

Sabbath School Department.

(From the Christian Helper.)

International Bible Lessons.

THE SECURITY OF BELIEVERS.

JULY 13.—ROMANS 8: 1-39.

GOLDEN TEXT.

1. God be for us, who can be against us?—Romans 8: 31.

EXPLANATION.

28. And we know, "We must remember that this was written in the midst of persecution, and in the expectation of bonds and imprisonment."—Ploubet. All things, not only the things which we desire, but also the trials and sufferings inseparable from this life. Ps. 119: 67, 71. Paul did not mean to include our sins in this broad statement. Sin is evil and evil only, and the only good is being delivered from it. To them that love God, &c. Foregoing clause not universally true, but true of persons of this character.

Called; not simply those who have heard the gospel call, but in whose hearts the call has found a response, effectually called. His purpose. The gospel has not been sent forth haphazard, God has a purpose as to what it shall accomplish. John 6: 37, v. v. 29, 30. Paul has made the wide and bold statement that "all things work together," &c: he has also described the character of those concerning whom this is true, "the called according to His purpose." He now treats of this purpose of God, sees it assuredly advancing step by step, from knowledge to predestination, from predestination to calling, &c., sees it certainly and finally accomplished in the glorification of "the called according to his purpose," and this purpose of God, so glorious, so certain of accomplishment, in his reason for making so bold a statement as that of v. 28.

29. This word shows that Paul is now going to give the reason for what he has just said. Foreknow, knew beforehand, God's election of the saved was not capricious, arbitrary, without good reason; in electing some and not others, He has acted on sufficient reasons according to Divine foreknowledge. What these reasons are we know not, they are not things meritorious in the elect. Predestinate. First he knows, then predestinates, and these two are not one and the same thing, but are laid down as two different stages in the process. To be conformed, &c. This is the ultimate design of the purpose as it respects us. 1 John 3: 2; 2 Cor. 3, 18. Firstborn, i. e. pre-eminent, most distinguished. The purpose of God involves the exaltation of Christ. Col. 1: 18.

30. v. 39 showed us the purpose as it existed in the mind of God; this v. shows it to us as being executed amongst men in its different stages. The past tense of all the verbs is used because the following of one step upon another is so certain that it is looked upon as already accomplished.

vv. 31-39. This whole passage is a commentary on v. 28 and what a commentary—Meyer.

31. What shall we, &c, i. e. what must be our conclusions from what is laid down in vv. 29, 30. If God be, &c. This is the conclusion. That God is for us is certain from His foreknowing, predestinating, justifying, glorifying us. Who can be, &c. The same idea in another form as that of v. 28. "Herewith begins a strain of triumphant questions and answers on to v. 37." These questions and answers are "what we say to these things."

32. Spared not, did not keep back, did not abstain from treating with severity. Delivered him up, "gave Him when he might have withheld Him." To what did he give Him? This shows how much God is for us; the gift of Christ is the measure of His love. See John 3: 16. How shall He not, &c. The gift of Christ, the greatest gift possible, and therefore the pledge of lesser gifts. To those questions no answer is expected or possible; it is the strongest and most exultant way of saying He will "With Him also freely give," &c, that no one "can be against us" &c.

33. In courts of law there is the judge on the bench; there is the plaintiff who makes the accusation and there is the defendant against whom the charge is laid. The apostle, as if before the tribunal of God, boldly challenges, saying, where is the plaintiff against God's elect. Of course there can be none, for God who knows all things and is the very Fountain of justice, already justifies. In doing that nothing can escape his knowledge, and no charge can be brought to change the sentence.

34. Condemnation impossible since Christ has died, &c. Notice the climax "died, yea rather that is risen, who is ever" &c, who also, &c.

Christ's death, the atonement of sin; His resurrection the proof of His divinity (Rom. 4) and the sign that the penalty is exhausted (Rom. 4: 25); His ascension, the elevation of our Saviour to the seat of power and universal rule; His intercession, the pledge of everything we need to bring us off victorious in life's conflict.

35. Christ's love, i. e. Christ's love to us, as is evident from the strain of the whole passage, and especially from v. 34, where the manifestations of Christ's love to us have just been stated. Some, e. g. Barnes, understand it to mean our love to Christ, but surely it would not add strength to the argument to come down from the consideration of God's boundless love and glorious purpose, and Christ's dying for us etc., to the consideration of our love to Christ which is all too feeble and changeable. That the view we take is correct is manifest also from vv. 37-39, "Him that loved us," "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Shall tribulation, &c. The love of Christ being Christ's love for us which is the exact meaning of this question and the following verses? The question is not whether any or all of these shall cause Christ to cease loving us, but it is whether any or all of these things shall be able to hinder Christ's love from reaching us, and working for us what that love desires, while we are

right in the midst of the tribulations etc. e. g. I have a friend in prison; the wall and bars that shut him in do not cause me to cease loving him, but they form a barrier so that I cannot get to comfort him, to carry gifts to him, and in every way to show my love, he is separated from my love, cut off from the manifestation of it. Not so are we separated from the love of Christ by tribulation. Perhaps Paul never felt Christ's love so near and so mighty as when shut up in that Roman prison awaiting execution for Christ's sake. 2 Tim. 1: 12, &c.

