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EXEGESIS OF ROMANS V-VIII¹

I. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH (V. 1-11)

CHAPTER V. We are first told *the result of righteousness* or justification. (v. 1) Those justified by faith secure ("we have") peace with God, which the world can neither give nor take away. (v. 2) By faith they are also brought into the grace in which they now stand, the grace of the new life of the justified. (v. 3) It is on our hope of the glory of God that we base our rejoicing; not only so, but actually we are rejoicing in tribulations. *We* know, what every trained soldier knows, that tribulation teaches you to stick it ("patience"); (v. 4) sticking it makes you a tested and proved individual ("probation"); if you are that, you cherish hope; (v. 5) and such hope is no disgrace, because God's love has been poured forth in your hearts *through* the Holy Spirit given to you. This is the secret of the *trained* Christian soldier. The hope "maketh not ashamed", *because* our souls are flooded by the Paraclete by the love which is God's (cf. iv. 6, the blessedness of the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works); (v. 6) if indeed, while we were still weak, Christ did die in due season for the ungodly!—as indeed He did. (v. 7) What would *men* have done? For a righteous man scarcely anyone will die. For a good man one might perhaps even dare to die. (v. 8) But God commends His (unparalleled) love towards us, that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. (v. 9) *A fortiori*, if we have already been justified in His blood, we shall be saved through Him (as Mediator) from *the* wrath (i.e. of God). (v. 10) Our being justified shows that we were reconciled to God through His Son's *death* while we were still His enemies: much more, being now reconciled, we shall be saved by His *life* (v. 10 is another way of restating v. 9: GOD is the actor throughout, *not* we). (v. 11) Not only are we reconciled; we actually rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received now, to-day, the reconciliation which God gives, and not something that we concede.

¹To be read with the Revised Version.

II. ADAM AND CHRIST (v. 12-21)

(v. 12) Because of this reconciliation ("therefore")—and now follows a grammatical anacolouthon. There is no sequel to the "as" clause, which depicts Adam as the "type" of Him who was to come. "As through one man sin entered the world, and through sin death, and so death extended to all men, because all men have sinned"—(v. 13) "down to the Law (of Moses) sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed if there is no law. (v. 14) Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who did not sin after the likeness of Adam's transgression" (eating the forbidden fruit. But they all sinned). Adam is "a figure (or type) of Him that was to come", i.e. Christ (cf. Matt. xi. 3: "art Thou He that cometh? or look we for another?"). Upon v. 14 some argue for the universality of sin but not for its originality. This would be to deny our oneness in Adam, which is the "type" of the oneness of the redeemed in Christ. Others indignantly repudiate the idea of sin in an infant: they must be sentimentalists or must never have had anything to do with an infant. We are all in Adam *and* we are all sinners. If we refuse to say "and *therefore* we are all sinners", we destroy the solidarity of the human race and deny the universality of our inevitable need of a Saviour from above. Weber, summarising Talmudic views, says that the Talmud asserts an inherited guilt but not an inherited sin; the fall of Adam has brought death upon the whole race, not however sinfulness in the sense of a necessity to sin. Sin is the result of each individual's decision; it is, as far as experience goes, universal, yet in itself, even after the Fall, not absolutely necessary. This is *not* the Christian view, which may be summarised in the words, "There is none righteous, no, not one". Christ alone, *we* believe, is perfectly sinless among the children of men, so far as He belongs to Adam's breed. "A sin which we commit in Adam (and which never becomes ours otherwise) is a mere fancy to which one has nothing serious to say." So James Denney. But how can a reality attested to faith be a "mere fancy"?

(v. 15) The parallel between Adam and Christ now becomes a contrast. "Not as the trespass is the free gift. If by the trespass of the one the many (i.e. all) died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one human being

Jesus Christ overflow to the many." Here some think of the fallen race being redeemable *quâ* race; which does not accord with any kind of election. (v. 16) "And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift". The judgment was of one unto condemnation (of all); the free gift was of many transgressions unto a pronouncement of justification. (The Greek word means a judicial utterance or decree or act of justification or righteousness.) (v. 17) To put it otherwise, "if by the trespass of the one, death was king through the one (Adam), much more shall they who receive the superabundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness be kings in life through the One, even Jesus Christ". (The connection with Christ annuls for eternity the sinful connection with Adam. That is, Christ annuls our bond of sin with Adam: or else He does not. *Either—Or.*) (v. 18) "So then, as through one trespass all men are condemned; so too through one justification all men are justified unto life". (This is the sort of passage which those who cannot tolerate a real doctrine of God's decree manipulate into terms of a different alignment suited to the nature of human knowledge, so called by them.) (v. 19) "As through one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so too through the obedience of the one the many (not necessarily the same "many"!) shall be constituted righteous". Here the comparison between Adam and Christ ends. (v. 20) But there is still the Law. "Enter the Law as an accessory, that the trespass might be multiplied. But where sin was multiplied, grace was multiplied the more exceedingly: (v. 21) that as sin was king in death, so too grace through righteousness might be king unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Grace is not the end. It leads through righteousness to its consummation, eternal life. And all "through Jesus Christ our Lord", which is not mere rhetorical doxology, but a powerful reminder that from start to finish the redeemed are bought individually, one by one, for a price.

