

Romans - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 19

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“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”—Romans 8:7, 8.

WHAT the law forbids, the heart of the unrenewed man produces. It is like a field full of noxious weeds which thrive despite all effort to curb or destroy them. By the new birth men become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) and so learn to delight in those things which please God, for the new life imparted is heavenly in origin and uncontaminated by lust. Nevertheless, the old nature abides until the day when the returning Christ shall transform these bodies of our humiliation, hence the importance of the exhortations to uprightness, honesty, and integrity that abound in the Epistles, where true Christian life is set forth in all its fullness.

—C. C. Crowston.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 18

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”—Romans 8:4.

WE must not confound law and grace, which are two opposing systems that never can be confused without doing violence to both. (See Romans 11:6.) But in every dispensation right is right and wrong is wrong, and the greatly increased light of the Christian revelation does not invalidate anything of a moral or spiritual character made known in past ages. Under the law there were certain things which were commanded because they were right. Others were right because they were commanded. So, while believers today are not under law, either as a means of justification or as a rule of law, but are justified by grace and are called upon to walk in grace, this does not give liberty to ignore what God made known in past ages, as though all had now been superseded by Christianity. Rather, Christianity takes up and embodies in itself all that was spiritual in every era, and adds much that was not previously known. No dispensational change can transform sin into holiness, or righteousness into unrighteousness. The basis of iniquity is self-will, and that continues always the same.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 17

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” — Romans 8:1.

IN Romans seven we have a man renewed by the Spirit of God, but struggling under law, hoping thereby to subdue or find deliverance from the power of the old Adamic nature. In chapter eight we have God’s way of deliverance through the death and resurrection of Christ, with which the believer is identified before God, and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The chapter begins with “No condemnation” and ends with “no separation.” All who are in Christ Jesus are accepted in the Beloved and as free from all charge of guilt as He is Himself. He met all our deserts on the cross. Now we are linked up with Him in resurrection, not under law, but under grace.

Daily Sacrifice, August 21

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God”—Rom. 8:26, 27.

THE indwelling Comforter is the power for prayer (Jude 20). Even when we are too bewildered to know what is best, He who indwells us is constantly employed in presenting our real needs before God, and Christ presents these petitions as our High Priest and Intercessor above, adding to them the fragrant incense of His own perfections. Thus the answer is sure, and far beyond our poor thoughts or expectations.

“He maketh intercession... according to the will of God.” Because the Spirit is Himself a Person in the Godhead, his pleading on our behalf must be in accordance with God the Father’s will. Therefore His intercession can never be in vain.

—Mary Skinner.

Daily Sacrifice, August 20

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” — Romans 8:18.

CHRISTIANS are not exempt from suffering. When one trusts in Christ, it does not mean that he is at once freed from all the consequences of sin. So far as divine judgment is concerned, he is forever delivered from that (John 3:18, R. V.). But he is still in the body from which the Adamic curse has not yet been lifted. Consequently he suffers with the groaning creation, of which that body is still a part. Then, in addition to this, he now finds that the world to which he once belonged, has become a scene of hostility because of the place he has taken in association with a rejected Christ. All this involves suffering, but with every trial and affliction there will come needed grace to endure, as seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. 11:27).

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 16

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” —Romans 7:18.

EVERY one of us is by nature worse than anything he has ever done. The natural heart is a den of every kind of evil (Matt. 15:19). The flesh is incorrigibly corrupt and can never be improved (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 8:7). It is all-important that this be recognized and judged in the presence of God. When thus dealt with, we cease to look for good in ourselves, and realize that it is from the new heart (Ezek. 36:26; Matt. 12:35), given in regeneration, that all good must come. Then we shall find that, as we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). Our boast will then be only in the Lord (Psa. 34:2), for we shall realize that all is grace from first to last.

Daily Sacrifice, August 19

“I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” —Romans 7:9.

PAUL tells us that so far as his outward life was concerned before his conversion, he walked in obedience to the requirements of the law, so that as “touching the righteousness which is in the law” he was blameless. The one commandment which made him realize the sinfulness of his own heart was the Tenth—and no one could know by observing his behavior that he was guilty of violating it. He was alive, in the sense that he did not realize he was under sentence of death as a law-violator. But when awakened to see how this commandment applied, he knew that he was, so far as the law was concerned, a dead man (Rom. 7:9-11). Surely, every honest person must make the same acknowledgment. Which of us has not known lust in some form or another? The fact is, it is absolutely impossible for the natural man to keep this law. Ever since the Fall, men have been drawn away of their own lusts and enticed, and from this all manner of sin springs (James 1:14,15).

—Isaac Watts.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 15

“Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (or, rendered powerless), that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed (or justified) from sin” —Romans 6:6, 7.

MY old man is not merely my old nature. It is rather all that I was as a man in the flesh, the “man of old,” the unsaved man with all his habits and desires. That man was crucified with Christ. When Jesus died I (as a man after the flesh) died too. I was seen by God on that cross with His blessed Son.

How many people were crucified on Calvary? There were the thieves, there was Christ Himself—three! But are these all? Paul says in Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ.” He was there too; so that makes four. And each believer can say, “Our old man is crucified with Him.” So untold millions were seen by God as hanging there upon that cross with Christ. And this was not merely that our sins were being dealt with, but that we ourselves as sinners, as children of Adam’s fallen race, might be removed from under the eye of God and our old standing come to an end forever.

