a faith that signifies mere belief of facts. We know that even devils had this faith. Many impenitent persons have it. One must believe the fact of the death of Christ for sinners, but he must do much more than to give credence to the story of the gospels. The cross by its very signification demands faith in the sense of trust in the blood of Christ. Baptism that accompanies faith that is no more than a principle of action misses the divine purpose of this meaningful ordinance. Some one has said that faith saves "because it leads one to be baptized into Christ." Much has escaped the attention of this person. Faith does not exist only to induce action. It is the natural response to Christ crucified. For example love for Christ induces obedience; but love is of value for other reasons. God



desires that we love him for love's sake. Love of parents induces obedience on the part of children. But parents know that a loveless obedience is far from what they desire. They value the *love* as well as the *obedience* of their children. The wife's love for her husband makes her a faithful helper, but no husband desires that his wife love him in order to secure her services. There is entirely too much response out of mere sense of obligation on the part of both sinner and Christian. Thus some church members attempt to worship God when they really prefer to do other things.

Properly to *evaluate baptism* one must consider it in connection with deep penitence and strong faith. Merely to emphasize that those who refuse baptism are rejecting the "counsel of God against themselves," can easily lead to the wrong conception of it. If one with such a spirit and such a faith were to accept baptism, God's will would not be done. The difference between one who refuses baptism, and one who in penitence and faith is baptized, lies not in the mere fact that one has not been baptized while the other has obeyed the Lord in this respect. The real difference in such persons is in their faith. One can easily believe all the facts of the gospel and still refuse baptism. But one whose faith means trust in Christ will never refuse it.

James has been misunderstood in what he said about faith and works. (Ch. 2.) James is not trying to add works to a *dead* faith in order to revive it. He speaks of those who had either *refused* to obey, or who had opportunity to obey, but *neglected* to do so. He is not contemplating the faith of one with every intention of obeying, and preparing to do so. For example, James is not finding fault with the faith of Abraham *immediately* before God commanded him

to offer Isaac. God found him with strong faith, not with a weak or rebellious faith. Abraham's faith was not revived by the command to offer Isaac. But having a strong faith, he obeyed when the command was given.

Baptism is not commanded of one whose faith is weak or rebellious. No impenitent person is required to be baptized. If he should be outwardly immersed, it would be only a pretense and worthless. Let us look back at the faith and baptism of one who has become a Christian. When this person's faith had a real existence, it was not without love and penitence. Genuine faith is never associated with rebellion. It is vain to talk about real faith in Christ as Saviour apart from penitence. Immediately before his baptism this person whom we are considering had a strong faith. He was penitent. His every intention was to proceed at once to be baptized. He loved the Lord. Now, is this the faith that James is considering in chapter two? Was this person's faith "dead" when he walked down into the water just a few seconds prior to his baptism? Is baptism possessed of magic power that brings to life a dead faith?

There is a great difference between faith immediately *before* it obeys and faith that *refuses* to obey. After all, Abraham did not take the life of his son. The act of sacrificing Isaac was never completed. Yet God knew that Abraham's faith was living and strong. Abraham did not know that God would stay his hand. He had every intention of taking the life of Isaac. His faith would have been no different had God not stayed his hand, and Abraham had stained the crude altar with the life blood of his son. But how different it would have been had Abraham stayed his own hand and refused to offer Isaac! Had this happened the fundamental failure would not

have consisted in the mere fact that an act had not been added to such a faith, but that Abraham's faith failed because of its weakness.

The faith of devils would not become the faith of saints by the addition of some act of obedience. The devils simply believed a fact, "God is one." There was no love associated with their faith. Neither was there penitence. Their faith left them rebellious devils. James never dreamed of comparing the faith of devils to the faith of a "penitent believer."

Those "brethren" to whom James wrote, let it be repeated, had either *refused* to obey, or to perform good deeds when opportunity presented itself. They were not postponing action, as though they lacked opportunity. They had no intention of performing good works. Their faith was *permanently* "apart from works." A tree is not "barren" or "dead" simply because it has no fruit on its branches in mid-winter. Even a blooming tree is still without fruit, but it has no semblance of being either "barren" or "dead." A tree is "barren" when it is *permanently* without fruit. It is "dead" when there is *permanently* no sign of life.

It is possible for one, under certain circumstances, to be more or less *permanently* "without works" and still possess strong faith. A sick child of God may be physically incapacitated for months, and even years. He may be unable even to feed himself. He may be in an iron lung. Yet his faith may shame some of us who are well. He may find great comfort in his reliance upon God and Christ. Will God reject his faith simply because there are no overt acts of obedience? And is not faith performing a most essential and acceptable function when it rests on the promises of God? What becomes of the theory that faith without acts is "nothing"? "But the principle without the acts is nothing; and it is only by the acts

which it induces to perform that it becomes the instrument of any blessing to man." This teaching concerning faith rules out one of the most important functions of faith. Confidence in the promises of God is just as important as the performance of acts.

Let no one think that I am saying that faith is of any account if it *refuses* to act when God gives a command, or that faith will bring a blessing when it *neglects* to act in the presence of inviting opportunities. But that faith is always nothing but a principle of action, and that it is always to be considered "dead" until an act is performed that will give it life, I do deny. Every Christian knows that faith in the promises of God brings comfort in times of trouble. And to bring consolation is as much a function of faith as to lead to action.

It is easy to miss the meaning of James when he writes: "By works was faith made perfect." This was said concerning the faith of Abraham when he offered Isaac. Does James mean that Abraham's faith was "dead" and "barren" up to the time that Isaac was offered? Can one imagine a "dead" faith leading one to prepare an altar on which a son is to be offered? Is it not more reasonable to believe that Abraham's faith was living and strong before he received the command to offer his son? How then, was his faith "made perfect" by the offering of Isaac?

Note these translations: "Faith was completed by deeds." (Moffatt.) "Faith found its highest expression in good deeds." (Goodspeed.) Other translations are to the same effect. The word "perfect" means *completed*. It does not suggest that a *faulty* faith was corrected by deeds. Faith is "perfected" or "completed" by deeds in the same sense that a mother's sacrifice for her child "perfects" or "com-

pletes" her love. In her sacrifice for the child her love "finds its highest expression." A rose bud is "perfected" or "completed" in the bloom. An act "perfects" or "completes" the will: "But now *complete* the doing also; that as there was the readiness to will, so there may be the *completion* also out of your ability." (2 Cor. 8:11.) "Complete" and "completion" are forms of the same Greek word used by James when he asserts that works *perfect* faith. If the Corinthians had not "completed" their will to give by the act of giving, the trouble would have been in their faith. Note the question of James: "Can *that faith* save him?" James advocated a *different* faith, not merely the addition of works to a dead faith?

The principle of works is so important in this epistle, and so difficult for many to understand, that a further study seems justifiable. For example, note this statement: "If all works are eliminated, faith itself is eliminated, for faith is a work." Then the words of Jesus in John 6:29 are offered as proof. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Now, does Jesus really teach that faith is a work? If so, then salvation by works is a clearly taught doctrine, and one is faced with the hopeless task of harmonizing Jesus and Paul. If Paul teaches anything in this epistle, he teaches salvation by faith as opposed to salvation by works.

It is unfair to take a passage of scripture out of its setting and attempt an explanation. Why did Jesus say, "This is the work of God, that ye believe"? The whole story is found in John six. Jesus had just fed the multitudes, and he charged that they were following him to be fed again. Then he warned: "Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth unto eternal life." He here speaks

of spiritual blessings as “food.” And because “food” is obtained by means of “work,” Jesus represents spiritual “food” as the reward of *working*. And since faith is the fundamental principle by which spiritual blessings are enjoyed, he speaks of faith as work. But in so doing, he still has in mind the figure of *working for food*. That is, if *spiritual blessings* are represented as “food,” then *faith* in himself would correspond to *work*, the means by which *food* is obtained. There is the same reason to call spiritual blessings *food* as there is to call faith *work*.

The above is no isolated case of this principle. In John, chapter four, we find Jesus at Jacob’s well. A Samaritan woman came to draw *water*. Jesus said, “Give me to drink.” Later in the conversation Jesus replied: “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Because literal water was under consideration, Jesus represented spiritual blessings as “water,” just as later in this gospel he speaks of the same blessings as “bread.”

Now, had the Samaritan woman inquired, “What must I do, that I may drink the drink of God?”, Jesus could have replied: “This is the *drink* of God, that ye *believe* on me.” The Jews asked Jesus, “What must we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered, “This is the work of God, that ye believe.”

In John, chapter six, Jesus and the Jews were speaking of the “bread” with which God fed the Israelites. As was the custom of Jesus, he again uses something physical to represent something spiritual. And since “bread” was the subject, he speaks of spiritual blessings as “bread.” And since he is the source of spiritual blessings, he said, “I am the bread

of life.” Now, *bread* is to be appropriated by *eating*. Hence Jesus speaks of “eating” him. “He that eateth me.” (v. 57.) “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.” But in verse 35 he identifies the eating and drinking as believing on him.

Now, had the Jews asked, “What must we do that we may eat the bread of God, and drink the drink of God?”, Jesus could have replied: “This is the eating of God, that ye believe on me,” and “This is the drinking of God, that ye believe on me.” He did say when the subject was *working* for *food*, “This is the work of God, that ye believe.” But Jesus represented faith as *work* for the same reason that he represented it as *eating* and *drinking* in John six.

To be consistent, those who contend that Jesus taught that faith is a *work*, should also teach that Jesus is *food*. That for which the Jews were to “work” was *Jesus*, “the *bread* of life.”

Upon the same principle, Jesus represented himself as the “way” or *road*. (John 14:6.) He spoke to the disciples of going away to some “place.” Thomas insisted that he did not know the *way*. Jesus replied, “I am the *way*.” Why did he thus represent himself as the “way”? For the same reason that he represented himself on another occasion as “bread.” Had Jesus continued the figure with Thomas, he could have appropriately represented walking the “way” or *road*, as *believing* on him. One in that day responded to a road by *walking* in it. One responds to Jesus by *believing* on him. (John 3:16.)

Why are some teachers so eager to prove salvation by works? One *must* believe to be saved, regardless of how faith may be regarded. Are not the obligations of faith just as binding as the obligations of works? It is erroneously supposed that unless salva-

tion is by works, some important condition will be ruled out. This is not true. But it is true that the principle of works is inconsistent with the principles of grace and faith. (Rom. 4,16; 11:6.) This is the significance of this matter.

The reward that follows the principle of works, is an *earned* reward, and is not of grace. Once more: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt." There is no exception to this rule. When one has become a child of God upon the principle of faith in Christ as sin offering, he continues to obey, not to become a child, but to fulfill the obligations of sonship. Sometimes we obey "as children." (I Pet. 1:14.)

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. Why is the justification of Abraham important to us?

2. Was Paul proving that Abraham was not justified by the works of the law of Moses? Did Paul teach that Abraham was or was not justified by works?

3. Was it works which Abraham actually performed by which he was not justified? "If Abraham was justified on the score of what he did." (Moffatt.)

4. Why was Paul concerned about the principle upon which Abraham was justified? Does the wrong principle of justification make grace void? 11:6.

5. Paul goes to Gen. 15, never to Gen. 22 in discussing Abraham's justification. Rom. 4 and Gal. 3.

6. Is anything not actually done by one ever "imputed" to him? Lev. 7:18; 17:4.

7. Are the actual sins of one always "imputed" to him? 2 Cor. 5:19.



8. Note the dates in Abraham's life and relate them to his justification. Gen. 17:24; Gen. 21:5.

9. Consult various translations on "walk in the steps" in v.12.

10. What does v. 16 imply about grace and faith?

11. Study carefully the description of Abraham's faith, noting particularly the condition of his and Sarah's bodies when he believed God. vv. 17-21.

12. Did Paul commend Abraham for obeying a list of commands, or for his faith?

13. Was Abraham's faith a type of the faith that justifies today? v.24.

14. In what respects is the faith of sinners similar to the faith of Abraham? v. 24.

15. Is this statement right or wrong? Now to him that worketh, the reward *is reckoned as of grace, not as of debt*. See v. 4 and 11:6. Discuss this statement: "No amount of works that a person may do will make his forgiveness any less a matter of grace."

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Blessedness of the Justified

1 *Being therefore justified by faith.* Paul here assumes that the doctrine of justification by faith in the crucified Christ has been proved. His logical mind was at rest. But some persons in this day raise these questions: "What does the apostle mean by 'justified by faith'?" "Does he mean that *faith* is the condition of justification, or that it is merely *the cause of certain acts by which one is justified?*" These are most important questions. An eminent author writes as follows:

"No relation in which we stand to the material world — no political relation, or relation to society — can be changed by believing, apart from the acts to which that belief induces us. Faith never made an American citizen, though it may have been the cause of many thousands migrating to this continent and ultimately becoming citizens of these United States. Faith never made a man a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a master, a servant, though it may have been essentially necessary to all those relations, as a cause or principle preparatory or tending thereto. *Thus, when in scripture men are said to be justified by faith, or to receive any blessing through faith, it is because faith is the principle of action, and, as such, the cause of those acts by which such blessings are enjoyed. But the principle without the acts is nothing; and it is only by the acts which it induces to perform that it becomes the instrument of any blessing to man.*"

There is nothing ambiguous about the above teaching. Faith in itself is "nothing!" Its value in *every* instance, in both the spiritual and material

realm, depends *entirely* on acts it induces one to perform! Hence trust in the blood of Christ, reliance upon him who “bare our sins in his body on the tree,” is of worth because, and only because, it leads the sinner to perform some act or acts which become the ground of justification! *This teaching has the right to go down in history as the most effective way of nullifying the grace of God and destroying the power of the blood of Christ to save sinners.* The author quoted makes this a universal rule. Dispensations have nothing to do with it. It is as true under Christ as it was under Moses. In fact, the cross itself has no power over this rule. After all, the ultimate aim of God, and of his Son bearing our sins on the cross, is the obedience of man! Christ was lifted up, not as the sin offering upon whom the guilty soul could rest, but to induce obedience to certain acts that bring justification! Those precious acts must be given the credit for man’s redemption. Had it been the author’s intention to make void the cross, he could not have done better. The good sense of unbiased students of the word of God will delight in refusing and refuting this theory. One could not understandingly love the Christ who redeemed him with his “precious blood” and do otherwise. The author quoted above is not being charged with the consequences of his own teaching. I am dealing with the logical results of his teaching, not with the personal feeling of one toward the crucified Saviour.

