

apprehended the revelation of a free forgiveness, all the texts about repentance began to charm and attract him, began, he says, in his strong way, to sport and frolic around him; their very sound was music; nothing was so dear or so delightful.—C. J. VAUGHAN.

### Sorrow unto Death.

It is recorded of a man, that in the body, on the earth, he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. In heaven it will be equally impossible to find a place of repentance, with this difference, that none will seek one there. Considering how many repentings are in human life, and how painful they are, it is a gladsome feature of the better land that it knows them not for ever.—W. ARNOT.

It is well known that the corpse has been preserved for centuries in the iceberg, or in the antiseptic peat; and that when atmospheric air was introduced into the exposed surface it crumbled into dust. Exposure worked dissolution, but it only manifested the death which was already there; so with sorrow, it is not the living heart which drops to pieces, or crumbles into dust, when it is revealed. Exposure did not work death in the Corinthian sinner, but life.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

WHEN Dante descends to the Fifth Circle of the Inferno, he finds there a black and loathsome marsh, made by the swarthy waters of the Stygian stream pouring down into it, dreary and turbid, through the cleft which they have worn out for themselves. And there in the putrid fen, he sees the souls of those whom anger has ruined, and they are smiting and tearing and maiming one another in ceaseless, senseless rage. But there are others there, his master tells him, whom he cannot see, whose sobs make those bubbles that he may mark ever rising to the surface of the pool—others, plunged further into the filthy swamp. And what is the sin that has thrust them down into that uttermost wretchedness? 'Fixed in the slime, they say, "Gloomy were we in the sweet air,

that is gladdened by the sun, carrying sullen, lazy smoke within our hearts; now lie we gloomy here in the black mire? This hymn they gurgle in their throats, for they cannot speak it in full words."

Surely it is a tremendous and relentless picture of unbroken sullenness—of wilful gloom that has for ever shut out the light and love; of that death which the sorrow of the world worketh.—F. PAGET.

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## The Theology of the Epistle to the Romans.

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### THE LIFE OF THE JUSTIFIED.

THE words at the beginning of chap. v. mark the beginning of a new stage in the argument. The process of justification is over; we are accepted by God; our life begins again under new conditions and with new opportunities. It is this new life that St. Paul proceeds to describe in chaps. v.—viii. It will be convenient first of all to give a short sketch of the argument, and then, as previously, to touch upon some of the main characteristics of the apostle's teaching. It will not be pos-

sible to do more than develop the leading ideas, and much that is full of interest must be left on one side.

These chapters may be subdivided in the following manner:—

1. V. 1—11. The positive results of Justification: Peace with God, Hope, Salvation.
2. V. 12—21. Contrast of the work of Adam and Christ.
3. VI. 1—vii. 25. Justification does not imply freedom to sin, but freedom from sin.

- (a) The gift of grace does not mean licence to sin (vi. 1-14).
- (b) Freedom from law does not imply licence to sin. The Christian freedom means a change of masters, not a freedom from service (vi. 15-23), a new marriage to bring forth fruit unto God, not a sterile union (vii. 1-6).
- (c) The gift of grace means the power of victory over sin (vii. 7-25).

4. VIII. 1-39. It is because of this victory over sin that there is no condemnation for the justified. The Christian life is one in the Spirit (1-11), of confident hope and assurance (12-30), of union with Christ (31-39).

1. The decree of amnesty has gone forth; let us be willing to accept the peace which has been offered to us. If we do so, our life will be no longer one of despair or indifference, but of hope. Nay, more, the bodily afflictions and persecutions to which we are exposed will increase that hope, for they will afford that test of our principles which will prove their reality. The gift of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of God's love are the guarantees of our hope, a love shown in the death of Christ for our sins. By that we are justified; the old enmity is removed; we may look forward with confident hope to our future salvation.

2. The work of Christ, its greatness and power, is then brought out by the contrast it affords to the work of Adam. So far as this passage enabled us to understand St. Paul's teaching on the subject of sin, we have considered it; but the purpose for which it is introduced here is to bring out more clearly and prominently the work of Christ. The typical character of Christ and Adam had been taught in the Epistle to the Corinthians. They represent, as does Moses, periods in the history of the human race. There is this great analogy between them: they are representative. But there the resemblance ceases the difference is twofold. It is a difference of character. The one was to condemnation; the other to acquittal. It is a difference of degree. However great might be the transgression, however great might be the sin, the power of God's grace and free favour would always be greater. 'Where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin reigned in death, so also grace may reign through righteousness to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