—Mrs. J. A. Trench.

Daily Sacrifice, August 18

“Sin shall not have dominion over you; For ye are not under the law, but under grace”— Rom. 6:14.

GOD’S salvation is not an impractical theory. It is a blessed reality. He who turns to Christ finds satisfaction for his conscience in the work of the cross, where the sin question was fully dealt with. But there is more than this. As he yields himself in loving obedience to the claims of the risen Lord, he finds divine power and all needed grace given him to live practically to the glory of God, and to honor Him in all his ways. Sin no longer holds dominion over the surrendered life.

The Unchanging Christ and Other Sermons, 3. Saved by His Life

Text: “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).

IT IS not the entire verse I am thinking of tonight so much as the last four words, “Saved by his life”. What are we to understand by this expression? Certainly the verse itself and the entire context makes it very plain that it is through the death of Christ our sins are put away. It is His precious atoning blood that cleanses us from all sin, thus purging our guilty consciences. It is through the work of His Cross that we have peace with God; and yet here the apostle declares, “We shall be saved by his life.”

Let us first consider what these words do not mean. “Saved by his life” does not imply that salvation comes through seeking to imitate the beautiful holy life of our blessed Lord. Let me say it seriously, earnestly, following Jesus will not save any one! Often the Christless are earnestly exhorted to begin the Christian life by taking up their cross and endeavoring to follow Jesus in order that they might be saved. But this is a travesty of the Gospel. No one was ever saved by imitating the life of Jesus or attempting to do so. His life was an absolutely holy life. There was not one thought or act that did not have the Father’s approbation. He said with truth, “I do always those things which please Him.” And the Father Himself declared, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” If salvation comes through imitating Him in His holy ways here on earth, then you and I are as good as lost eternally even now. For it is utterly impossible for a sinful man or woman to follow in the steps of the sinless Saviour. And yet the Apostle Peter tells us, “He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps.” But he is speaking to Christians, not to those who are seeking salvation. We who are saved are now born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. With His gracious aid we are enabled at least in some measure to imitate the example of our blessed Saviour. But the holiest Christian would be the last man on earth to insist that he was saved by following in the steps of Jesus.

Then again “saved by His life” does not mean that we are saved through the wonderful life that our Lord lived, as though that life were acceptable as an atonement for our sinful evil lives. The life of the Lord Jesus on earth apart from His death would never have saved one poor sinner. He came into the world for the express purpose of laying down His life a ransom for many. As the God-appointed paschal Lamb, He must be the unblemished one. His holy and righteous life proved Him to be the fit substitute for sinful men. But that life had to be given up in death ere our guilt could be atoned for and our iniquities blotted out. The natural heart rebels at the doctrine of the blood, but the Bible bears consistent witness from the offering of Abel’s lamb at the Gate of Eden to the song of the redeemed in the Book of Revelation, that salvation is not by the life of Jesus, but by the shedding of His precious blood.

This comes out in vivid contrast, if we consider the well-known words of the founder of a very popular religious system today. She has written: “The material blood of Jesus was no more able to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing in His veins as He went about daily doing His Father’s business.” But our Saviour Himself, when He instituted the last supper said, as He gave the cup to His disciples, “This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins.” It is impossible to reconcile these two statements. The one denies the cleansing efficacy of the shed blood. The other declares that blood was shed for the express purpose of the remission of sins. Whatever “saved by His life” means, it cannot then mean that it is His life on earth rather than His death that makes it possible for guilty sinners to be justified by a holy God.

Before attempting to show what words actually do mean, let me point out what to many will be familiar truth already. Salvation is presented in the New Testament in a three fold way: All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are saved from the guilt of sin and from the judgment due to sin. This salvation’s complete and eternal from the moment we believe. To it the apostle refers when he says, “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.” And again he tells us, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost”. Many other passages emphasize the same wondrous fact that we are already saved if we have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this is not all there is to salvation. Having been saved from the guilt of sin we who are Christians are now being saved daily, hourly, momentarily from the power of sin through the intercession of the Risen Christ, and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. By and by when we are gathered Home with the Lord, we shall be saved from the presence of sin, when we are fully conformed to the image of God’s beloved Son. Now it is to these second and third aspects of salvation that the words of the text apply. We who have already been reconciled to God by the death of His Son shall be saved by His life. That is, His resurrection life. He who died for us on the cross to settle the sin question, now lives in glory to complete in us the work which His grace has begun. It is as the Risen One, He says, “Because I live, ye shall live, also.”

It is right here that many need help. Often in speaking with exercised souls urging immediate trust in Christ and confession of Him as Saviour, one is met by the anxious reply, “I would like to come to Christ but I am afraid I can never hold out. I might become a Christian tonight and afterward bring such disgrace on the name of the Lord by lapsing into sin that I am afraid to venture. It is not that I do not trust Christ, but the fact is I do not trust myself. I know my own propensities and proclivities so well; I am so conscious of sinful habits that dominate and control my life that even though intellectually convinced that Jesus is the only Saviour, I do not dare trust myself to Him and confess Him openly for fear I could not hold out. I feel it would be better never to have made a profession than to disgrace it all by failure afterwards.”