Now, if the author is correct in affirming that faith is of value only because of the acts it induces one to perform, it was so in the case of Abraham. Is it possible for any discerning reader to study Paul’s discussion of Abraham’s justification in Romans the fourth chapter, and Galatians the third chapter, and reach such a conclusion? What were those acts which

his faith induced him to perform "that became the instrument of any blessing" to him? The above author does not fail to mention "the act" (singular) which the faith of the sinner induces him to perform that becomes the "instrument of blessing." Paul declares that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Why did he not say, "Abraham believed God, and this faith induced him to perform certain acts which became the instrument of the blessing of justification."? This is exactly what the above author teaches with all his energy. God is responsible for what Paul wrote concerning Abraham. But he wrote nothing like the above.

Where is the relation in the peculiar circumstances surrounding Abraham's faith and the acts which he is supposed to have performed? It was not necessary for him to believe in "God who raiseth the dead" in order to the performance of certain acts that bring the blessing of justification. Nor is it essential that sinners believe in God "who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" in order that they might be induced to obey God. Where is the logical relation of a sin offering to the faith whose sole purpose is the inducement to obedience? Must not the sinner respond to the blood of Christ, or to Christ crucified, as well as to commands? Was obedience the end of the cross? Or did Christ die to redeem sinners?

A proper understanding of the cross is the best safeguard against all forms of error connected with justification. Faith as the condition of justification (Rom. 5:1), is not an arbitrary one. Since the power to save is in the blood of Christ, or in Christ who shed his blood, then faith, in the sense of trust, is naturally required. Faith as a principle of action only, is not required by the cross. And the purpose of faith that

**means trust in Christ as sinoffering is not to induce obedience. It is man's answer to Christ as sinoffering and Saviour. This is merely a matter of seeing the natural relation of things. If faith is for the purpose, not of accepting the sacrifice of Christ, but of inducing obedience, then one has the logical right to place his trust in obedience.**

**There is good reason to believe that thousands are confiding in their obedience rather than in the blood of Christ! There is little wonder that they do! The special point in Paul's reference to Abraham was to show that he had faith in the power of God to fulfill his promise of a son, rather than to prove that the patriarch had enough faith to obey God. Of this truth there is no reasonable doubt. See the fourth chapter.**

**A fundamental error of the writer under consideration is the assumption that relationships of "the material world" are established in exactly the same manner, as to principle, as spiritual relationships. He seems to have missed the point in 2:28,29. Spiritual relationships are established by spiritual means, and justification is preeminently a spiritual relationship. This is the error which Paul is fighting in this epistle. The Jews were children of Abraham by fleshly birth, but they must become sons of God, or spiritual children of Abraham by means of a spiritual birth. This is the lesson that Jesus taught Nicodemus. This noted Pharisee was relying upon his fleshly birth, his fleshly circumcision, and his law-righteousness. So did Paul at one time. (Phil. 3:4-6.) Nicodemus had faith in God, and such a faith too that led to obedience. But he did not believe in God "that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." The purpose of the Pharisee's faith was to prompt obedience to law. One element in Abrahamic faith is reliance upon the**

power of God. Hence the sinner is required to have faith in God who had power to bring Christ from the dead, as we learn elsewhere in these studies. *There is no relevancy in faith as merely a principle of action and Christ as a sinoffering.* Weymouth translates John 3:16 thus: "For so greatly did God love the world that he gave his only Son, that every one who trusts in him" etc.

But the author in the quotation above teaches that faith is "nothing" unless it is a principle of action. Faith exists solely for action! But faith also has the function of responding to the cross; and this response is trust, not mere obedience to commands. The obedience required of the sinner is a special obedience that signifies trust in Christ crucified. It is all "in the name of Jesus Christ," that is, in reliance upon Christ.

In order to have baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" as an accompaniment of faith, it is not necessary to surrender Christ as sinoffering, or to reduce faith to nothing more than a principle that leads to obedience.

Carefully note this from our famous author: "The apostle Peter, when first publishing the gospel to the Jews, taught them that they were not forgiven their sins by faith; but by an act of faith, by a believing immersion into the Lord Jesus." If this is true, then Peter taught something different to Gentiles. To Corenlius Peter said that "every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:43.) Paul also wrote that one is "justified by faith." (Rom. 5:1.) What is the significance of a "believing immersion," if it is not faith? And if an act "of faith" is designed to embody faith, as baptism is, why does it not signify faith? Peter not only mentioned baptism in preaching to the Jews on Pentecost,

he told them to repent also. Why did not our author see repentance? If it had been his intention to teach justification by baptism alone, he could not have done better!

How is it possible logically to separate faith and "an act of faith" as to their design? If sins are forgiven "by an act of faith," and "not by faith," then salvation is not by faith! If salvation is not by faith, then it is not by grace. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace." (Rom. 4:16.) Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" signifies trust in Christ. Justification is by faith, not because it induces the performance of certain acts, but because it means trust in, or reliance upon, Christ as sinoffering. Faith in the sense of trust is as logically the response to the blood of Christ as eating is the logical response to food. There would be less confusion about faith, if it were understood that the conditions of salvation were not arbitrarily chosen. The cross naturally demands faith or trust.

*"Faith never made an American citizen."* Becoming a citizen of the United States is not analogous to becoming a citizen of a spiritual kingdom. A sacrificial offering is *not* necessary in becoming an American citizen. No mediator is required. But a sinoffering *is* required in order to become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. And the faith that is the response to a sinoffering is wholly unlike the faith of one concerning the political benefits of citizenship in the United States. Becoming a citizen of this country is purely a legal procedure. Such is not the case in becoming a citizen of a spiritual kingdom.

If one should object that I am missing the author's point, that it is not faith *alone* that accomplishes things, and thus brings a blessing, I reply that the author gives all the credit to "acts" *as dis-*

*tinguished from the faith that induces them. He makes faith no more than a means to an end, and that end the inducement of certain acts!*

*“Faith never made a man a father.”* Here the writer overlooks the work of a mediator again. Faith that justifies is trust in the work of a *mediator*, reliance upon a *sinoffering*. No such arrangement is possible in becoming a father.

*“Faith never made a man a son.”* Neither does “an act of faith” make one a son! Becoming a son after the flesh is wholly unconditional. He is entirely unconscious of the whole process! Is the writer teaching unconditional salvation? Compare these two statements: “Faith never made a man a son.” “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:27.) This faith may be embodied by some act, but it is still true that we are sons by faith in Christ.

1. *Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* The apostle refuses to permit his readers to forget Christ. “Christ is our peace.” Peace is here considered the result of justification. The principles of grace and faith can bring peace, while those of law and works brought unrest. (8:15, 16.)

2. *Access by faith into this grace.* The state of grace is entered by the principle of faith. “By grace through faith” is the divine formula.

*Wherein we stand.* Those justified by faith stand in the realm of grace. God’s mercy through Christ is not confined to sinners.

*We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* What a triplet: hope, rejoicing, glory! The ground of hope is Christ. (1 Tim. 1:1.) The result of hope is rejoicing. (12:12.) The end of hope is the “glory of God.” Contrast this blessed state with the condition of one under a law-religion. (7:24.)



3. *We also rejoice in our tribulation.* Note this also: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward."

5. *The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.* By means of the indwelling Spirit we both possess and experience a fuller appreciation of divine love. Even a partial insight into the love of God is most sublime. God's love is no mere love. It is infinite like himself.

6. *While we were yet weak — Christ died for the ungodly.* Note the words *weak* and *ungodly*. The reason for God's love of man is in God, not in man. Christ loved, and died for the ungodly; and God justifies the "ungodly" on the condition of his faith in Christ crucified. (4:5.) Law cannot successfully deal with the problem of sinners. Only grace can save the weak and the ungodly. Does the fact that Jesus died for sinners make a difference in the manner of justifying them? Law tried works and failed.

9. *Much more.* Four times in this chapter are these words found. (vv. 9,10,15,17.) If God loved *sinners*, and if Christ's *death* is the ground of their *justification*, "much more," now that enemies are *reconciled*, shall they be ultimately saved by his *life*. The "Living One" is able to save to the "uttermost," completely. (Heb. 7:25.)

11. *We rejoice in God.* All the glory belongs to God. Boasting is ruled out on the principles of grace and faith. Christ stands between the sinner and God's wrath. These sentiments prove as much as Paul's most profound arguments that justification is "by grace — through faith." No legalist ever felt, rejoiced, and wrote like Paul. (Contrast 1 Cor. 15:10 and Luke 18:11,12.) No legalist can properly interpret Paul.

12. *Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin.* Here is the story of sin and death! One man, Adam, committed one sin, and all die. All die because of their physical relation to Adam. Note that it was the sin of Adam, and not the sin of Eve, that brought death into the world. This is true, though Eve sinned first, because Adam is the head of the race. Eve came from Adam. Note carefully that men die, not because of their individual sin, but because of Adam's sin.

18. *Through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.* Here is the story of righteousness and life. "One man, Jesus Christ," through "one act of righteousness" brings life to all who are related to him spiritually. Note that it was the righteousness of Christ, and not man's own righteousness, that brings life. What a contrast with Adam and his sin!

Though briefly stated, we have given the gist of this confessedly difficult passage. Sometimes it is not the scripture, but man's theories concerning the scripture, that is difficult. How all sinned in Adam need not be fully understood in order to learn the chief lesson of this section. That it was Adam's sin, and not ours that brings death, is not difficult to receive by faith. That it is Christ's righteousness, and not ours that brings life, is easy to receive by faith. If man lives by his own good works, then he dies because of his own sin. Death by Adam's sin and life by Christ's righteousness stand or fall together. This seems to be the reason for the introduction of Adam's sin. Paul has not left his main theme of justification through Christ.

Note that it was not the violation of Moses' law

that brought sin into the world. Sin and death preceded the law. "Death reigned from Adam until Moses."

Note also that, if by the sin of Adam death came, "much more" can we expect life to come through Christ. (v.17.)

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER FIVE

1. Name two functions of faith. Does the cross affect the meaning of faith?
2. Is naturalization analogous to justification? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Does the fact that in justification there is a mediator, and in naturalization there is no mediator, make any difference in the principle by which each is realized.
4. Is the ground of God's love for sinners in them or in God? v. 8.
5. What is the significance of the "much more" in verse 9?
6. Does one die because of his own sins?
7. Is one justified because of his holiness?
8. Note: One man, one sin, and the death of all. One man, one act of righteousness, and life for all who are spiritually related to him.
9. What bearing does chapter 5:12-21 have upon the subject of justification?
10. Relate salvation by grace, and righteousness. See question No. 7, chapter six.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The Christian's Relation to Sin

1. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?* In 5:20 the writer has just said, "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." If God bestows grace in proportion to sin, is the child of God justified in persisting in sin? The answer is most definite: "God forbid." Let it not be. Note that the question does not concern justification, but sanctification. When or how justification is bestowed is not under consideration.

This question was certainly asked by one who knew that he was not under law, but under grace. He also understood the difference between the operation of law, and the operation of grace. Under law the more one sins the greater the punishment. By indirect means such as this one can learn the difference between law and grace as certainly as he can by direct statement, such as, "Ye are not under law, but under grace. (6:14)

Let it also be noted that the possibility of sinning is assumed. It was *living* in sin that is under study.

2. *We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?* The question of verse one is not answered by a direct statement prohibiting sin, but by a reference to a fundamental spiritual relationship to sin and to Christ. The essence of Paul's teaching is this: The Roman Christians were so related to Christ in his death and resurrection, that they died to sin. Being *dead* to sin, they could not *live* in it. They had become so "united with him in the likeness of his death — and of his resurrection" that their continuance in a life of sin would be most inconsistent, a reflection upon Christ with whom they were united,

and finally, an impossibility while they remained so united to Christ.

The tense of the verb "died" denotes a completed act in the past. Reference is made to the time of conversion. Justification prepares for sanctification. Those who had been saved by grace had been "created in Christ Jesus for good works." (Eph. 2:10.) "Put on the new self which has been created in likeness to God." (Eph. 4:24—Goodspeed.) Conversion not only *obligates* one to live righteously, but it *prepares* one to do so. Law could only obligate one to live righteously. Here is another fundamental difference between grace and a law-religion. One studies this epistle to little profit, if he restricts the weaknesses of a law-religion to the law of Moses. Any legal system would be as weak as the law of Moses. Christianity reduced to a legal system would be no exception.

What is it to die to sin? To die to *law* is to be freed from the dominion of law. Jewish Christians had been made "dead to the law." Consequently they had been "discharged from the law, having died to that wherein they were held." But they not only "died to that wherein they were held," they had been "joined to another" that they "might bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:4-6.) Hence to die to *sin* is to be "discharged" from the dominion of sin. This power of sin over the unconverted man is discussed in 7:14-24. But Paul does not contemplate a death to sin only. Those who died to sin are "alive unto God." Hence Paul's reply, "How shall we any longer live therein?"

