

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE epistle to the Romans is, in character, a treatise on the gospel. It is a divinely-authorized unfolding of the nature and character of the gospel.

Chapter 1: 1-17 is a fitting introduction. In it we are assured that the epistle is written by divine authority. Paul, the human author of it, writes as one who has been specially called by God to the apostolic office. He was divinely set apart to the proclamation of the gospel to men—all men. As so called and set apart, it was his divinely-imposed responsibility not only to publicly proclaim the gospel to all nations, but also to unfold to the saints—all believers—the fulness of the blessing it bestows on those who receive it.

Insisting on the divine authority by which he writes, the apostle also declares that the message which God has put in his trust relates to God's Son. The Son of God is its great theme. This leads him to make a statement which is a remarkable unfolding of the unique Person who is the subject of the message committed to him. In this statement reference is first made to His earthly origin. He comes of the family of David. By a true human birth He is a son of David. He is thus in reality a true man. But the apostle goes on to say that He is a man to be distinguished from all other men. The power of the Spirit of holiness was displayed in Him throughout the life He lived in human flesh. In His human life He came in contact with dead people; but

whenever and wherever this contact occurred there was manifested a power equal to the destruction of death and corruption. Displayed thus as being in His own person the annulment of death and corruption, He was shown to be the Son of God, proved to be God as well as man.

What a *unique* Person! What a *glorious* Person! How transcendently glorious even in the lowest depths of humiliation!

It was by such a Person Paul was called to the apostolic office. He filled the office by the highest possible authority. God's object in putting him in trust with the gospel, in setting him apart to the public proclamation of it among all nations, was to secure faith-obedience. Among those who had thus obeyed the gospel were the believers at Rome. They were very dear to God.

Paul evidently had never been at Rome, had never seen the believers there. They were bright lights, since they were being spoken of everywhere; and this fact filled the apostle's heart with gratitude to God. He solemnly assured them that he was continually praying for them, specially pleading to be granted the privilege of making them a visit. It was his desire to bestow upon them some spiritual blessing, and to have the comfort of enjoying in their midst the mutual exercise of their faith.

It was not from lack of interest in them that he had never visited them. He had often formed the purpose to go to Rome, but had been hindered thus far in carrying it out. He acknowledged, however, that he owed the gospel to all men—to the Barbarian as much as to the Greek, to the unwise as well as to the wise. He was therefore ready, as far as it

depended on himself, to proclaim the gospel at Rome. He was not ashamed of it, for it was God's power to save men. It meant salvation to every one who believed it.

| The believer of the gospel is assured of a full salvation—a salvation to be known and enjoyed as a present salvation. What assures this to the believer is the blessed fact that the gospel contains a full revelation of the righteous character of God. The gospel proclaims God's right, or title, to show grace—that there is no contradiction between righteousness and grace in Him. It is this revelation of the harmony of divine grace and divine righteousness that assures the believer of the gospel that he *is* saved. The revelation is for faith. Faith therefore, i. e., the believer, possesses the revelation. It belongs to him. It is his right to enjoy it. It is his privilege to be in the full comfort of the revelation.

It is the failure of preachers of the gospel to emphasize this blessed revelation of the apostolic gospel that accounts for the doubts and lack of assurance of salvation of large numbers of believers in the present day. May God raise up among His people everywhere faithful proclaimers of the gospel revelation that God, through the cross of Christ, has maintained His right to show grace—full, free grace—to sinners. Under such preaching we shall see healthier converts and brighter saints.

C. CRAIN.

(To be continued.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Chapter 1 : 18—3 : 20—continued from page 41.)

THE cross of Christ is the full revelation of what the wrath of God is. No mere governmental, earthly and temporal judgments, however severe and terrible, could be an adequate expression of God's absolute and eternal wrath. It was not until the cross, that men had a full revelation of God's estimate of sin. There, infinite and divine wrath was fully told out. God showed all that it is as He poured it out on the holy head of His beloved Son.

What a spectacle that scene was for both angels and men! How impressive! How solemn! God revealing to all His intelligent creatures the due, the exact due, of sin!

If God has made manifest in the cross of Christ the exact measure of what sin must receive at His hand, it is necessary that men should learn that it is impossible for them to come into the court of God and clear themselves of the charge of guilt that in righteousness deserves such wrath as the cross is a revelation of. Men need to be convicted of the absolute impossibility of giving a justifiable reason for their sins, that they are absolutely without excuse, before they will appreciate the grace that the gospel proclaims. From verse 19 on, the apostle takes up the various pleas that men make why they should be exempted from the judgment of God against sin, and shows how unavailing these pleas are. He demonstrates the impossibility of any one establishing a

valid excuse for sin. He shows that no one can clear himself of being justly charged with guilt.

First, If it is claimed that there are men who do not even know that there is a divine Being, he shows the claim cannot be allowed. Creation, both as a whole and in detail, is incessantly declaring there is a Creator, a God over all. It is a demonstration of both the eternal power and divinity of the Maker of all things. The responsibility and accountability of the intelligent finite creature is involved in this testimony of creation. No one, then, can excuse himself for violating the nature and character of his relation to the Creator of a creation of which he knows himself to be a part. As rational beings, all men owe subjection to their Creator, and sin in every form is in violation of this subjection, but no valid excuse can be made. No plea for violating creation's witness will stand. It is inexcusable guilt (vers. 19, 20).

Second, It is sometimes said there are hosts of men whom God has abandoned; that He has left to indulge themselves in their lusts; are they then to be blamed for sinking into low and degrading vices? The excuse will not avail. It is true that God, in governmental dealings, because men have turned away from Him and have chosen to indulge their lusts, has given them over to the vices they love. But notwithstanding this, there is in them innately (such is the constitution of their being) a sense of the justice of God in sentencing them to death. They know they deserve to die. They know the sentence by which they have been condemned to die is absolutely just. This is true of the lowest, of the most degraded and abandoned. None, then, can excuse

themselves, or their sins, in the court of God on the ground of His having given them over to judicial blindness. His governmental ways will not be a protecting shield against the charge of guilt (ver. 32).

Third, There are those who say, "But we are not so low and degraded as the great mass of the poor, ignorant, blind heathen. We know better; we condemn their vulgarities and vices. Are we to be judged along with them?" Especially in so-called Christian lands, where the light of the truth of God shines more or less brightly, is there a large class of people who are thus making their superior light and knowledge a reason why they ought to be exempted from eternal judgment. But in the day when a just God will judge, their plea will not stand. It will be proof rather of despising the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, and of refusing to repent. It will be evidence of a hardened, impenitent heart.

God is just. He will judge justly in the day of judgment. Righteousness will be the principle on which He will judge. If any one can produce in the court of the judgment-day a record that will prove that he has been a seeker of glory, honor and incorruptibility, his record will be approved. But who will be able to produce such a record? But if righteousness requires the approval of the record (supposing it possible for such a record to be produced), it would necessarily require the disapproval of a record that will be proof of disobedience and sin. Will there be any whose record will not be that?

If, then, righteousness is the principle on which the judgment will be carried out, it will be in vain

for any to hope for exemption from judgment on the ground of having better light and knowledge than the poor, ignorant heathen. God will not respect persons when He judges the deeds and thoughts of men. Those who have sinned without having special advantages and privileges will receive the due reward of their sins. The guilt of those who have sinned under greater light and knowledge will be all the greater. Righteousness will demand a judgment commensurate with the guilt. Light and knowledge will not be accepted as an excuse for sin.

If chapter 2: 1-16 thus clearly insists on the inexcusable culpability of those who boast of light and knowledge above their more unfortunate fellow-men, sunken in vice, we are now to learn how the case of the Jew stands. By the will and authority of God, he occupies a specially exalted position among men. He had received a divine commission, had been called to be Jehovah's witness and the exponent of His will. Set thus in the place of a light, guide and teacher to all men by divine authority, his responsibility was peculiarly solemn. How has he met it? Why, instead of being a bright and shining light for God, a true and faithful witness that Jehovah was the one only and true God, by his idolatrous and incessant disobedience he has become the occasion and instrumentality of God's being blasphemed among the Gentiles. He has incurred very great guilt.

A Jew might answer, while admitting all this, that circumcision protected him from judgment by God. The apostle exposes the utter insecurity of such a retreat. No Jew would be willing to have an uncircumcised man who kept the righteousness of the law

counted as a circumcised man. He, then, must submit to being counted as an uncircumcised man if he breaks the law. It is not the formal ordinance of circumcision that makes a man a really circumcised man, for circumcision to be real must be of the heart. No Jew has the right to count himself to be really a Jew unless he is one inwardly (vers. 17-29).

If a Jew objects that this makes formal circumcision useless, and that there is no good in being outwardly a Jew, the apostle answers that many advantages and privileges belong to those who have been outwardly circumcised, the principal one being the guardianship of the "oracles of God." Here, alas, the Jew had signally failed.

He might still argue, admitting the failure, that having put them in trust with the faith, God could not possibly nullify it. If He should finally judge them, He would falsify His character. To maintain His righteousness with those among whom He had deposited His oracles, He must exempt them from judgment. The argument means that God cannot vindicate His righteousness in the day of judgment, if He takes account of the sins of a Jew.

To silence this the apostle appeals to Ps. 51: 4. Just as He took account of the sins of David, and was justified in doing so by David himself, so in the day of judgment the right of God to take account of sins will be fully justified. He will overcome every one who thinks to call it in question. It will be better to make every man a liar rather than challenge God's right to judge sin.

If refuge be taken under the plea that the unrighteousness of the Jew will commend the righteousness of God, the answer is, "That destroys God's right

to judge at all. Every Jew is anticipating the judgment of God upon the world; but on this principle it never could be."

Besides this, it implies that the truth of God is dependent, for example, on my lie to abound to the glory of God; but this means that it is my right to sin—that it is a justifiable thing to say, "Let us do evil that good may come." But, the apostle says, The judgment of such is just.

Thus every argument is met, and the Jew is left without a single reason why he should be exempted from judgment in the day when God will call men to an account about their sins. He is in no better case than the Gentile. All Jews and all Gentiles are under sin. All are chargeable with guilt.

Thus far the apostle, saving a single exception, has been reasoning without appealing to the Scriptures. Every argument has been forceful, and there is no escape from the conclusion that not a single man can offer a valid excuse for his sins in the court of God. But before he drops the subject he adds an appeal to the Scriptures to show that they confirm his reasoning. Their testimony is that every mouth is stopped, that the whole world is guilty; and this is just what he has been proving.

He concludes now by insisting on the absolute impossibility of a man's justifying himself before God by deeds of law. The law convicts of sin. It does not clear the guilty, but affirms the guilt. It must be useless, then, to seek justification before God by it.

C. CRAIN.

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(Continued from page 71.)

WE have seen that all men, without exception, are chargeable with sin. Not one has any valid excuse. No one can put in a plea that his case must be treated as an exception. Though varying in degrees of guilt, there is not so much as one who is not guilty. All being guilty, all are under the necessity of having to stand before the throne of God's judgment to receive the due, the righteous due, of the deeds done in the body.

In chapter 3: 21-31 we learn of a provision of God for a release from this necessity. There is a way in which a guilty sinner, deserving everlasting judgment, can be righteously delivered from it. This must engage our attention now.

Let us consider, first, What is needful for a holy and righteous God to righteously set a sinner free from the necessity of receiving the righteous due of his sins? Is it possible for God to forgive sins without conserving His holiness? Surely not. Can He cancel the charges of guilt against a sinner at the expense of His righteousness? Certainly He cannot. It is as impossible for Him to violate His holiness, or ignore His righteousness, as it is for Him to lie. If, then, He forgives sins, if He cancels the charges of guilt, if He shows even the least mercy, if He exercises grace at all in dealing with sinners, it must be in such a way that the questions, Where is His holiness? and, Where is His righteousness? are fully answered. He must have what He can point

to as being full vindication. Grace, with Him, must be in every way above question.

The matter may be put very simply. Is God righteous in setting a sinner free from the claim of everlasting judgment? What is God's answer to this question? *Christ in heaven, "whom God has set forth a mercy-seat."* The apostle is alluding to the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat of Lev. 16. Suppose one asking an Israelite, How can God dwell among you? How can He vindicate His holiness and yet dwell in the midst of such a people as you? the answer was, *The blood-sprinkled mercy-seat.* So, now, to the question, Can God be righteous in canceling sins and reckoning a sinner righteous? the answer is, *Christ in heaven as a lamb that has been slain* is the fullest vindication of His righteousness in doing so. He is there as the One who gave Himself for sins. He is there as the One who paid the full price for the righteous title to redeem. He is there as the One who by offering Himself as a sacrifice unto God has conserved His holiness and maintained His righteousness. The sacrifice by which this was accomplished was the ransom-price which had to be paid that God might be righteous in delivering a sinner from the necessity of receiving the due of his sins. Christ, then, by becoming a substitute for sinners, and making a propitiatory sacrifice, has procured for God the righteous title to save sinners; has put into His hand, so to speak, the title to redeem; has made it consistent for Him to set sinners free from the claim of eternal judgment.

Thus far I have spoken of the righteous title. We will now consider God's exercise of it. In the

scripture before us we learn something about it. In times before the cross, we are told that God used it anticipatively. In forbearance He passed over sins in anticipation of the atoning sacrifice He had fore-ordained. He gratuitously pretermitted sins. The Old Testament believers were released from the necessity of having to stand before the judgment-bar of God to be judged for their sins. It was grace in God, but grace in forbearance in anticipation of a sacrifice that would be a complete vindication of the grace.

It was not from any merit in themselves that the Old Testament believers were released from the eternal due of their sins. They were children of wrath as truly as ourselves, but they will not come into judgment any more than we, because it was a righteous thing for God to act in grace in view of a substitutionary propitiation that would be an unanswerable defence of it.

Now Christ in heaven as the Lamb that was slain is the declaration that this grace of God in Old Testament times was both holy and just. His presence there as the One who died for sins proclaims the righteousness of God in His pretermision of sins—that the Old Testament saints were righteously released from the wrath of God which their sins deserve. Their salvation and eternal blessing thus stand on an immovable foundation.

But that which proclaims how just God was in the grace He exercised in Old Testament times proclaims also how just He is in New Testament days. He is now exercising His righteous title to justify, to cancel sins, to release from the charge of guilt. It is, as we have seen, through Christ's shedding

His blood that this righteous title to remit sins exists. In delivering from them; in setting free from their due; in not keeping them in the account of charges, but canceling them, He is justly exercising that title which the sacrificial death of Christ gives Him. Christ gone into heaven, in the efficacy of a death which His resurrection declares, is a perpetual witness that God is just. He is also the witness that God is the justifier of those who believe. He is perpetually proclaiming that God is freely using His righteous title to justify those who seek shelter from judgment under the sacrificial death of Christ. Through the redemption—the releasing—that is in Christ Jesus, there is a gratuitous justification for sinners; a justification freely bestowed in a grace that is vindicated against any charge of unholiness or unrighteousness.