My dear troubled one, let me now seek as God by His Spirit will enable, to bring before you the encouragement that lies in the four words of my brief text. We are “saved by His life.” You are not asked to trust Christ in order that your sins up to the time of your conversion may be

put away, and then that you should be left on your own resources to do your best to live a Christian life with possibly failure in prospect eventually, but the Spirit of God would have you see that He who loved you enough to die for you on the cross, now lives to sustain, and maintain all who believe in Him, in order that they may walk as He walked and glorify God in their daily lives. He is not less interested in us after having died for us, but now in heaven He is daily saving His people from their sins, keeping them by His mighty power. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read, "Wherefore He is able to save to the utmost all those who come to God through faith by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." What a glorious truth is here revealed! As our High Priest, with God, He ever gives us a perfect representation before the throne of God in heaven. He makes constant intercession for us presenting His own excellencies on our behalf. And He sits there enthroned as a reservoir of all that we need for our pilgrim path, bidding us come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help. All that we need in the conflict with sin to enable us to come out victoriously, He waits to supply. We have only to draw by faith upon His infinite resources. But more than this, by the Spirit He now indwells all believers. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." The indwelling Spirit is the Spirit of power, and of holiness, and as we walk in the Spirit, we are definitely promised that we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

"Ah," exclaims someone, "I begin to see now, I think, what it means to be saved by His life. But even though there are infinite resources in Christ of which I may avail myself, is there not still danger that I may fail to do this and hence may break down completely after all and so my last end be worse than the beginning?"

Unquestionably we are all liable to failure. But let us remember that failure does not involve separation from Christ. In respect to this also, we shall be saved by His life, for it is written, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not, but if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Christians are not perfect people. We still have within us the old nature though we have been born again. The Lord Jesus says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." No amount of Christian nurture will change flesh into spirit. "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." If we are looking for improvements in ourselves after conversion, we shall be disappointed. We need to recognize that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwells no good thing. The Word of God like a mirror exposes us to ourselves. It tells us what the works of the flesh are and against these we need to be continually on our guard.

I ran across an illustration the other day that I think pictures this admirably. An elderly gentleman who was very near-sighted prided himself on his ability as an art critic. On one occasion he was accompanying some friends through a large gallery and was seeking to display his real or fancied knowledge of pictures to these friends. He had left his glasses at home and was not able to see things very clearly. Standing before a large frame, he began to point out the inartistic features of the picture there revealed. "The frame," he said, "is altogether out of keeping with the subject and as for the subject itself, (it was that of a man) it is altogether too homely, in fact too ugly ever to make a good picture. It is a great mistake for any artist to choose so homely a subject for a picture if he expects it to be a masterpiece." The old gentleman was going on like this when his wife managed to get near enough to interrupt. She exclaimed, "My dear, you are looking into a mirror," and he was quite taken back to realize that he had been criticizing his own face.

Now the Word of God is such a mirror. It does not hide our deformities. It shows us up just as we are. But we are not to be occupied with our old selves. The Spirit of God would turn us away from self altogether to occupation with the Risen Christ, and as we are taken up with Him, we are kept from sin. It is when we get our eyes off Christ and become self-occupied or taken up with the world around us that we fail. And who of us does not so fail? We all have to confess our failures from day to day, but our ever living Saviour is not only our High Priest to minister all needed grace and help, but even when we fail to avail ourselves of that as we should, He is our Advocate still and the moment we fail, He takes up our case with the Father. Mark, it does not say, "if any man confess his sin, we have an advocate," but rather "if any man sin, we have an advocate." The moment we fail He is in the Father's presence about us, and as a result of His gracious advocacy, the Spirit continues His work in our hearts bringing us to repentance and confession, and "if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And so "we shall be saved by His life."

Then when at last our time of toiling and fighting here on earth shall come to an end and our Lord shall receive us to Himself, He, the ever living One, will save us completely from the very presence of sin so that we shall never be so much as tempted again for all eternity, but will be preserved inviolate in holiness before the face of God our Father. Thus in the fullest possible sense we shall be forever "saved by His life."

What encouragement then this should give to the anxious trembling sinner who is alarmed as he thinks of judgment ahead; he yearns for forgiveness and justification but he fears he will never be able to glorify God in his life afterward. The same one who loved you enough to die for you and now bids you trust Him as your Saviour, is the One who lives in the glory to guide, and has declared, "His sheep shall never perish." Trust Him then, I beseech you, tonight, and having been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, you shall know the blessedness of being "saved by His life."

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 14

"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" — Romans 5:10.

THE 5th of Romans is the chapter of the five "much mores," and it is well worth while considering them carefully in order. That of verse 10 is full of hope and encouragement for the timid believer. It assures us that He who loved us enough to give His Son for us will never give us up and allow us to drift beyond His gracious care. We have been reconciled to Him by the sacrificial death of our blessed Lord. Much more, then, having been thus brought into so happy a relationship with Himself, we shall be saved daily and eternally through the resurrection-life of the same precious Saviour who died for us on the cross. It is important to see that it is not His life on earth that is referred to. As to that we are saved—reconciled—by His death. His life had to be given up in order that He might redeem us. But now we who are redeemed are kept by the ever-living One who undertakes to see us safely through all possible circumstances, and bring us, at last, in triumph to the Father's House.

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” —Romans 5:20.

