

Berean Expositor Volume 1

Does “particular redemption” exhaust the sacrifice of Christ? pp. 55-58

Who among us can claim to have pierced the veil that hangs over the fateful past? “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us.” Though Scripture is silent respecting many aspects of this tremendous question, there are some phases which are revealed, and they are of greatest importance to us. John viii. 44 declares that the devil was a murderer from the beginning. He it was who deceived Eve into sin, and involved our first parents in far-reaching ruin. Side by side with this we are emphatically told that Christ took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, “in order that He might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. ii. 14). And again, “The devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, in order that He might *undo* the *works* of the devil” (I John iii. 8).

The work of Calvary included, among other objects, the *destruction* of the devil, and the *undoing* of his works. The Lord Jesus, as He bowed His blessed head and died, said, “It is finished.” All that he came to do had been accomplished, and even though time were to run its course before the final and complete fruition of His work, we accept the Word of truth, and believe that He did virtually destroy the devil and undo his works “through death.” If our theology does not allow of this, so much the worse for our theology. Turning to Rom. viii. 20, 21, we read:--

“For unto vanity hath creation been made subject. Not by choice, but by reason of Him who made it subject, upon hope that creation itself also shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.”

This passage refers back to Gen. iii. 17, 18, and forward to Rev. xxi. 1-5 and xxii. 3, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake.” “No curse shall be any more.” Literally it is, “And every curse shall be no more.” Here, truly, we see the undoing of the works of the devil.

Turning now to Rom. v. we have further light on this great question. Verses 1-11 lead us on to the love of God which surpasses the highest flights of human love. It was not for “just” ones, or “good” ones that Christ died. God commendeth His love in that whilst we were *yet* without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, Christ died for us (Rom. v. 6-10). But this does not exhaust the love of God; there is a “much more.”

“*Much more* then, having now been declared righteous by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, being enemies, we were reconciled unto God through the death of His Son, *much more*, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. v. 9, 10).

“But not as the offence is the act of free grace. For if by the offence of the *one* the many died, *much more* the grace of God, and the gift by grace, of the *one* man, Jesus Christ, superabounded unto the many.” “Where sin abounded, grace did superabound” (Rom. v. 15, 20).

It will be observed that although there is a marked division v. 12, yet the succeeding verses are connected with the earlier theme, the *much more*, the *superabounding* grace and love of God. The question before us as to the cause of the permission of evil, and as to the federal headship of Adam, receives a partial answer as we consider verse 12. This verse is not isolated or disconnected from verse 11, but is most definitely linked to it by the word “therefore” (Greek *dia touto*==”because of this”). Because of what? The preceding verses have been emphasizing the great love of God and the reconciliation. Scripture would have us link the entrance of sin, the passing through of the guilt and penalty of *one man’s one sin* to the many, with the superabounding *love* of God, and tells us that Adam was a type of the *coming One* (verse 14). Verses 13-17 are parenthetical, dealing with the difference observable between the act of judgment and the act of grace. Verse 18 resumes the statement of verse 12, and verse 19 furnishes us with the real answer to the introductory words “because of this.”

“Hence then as through *one* offence (the sentence was) unto all men unto condemnation, so also through *one* righteousness (the decree of grace was) unto all men unto justification of life. For just as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the one, the many shall be constituted righteous.”

There are in these verses some statements which are hard for us to accept who have been trained in the traditions of men. Supposing we had no theological views, supposing we received God’s word as little children, how should we understand Romans v.? We should see first of all that the sin and ruin of Adam and his race were somehow connected with God’s final purpose of reconciliation. We should believe, moreover, that when God says “all men” in verse 12, He means “all men” without exception. And further on when we read in verse 18 “all men,” we shall believe the same words in the same verse (linked as they are by the terms of comparison “as” and “so”) to mean the same identically. It will be seen that in verse 18 “all men” are mentioned, while in verse 19 “the many” are found instead. Here is a difference, what does it mean?

In verse 18 “all men” are “condemned.”

In verse 19 “the many” are “constituted sinners.”

In verse 18 “all men” are given “a justification of life.”

In verse 19 “the many” are “constituted righteous.”

Verse 17 also differs from verse 18, but agrees more with verse 19. “Through the offence of one, death *reigned* by the one.” It then says that “those who *receive* the superabounding grace and the free gift of righteousness shall *reign* in life by the one, “Jesus Christ.” In verse 18 “all” without exception are meant, and there is nothing said about “receiving.” In verse 19 “the many” are in view, while only those who “receive” “reign” in verse 17. It does say that “all” in verse 18 “reign in life,” but it does say that they have a “justification of life.” The reader should carefully read Ezek.xxxiv. and xxxvii. in this connection, particularly noticing the emphasis on the word “graves” in xxxvii. 11-14, and the character of those thus raised (xxxvi. 6-12 and 22-38).

We have been far too quick in making a clean sweep of the great majority of men. If orthodox belief is correct, a very small percentage of Adam's children will be constituted righteous, whereas Scripture declares that the "many" shall be so constituted. How many of us have believed and taught that those who stand before the great white throne have no end but the lake of fire, yet Scripture does not so teach. Rev. xx. tells us that all the dead who are not raised at the commencement of the millennium stand before God, and are judged according to their works out of the things written in the books. That is the first step. What their various sentences will be we do not know. We do know that they stand before a righteous Judge who delights in mercy, and will certainly not impose a fraction more than justice demands. *But the judgment according to their works does not decide their eternal destiny.*

Scripture comes down to the individual. Both J. N. Darby and J. R. Rotherham translate correctly, "And if *any one* was not found written in the book of life, *he* was cast into the lake of fire." Instead of the orthodox idea of myriads being cast into the lake of fire, Scripture leads us to see that it is to be an intensely individual matter, depending not upon works, but upon the book of *life*. Do those who are judged according to their works have the justification of life granted them? We ask the question. Readers, maybe, are mentally asking many more. We would not dogmatize here, but we lodge a plea for a closer and fuller study of these tremendous issues. Sin is an intruder. Will it be allowed to mar God's universe for eternity? Many say Yes! What saith the Scripture? Has Christ *undone* the works of the devil? Will God's universe never be really clean again? If not, has not Satan triumphed and Christ failed?

Romans v.

1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
4. And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
10. 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.
11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.
12. 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:
13. (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.
14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.
15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
16. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)
18. 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.
19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
20. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:
21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.