Another point to be considered is, On what principle does God use His righteous title to act in grace? The answer is, *Faith*. Faith is the one only condition of partaking of the blessing God has a just title to give. It was believers, in Old Testament times, as we have seen, whose sins God pretermitted. It is believers that He justifies now. Faith is thus shown to be the principle on which God exercises His title to act in grace. He has a good right to be gracious, to act in grace, and all are free to profit by it, on the condition of faith.

Now this is the glorious revelation which the gospel of God declares. In it the righteousness of God is revealed. It proclaims God's righteous title to deliver from judgment those who deserve to be judged forever. It is saying to sinners (and all have sinned), God is the One who justifies. He is the

justifier. He justifies freely. He justifies on the principle of faith. Here is a righteousness which is for all; and all who believe are securely sheltered by it. What a grand message to be proclaimed to men everywhere!

But if God is the justifier, and justifies on the principle of faith, there can be no boasting. The principle of faith excludes it absolutely. No one can claim a better right to be justified than another. The privilege of faith cannot be offered to any without offering it to all. If a sinner of one class or condition of men can have the opportunity to believe, and thus be justified, then a sinner of any class or condition of men can have the same opportunity. Justification is simply on the principle of faith. Works in no wise enter into it. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has anything to do with it. If God can justify a Jew on the principle of faith, He can justify a Gentile in the same way. There is no difference. It is gratuitous in *any* case. No one has a claim upon God for His grace.

A Jew might think this nullifies law, but it is not so. On the contrary, it confirms the law. The law convicts all of sin; it brings all in guilty before God. It does not cancel sins. It does not dismiss the charges against the sinner. It affirms his guilt, and testifies to his need of grace—the free, sovereign grace of God. The grace that meets this need establishes the law which affirms the need.

God, then, can righteously cancel the charges of sins against sinners. This is founded on the sacrificial death of Christ. Christ's exaltation in heaven is the proclamation of it, and that God is exercising it on the principle of faith. Thus, believers in Jesus,

who was here in this world as sent of God to make propitiation, are released from receiving the due of their sins, and stand before the face of God judicially cleansed from every charge of guilt. They have been justified gratuitously through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; no merit in them or their works entering into the justification they have received from Him who has the righteous title to bestow it.

C. CRAIN.

(To be continued.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 95.)

Chapter 4 : 1-12.

IN chapter 1: 2, speaking of the gospel in the form in which it was authoritatively proclaimed, the apostle says that the prophets who uttered the Old Testament revelations distinctly promised it. Either in type, illustration, or formal prophetic statement, the Old Testament Scriptures anticipate the grand proclamation of the gospel of God. They are rich in foreshadows of it. It is true, clouds and mists surrounded these foreshadows; still, where there was faith, the clouds and mists were more or less penetrated. Faith learned more or less distinctly to anticipate what God was anticipating. As in the blaze of the full light that now shines, we can look back upon the Old Testament saints in the dimmer and partial light that was shining upon them, we can easily see how precious their foreshadows of our light must have been to them. There is, then, a unity between the gospel as partially told out then, and as fully declared now. The Old Testament promises and foreshadows are a divine seal on the New Testament unfolding of the grace that is in the heart of God.

In chapter 3: 21, in mentioning the righteousness of God that is now fully revealed in the gospel message of New Testament days, the apostle speaks of it as "witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets." Both the Law and the Prophets strongly emphasize the need of man. They insist on the hopelessness

of his case except as God, in the sovereignty of His grace, takes him up. In doing this, they foreshadow the ground on which this sovereign grace is, in righteousness. The Law, by its typical system of sacrifices, clearly pointed out the way in which the need of sinful men is met. It declared that God's way of delivering men from the due of their sins is by a substitutionary sacrifice; that only by such a sacrifice could God righteously release men from their guilt. In this testimony the Prophets abundantly joined. They urge again and again the complete ruin of man, and point out God's way of meeting that ruin. The doctrine of the Prophets is that by the provision of an acceptable sacrifice for sins sinners can righteously be set free from the due of their sins. The Law and the Prophets thus, in their *partial unfolding of the righteousness of God, and in their anticipations of its complete unfolding as it is now since the Cross*, are Old Testament witnesses that God is just in His grace, and of *how* He is just.

Now, in chapter 4: 1-12, having proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith, a justification by God, entirely gratuitous on His part, yet strictly in righteousness, the apostle proceeds to give illustrations of how the Old Testament Scriptures confirm this doctrine as being of God. We shall see that for the apostle the Old Testament Scriptures unmistakably and unequivocally teach the doctrine of justification by faith.

In showing how they did so, he chooses, first, a practical example illustrative of the doctrine. Then he cites a case of the prophetic proclamation of the doctrine. Finally, he appeals to the original institution of the rite of circumcision—the rite signifying

that the principle of relationship with God is *faith*, not works of flesh.

All this needs careful examination. Turning now to the practical example of justification by faith, it is interesting to notice that it is what we may call the typical case, i. e., it is the case to which every other case must conform. It is the case of the one who is explicitly called "the father of all them that believe." Abraham's justification, then, is the pattern of the justification of the children of Abraham. The principle on which he was justified is the principle on which *all* believers are justified.

How, then, was Abraham justified? Did God justify his flesh? Did God account him righteous by works of flesh? Can Abraham boast before God of being better in the flesh than others? In nowise. This is made perfectly clear by the scripture which reads, "Abraham believed God, and *it* was counted unto him for righteousness." Abraham, as in the flesh, was a sinful man, was a guilty man. He had a record of sins. But God pretermitted his sins in anticipation of the cross of Christ; canceled the record, all the charges in it; released him from the necessity of standing at the great white throne to be judged for his sins—delivered him definitely and finally from the eternal due of his sins. He formally, definitely and finally declared him to be a righteous man. He judicially pronounced him to be no longer in his sins. By a judicial decision he made him a righteous man. But it was explicitly on the principle of faith that he did this. The scripture quoted by the apostle from Gen. 15: 6 makes this perfectly plain. "The father of all them that believe" was justified by faith—not by works.

Having now shown how Scripture affirms the justification by faith of the pattern-man of faith, the apostle proceeds to draw a conclusion. He applies the lesson which the practical example teaches. He says, "Now to him" (not Abraham alone, but him) "that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him" (not Abraham alone again, but him) "that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Abraham's children—believers—those who believe on Him who justifies the ungodly, are thus declared by the apostle to be justified by faith, in conformity to the typical case. Abraham's case, then, is an illustrative case. As such, it is confirmatory of the doctrine the apostle is insisting on, that justification is by faith (vers. 1-5).

Now we have a citation illustrative of the way in which the doctrine of justification by faith is prophetically announced in the Old Testament Scriptures. David, under the inspiration of the Spirit, proclaimed the doctrine. The citation is from psalm 32, where David writes of the blessedness of the man whom God justifies by faith. It is evident that David is describing his own case. He had sinned, and was in great distress of mind until he took his place before God in frank, unreserved confession of it. Then God gratuitously, yet righteously, as anticipating the cross of Christ, forgave him his iniquity. As forgiven, as released from the deserved due of his sins, he could write experimentally of "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." While speaking experimentally, he yet speaks in a way to embrace others besides himself. The blessedness of which

he writes is not his alone, but that of the man, whoever he may be, "to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." We have here a plain case of Old Testament Scripture affirming justification by faith. It is clearly an Old Testament doctrine, as well as the doctrine of the New (vers. 6-8).

We have in verses 9-12 yet another appeal to Old Testament teaching. It is the bearing of the lesson of the original institution of circumcision, which the apostle presents here. He is evidently thinking of an objection that would naturally occur to the mind of a Jew. Forced, perhaps, by the unanswerable argument of the apostle to admit that the doctrine of justification by faith is certainly taught in the Scriptures he owned to be of God, he would say, "Yes, but they limit its application to those outwardly circumcised."

The apostle's answer is absolutely conclusive. He says, "Upon whom does the blessedness of the man that God reckons righteous without works come? Only upon the circumcised? or does it come upon the circumcised also?" The case of Abraham is the decisive answer. He was reckoned to be righteous *before* he was circumcised—a clear proof that circumcision has absolutely nothing to do with being reckoned righteous.

But the apostle goes further, and appeals to the lesson of Abraham's circumcision as an incontestable testimony to the doctrine of justification by faith without regard to circumcision at all. First, he speaks of Abraham receiving circumcision *as a sign*. Gen. 17 instructs us fully as to this. God, there, establishes a covenant with Abraham. It is a covenant of grace. It is a perpetual covenant, an eter-

nal covenant. It is a covenant under which Abraham is in eternal relationship with God on the principle of faith alone. It is a covenant with which both temporal and eternal blessings are connected, in which both earthly and heavenly blessings are involved. Now, in establishing this covenant, God gives circumcision to Abraham to be the sign of it.

But what does the sign signify? Plainly, it is a symbolic witness that faith, not flesh, is the principle of relationship with God. God says, in giving Abraham circumcision, "You must bear about in your body the sign that your flesh is profitless. You must have in yourself the sign that the sentence of judgment is upon the flesh. You must submit to receiving a mark which means that *faith* is the principle on which you are in relationship with Me."

But if circumcision is the sign of a covenant of grace—of relationship with God on the principle of faith, it is a *seal* on the righteousness of faith—a righteousness already Abraham's before he was circumcised.

But further: This sign and seal was given to Abraham as already possessing the righteousness of faith, to make him the father of all them that believe—the pattern-man of faith. Abraham is the pattern and example of believers—*all* believers, whoever they are, and wherever they are found. But if he is the pattern and example of "all that believe," then, just as righteousness was reckoned to him by faith, so it is to them also.

We see thus how the apostle shows that the giving of circumcision to Abraham teaches the lesson of justification by faith without works.

But we are not yet done with the apostle's argument on this point. When Abraham received the sign and seal of circumcision, he was not only made the father of all them that believe—the pattern and example of all those who are in relationship with God on the principle of faith, and of righteousness being reckoned to them by faith—but he was also made the father of the real circumcision—the pattern and example of circumcision that is not simply outward in the flesh, but is inward, of the heart. All those who have real circumcision—the circumcision of the heart—have the faith which Abraham had before he was outwardly circumcised; i. e., they have the faith that God reckons as righteousness.

So, then, once more we see how the apostle makes the circumcision of Abraham confirm the doctrine of justification by faith apart from works.

How irresistible his argument is! how impossible to escape the conclusion that the Old Testament, more or less distinctly and plainly, teaches the New Testament doctrine of the imputation of righteousness to all them that believe. How clearly it is shown that the Old Testament, as well as the New, insists that this imputation of righteousness is on the principle of faith alone—that works of flesh have nothing whatever to do with it.

God ever is the justifier. He ever justifies on the principle of faith. The justified are in an eternal relationship with God—a relationship, the principle of which is faith. They are free, forever free, from the claim of judgment. They are, before the face of God, eternally cleared from the necessity of receiving the due of their sins.

C. CRAIN,

(To be continued.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 122.)

Chapter 4 : 13-25.

THE character of the faith that God reckons for righteousness is the apostle's theme in these verses. The way he treats his subject is very instructive. His argument is unanswerable. There is no escape from the conclusion he arrives at. We will follow his argument closely.

There can be no denying that God promised the possession of the world both to Abraham and to his seed. When God said to him in Gen. 12, "And thou shalt be a blessing: . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Abraham's possession of the earth was implied—not merely Canaan, but all the earth. It was also implied in the promise of an heir in Gen. 15; for it is evident that it is through this heir, which is Christ (as the apostle tells us in Gal. 3: 16), that Abraham is to inherit all

that was involved in the promise, whether earthly things or heavenly things. Again, possession of the earth was involved in the promise that Abraham should be the father of many nations (Gen. 17). Possession of the earth is also implied in Gen. 22, where the Lord says, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." There are other passages in which possession of the earth by Abraham and his seed is involved; but we need not quote more. Sufficient has been cited to put the matter beyond dispute.

But this promise of possessing the earth by either Abraham or his seed was in nowise on the principle of works of flesh. It was on the principle of faith. It was through the righteousness of faith. It was not through the law.

Now to this a Jew would object, "God *did* give the law afterward; and having given the law, the promise would be limited to the people to whom the law was given." The apostle's answer to this is, "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." But the promise is gratuitous, and absolutely unconditional. The law afterward given could not set aside an unconditional promise, could not disinherit those to whom the promise had been gratuitously given. Abraham's spiritual seed—those who were of faith—under the law were heirs to his inheritance. It was not law that made them heirs. They were heirs by faith, not by works of law. Being put under law, they were in bondage. They were being treated as servants; still they were heirs, because they were of faith. See Gal. 4: 1-3. This the law could not set aside.

Further, those who were not of faith, but of law merely, were not heirs. They were cut off as being children of flesh merely. Such could not be heirs with Abraham. Circumcision as given to Abraham plainly shows that. All males born in Abraham's house, or purchased with money, had to receive the marks of the profitlessness of the flesh, as showing that they were not heirs with Abraham by works of flesh, but by faith merely. The children of flesh were rejected as heirs; they were cut off. The law afterward given could not nullify this. Hence, even under the law, the real seed of Abraham were the children of faith, not the children of the flesh.

Now one more point. The law, instead of producing children of Abraham, genuine heirs of his promise, operated to produce wrath. It turned sins into transgressions, and by these transgressions showed the mind of the flesh to be essentially enmity to God. Showing how intrinsically the mind of the flesh is insubjection to the will and authority of God, it manifested the absolute impossibility of its becoming subject. In this way the law shows how necessarily the man of flesh is a subject of wrath—the wrath of God. This was the law's great lesson: a lesson even the children of faith needed to learn. But they did not become children of faith by the law. It was not by the law they became heirs to the promises to Abraham.

Having now shown how law works, the apostle proceeds to insist that in making promise to Abraham, or his heirs, God did not do so in connection with law, but with faith; so that it might be by grace. In making promise, God was acting gratuitously. It was an unconditional promise to faith.

Now God's purpose in giving the promise on the principle of faith was that it might be sure *to all* the seed. The seed here, of course, is Abraham's spiritual seed, those who are of faith; the seed according to the flesh, as we have seen, being cut off.

Carefully considering the Scripture account of Abraham, it will be seen that his spiritual seed is divided into three groups: one group of seed for heaven; another group, for the land of Canaan; and a third group, for the rest of the world—the nations of the earth to be blessed in him.

Now the promise in regard to inheriting the world is sure to these three groups of Abraham's seed, for even the seed for heaven will inherit the earth through the two earthly groups. The seed for the land of Canaan will not only possess Canaan, but, through the Gentiles blessed under them, they will possess and enjoy all the earth. So, likewise, the heavenly seed, through the earthly seed, will inherit the earth, for "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto" the heavenly city.

All Abraham's seed—his spiritual seed—are, then, sure of inheriting the earth. But, that they might be sure of it, in promising it God did it in connection with faith, not works of flesh.

Abraham, then, "is the father of us *all*." He is the father of the heirs given to him during the dispensation of law. He is the father of the heirs God is giving him now. Gal. 3: 29 tells us that if we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed. As being Abraham's seed, we are "heirs according to promise." So Abraham is *our* father. He is "the father of us *all* before" the God "whom he believed." |

This brings us to the character of his faith. He

believed in God as the quickener of the dead, and as the One who calls "things that are not, as though they were."