NOTICE the “much mores” of Romans 5. The super abounding grace of God to the believer is set forth most strikingly in these five “much mores.” verse 8 and 9: We are justified through the blood of Christ, much more shall we be saved from future wrath. Verse 10: Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more shall we be saved through all the trials of the way because He lives for us on high. verse 15: By Adam’s one offense the race came under sentence of death. Much more shall grace abound to all those who trust Christ. verse 17: Death reigned over all because of one man’s sin. Now all reign in life who have received God’s gift by faith: “Much more they... shall reign in life.” verse 20: “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

—T. Kelly.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”— Romans 5:1, 2.

FAITH is taking God at His word. The gospel is the glad message of an accomplished redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-5). When the repentant sinner believes that message he puts his trust in the Saviour thus revealed. To believe about Him saves no one. To believe in or on Him means life eternal (John 3:36). The difference is like that of one believing that a great airplane is strong, safe, and fully capable of carrying one across the sea from continent to continent. But one may believe all that and yet never reach the other side of the ocean. He must trust himself to the massive ship of the air, if he is ever to get across. The illustration fails in this: that the airplane may be wrecked, and its passengers lost; but Christ will never fail to carry safely to glory all who put their trust in Him.

—C. W. Frazer.

The Unchanging Christ and Other Sermons, 2. Ungodly Sinners Justified

Text: “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. 4:4 and 5.)

I WANT to emphasize the central words of that fifth verse, “Him that justifieth the ungodly.” “Him”— that refers, of course, to God Himself, God the infinitely righteous One, the holy One. Yet we are told that this righteous God, this holy God justifies ungodly sinners! This is surely an amazing statement. Can it possibly be true? What is it to justify? It is to pronounce one to be righteous. According to some theologies, justification is said to be that act of God whereby He maketh a sinner righteous. But that is clearly a mistake. In justification God is not making the sinner righteous. He does that in sanctification, but justification is a forensic act of God in which He declares a sinner to be righteous.

In the book of the prophet Isaiah we have a very solemn woe pronounced upon those who justify the wicked, It is a very wrong thing for a judge to justify a wicked person, and we have had a great many complaints in our great cities because public enemies, racketeers, and hoodlums of all kinds have been arrested, and when they have come before corrupt judges, they have been allowed to go free and to prey once more upon the community. People are rightly indignant about it. It is a thoroughly wicked thing for a judge to declare a criminal righteous, yet the singular thing is that this text tells us that it is the very thing God does! God justifies, — not the righteous, not good people, not holy people, but the ungodly. How can this be?

What is it to be ungodly? The word really means those who are not pious, not godlike, and that is true of all men by nature. I do not know of any unsaved man who is godlike. I have never met an unconverted person that was truly pious, and an ungodly man is one who is unlike God, impious, yet Scripture says that God justifies the ungodly. Whatever does it mean? There is no other religion that teaches anything like this. I am somewhat conversant with practically every well-known religious system in the world. I have been studying these things almost exclusively for over forty years, and I think I can say without boasting that I know pretty well what they all teach in regard to the justification of mankind. I do not know one of them that does not tell men they must produce some kind of a righteousness in order to suit God, before they can ever be justified or accepted of Him. The Christian message stands alone in this respect, for it tells us that God justifies the ungodly. That is one reason why I am absolutely certain this Book is inspired of God. Man would never have thought out anything of the kind. It would never have occurred to him that a Holy God, a righteous God might justify the ungodly. He would take it for granted that before God could justify a man he must do something to deserve that justification, but the sad thing is that nobody can do anything to deserve it.

Have you ever read the Epistle to the Romans carefully? If not, I wish you would begin today and read it right through. It is the most closely reasoned, logical presentation of God’s dealings with sinful men that has ever been penned. I look sometimes on the shelves of my own library, and I suppose I have dozens and scores of books written on this little Book of sixteen chapters, and then when I have gone through them all, I can ransack the libraries of my friends and find hundreds more. I have often thought, “What a marvelous Book it is that could inspire so many writers.” And these few with which I have come in contact are just a fraction of the many books that have been written by some of the most learned, the most intellectual and the most spiritual of men. If you have not studied this book, your education has been

tremendously neglected. Do not call yourself a cultured person, an educated person, if you are not familiar with the Epistle of the Romans, because it is one of the most important pieces of literature ever produced.

In the first chapter God is looking down upon this poor world, seeing the condition of mankind and He finds that all men are living in sin. He looks over the heathen world, looks upon men in their ignorance, in their wickedness as they are in idolatrous countries and gives His judgment concerning them. I often meet people who say, "What are you going to do with the heathen?" I am not going to do anything with them! It is not up to me to do anything with the heathen except to get the Gospel to them. But people say, "Are they going to be judged when they have never heard of Christ? Are they going to be damned for rejecting Christ when they have never known of Him?" No, they are not going to be judged for rejecting Christ about whom they have never heard, but the first chapter of Romans shows that they are going to be judged for their own sins; and the heathen are sinners, and more than that, they are not living up to the light they have. People sometimes say, "Why, they have beautiful religions of their own and they are all feeling after God. We need only to give them a little encouragement." We have heard a great deal about this in the recent Laymen's Commission, which is composed of unconverted professors who have been going over mission fields and making what they call an investigation of missions, and they have decided that it is an impertinence for Christian people to go to pagans and give them the Gospel.

