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BIBLE STUDY.**LETTER TO THE ROMANS. — NO. 3.**

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In our study of the first and second chapters we have found that knowledge without God is foolishness and immorality, and that a high profession, or, as Paul states it, circumcision of the flesh profits nothing, where the thing which that sign was given to indicate—the righteousness of God by faith, the circumcision of the heart—is not present.

Chap. 3:1-4. "What advantage then hath the Jew?"—"Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Abraham was led out from amidst heathenism, from faith to faith, and his descendants were beloved for their father's sake. To them God committed his truth. They failed to realize what the profit of being a Jew was, and rested confident, in their high profession, with the thought that God must think more of them than any other people. God had given them the light that they might carry it to others. But filled with pride they did not do the work, and God bore with them generation after generation.

During the captivity he revealed to Daniel that He would yet wait 490 years longer for his people to carry the light to the world. The carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles was a work which God all along the centuries had been working with the Jews to get them to perform, but they refused. Yet God cared for the Gentiles, and "left not himself without witnesses." Do we not see a tendency among us as a people to boast of the light we have, and to feel that the Lord must have a special regard for us as a people? But he has given us the light only that we may carry it to others. If we boast of the light, but do not carry it to others, God will bear with us long, but finally some one else will take our place and do the work.

God has sworn to Abraham, and his promises will be fulfilled, even though men do not believe. Verses 3 and 4. If none are found with the faith of Abraham, God is able of the stones to raise up children unto him. God is himself on trial before the universe, and Satan and evil men have always charged him with being unjust and arbitrary; but in the judgment all the universe will say, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Verses 9-18. All are in sin. There are no two ways of salvation. "The way of peace they have not known." Here is the touch-stone, showing the difference between the true Jew and the Gentile. The children of faith will have this peace—the peace that Christ had—continually with them.

Verse 19. "Under the law" is a mistranslation. It means in the law, or within its jurisdiction. By this law all the world becomes guilty; no man has any advantage over any other in the sight of the law.

Verse 20. Some people feel apprehensive lest laying stress on such texts as this should discredit the law. But God who wrote the text, may be left to care for the honor of his own law. It is to the everlasting credit of the law that it cannot justify the transgressor. The law requires in man the perfect righteousness manifested in the life of Christ. No man ever lived as Christ lived—all are guilty. The perfection and majesty of the law leads sinners to cry out, "What shall we do?"

Sometimes the idea obtains that if Christ would only wipe out the record of the past, the individual might then get along very well. That was the trouble with the Jews. Rom. 10:2, 3. There is not a man on earth who in himself can do one deed as pure and as free from selfishness as though Christ had done it. "Whatsoever is not of faith in sin." A sermon not preached by faith is a sin to be repented of. Much missionary work has been done by us all, that is to be repented of.

There never was a better man than Paul, as a man. If any man outside of Christ ever did a good deed, Paul did. Yet he had to count all things he had but loss, that he might win Christ. (Phil. 3:4-8). The psalmist says that God withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly. If Paul, before he found Christ, had had something in his nature that was good, he might have taken these things along with him. But he counted all as loss.

Verse 21. The law will witness in the judgment to the righteousness that the sinner receives without the law, testifying to its perfection. Only instead of getting the righteousness out of ourselves, where there is none, we go to the fountainhead.

Verse 22. All men are on a level. We will be thankful that God is willing to save us as he saves others. The plan of salvation is one of giving and taking; giving on the part of God and taking on the part of man. The pride of the heart resents this dependence upon God; but we are pensioners, beggars, miserable, and poor, and naked. The only thing for us to do is to buy the white raiment. This is offered without money and without price.

The prophet rejoiced in the Lord, because God had clothed him with the garments of salvation, and covered him with the robe of righteousness. We are not to put on the robe ourselves. Let us trust God to do that. When the Lord puts it on, it is not as an outward garment merely; but he puts it right through a man, so that he is all righteousness.

Sometimes we hear people talk as though we must ourselves put on a fairly presentable garment before we can ask for the white raiment. But it is the very need and helplessness of the beggar that recommends him to charity.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." All men stand on the same level, and offer of mercy is to whosoever will come and partake of the water of life freely. We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Verse 24.

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