The Holy Spirit's account of Abraham shows this very clearly. We have seen how God reckoned faith to him as righteousness in Gen. 15. We will now see that the faith that laid hold upon God as able to fulfil His promise to give an heir, laid hold upon Him as being the quickener of the dead. The land of Canaan, which God had told Abraham he should possess, was in the possession of the Canaanites. God shows him that He is going to redeem the land through a sacrifice. Then He tells him that though he will live to a good old age, yet he will die and be buried. Abraham now knows that he will not inherit that land as a man in the flesh—that it is in resurrection that the promise of possessing it will be fulfilled to him. He is taught that he and his seed will pass through the furnace of trial; but however severe the trial, the word of promise is to be the support of faith. He sees that the promise cannot fail, since He who has promised is the quickener of the dead. Believing God to be the God of resurrection, he dwelt as a stranger in the land of promise. He sojourned in the promised land in the hope of possessing it. He believed the God of resurrection would carry out His promise.

That his faith had this character is seen also in another way. In Gen. 17 God told Abraham that he should have a son of Sarah. Now nature told him it was an impossibility; yet he did not stagger at it through unbelief. He believed in hope—the hope of a son through Sarah, when nature said there was no hope of it. He was strong in faith. The

deadness of his own body and of Sarah's womb was no difficulty to him, since, to him, the God who had promised was the God of resurrection. As such, He was able to quicken the dead.

The same thing is shown in Gen. 22, where he receives Isaac "in figure from the dead." God gives him another testimony that He is the God of resurrection. The apostle, however, does not refer to this in our chapter. What he does refer to is illustrative, to show what was characteristic of Abraham's faith.

What characterizes faith in Abraham, then, is his laying hold upon God as the quickener of the dead. Believing in Him as the God of resurrection, he believed He was able to perform what He promised. The character of God was the guarantee of His word.

Now this being the character of Abraham's faith, God reckons it to him as righteousness. Having the faith that lays hold on God as the God of resurrection, God imputes righteousness to him; judicially declares him not only to be no longer in sins, but in righteousness—sets him before His face in righteousness. Righteousness being thus imputed, he is never to be charged with his sins. God never will charge them to him; nor will He listen to any one who would presume to do it. Abraham is henceforth before the face of God in unchangeable righteousness. God has judicially established him in eternal righteousness.

A difficulty may here suggest itself to some. The incidents in Abraham's life which have been referred to as showing how he believed in God as the quickener of the dead, all occurred after God reckoned

his faith as righteousness. How, then, is it shown that Abraham had this character of faith at the time when he was reckoned righteous by God? The answer is simple. At the time when God promised him an heir Abraham was childless. The fact had exercised his mind, as his expression in Gen. 15: 2, "seeing I go childless," shows. Chap. 11: 30 calls our attention to the fact that long before this even, Sarah was barren. Now in spite of every evidence of nature to the impossibility of his ever having an heir, he believed the promise of God that he should have one. We thus see that already the faith that lays hold upon God as the quickener of the dead was germinally in him. In the incidents afterward this germinal faith was developed and displayed. But however more manifest it was in these later circumstances, it was really present in his soul at the very time when the promise of an heir was made, and when his faith was reckoned as righteousness.

Our apostle now tells us that the record of God's imputing faith to Abraham for righteousness was not written for him merely: it *was* written for him surely, but it was written for his seed as well—for "all them that believe"—for those that have his faith. Hence the apostle goes on to say, "but for *us* also."

The record of God's reckoning faith for righteousness to Abraham, then, is testimony, divine testimony, that faith in us is also reckoned for righteousness. This is because faith in us has the same character that it had in Abraham. It is the faith that lays hold of God as being the God of resurrection.

But while faith in us has the same character as

the faith of Abraham, which was also the faith of all the real children of Abraham before the cross, we must remind ourselves that God had not then displayed Himself so fully as the God of resurrection as He is displayed in that character since the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Death is the penalty of sin. Jesus has been delivered as a Substitute to that penalty. He died under the penalty of our offenses; but God has raised Him from the dead. In doing so He has fully revealed Himself as the quickener of the dead, as the God of resurrection. It is as in the light of this fuller revelation that we believe in God. But whatever the difference in this way between the past dispensations and the present, notwithstanding the fuller revelation of the present as compared with the revelations of the past, faith has the same character. It is faith in God as the God of resurrection.

Now by raising Jesus from the dead—Jesus the Substitute delivered to death which is the penalty of our offences—God has proclaimed a sentence of justification. The resurrection of Jesus is in this sense a judicial act of God, declarative of His acceptance of the sacrifice of the cross, and that the justification of the believer goes with that acceptance.

The doctrine of justification by faith is thus fully established. The believer in the God of the gospel is gratuitously justified. His sins are canceled, and he is set before the face of God in righteousness; declared to be righteous, to have a righteous character, a character that cannot be assailed. Blessed indeed is that man, the man "to whom the Lord will impute no sin."

C. CRAIN.

(To be continued.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 151.)

Chapter 5 : 1-11.

NOW, in chap 5 : 1-11 we have the practical results for the justified. Here we must remind ourselves that it is in no wise a question of how fully we are in the enjoyment of these results. This depends on the energy of faith. These most blessed consequences of God justifying us on the principle of faith may be enjoyed in greater measure by one than by another. There may be times when the same individual will be more fully in the enjoyment of them than at other times. But the apostle is not occupying us with this here. He is rather stating what are the normal consequences of justification for the believer.

Let us then seek to learn what these normal consequences are. The first practical result of justification by faith mentioned by the apostle is "peace with God." If God is the justifier, if He sets a believing sinner before His face in an abiding, unchangeable righteousness, then all controversy about sins between God and that soul is ended forever. By justifying him, God Himself has ended it. He has put the believing sinner before His face in righteousness, and no more charges up his sins against him. He no more presses upon him the need of answering to God for his sins, so far as bearing their penalty is concerned. This is peace—peace with God. The force of the expression is peace as respects God. Through the instrumen-

talities of our Lord Jesus Christ there is for the believer—the spiritual child of Abraham—peace as regards God. On the ground of the sacrifice of Christ God is for him, not against him. On account of the work of the Cross, he being now a believer, God has ended His controversy with him. What a blessed result of justification this is! God for us! God no longer maintaining His controversy with us! And this blessed result, let us remember, is true for “all them that believe.”

Another result is the God-given privilege of entering by faith into the grace in which we stand. Under law, the children of Abraham (his spiritual children) could not do this. The grace in which they stood was clouded. Law was a hindrance to them. The privilege of taking practically the place of sons was not given them. But now, through the instrumentality of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the ground of His atoning sacrifice, the privilege of entering by faith into the grace in which we stand is given. It is in grace we stand. God gratuitously sets the believer before His face in unchanging favor, and grants him now the privilege of enjoying that favor without a cloud. This too is the right, a God-given right, of “all them that believe”—a blessed consequence indeed of justification by faith!

A third result is the liberty of soul in which the believer can now anticipate and await the day in which God will display Himself. The justified may calmly contemplate the glory of God, and rejoice in it. God has made them meet for it. And since the glorious revelations of which the cross of Christ has been the occasion, no clouds or mists remain to disturb the mind in thinking of the day when there

shall be a full display of God. The Cross has settled every question concerning the believer's right to be with God in that day. It has disposed of everything that would make that day a thing to be dreaded. The glory of that day is the hope of those whom God has justified. It is their privilege to anticipate it with unspeakable joy.

A fourth result of justification by faith is the joy to be found in trials. The trials of the justified are innumerable. Justification does not exempt from them, but it gives power to rise above them. It enables the soul to value the priceless blessings they minister.

But what are these blessings? First, with the eye on the coming glory, the trials are judged as incomparable with it. They thus become "light afflictions, which are but for a moment," soon to pass away, and are thus easy to be endured. Trials, then, develop patient endurance—one of the marked characteristics of our blessed Saviour. How precious is fellowship with Christ in patient suffering! We may well endure trial to experience the preciousness of it.

Experience is next mentioned as the product of patient endurance. In patiently enduring trial, we prove how good the will of God for us is. We gain a practical experience of His thoughtful care, of the sufficiency of His love and the resources of His grace for us. We get to know Him better, to know better what His heart is. We realize better how Christ sympathizes with us, and we understand better what His own path was; that path of which He could say, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places" (Ps. 16: 6). We thus learn by a practical experi-

ence of it to say, with Him, "Yea, I have a goodly heritage." How immeasurably blessed is such an experience! But let us remember that it is in patiently enduring our trials that we find this precious experience.

We are next told that "experience works hope." As, in the path that leads to the glory, we experience what the God of glory is, how that glory brightens! As by patient endurance we learn experimentally the love and care and tender mercies of Christ in His never-failing ministry to us as He guides us on our way, how we are constrained to say, "What will it be to be with Him!" It is thus experience works hope. It is thus experience strengthens in us the desire to realize the hope that is set before us.

The apostle now assures us that hope makes not ashamed. The path we are in bestows upon us no worldly honors. The world disdains it, looks contemptuously upon it; but, with the light of our glorious hope shining upon it, we are not ashamed. Our hope, too, is an unfailing, unfading hope. Worldly hopes fail, and disappoint those who wait for them; but he who patiently endures the trials of the path of the justified will never be disappointed. He will never be made ashamed. As he draws nearer and nearer to the consummation of the glory he is waiting for, his confidence in its realization strengthens. He grows steadily stronger in hope because along the way he enjoys the love of the God of his hope. It is shed abroad in his heart. The God of eternity, with whom he is to eternally dwell, is the God of love—love already manifested and filling the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells the believer.

Here we must notice that the gift of the Spirit to indwell the body of the believer is a blessing from God that accompanies justification by faith. All who are justified by God have the Spirit. The Spirit is now given, since the death and resurrection of Christ, to all the children of Abraham—to all them that believe. All who are justified by God have the Spirit as the power of realizing and enjoying His love. It is the Spirit who sheds it abroad in the heart.

But while the love of God is shed abroad in the heart of the justified, it is not there that its full measure is to be found. For this we must ever turn to the Cross. It was there that the love was fully manifested. The love displayed in the cross of Christ is a love *for sinners*, for those who are without God, helplessly under the eternal doom of sin. It was for *such* Christ died. In this death of Christ for sinners God displayed what His love toward us is. In thus displaying His love toward us He commends it as surpassing all other love. Love in God finds all its motives in Himself, not in the objects toward which it goes out.

Love of that character is free to provide itself with the means by which to justify the objects toward which it goes out. It supplies itself with the basis on which it justifies itself for being the kind of love it is. This basis is the blood of Christ—His sacrificial death.

If then the blood of Christ is love's vindication of itself, and the basis on which it goes out to sinners, it is the basis of the sinner's justification, the basis on which God acts in justifying.

Here I must call attention to the difference be-

tween justification by *blood* and justification by *faith*. Justification by blood is justification on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ is God's title, or right, to justify. It does not mean that because Christ died for all, that therefore everybody is justified, but that He died for all as providing a righteous basis *for* God *to* justify. But the *principle* on which He justifies is *faith*. It is only the sinner who *believes* that is justified. The actual justification of the sinner, therefore, is individual. We are all individually justified when we believe. Hence we may speak of being justified by faith.

But God's act in justifying us individually when we believe, i. e., on the principle of faith, is based on the blood—the sacrifice of Christ. Looking thus at our justification as based on the work of the cross, we may speak of being justified by blood. It is not that there are two ways of justification. There is only one way. This we may state as justification by or on the principle of faith, on the basis or ground of the blood of Christ.

In verse 9 it is the ground of justification that is in the mind of the apostle; so he says, "Justified by His blood." But if a righteous basis for our justification has been provided through the death of Christ, He who died to provide this has risen from the dead; He is a risen, living Christ, and believers live by and in Him. He is their life. He is thus our salvation from wrath. He as the living One, the source of life to us, the One by whom and in whom we live, stands forever between us and wrath.

We *were* enemies, but by the death of His Son God has reconciled us to Himself. By the power of the love displayed in the sacrifice of the cross, God

has won our hearts. We are now no longer enemies. But, being reconciled, our full and final salvation is bound up with Him who is our life. We live by and in One who, having triumphed over death, can never again be brought under its power. Death, then, can never have power over those who live by Him. Their full and final salvation is thus assured by His life.

And here let us remind ourselves that this is true for all the justified. All whom God has gratuitously justified; all whom He has set before His face in unchanging righteousness on the ground of the sacrificial death of Christ, are eternally secure in that place, because they live by Him who has brought them there. The power of life in Him must be applied to *their* bodies as well as His if they live by Him. They shall be saved by His life—finally and completely saved—finally and completely conformed to Him, their bodies made like His. All the justified are assured of such a salvation. It is a necessary consequence of justification.

There is yet one other result of justification mentioned by the apostle. The justified, knowing God as the author and revealer of such a full salvation, glory in His being what He is. He reveals Himself in the salvation He provides. Those who are the happy subjects of it glory in Him as thus revealed.

There is another thing to call attention to. It is the place our Lord Jesus Christ has in connection with all these blessed consequences of justification. It is by, or through, Him we have them. We must notice how the apostle emphasizes this. If he speaks of having peace with God, he adds, "through our Lord Jesus Christ"; if of access into the grace in

which we stand, he reminds us it is “by” Him we have this access. If he alludes to our being saved from wrath, he tells us it is “through Him.” If he refers to joying in God, he insists that it is “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If he speaks of having received reconciliation with such a God as the salvation He has provided reveals Him to be, he reminds us it is by or through Him. Thus again and again our attention is fixed on the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is the One to whom we are indebted for all these immeasurable blessings which are the portion of the justified. His sacrificial death is the ground on which they are ours. How well may we sing,

“Oh what a debt we owe !”

(To be continued.)

C. CRAIN.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 185.)

WE have seen that not only is salvation from wrath the assured portion of those who are justified by God on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, but that they live by and in the living and risen One. We have also seen that the power of resurrection which has already been applied to the body of our blessed Lord, in its due season will be applied to the bodies of the justified. Our salvation will not be a fully completed salvation until this is done. But such a salvation is assured to the justified.

If, then, there is power in Christ, the living, risen Christ, to conform the bodies of the justified (whether it be the mortal body or the dead body) to His own resurrection-body, there must be power in Him, to use the mortal body as a vessel for the display of this life: there must be power in Him to produce practical holiness in those who have life in Him.

Nothing in the life, walk and service of the justified that is not produced by Him can be fruitfulness for God.

The living, risen Christ, then, is the power of practical deliverance from the power of sin still dwelling in the bodies of the justified. This practical salvation from the power of indwelling sin is involved and included in the apostle's expression, in verse 10 of chap. 5, "We shall be saved by His life."

Now, before we proceed with the epistle, it is important that this should be clearly understood. From this point on it is not a question of how a guilty sinner can be saved from the necessity of having to stand before God, to be judged for his sins—the deeds done in his body, but it is a question of how a person—who has already been saved from that dreadful necessity—can be saved from the present dominion of the sin that dwells in him. It is not a salvation from a future judgment of sins that is being considered, but a day by day salvation from a power that is realized to be ever inwardly present. Sin dwells in the mortal body, how can it be nullified? That is the great question. How can the tyranny of sin dwelling in the body be overcome? Can practical deliverance from the dominion of indwelling sin be realized?

