

Berean Gospel Messages

To all sorts and conditions of men

Charles H. Welch

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by

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No. 1

“There is no difference”

One of the earliest impressions received by the student of nature is its endless variety. Field and forest, river and sea, earth and sky teem with variety. Every conceivable colour, form, and structure fill the three kingdoms of nature. One enthusiastic observer commenced photographing snowflakes many years ago. He has taken over 10,000 photographs - ALL DIFFERENT, and there is every reason to believe that he would have to take 10,000 more before he came across a repeat!

We need go no further than ourselves to realize the bewildering variety. Each one of us has a thousand peculiarities that mark us off from the rest of mankind. Your signature is so individual that the bank will pay out cash upon that peculiarity alone. Your finger print is so exclusively yours that it would be evidence in a court of law, either for or against you. Yet, in spite of our differences, we are, after all, much alike in the deeper things, and it is in one of these unifying characters that the Scriptures find a word common to all:

“There is NO DIFFERENCE” (Rom. 3:22).

Human nature likes to remember differences. The Hindoo system of *caste* is built upon the observance of distinctions. The English system of *class* is much the same in essence. It is humiliating to be told that high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant have some levelling property that breaks through all barriers of class and distinction.

In the days of the apostles it was the Jew who felt so keenly the slightest attempt made against his narrow class system, and it is in connection with this spirit of pharisaical pride that we meet with the great levelling word of Romans 3:1-23 :

“What advantage then hath the Jew? ... Much every way: ... What then? ARE WE BETTER than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ... that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ... FOR THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE; for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”.

All pride of race and privilege, of light and learning, all boast in ancestry is levelled in the dust, *we are all slaves!* “Under sin” says Romans 3:9; “sold under sin” says Romans 7:14. There are countless varieties of sin, some loathsome, some attractive, some profane, some religious, some degrading, some most refined, but “there is no difference” in the one great fact, “for all have sinned, AND COME SHORT”.

See, through that office door comes a group of rejected men. They have sought to pass the medical examination connected with a government post. They have “come short” of the required height, that is all, yet they have failed just as surely as those less fortunate folk who did not even get so far as to reach the medical examination stage. Do we hear one saying to another, “But I only missed by an inch!” Has not the wisdom of this world expressed itself in such proverbs as, “A miss is as good as a mile”, and “We may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb”? Why therefore waste precious time in the vain attempt to extract some comfort to our pride by observing degrees in guilt? God says, “There is no difference”, and His judgment is just. Romans 3 leaves the reader with no uncertainty in the matter:

“There is NONE righteous, NO, NOT ONE” (Rom. 3:10).

“Every mouth ... stopped, and ALL THE WORLD ... guilty” (Rom. 3:19).

and between the “None” and the “All” there is no loophole.

No difference in disease or remedy

There is good news, however, for sinners. One in need, yet we find that God has provided one remedy for all without respect of persons or degrees of sin:

“... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ... For THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Rom. 10:9,12).

When the first Gentile conversions began to take place in the early days of the apostles, the Hebrew believers were compelled to admit that:

“God, Which knoweth the hearts ... put NO DIFFERENCE between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8,9).

While there is no difference between one man and another before God in the question of his sin and the way of salvation, it would be leaving a false impression did we not add that while there can be “no difference” so far as we ourselves are concerned, the grace of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE. We can say from the depths of our hearts:

“Whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25).

“Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

On one occasion, while Israel waited for deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and God sent plagues to teach Pharaoh the folly of his resistance, we read:

“I will SEVER in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there ... and I will put a DIVISION between My people and thy people” (Exod. 8:22,23).

Here is a difference both of land and people, and if the reader will look at the marginal note in his Bible, he will see that the word translated “division” is literally “a redemption”. This is gospel truth in type and shadow.

So it was when the time came for Israel to be delivered from the bondage of Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb.

The Lord put a difference

“Against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth PUT A DIFFERENCE between the Egyptians and Israel” (Exod. 11:7).

Let us see some of the “differences” grace has made in those who by nature differed nothing among themselves. There is *no difference* in any child of Adam in the matter of condemnation:

“By the offence of one judgment came upon ALL MEN to condemnation” (Rom. 5:18).

but look at the difference made by grace:

“There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to them which are IN CHRIST JESUS” (Rom. 8:1).

With all our boasted freedom, there is no difference when it comes to the slavery of sin:

“Sin hath reigned” (Rom. 5:21).

“When ye were the servants (slaves) of sin, ye were free from righteousness” (Rom. 6:20).

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

Now look again at the difference that Christ has made:

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by (through) Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

“For sin shall not have dominion over you” (Rom. 6:14).

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12).

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Are not these differences indeed? The difference between life and death, the difference between bondage and liberty, the difference between condemnation and justification! Dare we boast of these blessed differences as though any credit were due to ourselves? No, grace alone has made the difference:

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory (boast), as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us WISDOM, and RIGHTEOUSNESS, and SANCTIFICATION, and REDEMPTION: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth (boasts), let him glory (boast) in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:30,31).

“No difference” in sin, “no difference” in salvation, but a glorious difference by virtue of redemption. Dear reader, what is your position before God?

No. 2

“Without money and without price”

While it is the general rule in the affairs of state and commerce that service and substance must be paid for, and while this buying and selling of service and substance constitutes the daily round of the vast machinery of modern civilization, yet there are still some things absolutely vital to all that can neither be bought nor sold, but are alike FREE to the wealthy as to the poor, to the wise as to the fool.

A man may live for weeks without solid food, but he can only live for a few minutes without air. Solid food must be paid for, but vital air is FREE. Coal, gas, electricity must all be paid for, but sunlight, without which human life would be impossible, is FREE. We turn on our taps and pay our water rate, but our payment is for service, for convenience, not for the water, rain is FREE.

