

WHY IS FAITH COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS?

ROMANS iv. 5.—But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

IT may well surprise the uninitiated, that a premium for inactivity seems to be here offered: and the gospel expounder is advocating a do-nothing system; the man's "working" hindering his success. When we turn to the first creation, it is spoken of thus; "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all the work (of creation) which he had created and made (to make, to do)." All his works, including man, were to do, to be active; no idleness, inactivity, allowed to any of his works. And we need only look around and above us, to see that it is so: nothing is still. The Master says, in contrasting the second (his own) with the first creation (his Father's), "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." *John v. 17*. And is it possible that in his creation, there is no working? It is not possible. We are required to "work out our own salvation," *Phil. ii. 12*, by express command. But, did man work his way into the first creation? It was only after God had "formed him of clay and made him man," that he became a worker. And the apostle, here, is alluding to one's entrance into the second, the new creation; not of his duty within it. He means that the requisite is not work on the sinner's part; no penance, tears, groans, prayers: nothing to suffer, nothing to do. The one requisite being faith: "He that believeth with the heart."

He "believeth on him that justifieth (*epi ton dikaiounta*) the ungodly:" believeth, trusteth to the one justifying (declaring righteous) the ungodly; the ungodlike; the one created in the image, the likeness of God, but who has lost it; and is ungodlike, which is the full orthography for the abbreviated ungodly. God is wise, good, pure, loving, and beneficent; and the ungodlike is not wise, good, etc., but is foolish, bad, impure, hateful, and hating: so that he resembles his father, the devil; *John* viii. 44; is earthly, sensual, devilish; *Jas.* iii. 15. Yet such is the one, that it is proposed to justify! i. e. to reckon righteous! Then, where is the sinner whose condition is so wretched, as to justify despair? He can hardly put himself outside such a qualification as this—ungodlikeness: surely any poor wretch has that qualification. And that is the requisition; that he shall believe, trust in, the one justifying the ungodly.

O for a trumpet voice
 On all the world to call,
 To bid their hearts rejoice
 In him who died for all!
 For all my Lord was crucified;
 For all, for all my Saviour died.

To this miserable ungodly one believing, trusting in the one justifying the ungodly, "his faith is counted (*logizetai*) for (*eis*) righteousness." His faith is counted, computed, to be righteousness. Not, that faith really not being righteousness, is counted as such, because of the abounding grace and mercy of God; as he does not merit of us any such idea, as that his goodness would induce him to be false, or unjust. The gospel is truth; not pretense. God can be, and is, "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." *Rom.* iii. 26. Then, his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness, because it is righteousness; his faith is his righteousness.

Is not he righteous, who obeys the government under which he lives? Then what does the Lord of this new creation require of the sinner, that he may come in? Faith: nothing but faith: no victim, no suffering, no tears or groans, no improvement of his condition, but "Believe in the justifier of the ungodly;" in which case his faith is his righteousness; he has fulfilled the only requisition made of him. He needs nothing but this faith to be counted in: and when in, there will be appliances supplied to him, to secure the result that his faith shall work; work mightily; work by love and purify the heart.

In this condition of righteousness by faith, we are in a position, in some important respects, equivalent to our never having sinned at all. For summon one of the blessed, who has not lost his first estate, and let him stand before us bright as the morning star, and pure as the clearest crystal; and let this sin-scarred believer, slashed at every part by the blade of Satan, stand also before us. "Blessed angel, have you peace with God?" What a rapturous smile on his radiant features, as he replies, "O yes: I have never, since my existence began, offended him: I have peace with God, certainly." "And now, my poor sin-scarred brother, have you peace with God?" A holy calm is upon his features, and the light of thankful gladness in his eyes, as he replies, "Being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. My sins which were many and grievous were borne and expiated by my loving Redeemer. I am accepted in the Beloved." Is not that glorious; our scarred brother, as we see upon examination, has had all his scars healed by the balm of Gilead, administered by the physician of sinners: and as to peace with God, he ranks with that bright angel on whom a spot of sin has never come!

“Celestial one, does God love, and guard you now?” The same smile is there, as he answers in the same prompt and confident voice, “Yes: God is love: he is everywhere; and as I have never been conscious of an act, a word, a thought, contrary to his will; wherever I am I bask in the smile of his love. All this heavenly brightness that you see upon me, is but the reflected light of that smile.” “Then, my poor brother, you who have sinned so deeply and persistently, have you any such idea as that God, so pure, so apart from sin, has any love for you?” And astonishing as it is, he abides this test also: for as calm is his countenance, and as lustrous is his eye, as when under the first question, as he says, “God so loved me as to give his only begotten Son, to die in my stead: God is without change, therefore faith whispers all through my heart, that he loves me now; and this faith keeps me in the love of God: the love of God is assured to me by the Holy Ghost, who has shed a respondent love abroad in my heart.” Is not this splendid! Our brother is not only delivered from the guilt of his countless sins, but God loves him so, that in this respect also he ranks with this heavenly one, so sinless, and so much beloved! O this faith, how wonderful it is!