Here many serious and fatal mistakes have been made. Many, not realizing that the living, risen Christ is the power of deliverance, have sought to curb the activities of indwelling sin. They have endeavored to resist it and fight it down. With many the conclusion has been accepted that it is not only a hopeless struggle, but that they have no

resource. They say, "We must go on in sin." They abandon the struggle and give up the very idea of ever in this life realizing deliverance from the power of sin. They reason that under grace it is permissible to continue in sin. Some carry the argument so far that they justify continuing in sin on the ground that the grace of God abounds by it. It is an unholy argument—a shocking abuse of grace.

Another mistake, often made, is that the struggle with indwelling sin, to repress and overcome it, is the normal Christian experience. They consider that the struggle and the exercises connected with it are the sure proofs of being a Christian. They would look upon one who has found deliverance, and lives in the sense and joy of it, as being presumptuous and treading on very dangerous ground. With them the cry, voiced by the apostle, where he says, "O wretched man that I am," is the very acme of Christian attainment. They, too, thus give up the idea of deliverance from the power of indwelling sin.

Others again consider that the struggle with the inward evil indicates that the Holy Spirit has not been received. Some of those who hold this view contend that we must die to sin. They constantly urge upon us that we must crucify self, that we must persist in the process of self-crucifixion until we have succeeded in eliminating the inward evil altogether. They argue that the Holy Spirit and sin cannot dwell together, that the body must be made a holy body—a sinless body, before the Holy Spirit can come into it to make it His habitation. Some, a few, have persuaded themselves that they have been successful in their efforts to destroy self,

and that, in their cases, the mortal body has actually become a sinless body. Many more are struggling hard to attain that result.

But there are others who would strenuously refuse such teaching as I have been referring to, who yet hold that the Holy Spirit does not indwell the body of one who has not learned or apprehended what is the real power of deliverance from the reign of the indwelling sin. According to their view the believer, who is passing through the exercises and experiences which are described and explained in the portion of the epistle we are about to consider, is not yet in Christ. While they have a more or less clear understanding of the character of the exercises and experiences themselves, they yet regard the one who is passing through them as still "in the flesh." For them he is neither in Christ nor in the Spirit.

Now all these views, and others, more or less akin to them, are erroneous. The section of the epistle that is now to be before us fully answers them. To enter intelligently on the study of it, it is needful to mark the character of it as distinguished from that of the section we have already reviewed. In this no question of the sinful nature inherent in all men was raised. There is no guilt attaching to the children of Adam for having a fallen, sinful nature. They are not responsible for it, will not be judged for it at the great white throne. They are, however, responsible for allowing it to act. Guilt attaches to the *allowing* the acts. It is for the deeds done in the body men are responsible. This is what constitutes them guilty. It is their guilt—the deeds done—that they will

have to face and be judged for at the great white throne.

We have already seen that what characterizes that part of the epistle we have gone over is the ground and principle on which God gratuitously and righteously delivers a guilty man from the necessity of being judged for what he is guilty of, from having to endure the eternal penalty of his sins.

Nothing of this is found in the next part of the epistle. The wrath of God, as the deserved due of sins, is not contemplated here. It is not this that causes the exercises and experiences that are described. We are not in any way occupied with a soul that is fearing the judgment of the great white throne and is seeking deliverance from it. This has been fully considered in the previous chapters, and peace with God established on a secure basis.

But what we find here is a soul that, having deliverance from eternal judgment, and being so in the sense of the love of God in providing such a deliverance for him, earnestly wants now to live for God. He wants to serve God in a life of holiness. He wants his life now henceforth to be one of fruitfulness for God. Hitherto his body has been a vessel for the use of sin, for Satan's use, now he wants it be a vessel for the use of God.

But with these desires, purposes, aims, longings and aspirations, he finds in himself a power that hinders him from realizing what he so ardently desires. By this power—the power of evil within him, an indwelling, fallen, sinful nature—he is turned from normal Christian occupation (the enjoyment of Christ) to self-occupation and intros-

pection. He longs to be delivered from this power. He feels what terrible bondage it is to be so helpless under a power which, the more he struggles against it, the more miserable he gets. It is a wretched condition to be in. The exceedingly sinful thing that is in him, his fallen, sinful nature, seems to be triumphant. It is reigning in his body.

Is there a power that is greater than this power of indwelling sin?—a power equal to the deliverance out of this wretched self-occupation and miserable introspection?—a power of sufficient energy to produce holiness notwithstanding an ever-present sinful nature?—to produce fruit for God, to use the body as a vessel for the display of the life of the risen Christ, though sin still dwells in it?

Yes, thank God, there *is* such a power. Only it needs that we be turned to the place where it is to find it, and be conscious of its workings. It is this need that the second part of Romans meets and provides for. It turns us to the place where the power for living the life of Christ practically is to be found. To be occupied with it *there* is to be practically under the delivering power, and practically delivered from the power of indwelling sin.

This part of the epistle, then, answers the question, Where do the justified find power to live practically by Christ? Where do they find power to display the life of the risen Christ in their mortal bodies?

We shall now turn to it to follow the apostle's discussion of the question. May the blessed Spirit guide us in doing so. And may we be helped to a

fuller and deeper apprehension of the deliverance that the God, who righteously justifies the sinner that believes, has provided for the justified to enjoy.

C. CRAIN.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 205.)

THE blessings which grace bestows along with justification by faith are all, as we have seen, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now this suggests the idea of many being involved by the act of one, and sharing the results of that act. Possibly the thought was before the apostle's mind as an objection raised by some to his teaching. At all events, he fully indorses the idea. If the word "wherefore" is changed to the expression, "with reference to this" (which is really the force of the words in the original), the meaning is made more simple. Thus the apostle's argument is: With regard to the justified being involved in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and sharing in its results, it is the same as it is with sin and death coming into the world by one man. Many are involved by the one sin of Adam, and share in the results of that sin.

There is no other explanation of the fact that the children of Adam universally have a corrupted moral nature. The moral nature of man was first corrupted in him—our progenitor. Having become corrupted in him, it has passed on naturally as an inheritance to his descendants. They have a fallen, sinful nature through him. All his children are thus involved in his fall and ruin—the many involved by the act of the one.

As regards death, it is the penalty of sin. It was by sin that death came to Adam, but the death that came thus to him has passed on to his descendants. Involved in his moral ruin by his sin, deriving from

him his fallen, sinful nature, to be righteously exempted from the death he brought in by sin, his children must establish a right to live. Not one has ever done this. They all sin, and so death justly passes to them. In the holy government of God it would be impossible to exempt from death the sinning children of Adam, although it is not *their* sinning that brought death into the world. It was brought into the world by the sin of Adam. It came in thus under the government of God as penalty for sin, and it necessarily passes to all that sin—which all do.* Righteously, therefore, all die.

The law did not alter this. It was a special system of dealing with man; a system in which sin was taken note of in detail, and under which sin became transgression, and was thus shown to be in nature and character *enmity* to God. If death thus rightly reigned under law, it is still true that it rightly reigned when and where there was no law; for it was not law that brought death into the world; it came in by sin, and sin was in the world before law.

* The apostle is not here taking the case of infants and idiots into consideration. It is quite true that they have, as an inheritance from Adam, a corrupt nature, and die. They are, so far, involved by his one act of disobedience. Still, when the apostle says, "For all have sinned," he must be exempting infants and idiots. He surely exempts them in chap. 3:23. Those who die in infancy, in irresponsibility, are exempt from a judgment of "deeds done in the body." It is of those in responsibility that the apostle says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Even the irresponsible die, for they are linked by the body with the old creation which must pass away. But there is no reason why they will not have part in the first resurrection! If we view them in their irresponsibility as exempted from judgment, their case presents no difficulty

The principle, then, of many being affected by the act of one is clearly established by appealing to undoubted historical fact. The entire human race is involved in the one act of disobedience by which the moral nature of our progenitor became corrupted. The universal reign of death is a sufficient appeal to demonstrate the principle of many sharing in the consequences of the act of one.

Now Adam, looked at as the fountain-head of the stream of fallen, sinful humanity, a race of sinners, sharing in the disastrous results of his sinful act, is a "figure" of Christ. He, too, is the Head of a race, a spiritual race, all of whom are involved in His blessed obedience unto death, and share in its glorious consequences. The principles we have been considering are as true in connection with Christ as they are in connection with Adam.

However, before the apostle draws his conclusions from the argument he is using, he stops to point out certain features connected with those two fountain-heads in which they stand in remarkable contrast, and in which Christ abundantly exceeds over Adam. While Adam is a type of Christ, and thus in certain features there is a similarity between them, there are three features in which there is *dissimilarity*. The dissimilarity consists in this, that in the case of Adam there is the measuring of penalty in exact righteousness; while with Christ there is a wealth of blessing that far exceeds the need that has to be met. It is a "much more" than the recovery of a position and condition that have been lost. It is the gaining a much higher place and a condition of blessing infinitely greater than those which were forfeited by sin.

Let us look at the three features in which the dissimilarity between the first man, Adam, and the Second Man, the last Adam, is so strongly emphasized.

First, there is a difference between "the offence" of the one and "the free gift" which is by the Other. By Adam's one offence death has been transmitted to "the many" who have sprung from him. The death that came to Adam as penalty for sin has passed on in that character to those that have descended from him. Now the "free gift" by Christ, conferred on "the many" to whom it is given to "live by Him," abounds for them far beyond their deliverance from death, the penalty of sin. It means for them life in the abundance of its power. It is "much more" than salvation from the death duly and righteously deserved. It is the positive reality and blessedness of living with God.

Again, there is dissimilarity between the effects of "the one sin" and the effects of "the gift." A state of condemnation was established by one sin. One sin produced a subsisting state of condemnation. One sin brought it in. The gift through Christ has established a state of righteousness. An abiding, subsisting state of righteousness is the effect of the gift by Christ. This established state of positive righteousness is "much more" than deliverance out of the state of condemnation. The gift does indeed deliver out of the state of condemnation, taking full cognizance of the accumulation of offences; but beyond the deliverance from the condemnation, there is the provision of a state of positive righteousness, which is one of abiding acceptance. This is a righteousness already produced, fully accomplished—a

completed righteousness conferred by God in grace. How blessed to have it thus as the transcending favor of God!

The third feature in which there is dissimilarity relates to the final results. Through the offence of the one, there has come in by the one a reign of death. It has been an absolute reign—a reign of irresistible power. Now on the other hand there are those “who receive *abundance* of grace and the gift of righteousness.” It is not merely deliverance from the power of death, from its reign and triumph, but a “much more,” by which they themselves are “more than conquerors.” By the power of the life grace confers on them, they themselves reign. The life they have is life through and in the living, victorious Man, Jesus Christ. In this life they reign. What an abundance of grace!

Now we have seen that in verses 12-14 the apostle sets before us the features in which there is similarity between Adam and Christ; and in verses 15-17 the features in which there is *dissimilarity*. In verses 18-21 we get his conclusions. To rightly understand these we must keep in mind the dissimilarity as well as the similarity; the unlikeness as well as the likeness; the features in which there is contrast as well as the features in which there is resemblance. In other words, we must not forget the “much more” and the “abundance” of verses 15-17 while we are considering the apostle’s summing up of his argument.

There are three conclusions that the argument leads to. First, by one offence there was brought in for all men a state of condemnation. The one act of Adam operated in the way of establishing a sub-

sisting state of condemnation for all men. So, too, by one righteousness there has been brought in for all men an abiding state of righteousness. Before his fall Adam lived in a state of innocence. But it was living under conditions of testing, and so was not in an abiding state of righteousness. When he fell, he came into a new state. After he sinned, he was no longer under testing in innocence. He was in a new condition entirely. It was a state of condemnation. Condemnation was connected with the new condition in which he lived. This state of condemnation was brought in by his one offence. His one offence bringing in such a state, determined for all men a living in a state of condemnation.

Now Christ by His one righteousness has established an abiding state of righteousness. *He* is living in such a state. The abiding state of righteousness in which He lives is a provision He has made for all men. Just as Adam by his one offence passed out of a state of testing in innocence into a state of living under condemnation, so Christ by His one righteousness has passed out of a state of living in which He was in relation to sin (always personally sinless, of course), into a state in which He lives no more in reference to sin, but to God—a state of subsisting righteousness. He has passed out of a state in which He had to do with sin and death. He now lives in a state in which He no more has to do with them. He has established a state of abiding righteousness in the behalf of all men.

The apostle is affirming here the all-sufficiency of the provision of this state of righteousness. It has been established as a provision for all men. It is available for all. If any have difficulty about it, let

them remember the apostle, in the verse we are considering, is not speaking of the final results of either the one act of Adam or of Christ. He is speaking of the bearing of their acts. Just as the one offence of Adam was toward all for a state of condemnation, so the one righteousness of Christ is toward all for a state of subsisting righteousness of life.

Again, in speaking of a state of condemnation, he does not say "of life." Those who are living in this state are living in a state that is really death. When he speaks of a state of abiding righteousness, then he says, "of life." Those who are in this state are the only ones who are really living. They live by Him who has established a state of life in unchanging righteousness.

In verse 19 we get a second conclusion. By the disobedience of one the many springing from him have been caused to be sinners. They are sinners by the fact of inheriting his corrupt moral nature. So, too, on the other hand, by the obedience of Christ those who derive life and nature from Him, by that very fact have a life and nature *in which* they are righteous. They are not righteous in themselves, but in Him by whom they live. In Him they are holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable. In the life and nature they have derived from Him, the righteous One, they are in life and nature righteous. By His one obedience they have been caused to be righteous.

We must now look at the third conclusion—verses 20, 21. Here the apostle refers to the introduction of law as a special dealing with man. It did not bring in sin and death, but caused the *offence* to abound. It turned sin into transgression. It dem-

onstrated sin to be, in its essential character, enmity against God. It was given as a special system of dealing with man for that very purpose. But law did not bring either sin or death into the world. They were already in the world when the law was given. If sin reigned unto death under law, it did before law also. Nevertheless, whether in the time of law or before it, wherever sin abounded grace has abounded in a far more abundant measure. In every age-time there have been those who received "abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness." They reigned in life—a life not derived from the first Adam, but from Him of whom he is a "figure." They were involved in the one obedience. They were sharers in the results of the one righteousness.

How glorious these triumphs of the grace that is through Jesus Christ! How glorious, whatever the age-time, whether before law, after law came, now, or in the age-times to come!

If now sin has reigned in death, the reign of grace through righteousness is unto eternal life. While Old Testament believers derived their life—the life in which they reigned—from Him that then was to come, yet they did not have the life in the abundance and fulness of its power in which it is possessed by those who receive it now. But even we who derive life from Christ in this Christian age do not yet possess it in its most abundant power. For this all receivers of the "abundant grace" must wait until life is possessed in its final condition.