A young and green student had just been graduated from the theological seminary. Although I am a teacher in one for a part of the year, yet I can say that very often a theological seminary is a place where young men learn how not to, preach! Take a young man who is on fire for God, and if you want to spoil him so that he won't know how or what to preach, send him to a modernist theological seminary and he will be so filled with pride and conceit and a little smattering of Greek, Hebrew, and "philosophy" that he will never be able to preach the Gospel, until he unlearns the rubbish he has been taught. This young fellow had just been graduated from the seminary; he had also been ordained. Spurgeon once said about ordination, "If it is not the scriptural kind, it is laying empty hands on an empty head." It doesn't amount to anything. This young man was going out as a missionary. He was giving his valedictory address, and said, "I am not going to tell the heathen that I have a better message than they have; I am not going to give them a gospel that they do not know anything about; but I am going to take my heathen brother by the hand and say, 'Come with me, my brother, we will go together on a quest for God.' Just imagine a man like that being lent out as a Christian missionary! No gospel to preach! No Christ to proclaim He had far better stay at home.

According to the first chapter of Romans the heathen are not on a quest for God. We read in the third chapter, "There is none that seeketh after God." The heathen have turned away from what they did know of God. Why? Because it made them uncomfortable in their sins. You who are out of Christ know what that means. You were brought up perhaps in Christian homes and have come to this great godless city and have gotten away from righteousness and decency and goodness and purity, and have launched out into the world. You think you are seeing life when in reality you are simply tasting death. You know how you have to try to forget what that godly mother used to teach you, what that Christian father once taught you. You know you do not like to retain these things in your knowledge; you wish you could forget that you ever knelt at a praying mother's knee, that you were ever taught the Bible. Then you think you could sin with impunity.

There was a time when the heathen knew a great deal better than they do now, but they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so turned away to worship images of all kinds, and even stooped so low as to worship beasts and creeping things. Three times we read in this first chapter, "For this cause God gave them up." In vs. 24 we read, "Wherefore 'God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts;" vs. 26, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections." I cannot read the rest of it in an audience like this. You say, "What, so you think there are things in the Bible too nasty to read in public?" Yes, because they are depicting the sins that men and women commit, and commit with impunity, and those things are in every ungodly person's heart. Read it alone in the presence of God and let Him speak to you through these passages and show you what the human heart is capable of, things that men and women today unblushingly. Those things that Christless college professors now call Behaviorism; simply letting nature have its way, God declares to be the lust of uncleanness, and men are going to be damned for these things. That is why the heathen are to be judged; that is why they are lost without Christ.

In vs. 28 we read, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." The apostle shows the terrible sins they are guilty of, because they have turned from the light they once had. These are the heathen, and they are lost, and people in Christendom are doing the same things and they too are lost. All alike need a Saviour. None can save themselves.

Turn to chapter two and you will find that in the first part you have another class, a cultured, educated group such as the philosophers, who prided themselves upon their knowledge and gloried in not being so low and vulgar and degraded as the more ignorant heathen. They sat in judgment on others, and God says, as it were, "You who judge others, you are doing the same things only you keep your sins covered up a little more; you are guilty of the same wicked things only you are not so openly brazen about them, but you are committing them just the same and are therefore just as guilty and subject to the righteous judgment of God." Anyone familiar with ancient history knows how terribly true this was.

Then he turns to the third class, a people who had the Bible and had received instruction out of the law of God, the Jews. They had the Old Testament, they prided themselves on belonging to God's covenant people. To them, He says, "Very well, you are called a Jew and rest in the law and make your boast of God and know His will and profess to approve the things that are excellent; — are you any better in heart, are you purer in your life than your Gentile neighbor?" Not a bit. He declares, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you." They looked at the Jew and said, "He professes to have the true God and yet he lives just like the rest of us." That is what they are saying about a lot of professing Christians today. "They belong to the church, they have been baptized, they partake of the sacrament, but they are just like the rest of us."

A gentleman told me one day that he went to a certain church and they were going to have the Lord's Supper. He got up to move away, for he did not feel that he ought to partake. Just then he noticed a business associate of his, who leaned over and put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Just take it with the rest of us. We are all a lot of hypocrites anyway." And he drank of that cup and ate of that bread! What a shame that people are forever covering up, covering up, covering up, and yet know in their own hearts that they are guilty before God; "eating and drinking judgment to themselves."

Paul concludes this review of all mankind in chapter three, and says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." They are all under sin. How many righteous? Not one. Not even you? No. Not even me? Oh, no, I found that out long ago about myself. "There is none righteous, no, not one." "There is none that doeth good, no, not (so much as) one." What a wretched condition we are in. Nobody but righteous and good people will ever be in heaven and here is a world filled with unrighteous and ungodly sinners! We cannot help ourselves, we cannot cleanse our own hearts, we cannot make ourselves any better, try and struggle as we may. We cannot purify that cesspool of iniquity in our breasts. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornication, and adultery." These could not come out of the heart if they were not there beforehand. But what are we going to do about it? God says, "The thing for you to learn is that you cannot do anything."