But once more, “Happy spirit, what is your prospect for the future?” How he glows as he responds, “God inhabiteth eternity, and my blissful existence shall proceed forever.” “And you, believer?” “My Saviour is alive for evermore: because he lives, I shall live also: forever am I to be with him, that I may behold his glory; sharing the joy of my Lord: I shall not see death.” Is not the test well sustained? The believer in these grand respects ranks with one who has never sinned: his faith is counted for (*eis*) righteousness.

WE GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS—BE- CAUSE—?

ROMANS v. 3-5.—“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us.”

“AND not only so” (*ou monon de*, but not only): the apostle had just mentioned that among the results of justification by faith were “peace with God,” and an abidance in a state of grace, in which we, believers, “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” This “glory of God” does not signify, that we are to have a glory such as that of God; as Satan promised to Eve in Eden, “your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,” etc. Nor, that we shall see God in his own glory, in the future state; though this is true. But, that we believers are sure, steadfast in the hope, that this grand plan of salvation by faith, will not come short, be interrupted, be laid aside as defective, typical, but will really glorify God in its complete success. At *ch.* iii. 23, we are told that “all (Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short (*husterountai*) of the glory of God:” i. e. as we read it, have failed to glorify God as their Creator and Governor; as a piece of bad workmanship does no credit to its maker: the tongue of deceit, the poisonous lips, the mouth full of cursing and bitterness, the feet swift to shed blood, causing destruction and misery, and having no reverence for God; these dishonor their maker: but this whole, crowning scheme of God, justification by faith in his Son, with its blessed accompaniments, and sequences, will glorify God, in producing

such regenerating and sanctifying effects upon men, that "God is not ashamed to be called their God:" *Heb.* xi. 16. The system of Jesus made a poor show in the eyes of Saul, the Pharisee, and he did what he could to stamp it out of existence, as a disgrace to Him who had framed the Mosaic institute, supported by the tradition of the elders. But Paul, the Christian, saw it in a different light, "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun;" and had no doubt that this grand scheme of a suffering, risen, reigning Christ receiving sinners by faith, regenerating them, sanctifying, sustaining, saving them by his word, grace, and providence would not fail to glorify God. So with all Christians: so far from thinking this simple, but comprehensive plan, so suitable to sinners, to be inferior to any other, they regard it as being superior to all: and while they mourn that the Edenic, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, the Philosophic plan all failed to exhibit their votaries as worthy of God; they rejoice in the hope, that this Christian plan, this final effort, will glorify God.

And not only do they thus, "but we rejoice (*kauchoometha*, the identical verb, in the same mood, tense, and person, as rendered *rejoice* in the second verse) in tribulations also:" for we are not afraid that the suffering Christian will dishonor God. It might appear so, to the world. They might say, if God can do nothing to protect his people from the prison, the sword, the cross, the stake, he is of small resources: our Jupiter and his family overthrew giants mighty enough to pile mountain upon mountain to scale heaven: but this Jesus, whom his followers say, contrary to all reason, had life in himself to conquer death and break the bars of the grave; cannot protect his people from a common mob!

But Christians *know* more of the matter, than the heathen; they know that "tribulation worketh patience."

Now, this, as an abstract proposition cannot be maintained: for tribulation worketh impatience; as we see from Scripture, where men are represented as being visited with such an anguish of tribulation, that "they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." *Rev.* xvi. 10, 11. This is surely no picture of tribulation working patience: there is tribulation enough; but an utter absence of patience. And such is the natural tendency of trouble; it tends to impatience, fretfulness; ruins the temper; as is seen in so many cases of sickly children, and men of broken fortunes. "Patience (worketh) experience," as a proposition, is admissible; for that is obvious: a patient trial of any plan or thing will give one experience of its value. Patience with a physician; a lawyer; a merchant; a mechanic; a course of exercise, diet, anything, will work experience as to his or its worth. Experience can be had in no other way. "Patience, experience:" we admit it. But now, again, "Experience (worketh) hope," is, as a proposition, inadmissible, for sometimes it does, and, perhaps, more frequently does not. Men hope when they commence an experience of a man or of a mode of business; but very many when they have gained experience of a man or of a mode, abandon him or it in despair: experience instead of working hope, wrought the destruction of hope.