But this final condition—a condition that is permanent and eternal—is the assured portion of all the recipients of the grace that reigns through righteousness. All who derive life and nature from the

second Fountain-head live by Him. Living by Him, they are more than victors. The end will be the completion of the triumph of grace, living by Him still, but having life in its final and unchanging condition.

Now we must notice that the apostle adds, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." He has fully justified the principle of many being involved in the act of one, and sharing in the consequences of the act. Thus, in adding here, "through Jesus Christ," he reaffirms the principles.

Christ, then, is a new fountain, or source of life. Those who derive life from Him—the receivers of grace, the justified—live by and in Him. This fact assures of final and complete salvation—a salvation that will embrace the body.

C. CRAIN.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 236.)

(Chap. 6 : 1-13.)

HAVING unfolded the character of the transcending triumph of grace over sin, the apostle is anxious that those who are participators in this triumph should be preserved from what is, alas, a common abuse of his doctrine.

Enemies of the doctrine of grace have sought to discredit it by charging it with making sin a necessity. There are those who understand the doctrine to mean that it permits going on still in sin. Flagrant violations of holiness have been defended by the plea that it is allowable under grace to continue in sin—to indulge the lusts of the flesh. In many quarters it is taught that victory over sin is not to be counted on as long as we remain in our earthly life. It is said, "We have not yet received our sinless body, and as long as we have the old sinful body we must inevitably be subject to sin. It must have at least a certain measure of rule over us."

But the apostle will not allow those who are in Christ, those who live by and in Him, to entertain such unholy deductions from his doctrine of grace. When he says, "What shall *we* say then?" he is speaking as one of the numerous subjects of the reign of grace. He speaks as representing those, once among the victims of sin, whose hearts have been laid hold of by the grace which is by the one Man, Jesus Christ, and who have thus come to be of Him—sharers with Him in the life and blessing

of which He is the Fountain-Head. On their behalf, in their name, we may say, he asks, "Does the doctrine of grace allow one to go on still in sin? Do we take the view that grace abounding over sin implies that sin, or a measure of it, is justifiable as furnishing occasion for the triumph of grace?"

How indignantly the apostle refuses the thought! With what vigor and earnestness he denounces such a conception of his doctrine! The thought is intolerable. It is an unholy implication. It would destroy the true character of grace; it would rob it of the reality of its triumph; it would mean serious damage to souls, as it would vitally affect the state of their minds and the condition of their hearts. No! Such a view is to be wholly condemned. Those who are participators in the triumph over sin through Jesus Christ are to put the unholy thought far, far away. The authoritative apostolic declaration of the doctrine of grace demands it. Be it so that we still have our old sinful body, we can not allow that we must therefore sin more or less. We are not on that account to justify going on still in more or less sin. That is not deliverance from the dominion of sin.

If it be said, "Our future deliverance is secure, but present deliverance is impossible," the answer is, That is not the apostle's teaching. He teaches and insists on a *present* deliverance from the dominion of sin. As our Lord in John 8: 34 said, "Who-soever committeth sin is the servant of sin." The doctrine of the apostle is the same. With him, being under grace and under sin is an impossibility. Those who are the subjects of grace should regard

bondage to sin as incompatible with subjection to grace.

We come now to the apostle's discussion of the subject of present deliverance from the dominion of sin. We shall see that he divides his discussion into two parts. In the first he dwells on our title, or right, to be in present practical deliverance from sin's dominion; in the second he shows how deliverance is practically attained, and what it is found to be when practically reached.

Before we begin to follow the apostle's argument, let us remind ourselves that all men, as sprung from fallen Adam, are victims of sin and of death. Those laid hold of by grace, which is by Jesus Christ, have become His seed (Isa. 53: 10). As thus sprung from Him, they are sharers in the eternal life which is in Him. This participation in eternal life in Christ Jesus is a blessing to be realized *now*, as well as in eternity. The subjects of grace have *now* the eternal life that is in Him. It is in that sense that they now live by and in Him. But living thus in connection with Him, i. e., as sprung *from* Him, they are *of* the position in which He is. They belong to *it*.

What then is His position? Here we must remember that Christ, in grace, once took our position under sin. He was not *personally* under it, but in grace entered into the position of being under sin in the behalf of those who were personally in that position. Having thus in grace taken the position, He died—death being the penalty of sin, and so the due of those in that position. It was a vicarious death; He could die in no other way. Having died thus atoningly in behalf of the victims of sin, in rising

again He has taken up a new position, and is dead to the former position under sin, which in grace He had taken for those under sin.

Now, as we have already said, as sprung from Him we are of Him in His new position. We are of the position in which He is, and therefore dead to sin.

It is to this blessed fact that the apostle appeals in beginning his discussion as to our right to be practically delivered from the dominion of sin. His argument is this: Sin having had its reign over us to its legitimate end in death, and Christ having taken our place in subjection to it, we who have been laid hold of by His grace have passed out of that position from under sin. We are subjects of grace, and as such dead to sin. We have the right to be free practically from sin's power and rule. We have a positional deliverance which entitles us to live in happy subjection to grace, in the realization that sin's rights over us have all been annulled. We are freed completely from every claim of sin upon us, even from its claim to the use of the old sinful body. What a perfect deliverance grace has thus provided for us!

Alas, how little it is understood! How difficult it is to lay hold of the true conception of what our deliverance is! How few are in reality entering into what the apostle means when he teaches, as he does here, that the subjects of grace—those who are in Christ—are dead to sin!

Some, in their inability to lay hold of the real import of the doctrine of being dead to sin, deny it altogether. They insist that the fact of our having still the old sinful body is the clearest proof that we

are not yet dead to sin. Others, while they do not deny that the doctrine is taught, and that there is a certain ideal sense in which it is true, yet deny that it can be *practically* true. Others still modify the form of the words in which the doctrine is taught, and say, "We *ought to* be dead to sin." In their teaching there is much exhortation to the effect that Christians should strive *to die* to sin. How forcefully sometimes we are exhorted to put the old man to death. But in all this teaching the true conception of what deliverance from sin is, and being dead to sin, is lacking. The widespread misunderstanding of what being dead to sin is, shows how difficult it is for us to lay hold of it. Those who so zealously promulgate such teachings as we have referred to, in contradiction to the teaching of the apostle, will do well to weigh the incontestable argument of verses 3-7, in which the fact of our being positionally in the place of death to sin is clearly demonstrated. Let us now turn to it.

The apostle's first appeal to prove that we are in the position of being dead to sin is the significance of baptism. Baptism is the badge of discipleship to the risen Lord Jesus Christ. What makes it a suitable badge of discipleship to Him is that, as Peter tells us (1 Peter 3: 21), it is a figure of salvation by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism being such a figure, shows that in our being baptized we were in figure put into the position of being dead with Christ. Furthermore, our being figuratively put into this position was in view to our living henceforth in a new life. But the new life our baptism calls for is one in the likeness of Christ's life in resurrection. Plainly then our baptism, though it

is a figure, witnesses to a position of death to sin. It declares that Christ has died to sin (having in grace put Himself under sin to do so), and that we are in figure identified with Him in His position of being dead to sin, to be identified with Him in the life He is living as risen.

Now what baptism witnesses to, the gospel declares to be true of us. As having heard and received "the word of the truth of the gospel," we know that when Christ died, the old, fallen, sinful man was being judicially dealt with. We know that if One died in behalf of all men, judicially all men have died (2 Cor. 5: 14, *Greek*). Having heard and received the word of truth, by which we have become new creatures in Christ, we know that our old man (the man connected with the old position in Adam) has been crucified—judicially put to death. His claims to the body have been annulled in his judicial death. The body, therefore, which once was in the power of the old man, now belongs to the new man; and though yet unredeemed, is no more for the use of sin.

Even though still in our old body, we are of Him who died and rose again, and our body, though still a sinful body, belongs to Him; and as belonging to Him, it is not under sin's dominion. How manifestly we have title to be practically delivered from sin's power and rule! We are, positionally, delivered. Though we have still the old sinful body, as being in Christ we cannot be charged with being sinful men. We do not have to wait until we receive the redemption of the body to be in Christ. We are in Him now. We are His seed now by His grace having laid hold of us. We are thus constituted right-

eous; we are no more chargeable with our old state under sin, than a dead body, a corpse, is.

Clearly then is our position demonstrated to be Christ's position of being dead to sin. But this implies and involves living with Him; and living with Him *now*, not merely by and by. We shall surely live with Him when we get our redeemed bodies, but we have title to live with Him *now*, while we are still in the old body. He lives no more under sin's dominion. He went under it once in grace, but by dying and rising again He lives in eternal deliverance from sin's power. As subjects of grace—as being in Him—we are in the same sphere of life in which He is, where sin cannot enter. It is not simply that we have life in Him, but that we live with Him; and living with Him implies living in practical deliverance from sin's dominion. The apostle is not yet ready, however, to take up the question of the practical deliverance. Other questions of serious moment must first be given attention to.

The reason why many never get far along in the road to deliverance from sin's power is because they fail to take the very first step. Having established beyond question that the subjects of grace have title to be practically delivered from the dominion of sin, the apostle now points out what is the first step in the road to deliverance. What is it?

It is taking the right standpoint from which to look at ourselves. Many who are in Christ do not think of themselves as in Him. They think of themselves as in Adam. They think of themselves as under sin, as necessarily so because of sin still dwelling in them. It is not true, however, that because we have still the sinful body, we are under sin. We

are under sin as yielding to it, as serving it, as yielding the members of the body to its use; but we are not under sin as being still in the old body. We are thinking wrongly when we think of ourselves as under sin because we have still the old body of sin.

Now, to think rightly of ourselves is the very first step toward deliverance from the service of sin. The apostle tells us in verse 11 how we should think of ourselves. He says, "Likewise reckon"—consider, think of—"yourselves as *dead to sin* and *alive to God*" We are still in our earthly life, but as in Christ we are entitled to think of ourselves as if we had died and were risen from the dead. It is this right thought of our position that the apostle presses upon us here.

Now another thing necessarily accompanies this right thinking of ourselves as if we were dead and risen. Viewing ourselves as connected with Christ in His position of having died to sin and living to God, we will consider that sin has no longer any title to the use of the mortal body. We will not consent to its reigning there; we will refuse that its lusts should govern us. We will look upon the members of our body as belonging to God, as if they were members of the new body which we are yet to receive. We will hold them to be instruments of righteousness—not of sin.

If now we take the apostle's standpoint of looking at ourselves as being in Christ, as if we were thus dead and risen and living to God, we shall then regard sin's title to our body as annulled, and that our Saviour-God has claims upon it, its members to be instruments of righteousness; and, as under these claims, there will be in us a purpose to have God's

rights to our body realized. We will be actuated by the thought that God's title must be made good practically—that His title over us should be realized in practical life.

The formation in our minds of this purpose, the establishment in our souls of this aim to be practically attained, carries us on a good step in the road to a life of practical deliverance from the dominion of sin; but until this purpose is formed, and the aim becomes the absorbing desire of our soul, progress toward a practical life of liberty from sin's power is impossible. Alas, how many are lacking here! They are content to drag on in weary bondage to sin with little or no purpose to be free from its rule.

May the Lord use the apostle's exhortations in verses 11-13 to establish in the souls of all the subjects of His grace an insatiable desire to be practically delivered from sin's power in its use of the body for any sinful purpose.

C. CRAIN.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 269.)

(Chap. 6.)

WE have seen that the apostle teaches that the victims of sin, who have been laid hold of by the grace of Christ, who took their place under sin's dominion, are now connected with Christ in the new position He has taken up as risen from the dead. They are *of* Him. They live now—live by Him. Living by Him, they belong to Him, are in Him; and *with* Him are dead to sin, and have title to think of themselves from this point of view—as *in Christ*. It is their right to take the place of being of the risen Christ—to look at themselves from this standpoint.

Now it may be said, "From that standpoint it is true that those who are the subjects of this grace have title to be practically free from the service of sin; but title to deliverance from sin is one thing, and ability to use the title is quite a different one. It will be said, "It is one thing to look at my mortal body and think of it as subject to the claims

of Christ, and quite another thing to keep from activity the sin that dwells in it." We are told, "It is quite right to regard our members as being instruments of righteousness and for the use and service of God, but it is another matter to hinder their being used as instruments of unrighteousness."

We are thus reminded that there is a distinction to be made between *title* to be free from the service of sin and *ability* to make the title good practically.

To this distinction we readily agree; but before we discuss the question of the power by which we live practically to God, and where we find that power, there are other questions which must be looked at first. We must first inquire, Are there any necessary hindrances in the way of being practically delivered from the rule of sin? Are there limitations to which practical deliverance is possible, and beyond which it is impossible?

If we turn back to the preceding dispensations we readily see that there were then subjects of grace—men who lived in faith, in the light of the prophecies of the grace that has been brought to us (1 Pet. 1: 10). They thus lived by the One of whom Adam was the figure, but they did not live in the abundance and fulness in which it is given to us to live (John 10: 10). Life and incorruptibility were not then illuminated as they are now (2 Tim. 1: 10). They lived the life of faith under limitations. Again, they did not have the full measure of God's estimate of sin as we have since the cross of Christ, and here we cannot fail to see a very great limitation which must very largely have affected their practical lives. Furthermore, the law, when it was given to Israel, must have been a very great limita-

tion to the extent in which the life of faith could be practically maintained.

Here is a matter which requires careful consideration. It should be remembered that the law as a rule of life was given to Israel as a nation—to men in the flesh; and the children of faith were not separated from the rest of the nation; they were not exempted from the rule of life under which the *nation* was put. Being thus under the same rule of life as the rest of the nation, they were under restraints that made it impossible for them to take the place of children with God. While they were children in reality, they could not be children practically (Gal. 4: 1-7).

Now, the rule of life under which they were put, as being a part of the nation upon whom it was imposed, is the strength of sin (1 Cor. 15: 56). It made the offense abound in them as well as in the rest of the nation. Being thus under an order of dealing which stirred sin in the flesh they were continually in bondage through fear of death (Heb. 2: 15). They could not be set free as long as that order of dealing with them stood. The law gave to sin an opportunity and advantage, and it was impossible for them to claim exemption from its penalty. They could never say sin did not have dominion over them.

Believers, then, under law, were under conditions of restraint—limitations which prevented the grace that had laid hold of them abounding in the fulness and abundance of its power. But Christ dead, risen and glorified, is the end of these conditions of restraint for believers. He is the end of the law for believers, whether it be for righteousness or for a

rule of life. The subjects of divine grace are not under it *now*. This has been authoritatively declared, and with this declaration there has come also the assurance that "sin shall not have dominion over us" (ver. 14).

In the apostle's statement, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace," we learn there is no necessary hindrance to those who are of Christ being now practically free from the service of sin. God is not now requiring His children to live by a rule which is the strength of sin. He has brought to a complete end, for believers, the whole system under which formerly He held them under restraint, and under which it was impossible to know and enjoy the complete measure of grace.