Note that it is "we" who die to sin, not God. God justifies, but *man* dies to sin. Death to sin is, therefore, that subjective spiritual change that causes man to turn from a life of sin to a life of righteousness.

It is important that we observe that this death to sin takes place in faith and repentance. Repentance is the determination executed to turn from sin. "We die to sin when we believe in Christ and repent of our sins." (J. W. Shepherd.) "To die to sin is to turn from sin to the service of God." (David Lipscomb.) Thus Lard, Johnson, McGarvey-Pendleton, etc.

What is the relation of baptism to this death to sin? There is no magic in baptism. It is not its design to supplant faith or repentance. But it can and does picture or embody them. Hence the death to sin that takes place in faith and repentance is powerfully declared in baptism. This is no contradiction of Paul who wrote: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death." (6:4.) The apostle speaks as though death to sin takes place in, and is caused by baptism. Some one may say, "This is exactly what Paul *said*." Granted. But what did he *mean*? Jesus said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," referring to the elements of the Supper. Jesus did not say, "This (bread) *represents* my body." But those not Catholics believe that Jesus means "This (bread) *represents* my body." Paul also declares "The rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10:4.) Scripture abounds in this figure of speech. "The apostle, in asserting that baptism is a death to sin, does not speak literally, but uses a bold and appropriate figure, suggested by the inherent symbolism of the ordinance." (McGarvey - Pendelton.)

Baptism is a most impressive figure of a *death* and a *resurrection*. The immersion pictures a death and a burial; and the emersion, a resurrection and life to righteousness. "Only the dead are buried. — Only the resurrected rise from the grave. Therefore, one who has not fully resolved to live as having died unto sin has no right to be lifted from the waters of

baptism. If he is still dead in trespasses and sins, he should remain buried." (McGarvey - Pendleton on Rom. 6:4) Or better still, he should never have been buried!

The apostle teaches that there is finality to the sinner's death to sin. Just as Christ, "being raised from the dead dieth no more;" and just as "death no more hath dominion over him," so the Christian should consider himself "dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." When Christ died, "He died unto sin once;" and when he was raised, "He liveth unto God." And this life unto God is forever.

Before leaving this section, let it be emphasized again that Paul here speaks of the Christian's relation to sin and to Christ, not of *when* and *how* the sinner was justified, or pardoned. "Our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin." "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Verse 14 is significant: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." When we come to chapter seven we shall see the effect of law in its relation to sin.

Paul in verse 15 presents the question concerning the relation of the Christian to sin in a different form: "Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?" This question not only assumes that Christians are not under law, but under grace, it implies also that a fundamental difference exists between law and grace. Law is not another name for grace. Law is an administration of justice, dispensing

blessings and curses on the ground of man's desert, or lack of desert, respectively. Grace is an administration of mercy, bestowing blessings on the ground of the work of Christ on the sinner's behalf.

Another important point needs emphasis: Paul implies in his question of verse 15, that one under grace is still under obligation to God. The idea that grace does not, like law, discourage sin is wholly without foundation. Never was the obligation under law to refrain from sin any greater than the same obligation under Christ. If there is any difference in one's obligation to be dead to sin, the obligation has a greater emphasis under Christ. Law placed man under obligation to refrain from sin, while grace recognizes the same obligation and, in addition, crucifies "the old man" and prepares one for a life of righteousness. One need not fear the consequences of grace. Paul gave the credit to grace for whatever he was, and he is a rather good example of what grace can do!

16. *His servants ye are whom ye obey.* Here the apostle states an obviously universal truth. Regardless of the master or the servant, this is true. If a child of God serves Satan, he becomes a servant of Satan, and he ceases to be God's servant. The grace of God does not enable one to live in sin with impunity. Christ saves one from *sinning*, or he does not save. An ungodly child of God is a misnomer. And this rule works two ways: "His servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."

17. *Ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching.* Their obedience was not a mere external form, but an inward and spiritual submission to God. Ritualism cannot affect life. For "form (pattern-margin) of teaching" Goodspeed has "stand-



ard of teaching,” and Moffatt, “rule of faith.” When one dies to sin and is made alive both transactions are in relation to the death of Christ to put away sin, and his resurrection to a permanent life unto God. Hence a vital spiritual union with Christ in his death and resurrection frees one from the “bondage of sin” as the slave is freed from a tyrannical master. The freedom contemplated in verses seventeen and eighteen is freedom from the service of sin. Paul is still discussing sanctification, not justification.

23. *For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* The sinner can earn death, but he cannot earn life. Life is a gift. It was purchased by Christ, but it is bestowed as a gift. This is the only way sinners can be saved. Life as a gift honors God and his Son. So do grace and faith.

## OBSERVATION ON BAPTISM

Though the argument of this chapter does not require a full discussion of baptism, some additional observations might be helpful. I know of nothing on which more prejudice and less spiritual discernment has been displayed. To keep in mind the following obvious truths concerning baptism would help immeasurably:

1. No condition, including baptism, has been arbitrarily chosen.
2. Baptism has no meaning apart from faith and repentance which it embodies.
3. Baptism, therefore, must not be assigned a design separate from these.
4. Baptism must be given a meaning consistent with the principle of grace.
5. Baptism must be given a meaning consistent with faith.

6. Baptism must relate to Christ as *sinoffering*. Let us now study briefly these points in order.

1. *No condition, including baptism, has been arbitrarily chosen.* “On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached faith, repentance, and baptism to the inquiring multitude. Why God placed these commands as steps into his kingdom, instead of some other commands, we do not know, but we will accept the will of God.” I give this quotation to show that many regard all conditions of salvation as arbitrary enactments. I have never read anything from a recognized “teacher of Israel,” so to speak, that is more unphilosophical. Such a statement from such a person is bound to do much harm.

If conditions have been arbitrarily chosen, then repentance has been so chosen. But repentance is the change of mind to forsake sin, and the forsaking it. Now Christ proposes to save man from *sin*. Yet the author quoted above does not know why repentance is a condition of salvation! Does he think God would pardon the impenitent? Is there no proper subjective preparation for salvation? Has God ever pardoned the impenitent? Can he contemplate an impenitent child of God? But our author has spoken and his word will continue to do harm for years to come!

Faith, in the sense of trust, has been shown to be the natural response to Christ as *sinoffering*. Can one imagine the blood of Christ having redemptive power, and trust or reliance not following as night follows day? Can it be possible that any condition, or all conditions of salvation, can disregard the cross? If one can understand why *food* must be *eaten*, and not merely looked at; or why *water* must be *drunk* and not only seen, he should understand why faith or trust is demanded by the cross. The serious part of this theory is that multitudes “render obedience” with

little or no thought of Christ as sin offering. This is a tragedy.

If conditions have been arbitrarily chosen, then their designs have likewise been so chosen. Then repentance, for example, was not chosen as a condition because of anything it might accomplish. Nor was faith, or baptism! When the writer of Hebrews wrote: "Without faith it is impossible to please God," he assumed that the reason for the necessity of faith was self-evident. If it is absolutely necessary to have faith in order to please God, then faith was not arbitrarily required.

The manner in which faith comes shows conclusively that it is a *natural* response, and is not, therefore, an arbitrary requirement. "Faith comes by hearing." It does not come as the result of a direct command. No evidence, no faith. And where evidence is produced faith is the natural result. If there is no reason for faith, then there is no reason to preach Christ or God! If there is no reason for repentance, there is no reason to convict men of sin!

A most fundamental reason for certain conditions of salvation was overlooked by the brother whose teaching is under study, namely, that certain conditions nullify grace and, therefore, the cross, while other conditions are consistent with both grace and the cross. "Now to him that *worketh*, the reward is not reckoned as of grace." Again, "If it (justification) is by grace, it is no more of works." And again, why does Paul always associate *grace* and *faith*, *law* and *works*, if there is no *natural affinity* between *grace* and *faith*, *law* and *works*? And why does he contrast grace and works, law and faith, if there is not a natural inconsistency between them? "The law is not of faith."

Now, in determining whether baptism has been

arbitrarily selected for any reason, let no one do the unreasonable thing of separating baptism from faith and repentance as their embodiment. Baptism *per se* has no meaning, no design, and hence is never contemplated in the Scriptures. But baptism as the exponent of both faith and repentance, does have meaning, and therefore, design. And since its design is based on its relation to faith and repentance, baptism has not been arbitrarily demanded. Baptism is a burial and a resurrection. Hence it pictures faith in a buried and risen Saviour.

2. *Baptism has no meaning and no design apart from faith and repentance which it embodies.* This point has already received notice above. A close study of the conversion in *The Acts* shows that baptism was administered as a consequence of faith. "When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized." (Acts 8:12.) They were baptized when they believed! Why were they not baptized before faith? "The Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.) The Corinthians believed in consequence of hearing, and were baptized in consequence of believing. This is significant. In Col. 2:12 Paul affirms that one is buried and raised with Christ "through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." This is definite proof that Paul regarded baptism as having the meaning of faith.

3. *Baptism derives its design from its relation to faith and repentance. Hence it should not be assigned a design distinct from them.* In Acts 2:38 "remission of sin" is represented as the end of both repentance and baptism. In Mark 16:16 "shall be saved" follows both faith and baptism. If baptism is "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit,” (Matt. 28:19), so is repentance “in his (Christ’s) name.” (Luke 24:47.) If we read that one is “baptized *eis* Christ” (Gal. 3:27), so we read that one “believeth *eis* him” (John 3:16.) The *embodiment* of faith should not be expected to sustain a relation to Christ different from *faith*. It is enough that the embodiment be as that which it embodies. The habit of naming faith, repentance, and baptism together, and associating “remission of sins” with the last named condition, leads to a misunderstanding. It is implied that in some special way baptism is for “remission of sins.” Whatever be the design of baptism, its end is not guaranteed by anything the administrator might believe or say about it in administering baptism.

4. *Baptism must be given a meaning consistent with the principles of grace.* We have already pointed out that the principle of “works” is inconsistent with grace. See Rom. 4:4 and Rom. 11:6. If baptism be considered a “work” in a legal sense, it is inconsistent with grace. Paul denies that baptism has this signification. (Tit. 3:5.)

5. *Baptism must be given a meaning consistent with faith.* Grace and faith are correlative terms. “By grace through faith” is the divine order. Baptism as the embodiment of faith is consistent with the faith principle. But if baptism is separated from faith, and denied the meaning of faith, it is inconsistent with faith.

6. *Baptism must relate to Christ as sinoffering.* Paul knew no Christ, but the crucified Christ. (1 Cor. 2:2.) And we read from Paul the expression, “baptized into Christ.” Hence baptism is related to Christ as sinoffering. This relation gives it the meaning of faith. When baptism is based solely upon the *authority* of Jesus, it is made a response to Jesus as *Lord*, but

not to him as *Christ*. “God hath made him both *Lord* and *Christ*.” Peter commanded baptism in the name of “Jesus Christ.” (Acts 2:36, 38.) To consider baptism a mere test of one’s willingness to obey God is a failure to relate it to Christ as sinoffering.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER SIX

1. What is the subject of this chapter? vv. 1,15.
2. Can the power of sin be overcome by prohibitions only? Then can law free one from the bondage of sin?
3. Note that Paul makes our spiritual relationship to Christ the basis of holiness.
4. Does the fact of forgiveness overcome the power of sin and prepare one for holiness?
5. Paul does not consider baptism a meaningless act designed merely as a test of one’s willingness to obey God.
6. Baptism apart from its relation to faith and repentance has no signification, and hence no design.
7. If the justification of sinners is an arbitrary matter, how can justification become the natural basis of christian morality? One dies to sin in his conversion, and this death to sin is the *reason* the child of God cannot live in sin. Justification is as reasonable as sanctification.
8. Repentance and baptism are to be performed “in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 2:38.) Study the phrase “in the name of” or “in my name.” See Matt. 24:5; Matt. 10:41,42; Acts 3:6,12; Acts 4:7; etc. Illustration: (A true story). A son attending a certain college died. The grief-stricken father, wishing to honor his son, (rather than merely to endow a school) gave the college a considerable sum of money “in the name of” his son. That is, the son was the

consideration of the gift. God saves us because of the Crucified Son. Accordingly, the conditions of salvation are “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Hence Christ Crucified, not our holiness, or good works, saves us. See John 14:21,22; John 16:27. God loves and saves us because we love his Crucified Son.

9. Is there justification, logical or scriptural, for the administrator of baptism adding, “for the remission of sin” to the baptismal formula as recorded in Matt. 28:19?

\* \* \*

Examples of the Greek preposition *eis*.

Separated unto (*eis*) the gospel. 1:1.

Gospel unto (*eis*) salvation. 1:16.

Unto (*eis*) uncleanness. 1:24.

For (*eis*) righteousness. 4:22.

Into (*eis*) this grace. 5:2.

Toward (*eis*) us. 5:8.

Unto (*eis*) condemnation. 5:16.

Unto (*eis*) justification. 5:16,18.

Baptized into (*eis*) Christ. 6:3.

Baptized into (*eis*) death. 6:4.

Believeth unto (*eis*) righteousness. 10:10.

Confession unto (*eis*) salvation. 10:10.

Unto (*eis*) remission of sins. Acts 2:38.

Believeth on (*eis*) him. Acts 10:43; John 3:16,18.

Baptized unto (*eis*) Moses. 1 Cor. 10:2.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### The Inability of Law to Overcome Sin

1. *Law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth.* Here is an obvious truth which the apostle will need in his discussion of law. This principle is illustrated by the husband and wife. The wife is bound by law respecting her husband so long as he lives. But when the husband dies she is free from the law that binds her to him. The apostle is not discussing the marriage relation except in this one aspect.