“God ... left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:15-17).

“He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45).

“God that (Who) made the world ... giveth to all life, and breath” (Acts 17:24,25).

Here we have the Scriptures reminding us that sunshine, shower, and the very breath in our nostrils are the free gifts of God to man. The philosopher summed up humanity as “mostly fools”, and many are made fools by their pride, but have you ever heard of anyone so foolish as to die for want of breath simply because it wounded his pride that air was FREE? Has there ever lived a man who would rather suffer the agony and death of thirst, than drink a cup of water, because water is FREE? Surely, never! Remember this, dear reader, when you feel inclined to refuse God’s greatest gift of all because it wounds a foolish pride in being FREE.

Naaman, the Syrian, was a mighty soldier, but he was also a leper. He brought with him a present of ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, but they availed him not. He went to the prophet of Israel, and was offended because he was told to go and dip himself seven times in the Jordan:

“Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike (move) his hand up and down over the place, and recover the leper ... he ... went away in a rage. And his servants came near ... and said ... If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down ... and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God ... and he said ... take a blessing of thy servant. But he said ... I will receive none” (2 Kings 5:11-16).

Is not Naaman, the Syrian up-to-date? Can we not see ourselves in this mirror of truth?

After declaring all men to be sinners, and all the world guilty, the apostle Paul reveals to every modern Naaman the one way whereby we must be saved:

“Being justified FREELY by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

Let us give these weighty words a hearing:

Being Justified FREELY	{	By His grace.
	}	THROUGH the redemption
		that is in Christ Jesus.

It is evident at once that though free to us, it was not procured without cost. But first of all, what is justification?

(1) *Justification is the act of God alone.*

“It is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith” (Rom. 3:30).

(2) *Justification is a righteous as well as a merciful act of God.*

“To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

(3) *Justification is not based on any good quality in man.*

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

(4) *Justification is based upon the sacrifice of Christ.*

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested ... even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:21,22).

“Who was delivered for (because) of our offences, and was raised again for (because) of our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

“Being now justified by His blood” (Rom. 5:9).

This marvellous acquittal is free. If that man is a fool who would refuse to breathe because he was not allowed by God to be independent and pay for it, what kind of man are you my reader? Are you offended because the gospel is free? Have you turned away like Naaman saying, “But I thought” this or that? Let us learn at once that this Gospel is free, because no man living can afford the price of redemption.

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be let alone for ever:)” (Psa. 49:6-8 R.V.).

This free salvation is said to be “by grace”. What is the meaning of grace?

(1) *Grace is a gift.*

“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

(2) *Grace can be neither wages nor debt.*

“If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace” (Rom. 11:6).

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt” (Rom. 4:4).

(3) *Grace is opposed to any sort of legalism.*

“If they which are the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect ... therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure” (Rom. 4:14-16).

(4) *Grace is the title of the gospel.*

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

The underlying meaning of the word grace is “favour”, and in the scriptural usage grace means favour shown to those who have no claim, who have forfeited all rights, who are actively at enmity, and who deserve nothing but condemnation.

While the grace of God is the sole moving cause for the marvellous manifestation of His love as shown in the gospel, and while it is, and must be, absolutely without money and without price so far as the saved sinner is concerned, it is not without cost that this salvation is so FREE. This is revealed in the words of Romans 3:24, “Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”.

(1) *The idea of its priceless character is expressed by Peter when he said:*

“Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but with the PRECIOUS blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

(2) *That a price was paid is stated by the apostle Paul:*

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a PRICE” (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

“The church of God, which He hath PURCHASED with His Own blood” (Acts 20:28).

(3) *This ransom sets us free.*

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1:7).

The word “forgiveness” here is the same as is translated “deliverance” (as of captives) and “set at liberty” in Luke 4:18. Redemption, as used throughout Scripture, presupposes either bondage or forfeiture of inheritance, or both. Israel in Egypt are types of sinners, and their exodus is the great type of our redemption.

(1) *Israel were in bondage (so are we by nature).*

“Israel sighed by reason of the bondage” (Exod. 2:23).

“Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (2 Pet. 2:19).

“Ye were the servants (slaves) of sin” (Rom. 6:17).

“Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:15).

(2) *Israel were delivered by redemption (so must we be).*

“I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you” (Exod. 6:6).

“Behold, there talked with Him ... Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease (EXODUS) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:30,31).

(3) *Israel’s redemption was by means of the shedding of the blood of the lamb.*

“Every man a lamb ... Your lamb shall be without blemish ... Israel shall kill it ... and they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts ... and when I see the BLOOD, I will pass over you” (Exod. 12:3-13).

(4) *That lamb was a type of Christ.*

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7)

“Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Reader, this grace is FREE, free as the air that you breathe. How do you stand in view of God’s unspeakable gift?

No. 3

“Light on life and immortality”

Supposing you were asked to add together the following items: 5 cows, 10 hens, 3 ploughs, 4 spades, 1 bushel of seed, you would probably reply, “I can only add these different items together if I can find some common denominator for them all. I cannot say 23 animals, neither can I say 23 implements; perhaps I could say 23 items of farm stock.

Well, dear reader, here am I with the gospel of God, and before me are men of every conceivable character, creed and country. Black men and white, educated and ignorant, Jews and Chinese, millionaires and paupers, princes and vagabonds, dare I hope to find the common denominator for all this great variety that shall make the gospel of God a living thing to one and all? What is there common to the wise and the fool? How can I expect an equal interest from an atheist and a ritualist? In what way are millionaires on a level with paupers? Rather than give the answer myself, I would let the words of the wise man reveal this common leveller of mankind:

“I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness” (Eccl. 2:13).

