

THE LOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF ROM. V. 15-17.

IT is not a detailed exegesis of these three verses which I propose to lay before the readers of THE EXPOSITOR. All that I was able to offer in this way has already appeared in my *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. I simply desire to present, more precisely than I have succeeded in doing hitherto, the logical connexion which unites these three verses to each other, and to the whole passage of which they form a part (vers. 12-21).

In the preceding chapters the apostle has laid down as two indisputable historic facts, on the one hand, the state of *condemnation* in which all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, is found (i. 18 to iii. 20); on the other, the universal *justification* of the same humanity in Christ (iii. 21 to v. 11): "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In these two verses, which mark the transition from one of the two sections to the other, we have a summary of both, and consequently of all the earlier portion of the epistle.

Having set forth these two great facts, the state of condemnation in which all are plunged, and the sentence of justification obtained for all by Jesus Christ, the apostle goes on to show (vers. 12-21) that the fact of the salvation of humanity being accomplished by one Man corresponds to the manner of his fall, which also resulted from the action of one man. Humanity has been raised in One, as it fell in one. Universal perdition and universal redemption are thus each bound up in a central personality.

What is the object of the apostle in placing this third passage as a corollary to the two which precede it, and which are thus linked closely together? Is he simply giving himself up to an interesting meditation, to a train

of thought intellectually curious? It often happens that, after having expounded any subject, St. Paul likes to summarise it in a general review, which, to the mind of the reader, is full of rich spiritual enjoyment. Thus in chap. xi. of this same epistle, after having unfolded to the view of his readers the different phases by which the gospel will eventually reach the whole of humanity, first the heathen, as the result of its rejection by the Jews, afterwards the Jews, as the result of its adoption by the heathen, he gives himself up (vers. 32-36) to the contemplation of these ways and judgments of God—a contemplation which bears the same relation to the religious future of humanity as the passage we are now considering bears to its past.

But we should misunderstand the apostle if we were to represent him as writing such passages merely with a view to intellectual gratification. His true object is here, as always, the strengthening of his readers' faith. By showing the analogy of the fact that salvation was consummated in one Man, with the other fact, that the fall was likewise the work of one man, he seeks to remove from evangelical teaching on this subject all that might appear strange to the mind of a Gentile who heard the good news set forth for the first time.

Nay, more; from this general survey each reader was intended to draw for himself a pressing invitation to free himself completely from his union with the diseased stem to which by nature he belonged, and to form, by the free act of faith, a new union with the vigorous and healthy tree planted on earth by the hand of God, and in which each believer has his place already prepared (according to St. Paul's own words in Romans i. 16: "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth").

This great thought of the parallel between the author of the fall and the Author of redemption is developed in

four different sections in chap. v. 12-21. In the first (vers. 12-14) St. Paul states the fact of the universality of sin and death, as resulting from the fall of Adam; in the second (vers. 15-17), with which we are now specially concerned, he shows the points of difference between the two facts which he compares; in the third (vers. 18-21) he completes the comparison; the fourth (vers. 20, 21) describes the part taken by the law as a transition stage between the economy of sin and that of salvation.

In the first section (vers. 12-14) Paul affirms the fact that each man dies in consequence of the sin of Adam, and not as a result of his own sin. If it were otherwise, it is clear that the parallel between Adam, as the source of death, and Jesus, as the source of life, would be utterly destroyed. This is why the opposite idea, widely accepted as it is, must be expressly set aside. Such is the purpose of vers. 13 and 14, which are not in any sense a digression, as at first sight it might appear. They form, on the contrary, a necessary link in the logic of the argument. The apostle further demonstrates the fact, that the death of all men is the consequence of the sin of Adam, and not of their own sins, by pointing out that sin rouses the Divine anger, and provokes, as a result, the death of the sinner, only when it is the conscious and deliberate violation of a positive command. Now no positive command existed between the time of Adam and of Moses, and yet men died during that period. Hence it follows that death reigns in humanity, not because of the sins of individuals, but because of the transgression of the father of the race.