4. *Ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ.* Two points are significant: Christians are dead to the law, and they are so because of Christ crucified. In Col. 2:14 the apostle declares that the law was "contrary to us," and that Christ "blotted out" the law-covenant by "nailing it to the cross." The cross terminates, not only the law of Moses, but the law-principle. Law administers justice, while the cross introduced the principle of mercy. Law and grace mutually annul each other. In other words, if *sinners* are given *justice*, they cannot obtain *mercy*; if they receive *mercy*, the application of law in their case is impossible — they cannot receive *justice*. This truth reveals the error of those who regard the new covenant as law. Of course, the apostle was dealing immediately with the law of Moses, but what was true of the Jewish system is true also of any legal system. The weakness of the Jewish law did not lie in the fact that it was given by Moses. All legal systems administer justice, not mercy. Hence Paul wrote, "ye are not under law." This epistle cannot be understood unless the inherent distinction between law and grace is recognized.

4. *That ye should be joined to another.* It is



strongly implied that one cannot be joined to Christ so long as he is under a legal system. It is a case of the incompatibility of law and grace, works and faith, justice and mercy. (Gal. 5:4.)

It should be carefully noted that whether one is under law or grace is determined by the cross. The cross is death to law. It is death to the principle of works as conditions of justification. The cross as naturally nullifies law as it established grace. Law ended *at the cross* and *by the cross*.

The consequence in respect to service is also noted by Paul: "So that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." This is the difference in the service of a slave and the service of a free man. The law was written on stone, the covenant of grace, on the heart. (2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10.)

7. *Is the law sin?* Law itself was not sin. But instead of saving man from sin, law reveals the power of sin over man, and *occasions* sin. The law of Moses antagonized the "law of sin" in man, so that when the law said, "Thou shalt not covet," Paul testifies that sin "finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting." Law arouses sin in man instead of destroying it. Hence Paul found the law to be "unto death." This does not indicate that the law was sin, but that man is exceeding sinful. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good." But law cannot overcome the power of sin. "But sin, that it may be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;—that through the commandment sin might become (or be shown to be) exceeding sinful." Hence more than a holy commandment is required to rid man of sin. This simply means that no legal system can save sinners. Man must be saved, not only from the guilt of sin, but from the power of sin. The sinner

needs more than a new set of rules. He needs the blood of Christ to atone for sin, and divine help to overcome the "law of sin" in himself. And yet some still talk of the "old law" and the "new law." It is exceedingly dangerous to attempt to teach when one has not learned the fundamental difference between law and grace. He will either attempt to mix law and grace, or reduce Christianity to a complete legalism.

14. *I am carnal, sold under sin.* Here Paul locates the trouble with all men. Here also is revealed the weakness of law and the need of a Saviour. The result of being carnal is shown in the remaining part of this chapter. The struggle under the power of carnality or sin finally issues in the cry, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? Notice Paul asked "Who" not *what*. Paul exchanged law for *Christ*, not for another law. He considered all legal "gain" to be loss for "Christ." (Phil. 3:7.)

Paul's description of the inward conflict between the will to do right and the overcoming power of sin in him is most pathetic. Note that Paul knew what was right, that he desired to do right, and that he tried desperately to do right; but he failed! The sinful power in him he calls "the law of sin." The word "law" does not signify a code, but a power that ruled him. This power was a sinful power. And it was this "law of sin" in Paul which the law was helpless to overcome. It is not the function of law to give inward spiritual power or to crucify the "old man." Rather it is the function of law to reveal the obligation of man, and to punish him when he sins.

25. *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* For deliverance, that is. Man's saviour must be a *person*, not law. Paul saw in Christ every need of

man. And it was for Christ that he gladly surrendered all that he once counted gain under law — fleshly relationship to Abraham, fleshly circumcision, and law-righteousness. (Phil. 3:4-9.) No one who knows Christ desires to be under law. It is strange how multitudes prefer the bondage of law to the freedom of grace. (Gal. 4:21-5:1.)

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Does not Paul's reference to the operation of laws in vv. 1-4 show that the nature of all law, human or divine, is the same?

2. If Christianity is a legal system, would it not be as binding as the law of Moses? Would it not demand perfection just as the law of Moses? Then how could it save when the law of Moses could not?

3. Note the significance of "Ye were made dead to the law through the body of Christ," and "He hath taken it (the law) out of the way nailing it to the cross." Law which administers justice, and grace which administers mercy are mutually exclusive. Law religion ended *at* and *by* the cross.

4. Note that it is as necessary to be delivered from the law-principle as it is to be put under grace.

5. The mixture of law and grace is spiritual adultery. One "joined" or "married" to Christ proves unfaithful, if he goes back under the law-principle. This was the error of the Galatians (Gal. 1:6-5:12.)

6. Study carefully the power of the "law of sin" and the inability of law to overcome it. Man needs more than prohibitions to overcome sin.

7. Is carnality absolutely destroyed in the Christian? (See 1 Cor. 3:1-4.)

8. Law leads to grace by convicting man of sin and revealing the power of sin.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The Rule and Help of the Holy Spirit

1. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* There is no condemnation such as the writer described in chapter seven. Man under law presents a dark picture. Those “in Christ” present a glorious picture. What makes the difference? “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.” First, what is the “law of sin and of death” from which the Christian is free? Evidently it is the “law of sin” of 7:23. This “law” was not a code, but sin considered as the ruling power in the sinner’s life. It is true that under law, the law of Moses, sin exercised dominion over man. See chapter seven. The apostle implied as much in 6:14: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.” If “the law of sin and of death” refers to the law of Moses, it is not implied that the law was itself sin, or that it was the real cause of sin. “Is the law sin? God forbid.” (7:7.) But it was *sin* in Paul that took occasion of the law to work “all manner of coveting. (7:8.) In other words, the “law of sin” (7:23) operated under the law of Moses to intensify coveting. Only in the sense that the law was used by sin as an instrument to enslave Paul would it be possible to refer to it as “the law of sin and of death.” “For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.” Then Paul adds: “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid.” Then he explains: “But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good.”

It is certain that "the law of sin," and not the law of Moses, was the source of sin. It was this "law of sin" that made the apostle cry "Wretched man that I am," and desire a deliverer. But since the apostle was considering this "law of sin" in relation to the law of Moses, it is possible that he had both "laws" in mind when he wrote, "the law of sin and of death." But I am inclined to think that the apostle had more in mind "the law of sin" than the law of Moses. The fact is, Christ frees from both "the law of sin" and the law of Moses.

Now, what is "the law of the Spirit of life."? This "law of the Spirit" is the antithesis of the "law of sin" of 7:23. This much seems certain. If the law of Moses forms part of the antithesis, it is on the ground that we have just explained. Whatever Paul had in mind by the "law of the Spirit," the indwelling Spirit as the source of the new life in Christ is certainly involved. For the difference, as we shall see, between the one described in chapter seven and the one described in chapter eight, is the indwelling Spirit by which "the deeds of the body" are "put to death."

3. *For what the law could not do.* Obviously Paul here refers to the law of Moses. This law could not do what was necessary in order to free man from both the guilt and the bondage of sin. But wherein the law failed, God succeeded by sending his Son to be an offering for sin. And under Christ, the Holy Spirit is given as the ruling force in the life of the Christian, so that "the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

6. *The mind of the flesh — the mind of the Spirit.* Sinners are described as "they that are after the flesh," and the saved as "they that are after the

Spirit.” “The mind of the flesh,” Paul asserts, “is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.” “The mind of the flesh” is death because it is “enmity against God;” and, since the law of God is the transcript of his character, this “mind of the flesh” is “not subject to the law of God.”

9. *But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.*” There are two results, one negative and the other positive, of the indwelling Spirit. Negatively, “Ye are not in the flesh.” Positively, “Ye are in the Spirit.” This indwelling Guest is, in this context, called the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. He is also significantly spoken of as “the Spirit of him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” Hence the Spirit that dwells in the Christian definitely plays a part in the redemption of man along with God and Christ.

12. *We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.* The apostle has not forgotten the question of 6:1. The entire arrangement on the sinner’s behalf now found under Christ forbids a life of sin. Everything contributes to a life of holiness. Paul is fond of contrasts: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* Here is practical proof of sonship. One is led either by the flesh or by the Spirit. Sonship of God or of Satan is thereby manifest. The Spirit of God may *lead in two ways*. He may lead us through the word of God, or he may lead us in the sense of inciting us to a holy life. The contexts argues for the latter leading. Paul speaks of being “after the flesh” and “after the Spirit.” We read also of *living* after the flesh. But he says that one is not

“after the flesh,” if the Spirit of God “dwelleth in you.” So what is in verse 14 asserted of the Spirit is affirmed of the “Spirit of God that dwelleth in you.” The Spirit guides the Christian just as “the law of sin” dominated the sinner.

Paul elsewhere (Gal. 5:16) speaks of walking after the Spirit. “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” One either “walks by the Spirit” or fulfills “the lust of the flesh.” Then the apostle elaborates: “For the flesh *lusteth against the Spirit*, and the Spirit (lusteth) against the flesh.” “The cravings of the Spirit are against the physical.” (Goodspeed.) “The passions of the Spirit (are) against the flesh.” (Moffatt.) “If ye are led by the Spirit” is translated by Moffatt, “If you are under the sway of the Spirit.” When one commits the sins mentioned in Gal. 5:19-21 he is fulfilling the lust of the flesh. When the Christian practices the virtues mentioned in Gal. 5:22,23, he is bringing forth the “fruit of the Spirit.” He is being *led* by the Spirit. “The passions of the flesh” are within the heart of man, as are the “passions of the Spirit.” Hence the leading of the Spirit contemplated in our text (Rom. 8:14) is the incitement to righteousness of the indwelling Spirit. It is man who produces the “fruit of the Spirit.” But it is the man who is ruled by the Spirit “that dwelleth in you,” just as the man who is dominated by the “law of sin” fulfills the lust of the flesh. Is it incredible that God should give his children the Holy Spirit with whom they are to cooperate in living a life of holiness, if the sinner is unwillingly, in some cases, dominated by the “law of sin”? Let us not be afraid that we shall be robbed of the glory of overcoming the devil! It does not belong to us.

16. *The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.* Note that the

**Spirit's witness is not here concerned with our *becoming* children of God. It witnesses that we *are* children. Being led by the Spirit is another proof that we *are* children of God (v. 14.) Children of God are not plagued by a *slavish* spirit, "the spirit of bondage" that leads to fear: but they are blessed with the "spirit of adoption" which incites them to recognize God as Father. Since the filial spirit in God's children can be attributed to the indwelling Spirit, they can be assured that when they cry, "Abba, Father." "It is this Spirit testifying along with our own spirit that we are children of God." (Moffatt.)**

That the Holy Spirit dwells in God's children is definitely stated: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:9.) "Ye are a temple of God, and — the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Cor. 3:16.) "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you." (1 Cor. 6:19.) "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. 4:6.) "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) "And we are witnesses of these things: and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32.)

*What are the functions of the indwelling Holy Spirit?* 1. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." (Rom. 8:16.) 2. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity." (Rom. 8:26.) 3. "The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:26.) 4. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13.) 5. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.) 6. "In whom ye also



having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, — in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph. 1:17.)  
7. The Spirit “is an earnest of our inheritance.” (Eph. 1:13,14.)  
8. “Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he give us.” (1 John 3:24.)  
9. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace” etc. (Gal. 5:22.) All the above functions are asserted of the “Spirit that dwelleth in you.” Note the contexts.

If any one thinks the apostle meant no more by the above scriptures than that the word of God dwells in us, note two examples that prove otherwise: “In whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, — in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph. 1:13.) Note that the *sealing* of the Spirit came *after* the Ephesians heard “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” On Pentecost Peter first preached the word, and then promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit” to those who repented and were baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ.” A little more faith in the Scriptures would remove all the apparent difficulties that stand in the way of any who have not believed in the indwelling Spirit.

*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* How little we can know of the significance of being “heirs of God!” To him belongs everything. The inheritance will be a gift consistent with the infinite Father who reserves the best for his children redeemed by his Son.

“Joint-heirs” with Christ. Christ and Christians are inseparable. We are “sons of God” because of our incorporation into God’s Son. But we share his sufferings before we share his glory. Here are some of the things upon which we should set our mind.

18. *The glory which shall be revealed to us-*

*ward.* “The sufferings of this present time” seem to be prophetic of future glory. Even creation is figuratively represented as sharing in our sufferings and waiting hopefully “for the revealing of the sons of God.” But especially we “who have the first-fruits of the Spirit” are patiently waiting for “the redemption of our body.” Hope characterizes God’s children. “In hope were we saved.” Hope, that is, desire and expectation can be reasonably enjoyed only under grace, not under law.

26. *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity.* God delights in providing for the infirmity of his children. We are not orphans. We are not left to our weaknesses. One way the Spirit “helpeth our infirmity” is in prayer. So often “we know not how to pray as we ought.” Some how —he knows — “he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” God hears him who intercedes in our behalf.

27. *All things work together for good.* “God works with those who love him—to bring about what is good.” (Goodspeed.) God who can see the end from the beginning assures us that the above statement is true. He can see the whole salvation of man from his *fore-knowledge* through *foreordination*, *calling*, *justification*, and *glorification*. These things were not given for our speculation, but for our edification.