And again, "Hope maketh not ashamed; because," etc. This proposition needs no because. Like "Patience worketh experience," it is self-evident. It is the very nature, and peculiarity of hope to buoy up, sustain, elevate, make bold, invigorate, make one smile at objections, at obstacles, at contempt for one's plans. While hope lives the hoper proceeds with his despised plan, *hoping* to overwhelm with surprise and mortification all gain-sayers, by achieving success. It is suspicious, that the

usual mode of understanding this passage, gives to this grand writer, Paul, the air of supporting a proposition that needs no support, and leaving others unsustained having absolute need of it. So, we propose as another exegesis, that we make the sustaining "because," etc., the support of the whole series of propositions, or statements, or allegations. "Knowing that (because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us) tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed;" but still holds on to and rejoices in the expectation, that this simple, final plan of saving sinners, ourselves among them, will vindicate the wisdom of God, and redound to his glory.

We should not forget, that the thought of this magnificent writer courses, often, through large periods; and we do not get his meaning unless we accompany him with held breath to the close. The Christian becomes patient, suffering without murmuring, under tribulation, because the love of God in his heart impels him to confidence in God, and to say "the cup which my FATHER giveth me, shall I not drink of it?" And his "experience" of God's gracious support and consolation in affliction, leads him to hope, that the divine plan will exhibit itself at the close as glorious. The reason why a Christian acts like a Christian, is because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, given to him; and instead of blasphemy from his mouth, in tribulation, he continues to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, crying out, "just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." *Rev.* xv. 3. Then let "because," etc., not support the self-evident proposition, "Hope maketh not ashamed:" but the entire series.

ADAM AND CHRIST.

ROMANS v. 12-21.

IT must be owing to the depth of this passage, that learned and able expositors differ so much, in their understanding its meaning: and we have hesitated as to giving our own opinion of it. To us it appears, that the apostle having treated of justification by faith, as in advance of justification by works; proceeds to show the reasonableness of this view, by contrasting Adam the introducer of sin and death, with Jesus Christ the introducer of the atonement and recovered life: that we may consider the former as bringing upon the human race a great evil; the latter, himself being so much greater than the former, bringing upon the human race a greater good. The great evil from the former having come without the consent of the race; and the great good also, without their consent. As to HOW the evil and the good thus came to us from these sources, nothing is said: perhaps it is above human intelligence. Only the two facts are stated, and as facts we are to receive them: the HOW being, probably, one of the many lessons of the future eternity.

“Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (*eph' hooi*) all have sinned:” There can be no question as to the statement, in its first particular. Adam introduced sin: was the first sinner: the apostle merely restates the fact, recorded in Genesis. And sin produced death: whether man and other orders of creatures are all included, we do not discuss; content with observing that Paul says nothing of other orders here; while the decree was, “for in the day

thou eatest thereof thou (Adam) shalt die." *Gen. ii. 17.* The remainder of the verse particularizes the general statements foregoing; by specifying the passing of death upon all men, because all sinned (*heemarton*). Upon this point, the inquirer will find as much controversy as he will be willing to read: the HOW, here is inscrutable: we concern ourselves with the fact alone: Adam brought sin upon us, and, so, death; in an inscrutable sense we were infected by sin, all, and, so, became subject to death: all sinned, and therefore death passed upon all (*eis pantas anthropous ho thanatos dieelthen*).

From *ver. 13*, to *ver. 17*, inclusive, we have a parenthesis, illustrating the statement of sin and death descending from Adam, by showing the fact that sin was "in the world," i. e. universal among men; and death reigned from Adam to Moses; until which latter time, of all who died, not one had sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression:" i. e. not one was put under a law, to which obedience was life; disobedience death: and yet, all having died, and death being by sin, their death must have been by Adam's disobedience, sin; in which, in some inscrutable way, all were implicated: when Adam sinned, all sinned.

"But not as the offense, so also the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead—" here the statement is transparent: the many (*hoi polloi*, THE many, all) are dead by the offense (an offense, singular, one, not offenses, plural) of THE one (*tou henos*)—"much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto (*eis*) THE many (*tous pollous*)." The poison issuing from the one unto the many (all) was universal, virulent and deadly: but the gracious energy of Jesus Christ, the "unspeakable gift," the one, bringing the expiation and life unto the many (all) hath much more abounded: for it is mightier to quicken the dead, than to kill the living.

