

## STUDIES IN ROMANS

By B.H. Carroll, D.D., LL.D.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD  
of the  
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

- 1935 -

### V. THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

Romans 5:1-21

The first paragraph, 1-11, of this chapter is but an elaboration, or conclusion, of the line of argument in chapters 3 and 4. There are two leading thoughts in this paragraph: (1) GOD's method of induction into the grace of salvation. (2) The happy estate of the justified.

#### I. METHOD OF INDUCTION

This method is expressed thus: "Therefore being justified by faith . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." A vital question is here answered -- "How do we get into CHRIST, in whom are all the blessings of salvation, each in its order?" The corresponding doctrine to our getting into CHRIST is getting CHRIST into us to complete the union with Him as expressed by Himself: "**I in you . . . ye abide in me**" (John 15:4). The names of these two doctrines are --

- (1) Justification through faith, or we into CHRIST
- (2) Regeneration through faith, or CHRIST in us.

Elsewhere the doctrine of "**Christ in us**" through regeneration is presented thus: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (II Corinthians 3:3). "**For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" (II Corinthians 4:6). "**To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (Colossians 1:27).

The proof that the method of this induction is also by faith is given by CHRIST. When Nicodemus asked as to the method of regeneration, CHRIST answered, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1).

**"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to**

**them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26).**

## **II. THE HAPPY ESTATE OF THE JUSTIFIED**

1. The justified truly have peace legally in GOD's eyes as soon as they are justified. So one may be justified in fact sometime before he realizes the peace to which justification entitles, as the experience of many Christians shows. It is GOD's purpose that we should realize it, and the sooner the better. To affirm that our subjective perception of an external act is necessarily simultaneous with the act is to limit the existence of things to our knowledge of things. So we may express the understanding of the text by saying that it is both an affirmation: "We have peace"; that is, justification now entitles to peace, but we need to lay hold of it. The fallacy of the affirmation consists of confounding justification, which is GOD's act, with subjective peace, which is our experience. Objective peace, legal peace, necessarily accompanies justification, but it may not be subjective. The battle of New Orleans was fought after the treaty of peace was signed, because Sir Edward Packenham and General Jackson did not know a treaty of peace had been agreed upon.

2. I will name in order all the elements of the happy estate of the justified:

(1) Peace with GOD.

(2) Joy in hope of the glory of GOD

(3) Joy in tribulation, because of the fruits which follow.

(4) The gift of the HOLY SPIRIT

(5) The love of GOD shed abroad in our hearts, by that given SPIRIT

(6) The assurance that the justified shall be saved from the wrath to come, because:

(a) If reconciled, when enemies, much more will He continue salvation to friends.

(b) If reconciled through His death, much more will He alive deliver us from future wrath.

(7) Joy in GOD the Father, through whose Son we receive the reconciliation.

## **III. THE JUSTIFIED ARE SURE OF SALVATION**

By a new line of argument the Apostle conveys assurance of salvation to the justified.

1. An argument based on our seminal relations to the two Adams -- This great doctrine is expressed thus: "**Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned**" (5:12). "**Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous**" (5:18-19). If we combine the several thoughts into one great text we have this: By one offense of one man, condemnation came upon all men. So by one act of righteousness of one Man, justification unto eternal life comes upon all men who by one exercise of faith lay hold on him who wrought the one act of righteousness.

2. This text startlingly offends and confounds the reasonings of the carnal mind which says:

- (1) One may not be justly condemned for the offense of somebody else, but only for his own offense; nor justified by the righteousness of somebody else, but by his own righteousness.
- (2) Condemnation must come from all offenses, not just one; and justification must be based on all acts of righteousness, not just one.
- (3) To base a man's condemnation or justification on the act of another destroys personal responsibility.
- (4) The doctrine of imputing one man's guilt to a Substitute tends to demoralization, in that the real sinner will sin the more, not being personally amenable to penalty.
- (5) The doctrine of pardoning a guilty man because another is righteous turns loose a criminal on society.
- (6) The whole of it violates that ancient law of the Bible itself: Thou shalt justify the innocent and condemn the guilty.