The next part of the Epistle to the Romans opens that up to us. In ch. 3, vs. 21, we read, "But now"—"now" is an adverb of time. When? After he has proven that all have sinned, that all are ungodly, that all are unrighteous, that there is none that doeth good, "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested." God has a righteousness for unrighteous sinners who have nothing of goodness to plead. And what is this righteousness of God? God looked in pity upon men in their sins and iniquity, His holy nature demanded that sin be dealt with, so He came down into this world in the person of His own blessed Son, and there on Calvary's cross drank to the very depth the cup of judgment that our sins deserved. Think of it! The Lord Jesus, the holy One, the just One, suffered on Calvary's cross that which your sins and my sins deserved, as though He had been as corrupt, wicked, licentious, untruthful, unholy, and unchaste as men and women in this world are today. He who is absolutely pure and undefiled, drank to the depth the cup of judgment.

This explains that cry from Calvary, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was because you and I deserved to be forsaken, because you and I were so utterly unfit for God that He could do nothing but turn His face from us. He was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and so God "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). God had to act in consistency with His own character before He could offer a righteous salvation to anyone. He did this on the cross.

He has set Christ forth a prince and a Saviour. He died for our sins; He has been raised from the dead for our justification, and now God comes to guilty men and women and says, "You need no longer be debarred from heaven because of your sins, I have provided a ransom; I have a Deliverer for you, and if you will put your trust in my blessed Son, take Him as your Saviour, give up all pretension of righteousness, come to Him just as you are, I stand ready to justify the ungodly."

But somebody says, "I would like to come to a God like that, who is so good and so gracious, but I do not feel good enough." You are barking up the wrong tree. It is not a question of being good enough; the question is, are you bad enough? When He was here on earth, the Pharisees derided Him and said, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2), but He said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). If there is a man or woman who can prove that he has never sinned, I can prove from this Book that there is no Saviour for him. There is no Saviour for righteous people, for good people, but Christ is the Saviour of sinners. "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31).

A young man who often listened to a great Scotch preacher wanted to be saved. He had a great longing in his heart to know Christ as his deliverer, to know the blessedness of God's salvation, and although he wept and prayed and sought, he could get no sense of forgiveness, no assurance that he was received by God. One night the minister preached on those words, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9), and he showed that "any man" took in poor sinners no matter how vile, how wicked, how corrupt they were. As he preached, he could see the cloud lift from this young man's face, and at the close of the meeting he came to the front and said, "I got in tonight."

"What do you mean," asked the preacher.

"Why, I got in, at the open door tonight while you were preaching."

"I am glad to hear it. But why did you not get in before? You have been troubled for a fortnight and I have been trying to help you, and others have been doing their best to help you. How was it that you did not get in until tonight?"

"Well," said the young man, "I have been at the wrong door all the time. I have been knocking at the saints' door and I found it locked against me. I thought I had to become good enough for God to save me, but I said tonight, I will try the sinner's door, and when I came to it, it was open and I got right inside."

A great many people are not saved because they will not take the place of a lost sinner; they will never bow low enough.

There is a story told of an old man who owned a little narrow lot, with a poor miserable cabin on it. Lots in his neighborhood had been selling for fabulous prices and he felt that someday his place would make his fortune. By and by a millionaire came along and seeing the possibilities of that block, said, "I want the whole thing." He sent his agent to go and buy up the block, and when he came to the old man, he said "What would you sell your place for?" He had waited long for this opportunity and so he put up what he thought was a tremendously big figure. "Very well," said the agent, "I will take it." "When do you want it?" the old man asked. "In about two weeks I will be around with the deed and you can be ready to sign it. Here is a thousand dollars to bind the sale," replied the agent. The old man was simply delighted and thought, "Well, if somebody has bought this place who is able to pay all that money, I ought to fix it up a bit." And so he bought some paint and went to work painting the old cabin. He bought some glass to replace the broken panes, and for two weeks he worked on the cabin. When this millionaire purchaser and his agent brought the papers for him to sign, he was so nervous about it he could hardly hold the pen. He was surprised that the purchaser did not say anything about the shack and so he said, "You see how beautifully I have painted it up and have put in some new windows. It is going to make a nice place. I hope you will be very comfortable in it." "Oh," said the millionaire, "but I didn't buy this place for what is on it, but for what I am going to put on it." That is how God justifies the ungodly. It is not because of what He finds in men, but He saves them for what He is going to put in them, for what He is going to do for them. When they put their trust in Him, they get everlasting life, they are justified, and all their sins are forgiven. Then God proceeds to make them fit for His own blessed presence, and when we get Home to heaven, we will give Him all the glory.

Have you trusted Him? He justifies the ungodly. Are you ungodly? He is waiting to justify you. "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38 and 39).

Daily Sacrifice, August 15

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith"—Romans 4:13.

NOT only Israel, but many other nations, sprang from this man (Gen. 17:4, 5) whose understanding of God marked him out as unique in his day and, through all the centuries since, as the outstanding witness to the truth revealed to him, and to the importance of faith in God's testimony.

We need to remember that it was while he was still a Gentile after the flesh that enlightenment came to him. It was not until he had received and believed the promise that he and his household were circumcised (Gen. 17:10-14) and so separated unto God. This was the sign of the covenant already made to him, and it marks the beginning of the Hebrew people. Paul emphasizes this in discussing the great truth of the imputation of righteousness to all who believe (Rom. 4:9-12). The grace extended to Abram as a Gentile and confirmed to him later as a separated man, is the same grace that flows out to all men, through Him who is the promised Seed, the Son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1). Dispensations have changed, but God's promise of salvation by grace abides through all ages.