III. UNION WITH CHRIST (vi. 1-14)

CHAPTER vi. Here we recall v. 8f., 2ob f., "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified in His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath through Him. . . .

Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? "Is there a temptation in the very fact that we *know* we are saved? To go on achieving justification, are we to do evil that (this) good may come (iii. 8)? Because, where sin abounded, grace did superabound, does the Gospel really make void the law (iii. 31)? St. Paul has to show that it is those who have received reconciliation (v. 11), who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (v. 17), who are the people in whom the judicial decree of righteousness is fulfilled (v. 16). In chapter vi, we shall see, the Christian dies to sin in baptism (by the Holy Spirit!). In chapter vii he is by death freed from the law which, indispensable as it is, in a way really stimulates sin. In chapter viii the Spirit imparted to believers breaks the power of the flesh and enables them to live to God.

(v. 1) "If v. 2of. is true, are we to keep sin on the go, in order to maintain the access of grace? (v. 2) Away with the thought! How shall we, who have died to sin, live any longer in it?" If we are dead so far as sin is concerned, we have nothing more to do with sin. *We cannot* continue to live in it. (v. 3) "Christians should know that those baptised into Christ were baptised into His death" and into the consequences of it. (v. 4) "Through baptism they share burial with Him into His death". And the analogy goes farther! "Through the glory of the Father, Christ was raised from the dead; the result is that we are also enabled to walk in newness of life." We forget what is past and look unto Jesus, who died *for* sin, that we might be dead *to* sin. (v. 5) Union with Christ's death is union with Christ altogether. "If we have become united to Him in the likeness of His death, then so *shall* we become united to Him in the likeness of His resurrection." If baptism associates us with Christ's death (through our death to sin), we shall have an analogous consummation in association with His resurrection. We are *wholly* bound to Christ in life, in death and in resurrection. Baptism immerses us, and raises us out of the water again (in this instance, death); raising from death *is* resurrection. Christ is buried and rises again: we are bound up with Him in the whole process. (v. 6) "Our old man was crucified with Him for the destruction of the sinful body, in order to cancel our slavery to sin *forthwith*. (v. 7) The man that has died (with Christ!) has

settled all obligations in the way of sin, or has had them settled for him. (v. 8) That being so, we believe (faith again!) that we shall also live with Him (union with Christ runs the entire gamut of possibilities). (v. 9) Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more. Death no longer holds dominion over Him". (Its dominion expired with the death on the Cross.) (v. 10) "He did die, of course—to sin—once for all. He is alive—for God". He died, not *as* a sinner but *for* sinners; He lives as the conqueror of sin—for God, the claims of sin annulled for ever. (v. 11) Death with Christ and life with Christ are realities; but realities to be continually and, in the individual case, progressively realised, in this life as well as in the life to come, during sanctification as well as after its consummation beyond death. "Even so do ye reckon yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

(v. 12) "Therefore let not sin lord it in your (*plural*) mortal body (*singular*) [does this refer to the body of Christ (i.e. all Christians)?], by obtempering its desires". Let not sin tyrannise over you corporeally, who are the visible body of Christ in the world (?). (v. 13) "Do not go on presenting your limbs to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. Present yourselves outright (once for all) to God, as if you *were* alive from the dead; and your limbs to God, as if they were weapons of righteousness. (v. 14) Sin shall not lord it over you. Ye are not under law but under grace". Law almost makes you sin. Law says, *Don't* walk on the grass: sin says at once, *Shall* walk on the grass if I like. "Thou shalt not" must give place to the power of the Spirit. Mount Sinai at best shows us how frail we are; Mount Calvary is sheerly saint-producing. And a saint is a sinner saved by Christ, a sinner till death comes and closes the account, closes it *for the sake of Jesus Christ*, not one shred for the merit of the sinner thus made saint, a saint—sin notwithstanding.

(To be continued)

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