It is, then, the privilege of every child of God now to be practically delivered from the rule of sin. Deliverance from the dominion of sin is his present right. It is not to be thought of as an ideal, impossible of realization until the body is changed. It is to be maintained that the grace of God, which is by Jesus Christ, provides for all its present subjects not only eternal exemption from judgment, but also present freedom from the service of sin; and that God is not now imposing on them a rule of life that hinders their enjoyment of deliverance from sin's power.

But the apostle's assertion that the subjects of grace are not under law is often disputed. Many still maintain that the law is the Christian's guide to right living. But freedom from it as the rule of life is most unequivocally stated by the apostle. There is not the least ambiguity about his expression of it

He is speaking, too, as the exponent and representative of Christianity. His statement is authoritative. Nevertheless, it is not accepted as being the truth by many. There are many who refuse it with horror. They say it means license to sin. They tell us freedom from law as a rule of life means lawlessness, indulging in sin as much as one pleases.

But this is plainly a misconception of the apostle's teaching. It is a thorough misunderstanding of the character of divine grace. No one really entering into that grace, in which Christ took the place of the victims of sin, could conceive of it as meaning license to sin, or think it necessary that the subjects of that grace should be under law as a rule of life to them from sinning.

That freedom from law means lawlessness, the apostle resents, and strenuously refuses. That it means license to sin is an intolerable thought to him. He exclaims most vigorously against it. All who submit to his authoritative statement of what the grace of God means, will join with him in denouncing as a false conception the thought that freedom from the principle of law is liberty to indulge in sin;—a thought to be put far away.

Having strongly denounced the idea as repulsive and intolerable, the apostle now proceeds, in ver. 16, to show what the misconception really means. To say, "If we are not under law, then let us sin as much as we like," means deliberately choosing to be the servants of sin. To willingly indulge in sin is to make one's self a voluntary servant of it. That should be self-evident. What is so manifest ought to expose the error underlying the statement that "because we are not under law, but under

grace, therefore we may sin as much as we choose." It is plainly wrong: it certainly is not apostolic teaching.

The apostle goes on to insist that it is not the form of teaching to which the subjects of grace have submitted themselves (ver. 17). They have received a different type of teaching altogether. They have surrendered themselves to a teaching of another character. Having received the apostolic teaching, that which he denounces as intolerable must be unholy and abhorrent to them.

Now, let us remark, the teaching that freedom from law as the rule of life means lawlessness, is not the teaching to which the Roman saints had given their adherence. Taking them as representatives of the saints of apostolic times, we may say, such teaching was not a part of the faith of those saints. It is therefore a teaching antagonistic to Christianity. Those who are seeking to introduce it into Christian teaching, who would make it a part of Christian instruction, are corrupting and subverting Christianity. It is therefore to be vigorously refused and strenuously opposed. The defenders of the apostolic faith must join with the apostle in refusing it as a misconception of the character of Christianity, as unholy, and intolerable.

But we must follow the apostle further. Having thanked God that the Roman saints were not adherents of such a false and unholy teaching, he tells them (ver. 18) that through their surrender of themselves to the right form of teaching, they were made free from sin, and are now the servants of righteousness. He then exhorts them to let righteousness have the use of their members even as

formerly they had allowed sin to use them (ver. 19).

Then, next, he contrasts the fruit. He says, "When you were free from righteousness you lived in unholiness. You are now ashamed of the unholy lives you lived as the servants of sin. You were on the road that leads to and ends in death. But now as servants of righteousness you are living in holiness, and are on the road which leads to the final condition of life which is in prospect for all those who have become connected with the risen Christ."

We may, then, sum up the apostle's argument in the chapter: The grace that is by Jesus Christ has provided and secured, for those of whom it lays hold, a new position and condition of life in which they are entitled to be practically free from the service of sin. Though they are still in their old, mortal, sinful bodies, yet there is no necessary reason why these bodies should be under sin's power, or their members be yielded up to be used for sinful purposes. Christ, by whom we live, being the end of the law, both for righteousness or as rule of life, for those who have life in Him, we are not limited by what gives strength to the sin that dwells in us; hence there is full liberty for the life of Christ to manifest its power in using the body, though still mortal and sinful, to the glory of God.

This is what the grace of God confers on those who submit themselves to the grace of Christ in His one obedience unto death. We are granted the inestimable blessing of living with God. This is eternal life indeed. May we submit ourselves more fully to the grace that has made it our portion.

But in spite of the plain and authoritative state-

ment of the apostle, that we are not now under a rule of life that prevents our enjoying this liberty from sin's service, there are many who very mistakenly regard the principle of law as the only means by which a life of practical holiness can be produced. Notwithstanding the apostle's unequivocal statement that we are *not* under law, they insist that law is the power for holiness. Evidently, some in the apostle's day maintained this. It was necessary for the apostle to take up the question of law to show the effect of it upon a believer who undertakes to make it the rule of life.

As we shall see, the question that is raised is, What is the power by which a believer lives a life of holiness and fruitfulness to God? Is it law that gives him strength to serve God, or is it Christ enjoyed by the power of the Spirit? Does the one who is in Christ find in the principle of law power to yield himself to God? Is it the principle of law that gives him ability to yield his members to righteousness? Is practical righteousness produced in those who are in Christ by walking after the law as a rule of life?

These are all serious, sober-minded questions. Every soul that the grace of Christ lays hold of sooner or later raises them. Finding themselves the objects of the love of God they cannot long enjoy that love as the Holy Spirit sheds it abroad in the heart without feeling themselves under the obligation to live to God. In their efforts to do so they find they need power to enable them to live to the honor and praise of God. We naturally suppose a life to the glory of God can be lived by making the law the rule of life. The supposition is an en-

tire mistake. But the experience under the trial of it is necessary to manifest the mistake.

This experience is explained and interpreted in chap. 7. The explanation of the experience answers definitely and authoritatively the question, Is the law the Christian's power for a life of holiness and fruitfulness to God.

(To be continued.)

C. CRAIN.

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 292.)

(Chap. 7: 1—8: 4.)

WE will now consider the apostle's statement of the effect of one who is in Christ making the law the rule of life.

It is of very great importance to notice that the apostle does not admit that God imposes the law as a rule of life on those who are connected with the risen Christ. He looks upon them as being dead to the law with Christ. He recognizes that in the past dispensation the subjects of divine grace were put by God into relationship with law—a relationship he illustrates by the marriage bond. If death removes the husband, the woman is no longer in the marriage bond. So too the death of Christ, as our representative and substitute, ends for believers their relationship with law. A woman whose husband is dead is free to be joined to another man. So also, since the death of Christ, the law cannot prevent those who are of Christ being joined to Him. Their bond with law having been dissolved by the death upon the cross, they are thus freed from it, and a new bond has been formed. By the Spirit of God, who is given to believers (to all believers since the ascension of Christ—John 7: 39), those who are of Christ are united to Him in this a new bond (vers. 1-4).

We must also note another thing. Whatever fruit for God there was in the practical lives of those who were of Christ before His death, it was not the fruit of their bond with law. That was a barren, fruitless bond. But the new bond, the bond by the

Spirit, is *not* a fruitless one. The law's very prohibitions intensified the opposition of the natural man's sinful passions (ver. 5). For this reason it could not help the true children of faith to a life of fruitful service for God.

But now, since the death of Christ, believers are delivered from the bond with the law, and are in a bond with the risen Christ, in which the Spirit of God is the energy of service—a service acceptable to God. Serving thus by the Spirit, they serve in newness of spirit; not now with minds in rebellion against the authority of God, but with hearts in subjection to His grace.

The doctrine of the apostle, then, is that those who belong to Christ now, not only have title to be practically free from the law, but are in a bond with the risen Christ, the fruit of which is realized and enjoyed in the measure in which the Spirit, who is the power of the bond, is obeyed in His leading (ver. 5, 6).

Here an objection presents itself. An ardent defender of the doctrine that the law is the rule of life for Christians, says, "If Christians are dead to the law, then the law is sin." The apostle's answer shows that it is in nowise so. Instead of its being sin, it *convicts* of sin. This was one of the purposes for which it was given; and no matter to whom it has to say—an unconverted or a converted man—it convicts of sin. Whoever undertakes to live by it finds the lusts it forbids are in him, and that the very prohibition is the occasion of their vigorous activity. One just converted usually delights, with more or less ecstasy, in the love of God, which the Spirit that dwells in him sheds abroad in his heart.

While thus occupied, in the power of the Spirit, with the love of God, he is not concerned, or occupied with the sin that dwells in him. Without the law, it is not active (ver. 9). But as he begins to think of the claims which the love he has so much enjoyed has upon him, he assumes that the law is the power by which he is to meet those claims. He takes it up thus as the rule of his life. He finds, however, that he is continually being made aware of the presence in him of the prohibited lusts. Their activity has revived, and his conscience continually accuses him. What he took up for life, he finds to be a ministration of death—see 2 Cor. 3: 7. He has been deceived. The coming in of the law in this way, as the rule of life, was the occasion of his being deceived. The result of the experience is the writing upon his conscience that he has no title to live—his conscience is under the sentence of death. He has to own that even as a child of God he has not the least title to live.

The lesson thus learned is a good one; he has learned it through the law, though mistaken in taking it to be the rule of life. The law, then, is not sin. It is holy, and the commandment is "holy and just and good" (vers. 10-12).

There is yet another objection. The defender of the law as being the Christian's rule of life, considers the apostle's reasoning to imply that what is "good is made death" to the Christian. The apostle now shows that the objection is an entire misapprehension. Instead of the law being made death to a believer in Christ, as a ministration of death it shows how exceedingly sinful sin is. The fact that it is by means of what is good that sin works death

in one who belongs to Christ, makes the deadly character of sin the more manifest. The objection, then, is shown to have no force (ver. 13).

We come now to the apostle's explanation of the exercises and experiences resulting from the mistake which so many believers in Christ make in taking the law to be the rule of life (vers. 14-20). To understand this explanation we must remember the apostle is not speaking of the exercises and experiences of an unregenerate man—of a man whose position before God is that of being in Adam—in the flesh. He is speaking of a regenerate man—a man in Christ; in the new bond, therefore, possessed by believers ever since Pentecost. He is a man indwelt by the Spirit. While he is not walking *according to* the Spirit, yet the indwelling Spirit is leading him. He is leading him as to his aims and purposes, and He is also leading him in his decisions as he passes judgment on the strife that he finds going on within him. Terrible as it all is, he is being led and taught of the Spirit.

Let us trace the Spirit's ways with him under the authoritative guidance of the apostle.

First, let us mark that the spirituality of the law is spoken of as found in what we may call a common Christian consciousness. In other words, it is the instinctive consciousness of every regenerate soul. The *measure* of its spirituality is another matter. This, no doubt, differs in different individuals. But every new-born soul will unhesitatingly confess the spirituality of the law. With this common Christian instinct the Spirit allies Himself; hence the one who has mistakenly taken up the law as a rule of life is led to realize that by his carnality he is a captive

in sin's power. He consents to the law, agrees with the Spirit that it is good, in mind and heart is subject to the Spirit's view of the law as being spiritual, yet he finds inward insubjection as well.

Second, as, under the Spirit's watchful eye and superintending care, he studies the conflict going on within himself, he is taught to distinguish between himself and the sin that dwells in him. He is unwillingly serving sin. He sees there is an "I" that is right, though he has not yet learned to identify it. He does not yet see himself as a man in Christ, but he distinguishes the "I" that is right from the sin dwelling within him, and to which he is captive.

Third, further exercise and introspection, still by the sure guidance of the Spirit, teaches him the utter profitlessness of the flesh. The carnal mind, or the mind of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. There is no power in the law to make it subject. He sees there is a will to do the good—a will that is not the will of the flesh—but power to do the good he does not find. His previous conviction and conclusion is thus confirmed, and in fact greatly strengthened. While he does not yet see himself to be a man in Christ, he is more than ever confirmed in the conviction that there is an I that is right, from which the indwelling sin is to be distinguished.

We come now to the final conclusions to which the Spirit leads him (vers. 21-23). All the exercises the Spirit has been pressing upon him, and all the experiences he has passed through in connection with the exercises, reveal plainly an ever-present law. However desirous of doing the good, evil is always present with him. It is a fixed, established law. While

he delights in the law of God, approves God's expressed will, he sees there is an opposing law in his members, not only antagonistic to the law of his renewed mind, but with sufficient power to make him a helpless captive to the law of sin dwelling in his members. Thus by the guidance of the Spirit, who characterizes his true condition before God as a subject of divine grace, he has learned to place a right estimate upon his practical condition in not enjoying the aims and purposes with which the Spirit has energized him. He has not yet learned what the Spirit's power is, but he has become assured that it is a mistake to look for it in himself. He is now ready to abandon his search for it by introspection. He turns thus away from himself to find in Another the power for holiness and fruitfulness that he has thus far *been looking for in himself in vain.*

We will now inquire, Where did he find the Spirit's power? How did he find it? When he found it, what did he find it to be? All these questions are answered for us in verses 7: 24—8: 4. Let us look at them.

Having learned to realize his wretchedness as a helpless captive to the power of indwelling sin, he turns away from himself to think of and enjoy Christ—the Christ that died and rose again, with whom he is connected as being a subject of grace. Occupied now with Him, he sees himself as *in* Him—as belonging *to* Him, as being *of* Him. This, that he now sees, has been true of him all through. It has been the mind of the Spirit as to him all along. But the discovery fills his soul with praise. Convicted of needing a deliverer, he finds the need fully met in the One to whom he has turned, and his soul re-

sponds, "I thank God!" Through Jesus Christ he has been delivered from his captivity, and the joy of it fills him.

Now as a delivered one he looks back with spiritual intelligence—the intelligence of the Spirit—upon the terrible struggles through which he has passed. He understands that, as serving the law of God with the mind, and the law of sin with the flesh, he had been entirely mistaken as to his real condition before God. He did not have the mind of the Spirit about it. He now understands that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ: that God views them as being of the risen One, and thus as sharing in the favor and acceptability in which He stands before God.

If now (having learned to look at himself as belonging to the risen and accepted Man) he rejoices in being delivered from the bitter conflict he had been maintaining, what is it that has effected the deliverance? If it is the truth that sets free, what truth is it which sets free from the struggle we have been considering? Plainly, according to the apostle, it is learning this precious truth that, as being of Christ, he is under the operation of the law of life, which operates by and in Christ. Knowing, as he now does, that this is the law with which the Spirit identifies Himself, he understands that, according to the mind of the Spirit, he is no longer a subject of the law of sin and death.

Furthermore, he now sees that sin in the flesh has already been fully condemned of God in the death of Christ; that God therefore is not requiring fruit from the flesh; that the righteous thing required by the law, instead of being produced by the flesh as

he has hitherto supposed, is produced *in* him by Christ with whom now he is occupied. Walking according to the Spirit is holiness and fruitfulness.

Thus we see that all the victims of sin whose hearts have been laid hold of by the grace that comes in through Jesus Christ, belong to the risen Christ. They are of Him—are sharers in the nature and character of His risen life. They belong to the position into which He has entered as risen from the dead.