31. *If God is for us, who is against us?* Paul answers in substance, “Nothing, or no one.” The fact that God “spared not his own Son” is proof that he will “with him freely give us all things.” If any man lays any charge against us, “It is God that justifieth.” Christ died for us; he was raised for us; and he “maketh intercession for us.” Hence the apostles triumphantly challenges every conceivable opposition to “separate us from the love of Christ.” He closes with the assurance that in everything “we are more than

conquerors through him that loved us.” It is characteristic of Paul to claim nothing for himself, but to give all the glory to his Saviour.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER EIGHT

1. This chapter shows how deliverance from the “law of sin” is overcome.

2. Contrast “law of sin” and “law of the Spirit.” Neither is a code.

3. Chapter seven reveals the “mind of the flesh” while this chapter reveals the “mind of the Spirit.”

4. Note this declaration: “The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” Is there any reason to deny it?

5. Note the functions of the indwelling Spirit. vv. 11, 13, 16, 26, 27.

6. Jesus overcame Satan not merely by quoting scripture, but “in the power of the Spirit.” (Luke 4:14.) How do we resist the flesh? v. 13.

7. Note that Paul founds the security of the Christian, not merely upon his own faithfulness, but upon the basis of what God has done, and is doing, for him. vv. 31-39.

## CHAPTER NINE

### The Problem of the Jews: Israel's Rejection

1. *I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart.* Paul is preparing for a delicate and difficult task, the explanation of Israel's rejection. He wishes to assure Israel of his sincere love. His expression of interest in his Jewish brethren is most difficult to understand. It is certainly the language of great passion. "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." Moses had a similar feeling for the Jews in his time. (Exod. 32:32.) Israel's rejection seemed more tragic in view of their unusual advantages.

4. *Who are Israelites.* Elaborating on this the apostle added: "Whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the services of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen." Paul's own heart must have swelled with pride at the enumeration of these things that mean so much to the Jews. But he saved the best until the last, "of whom is Christ."

6. *For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel.* Here Paul speaks of both Israel after the flesh and spiritual Israel. Else he contradicts himself. He explains that mere children of Abraham does not make them the Israel contemplated in some of God's promises. "In Isaac shall thy seed by called." With this last statement the apostle introduces a divine principle of choice which is difficult for man to understand. The apostle does not attempt a full explanation. He gives Jacob and Esau as examples of divine choice with which all the Jews should have been familiar.

But it is not the mere fact of divine choice between men that is hard to be understood. It is rather the principle upon which God makes choices that is so puzzling. For example, God made choice between Jacob and Esau before their birth, and of course, before they had done "anything good or bad." This means that it is not character that determines the divine choice. What it is shall be seen later. Of course, in choosing Jacob God had in mind, not simply Jacob, but his descendants. But this makes no difference in the principle by which the choice was made. He still selected Jacob and his descendants upon some other basis than character.

14. *Is there unrighteousness with God?* Paul well understood the difficulties involved in such a selection from a human standpoint. Man chooses on the ground of individual excellence. And since God makes his choice on some other ground, man is ready to charge him with unrighteousness.

15. *I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.* This is no explanation, but rather a statement that God proceeds upon the basis of his sovereignty. God's purpose in his dealings with Pharaoh was to "show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth." Again God was manifesting his sovereignty.

16. *Who withstandeth his will?* The Jews seemed to think that God was a hard master. "Why doth he still find fault?" Again Paul does not vindicate God except on the ground of his right over man. He then cites the potter's right over the clay to make the type of vessel he desires. But the *vessels* God chooses are "vessels of mercy." That is, God chooses on the principle of mercy. Hence no one is mistreated. The principle of mercy does not demand that every one be treated exactly alike in all respects.

Saul of Tarsus was permitted to see and hear the Lord after his ascension to God. While he was not saved merely because he saw and heard the Lord, he believed in him as a consequence, which he probably never would have done otherwise.

25. *I will call that my people, which was not my people.* The calling of the Gentiles was upon the principle of mercy, not upon the principle of their desert. To the Jew it seemed incredible that God should call the Gentiles his people.

27. *It is the remnant that shall be saved.* Why a mere "remnant" of the Jews would be saved is explained in three places, 9:31, 32; 10:3; 11:20.

30. *What shall we say then?* First about the Gentiles: "That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness." Paul does not mean to say that the Gentiles did not desire justification, or that their justification was unconditional. The justification which they obtained was "the righteousness which is of faith." "Followed — after" is here opposed to "faith." That is, the Gentiles did not seek to attain justification upon the same principle by which the Jews sought to attain it. Of the Jews the apostle writes: "But Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law." That is, they did not attain the righteousness which they sought. But why? "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works." Here Paul contrasts *faith* and *works*. These principles are contrasted in chapters three and four. Faith is the natural response to Christ as a sin offering. (Faith, that is, in the sense of trust.) Works as a principle is the response to the commands of the law. The Jewish law which the apostle had in mind provided no Saviour. It was therefore "not of faith." (Gal.

3:12.) It was not of faith, or trust, because there was no sin offering which justified their reliance.

To the Jew who sought justification "by works" Jesus as a sin offering was "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." (See 1 Cor. 1:23.) The Jew was logical enough to know that the principle of works ruled out a Saviour. And it is significant that advocates of salvation by works today make little or no use of Christ crucified, except as a mere item of doctrine. They do not know why, in the first place, that God offered his Son "instead of some other sacrifice." Then they do not know why faith is a condition of salvation! They could not, therefore, be expected to make much use of the cross. And when faith is related to Christ as sin offering, to many it is no more than a principle of action. That faith means trust in the blood of Jesus seems to have escaped their attention.

The thoughtful reader will desire to know the relation of this ninth chapter to the theme of the epistle. In stating the subject of this letter (1:16,17) Paul teaches that Christ crucified is God's power to save the believer. This is true because in the gospel is revealed "a righteousness of God." In chapter nine Paul shows that this "righteousness" or justification was not meant for the fleshly descendants of Abraham simply because they were thus related to Abraham. "They are not all Israel, that are of Israel — but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Those "that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham." (Gal. 3:7.)

In the second place, Paul shows that Israel sought salvation "by works." They sought to achieve justification by their own good conduct. This principle rules out Christ crucified as Saviour. The Jews were not rejected merely because they sought to

attain righteousness, or justification; but because they sought it upon the wrong principle, that of works. Works as a principle, let it be repeated, nullifies grace. "But if it is by grace, it is no more of works." (11:6.) This is a universal truth. Those who regard the conditions of accepting the work of a sin offering as works, have not seen the distinction Paul makes in faith and works. To limit the principle of works to the law of Moses is to fail to see the underlying principle under discussion. The issue goes deeper than any certain set of commands. It is true that we are not under the law of Moses. But the law failed to save because it was a law requiring works. Any legal system requires works, not faith. If Christianity is a legal system, then it too demands works, and not faith. The principle of works is out of place under Christ because it means effort on man's part to achieve salvation. Abraham who lived before the law was not justified by works, but by faith. But Abraham is the father, not of the worker who is seeking to earn his salvation, but of the believer. "They that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham." Faith here means more than mere belief of truth, as we have shown else where. It signifies trust in Christ crucified, or reliance upon the blood of Christ. The believer relies upon the blood for his redemption, the worker trusts in his own achievement.

If the apostle appears to teach unconditional salvation in parts of this chapter, it is because he does not consider the principle of faith a matter of "willing" or "running," that is, an effort on man's part to *achieve* justification. Faith in Christ as sin offering is not to be classified with the principle of works, or a "following after a law of righteousness." (vv. 11, 31.) Hence from the standpoint of legal justification,



faith is not to be considered. It is as nothing. And is it not true today that those who consider faith as a principle of action only (See chapter five), look upon faith, trust in the blood of Christ, as “nothing apart from the obedience to which it leads?”

But the apostle does not teach unconditional justification as we see from vv. 30-33. Whatever is meant by “election” faith in Christ as Saviour is not ruled out. “The purpose of God according to election,” however is “not of works.” (v. 11.) This is what the Jews believed, and this is what Paul is denying.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER NINE

1. Note that this chapter was written from the standpoint of the Jews who regarded their fleshly relation to Abraham and the “righteousness of the law” as the ground of their acceptance with God.

2. What does the “purpose of God according to election” exclude? v.11.

3. What does the “purpose of God according to election” include? vs. 30-33.

4. In what sense did the Gentiles not “follow after righteousness.”?

5. What is it to seek justification “by works?”

6. What is it to seek justification “by faith”?

7. Why is “Christ crucified” a “stumbling-block” to the legalist? (1 Cor. 1:23.)

## CHAPTER TEN

# Law-Righteousness and Faith-Righteousness Contrasted

2. *They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* The zeal of those without the knowledge of Christ leads them away from, not to Christ. In another epistle Paul writes: "I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." This knowledge involved the "righteousness" which comes by "faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith." (Phil. 3:8,9.) The Jews were ignorant of this divine righteousness, because they were ignorant of Christ. Those who do not understand the sacrificial work of Christ on behalf of sinners cannot understand the righteousness which God bestows. Those who regard Christ as merely another law-giver or teacher are wholly ignorant of the justification Paul is here discussing.

3. *Seeking to establish their own.* That is, their own righteousness. What was their "own righteousness." Paul answers: "Not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law." (Phil. 3:9.) Law - righteousness is human righteousness. Though the law of Moses was given by Jehovah, it was man who had to keep it. The resultant "righteousness" was therefore man's righteousness. Paul made reference to himself under law, even while the law was in force. The idea that man's righteousness (Phil. 3:9: Rom. 10:3) consisted in keeping the law *after* its abrogation by the cross, or in keeping human tradition is wholly gratuitous. There is nothing in the context to warrant it. Those who rely on human righteousness cannot rely upon Christ as Saviour. Hence the Jews "did not subject themselves to the

righteousness of God.” Legalism is the rejection of Christ as Saviour.

4. *Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.* “End” here could signify either termination or purpose, or both. Law ended *at* and *by* the cross. I am inclined to think that Paul meant that Christ is the purpose of the law. “What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come.” “The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:19,24.) Here is justification or righteousness by faith, a faith in Christ as Son of God, and sin offering.

5. *For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.* Paul has in mind a significant contrast: “But the righteousness which is of faith” etc. Law-righteousness is based on doing (with no reference to a saviour while the “righteousness of God” is based on faith, trust in Christ crucified. Nothing is more logical than this teaching. Law is the announcement of man’s duty and demands doing, perfect doing. There is nothing arbitrary or illogical about this. But Christ as Saviour or as sin offering requires faith in the sense of trust. Yes, there are commands relating to Christ crucified, but these are intended to express man’s trust in Christ as sin offering. The commands of law were not so designed. They were but the effort on man’s part to do his duty, not means of accepting a saviour.

Verses six and seven emphasize the fact that Christ has already come down from heaven, died on the cross for our sins, and was “raised for our justification.” Hence, “the word of faith” which Paul preached was “nigh.” Now note the difference in this “word of faith” concerning a Saviour in contrast to the stern demands of the law:

9. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Here Paul names two things, faith and confession of faith. Upon these two conditions he promises salvation — “thou shalt be saved.” How different is this from the response required by law! Law says nothing of a saviour. Law demands obedience, not to three or four commands, but to every command. Law makes no requirement of trusting in a sin offering. “The law is not of faith.” Law places man under a curse. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.” “For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Gal. 3:10.) In contrast to this Paul adds, “But the just shall live by faith.” Law places man under a curse, but not because it happens to be the one given by Moses. The law itself was “holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.” Man under law, any legal system, is under a curse because he is obliged, not merely to try, but to keep every command all the time. It does seem that everyone should be able to see the difference in law and grace. Law points the sinner to commands, and to commands only. Grace points the sinner to the Saviour. The commands addressed to the sinner are commands that mean reliance upon the Saviour, not an attempt to earn God’s approval simply because of obedience. Obedience to the gospel is obedience that means trust in the blood of Christ. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law” by dying for us and by placing us under an administration of mercy.

10. *With the heart man believeth unto right-*

*eousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Righteousness, justification, and salvation are the same. So are faith and the confession of faith the same as to significance. What Paul affirms in verse ten, he states in other words in verse eleven: "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame." The apostle does not mean that one is saved twice, once by faith, and once by confession of faith. Faith and confession are considered the same thing. So are righteousness and salvation.

"For with his heart man believes and is justified, with his mouth he confesses and is saved." (Moffatt.) Paul is not excluding repentance or anything else required of sinners, just as these are not excluded in John 3:16.

13. *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* The emphasis here is upon "whosoever." "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him." To "call upon the name of the Lord" is to make one's appeal to him for salvation. It signifies reliance. That this reliance may be outwardly expressed does not change the fact that one is still "calling upon the name of the Lord." Confession of inward faith has the same significance as faith. So does baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" have the same meaning as the faith that it expresses or embodies. *But let us be concerned, not alone with the fact that faith does not exclude baptism, but also with the fact that baptism does signify reliance upon the crucified Saviour.*

But no one can make his appeal to the Lord for salvation apart from faith in the Lord. He must hear about the Saviour and believe the facts concerning him, namely, that he is Son of God, and that he died for our sins. Having thus believed these truths about

Christ he can now trust in him. And this trust is to be seen in everything required of the sinner. In everything he is making his appeal to the Lord for salvation. He is calling upon the name of the Lord.

17. *So belief cometh of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.* Here is something fundamental. Faith and hearing are related as cause and effect. The hearing produces faith. This is true in religion and outside religion. One cannot believe in Christ until Christ is preached. And Christ is preached when one preaches his Sonship, and his Messiahship. Note that it is *Christ* preached that produces the faith that is a condition of salvation. To the Samaritans Philip “proclaimed unto them the Christ.” (Acts 8:5.) To the eunuch Phillip preached “Jesus.” He preached “Jesus” from Isaiah the fifty-third chapter. In this chapter we read not only the passage quoted by Luke in Acts 8:32, 33, but this: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Until the sinner hears that Christ is his sin-bearer he has not heard that which produces the faith that saves. In fact one cannot believe in Christ in the sense of v.17 until he has heard that “Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “This is the good news of salvation. John 3:16 makes the object of faith the Christ on the cross.