This point being settled, it seems that the apostle need only pass now to the other side of the parallel, and assert, as a pendant to the condemnation of all in Adam, the justification of all in Christ. But, singularly enough, he merely indicates this idea in passing at the end of ver. 14 ("Adam who is a figure of Him that was to come"), to

resume and develop it later on in vers. 18, 19; and he inserts, first of all, the section contained in vers. 15-17 which we are now to consider, and which in its logical bearing, is one of the most difficult—in my opinion *the* most difficult—of all the passages in this epistle.

The following is a translation of it, as exact, it not as literal, as it can be made :

Ver. 15. "But with the gift of grace it is not as with the trespass. For if by the trespass of the one *the many* [all the human race] died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift made by it of the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ, abound unto the many [all the human race].

Ver. 16. "And not as through the deed of one that sinned,¹ so is the gift; for by the act of judgment one sin resulted in condemnation, but by the act of grace many sins² have resulted in justification.

Ver. 17. "For if by one sin³ death reigned by one, much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ."

On reaching ver. 14, as we have said, instead of pointing out the similarity of the case of Adam with that of Jesus Christ, St. Paul points out wherein the difference between the two consists. "But the gift of grace *is not* as the fall" (ver. 15). And also "the gift *came not* as through one who sinned" (ver. 16). What motive can the apostle have had for breaking off in the comparison he had begun, and for turning his readers' attention to the distinction between the two parallel cases?

The apostle appears to suppose that this objection might be made: Even if it is certain that by the sin of Adam death spread over the whole human race, it is not certain that the

¹ We may read also, "by the doing of a single sin."

² Or we might translate, "the sins of many."

³ We may read, "by the sin of one" (cf. ver. 15)

justification provided by Christ was extended equally far; and, further, that as the sin of Adam has been multiplied *ad infinitum* in the sins of his descendants, it is doubtful whether the work of the one Man Jesus Christ, even if it made reparation for that primitive trespass, provided also a justification for the numerous sins freely committed by after generations. We see that the first question has reference to the *extension*, the second to the degree of *intensity* of the two works which are compared. Not until these two points have been explained, can the apostle, without fear of contradiction, conclude in the words of ver. 18, "Ἄρα οὖν ὡς . . . οὕτως καὶ. . . . So then, even as . . . even so also."

For the purpose of settling these two questions, the apostle brings forward a single and unique consideration, which he applies in ver. 15 to the first and in ver. 17 to the second. It is the superiority in power and value of the agencies set in action on the part of Christ, as compared with those set in action on the part of Adam. On the one hand, a single trespass committed by one man, a false step, as the Greek term implies (*παράπτωμα*); on the other, the meeting of two forces, each of which would be powerful enough to counterbalance the effect of Adam's sin, and which, when united, make the salutary effect of the work of Christ much more certain than the deadly effect resulting from the work of Adam.

In ver. 15 the apostle seeks to prove that the justification obtained through Christ could not possibly apply to a *less extensive* domain than the condemnation called forth by the sin of Adam. In the first clause he calls attention to the fact that this condemnation to death has fallen upon *the many* (*οἱ πολλοί*), that is to say, the whole of humanity, as contrasted with the one man who has sinned; in the second clause he places in opposition to that one feeble sin, which

has produced such enormous consequences, the two infinitely more powerful agencies which operate together in the work of Christ: (1) the grace of God, *i.e.* the condescending love of the Creator, who laboured on behalf of His miserable creature and bent down to save him; (2) another grace, resulting from the former, the gift of a being who has become a member of our race, and whose brotherly love has been added to the fatherly love of God, in order to complete the sacrifice necessary for our salvation. What a power exists in these two united loves! Would it not be strange if their influence were not to extend at least *as far* as the influence exerted by so feeble a cause as the sin of Adam, and were not to reach the utmost limits of the region marked out in the first clause as "*the many*" (*οἱ πολλοί*)? A mere thread of water has sufficed to inundate a certain definite space of ground; would not a far fuller current of water be much more certain to submerge the same region? This is the *à fortiori* reasoning of ver. 15.