As being thus of Him they are entitled to be practically free from the power of indwelling sin; but to really enjoy this practical freedom from sin's power, they need to learn the impossibility of doing so by walking according to law; that holiness and fruitfulness are found in the enjoyment of the mind of the Spirit. Walking thus according to the Spirit in the enjoyment of the risen Christ is practical liberty.

C. CRAIN.

(To be continued.)

HELP AND FOOD

FOR THE

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READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 319, Dec. No.)

(Chap. 8: 5—39.)

HAVING described the walk of a Christian, not exactly after the flesh, but according to the power of law, the apostle now goes on to describe his walk according to the power of the Spirit. No believer, even though he be but the merest babe in Christ, is after the flesh. One who is after the flesh is in the condition and position of the fallen first man. He is under sin and death—an unregenerate man whose heart has not been laid hold of by the grace which has come through Jesus Christ. He minds only the things of the flesh.

One who has been a victim of sin and death, but whose heart has come under the grace that is by Jesus Christ, has a renewed heart and mind. He belongs to the risen Christ, is *of* Him, and is no longer in the position of the fallen first man, but

in the position of the risen Christ. Being in this position he is also in the condition that attaches to it, i. e., he is "in the Spirit"—a condition in which he characteristically minds the things of the Spirit (verse 5).

Now these two conditions are essentially different. The mind of the flesh *is* death. The mind of the Spirit *is* life and peace. A condition of death on the one hand, and a condition of life and peace on the other—two contrasted and widely differing conditions, which cannot commingle. The mind of the flesh being in its nature and essence enmity against God is intrinsically antagonistic to the expressed will of God. Law will not subject it to God. Hence it is impossible for those who are of Adam to please God. The walk according to the flesh is not suitable to Him (verses 6-8).

Plainly, then, all efforts on the part of those who are in Christ to improve or regulate the flesh are misdirected and contrary to the mind of the Spirit. This we have seen in our consideration of chap. 7. We saw there a renewed man, ignorant of his true condition according to the Spirit, endeavoring by the power of law to subject the mind of the flesh to God. It was a vain and useless effort, for if we are not in the flesh (not in that condition) why seek to improve or better a condition we are not in? What a great deliverance it is to be set free from such a profitless conflict!

But those who are in Christ—those whose hearts the grace that is by Him has laid hold of, are not in the flesh. They belong to the risen Man—the new Head and Fountain of life and blessing. They are of Him, and the Spirit of God dwelling in them

is the divine acknowledgment of it. He characterizes the condition of all those in whom He dwells. That He dwells in all believers, John 7: 39; Gal. 4: 4-6, and Eph. 1: 13—rightly translated, plainly declare. The children of faith, even the babes among them, are justified, are children of Abraham, are Christ's. Even if we should read, as it is by some claimed we should read, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him" instead of "none of His," the truth remains the same. The force of "not of Him" or "none of His," must be determined by the doctrine taught in chap. 5: 12-21. Those who have derived life and nature from the fallen Adam are of him, they belong to him and share with him in the consequences of his disobedience. On the other hand, those who have derived life and nature from the risen Christ belong to Him, are of Him and share with Him in the consequences of His one obedience. He is the Head of the family, of the race, and all who belong to Him are of Him, and thus are sharers with Him in the position in which He is as risen; they are the sons among whom He is the First-born. Being thus sons they are given the Spirit. The indwelling Spirit is connected with being of Him,—not with deliverance from sin's power. Hence all who are in Him are in the Spirit. All His race are in Him. They are all in the Spirit. Being in the Spirit they are not in the flesh (verse 9).

But as yet we have the old mortal body. This is our present participation in the sin that came in through Adam. The body being mortal cannot be the power by which we manifest the life of Christ. It is not able to express our vital connection with

Him. The Spirit indwelling us is the power for this. Righteousness having come in, having been maintained, or accomplished, the Spirit can now righteously dwell in our bodies, and doing so He effects in us the display of the life and nature of Christ. Nothing else but the effect of His activities in us is life according to the thought of God (verse 10).

But the spirit that dwells in us, in our mortal bodies, is the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead. In taking up His abode in our mortal bodies He has thus claimed them for Christ. He is the witness of God's title to quicken them. We see thus that even the mortal body itself is delivered from the claims of death. If the Lord tarry it will die, but not as being under the claims of death. If the believer dies it is as being "put to sleep by Jesus," not as under the penalty of sin. The indwelling Spirit then is the proof of Christ's absolute and complete title to our mortal body itself. It is in His right to deliver it from the sin that dwells in it by applying the power of life to it, by quickening it, by changing it into an immortal body (verse 11).

This makes it clear how we can look for the Lord to come for us before we die. If He had not title to quicken our body with immortal life, death would be our inevitable lot before we ever could be with Him. But the mortal body of the believer belongs to Christ. He can do what he wills with His own. If He so wills it, it is His right to leave us here in the mortal body. If He wills it, He may with perfect right "put us to sleep," i. e. take the spirit to be with Himself while the body goes to corruption.

But whenever He wills to do it, it is in His right to change our body, and quicken it into an immortal body.

If now the very mortal body itself is no longer under the claim of death, but subject to the claim of Christ, then in no sense are we debtors to the flesh to live according to it (verse 12). The natural relationships which God has formed for man on earth are of course to be owned and walked in, but the believer is under no obligation to the sinful lusts which have their seat in the mortal body. The mere natural man, whether under law or not, lives according to the flesh. He is led by the fleshly passions and lusts. He is on the road to death as the penalty of sin (verse 13). But those who live through Christ, participating in His life as risen from the dead, are characteristically Spirit-led men. Through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body. The measure of it is doubtless never perfect in any one of us, but, with whatever defects, mortifying the deeds of the body is characteristically true of all those who are of Christ. They are in the way of life. They are already participators in eternal life. Being thus Spirit-led men, they are sons of God (verse 14). Man, the natural and fallen man, has lost his place as a son with God. The children of grace and faith are now put in the position of sons; but their sonship is the concomitant of their connection with the risen Christ; it is therefore a position of greater exaltation and dignity than the one that has been forfeited by sin.

The sons of God of Old Testament times (Gen. 6: 2) had the spirit of bondage and fear. The full truth had not then come; the full measure of grace

had not been given. Necessarily, therefore, they were all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of death. But now the sons of God have the Spirit of adoption, characterizing the position in which they are. In the power of that Spirit the cry, Abba, Father, is in their hearts (verse 15). Here again the measure is never perfect, even in the hearts of those with whom the sense of it is deepest, but it is a cry characteristic of every one whose heart the grace of Christ has laid hold of. By the Spirit it is instinctively in the renewed soul. The renewed spirit instinctively turns to the One from whom a new life has been derived.

With this renewed spirit, the Spirit of God allies Himself. He joins His own testimony to that of the intelligent part of the renewed man. The two-fold witness is one—the one testimony confirming the other. Thus the fact of being in a relationship with God, that of a child with a Father, is fully certified to (verse 16). Our own spirits agree in declaring it. The subjects of the grace of the Cross are children of God. The race of the risen Christ have God for their Father.

But if those who are participators with Christ in His risen life are the children of God, then they are heirs—and what heirs! Heirs of God—possessors with Him of what He possesses, all things ours! But it is through Christ that we have come into this wonderful inheritance. It is as being joint-heirs with Him it is all ours. We have no claim upon it. We are absolutely without title to it save as He holds the title to it for us. But if we are joint-heirs with Him, then we share with Him the sufferings of the time of His patience, so that our

glorification will also be a joint-glorification with Him (verse 17).

But if the present time is a time of suffering, of patience and endurance, we seriously err if we think of the sufferings as deserving comparison with the glory that is to be revealed to us in its own suited time (verse 18). The former are temporal; the latter is eternal. But, beside this, creation itself is not yet in its final and permanent condition. The manifestation of the sons of God will bring about a great change for it. By the will of God it was not given its permanent abiding condition. It was subjected to change and decay, to vanity. But this condition was not intended to be permanent and final. So there is before it the prospect, not only of a measure of relief from its present groanings and travail-pains, when the sons of God shall be manifested, but of full and permanent deliverance at the end, when all things will be made anew to abide forever. It is to have finally the liberty from corruption that will characterize the glory of the children of God (verses 19-21).

If creation, now in a state of decay, in earnest hope looks for a final and permanent deliverance from it, how much more must we who are of the race of the risen Christ, already possessing the Spirit (the pledge and foretaste of new creation), be in earnest longing for the glorious change that awaits us, the redemption of our bodies. It is this that will complete our salvation. How we long for it! (verses 21-25.)

Meanwhile, as we wait for the consummation of our hope, how incapable we are of measuring our present dependence. But here we realize the great

value of the indwelling Spirit. He joins His help to our infirmity. Whatever sense of need there is in our souls it has been produced by the Spirit. But our sense of need is never in the full measure of the Spirit's sense of it. Hence in expressing our need to God we never do it as we ought; we always come short of the measure of the Spirit. But it is He who is working in us, and He is at work according to God. In our inability to lay hold of His full measure, so far as His mind is concerned, there is a longing with Him that is never fully expressed by us, though what we do express is by His power (verse 26).

But the God who searches our hearts knows perfectly the mind of the Spirit—what He is working in us. Our imperfect, defective utterances go up to Him, reach His ear; and, inadequate as they are as expressions of what the Spirit means, He gives them all the value of His own mind (verse 27).

Verses 28–39 are a triumph-shout which the apostle puts into the mouths of the subjects of the grace of the Cross. All things are absolutely in the hands of Him who has purposed the glory of the Man Christ Jesus, in whom He has called the joint-heirs. Nothing whatever can defeat that purpose. He has seen the end from the beginning, and determined all the steps by which to reach the end. Everything must necessarily be subservient to the eternal purpose, and work for the blessing of those marked out for participation in the image of the glorious First-born.

God is manifestly for (working in behalf of) the subjects of His grace. If there is nothing that is not under His mighty hand—the hand displayed in the resurrection of Christ, then there is nothing that can

be against those who are of Him who died for them and is risen again. The love that spared Him not, but delivered Him to judgment and death for us, triumphs in His glorious resurrection, proclaiming the impossibility of anything being charged against the elect of God. It is God Himself who justifies, and there is none to override His judicial decrees.

He whom God has raised up from the dead as justifying those believing on Him, sits now on the very throne of God itself as Intercessor—a continuous Intercessor for the objects of His love, who live through and in Him. His ceaseless intercession is in the same love in which He assumed their judgment and death. Nothing can possibly separate them from that love which even judgment and death could not overcome—the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How complete and glorious is the victory of the Cross! What boastings for those who are altogether the debtors of grace—the grace of Christ! How these boastings glorify Him who loved us and gave Himself for us!

C. CRAIN.

(To be continued.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(Continued from page 16.)

(Chaps. 9-11.)

IN chapters 9-11 the apostle answers an objection which an unconverted Jew would naturally make to Christianity as it has been unfolded in the previous chapters. He would say that Israel, the descendants of Abraham, were the God-chosen nation entrusted with this testimony, and to whom the promises were made. He would claim that God had put into their hands the covenants and the promises, as well as the law. He would argue that Christianity, as the apostle has expounded it, nullifies all this, and makes the word of God to be without effect.

In answering this objection the apostle shows that he knows how to appreciate the force of it as it would be felt by an unconverted Jew who was imprecating Christ. In his own unconverted days he had done the same. He had justified the murder of the Son of God by the Jews. Their solemn declaration, "His blood be on us, and on our children," he had made his own. He had thus "wished himself accursed from the Christ." But now, since He had been revealed to him, and he was prostrate at His feet, there was constant heaviness and sorrow in his heart on the behalf of his brethren according to the flesh. This he affirms in the most solemn way. He is declaring the truth in Christ. He is not lying, as they thought (vers. 1-5).

Having thus assured his kinsmen after the flesh of his deep concern for them, and of his ability to understand their objection to Christianity, he goes on to show from the Old Testament Scriptures that Christianity in no way nullifies the word of God to Israel.

First, he appeals to the case of Isaac to show that the children according to the flesh are not the children of God. Isaac was not the seed of Abraham on the mere ground of the flesh, which Ishmael might also claim; but on the ground of promise it was that Isaac was reckoned to be Abraham's seed. The apostle thus clearly shows that not all who are of Israel are truly Israel. Those merely children of Abraham after the flesh are not counted to be his children in reality—not connected with *faith* and the promise to faith (vers. 6-9).

Furthermore, the case of Jacob and Esau illustrates still further the same truth. If Isaac was

made the seed of Abraham by the word of God, it was the same also with Jacob. He had his place by grace—sovereign grace. It was the purpose and election of God, not works of flesh, that made Jacob the object of favor that he was. It was a calling and election of which God did not repent, as Mal. 1: 2, 3 sufficiently shows—written as it was after 1600 years of sin and failure on the part of Jacob's descendants. Plainly the election and calling was not founded on any foreseen goodness in Jacob as a man in the flesh. During all these years God had not transferred His favor from Jacob to Esau, though many might judge Esau to have been the better man. But God clearly had acted in His sovereign right in the purpose He had formed for Jacob, and in the call He had given him (vers. 10-13).

Jacob then, like Isaac, was a child of promise. It might be thought this choice of Jacob instead of Esau looks like unrighteousness. This the apostle strongly refuses, and justifies his refusal of it on the ground that in the case of the guilt of Israel in the matter of the golden calf God claimed it to be His right to show mercy to whomsoever he willed to do so (Ex. 33: 19). From this the apostle deduces the general principle that mercy is not of the will or work of man, but of God, as having the sovereign right to show it. He also appeals to the case of Pharaoh, to whom God said that He had set him up as the head of Egypt for the express purpose of displaying His power in connection with him, so as to make Jehovah's name known throughout all the earth. Mercy and hardening, then, are both in the sovereignty of God (vers. 14-18).

If now it be objected that if God shows mercy

where He wills, and where He wills He hardens, He cannot rightly censure men, the apostle rebukes it as arrogance. Men should remember that it is unseemly to argue with God. Furthermore, it is His right of the same lump of fallen, sinful humanity to make one a vessel to honor, and another a vessel to dishonor. It is His sovereign prerogative to find delight in the part of the lump that submits to His grace, and to be displeased with the part that resists it. Those who reject the Ideal after which His grace would form them are surely vessels quite fit for judgment. God's long-suffering and patience with them make this manifest. On the other hand, those who yield to the formative power of His grace are suited vessels to display the riches of His glory; and this, too, whether such vessels are found among Jews or Gentiles. That such are to be found among the Gentiles the quotations from Hos. 2: 23 and 1: 10 fully show (vers. 19-26).

Now Isa. 10: 22, 23 and 1: 9 show the two kinds of vessels formed from the same lump of sinful, disobedient Israel: on the one hand, a remnant submissive to grace; on the other, a vast body of them resisting grace, and cut off in judgment (vers. 27-29).

It is then to be concluded that the Old Testament Scriptures are not in any way nullified by the grace of Christianity which includes Gentiles among the subjects of its blessings. It is in accordance with their predictions that Gentiles who followed not after righteousness have attained to it by faith; while Israel, seeking it by works, and not by faith, has not obtained it. A new beginning in Christ was a stumbling-stone and rock of offence. He came in in grace, but they would not yield themselves to be

formed by it. They would not call upon Him. They have stumbled to their great confusion (vers. 30-33).