If the Gospel plan of salvation, fairly interpreted, does destroy personal responsibility, does tend to demoralize society, does encourage to sin the more, does turn criminals loose on society, does not tend to make its subjects personally better, it is then the doctrine of the devil and should be hated and resisted by all who respect justice and deprecate iniquity. But the seminal idea of condemnation and justification grows out of relations to two respective heads, and it results from varieties in creation, thus:

(a) GOD created a definite number of angels, just so many at the start, never any more or less, a company, not a family, incapable of propagation, being sexless, without ancestry or posterity, without brother or sister or other ties of consanguinity, each complete in himself, and hence no angel could be condemned or justified for another's act. The act of every angel terminates in himself. Therefore, there can be no salvation for a sinning angel. And hence our Saviour "**took not on him the nature of angels.**"

(b) But GOD also created a different order of beings, at the start just one man, having potentially in himself an entire race -- a countless multitude to be developed from him. And in propagating the race he transmitted his own nature, and through heredity his children inherited that nature. No act of any human being arises altogether from himself or can possibly terminate in himself. In considering heredity, Oliver Wendell Holmes has said, "Man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors ride." Moreover, man was created to be a social being, from which fact arises the necessity of human government whether in legislative, judicial or executive power. The mind can conceive of only one human being whose act would terminate in himself, and under the following conditions alone: He must be without ancestry, without capacity of posterity, without kindred in any degree, without relation to society, living alone on an island surrounded by an ocean whose waves touched no other shore from which society might come. How much more the head in whom potentially and legally was the race could not do an act that would terminate in himself!

(c) The creature cannot deny GOD's sovereign right to create this variety of moral beings, angels and man.

(d) Nature does not exempt children from the penalty of heredity.

(e) Human law neither exempts children from legal responsibility of parents nor acquits criminals because of hereditary predispositions.

The context bases the condemnation of all men on the ground that all sinned in Adam, the head, and so having sinned in him they all died in him. The context, "**And so death passed upon all men**" (even those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression) is the distinct proof of our proposition. Only one person ever sinned the sin of Adam and that was Adam himself, the head of the race. Now as proof that his posterity sinned after the similitude of his sin; that is, they sinned not as the head of a race, but from depravity -- an inherited depravity. Adam did not have that inherited depravity. GOD made him upright.

Whenever I commit a sin, I do not commit that sin from the standpoint of Adam, but I commit it on account of an evil nature inherited from Adam, and that sin is not after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Moreover, if I commit a sin, the race is not held responsible for my sin, because I am not the head of the race. The race does not stand or fall in me. Thus there are two particulars in which sins which we commit are not after the similitude of Adam's sin, and yet, says the Apostle, with his inexorable logic, ". . . **even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.**" The law was executed on every one of them; they died. Sin condemns on the ground of the solidarity of the law, the unity of the law. "**For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all**" (James 2:10).

Human law in this respect conforms to divine law. If a man be law-abiding fifty years and then commits one capital offense, his previous righteousness avails him nothing. Nor does it avail that he was innocent of all other offenses. If a man were before a court charged with murder, he would derive no benefit by proving that he had not been guilty of theft. If he were guilty on the score of murder, his life is forfeited. That is on account of the solidarity of the law. Nor does it avail a man anything in a human court that he was tempted from without. So Adam vainly pleaded, "**The woman... gave me of the tree, and I did eat.**"

#### IV. THE SEMINAL IDEA OF SALVATION (5:12-21)

1. The one offense committed by the first Adam was his violation of that test, or prohibition, "**But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**" (Genesis 2:17). Adam was told that he was not to eat of the tree of death, nor was he to experimentally know the difference between good and evil. In other words, he was an anti-prohibitionist. The law commenced with an absolute prohibition, and it did not avail Adam a thing to plead personal liberty. Race responsibility rested on Adam alone. It could not possibly have rested on Eve, because she was a descendant of Adam, just as much as we are. GOD created just one man, and in that man was the whole human race, including Eve. Later he took a part of the man and made a woman, and the meaning of the word "woman" is "derived from man." When Adam saw her, he said, "Issah," woman, which literally means derived from man. As she got both her soul and body from the man, being his descendant, it was impossible that the race responsibility should rest on her.

If Eve alone had sinned, the race would not have perished. She would have perished, but not the race. The race was in Adam. GOD could have derived another woman from him like that one. He had the potentiality in him of all women as well as all men. Some error has arisen from holding Eve responsible, such as the error of pointing the finger at the woman and saying, "You did it!" The text says, "By one man's offense" and not by one offense of one woman. That Eve sinned there is no doubt; she was in the transgression. To the contrary, history shows that GOD connects salvation with the woman, and not damnation. He said that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. There we have the promise of grace. And he could not have said the seed of the man, for, if one be the seed of a man, he inherits the man's fallen nature.