The expression "*the many*," common to both propositions, indicates an equal extension in both cases. But we must carefully consider the preposition *εἰς*, *towards*, *for*, used in the second clause. It indicates merely an eventual *destination*, and not, as yet, an actual application. The apostle does not mean to say that these "*many*" who die through the sin of Adam have all been really justified by the work of Christ; but that they *may* all be justified by it. The treasure of justification offered by Christ is sufficiently abundant to allow of each individual drawing out of it his own justification; each man has the right to be justified by Him. Not one of those who die in Adam is excluded from the grace, but the individual application of this right depends on the free act of faith (see ver. 17); and this is why the apostle makes use of the preposition *εἰς*, *for*, which marks direction, destination, and not the preposition *ἐπί*, *upon* (added to *εἰς* in iii. 22, to mark individual appropria-

tion, and used alone in the same sense, Phil. iii. 9). For the same reason the words *τοὺς πιστεύοντας*, *believers*, which we find in iii. 22, are omitted here.

We must further notice in ver. 15 the choice of the verb *ἐπερίσσευσεν*, *has over-abounded*. There is, as it were, a surplus of salvation in the work of Christ. It was not enough, in order to assure the justification of the *many*, that their condemnation should be simply counterbalanced and revoked; a merely equivalent value of condemnation and grace would have had a purely negative result ($x - x = 0$). There would, in this case, have been no *real* advance, no positive progress. A new beginning would have had to be made between God and men. In order that condemnation should be not merely neutralized by forgiveness, but replaced by a declaration of positive righteousness, an overplus was necessary (as we read in ver. 17, reproducing the idea of ver. 15, "an over-abundance of the gift of righteousness," *περίσσεια τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης*). This is the precise meaning of the verb *ἐπερίσσευσεν*—a river which has overflowed its banks in the direction of the many, in order to reach them. This idea is more fully applied in ver. 17. The first point is settled, and well settled. If the fact proves that the *many* died as the result of the sin of Adam, it is for that very reason impossible to doubt that the work of salvation, due to the twofold grace of God and of the Man Christ Jesus, His ambassador, virtually extended its justifying influence to the *many*, without exception. From our point of view this is a perfectly simple truth; it was not equally apparent to the readers of this epistle, of whom a certain number may have asked themselves whether the redemption accomplished by Christ was of force for all men, or only for a class, such, for instance, as the Jews (cf. Rom. iv. 28-30, where this question is proposed and considered).

There was another point to be considered here. The

work of Christ might have removed the guilt which weighed upon humanity as the result of the sin of its first father, while at the same time it need not necessarily follow that the sinners who descended from him were also justified from the sins which they had each of their own free will committed. As we have pointed out, the disobedience of Adam had been followed, in the course of centuries, by the innumerable multitude of disobedient actions committed by his descendants. Now from the fact that one transgression was enough to draw down condemnation upon many, it does not follow that one righteousness would be enough to justify these many, not only from the one collective transgression which causes them to die, but also from all the personal and voluntary sins which they themselves have added to it. One spark is sufficient to set a forest on fire; but when the forest is all aflame and forms one huge furnace, would a single drop of water be sufficient to extinguish each burning tree, and transform the furnace into a blooming garden? This question, which hangs upon the other, is answered in the 16th and 17th verses. The *kai*, and, with which ver. 16 begins, signifies, "And we must observe that —." The words which follow mean that the gift of justification has not been made, like the judgment of condemnation, with reference to one sinner, Adam, but also with reference to the multitude of sinners who followed. This is what the two propositions which follow in this verse virtually maintain. While one sin resulted in the condemnation of humanity, it is for a multitude of sins that Jesus has obtained the sentence of justification. Ver. 17 serves to prove the truth of this affirmation.

Needless difficulty has been raised with reference to the *for* in ver. 17. It has been maintained that the apostle, far from proving anything new in this verse, is merely repeating what he has twice already said (vers. 15, 16). Another explanation of the *for* is, that the apostle passed over ver.

16 and used this particle with reference to the statement of ver. 15. But an intellect as keenly logical as that of Paul does not commit such blunders.