The reader may interrupt and say that this observation, instead of levelling mankind, most definitely divides it into two classes. Let us hear the end of the matter however:

“The wise man’s eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that ONE EVENT HAPPENETH TO THEM ALL ... How dieth the wise man? *as the fool!*” (Eccl. 2:14-16).

“There is ONE EVENT to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean ... there is ONE EVENT unto all” (Eccl. 9:2,3).

“All go unto ONE PLACE; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl. 3:20).

Whether you be philosopher, philanthropist, or fool, there is no necessity for me to interpret the wise man’s words. We all know well enough that the common denominator of mankind is death. Now as a man of the world you may secretly despise the meekness of Christ, or as the possessor of this world’s good things you may have no room for One Who held these things so cheaply. You may have a wonderful philosophy, or religion, that is quite satisfying, but what avail will riches, or position, or philosophy, or religion be when you arrive at that ONE EVENT.

Is it no news to mortal man that:

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I (Paul) am appointed a preacher”? (2 Tim. 1:10,11).

As part of this same gospel we read:

“Christ DIED for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).

“For since by man came DEATH, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as *in Adam* all die, even so *in Christ* shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:21,22).

Listen to this statement of gospel truth, and see whether it does not constitute “glad tidings”:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He (Christ) also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through DEATH He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14,15).

Is it true that the reader knows nothing of this fear and this bondage? What would you not give to be able to say:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

While the plain fact is that for this boon you can “give” nothing, is it the less desirable because it is absolutely free?

Scripture is most emphatic in its teaching that death reigns in mankind because of sin. To speak of death as a part of the evolution of the race is to deny the very basis of the gospel:

“By one man sin entered into the world, and DEATH BY SIN; and so *death* passed upon all men” (Rom. 5:12).

When Christ therefore would deal with death, He must also deal with that which is the “sting of death”, namely, sin (1 Cor. 15:56).

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

Seeing that this subject is so near to each one of us, we believe that the reader will welcome a closer survey of the teaching of Scripture on this point. We have already referred to the Scripture which reveals that Adam as the head of the human race involved all his posterity in death, let us continue our study, and notice that:

(1) *Christ is placed over against Adam.*

“Adam ... who is the figure of Him that was to come” (Rom. 5:14).

“The FIRST MAN Adam became (was made) a living soul. The LAST ADAM became (was made) a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45 R.V.).

“The FIRST MAN is of the earth, earthy; the SECOND MAN is the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47).

“Since by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:21).

(2) *Adam sinned; Christ was sinless.*

The ANGEL said before His birth: “That *holy* thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

GOD THE FATHER said at the commencement of His ministry: “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

CHRIST Himself said to his enemies: “Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John 8:46).

PILATE *at his trial said*: “I find no fault in this man” (Luke 23:4).

The DYING MALEFACTOR said: “We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:41).

The ROMAN CENTURION said: “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47).

(3) *Christ therefore must have died for others.*

“The good shepherd giveth His life FOR THE SHEEP” (John 10:11).

“The Son of man came ... to give His life a RANSOM FOR MANY” (Matt. 20:28).

“When we were yet without strength ... Christ DIED FOR THE UNGODLY ... God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died FOR US ... When we were ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son” (Rom. 5:6-10).

“Christ died for OUR SINS according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3).

“He hath made Him to be sin FOR US, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

“Christ also hath once suffered FOR SINS, the JUST FOR the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18).

Man is not saved by believing in “substitution” or “identification” or “representation”. He is saved alone by Christ. While it is evident from the above Scriptures that the *death of Christ* is absolutely essential to salvation, it is also abundantly clear from Scripture that a DEAD CHRIST CAN SAVE NO MAN. We therefore must pass by the wealth

of teaching that clusters around the sufferings of Christ, the blood of Christ, and the cross of Christ (Oh that their very enumeration may stir up some to search the Scriptures for these treasures of truth), and devote our remaining space to the glorious fact that the Christ Who died LIVES AGAIN.

The Resurrection of Christ is vital to:

(1) SALVATION ð "If thou shalt ... believe in thine heart that God hath *raised Him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

(2) GOSPEL ð "If Christ be not *risen*, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ... ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:14-17).

(3) HOPE ð "If Christ be not *raised* ... then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:17-19).

(4) IMMORTALITY ð "The dead shall be *raised incorruptible* ... and this mortal must put on *immortality*" (1 Cor. 15:52,53).

(5) VICTORY ð "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is *swallowed up* in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

Here, in the risen Christ, is our one and only hope in view of that "one event" that lies ahead of every mortal man:

"Jesus said ... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

"Death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. 6:9).

No. 4

Why faith is essential

Certain things are self-evident. Such *truths* we call "axioms", they do not admit of argument. The person who does not readily accept any statement, but demands some measure of proof, we consider a wise and reasonable man. The person who is contentious, and refuses to proceed until self-evident truths are proved, is a nuisance, and is looked upon as lacking in intelligence. We should not waste time with a man who demanded proof that the sun was shining, it would be self-evident. No business man could tolerate for an hour the unnecessary delay caused by anyone who held up all business transactions while he received proof that $2 \times 2 = 4$, and that there really are 20 shillings in the £1.*

It is perfectly certain that in the unwritten laws of everyday life there would be found this one:

"Without faith nothing is possible"

The man who entrusts a letter to the Post Office exercises faith in the whole machinery and service of the G.P.O.. Modern business life, we are told in cold calculating text books, is built up on *credit*, and the word credit is derived from the Latin *credo* = I believe. Every banking transaction, every cheque paid or accepted, every exchange of commodities or services for a bill, all the intricate legal business that decides inheritance and fortunes upon a signature and a testimony, all are saying with one voice, *credo*, I believe.