The necessity of preaching Christ as sinbearer cannot be over-emphasized. The practice of preaching the conditions of salvation apart from a clear and full presentation of Jesus Christ and him crucified is without any semblance of justification. It was never done by the apostles and other inspired men. Paul declared, “For I determined not to know anything

among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2.) Preaching Christ means to preach him as the crucified Saviour. Paul preached “the word of the cross.”

The facts that Jesus must be preached as Saviour in order that men can be saved, and that faith comes naturally by hearing about Christ, prove that the conditions have not been arbitrarily chosen, as some imagine. Christ must be preached. When he is preached faith follows naturally. Whether faith is a condition or not, it is present when Christ is preached. But faith that justifies can never exist apart from the preaching of Christ as sin offering.

To emphasize the fact that it is Christ crucified that must be preached in order to produce the faith that saves, I give other translations of the phrase, “and hearing by the word of Christ.” (American Standard Version.) “And that hearing comes through the message about Christ.” (Goodspeed.) “And the teaching comes in the Message of Christ.” (The Twentieth Century New Testament.)

How can the gospel be obeyed unless the gospel is preached? We usually think of obeying *commands*. But both Paul and Peter speak of obeying the *gospel*. (2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17.) The commands addressed to sinners relate directly to the gospel which must be preached. They are not merely something required of them to test their willingness to obey. Faith has as its object Christ on the cross. (John 3:16.) Repentance and baptism are both “in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Acts 2:38.) “In the name of Jesus Christ” signifies in reliance upon Jesus Christ. This phrase signifies much more than that repentance and baptism are by the authority of Christ. Peter said that God made Jesus “both *Lord* and *Christ*.” “Christ is the Greek term and corre-

sponds to the word "Messiah" which is a Hebrew term. (John 1:41.) Christ is an official title and relates to his work as sin offering. In order for one to be baptized "in the name of Christ" he must have been taught the work of Christ as sacrifice for sin. Baptism apart from its reference to Christ crucified does not meet the demand of Acts 2:38.

Therefore one obeys the gospel only when the conditions of salvation are responses to Christ crucified. This is most important. Every one who is baptized should have Jesus and him crucified in his mind, not merely the design of baptism. Jesus crucified gives any condition its design, and apart from the cross no condition has any design whatever. When it is remembered that all conditions are responses to Christ as Saviour a better understanding of them will result.

### QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER TEN

1. Paul returns to the subject of "the righteousness of God."
2. Contrast God's righteousness or justification with that of law.
3. Are the "righteousness which is of the law" and the "righteousness which is of faith" attained upon the same principle? Why?
4. Is law-righteousness to be sought by faith?  
See v. 5.
5. Is the "righteousness of God" to be sought by works? See v. 4.
6. Does the apostle consider the principles of faith and works identical?
7. Consult the various translations on verses 9, 10.
8. Does faith in Christ come apart from hearing about him as sin offering? v. 17.



9. Why cannot faith come as the result of a direct command to believe?

10. Would one know to believe on Christ when taught about him without being told to believe? Would one know to repent without being commanded to repent? Are the conditions of salvation arbitrary enactments?

When Paul saw Christ (Acts 9) did he believe as a consequence of seeing him, or was it necessary for some one to tell him to believe? Who told Paul to repent?

If Paul believed and repented naturally as a consequence of the revelation of Jesus, does this indicate that the conditions of salvation are arbitrary commands, or does it prove that they are logical responses to Christ as Saviour.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Israel's Fall and Final Salvation

1. *Did God cast off his people?* It is Paul's habit to answer possible objections to his teachings. To this question he gives a definite *no*. The apostle cites himself as proof. "For I am an Israelite." Elijah felt that all but himself had deserted God, but he was wrong. God answered, "I have left for myself seven thousand men."

5. *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Here are two important statements. First, there is a "remnant" that had not fallen; and second, this "remnant is "according to the election of grace." Christianity began with the Jews. Paul was among this "remnant."

6. *But if it is by grace, it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.* Paul is much concerned with the above principle. Grace and works as principles are mutually exclusive, and Paul could not have been more definite in so stating. "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt." (4:4.) To restrict Paul's reference to the works of the law of Moses, one denies a universal truth, and misses a most important lesson of this epistle. Paul was speaking of Abraham in 4:4, and Abraham lived over four hundred years prior to the law of Moses. This principle applied to Abraham just as it applies to all in the realm of religion and out.

Note these words: "Otherwise grace is no more grace." Goodspeed translates this phrase, "Otherwise, his mercy would not be mercy at all." Moffatt: "Otherwise grace would cease to be grace." The worker does not receive his pay as an expression of mercy. If one so affirms, then language ceases to

have any definite meaning. The glory of grace is its distinctiveness. If grace is the reward of work, there is no signification to terms. Why do men refuse to surrender the principle of merit? It is because they do not understand the value of the cross! It is most illogical to affirm salvation by grace, then teach justification by works. Where the principle of works is found, merit is present, regardless of denials. Faith can express itself without "works," that is, the principle of works. There is no room under Christ for the principle that admits boasting. The works of faith in the New Testament are far from the nature of legalistic works. Unless the nature of the principle of works and the nature of the principle of grace are understood, this epistle will never be comprehended. If Smith works for Jones, his reward is not according to mercy. If salvation is based on man's character, man's works, then Christ died for nought. Modernists advocate "Salvation by Character." I saw this sign displayed in one of their meetings. They were at least consistent in affirming "Salvation by character" and denying the Sonship and the Messiahship of Jesus.

The fact that every condition is a response to Christ crucified and is performed "in the name of Jesus Christ" proves that these expressions of faith in the Saviour are not works of law or works of merit. As to signification they are faith, trust. Baptism signifying trust in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour is far from a work of law. But if baptism has no signification that relates it to the cross, it is a legal enactment, and, therefore, is inconsistent with the blood of Christ and the principle of grace.

In affirming that salvation is of grace, and "no more of works," the apostle does not teach unconditional salvation. Paul considered grace and faith

correlative terms. One implies the other, like the word father implies child. "By grace through faith" is Paul's formula, so to speak. Grace is the principle by which God offers salvation to the undeserving, and faith is the principle by which grace is accepted.

7. *That which Israel seeketh for he obtained not; but the election obtained it.* This statement is explained by Paul's teaching in 9:30-32: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works." Israel sought for salvation, but did not attain it "because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works." "But the election obtained it" because they received salvation as a "free gift", and therefore, according to the principle of grace. There was no arbitrary rejection of Israel, or arbitrary selection of the Jewish "remnant," or of the Gentiles.

8. *God gave them a spirit of stupor.* This spirit of stupor was not given to men earnestly and honestly seeking salvation through Christ, but to those who rejected the Messiah in the face of convincing proof of his claims. "Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed."

11. *Did they stumble that they might fall?* They were not caused to stumble in order that they might fall. They fell, but this "fall" was not to be final.

The "fall" of the Jews was used as an occasion of a greater effort to convert Gentiles. "By their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." Unbelieving Jews proved themselves unworthy of eternal life, hence, the apostles turned to the Gentiles. But if God

used their "fall" to accomplish a good end, how much more can he use their "fulness" to accomplish good. What he means by their "fulness" may be seen later.

Through a great part of this chapter (verses 12-24) the apostle considers the conversion of the Jews a hypothetical matter. In this section he uses a dozen if's. That the Jews had rejected their Messiah was a certainty. If God used this "fall" for the good of Gentiles, how much more shall the "receiving of them" be for good. Will it not be "life from the dead?" "If the first fruit is holy," and "If the root is holy," have furnished commentators ground for speculation and for differences of opinion. Whether "firstfruit" refers to the Jewish fathers or to the first Christians which were Jews, the lesson appears about the same. Paul is arguing that the conversion of the Jews is grounded on reason. In fact, the grafting in of "natural branches" is not so difficult a matter as the grafting of the Gentiles "contrary to nature" into a "good olive tree." Paul had already used himself as proof that God had not "cast off his people." Now, if the first Christians were "holy", that is, if they were accepted of God, then the rest of the Jewish nation could also be acceptable.

The apostle might have had in mind the fact that the prophecies of the Messiah were given to the Jews. The promise also of a "new covenant" was given to the "house of Israel and the house of Judah." (Heb. 8:8.) Paul also represents the Gentiles as once having been "far off" and "strangers and sojourners," and "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12.) This makes one think of this statement of Paul concerning compara-

tive difficulties surrounding the conversion of Gentiles and Jews: "For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

25. *A hardening in part hath befallen Israel.* The apostle now assumes the role of a prophet and predicts that "all Israel shall be saved." The reception of the Jews by God is not only a reasonable thing, but a matter of prophecy: "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (See Isa. 59:20.) The partial hardening of Israel is to continue "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." That is, between the "fall" of the Jews and their deliverance by the Deliverer something occurs which the apostle calls "the fulness of the Gentiles." This phrase has been variously translated and many theories have been propounded. Whatever the phrase means, God knows, and he will take care of the whole matter. We do know that the Jews have rejected their Messiah. We know that it is a reasonable thing that they should some day accept him whom they crucified. And we know that Paul leaves the impression that some day the Jews will in fact accept the Deliverer that came out of Zion.

Paul's teaching concerning the future conversion of the Jews is rendered objectional by some who tie this to the theory of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. It so happens that the apostle says nothing of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. Wherever the Jews may be, they will have to accept Christ before they are accepted of God. God neither arbitrarily cast them off, nor will he arbitrarily accept them. The gospel is the power of God to save both Jews and

Greeks. He has no other saving power. Elsewhere in this epistle the apostle states that "there is no distinction," between Jew and Gentile, that all are under sin, and all stand equally in need of the Saviour. He concludes his argument in one place by a question and a statement of fact: "Or is God the God of the Jews only? is he not the God of the Gentiles also? Yea, of the Gentiles also: if so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." (3:29,40.) It seems that it is difficult to give Jews and Gentiles equal rights before God. Paul had to prove to the Jew that Gentiles had a right to the gospel. Now in the Roman letter he must prove to Gentiles that the Jews have the right to the gospel and will one day accept it.

It seems that the matter of the future conversion of the Jews should be considered abundantly proved. Paul first introduces it as a possibility. Next he refers to the glorious results of such a desirable event. Then he affirms the ability of God "to graft them in again." Finally he asserts their future conversion. These conclusions appear to be unavoidable. Why any person should be slow to accept the obvious teaching of this epistle is strange indeed.

The phrase "all Israel shall be saved" need not be taken to mean that every individual Jew will accept Christ. Much less does it imply that every Jew will be saved regardless of his unbelief in Christ. For a similar use of the word "all" see Matt. 3:5. Nor does the "fulness of the Gentiles" mean that at some time every Gentile will be saved.

It might be profitable to cite a few translations of verse 25 and part of verse 26: "To prevent you from being self-conceited, brothers, I would like you to understand this secret: it is only a partial insensibility that has come over Israel, until the full number of

the Gentiles come in. This done, all Israel will be saved.” (Moffatt.) “For to keep you from thinking too well of yourselves, brothers, I do not want you to miss this secret, that only partial insensibility has come upon Israel, to last until all the heathen have come in, and then all Israel will be saved.” (Good-speed.) Others are to the same effect. What happens in the future will be the best and the safest commentary on some of these difficult verses.

It is essential to notice why the Jews as branches were “broken off.” “By their unbelief they were broken off.” And why were the Gentiles as unnatural branches grafted in? “Thou standest by thy faith.” Are the Gentiles unconditionally safe? “But toward thee, God’s goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off.” Once more, Are the Jews finally rejected? “And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in.” This seems to be all that one needs to know about either Jew or Gentile. There is one God, one Saviour, one gospel; all are sinners and in need of mercy through Christ, and either Jew or Gentile will be accepted on the condition of his faith. Either will be rejected unless he accepts Christ.

One other matter needs a brief notice: In the statement, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” does the apostle refer to fleshly or spiritual Israel? Paul recognizes both. But to argue that all spiritual Israel will be saved would be a truism. No one denied that. Paul began the discussion with a reference to fleshly Israel. (Verses 1,2.) In verse 13 the Gentiles are named in contrast to Israel. The contrast which follows (verses 14-24) plainly refers to fleshly Israel. The “Israel” contemplated in verse 25 have hardened hearts. In contrast to this hardened condition it is predicted that they will accept the Deliverer. I know



of no reason for thinking that fleshly Israel is not meant.

28. *As touching the gospel they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake.* God regards those who reject his Son as "enemies." They are under his curse. I do not believe that Paul means that the Jews rejected Christ for the express purpose of having the gospel taken to the Gentiles. Their rejection was the occasion, not the cause, of salvation being offered the Gentiles. They are "beloved" for the sake of the Jewish fathers to whom God made the promises. God regards them favorably, counts them "holy" or acceptable gospel subjects. God does not save any one on the ground of race, but on the ground of the sacrifice of his Son.

Conditions concerning Jews and Gentiles were reversed. Formerly, Gentiles had rejected God, but now are God's people; and this general acceptance of the Gentiles of Christ was hastened by the unbelief of the Jews, which permitted the evangelists to concentrate their efforts upon the Gentiles. But now the Jews are disobedient; but by the mercy shown to the Gentiles, the Jews also might yet obtain mercy. Note this difference: Jewish *disobedience* occasioned the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, while it is through the *mercy* received by the Gentiles that the Jews are to receive mercy. Note too that both Jews and Gentiles are blessed upon the principle of mercy. There are no future spiritual blessings for the Jews on legalistic grounds. Sinners, Jews or Gentiles, must be saved by grace and faith, not by law and works.