The basis of the reasoning presented in ver. 17 is this common sense maxim: If a cause produce a certain effect, the opposite cause will produce the contrary effect. The application is this: If the sin of Adam produced death, the righteousness offered in Christ cannot fail to produce life; for if the condemnation result in death, it is clear that the justification ought to cause new life. A second maxim, which results from the first, is this: If the first cause, weak as it is, produced an immense effect, it is certain that the second cause, provided that it contains much more powerful factors than the first, will not fail to produce more important results. In its application the maxim reads thus: If it is certain that the fall of Adam had the important effect of inaugurating the reign of death which weighs upon humanity, it is yet more certain that the work of Christ, in which are united the Divine grace and the gift of righteousness obtained by Jesus, will produce in the case of those who lay themselves open to the action of this more powerful influence a reign of life, which will take the place of the reign of death.

I said, among those who lay themselves open to its influence. St. Paul himself reminds us of this in the words, "those who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness." He here again calls to mind the powerful agencies alluded to in ver. 15. But the principle which acts as an effective cause in the direction of salvation is no longer here merely justification as a right, virtually obtained by Christ for the many (*πολλοί*, ver. 15). The reference here is to that righteousness *accepted by the individual*, and now existing, by the free act of faith, as a life-giving power in the hearts of sinners who believe. It is infinitely more certain that a reign of life will result in

their case from the appropriation of the grace of righteousness which is in Christ, than that a reign of death resulted from the sin of Adam.

And now we are in a position to understand the logical connexion between vers. 16 and 17, and to see how the second of these verses demonstrates the fact affirmed in the first. For, having once admitted that believers shall share in the Divine life, and reign in that life of glory through the work of Christ, as certainly as they died through the work of Adam, we must further admit that they have each individually found in Christ justification from their own sin, for this pardon is the condition of eternal life. How can they be raised and glorified if they have not been justified? This is the meaning of the *for* at the beginning of ver. 17.

And even if it happen that it is only a certain number of the *many* for whom the work of Christ becomes really a principle of justification, and hence of life and glory, the very fact that they obtained this privilege as a free gift (through the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness) proves that the same grace had been obtained in Christ for all (cf. ver. 15), and that all might have appropriated it by the simple act of faith.

And thus, as a result of this twofold demonstration (in ver. 15 of the virtual similarity of extent of the justification obtained in Christ, and in vers. 16 and 17 of the superiority of the effect produced by that justification, as compared with the effect of death produced by Adam), the apostle is able to conclude by resuming in ver. 18 the comparison he had begun in ver. 12, and to declare in triumphant tones, "So then, even as . . . even so."

The unique and singularly bold feature in the apostle's reasoning consists in this, that he makes the very power of the transgression which drew down death upon humanity a proof of the yet more certain power of the gift of grace,

by which we obtain righteousness in Jesus Christ. Here is the summary of his complete argument. The more the extent and power of the reign of death prove the greatness of the condemnation which fell upon a single sin, the more certainly do the extent and power of the reign of life, established in the heart of believers by the twofold grace of God and Christ, prove the fact of justification granted to humanity in Christ, its Lord. Condemnation made manifest by death, justification shining forth in the gift of life—these are the opposite poles of St. Paul's idea in this passage, as in all the earlier portion of this epistle.

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THE LANGUAGE AND METRE OF
ECCLESIASTICUS.

A REPLY TO CRITICISM.

I.

IN my inaugural lecture as Professor of Arabic (generously published by the Clarendon Press), I advanced the following theses :

I. That the proverbs of Ben-Sira are preserved in a number of independent sources, of which the most important are the Greek and Syriac versions, after them certain fragmentary revisions contained in the Latin version, certain MSS. of the Greek, and the secondary versions.

II. That there are reasons for believing that these proverbs were in a metre resembling the Arabic metre called *Mutakārib*.

III. That the language which from these various sources Ben-Sira appears to have used was a mixture of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac, resembling the language of the treatise *Aboth* de R. Nathan.