—C. Wesley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 13

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets"—Romans 3:21.

"BUT NOW"—exclaims the apostle. It marks a decided change of subject. Now that man has been fully shown up, God will be revealed. Now upon the proven unrighteousness of all mankind "the righteousness of God is manifested." Of old He had declared, "I will bring near My righteousness." This is in no sense a wrought-out, legal righteousness, such as man was unable to produce for God. It is a righteousness "without the law," that is, altogether apart from any principle of human obedience to a divinely-ordained code of morals. It is a righteousness of Gird for unrighteous men, and is in no wise dependent upon human merit or attainment.

The righteousness of God is a term of wide import. Here it means a righteousness of God's providing—a perfect standing for guilty men for which God makes Himself responsible. If men are saved at all it must be in righteousness. But of this, man is utterly bereft. Therefore God must find a way whereby every claim of His righteous throne shall be met, and yet guilty sinners be justified from all things. His very nature demands that this must not be at the expense of righteousness but in full accord with it. And this is what has been provided in the work of the cross.

—J. N. D.

Daily Sacrifice, August 14

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"—Romans 3:19.

IN choosing Israel from among the nations to be a special people unto Himself (Psa. 33:12) God had in view the blessing of the whole world (Gen. 12:2, 3). Moreover, in His dealings with that nation the entire world was on trial. To Israel He revealed Himself and made known His will, as He had done to no other people (Psa. 147:20). If they, under the most favorable circumstances, failed—as, alas, they did—then it became evident that there was no possibility that any people could or would of themselves prove obedient to His law. This is what Paul emphasizes in our present text. To Israel the law was given. Their failure to obey it (as a sample nation) demonstrated the sinfulness of all the world.

—Anon

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 12

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith"—Romans 1:16,17.

THE epistle to the Romans gives us the fullest unfolding of the gospel that we have in the Word of God. Of this glad message none need be ashamed. It answers every objection of the most astute reasoner. It satisfies the need of every exercised conscience. In it we see how God

can be just and yet justify the guilty sinner who comes to Him in repentance, owning his need and trusting His grace. Socrates exclaimed, "It may be that the Deity can forgive sins, but I don't see how!" The Holy Spirit here shows that God can forgive in righteousness because of the expiatory work of His Son. This is the message which is revealed on the principle of faith to those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles by nature, according to the oracle given to Habakkuk so long ago, "The just shall live by faith."

—Bernard of Clairvaux.

Trans by Jas. W. Alexander.

Daily Sacrifice, August 29

"The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly"— Romans 16:20.

EVIL-DISPOSED men are inclined often to blame God forever having permitted Satan to tempt them. Apart from his evil suggestions they are sure that they would never deviate from the straight and narrow way. The Bible tells of a time when the great enemy of God and man will be bound for a thousand years and Christ Himself will reign over all this lower universe. Yet even then it will be demonstrated that sin will not be done away in its entirety, for at the close of that glorious period men will still be found ready to join in a revolt against God and His Christ, when Satan is loosed for a little season.

The natural heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and only the grace of God can enable one so to rise above its lusts as to walk before God in holiness and righteousness. The same power that will bind the devil eventually can enable us now to triumph in Christ and to walk in newness of life. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

—Bonar.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 22

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" — Rom. 14:21.

TO use God's good gifts without abusing them, to exercise our divinely-given privileges without infringing upon the rights of others, and to avoid all things that are injurious to ourselves or set an evil example to those who are weaker is to live nobly and worthy of our calling as members of Christ. And even though one does not yet have the full assurance of his own acceptance with God, yet life here on earth is richer and sweeter if temperate habits prevail and considerations of decency and unselfishness are characteristic. We should remember that evil once done is evil that will never be undone. One may be forgiven for sins against God, against society, and against one's self, but the sins themselves, once committed, can never become as though they had not been. There are evil effects which go on forever. We may know all the beginnings of sinful behavior, but we can never know the final effects of evil actions or of a bad example. Therefore the importance of self-control and of sober, healthful living, that we may glorify God in our bodies and our spirits, which are His. Paul shows us that life at its best is only enjoyed as we walk in the fear of the Lord and are dominated by His Holy Spirit.

—Wm. Runyan.

Daily Sacrifice, August 28

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"— Romans 13:13, 14.

THESE were the verses that spoke to the conscience of Augustine of Hippo and brought him to yield his life to Christ.

God created man for His glory. As originally made, he was designed to have authority over all the lower creation. But sin has brought man down to the low level of "the beasts that perish" (Psa. 49:12), so that he readily becomes the slave of all kinds of fleshly lusts and passions which tend to degradation and dishonor. But when born from above, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, man is renewed in "the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:10), thus enabling him to triumph over perverted appetites and keep the body in the place of subjection (1 Cor. 9:27). In this way, the body glorifies God (1 Cor. 6:20), and is delivered from the power of carnal lusts, so fulfilling the "righteousness of the law" (Rom. 8:4).

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 21

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is

that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” — Romans 12:1, 2.

THE human body is a marvelous testimony to the personality and the wisdom of God. It is inconceivable that anything so wonderful should have come into existence without the guiding hand of a personal Creator. “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” (Psa. 94:9.) In creating our bodies He designed them for the highest of all purposes: that they might be used to glorify Him.