32. *For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.* Here is a most important truth. Whether Jew or Gentile, God considers every one a sinner. Sin is a spiritual malady,

and, hence, admits of no racial distinctions. If every one realized the problem of sin, there would be less difficulty in understanding the doctrine of grace taught in this epistle. *Christ did not come to give help to angels, but to men. God is not dealing with saints, but with sinners. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Sinners need, not another law with a new set of rules, but a sinoffering. Those who are already under condemnation cannot be saved upon the principle of works, but must be redeemed by the death of the Son of God. Man's salvation is not achieved by him, but purchased by the blood of Christ. If man were not a sinner, he would not be guilty; if he were not guilty, he would need no sin-offering; had man not needed a sinoffering, Christ would not have come; and if Christ had not come and died for every one, Jew or Gentile, mercy could not have been extended. And if mercy is not offered sinners, there is no salvation. Without Christ, man's best righteousness is as filth in God's sight. (Isa. 64:6.)*

*Mercy, then, is God's gift to sinful man. The greatest aim of God, the greatest delight of the Father of Christ, the greatest manifestation of his character is to bestow mercy. Law can reveal the "severity" of God and his justice, but it cannot manifest his love and mercy. Nor can man through law be found at his best. Law begets a slavish spirit and leads to fear. Grace begets a filial spirit and makes one cry Abba, Father. Grace begets love, and love makes man most like God. Pity him who knows only a legal religion. Pity him who knows only response to duty. And pity him who cannot endure to hear the grace of God magnified, lest man's part in salvation be under-emphasized! How strange it will seem to some, if ever by God's mercy they are saved,*

*to spend an eternity magnifying the mercy of God when they are now afraid of giving it credit for their salvation!*

33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen.*

Here rises a glorious song of praise from the mighty soul of the great apostle. His words here are the result of a spiritual discernment that gave Paul a unique understanding and appreciation of God and his wisdom and mercy. Paul evidently was looking back over his epistle. He remembered how he had proved the universality of sin, showing that both Jew and Gentile were under the dominion of sin, and stood in need of a "righteousness" or justification, based not on their own works, but upon faith in Christ as their "propitiation." He recalled that he had shown the Roman Christians that they had been released from a legal system that could not bring salvation to sinners, and that they had been "joined" to the Son of God who redeemed them with his "precious blood." He remembered with delight that he could assure his readers that God had given his children the Holy Spirit to help them in their struggle against sin, and to incite to a life of holiness. He had not forgotten that he went deep into the purposes of God concerning Jews and Gentiles. And he must have felt again a pardonable pride in the Jewish race when he recalled all their past advantages over the Gentiles. But he must have felt also a tinge of shame when he remembered that, in spite of these advan-

tages, his own brethren after the flesh had rejected their Messiah. But it gave him some relief to know that their "fall" was not complete and final, but that a prophecy concerning their acceptance of a great Deliverer would yet be fulfilled.

With all these things evidently in the back of his mind Paul penned the above wonderful words. No legalist could have ever written them. Only one who knew Christ Jesus the Lord as a real Saviour, not as a mere lawgiver, could have written as did Paul. Would that every reader of these lines could stand with Paul and look deep into the wisdom and the mercy of God by which he is redeemed. Such an experience is but a foretaste of "the glory that shall be revealed to usward." May the veil of legalism be removed so that "we all, with unveiled face beholding as a mirror the glory of the Lord, be transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Has God arbitrarily cast off the Jews? Does God save or condemn arbitrarily?
2. Note again "the election of grace." v.5.
3. Note also that Paul considers grace and works mutually exclusive. v.6.
4. Compare v. 7 with 9:11, 30-33.
5. Is it incredible that the Jews should one day accept Christ? v.24.
6. Is Israel's fall or unbelief final? vv. 25, 26.
7. Note God's plan for all nations. v.32.
8. What occasioned the doxology of verses 33-35?

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Exhortations and Practical Duties

1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.* Paul did not give orders as one in authority. "Beseech" is a better word than *demand* with Paul. Elsewhere he wrote: "Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:1.) "Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus." (Philem. 8,9.) A little age and a little persecution go a long way in mellowing the heart of a teacher.

*Present your bodies a living sacrifice.* In contrast to the dead sacrifices of the law. See 6:13 on presenting ourselves unto God. The bodies we offer to God must be holy and well-pleasing. We belong to God, having been "bought with a price."

2. *Be not fashioned according to this world.* Do not pattern your lives after "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), "according to the course of this world." (Eph. 2:2.) "Do not take this age as your fashion plate." (Robertson.) Imitation of the world in spirit and practice is one of the gravest dangers confronting the church.

*Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* See the "renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3:5.) Godliness begins within and works outward. Only a "new creature" can live in "newness of life."

*That ye may prove.* Not by argument, but by experience. "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good." "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (1 Pet. 2:3.) The new birth gives the new man a new mind.

The carnal person has no taste for things spiritual.  
(1 Cor. 2:14,15.)

3. *For I say — to every man — not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.* This is said in preparation to giving instruction relative to the different gifts among members of the church. The analogy of the church to the human body is cited to emphasize the various services Christians may render. As “all members have not the same office” so there are many different services the members of the body of Christ may perform. This same lesson is considered more at length in Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church. (1 Cor. 12.) There Paul teaches that each member has its special work given it by nature. The eye is an important member, but it should not overlook the work of other members without which its own function would be more or less nullified. Some can teach; others can exhort; some can rule, etc. But let not the teacher, for example, despise the work of those who minister to the needs of others. It is unwise to suspect the sincerity of those whose gifts differ from our own. The Lord can use us all, and there is work for all. But whatever one is qualified to do, let him do it with diligence.

9. *Let love be without hypocrisy.* Beginning with this verse the apostle in laconic fashion urges many exhortations which are easily understood, but sometimes difficult to heed. Among these are those relating to sincerity of love, the abhorrence of evil, adherence to what is good, brotherly love, diligence in business, fervency of spirit, rejoicing grounded on hope, patience in trials, and steadfastness in prayer. These relate in a special way to personal virtues.

Other exhortations concern the Christian’s relation to others, such as, benevolence toward the poor, hospitality, the Christian attitude toward persecutors,

or sharing with others their joys and sorrows, unity, humility, the Christian's response to evil, personal honor, living in peace with all men, and personal vengeance.

It is as necessary to conform to these practical exhortations as it is to be orthodox in doctrine. How many are orthodox in doctrine, yet heretics in the practice of the above virtues!

21. *Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good.* Paul had just said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." The only right way to destroy an enemy is to make of him a friend. Good is stronger than evil, if given a chance. One of the great lessons of the *Revelation* is that righteousness will ultimately triumph over evil. Evil seems now to be more powerful than righteousness. Evil is simply given a better chance than good. But the time will come when "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER TWELVE

1. What is the basis of Paul's appeal? v.1.
2. The church and the world can never be reconciled. v.2. Worldliness is probably doing more harm than heresies. Can one be a practical heretic?
3. Should one consider any special talent for service a trust from God? vv. 3,6.
4. Note the place for love and hate. v.9. Is it enough merely to refrain from evil? Does the church have the proper attitude toward evil?



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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### The Christian's Relation to Civil Government: Other exhortations

1. *Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers.* The reason assigned for this subjection is that the "powers" are "ordained of God," and that rulers are ministers of God to Christians for good. The rulers contemplated are those who govern by righteous principles. Such rulers praise those who do good, and punish those who do evil.

7. *Render to all their dues.* The payment of taxes, proper respect for rulers, and honoring those who are worthy of honor, are specifically enjoined. It should be remembered that Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." God has not abdicated his throne in favour of kings. God comes first always. And this fact may result in conflict between the sovereignty of God and the claims upon us of earthly rulers. So far as I can learn, God never declares a moratorium on the "debt" we owe him. To do right requires much courage and more prayer.

10. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.* Love for God and man is heaven's cure-all. Jesus taught that love for him guarantees obedience to him. John teaches that love makes us akin to God. Paul here affirms that one will not do harm to his neighbor, if he loves him. Love prevents the sins of adultery, murder, theft, and covetousness, to name those sins mentioned in the context.

Love fulfills the law. Fear will not meet the demands of the law. Until man loves God and re-

spects good government, this world will be cursed with lawlessness.

Why Paul appeals to the law, presumably the law of Moses, might be difficult to understand, since he has labored so hard to wean his hearers away from it. But even Jewish Christians still regarded the demands of the law as standard. And the moral requirements of the law were still binding, not as part of the law, but as the natural requirement of moral beings.

11. *Already it is time to awake out of sleep.* Spiritual indifference and sluggishness are here condemned. "The night (a symbol of evil) is far spent, and the day (a symbol of righteousness) is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." It would be difficult to make this clearer, and impossible to improve upon its teaching.

*Let us walk becomingly.* There is a life that becomes a Christian. There are "things that accompany salvation." Paul mentions a few things which are unbecoming a child of God; revelling, drunkenness, chambering and wantonness (immorality and indecency -- Goodspeed.) strife and jealousy. Yet these things have cursed the church from its beginning!

14. *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.* Paul has much to say in his writings about the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. The child of God should be clothed with Christ, so to speak, and crucify the flesh. Paul's own language is a good comment on this verse: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.)

# QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Do not verses 1-4 teach that good government is of God, and that rulers are servants of God?
2. Is subjection to one's government enjoined without qualification?
3. Note the fundamental importance of love. vv. 9, 10.
4. There is a "becoming" or befitting way of life for Christians. v.13.
5. What is meant by "put ye on the Lord Jesus"? v.14.
6. If the fundamental doctrines of salvation are arbitrary decrees of God, how is it possible that the Christian life can be consistent with these doctrines? See Phil. 1:27; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1. Justification *logically* leads to sanctification. Tit. 2:11-14; Eph. 2:8,9; Rom. 6.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### Forbearance Toward Scruples

1. *But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples.* In this chapter two persons of different convictions about matters of indifference are under consideration. The word "faith" is used in the sense of *conviction*. Paul is not so much concerned with who is "right" or who is "wrong," but about unity. For an example of what is meant by "right" and "wrong" in this context note verse 2: "One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs." Now the man whose scruples permitted him to eat both meat and vegetables was "right," while the vegetarian was "wrong" in refusing to eat meat. It is not actually a *sin* to refuse to eat meat, nor has God demanded that one eat both vegetables and meat. But it is "right" to eat both. It is proper.

Paul considers this difference about eating a matter of indifference: "Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God had received him." But it was not a matter of indifference when they began to display a sectarian spirit and set each other at nought. Judging in the sense of setting others at nought because of a difference of scruples, is not man's prerogative. "Who art thou that judgeth the servant of another? to his own Lord he standeth or falleth." Many times man sets his brother at nought when God has received him. It is possible to be "wrong" in spirit and "right" in practice. Both of the above brethren were "wrong" when they set each other at nought.

This lesson is badly needed today. How many

churches are divided over matters of indifference! Of course, the uninformed person thinks all his scruples are “weighty matters” and that if one differs from him, he is bound to be lost! Some times the person who makes his scruples a test of fellowship is no “babe”, but one who has been eating both “herbs” and “meat” for many years. It is most difficult to preach unity in the face of wrangling. It will be a great day for Christianity when Christians grow up. Many “childish things” are consuming the energy and stealing the time of those who are certain that they are “full-grown.”

8. *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* In a sense, one may be his brother's *keeper*; but he is not his brother's *owner*, or *lord*. I owe my brother some consideration, but he is not my lord. When one decides to disfellowship another, he should be certain that he is right in both spirit and practice. And the right spirit many times will substitute tolerance for excommunication!

The apostle stresses the matter of giving account to God and not to men: “To *me* every knee shall bow.” “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.” This truth is then followed by “Let us not therefore judge one another any more.”

14. *Nothing is unclean of itself.* The context must be considered or one will misrepresent Paul. He speaks here of meats. No food — no meat is unclean. The distinctions made under the law are not now binding.

The apostle qualifies the above statement thus: “Save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” Eating meat is still under consideration. If one considers it wrong to

eat meat, he should not eat it. Not that to eat meat is sin, but to violate one's conscience is sin. One who does what his conscience forbids is dishonest. This is sin. This does not imply that one's conscience is a safe guide, or that nothing is sin unless one thinks it is. Paul is simply warning us not to be dishonest with ourselves by doing what we consider to be wrong.

15. *For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love.* This principle is discussed by the apostle in his first Corinthian letter. Meat that had been offered to an idol was later sold in the market. Paul said that he could eat this meat because he knew that no idol is anything. But if some one saw Paul eating this meat and he was thereby encouraged to eat in honor of the idol, then Paul said he would cease eating meat. "Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge; but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." Hence Paul warns: "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died." No one is unimportant. Christ has invested his blood in every one, great or small, informed or uninformed.

Before leaving this part of the discussion it might be profitable to observe that a thing might be sinful for various reasons. Some things are *inherently* sinful such as murder or lying. What one thinks about these things changes nothing. Whoever commits murder sins. If God has legislated against something, then to do that which God forbids is sin. Once it was wrong to eat certain meats. But we are no longer under the law that forbade eating of such meats. Hence, it is not now sinful, if one eats meats. What Paul says about eating meat in this chapter applies



only to things indifferent, things that are neither commanded nor prohibited.

17. *For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* This statement is fundamental. How much difference there is in scruples about food, and “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” To be more concerned with trivial matters, such as what to eat, than spiritual things, manifests an ignorance of the kingdom of God. What one does not know about spiritual things gets him into trouble. It should be the chief aim of all teachers to instruct in matters that are fundamental. When these “weightier matters” are understood, not so many will be concerned about tithing “mint and anise and cummin.” Old “babes” cause much trouble.

