

XV.—WHAT ROMANS 6, 7 AND 8 TEACH

By J. A. Huffman, D. D.

No small amount of controversy gathers about these chapters in the Epistle to the Romans, consequently there must be much lack of understanding in relation to them. If even a small amount of genuine help can be given, by examining a few of its key words and phrases in the Greek text, it will be worth while.

Is Paul writing of himself or another, particularly in chapter seven? If he is relating his own experience, what period is he describing—his preconversion or post-conversion experience? These are the questions raised, answered, and argued.

It is quite generally agreed that Romans 5 deals with the subject of justification, and that chapters six to eight, inclusive, somehow deal with the experience of sanctification. But the exact meanings of Paul's statements need clarification.

Chapter six is devoted very largely to the incompatibility of sin and grace. The imagery is that of two masters: The master of sin and the master of righteousness, or Satan and God. That a complete change of masters is declared possible and necessary, and the technique of deliverance from the tyranny of the slavery of Satan and sin to the greatly-coveted service of God and righteousness is declared, is beyond dispute.

Chapter seven recounts the struggles which go on in the experience of one who is thoroughly disgusted with his bondage of sin, has broken from it, having come into possession of a new and spiritual life, but in whose heart there are conflicting claims for allegiance—rival claimants, demanding obedience. Whether Paul is speaking of himself, any other contemporary Jew who had similar experience with the bondage of sin, or any later Jew or Gentile, he can scarcely be delineating the experience of one still entirely in bondage to sin, for the character described is too noble and the struggle too heroic for that.

Neither is Paul, in chapter seven, describing one who is completely delivered from the bondage of sin, as is reflected in verses eighteen and twenty-two. That deliverance, resulting in the Spirit-filled life, close fellowship with God through the Spirit, and the security of those who know God in full deliverance from sin, is found in Romans 8. It is then that are named the seven plus nine things, with the added "any other creature" (verses 35-39), which cannot separate us from the love of Christ. Any one of these may have separated someone, or might separate another, but not this victorious soul. If separation ever takes place, he must do it himself, for God will not, and other things cannot.

Attempting to put our finger upon the verses from which help might come, we refer to chapter six.

First, look at verse six. Here is the remedy for sin in its deepest, deadly form. It is not the sins committed, for these are but the symptoms of the deep-seated virus of moral depravity: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (King James Version). The American Standard Version reads practically the same, except the phrase "might be done away" is substituted for "might be destroyed."

Here is the small Greek word *katargeo*, the meaning of which determines much. The Greek

word is compounded of *kata*, meaning down, and *argos*, which means idle. Thayer, in his Greek Lexicon, gives the following definitions: "To cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish." Strong words these, which express a radical, definite remedy for sin.

The phrase, "our old man," is sometimes playfully dealt with, but the subject is too serious. This "old man" is not the incorrigible husband of some undeserving woman, nor is he another entity living within this body, but our very selfhood dominated by Satan, whose servant we are in sin. The phrase, "old man" probably refers to the fact that this servitude of sin is a heritage of the Fall, and is equivalent to what is sometimes called the "Adamic nature." It is the same as the "carnal mind" of chapter seven, verse fourteen, and the "flesh," Greek *sarx*, of verse eighteen of the same chapter. The Expositor's Greek New Testament adds: "Our old man is our old self, what we were before we became Christians." This takes us back to the subject of depravity.

While *katargeo* is not exclusively a Pauline word, it is of interest to note that of the twenty-seven times which it is used in the New Testament, in twenty-five of these instances it is found in the Pauline writings. To those who would pursue further the use of this meaningful word in Pauline writings, the following references would be especially helpful: 1 Corinthians 6:13; 15:26; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14.

Having found the remedy for sin in its deepest form in Romans 6:6, let us seek the application. "Knowing" the facts as presented in 6:6, here is the prescription:

First, "reckon," Greek *logidsesthe*, imperatively, count it so (verse 11). Since Christ died, I, as one who accepts life through Him, died also. Do not reckon it so because it is not so, but reckon it so because it is so. Every need of the sinful, seeking, and consecrating soul is abundantly provided in Christ. It is true! No doubting!