3. But this reference to the 'abundance of grace' suggests a practical difficulty which we know, as a matter of fact, actually existed in the apostles' time, and has broken out secretly or openly since then. If St. Paul's teaching be true; if the greater the sin, the greater the grace—why trouble about our conduct, why not continue in sin that grace may abound? St. Paul's manner of meeting this somewhat specious argument is to show that it is absolutely inconsistent with the initial act of the Christian life, absolutely inconsistent with the conditions on which we receive God's grace or favour. We receive grace because of a victory over sin on the part of Christ, and that victory over sin must be made our own. Our Christian life begins in baptism. And what else does that mean but the putting on ourselves of Christ's death, in order that we may share in His life. The very external aspect of the ceremony shows this. We go down into the baptismal tank, the waters come over us; we as it were die. As Christ died on the cross, so we die; as He conquered sin, so we die to sin; as He rose, so we rise in newness of life—a new birth to a new life. All this is quite inconsistent with a life of sin. Grace frees you from sin; it does not set you free to sin.

Or look at the question again from another point of view. You are freed from service, freed from the law; you are no longer its slaves. Quite true. But how have you become this? It is not by a decree releasing all slaves and making them at once freemen; it is, to use a phrase from another epistle, because 'you are bought with a price'; because Christ has made you His servants, restored you to your true allegiance to Him. You are still servants, but what a very different kind of service! The wages then were 'of sin unto death,' the wages now are 'of righteousness to life eternal.'

Or again. We may represent the same thought under the metaphor of marriage. You, *i.e.* your real personal self, were married once to your sin-stained flesh. That old nature of yours has been destroyed through the death of Christ. You are free to contract a new marriage, a marriage with Christ; and this marriage must not be sterile; but as the old union brought forth fruits unto death, so the new union must bring forth fruits unto God.

The result of this new relation to God will be, in fact, that power will be given for victory over

this principle of sin that dwells in us and has corrupted our whole nature. We have already described this contest, and the meaning of it. We must now remember the victory. 'Who will save me from the body of this death?' 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' He will save me.

4. It is for this reason that there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. It is because we are freed from sin, because sin has been condemned, that that justification which was impossible under the law became possible for us.

There is no condemnation because our life is one in the Spirit and not in the flesh. A life in the Spirit means one in which our spiritual nature, that side of our nature which is divine in origin and character, is supreme—supreme, because it is inspired by and is responsive, to the Divine Spirit which thus dwells in us.

But then, again, this consciousness that we have the divine nature in us is a guarantee of the truth of our spiritual fatherhood. Spiritually we are sons of God, and the Spirit in us gives us strength and confidence to confess this. That is a sign that we are heirs, fellow-heirs with Christ, of the heavenly kingdom.

But, again, this attitude of hope is in accordance with the expectant attitude of nature. Nature, like mankind, has not yet succeeded in attaining its true aim. It looks forward to a higher consummation. Now, if we look upon the world as created once for all, full-grown, perfect, and complete, by the single act of the Creator, to exist for a time and then be destroyed also by the act of the Creator, these words seem meaningless. But this is just one of those points in which modern speculation has helped us to understand more fully St. Paul's thoughts. If we boldly recognise that on one side man is a part of the whole system of the universe, and that that universe has attained its present form by that continued process upwards, which we are accustomed to call evolution; that nature, like man, is as yet imperfect, and looking to a higher end: then the meaning and force of St. Paul's language

becomes clear. This law of upward progress is exhibited not only by human nature but by the whole of the natural world.

But our Christian hope has other grounds on which it may be based. We have the Spirit actually praying in and through us on our behalf. We have the guarantee which our knowledge of the divine nature gives us that God's purpose will be carried out to its final end. If He has elected us and called us to His kingdom, if He has ordained that we should be fashioned in the likeness of His Son, if He has begun the process by declaring us to be just in His sight—the necessary result will be that we are to be glorified: 'Whom He justifies, them He also glorifies.' We have not at present to discuss the question of election; but we may notice that St. Paul does not say, 'All whom he justifies, these also He glorifies'; nor, again, does he say, 'None will be glorified but those whom He has called.' What he does wish to say is: 'The continuity and consistency of God's purpose is a guarantee that that process which He has begun He will carry through to the end.'

The apostle has been gradually working up to his final conclusion. He is breaking away from the strict bonds of reason and thought by which he has been restraining himself. We feel, as we read, the strength of feeling which lies behind what he has written. Now, at length, he allows himself to break into one of those great rhetorical passages, all the more impressive from the contrast they present with his habitual self-suppression and the logical character of his style. Our confidence in God's consistency, our own spiritual experiences, are a sufficient proof that nothing can separate us from Him. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall persecution, or suffering, or hunger, or thirst, or cold, or nakedness, or the sword? I am persuaded, that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'