

STUDIES IN ROMANS

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VII THE FINAL WORK OF SALVATION IN US

Romans 6:1 - 8:39

In this chapter, following further the argument of the Apostle, we discuss (1) the redemption of the body, and (2) the final security of the believer

I. THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY

The final work of salvation in us is expressed in Romans 8:23 -- The redemption of our body concerning which he adds: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The body is an essential part of the normal man, who was made dual in nature, and even in Paradise GOD had provided for the elimination of the mortality of man's body, through the continued eating of the tree of life. But the immortality of the body in sin would have been an unspeakable curse to man, and hence GOD, in expelling man from the garden, said, "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."

1. But when our souls are regenerated the hope enters the heart that the body also will be saved, and we wait patiently for that part of our salvation -- this passage expresses the idea thusly:

Oh, that my words were now written!
Oh, that they were printed in a book!
That they were graven with an iron pen and lead
in the rock for ever!
For I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
And though after my skin worms destroy this body,
Yet in my flesh shall I see God.
Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,
And not another: though my reins be consumed within me.
(Job 19:23-27)

And the passage is akin to the expression in Psalm 17: "**I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness**" (vs. 15).

This harmonizes with another very striking passage in Job:

For there is hope of a tree,
If it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof die in the ground;
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
And bring forth boughs like a plant.
But man dieth, and wasted away:
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the flood decayeth and drieth up:
So man lieth down, and riseth not:
Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,
Nor be raised out of their sleep.
O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,
That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
If a man die, shall he live again?
All the days of my appointed time will I wait,
Till my change come.
Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee:
Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.
(Job 14:7-15)

Here Job is deeply impressed with the hope of a tree cut down reviving. There is a resurrection for it, but he says, "**But man dieth,... and where is he** (that is, as to his soul); **...if a man die, shall he** (as to his body) **live again?**" Inasmuch as the body was the work of GOD's hands and was originally intended to be immortal, he expresses the hope that GOD would hide him in the grave and appoint a set time to remember him there and then desire the work of His hands and call him forth from his long sleep.

2. The fulness of the salvation in us is the regeneration of the soul, its ultimate sanctification, and the resurrection and glorification of the body -- It has ever been possible to satisfy the cravings of a human heart with the hope of soul salvation only. It is ingrained in the very constitution of our being that we long for the revivification of the body. A bird escaping from its shell to fly with a new life in the air cares nothing for the cast off shell. A butterfly emerging from the chrysalis state cares nothing for the shell that is left behind. But from the beginning of time, through this ingrained hope of immortality for the body, man has cared for the bodyshell after the spirit has escaped.

It is evidenced in the care for the dead body characteristic of all nations. It is evidenced in the names given to graveyards. They are called cemeteries; that is, sleeping places. It is evident in the sculpture on the tombstones and in the inscriptions thereon, all tending to show that man desires an answer to the question "**If I die, shall I live again?**" And the thought being not with reference to the continuity of existence in his spiritual nature, but in his body. Hence the resurrection of the dead is made in the Christian system, a pivotal doctrine, as we learn from the

letter to the Corinthians: that our faith is vain, our preaching is vain, we are yet in our sins, our Fathers have perished and GOD's apostles are false witnesses, if the dead rise not. That is the conclusion of the doctrine of salvation in us.

II. THE EVERLASTING SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

All the rest of chapter 8 is devoted to a new theme, namely: the everlasting security of those who are justified by faith. The argument extends from verse 26 to the end of the chapter, and it is perhaps the most remarkable paragraph in inspired literature. It should be memorized by every Christian. Every thought in it has been the theme of consolatory and encouraging preaching.

Let us now consider item by item this argument on the security of the believer.

1. He takes the latitudinarian view, from top to bottom -- Down here he finds a Christian. Up yonder at the other end of the line is the Advocate. But there is an Advocate here, too. And these Advocates, one here on earth in the depths, and the other yonder in the heights of Heaven, are going to see to it that the Christian gets there all right through prayer and faith. If a Christian sins, he must confess it and ask GOD to forgive him. Sometimes he has not the spirit of prayer and does not feel like asking. But GOD provides an Advocate, the HOLY SPIRIT, that puts into his heart the spirit of grace and supplication. And the HOLY SPIRIT not only shows him what to pray for, but what to pray. That makes things secure at this end of the line. Up yonder the Advocate in Heaven, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, takes these petitions that the SPIRIT inspired on earth and goes before the Father, and pointing to the sufficiency of His shed blood in His death on the cross, secures this salvation from depth to height.