What should we think of a man who, before embarking upon a railway journey, demanded proof that the line was actually laid, proof that signalmen were on duty, proof that the engine driver knew his work, proof that the ticket would be accepted, proof ð but why continue? Such a bore would simply be left until he learned something of

* Written before British currency was decimalized in 1971.

the practical value of faith. Yet the very men who would unhesitatingly set such a stickler for evidence aside, often take exactly the same position when it comes to the things of God.

One man tries to impress us with the awful and solemn fact that until he has a full and complete answer to the question, "Who was Cain's wife?" he can proceed no further in this matter of life and death. One wonders whether, when lying on a bed of sickness, knowing that he had working in him some disease that had every appearance of fatal issues, this same person would refuse the doctor's medicine, and risk an awful death, until he had mastered with fever-stricken brain the contents of the library of the Pharmaceutical Society. Would he not be better persuaded to take the medicine, and get well first, and if he felt so disposed go into the why's and wherefore's after?

Bishop Butler says, "Probability is the law of life". In this world perfect knowledge is unattainable, and unless we are to stagnate and die, we must go forward without complete evidence. Now, see how the Bible opens:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

What God does is before our eyes, but what God is, is outside the range of human enquiry. The New Testament does not depart from this attitude:

"He that cometh to God must BELIEVE that HE IS" (Heb. 11:6).

None but a fool says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psa. 14:1), for as W.H. Fitchett, in his *Unrealized Logic of Religion*, has so well said:

"What height and depth, what eternity and universality of knowledge, must be assumed as a warrant for such an assertion! Who is entitled to announce such a negative? The mere sense of humour makes, or ought to make, such a performance impossible. Here is a little creature who was born yesterday and will die tomorrow. He comes he knows not whence; he is hastening he knows not whither. He is hedged round with mysteries, imprisoned in ignorance. He knows only one little patch on the surface of only one little planet. He knows, and that only dimly, a few of the mysterious laws touching him and shaping his life. He cannot tell how his own nails grow, or why his hands obey the impulse of his thoughts, or whether, when tomorrow's sun rises, he will be in existence. He cannot say, of his own knowledge, whether there is not a man in the moon. And shall he undertake to proclaim to the astonished race that there is no infinite God in the immeasurable universe!"

Just as the epistle to the Hebrews says, "God IS", so it declares "God hath SPOKEN" (Heb. 1:1,2), and it is equal folly to attempt to deny the one statement as the other. Whatever we may believe or deny, each man in his own heart of hearts knows that something is radically wrong. What if the Bible word *sin* should prove the answer? Man everywhere is seeking and searching for some remedy. What if the Bible plan of *redemption* should prove the answer? Will that man, who cannot deny his sin and his mortality if he would, refuse the cure testified in Scripture (and by countless thousands) simply because he has not sufficient "proof"?

Just as Scripture uncompromisingly says, "God is", so the meaning of faith is at once simple and positive. With one exception every occurrence of the words "faith", "faithful", and "believe" in the Old Testament is some form or other of the Hebrew word *Amen*. *Amen*, with which we close all prayer, is the Hebrew word "truth", and faith, according to the Scriptures, simply takes God to mean what He says. Faith is simply saying "*Amen*" to all that God has revealed. It is said of Abraham, when he believed the stupendous promise of God, that:

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20,21).

Further on in Romans 10:17, it is clearly stated that:

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God".

While in one sense this covers the whole of the Scriptures, we are not left with the idea that if a man believes that there is one God, or that the whale swallowed Jonah, that he will be saved. James says that:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the demons also believe, *and tremble*" (James 2:19).

The same chapter in Romans that tells us that faith cometh by hearing the Word, tells us most plainly what Word is meant:

“... the Word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:8,9).

“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ... ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:14-17).

Abraham’s faith was imputed (or reckoned) to him for righteousness, and says Romans 4:23-25 :

“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification”.

While faith is so intimately associated with the Word of God, salvation is found only in Christ:

“The holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise UNTO salvation through FAITH which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

Faith says “Amen” to the statement that Christ is the “Sent One”, sent to save:

“He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life” (John 5:24).

Faith sees in Christ God’s remedy for sin:

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:14-16).

“The just shall live BY FAITH” (Rom. 1:17).

“The righteousness of God which is BY FAITH of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:22).

“A man is justified BY FAITH without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

“We have boldness and access with confidence BY THE FAITH of Him” (Eph. 3:12).

We are, moreover, told in Romans 4:16, that instead of thinking that the words “by faith” indicate anything intangible, unreal and evanescent, they and they alone indicate certainty:

“Therefore it is of FAITH, that it might be by GRACE; to the end the promise might be SURE”.

Grace being the unmerited favour of God shown to the worthless, the medium cannot possibly be the works of such worthless ones, and can only be faith, for that is everywhere contrasted with works of merit:

“For by GRACE are ye saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of WORKS, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

While we here insist upon the radical difference between faith and works, let it not be construed that good works should not be the *result* of salvation, for this very passage in Ephesians 2 goes on to say that such believers have been created in Christ Jesus “unto good works”, but that is a sphere that belongs to life and salvation, and those for whom we write are still in darkness and the shadow of death.

“TRUST IN THE LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

“TRUST YE IN THE LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength (*margin*, the ROCK OF AGES)” (Isa. 26:4).

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psa. 49:6,7).

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No. 5

The Gospel of God

The word “gospel” means “good news from God”. Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers used to speak of the “godspell”, meaning “God’s spell or story”, and it is this “spell” or “story” that we desire once more to make known. In chapter 1 of the epistle to the Romans we find this “gospel of God” associated with (a) a Book, and (b) a Person:

“The gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son” (Rom. 1:1-3).