2. This fact has a mighty bearing on the Second Adam -- When the Second Adam came, the first and virtually essential proof was that a woman was his mother, but no man was His Father -- GOD was His Father. If a man had been His Father, He would Himself have been under condemnation through a depraved nature. Mary could not understand the announcement that she should become the mother of a Saviour who would be the "**Son of God**," since she had not yet married, until the angel exclaimed: "**And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**" (Luke 1:35). Hence, whoever denies our LORD's birth of a virgin and that he was sired by the MOST HIGH denies the whole plan of salvation and is both the arch liar of the world and anti-Christ. The essential deity of our LORD and His incarnation constitute the bed-rock of salvation. It is the first, most vital, most fundamental truth. No man who rejects it can be a Christian or should be received as a Christian for one moment. (See John 1:1, 14; I John 4:1-3; Philippians 2:6-8; I Timothy 3:16.)

But this question comes up, "Did not JESUS derive his human nature, through heredity, from his mother; since she was a descendant of fallen Adam, how could her Son escape a depraved nature?" This is a pertinent question and a very old one. It so baffled Romanist theologians that they invented and issued under papal infallibility the decree of "The Immaculate Conception," meaning not only that JESUS was born sinless, but that Mary herself was born sinless, which of course only pushes back the difficulty one degree. Their invention was purely gratuitous. There is nothing in the case to call for a sinless mother. Depravity resides in the soul. The soul comes, not from the one who conceives, but from the one who begets. This is the very essence of the teaching in the passage cited from Luke. The sinlessness of the nature of JESUS is expressly ascribed to the Sire: "**That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God**." And it is the very heart of Paul's entire biological, or seminal, idea of salvation; that is, life from a seed. The seed is in the sire. The first Adam's seed is unholy; the Second Adam's seed is holy. Hence, the necessity of the SPIRIT birth. So is our LORD's teaching in John 3:36; 8:44; and I John 3:9, and the parable of the Tares with its explanation, Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, and especially I Peter 1:23: "**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever**." The propriety of salvation by the Second Adam lies in the fact that we were lost through the first Adam. All the criticism against substitutionary, or vicarious, salvation comes from a disregard of this truth.

3. CHRIST met all the law requirements as follows:

(1) By holiness of nature -- starting holy.

- (2) By obeying all its precepts.
- (3) By fulfilling its types.
- (4) By paying its penalty.

The value of the first three items is that they qualified Him to do the fourth. If He had been either unholy in nature or defective in obedience, He would have been amenable to the penalty for Himself. But having holiness in His own nature and His perfect obedience exempting Him from penalty on His own account, He could be the sinner's Substitute in death and judgment: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). ". . . **ye were... redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot**" (I Peter 1:18-19). If He answered not to the types, He could not be the MESSIAH.

CHRIST's one act of righteousness, which is the sole ground of our justification, is His vicarious death on the cross. No one ought to preach at all -- having no Gospel message -- if he does not comprehend this with absolute definiteness. If we attribute our justification to CHRIST's holiness, or to His perceptive obedience, or to His Sermon on the Mount, or to His miracles, or to His Kingly or Priestly reign in Heaven, where He is now, or if we locate that one act of righteousness anywhere in the world except in one place and in one particular deed, we ought not to preach.

The one act of righteousness -- the sole meritorious ground of justification -- is our LORD's vicarious death on the cross, suffering the death penalty of divine law against sin.

This death was a real sacrifice and propitiation Godward, so satisfying the law's penal sanctions in our behalf as to make it just for GOD to justify the ungodly. Our LORD's incarnation, with all His work antecedent to the cross, was but preparatory to it, and all His succeeding work consequential. His exaltation to the throne in Heaven, His priestly intercession, and His coming judgment flowing from His obedience "**unto death, even the death of the cross**" (Philippians 2:8-9).

## **V. THE PARTICULAR PROOF OF THIS ONE ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM BOTH TESTAMENTS IS AS FOLLOWS**

### 1. Proof from the Old Testament

(1) The establishment of the throne of grace, immediately after man's expulsion from paradise, where GOD dwelt between the cherubim, east of the Garden of Eden, as a Shechinah, or Swordflame, to keep open the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24) and was there acceptably approached only through the blood of an innocent and substitutionary sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-4; compare Revelation 7:14; 22:14), which mercy-seat between the cherubim was to be approached through sacrificial blood, just as described in that part of the Mosaic Law prescribing the way of the sinner's approach to GOD (Exodus 25:17-22).