22. *The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God.* Even the strong brother can err, if he insists that the “weak” brother accept his viewpoint. If one thinks it wrong to eat meat, for example, do not try to force him to adopt your practice of eating meat. He is no worse or better for eating only herbs. Let the child play with his toys!

23. *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* It would be difficult to find a passage that is more abused. Every one seems to be able to use it against his neighbor. Some apply this to the worship service, others to methods of doing mission work, etc. The argument runs thus: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin; faith comes by hearing the word of God; hence, anything done in worship or in service to God which is not specifically commanded is sin.” But Paul was not speaking of worship specifically. Paul’s rule is universal. There is no limit to “whatsoever.” To do anything against one’s conviction is sin anywhere and anytime. The “faith” Paul has under considera-

tion did not come from hearing the word of God. "One man hath faith to eat all things," while the other man's faith would not let him eat meat. Note Goodspeed's translation: "The man who has misgivings about eating, and then eats, is thereby condemned, for he is not following his convictions, and anything that does not rest on conviction is wrong." One man's *convictions* allowed him to eat meat, while another man's "faith" or *conviction* would not let him do so. One man refused to ride in an automobile, because he could not find anything in the Bible about this modern mode of travel! His point was well taken according to the usual interpretation of verse 23. One's conviction may be wrong, but it is sin to violate it. The sin consists in dishonesty, not merely in doing certain things.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. Paul is dealing with scruples about things indifferent.
2. Is God particularly interested in one's diet today?
3. Is God tolerant with man's unfounded scruples?
4. Note the fundamental statements of verses 7,8. Do we realize that our lives belong to God?
5. Is it necessary to vindicate one's conduct in the sight of men? vv. 10-12.
6. Discuss: "Nothing is unclean of itself." v.14.
7. When one is about to do another harm he should remember that this person is one for whom Christ died. v.18.

## The Purpose in Preaching to Sinners

Paul's aim in preaching to sinners was to lead them to rely upon Christ for salvation. It is true that he rebuked the legalistic conception of the Jews, but their conception of religion prevented their acceptance of Christ as Saviour. As long as one relies upon himself he cannot rely upon Christ. Read Phil. 3:3-9.

Truth is more than a protest against error. It has positive value. Errors are corrected only that truth may be accepted. Christ died to save sinners, not merely to prove that sinners cannot be saved by law. It is easier to induce the rejection of what is considered error than it is to convert sinners to Christ as their sinoffering.

A true story: One spent an hour preaching against women teaching the Bible. When he had finished he extended the gospel (?) invitation to those who were "willing to be guided by the Bible." Hence, in the context of this sermon, one who responded to the invitation did so in protest to the *heresy* of women teachers. *He would have had no reason to think of the cross.* There is something wrong with the sermon addressed to sinners that does not lead them to Calvary.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### Mutual Helpfulness Enjoined: Personal Matters

1. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* Paul is still thinking of the brother "weak in faith" of the previous chapter. The weak brother needs support, not criticism. The spirit of helpfulness rather than the spirit of intolerance characterizes those who are really strong. No one was more tolerant than Jesus. He was the world's greatest burden bearer. He came to serve man, to bear his reproaches, to bear his sins on the cross.

5. *Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus.* Christ set an example of patient helpfulness, and God is characterized by patience. It takes infinite patience to deal with the weaknesses of men. The apostle urges unity so that "with one accord" all may "glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Regarding one's scruples as divine oracles is a grave danger to the unity of churches. Trifles can destroy fundamentals.

8. *For I say that Christ hath been made a minister for the truth of God; that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.* The connection of these two verses with the previous discussion seems rather obscure. Is it possible that the trouble relative to eating meat and eating herbs was caused by the two elements, Jews and Gentiles, in the church at Rome? At any rate, Jesus recognized both Jews and Gentiles during his personal ministry. His work was principally with the Jews, but he made reference to the Gentiles taking their place among

the Jews in the kingdom of God. (Matt. 8:11.) Note that the Gentiles glorified God for his *mercy*. Any one with a true knowledge of his own unworthiness and a correct conception of the work of Christ as Saviour is deeply impressed with the mercy of God. The quotations from the Old Testament prophets are to the effect that Jews and Gentiles will worship God together, and both recognize Jesus as their hope.

13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.* Paul here recognizes God as the source of hope, and believing as the reason for joy and peace. "Believing" with Paul meant trusting in Jesus as sin-offering and Saviour. He could find no more joy and peace in legalism. Nothing is so comforting to sinful man as the realization that he has a Saviour. One's doctrine is revealed in his prayer for himself and others, as well as in the fact of his hope, joy, and peace. Many more would be "rejoicing in hope" if they knew that they have a real Saviour in Jesus Christ, and not merely another ruler. Christ is our ruler, but he is a ruling Saviour.

*Through the power of the Holy Spirit.* The Spirit is recognized by Paul as dwelling in the child of God, and producing the Christian virtues. (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:22.)

16. *That I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.* This is a highly figurative passage. Paul is represented figuratively as performing a priestly office. He uses the gospel in preparing the Gentiles as an offering to God. On the offering of the Gentiles "being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" see Acts 10:44.

Paul rejoiced in the work he had accomplished

in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles "from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum." It was his "aim so to preach the gospel of Christ, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation." The various problems of mission work require the best talents of mature men. Paul was a natural missionary.

25. *I go unto Jerusalem, ministering to the saints.* See Acts 19:21; 20:22; 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8. This contribution not only supplied the temporal need of the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, but it contributed to the fellowship of Jewish and Gentile Christians. "For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things."

30. *Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* Here is a strong appeal for the prayers of the Christians at Rome. Paul made his plea for their prayers on the basis of Christ, and the love of the Spirit. This last phrase is translated by both Goodspeed and Moffatt thus: "The love which the Spirit inspires." Note this from Paul in 5:5: "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us." In Gal. 5:22 love is named as the "fruit of the Spirit."

*That ye strive . . . in your prayers.* Here is sincere and earnest prayer. Here is importunate prayer. Paul believed that prayer was effective. He desired their prayers that he might be "delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea, and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." Paul had not forgotten the hatred of the unbelieving Jew for him, or the suspi-

cion which the Jewish Christians manifested toward him. Paul was one of the most loved and the most hated men of earth. But when we note who it was that loved him and who it was that hated him, we are caused to appreciate him and love him even more. One of the best recommendations one can have is sometimes found in the character of those who hate him.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. Tolerance toward the untaught, and not adverse criticism, is an indication of spiritual maturity. v.1.

2. Why does the apostle refer to God as "the God of patience"?

3. Even trifles can reveal one's loyalty to Christ: "Be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus." v.5. Relate this to chapter 14.

4. Paul again defends his ministry to the Gentiles by an appeal to prophecy. vv. 8-12.

5. Note the joy that comes from having a Saviour in whom to trust. v.13.

6. In verse 16 Paul is figuratively represented as priest making an offering of the Gentiles. Was an apostle ever regarded as a priest officially?

7. Should mission work be left to the immature? vv. 20,21.

8. Note that Paul expected prayer to make a difference. vv. 30-32.

9. God is a "God of peace," not a "God of confusion." v.32. See 1 Cor. 14:33. Those who cause strife and confusion should seek another "god."

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### Salutations and Conclusions

1. *I commend unto you Phoebe our sister . . . for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self.* People can be classified as helpers or hinderers. Even members of churches can be thus classified. We do not know how Phoebe helped Paul and others, but to be thus commended by so great a man is the greatest recommendation. Here is a humble woman who is termed a "helper" whose name will be honored as long as time shall last. The world could use many more like her.

3. *Salute Prisca and Aquilla my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks.* See Acts 18:2,26. How these two Christians had "laid down their necks" for Paul is not known, but for them he is deeply grateful.

Many others are remembered by Paul of whom we know nothing. It is remarkable how many saints at Rome Paul knew by name.

17. *Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them.* Here are some *hinderers* in contrast to those who were *helpers*. Paul had predicted such persons would arise. (Acts 20: 29,30.) See also Acts 15. There can be little doubt that these dividers were Judaizing teachers who opposed Paul's teaching of justification by grace through faith in Christ as sinoffering. Legalists are always ready to mark them that preach justification as did Paul. Of all persons who should be marked as the most natural and effective enemies of the cross, they are those who preach doctrines that logically nullify the grace of God and the cross of



Christ. Paul disliked such persons, because they disliked Christ.

19. *Your obedience is come abroad unto all men.* At the beginning of this epistle Paul wrote: "Your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." Their believing on Christ was *obedience*, and their obedience was *faith*. Faith does not exist merely to produce obedience. This would be legalism. Faith does produce obedience, but it does much more. It is the response of a lost soul to Christ crucified. It signifies dependence upon the blood of Christ. And the obedience that faith in Christ produces in a sinner means reliance upon Christ as sin-offering.

20. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." He is therefore not the God of those who are characterized by the divisive spirit. Churches that are noted for their internal strife and divisions should find them another "god." The "God of peace" is not their God!

*Shall bruise Satan under your feet.* See Gen. 3:15. Paul expected final victory of right over wrong. He also considered that Satan is the source of all evil. And, of course, Paul believed in a personal devil. He had had too many close encounters with him not to believe that he existed.

*Shortly.* As God counts time. (2 Pet. 3:8.) Or the word may signify "not the nearness of the event, but the celerity or quickness with which it shall be accomplished." (Godet.)

25. *Now unto him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ.* Paul was a great believer in the power of God to accomplish his purposes. (Eph. 3:20, etc.) The source of spiritual strength is *Christ*. The gospel

is not merely a story *about* Christ, but the story of Christ and him crucified. Paul again implies what it is to preach the gospel. It is the "preaching of Jesus Christ." He calls it "my gospel," because he had been "separated unto the gospel of God." He lived to preach the gospel, to preach "Jesus Christ and him crucified." The gospel is spoken of as the "mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." This mystery related to the conversion of the Gentiles. (Eph. 3:3-6.)

26. *Unto obedience of faith.* This phrase is best understood in the light of Paul's discussion of justification through faith in Christ. Faith with Paul, let it be repeated, is more than a principle of action. The gospel does not exist merely to incite general obedience. It induces obedience in the sinner that means faith in Christ as Saviour. The cross demands trust or reliance as naturally as food demands eating. It does not exclude obedience that embodies faith. But such obedience is faith. For a fuller discussion of this phrase see comments on 1:5.

27. *To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.* One can see in this doxology a hint of much that Paul has stressed in this epistle. Having completed the doctrinal part of Romans, the apostle broke forth in a wonderful expression of praise to the wisdom of God. But his wisdom was revealed through Jesus Christ. And to God and Christ belong all the glory. (3:27.) Paul never so completely revealed himself as when he was giving glory to God through Jesus Christ. If ever there was a product of pure mercy, it was Paul the Christian. Whoever does not feel the urge to give God thanks for his salvation, would do well to compare his conception of Christ with that of Paul.

Here closes one of the most profound works in existence. It can be neglected only at the peril of true Christianity. No one should presume to teach sinners who has not spent many hours with Paul in this charter of Christian faith. The book of *The Acts* can be understood only when Paul's discussion of justification is understood. One can learn from *The Acts* what sinners did to be saved, but Luke does not attempt to give the meaning of what they did. *Romans* is certain death to formalism and legalism. As long as time shall last students of the scriptures will thank God for Paul.

## QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. Note the number of friends and helpers Paul called by name.
2. It is an honor to have one's name in the Scriptures, but it is a greater honor to have one's name in the "book of life." Phil. 4:3; Rev. 21:27.
3. Is there any reason to think that Paul referred to Judaizing teachers in v. 17?
4. Belief in the ability of God is fundamental. v. 25; Eph. 3:20; Rom. 4:24; Col. 2:12.
5. On the phrase, "the obedience of faith" see under 1:5.
6. Is the expression, "churches of Christ" (v. 16) a title? See "church of God." (1 Cor. 1:2), and "church of the Thessalonians." (1 Thes. 1:1.) What of the practice of using the expression "Church of Christ" to the exclusion of "Church of God"?

## Concluding Remarks

Though great emphasis has been given the necessity of preaching Christ as sin offering in former pages, a few concluding remarks are considered in order.

1. *The gospel has not been preached when the cross has been ignored.* This is true because to preach the gospel is to preach the cross. “For Christ sent me — to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made void. For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.” (1 Cor. 1:17,18.) To preach on the duty of *benevolence* or of *holiness* is not to preach the *cross* or the *gospel* in the sense of Rom. 1:16. Simply because a sermon is the truth on *some* subject, or because it is learned and eloquent, it must not be considered a substitute for the gospel of Christ. Or again, because a sermon stresses one command, or more than one command, addressed to sinners, it must not be considered a gospel sermon, unless the cross is also preached.

A true story: A man of learning and repute preached an eloquent sermon addressed to sinners. In this sermon Christ as sin offering was completely ignored. From this sermon no sinner could have learned anything about Christ as Saviour. Had a sinner responded to the invitation at the close of this sermon, he could have had no intention of responding to Christ crucified. He could have done no more than “render humble obedience” to some commands given by Christ. He could have done no more than offer his obedience in exchange for salvation? The truth concerning this sermon is tragic: *It was a Christless, crossless, bloodless, graceless sermon!* No gospel is just as bad as a perverted gospel.

2. *Let us not have faith in men, but in God.*

Paul deliberately under-sold himself, "that (as he wrote the Corinthians) your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." When Peter by his actions denied the universality of the gospel Paul wrote: "I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned." (Gal. 2:11.) Great men can do great harm. The masses are inclined to follow *names* rather than Scripture.

The words of Emerson are timely here: "If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation." Emerson has so well expressed the sentiments of so many!

Another literary genius has well said:

Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,  
But catch the spreading notion of the town;  
They reason and conclude by precedent,  
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.  
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then  
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.

—Alexander Pope.

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