These two, the Book and the Person, are so linked together that if we deny the one, we renounce the other. It is vain to imagine that we can trifle with the Word of God and yet find an interest in the Christ of God. Listen to what He Himself said concerning the Scriptures, and you will be able to settle this matter without further argument:

“Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?” (John 5:46,47).

This association of the gospel with the Scriptures is enforced by the testimony of the apostle Paul, who said:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; and that He was buried, and that HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES” (1 Cor. 15:3,4).

Returning to the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, let us note more fully what it says concerning “His Son”. First of all, God’s good news is entirely concerned with His beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. There can be no “good news” from God, to a world of sin and death, that is not centred in Him.

Do we ask for evidence of the love of God? He points to the gift of His Son:

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9,10).

The “gospel of God” is “concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord”. In the passage quoted above from 1 John 4:9,10, we learn that the reason why the Son of God came was that He might be “the propitiation for our sins”. This means, in simple language, that the Lord Jesus Christ by His death put away sin (for the wages of sin is death), and provided a way wherein God could come out to poor sinful man in all the fulness of His love and forgiveness, without compromising His holiness, or setting aside the demands of righteousness. With this in view, we turn once more to Romans 1 for further teaching concerning “His Son”. We discover by reading verses 3 and 4 that it speaks of Him under two aspects:

- (1) “The seed of David according to the flesh”.
- (2) “The Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”.

It would take us too far afield to consider what the reference to David implies. Let us pass that and just consider the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came “in the flesh”. It is evidently very vital to the gospel that “Jesus Christ came in the flesh”, for it is the spirit of antichrist that denies it (1 John 4:2,3). The following Scriptures will reveal the necessity for the manhood of Christ:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14,15).

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3,4).

“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. 15:21).

The first of these three passages is based upon the fact which is revealed throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, namely, that the Redeemer must be Next of Kin. And just as the next of kin combined in himself the twofold office of redeemer and avenger of blood, so Christ, in Hebrews 2:14,15, has a twofold office: "to destroy" and "to deliver", by reason of His death.

The second passage reveals the utter inability of any man to keep the law of God, and thereby provide for himself a righteousness, and shows that Christ came as man simply because neither the law nor its sacrifices were of any avail for the putting away of sin. In this passage there is an important statement. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh", for He knew no sin and did no sin: otherwise He would have needed a Saviour Himself.

The third passage, if studied in its context, reveals Christ as the "last Adam" and the "second man". And here we must add one further statement of the Scriptures, lest any should think that the Son of God, because He partook of flesh and blood, was a mere man. He is contrasted with Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:47 thus:

"The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven".

John, in the opening chapter of his Gospel, tells us that He Who was God, Who made all things, Whose name is the Word, "was made flesh" that He might become the "Lamb of God" to bear away the sin of the world.

While this first aspect of the work of Christ is so important, there is another, without which all is in vain:

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).

We return therefore to Romans 1:3,4 to note that in the gospel of God, Christ, as the Son of God, is set forth (1) according to the flesh, and (2) according to the Spirit. It is in the second aspect that He is "declared the Son of God with power", and associated with "the resurrection of the dead".

Seeing that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was raised again the third day according to the Scriptures, His death on the cross, which had every appearance of weakness and defeat, becomes the "power of God":

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

The same mighty power that saves from sin, keeps every believer afterwards:

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1:5).

It is in virtue of His risen power that:

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25).

And not only so, but after they are saved:

"He is able to succour (or help) them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

and moreover is:

"Able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

No wonder the apostle Paul exclaimed:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

We have already seen the association of the Scriptures with the gospel of God; we now see the finished work of Christ and the gospel of God, and so can bring together two passages that will reveal how fully the Lord has provided for poor sinful men:

HIS WORD.ō"From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are ABLE to make thee wise UNTO SALVATION through faith which (that) is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

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His SON.ō”The Gospel of Christ ... is the power of God UNTO SALVATION to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

“Unto Salvation”.ō Shall God be more concerned about the salvation of a sinner than the sinner himself? God has provided the sacrifice in the gift of His beloved Son. God has provided a guide in the gift of His blessed Word. To every sinner ò conscious of his guilt, sensible of his need, fully sure that all his strivings and efforts will avail nothing ò to every sinner, this good news comes. If a meal be provided, it must be eaten if it is to do any good. If clothes be given, they must be worn in order to benefit. If a fare be paid, the seat must be occupied or the road will still remain untravelled. If good news be brought from God, it must be believed before its blessing can be enjoyed:

“ ... as many as RECEIVED Him, to them gave He power (authority) to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that BELIEVE on His name” (John 1:12).

Believing therefore is receiving. To disbelieve is to reject. To disbelieve God is to make Him a liar, which is a dreadful thing to contemplate:

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: ... he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:9-11).

For simplicity of language the verse that immediately follows would be difficult to equal. No word has more than four letters: written so that a child can understand. How different from the witness of men! Look at this and live:

“HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE; AND HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE” (1 John 5:12).

“The gospel of God ... (is) concerning His SON” (Rom. 1:1-3).

May many who are at the moment burdened with unforgiven sin find “joy and peace in believing”.

No. 6

The Salvation of God

The gospel of God is concerning His Son, and this gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1:1-3,16). This was the theme of leaflet No. 5, which the reader is urged to read. In this present leaflet we desire to direct attention to the great matter of *salvation*. We read in 2 Timothy 3:15 that the Scriptures are able to make wise *unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and in Romans 1:16, that the gospel is the power of God *unto salvation* to every one that believeth. The idea of salvation presupposes three features:

- (1) A SAVIOUR.ō Someone who is able and willing to save.
- (2) A NEED.ō Someone who is in need of being saved.
- (3) A PROVISION.ō Some ground whereon salvation can be provided.