(2) In the four most marvelous types:

a. The Passover-lamb whose blood availed when JEHOVAH saw it (Exodus 12:13, 23) showing

that the blood propitiated GOD-ward. (See I Corinthians 5:7).

b. In the kid on the great Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) which shows that the expiatory blood must be sprinkled on the mercy-seat between the cherubim as the basis of atonement.

c. In the red heifer, burned without the camp, and whose ashes, liquefied with water, became a portable means of purification (Numbers 19:2-6, 9, 17-18 with Hebrews 9:13), representing that first and cleansing element of regeneration in which the HOLY SPIRIT applies CHRIST's blood. (See Psalm 51:2, 7; Ezekiel 36:25; John 3:5 [born of water and SPIRIT]; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5.)

d. The brazen serpent, fused in fire and then elevated to be seen, which shows that the expiatory passion, a fiery suffering, must be lifted up in preaching, as the object of faith and means of healing, Numbers 21:9, explained in John 3:14-16; 12:23-33; Gal. 3:1.

(3) In such striking passages as Isaiah 53:4-11 -- Compare the Messianic prayer: "**Deliver my soul from the sword**" (Psalm 22:20), with the divine response, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 13:7a), and hear the sufferer's outcry: "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" (Psalm 22:1 and Matthew 27:45-46). When these passages are compared with Isaiah 53:5-10, Romans 3:25; II Corinthians 5:21 and I Peter 2:24, it cannot be reasonably questioned that He died under the sentence of GOD's law against sin, and that this death was propitiatory toward GOD and vicarious toward man, and is the one act of righteousness through which our justification comes.

## 2. Proof from the New Testament

Some of the New Testament passages, including several already given, our LORD's own words in instituting the Memorial Service: "**This is my body which is given for you . . . This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you . . . which is shed for many**" (Luke 22:19-20; Mark 14:24). (We need to add only Romans 3:25; I Corinthians 1:30; 5:7; I Peter 1:18-19; 2:24 and Hebrews 10:4-14).

The combined text, "One exercise of faith," means that unlike sanctification, justification is not progressive, but is one instantaneous act; GOD justifies, and our laying hold of it is a simple definite transaction. One moment we are not justified; in the next moment we are justified. One look at the brazen serpent brought healing. Zacchaeus went up the tree lost, and came down saved. The dying thief at one moment was lost, and the next heard the words: "**Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.**" At midnight the lost jailer was trembling; just after that he was rejoicing, believing in GOD with all his house. There is no appreciable time element in the transition from condemnation to justification.

Considering CHRIST as a gift, how long does it take to receive Him?

Considering Him as a promise, how long to trust?

Considering CHRIST as the custodian of an imperilled soul, how long to commit it to Him?

Considering the union between CHRIST and the sinner as an espousal (II Corinthians 11:2), how long to say: "I take Him?"

As a marriage between man and woman is a definite transaction, consummated when he says, "I take her to be my lawful wife," and when she says, "I take him to be my lawful husband," so by one exercise of faith we take CHRIST as our LORD. But as sanctification is progressive, we go

on in that from faith to faith. But justification through faith in a Substitute does not turn loose a criminal on society. If it be meant a criminal in deed, it is not true, because to the last farthing the law claim has been met in the payment of the surety. In other words, the law has been fully satisfied. If it be meant in spirit, it is not true, for every justified man is regenerated. A new heart to love GOD and man has been given, a holy disposition imparted, loving righteousness and hating iniquity. A spirit of obedience, new and right motives of gratitude and love are at work, and motive determines very largely the moral quality of action. In other words, the justified man is also a new creature.

It secures in the new creature the only basis of true morality.

Morality is conformity with moral law. Immorality is non-conformity with moral law. The first and great commandment of moral law is supreme love toward GOD, and the second is love to thy neighbor as thyself. No unregenerate man can make a step in either direction any more than a bad tree can produce good fruit, for "**the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**" The unregenerate is self-centered; the regenerate, Christ-centered. The justified man, being regenerate, will be necessarily a better man personally and practically than he was before in every relation of life -- better in the family, better in society and better in the state. A claim to justification without improvement in these directions is necessarily a false claim.

The writer in 2:17 has already introduced the word "law" in a special sense when discussing the case of the Jew as contradistinguished from other nations. And this is the sense of his word "law" when he says, "**For until the law sin was in the world.**" Law, to a Jew, meant the Sinaitic law.

But the Apostle is proving that law did not originate at Sinai, in any sense except for one nation, as was evident from sin and death anterior to it. First, there was primal law inherent in GOD's intent in creating moral beings, and in the very constitution of their being, and in all their relations. And this law, even to Adam in innocence, found statutory expression in the law of labor, the law of marriage and in the law of the Sabbath, as well as in the particular prohibition concerning the tree of death.