Second, "present yourselves," Greek *paristane*, compounded of *para*, meaning "under," and *histami*, "to stand," meaning to place under the authority of a new master, in complete abandonment.

It is of importance to know that the imperatives of the prescription to "reckon" and to "present yourselves" are in the present tense, which in the Greek as well in the English implies continuous action. This is exceedingly important. We must never cease to reckon, or to present ourselves.

And now the result: In verses eighteen and twenty-two of chapter six, we have statements concerning being made free from sin, and having become servants unto God and righteousness. Here is the definite result of the application of the remedy for sin. Moreover, both of these couplets—"being made free," and "becoming servants"—are in the aorist tense in the Greek. This tense expresses not time only, but definiteness, completion, and finality. The result is not only in process, but accomplished.

If Paul may be permitted to be his own interpreter, the summation of the results of the remedy and its application is sanctification, and the fruit of the same, unto sanctification, verses nineteen and twenty-two. Whatever the words we employ or the phrases we may use, we should always be careful not to subtract an iota from this great preachment of the apostle Paul.

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YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Winona Lake, Indiana, July 18—Youth for Christ International this week adopted a budget of \$872,000, prepared to send forty gospel teams to forty-six foreign countries, completed final details for the World Congress on Evangelism at Beatenberg, Switzerland, from August 10-22, and elected as president Dr. Robert A. Cook, thirty-six-year-old director of Chicagoland Youth for Christ.

This fourth annual convention's budget is more than four times the budget two years ago. Enthusiasm was at a peak all week as delegates and directors from 260 cities in thirty-six states, and five provinces of Canada, prayed, worked and discussed the amazing growth of this twentieth-century youth revival movement.

Other important decisions:

- (1) Setting of a goal of enlistment of 10,000 candidates for foreign mission service before the 1949 conference.
- (2) Setting of a world-wide day of prayer for world evangelization on August 14.
- (3) Launching of an intensive campaign to reach prospective draftees through Youth for Christ rallies in army camps.
- (4) Scheduling of a mid-winter convention of Youth for Christ leaders.
- (5) Stressing of high school Bible clubs as a definite stop gap against juvenile delinquency and aids in Youth for Christ.—Selected.

WEDDINGS

At the Reformed Baptist parsonage, Crystal, Me., on August 10th, Millard Levern Strait and Angeline Elwell, both of Sherman, Me., were united in marriage by Rev. R. L. Sabine. The double ring service was used.

OBITUARY

Allen M. Main, aged 66, of Belvedere, Me., died at the home of his son, Earle, on June 22nd. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. R. L. Sabine from the Belvedere Church, and interment was at Island Falls on June 24th.

He leaves to mourn, besides his wife, five sons, four daughters, two brothers and one sister. To the bereaved ones we extend sympathy.

The funeral services of **Delmont Edgar Strait**, 34, were held at the home of his sister, Mrs. Birmingham, of Patten, Me., on July 31st. Interment was at Crystal, Me. Rev. R. L. Sabine officiated.

He leaves to mourn his passing, his father, Talmadge Strait, two brothers and six sisters.

To the sorrowing ones sincere sympathy is extended.

Mrs. Juanita Main Brewster, 33, wife of Eugene Brewster, died at the Island Falls Hospital on August 9, after a long illness.

Funeral services were conducted at the Crystal Church on August 12th at 2 p. m., by her nephew, Lic. James D. MacArthur, assisted by Rev. R. L. Sabine. Interment was at Crystal.

She is survived by her husband, a daughter, Norma, a son, Leroy; a sister, Mrs. Storer Emmett, of Old Town; two brothers, Melvin Main, of Danvers, Mass., and Russell Main Woodard, of Hillsboro, N. H.; several nieces and nephews. Sincere sympathy is extended to the family.