36. See Ps. 44: 22. A statement of what God's ancient people were suffering at the time the psalm was written and a prediction of what Christians would have to endure in times of severe persecution.

37. All these things, i. e., the things of vv. 35, 36. We are more than conquerors, &c. So far from the approach and help and manifestation of Christ's love being hindered, it comes right to us through all adverse circumstances, lifts us up, makes us more than conquerors over trial and suffering, nay, seizes these very tribulations and turns them into blessings. Have you not sometimes been amazed in witnessing the peace, the confidence, the bright hopefulness of Christians under trial? See 2 Cor. 4: 8-11; 12: 9.

Seeking Rest.

Troughout India, at certain seasons of the year, the Brahmins consult their books on astrology, and appoint melas, or religious festivals at certain sacred places.

These places are generally near some body of water, some supposed sin-cleansing pool.

The people assemble from far and near to bathe, and to worship the idols in the temples.

The late Rev. J. D. Brown, in a letter told the following touching story in regard to one of these annual gatherings:

"Having preached to the crowds of pilgrims one morning I had gone to my rest.

Sitting in the door I watched the pilgrims passing by on a three mile march around the pool.

Among the many that morning there came a poor woman, bowed under the weight of many years. Leaving the others, she came and sat down under the shade of a tree in front of my tent. Contrary to the custom I approached her and said, respectfully: 'Old mother, who are you?' Looking up, and with a sad face, she replied, 'I am a poor old pilgrim.'

'How long have you been a pilgrim?' Again she turned her weary-looking face towards me and said, 'Oh, sir, I have been a pilgrim for fourteen years. I have been to the Ganges, and to many other shrines. I have spent all my money, and I am a poor old pilgrim still.'

I then said, 'Tell me why you go on these long pilgrimages. What are you seeking?' A look of utter loneliness and despondency gathered over the old pilgrim's face as she said, in words and tones I can never forget, 'I am seeking rest for my soul.'

'Have you found it?' Again that lonely, weary expression came over her face as she said sorrowfully, 'No rest yet.'

Christian sisters, hear the cry from the woman of heathen lands: 'Seeking rest for our souls. They look to us imploringly. Let us hasten to tell them of One who says, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'—W. F. M. S. Tract.

In Memoriam.

Lines on the death of Mrs. H. A. Lewis who departed this life, June 1st, 1866, at Centerville, C. Con. N. B.

Stern winter was passed and it was May, All nature appeared beautiful and gay, As the last rays of the setting sun Bade adieu to May, to-morrow will be June.

Slowly he stalks behind the western hill, All nature retired, and the night was still, While the stars shone forth from the vaulted sky With wondrous beauty to the gazer's eye.

The full moon arose with her charming light, As her soft rays fell through the gloom of night, She seemed to wish the world below The wonders of her Creator to know.

With nature, I too had sought my rest, No ill dreams disturbed my repose, When a well known voice call in haste, And at that voice I quickly arose.

It was the voice of a mother, I shall never forget.

Tho' on earth I may hear it no more, Yet faith looked beyond life's turmoil and care To that home and song on the evergreen shore.

The moon had now arisen high, And still shed a mild and steady light, Though our hearts were sad—she still shone on, With the stars, through that memorable night.

Night's shadows past, and it was day, That fond mother now on her death-bed lay, Called in the midst of life and health, to go, Severing each tender tie that was formed below.

One little babe to earth was given, Its mother passed away to heaven, One to toil and a world of sin, The other with God forever shut in.

"God bless my child," the mother said, With her last faltering breath, While she fondly gazed on its infant face, Then closed her eyes in death.

We children stood beside her couch, In vain our weeping, too late to sigh, Our mother's work on earth was done, With other mothers she must die.

Thou told us, mother, of Adam's fall, Of Christ the Lord who died for all, And prayed that we might seek his grace, Thus find in Him a hiding place.

And when life's battle is past, Shall it be ours to meet in heaven at last, And looking back o'er a world of cares, Bless God for a loved mother's prayers.

C. T. L.

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