A SAVIOUR.ō The Lord Jesus possesses many and wonderful titles. He is, for example, King, Lord, Shepherd, Prophet, Priest, Redeemer: but the character in which He is first spoken of in the New Testament, and the one in which every soul should meet Him first, is that of *Saviour*:

“Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall SAVE His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOUR, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

“Jesus” means “Saviour” or “the Salvation of the Lord”.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostle Peter declared:

“Neither is there SALVATION in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In Titus 2:13,14 we find a very comprehensive statement concerning the Saviour, His Person and His work:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”.

Look, O saint, and look, O sinner, at the glorious person Who stooped so low for us! He is the great God. He created all things (Col. 1:16). He made the world (John 1:1-10). He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled Himself to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8). He became man, “He gave Himself for us”, or as the apostle rejoiced to say, “The Son of God, Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*” (Gal. 2:20). Dear reader, what hinders you from saying this of yourself? He gave Himself for a specific reason, “that He might redeem us from all iniquity”. We were lost, sold under sin, in the bondage of sin and death, without hope in ourselves, without power to do anything for our own salvation. He redeemed us from all iniquity. His salvation, however, does not stay there. He Who redeemed us *from* sin, also died that He might purify us *unto* Himself. Consequently they who have believed in Him as their Saviour *from sin*, are looking for the Saviour to receive them *to glory*, and are assured that He Who died for them in the *past*, and Who is coming for them in the *future*, is the Saviour for the *present* too:

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be **SAVED** by His life” (Rom. 5:10).

“Wherefore He is able also to **SAVE** them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

A **NEED**.ō Let us now look at our need of a Saviour. He came to save His people from their *sins*. He came that He might redeem us from *all iniquity*. What then is sin? Who are sinners? What are its consequences? “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). In other words, anything that is not *right* is sin. “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4), or as the word means, “lawlessness is sin”.

Sin comes short of God’s standard, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Sin is essentially utter failure, as can be seen by reading Judges 20:16 :

“Every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not **MISS**”,

where the word “miss” is the translation of the word for “sin”. From the fact that man has so completely failed springs all the resultant wickedness, rebellion and misery of sin. Sin has started the whole race upon a pathway of weary purposeless toil, ending at last in death. Man, created in the image of God, is now a deformed, crooked, twisted creature. Our English word “wrong” bears its evidence to this fact, for it comes from the word “to wring” or “to twist”. Such then is the nature of sin.

Who then are sinners? Does this awful character extend to all men, or is it true only of the base, the vile, and the abandoned? Alas, it is only too true that sin has dominion over all:

“There is no difference: for **ALL** have sinned” (Rom. 3:22,23).

“There is **NONE** righteous, **NO**, **NOT ONE**” (Rom. 3:10).

“If we say that we have **NO SIN**, we deceive ourselves ... If we say that we have **NOT SINNED**, we make Him a liar” (1 John 1:8-10).

The testimony of Scripture, and the universal testimony of conscience, leave no room for doubt upon this awful question. We belong to a sinful, dying race. Our greatest concern should be to discover whether there is a remedy: if so, how is it to be obtained? what must we do, promise or pay in order to receive its benefits? to whom do we apply? and has anyone ever been saved from sin, so that we may be encouraged to seek and find the way?

A **PROVISION**.ō The answer is found in the following:

“The wages of sin is death; but the **GIFT** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that NOT OF YOURSELVES: it is the GIFT of God: NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

These two passages of Scripture are sufficient to dispose of the idea that salvation can be *merited*; it is God’s *gift*, free, and by grace:

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world TO SAVE SINNERS; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15).

Here is Paul’s testimony. Christ came into the world to live and to die with this great object, “to save sinners”, and Paul might have added, I believed, I received, I passed from death unto life, I dropped my own filthy rags of self-righteousness in order to be clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation. Look at me, take heart, I am set before you as a sample ò you, too, shall be saved if you but trust in Him. Moreover, we do well to lay to heart the fact that there is but one alternative in this matter. We are either saved by Christ, and by grace, or we are lost. There are no other ways of life; there is no other door; there is no other sacrifice for sin. Let us see this from the Scriptures. We have already quoted Acts 4:12, so we proceed to others of like character:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: NO MAN cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME” (John 14:6).

“I am the door: BY ME if any man enter in, he shall be SAVED” (John 10:9).

“He offered ONE sacrifice for sins for EVER ... by ONE offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified ... there remaineth NO MORE sacrifice (offering) for sins” (Heb. 10:12,14,26).

The human heart, when once it has become acquainted with its terrible need, echoes the cry of Peter when he said:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Every redeemed child of God joins in the testimony of the apostle John who said:

“And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14).

From the Scriptures it is abundantly clear that salvation is the gift of God, a gift unmerited and unearned by any of us. Moreover, we learn that this salvation is ours in and through His greatest gift, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet further, this salvation is ours because He, the Son of God, died for us, died for the ungodly, died for sinners, died for their sins, died the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Salvation is ours without money and without price, but salvation is nevertheless costly beyond dreams. It cost the Son of God the suffering, shame, and death, of the cross. It cost the Father the gift of His beloved One. Think well and long before this gracious gift be turned aside. God has done all He ever will do to accomplish our salvation. Never again will He send His Son to die: “He dieth no more”. Christ has paid the dread penalty once and for all: “There remaineth no more offering for sin”.

Are you casting about in your mind how this blessing of free salvation can be assuredly yours? Let God’s Word tell you ò receive its testimony and rejoice:

“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:8-10).

No. 7

The righteousness of God

The apostle Paul rejoiced in the gospel of Christ, for, said he, “it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). It is our present object to discover why the gospel is such a mighty power unto salvation. The answer is supplied by the apostle himself in the very next verse:

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed”.