2. The unbroken sweep of the providence of GOD -- "**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose**" (Romans 8:28).

With CHRIST on the mediatorial throne in Heaven holding in His hand the scepter of universal dominion, constraining everything -- beings in Heaven above and on the earth beneath and in hell below -- to work, not tangentially, but together for good -- not evil -- to them that love GOD, in the sweep of this providence all elements and forces of the material world and the spiritual world, are laid under tribute -- fire, earth, air, storms and earthquakes, pestilences, good angels and bad, the passions of men, the revolutions in human government -- ALL are made, under the directing power of JESUS our KING, to conspire to our good. Fortune and misfortune, good report and evil report, sickness or health, life or death, prosperity or adversity, it is all one -- the power of GOD is over them all. Satan is not permitted to put even the weight of a little finger upon the Christian to worry him except in the direction that GOD will permit, and that will be overruled for his good.

3. This sweep of providential government under our mediatorial KING accords with a linked chain of correlative doctrines reaching from eternity before time to eternity after time. The links of this chain are thus expressed in 8:29-30: "**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**" Before there

was any world, a covenant of grace and mercy was entered into between Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT, the evidences of which covenant are abundant in the New Testament, and the parts to be performed by each person of the God-head are clearly expressed, namely: The Father's grace and love in agreeing to send the Son, His covenant obligation to give the Son a seed, His foreknowledge of this seed, His predestination concerning this seed, His justification and adoption of them here in time. Then the Son's covenant was the obligation to assume human nature in His incarnation, voluntarily renouncing the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, and in this incarnation of humility to become obedient unto the death of the cross.

The consideration held out before Him, as a hope set before Him, inducing Him to endure the shame of the cross, and the reward bestowed upon Him because of that obedience, was His resurrection, His glorification, His exaltation to the royal priestly throne and His investment with the right of judgment. And the SPIRIT's covenant obligations were to apply this work of redemption in calling, convicting, regenerating, sanctifying and raising from the dead the seed promised to the Son, the whole of it showing that the plan of salvation was not an afterthought; that the roots of it in election and predestination are both in eternity before the world was, and the fruits of it are in eternity after the judgment. The believer is asked to consider this chain, test each link, shake it and hear it rattle, connected from eternity to eternity.

Every one that GOD foreknew in CHRIST is drawn by the SPIRIT to CHRIST. Every one predestinated is called by the SPIRIT in time, and justified in time, and will be glorified when the LORD comes.

4. It is impossible for finite beings to say anything against the grounds of this security, because **"If God be for us, who can be against us?"** (vs. 31). Because, **"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"** (vs. 32) Then the challenge is sent to the universe to find any one who can lay any charge against GOD's elect -- who in Heaven, who among the angels, good or bad, who on the earth? No charge can be brought against a believer because it is GOD, the Supreme JUDGE, who has justified him. Justification is the verdict, or declaration, of the supreme court of Heaven that in CHRIST the sinner is acquitted. This decision is rendered once for all, is inexorable and irreversible. It is registered in the Book of Life, and in the great Judgement Day that book will be the textbook on the throne of that judgment. Whatever may be brought out from all the books that are opened, none of them are decisive and ultimate but one -- the Book of Life -- and it is not a docket of cases to be tried on that day, but is a register of judicial decisions already rendered: **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Revelation 20:15). Therefore the thrill excited in the heart by that song which our congregations so often used to sing:

When Thou my righteous JUDGE shall come,
To take Thy ransomed people home
Shall I among them stand?
Shall I, who sometimes am afraid to die
Be found at Thy right hand?
Oh, can I bear the piercing thought,
What if my name should be left out!

5. The ground of this salvation is what CHRIST does -- Spurgeon calls this thirty-fourth verse of the eighth chapter, the four pillars upon which rests the whole superstructure of salvation. They are, (a) the death of CHRIST, (b) the resurrection of CHRIST, (c) the exaltation of CHRIST to the kingly throne, (d) His intercession as our great HIGH PRIEST. These four doctrines are strictly correlative -- they fit into each other. The soul of the Christian does not at the beginning realize the strength of his salvation. Many a one has simply believed on CHRIST as a Saviour without ever analyzing in his own mind, or separating from each other in thought, the several things done by CHRIST in order to his salvation. But as he grows in knowledge of these things, he grows in grace and assurance.