The energy for good issuing from Jesus Christ, greatly exceeds the energy for evil issuing from Adam.

“And not as by one that sinned, the gift: for the judgment by one (*ex henos*, from one offense, because of one offense) unto (*eis*) condemnation (*katakrima*); but the free gift (*to charisma*) of many (*ek polloon*) offenses unto (*eis*) justification (*dikaioomai*, the opposite to *katakrima*).” Adam’s offense, the Jews’ offense, and all the offenses proceeding from these, are the many offenses referred to; all offenses having been provided for in the scheme of redemption, according to which “Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.” *Heb.* ii. 9.

“For if by one man’s (Adam’s) offense death reigned by one (Adam); much more they which receive (*lam-banontes*) abundance (*perisseian*) of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” Death by one (Adam); life by one (Jesus Christ). No doubt about the energy of the poison; no doubt of the greater energy of the remedy. Jesus, the Christ, is greater than Adam.

“Therefore (*ara oun*, so then) as by the offense of one upon (*eis*) all men to (*eis*) condemnation (*katakrima*); even so (*kai*) by the righteousness (*dikaioomatos*) of one upon (*eis*) all men unto (*eis*) justification (*dikaioosin*) of life.” We have omitted, as the reader will perceive, the interpolated words of the translators, amounting as they do to their comment on the passage; and have confined ourselves to the words of the apostle: these showing, as we believe, that the “offense” of one involved all men, unto condemnation; and the “righteousness” of one involved all men unto justification of life. The offense of Adam affected all for evil; the righteousness of Jesus Christ affected all for good. No one excluded from participation in the great offense; no one excluded from participation in the greater righteousness.

“For as by THE one (*tou henos*) man’s (Adam’s) disobedience (*parakoees*) THE many (*hoi polloi*, all) were made (*katestatheesan*, became; as *Jas. iii. 6*, *hee glossa kathistatai*, “the tongue is”) sinners; so by the obedience (*hupakoees*) of THE one (*tou henos*) shall THE many (*hoi polloi*, all) be made (*katastatheesontai*, become) righteous.” Here the parallel is expressed with increased clearness. By the one man’s disobedience, sin, the many, all, became sinners; by the one’s (Jesus Christ’s) obedience, righteousness, all became righteous: for though in the latter line of the parallel, the verb is in the future; it can only be referred to the logical inference; as, if you admit the former, you will be compelled to admit the latter; or something of that sort. And if it be objected, that the force of *kathisteemi* is *constituted, assigned the position of*, etc.; that seems to reproach the justice of God, as it represents him as rating with sinners those who are not sinners. If God treats any one as a sinner, it is because he is a sinner. “That the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then will I spare all the place for their sakes. * * * And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.” *Gen. xviii. 25, 32*. We have given the true force of the verb, as equivalent to one of the senses of *ginomai*, to become: all became sinners by Adam; all became righteous by Jesus Christ: the latter’s influence extending from Calvary back to Eden; and forward to the hour when shall be heard the voice, “There shall be time no longer:” in accordance with the revelation that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. He was slain from the foundation of the world. “But Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.”

Rom. x. 20. The Saviour was promised to man: the whole race: to bruise the serpent's head: to destroy the works of the devil: and, wherever the blight from the first Man's sin extended, beyond it went the blessedness of the second Man's righteousness. Sin and death by Adam; righteousness and life by Jesus Christ.

Lest from this supra-Jewish survey of the subject, he should appear to have forgotten the Law, the grand dispensation through Moses; he brings it in, to the horror of Phariseeism, as a mere adjunct, segment, item, of the immense scheme of salvation. "Moreover the law entered, that sin might abound." Not that God was anxious to have more sin in the world: but, that a chosen nation might be put under a law of works, and be supplied with the greatest possible natural and supernatural advantages; and by a miserable failure, demonstrate the incapacity of the human race, to be saved by any law of works, even under the most propitious conditions: the law thus becoming a pedagogue to lead the race to Christ. Such an expedient, to be sure, involved the Jew; in addition to his share in the one offense of the one first human transgressor; in his own many offenses against the law of sin and death given by Moses. But he was held in the hand of the Mediator; *Gal. iii. 19*; and "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:" the Mediator's hand was between him and death; the sinner offered his typical victim confessing his sin, and was forgiven; he was saved by faith through grace. "That as sin hath reigned unto (*en*) death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto (*eis*) eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

This view, which may not be preferable to any of those preceding it, may be useful to those minds which resemble our own. The important thing is not to conform the Scripture to one's theology; but one's theology to the Scripture. The HOWS will be more manageable in eternity.