Now the term, “the righteousness of God”, may refer to His own inherent moral character as the Judge of the world, as we find it used in Romans 3:5,6. But this is a righteousness that condemns us. Again, in Romans 10:3,4 we read of “God’s righteousness”, where it says of Israel:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth”.

Now Christ cannot be the *end* of God’s moral character. It must mean something else. Further, these different references to the righteousness of God associate it with faith. Now no amount of my faith can influence by one iota the essential righteousness of God Himself. We are therefore forced to look at this expression again to discover how the righteousness of God can be the power of the gospel, and how it can be associated with faith.

We leave the epistle to the Romans for a moment, and turn to the second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 5, and there we read these words:

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ... For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

“Not imputing their trespasses to them”. Does this mean that God has glossed over the matter of sin? Indeed no, for how should the throne of His glory stand? There can be no compromising of righteousness with God. For answer, read once more the closing verse quoted above: “He hath made *Him* to be sin for us, Who knew no sin”. *Our* sins, though not imputed to us, were imputed to *Him*:

“HE was wounded for OUR transgressions, HE was bruised for OUR iniquities: the chastisement of OUR peace was upon HIM; and with HIS stripes WE are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on HIM the iniquity of US all” (Isa. 53:5,6).

Which is the greater wonder ð that He, Who knew no sin, should be made sin for us, or that we, who were nothing but sin, should be made the righteousness of God in Him? Who shall decide? it is all too wonderful, and the solution of this problem lies outside of our present purpose. We believe that 2 Corinthians 5:21 provides us with the answer we need as to the meaning of the term, “the righteousness of God”, as it is found in the gospel. Let us therefore return to the epistle to the Romans with this blessed knowledge, and see how fully the righteousness of God, provided through Christ by faith, covers the guilty sinner, and brings to him the blessing of salvation full and free.

This righteousness is said to be revealed and manifested:

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:21,22).

Isaiah the prophet associates revealed righteousness with salvation:

“My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed” (Isa. 56:1).

Where Isaiah said it was “near”, Paul could say it was “now”. This “now” of Paul follows a dreadful revelation of human guilt and helplessness. All hope of salvation by personal effort is here excluded. Every mouth is stopped, and all the world found guilty before God:

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. BUT NOW the righteousness of God *without the law* is manifested” (Rom. 3:20,21).

Do you not see how blessed is this “but now”? What else could have saved us? Nothing in heaven or on earth. If God Himself had not found a way whereby guilty sinners could be forgiven, a righteousness provided, and at the

same time the law magnified and made honourable, the whole world would have sunk into the abyss. It is most important, moreover, that we should distinguish between the righteousness of law and the righteousness of faith here.

Righteousness of law. ð”Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which *doeth* these things shall live by them” (Rom. 10:5).

Righteousness of faith. ð”But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise ... If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, *for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*” (Rom. 10:6-10).

Here the apostle draws a distinction between that righteousness which depends upon *doing* and that which is of *faith*. In the epistle to the Galatians he has taken this distinction to its conclusion, and shown us the dreadful consequences of attempting a righteousness of works:

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to *do* them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by FAITH. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that *DOETH* them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:10-13).

Let us read together the two tremendous statements:

“FOR IT IS WRITTEN, CURSED IS EVERY ONE THAT CONTINUETH NOT ... TO DO THEM”.

“FOR IT IS WRITTEN, CURSED IS EVERY ONE THAT HANGETH ON A TREE”.

Here, therefore, is a parallel with 2 Corinthians 5:21. He knew no sin, but was made sin for us. He was above all curse, but was cursed for us. We could produce no righteousness, but, by God’s grace through Christ, we, the guilty, are made the righteousness of God in Him. Whosoever attempts to produce a righteousness by works of law is involved in the curse ð but He was made a curse to set us free.

Let us now read the two statements of Romans 3:21,22) together, so that we may compare them:

“NEGATIVE. ð”Righteousness of God manifested apart from law”.

“POSITIVE. ð”Righteousness of God (manifested) by the faith of Jesus Christ”.

We have seen that the righteousness which saves can never be that of the law. Let us now consider what is meant by the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. The reference to faith in Romans 3:22 is twofold, and this we must exhibit:

“The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe”.

Faith and belief are the same, but in this verse it is the faith of Christ, and the belief of the sinner that we must distinguish.

Now as “the faith of ... Abraham” mentioned in Romans 4:12 must mean Abraham’s own faith, just so “the faith of Jesus Christ” must mean His own faith. And as Romans 3:3 speaks of “the faith of God”, and balances it, in verse 7, by “the truth of God”, meaning His faithfulness to His promise, so “the faith of Christ” is in reality the faithfulness of Christ in life and death, and this is the ground of all our acceptance and our hope. This is one aspect of the righteousness of God by faith. The other is that expressed in the words: “unto all and upon all them that believe”. Let us hear the testimony of one who was as righteous in himself as a man could be. Let us hear what his own estimate of that self-wrought righteousness became the moment he saw the glorious provision made by God in the gospel, and may we all by the grace of God be enabled to reckon likewise:

“If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more ... touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ... that I may win

Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:4-9).

This righteousness is unto all. Unto you, unto me, unto all men everywhere. It knows no barriers, no distinctions, no frontiers. It is unto all. It is upon all them that believe. Reader, what a solemn thought is this. Sin has been taken away. Sin no longer bars us from access to God. Sin is no longer imputed to us. Sin has been laid upon the spotless Son of God. Righteousness has been provided, and it is a righteousness, too, of God. It is a righteousness of God by faith. What madness then to reject such a provision, such a gift, at such a cost.