It was some time after my own soul was saved before I ever understood fully the power of CHRIST's exaltation, or kingly throne, and still longer before I understood the power of His intercession. I got the comfort of this last thought one day in reading a passage in Hebrews **"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"** (Hebrews 7:25). I had never before seen the difference between salvation in justification and salvation to the uttermost. In the same way we may not realize in our joy of regeneration the power of His continuing that good work in us until the day of JESUS CHRIST, and the great value of the SPIRIT's work in taking the things of CHRIST and showing them to us. And as we learn each office of CHRIST, and just what He does in that office, the greater our sense of security. He is PROPHET, SACRIFICE, KING, PRIEST, LEADER and JUDGE.

6. The final argument underlying the security of the believer is presented in verses 35 to 37, that none can separate us from the love of CHRIST after our union is established with Him. The words here are, **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . in all these things we are more than conquerors . . ."** The argument is in full accord with the statement of our LORD, John 10:29: **"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."** It is further expressed in another passage by the Apostle when he says, **". . . for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"** (II Timothy 1:12). And it is further expressed in the seal of the HOLY SPIRIT. We are sealed "unto the day of redemption."

When I was a youth I was wonderfully stirred by an eloquent sermon preached by J.R. Graves in which he pointed out the fact that by faith we commit our lives to JESUS; that life is hid with CHRIST in GOD; that life is sealed with the impression of the HOLY SPIRIT unto the day of redemption, and then he asked, "Who can pluck that life out of the hands of GOD?" drawing this vivid picture: "If hell should open her yawning mouth and all of the demons of the pit should issue forth like huge vampires darkening water and land, could they break that seal of GOD? Could they soar to the heights of Heaven? Could they scale its battlements? Could they beat back the angels that guard its walls? Could they penetrate into the presence of the HOLY ONE on His eternal throne, and reach out their demon-claws and pluck our life from the bosom of GOD where it is hid with CHRIST in GOD?"

The pages of religious persecution are very bloody; rack, thumbscrews and fagot, have been employed. Confiscation of property, expatriation from country, and hounding pursuit of the exile in foreign lands, exposedness to famine and nakedness and sword and other perils -- and yet

never has this persecution been able to effect a separation of the believer from his LORD. Roman emperors tried it, Julian the apostate tried it, Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V., their son, and Philip II., his son, all tried it in their time. The inquisition held its secret court; war, conflagration and famine wrought their ruin, but the truth prevailed.

All this illustrates the truth that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. The Genevan, the German, the English State churches have tried, in emulation of the Romanist union of Church and State, to crush out the true spirit of Christianity. They have been able to merely scatter the fires, to make them burn over a wider territory as it is expressed concerning the decree to scatter the ashes of Wyclif in the river.

Now upon these arguments, the two intercessors, the sweep of GOD's providence, the link-chain reaching from eternity to eternity, the impossibility of any being laying a charge against one whom GOD has justified, the four pillars -- upon these, the Apostle reaches this persuasion:

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

QUESTIONS FOR STIMULATION AND REVIEW

1. What is the final work of salvation in us?
2. What provision did GOD first make for the immortality of man's body?
3. What defeated that plan, and how is this immortality finally to be accomplished?
4. What is Job's testimony to this hope, and what the interpretation of the passage?
5. How is this hope in man evidenced in a singular way?
6. How does Paul elsewhere make the resurrection a pivotal doctrine in the Christian system?
7. Name the six arguments for the security of those who are justified by faith as taught in Romans 8.
8. What is the providential argument, and what does it include?
9. In the covenant of grace, what are the parts to be performed by the Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT, respectively?
10. What is the ground of this salvation, and what the four-pillar argument?
11. In view of these arguments, what was Paul's persuasion?

LET US RETHINK THE CHAPTER

I. THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY

1. The body to be saved also
2. The body is to be raised
3. The body is to be glorified

II. THE EVERLASTING SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

1. The latitudinarian view

2. The sweep of GOD's providence
3. The sweep of providential government
4. If GOD be for us, who can be against us?
5. The ground is what CHRIST does
6. Who shall separate us from the love of CHRIST?

~ end of chapter 7 ~