When He saves a man He claims all there is of him. Some have thought that if the soul is saved, it is a small matter how the body is used. But the believer’s body is the vehicle through which he expresses himself, and it is to be recognized as a sanctuary in which God dwells by His Spirit, as He dwelt, first in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple of old. The spirit of man is the holy of holies, and the body is like the building itself, all of which was to be kept holy to the Lord. All debasing habits, all unlawful appetites, all evil inclinations are to be judged in the presence of God, confessed as sin, and rigidly turned away from, in order that we may rightly represent Him in this world, through whose grace we have been saved.

Daily Sacrifice, August 27

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”— Romans 12:11.

EVER since the Fall, God has decreed that man shall earn his bread by toil, either with his hands or with his brain. The Christian should readily, see the wisdom of this. Realizing that honest work is in itself a safeguard against many temptations that beset mankind, he will not be disposed to quarrel with the declaration that “if a man will not work, neither shall he eat.” Whether he be owner or manager of a business or of some agricultural project, or an artisan, or mechanic, or office-helper, or a laborer, he is required to be conscientious in his service, doing all as unto the Lord. This will insure a care for the rights of his fellows and will keep him from overreaching or underpaying those in dependent positions. True Christianity involves faithfulness in every walk of life.

Daily Sacrifice, August 26

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another”— Romans 12:4, 5.

THE recognition of this unity of all Christians (not as denominations, but as individual members of Christ) results in practical fellowship and love for all saints. It destroys narrow sectarian prejudices and enables us to recognize every one redeemed by the precious blood of Christ as being one with us in Him. As in the human body, so it is in the spiritual Body of Christ. Just as when one is in health, each organ functions for the benefit of the whole, so it should ever be in the Church of God. To each has been committed some special responsibility which no one else can discharge.

Daily Sacrifice, August 25

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”— Romans 12:2.

THERE are times when we are all called upon to take a definite stand for God and His truth, no matter what the consequences. We are forbidden to conform to the spirit of the age but are commanded to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that, knowing God’s perfect will we may walk in it. Satan pleads for amalgamation. The Bible calls for separation. The world would seek to destroy those who witness against its evil works, even as it sought to destroy our blessed Lord. But he who refuses to bow to Baal and stands for God, even though he has to stand alone, can never be destroyed. Death itself will but open the way into the throne-chamber of the King.

As we scan the pages of Holy Writ we can see how the non-conformists of the past were made to triumph over all their vindictive foes. Abel was slain, but he being dead yet speaketh. Noah refused to go with the men of his day in their rebellion against God, but was saved through the flood when all others, save his own family, perished. None ever loses who sides with God.

—W. Trotter.

Daily Sacrifice, August 24

“Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee” —Rom. 11:18.

IN order that God’s purposes might be carried out, He chose Abraham and his seed, through Isaac and Jacob, and separated them to Himself, giving them an honored place which no other people have ever known (Amos 3:2). They are His peculiar treasure (Ex. 19:5; Psa. 135:4) destined someday to be the display of His grace and power to all mankind (Isa. 53:1-3; 54:1-8). Now, they are like olive branches torn out of

the olive tree of promise, of which Abraham is the root, and wild branches of the Gentiles have been grafted in contrary to nature (Rom. 11: 17-22). But when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in, these natural branches will be grafted again into their own olive tree and so all Israel shall be saved. Therefore the Gentiles are warned not to look with prideful contempt on Israel, who are still "beloved for the fathers' sake."

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, September 20

"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"—Romans 10:9, 10.

EVERYTHING, for the Christian, centers in the glorious reality that Jesus, who died for our sins upon the cross of shame, has been raised from the tomb and now lives to save eternally all who trust in Him. It is with the recognition of this great truth that we begin, and in the power of it we are enabled to continue in the path of devotedness to the very end, sustained by One whose endless life is the pledge of ours (Heb. 7:16, 24, 25). To deny the physical resurrection of Jesus is to repudiate the Gospel, which is based upon it (1 Cor. 15:13-18).

—S. Medley.

Daily Sacrifice, August 23

"There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him"—Romans 10:12.

NATURALLY, we are all selfish and concerned about our own fancied importance and our personal recognition by others. Even in things religious we like to feel that we are the favorites of Providence and that others are of less importance in the divine economy than we and our group. It is the grace of God that delivers from all of this and makes us to know no man after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), but to see in all, sinners like ourselves, for whom Christ died, and who have the same title as we to the knowledge of His redemption. It is this conflict between man's limitations and God's boundless grace that we see as we study the early days of Christian missions. And even after nineteen centuries of gospel preaching, we have need still to be reminded that all are on the same level before God as helpless sinners, and for all the same salvation has been provided.

—James McGranahan.

Daily Sacrifice, August 22

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"—Romans 10:4.

HE has met all the claims of the violated law and is Himself the One typified in all its sacrifices. He is thus the end, in the sense of being the fulfillment, of the law. This is realized only by believers. Every righteous claim of God's throne has been met, and the believer is thenceforth not under law, but under grace, and as he walks in the Spirit the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in Him (Rom. 8:4). The law proposed a certain manner of life to those with whom the legal covenant was made, and promised life to those who walked in obedience to it. This was a testing of man in order to demonstrate his utterly lost and sinful condition. No man ever met its claims until the Man Christ Jesus came and fulfilled its every demand.

—Mrs. Cousins.

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