May you, dear reader, learn a lesson from Israel, of whom it is written:

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH” (Rom. 10:3,4).

No. 8

The Lamb of God

There are three other leaflets belonging to this series, and they have presented THE GOSPEL OF GOD (No. 5); THE SALVATION OF GOD (No. 6); and THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (No. 7). We now draw attention to the title given to Christ which forms the title also of this leaflet, namely, “THE LAMB OF GOD”.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh (beareth) away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

Why should the Son of God be called a “Lamb”? The question is answered by completing the sentence. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Lamb of God because He is the appointed sin-bearer. He Who bears sin, dies. He who bears sin for another and dies, dies as a sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ came to die as a sacrifice for sin; to bear our sins in His own body on the tree; to there put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. There could be no “gospel of God” without the Lamb of God for there could be no “good news” to a world condemned, that did not speak of sins forgiven. There could be no “salvation of God” without the Lamb of God, for salvation implies a Saviour Who undertakes for the lost; and there could be no revelation or provision of a “righteousness of God” without the Lamb of God, for imputed righteousness is the completion of that good work, begun in the putting away of sin.

As the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus is set forth as the great passover sacrifice, and it will help us, in setting forth the glorious work of Christ, if we consider some of the teaching of Scripture concerning that great type. First of all, let us establish the fact that the passover lamb does set forth, in type, the offering of Christ. This we can do at once, with one clear quotation:

“For even CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US” (1 Cor. 5:7).

That Christ as the Lamb of God is essentially God’s appointed Redeemer, let the next reference make plain:

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ... Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: ... Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on (*margin* or, to) the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet. 1:18,19; 2:22-24).

It will be observed here that while the spotlessness of the lamb is insisted on, it is *the precious blood* that avails for redemption, and in the further reference, while the sinlessness of Christ is insisted on, *the bearing of our sins* in His own body alone accomplishes our salvation. With the gospel facts well in mind, let us turn to Exodus 12, where the first passover was inaugurated. There are three items that are spoken of in the earlier chapters that are true of all men, viz., bondage, bitterness and burdens.

Israel were slaves; their lives were made bitter; their burdens were crushing and severe. The reader is earnestly advised to read Exodus 1 to 6, noting 1:11; 2:11; 5:4,5 and 6:7 for references to their burdens; and 1:14; 2:23 and 6:6 for their bitterness and bondage.

Israel in Egypt set forth in vivid colours the state of mankind dominated by sin.

When the time drew near for Israel's redemption, the Lord spake to Moses on this wise:

PROMISE.ō"I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm" (Exod. 6:6).

PASSOVER.ō"It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses" (Exod. 12:27).

There are one or two items of vital importance to the understanding of the type we must now consider.

(1) A new beginning.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exod. 12:2).

Israel's year begins in October; Passover was instituted in April, consequently Israel had two new year days in one year. Every believer in Christ has a similar experience. He has his ordinary birthday, but he has his spiritual birthday, when he passed from death unto life, from Adam to Christ, from the ranks of the lost to the ranks of the saved. New life begins with the sacrifice of Christ. It has no connection with any ceremonial or observances, either made by ourselves or for us by others. Reader, if you still stand in need of *newness of life*, seek it of the Lamb of God Who bore the sin of the world.

(2) A personal Saviour.

In Exodus 12:3 the sacrificial lamb is spoken of as "A lamb"; in verse 4 as "THE lamb", and in verse 5 as "YOUR lamb". At first you may be satisfied to believe that Christ is "A" saviour. If this is all, if He is one among many, salvation is not yours:

"A just God and a Saviour; there is NONE BESIDE ME" (Isa. 45:21).

"Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE" (Isa. 45:22).

Perhaps you have already realized the pre-eminence of Christ. No other so-called deliverer competes with Him in your estimation. You are not far from the kingdom, but remember the statement:

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

Nothing avails, if Christ be not *my* Saviour, *my* Sin-bearer; unless I can say with the apostle Paul:

"The Son of God, Who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME" (Gal. 2:20).

(3) The one thing needful.

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exod. 12:13).

The children of Israel had many advantages over the Gentile world, as may be seen in the following extracts from scripture:

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God ... Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants" (Rom. 3:1,2; 9:4).

It would not have availed the children of Israel on that dreadful night in Egypt, however, to have exhibited any or all of these undoubted advantages:

Rom. 3:1,2 asks, Is there advantage, and answers YES.

Rom. 3:9 asks, Are we better than the Gentiles, and answers NO.

Sin is the great leveller:

“There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:22-24).

“There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:12,13).

Nothing availed Israel that night but the blood of the lamb that had been slain. Nothing will avail you and me, dear reader, but the precious blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins, when He died the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.

(4) A wonderful principle.

“And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; ... there was not a house where there was not one dead” (Exod. 12:29,30).

“Not a house”.ō This was true not only of the Egyptians, but of Israel as well. There was “not a house where there was not one dead”ōeither a man or a lamb, one or the other. Either, dear reader, the Son of God died for you and your sins, and you, like Israel, go out free, or you perish unsaved, you die in your sins, and never know His salvation.

Isaiah 53, so well known, yet so unknown, contains all that the passover typifies ō and more:

“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS. HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES: ... the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all ... He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter ... by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for HE SHALL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES” (Isa. 53:4-7,11).

It is a principle established in Scripture that whosoever bears sin ō dies: “Lest they bear sin, and die” (Num. 18:22). Therefore we face solemn issues together. Either we flee for refuge to Christ, as the Bearer of our sin, and are saved, or we reject the gospel of grace, and perish.

May the God of mercy bless these words to not a few and may many behold in the Lord Jesus Christō

“The Lamb of God, which taketh (beareth) away the sin of the world”.