## **VI. THE INTERVENTION OF THE GRACE COVENANT**

Immediately after Adam's fall and expulsion from Paradise came the intervention of the grace covenant with its law of sacrifices, symbolically showing the way of a sinner's approach to GOD through vicarious expiation. There were preachers and prophets of grace before the Flood, as well as the convicting and regenerating SPIRIT. All these expressions of law passed over the Flood with Noah, with several express additions to the statutory law both civil and criminal. Death proved sin, and sin proved law, before we come to Sinai. Adam was under law. Adam sinned and death reigned over him. Adam's descendants down to Moses died. Therefore, they had sinned, and therefore were under the law. But their sin was not like Adam's in several particulars: (1) They did not sin as the head of a race. (2) They did not sin from a standpoint of innocence and holiness, but from an inherited depravity. (3) They sinned under a grace covenant which Adam had not in Paradise. This last particular is here emphasized, where grace in justification is contrasted with the condemnation through Adam's one offense.



If then the Sinaitic code did not originate law, what was its purpose? "**Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound**" (Romans 5:20). This purpose of the law will be considered more elaborately later. Just here it is sufficient to say that the Sinaitic code under three great departments, or heads, is the most marvelous and elaborate expression of law known to history. Its three heads or constituent elements, as we learn in the Old Testament are --

1. The Decalogue, or moral law, or GOD and the normal man.
2. The law of the altar, or GOD and the sinner, or the sinner's symbolic way of approach to GOD, including a place to find Him, a means of propitiating Him, times to approach Him, and an elaborate ritual of service.
3. The judgments, or GOD and the State, in every variety of municipal, civil and criminal law.

So broad, so deep, so high, so minute, so comprehensive is this code, so bright is its light, that every trespass in thought, word and deed is not only made manifest, but is made to abound, in order that where sin abounded, grace would abound exceedingly.

### **QUESTIONS FOR STIMULATION AND REVIEW**

1. What part of chapter 5 is but an elaboration, or conclusion, of the line of argument started in chapters 3 and 4?
2. What vital question is here answered?
3. What is the corresponding doctrine to our getting into CHRIST?
4. What are the names of these two doctrines?
5. How elsewhere is the doctrine of "CHRIST in us" through regeneration presented?
6. What is the proof that the method of this induction is also by faith?
7. What is the fallacy of affirming that subjective peace is simultaneous with justification? Illustrate.
8. What, in order, are the elements of the happy estate of the justified?
9. By what new line of argument in 5:12-21 does the Apostle convey assurance of salvation to the justified?
10. How does this text startlingly offend and confound the reasonings of the carnal mind?
11. On what ground does the context base the condemnation of all men?
12. What is the meaning of the context, "and so death passed upon all men," and so forth?
13. On what ground does sin condemn, and what the proof?
14. How does human law in this respect conform to divine law?
15. What was the one offense committed by the first Adam?
16. On whom did race responsibility rest -- Adam or Eve, or both, and why?
17. If only Eve sinned, what would have been the result?
18. What error has since arisen from holding Eve responsible?
19. What bearing has this fact on the Second Adam?
20. How could JESUS, being born of a depraved woman, escape depraved nature?
21. What is CHRIST's one act of righteousness, which is the ground of our justification?
22. What particular proof of this one act of righteousness from both Testaments?
23. How is it that justification through faith in a Substitute does not turn loose a criminal on society?
24. Explain the parenthetical statement in 5:13-17.

25. What are the three constituent elements of the Sinaitic law?

## **LET US RETHINK THE CHAPTER**

### **I. METHOD OF INDUCTION**

1. Justification through faith, or we into CHRIST.
2. Regeneration through faith, or CHRIST into us.

### **II. THE HAPPY ESTATE OF THE JUSTIFIED**

1. "We have," "Let us have"
2. Some things included in this happy estate

### **III. THE JUSTIFIED ARE SURE OF SALVATION**

1. Argument based on relations to the two Adams
2. Offends the carnal mind

### **IV. THE SEMINAL IDEA OF SALVATION**

1. Sin came through Adam
2. This has bearing on the Second Adam
3. How CHRIST met all requirements

### **V. THE PROOF FROM BOTH TESTAMENTS**

1. From the Old Testament
2. From the New Testament

### **VI. THE INTERVENTION OF THE GRACE COVENANT**

1. The Decalogue
2. The law of the altar
3. The judgments

~ end of chapter 5 ~

\*\*\*