Nevertheless the apostle earnestly desired salvation for them. He owned they had a zeal for God, but yet it was not according to knowledge—the knowledge of the written Word. Did they know that rightly, they would understand how righteous God is. It is because of their ignorance of this that they are seeking to establish a righteousness of their own; but in doing so they are not submitting to a righteousness provided in grace by God. They are in the darkness of unbelief; for, for believers, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; Christ being received, He is to the believer all that the law can claim (chap. 10: 1-4).

The apostle now turns to explain the difference between the righteousness which is of law and the righteousness that is by faith. The righteousness of the law consists in the doing the things it requires. This the law affirms repeatedly, as every reader of the Old Testament Scriptures should know. Now, to show the character of the righteousness which is of faith, he appeals to Deut. 30: 12-14. In this chapter Moses is informing Israel that after they have fallen under the curse of the law their only hope will be in the grace of God, who will no longer put them on the ground of their obedience as the way of life and blessing, but will circumcise their hearts to love the Lord (ver. 6). This answers to the prophet's word in Jer. 31: 31-33, where Israel is told that God will in grace establish them under a new covenant—a covenant of a very different char-

acter from that of the old legal one. The principle of the new covenant will be faith, not works. Therefore, instead of *doing*, in order to have God's law in the heart, it will be having the law in the heart *by grace*, the doing it being the result. Consequently, when Israel from the heart calls upon the name of the Lord, she will be saved. She will then stand before God in a righteousness not her own, but given her of God—a righteousness which is of faith.

Having thus shown by appealing to Moses the character of the righteousness which is by faith, the apostle now informs the Jew that this is what he is preaching; and if he objects that it should only be preached to the Jew, he shows that the prophets expressly apply it universally: their oft-repeated "whosoever believeth" opens the door of the gospel to the Gentiles (vers. 5-13).

Therefore, if the prophets contemplate the gospel going out to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, it is those who are resisting its world-wide proclamation that are nullifying the word of God. Hearing, whether in a Jew or a Gentile, comes by faith; and faith in the heart is by the power of the word of God. It is by preaching the Word that God reaches the heart. Necessarily then there must be messengers of the Word, and those who seek to carry the message of God's grace to the Gentiles can justify themselves in doing so by abundant Old Testament scriptures (vers. 14-17).

Furthermore, Israel is fully without excuse for resisting Christianity, because, while on the one hand her own Scriptures anticipate it, on the other hand she has been faithfully warned, by Moses himself too; that God would provoke her to

jealousy by them that are no people; and Isaiah very boldly declares the turning of the Gentiles to God, and finding Him, while Israel is still a disobedient and gainsaying people (vers. 18-21).

If then Christianity does not nullify the word of God, Israel's present rejection is only temporary—not final. As witness of this, the apostle appeals to his own case. He was an Israelite, yet God had shown him mercy. He was one of a remnant—an election of grace in a day of apostasy, such as God reserved to Himself in the days of Ahab (chap. 11: 1-6).

As to the rest, they are in the blindness of their unbelief. Of this present state of unbelief, in the great mass of the nation, their own prophets have sufficiently foretold. But if they have thus been given over to blindness, under God's judicial dealings with them, it is by no means to be the final state of the nation. While they are in this state, God is provoking them to jealousy by the privileges He is conferring on Gentiles. From this the apostle argues that as Israel's stumbling and temporary setting aside from the place of privilege was the occasion of blessing going out among the Gentiles, the recovery of Israel, and her restoration to the position she has temporarily lost, will be the occasion, not merely of widespread blessing among the Gentiles, but of the recovery of the world. The bringing of the world back in allegiance to God waits on the restoration of Israel. As being specially an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul would particularly appeal to this, being desirous of stirring up in his brethren after the flesh the spirit of jealousy (vers. 7-15).

Abraham was called of God to occupy a special

place of privilege and responsibility among the nations of the earth, already then swamped in idolatry. Israel had been identified with this place of privilege and responsibility, but the unbelieving part of it have been separated from it. Since their rejection of Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, come as His witness, only the believing remnant among them have continued on in the special place of privilege and responsibility. But Gentiles have been brought in to occupy that place along with them. The Gentiles, however, are warned by the apostle not to be high-minded. They must remember the place of privilege into which they have been brought is also one of responsibility, and their continuing in the place depends on their meeting the responsibilities of it. The unbelieving part of Israel had been cut off for this very thing—because of their continued failure to meet its responsibilities. In like manner also would the Gentiles be cut off if they failed as Israel had done. How needed the warning! Alas, how unheeded! (vers. 16-21.)

In Israel's case the goodness and severity of God had been illustrated; the believing remnant realizing His goodness, the unbelieving part of the nation experiencing His severity. The same result will be seen at the close of the Gentile period of their time of testimony. Israel was cut off for unbelief. The Gentiles apostatizing in like manner will also be cut off. But the same grace that introduced Gentiles into the place of privilege when Israel was cut off will also restore Israel to the place from which she fell, when from the heart she turns to the Lord. Her blindness is only in part, for a time, while the fulness of the Gentiles is being gathered

in. In a day now fast approaching there is to be a remnant *in* Zion to whom the Lord will appear, and then *from* Zion He will come forth in the character of Israel's Deliverer, turning ungodliness away from Jacob, in accordance with the new covenant that is yet to be made with Israel. Thus it is clear that as regards the gospel the Jews are now enemies, i. e., regarded so by God for the sake of the Gentiles; nevertheless, as regards the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes (vers. 22-29).

The Gentiles were once disobedient, but God has shown mercy to them on account of the disobedience of Israel. Likewise Israel has disobeyed God's present mercy to the Gentiles, that in their restoration they themselves may become objects of *mercy*. Gentiles and Jews alike are shut up in unbelief, so that *mercy* may be shown to them both. In thus reviewing the dispensational ways of God, how manifest becomes the wisdom of God! Every heart that enters into this mercy of God surely joins with the apostle in saying, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and for Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (vers. 30-36). C. CRAIN.

(Concluded in next number.)

READINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

(*Concluded.*)

(Chaps. 12-16.)

CHAPTERS 12-16 are exhortations. The recipients of the mercies of God are told what ways should characterize them. We have seen that the apostle regards the body as being dead. It is in no way capable of displaying the life of Christ; the power for that is in the Spirit that indwells it. We need then to place it at His disposal, to yield it to God. His mercies, of which we are the subjects, impel us to deliberately surrender ourselves—our

bodies—to His will. Our practical lives are thus, and only thus, acceptable to God—a sacrifice rich in the fragrance of Christ. The life of Christ is produced in us by the power of the Spirit (chap. 12, verse 1).

But this means non-conformity to the life of the world which is astray from God, and at enmity with Him. It is ours to pass through it with minds laid hold of by what is found only where the risen Christ is. Living in the practical realization of association with Him where He is, is to prove the blessedness of the will of God (verse 2).

The Christian's practical life becomes thus a life of service. Self-seeking is no expression of the life of Him who humbled Himself and was meek and lowly. We are therefore warned against it. We are reminded of the nature and closeness of the tie by which we are bound to one another—a tie that makes us dependent on one another. Whatever the line in which the Spirit of God exercises us, and in which He leads us out, it is not for self-exaltation, but for the profit of others. The spirit of service then befits us. We should accept our gifts as being *grace* to us, and in humbleness of mind use them for the benefit of those whom love so urgently prompts us to serve. The spirit of service will find its justification in the need of the object of love. Let each one then serve as prompted by love in the measure in which he finds he has capacity for it (vers. 3-8).

The remainder of the chapter shows us the holy ways of the spirit of service—the ways in which love, which is the spring of service, manifests itself. Those who have derived such immeasurable bless-

ing from the grace of Christ are here exhorted to see to it that they walk in these beauteous ways of love. It is not necessary here to enlarge on them singly, or even to enumerate them. We need to remind ourselves however that the actual attainment of a walk characterized by these things is not, and cannot be, the fruit of legal effort. It is by the power that is in the renewed mind that such a transformation is effected. It is alone by putting God at the helm, to be our governing power, that we can walk in ways that display such characteristics as are here declared.

If, as we have seen, chapter 12 gives us the character to which divine grace transforms us, in chapter 13 we find what characterizes our relations to the world through which we are passing. If we have the practical character of which we have been speaking, though we are yet in the world, evidently we cannot be of it. We are of heaven; we belong to the new creation. Here is where we find our new origin and citizenship. This separates us completely from the old creation. This takes us entirely outside of the course of this world. But that does not empower us to regulate the world or reform its ways. We are reminded that God has authorized the governments of the world, and are exhorted to be in subjection to them. We are to see in them a divine institution, and leave those charged with the exercise of government to their responsibility to God, to be dealt with by Him who will call them to give account as to their use of the power which He has put in their hands. The Christian, then, needs to be in subjection to the governments under which God has placed him. He

is to show due respect to their agents, honoring them as servants of God (verses 1-7).

But subjection to governments does not mean that Christians should be under obligation to them. In fact they should not be indebted to any one. As having found their resource in God, they should be dispensers of blessing. Themselves indebted to the love of God, they should regard themselves as under the obligation of showing love to all. In doing this they are fulfilling what the law required. It demanded love, but man in the flesh is without power to meet the demand. The Spirit dwells in the Christian. With Him there is power to produce what the law required. The requirement of the law is carried out in the Christian through the power of the Spirit without his being under law either for righteousness or as a rule of life.

What a wonderful thing this! The very fulness of the law—what was sought after by those under it, but not attained unto—through the power of the Spirit is produced in the Christian, in the measure in which the power of the Spirit is realized and depended on. How little this is understood! In how many is the measure extremely scant! (vers. 8-10.) May it be much enlarged in us all.

The Christian belongs to the day that is coming, which in fact is at hand. It is fast drawing near. It is nearer now than when we believed. The Christian is not of the night; but passing through the darkness, the power of the day to which he belongs should be manifested, not the power of the night. Walking here in the sense of the light of the coming day he is armored against all the temptations of the night. He needs to be awake, to be in the sense of

the light—in the practical enjoyment of the things of the coming day. Let us be diligent, then, in casting off the works of darkness! May we be sincere and wholehearted in putting on the Lord Jesus. Let there be such a sense in our souls of His claim to the exclusive use of our bodies that we shall be kept from providing for the sinful lusts of the flesh (verses 11-14).

In chapters 14: 1 to 15: 7 the apostle unfolds the principles which are to regulate our dealings one with another. There are three general principles. The first is the supreme authority of the Lord. The right to command is in His hands, not ours. He is the only dictator of the conduct of His people. His way of ruling His people is by the conscience. Each one needs to be individually before Him. It is a most serious thing to interfere even in the slightest way with the conscience of another. It is damaging to the soul to hinder one from being in his own conscience before the Lord. No one can make his own conscience the rule for another.

We must remember, of course, the apostle is not here raising any questions about *doctrine*. He is not speaking of the faith. We are not at liberty to believe what we like. A faith has been revealed and committed to us. If question arises as to truth or doctrine, *revelation* is the only appeal. But this is not what is under consideration here. It is a question of practical conduct that is occupying the apostle now. How am I to act towards a brother whose conscience, as truly before the Lord as my own, does not permit him to do the things I feel myself free to do? Is it *my* conscience that is to

govern him or his own? Am *I* to decide his doubts for him?

Here we need to remember that we each have our predilections, our prejudices, our tastes, our likes and dislikes. In these things we are accountable to the Lord surely, but we are not each other's master. These are things in which one is not the judge for another. We should receive one another without regard to them (chapter 14: 1-12).

The second principle governing our conduct towards one another is *love*. Love will not find its pleasure in censuring, nor will it delight in causing a brother to offend or fall. Where true love is operating, no brother who thinks a thing to be wrong will be forced to do it. If he thinks it is sinful, to him it *is* sinful; and to force him to do it is to crush his conscience. To despise the conscience of another is not to walk in love toward him. One may indeed be within the limits of what is perfectly right, and as to which his own conscience is free and clear, yet be liable to have his good considered evil. As the servant of Christ he is not to think of what he may consider his rights, but of the benefit and blessing of his brother. Love will seek peace and edification for its objects (verses 13-23).

A third principle is the glory of God. We should diligently seek this in all our dealings with one another. What simply pleases ourselves may not be to His glory. It is to His glory to seek to profit our brother. The weaker he is, the more needful it is to be considerate of him—the more necessary to think of what will prove best for him. The example of Christ is appealed to: He pleased not Himself, but endured and suffered even the reproaches

of those who reproached God. Let us be likeminded with Him, tender towards one another, considerate of one another's weaknesses, ready to bear another's infirmity. We shall glorify God in so doing.

Chapter 15: 8-33 is the apostle's vindication of his boldness in writing as he has to the saints at Rome. In the first place he appeals to the fact that the Old Testament, while marking out the Jewish Messiah as the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm, or establish, the promises made to the fathers, at the same time distinctly declares that the Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy through Him. He draws on both Psalms and Prophets to show this. Naturally, therefore, he encourages Gentile believers to lay firm hold on the hope the gospel has brought to them, and to be filled with joy and peace in doing so.

While thus exhorting and encouraging them he declares his confidence in them and in their ability to admonish one another. At the same time it was his special privilege and right, as called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, to put them in mind of the claims upon their hearts of the blessing it was his to minister to them. For him it all was a happy priestly service, in which believers from among the Gentiles, laid hold of by the power of the Spirit, were an acceptable offering to God. Thus the apostle glories in the power by which he had been sustained to fully preach Christ in those extensive regions through which he had journeyed. His work had been abundantly manifested as authorized by God. Throughout he had acted in accordance with what is written in the prophet, "To whom He was

not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand."

It was the faithful carrying out of this service that had so long stood in the way of his going to Rome; but now that he had fully covered the field which had been thus far the sphere of his labors, moved by the same principle which had hitherto governed him, he was thinking of Spain. He saw in his journey there his opportunity to see the saints at Rome whom he had so long desired to visit.

But before undertaking the carrying out of his purpose, he felt the need of the saints at Jerusalem had a claim upon him. He was going there to deliver to them the offerings of the Macedonian and Achaian saints. Having performed that service, his purpose was to immediately set off for Spain. He was anticipating a season of refreshment among the saints of Rome, confident that in coming to them it would be "in the fulness of the blessing of Christ." Nevertheless he realized the dangers to which he exposed himself in going to Jerusalem, and thus implored the earnest prayers of the Roman saints. He desired them specially to beseech God for his deliverance from the disobedient, the favorable reception of his ministry, and the privilege of making his long-purposed visit to them.

Chapter 16 needs little comment. It is touching to notice the delicacy with which the apostle makes mention of one and another. How quick love is to notice and single out what deserves approbation in the service of saints. There is also a warning against the makers of division. Such are to be turned away from, characterized as they are by self-seeking and pretentious speech. He rejoiced in

the obedience of the saints. He desired them to be wise in what is good, and not to be dwelling on evil.

He closes with the salutations of Timothy and others, wishing the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be with them.

C. CRAIN.
