the result of a moral process, and even a moral battle. This idea is the key to the sufferings which Christ underwent to bring many sons to glory; and the subsequent verses shew how the key opens the problem by explaining why this moral battle was a battle involving suffering and death. Verses 11–13 shew that the position of Christ as our Saviour is one of brotherhood; and the following verses shew that the vocation of a brother to save his brethren can only be realized when the Saviour, becoming in all things like his brethren, takes upon Him their weaknesses and sufferings.

W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE Epistle to the Romans is generally, and with justice, regarded as the most comprehensive of St. Paul's Epistles. It is not so much prompted as the others by special interests or occasions. At the time it was written, St. Paul had not yet been to Rome, and except that, no doubt, he kept in view the general character and tone of thought of the Roman Christians, he was rather concerned with the general message of the Gospel than with any particular application of it, such as he had to make in the case of the Galatians or of the Corinthians. Accordingly, he intimates, at the outset, that this general account of the Gospel would be the subject of his letter. "As much as in me is," he says, in the first Chapter, "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also: for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"; and he then enters at once upon his main argument. We may with advantage, therefore, regard the

Epistle as presenting in its most comprehensive form the Gospel which St. Paul preached, when he had no particular class or purpose more especially in view. He surveys, more fully than elsewhere, the whole ground which, so to speak, the Gospel has to cover, and exhibits once for all its central principles. There is no Epistle which enables us more fairly to judge of the harmony between the preaching of the Apostles and the records of the Gospels. Although the Epistle is far from being the first in order of time, it is with great appropriateness that, in regard to its subject matter, it has been placed at the head of all the rest, forming, as it does, the natural transition between the Evangelical and the Apostolic writings. It will assist our appreciation of this harmony if we briefly review the main heads of the Apostle's argument.

That for which the Epistle, then, is most remarkable is the clearness and fulness with which it contrasts the position of men without the Gospel, and the new position into which they are brought under its influence. The Apostle commences by describing the manner in which the heathen world of his day had lost the knowledge of God, not liking to retain that knowledge in their minds, and in consequence falling into the grossest degradations with respect both to their conception of Him, and to their recognition of the dignity and purity of their own nature. But he denounces this ignorance as self-condemned; and, without condescending to argue with it, he proclaims that all men have to give an account to the righteous judgment of God, and will all be miserable or blessed in proportion as they are reconciled to Him, and as their souls are in harmony with his will. But this being the great ultimate reality, with which all human beings have to deal, the Apostle exposes with terrible force their incapacity, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether nominally living according to a revealed law or without one, to meet the demands of the

Divine tribunal. Just as he had commenced by describing the general collapse of the heathen world in respect to the knowledge of God, so he proceeds to describe the general moral failure of all men, Jews or Gentiles, whatever their advantages or efforts, and their incapacity to endure the severity of the Divine judgment. It is a picture of which we must all recognize the truth. Did our hopes and our peace depend on the harmony of our thoughts, words, and deeds with the judgment of a God of perfect righteousness, and were we left to ourselves in satisfying that requirement, most of us would have reason to tremble, and none could look forward with any confidence. The language which the Apostle uses on this subject, strong as it may seem to us in some moods, when our sins and their evil consequences are not vividly present to our thoughts, expresses none too forcibly the apprehension which seizes the soul, whenever it is brought fully to realize the prospect of coming face to face with a Being of absolute righteousness. Every mouth is then stopped, and all the world is sensible of being guilty before God. Of course, if men could escape that perfect judgment, their sins and their errors might be overlooked, just as they are overlooked between one another. Unless a perfect light were to be poured on their souls, their darkness and uncleanness would not be visible. But it is an essential part of the Apostle's message, it was indeed the primary message of the Gospel, that that perfect judgment will be brought to bear on us, that the inmost recesses of our souls will be exposed to the glare of that perfect light, and that upon the result of that fiery trial our whole spiritual future must depend.

Such, as described by the Apostle, is the natural condition of men considered in relation to the Divine Judgment which will one day be revealed and brought to bear on them. In a subsequent Chapter, the Apostle describes the natural condition of men individually, in reference to their

moral power. Here, too, he gives a description, to which almost every heart must respond, of the struggle within the soul between the sense of what is right and the temptation to what is wrong. "That which I do," he says, "I allow not; for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I. . . . I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that do I. . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." This is a description of his own experience, given by a man of singular holiness, earnestness, and sincerity of character; and it is difficult to believe that it can be foreign to the experience of any one who pursues righteousness with any approach to a similarly single and intense purpose. In short, whether we contemplate men as a body, or penetrate into the deeper experience of earnest souls, the Apostle describes everywhere the sense of imperfection, of failure, of weakness. Good enough we may sometimes seem to each other, with our light, and facile, and shallow judgments. Yet, if we contemplate the judgment of the world on itself, as expressed by poets, by historians, and by men of letters, we shall find it corresponds too truly to the description of St. Paul. Still more does the cry of weakness which St. Paul utters, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death," find its echo in every earnest life, in every true record of struggling human experience. The Epistle to the Romans, as was observed at the outset, is comprehensive; and it is in nothing more comprehensive than in the melancholy and stern survey which it thus takes of our moral experience, alike in respect

to the external standard we have to confront, and to our own sad consciousness. Ancient and modern philosophies, Eastern and Western religions, are in this at one; and to every heart, no matter how earnest, enthusiastic, and hopeful, comes sooner or later, often revealed in some touching and unexpected confession, this sense of failure and weakness.

When the Apostle, then, announces a Gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation," he points, in one word, to the very centre of human needs, and proclaims the very remedy which is wanted. Men are afflicted with a general sense of moral weakness and moral corruption; and the Apostle announces to them the means of moral power, and of moral salvation. Let us consider what is its character and source. Notwithstanding the closeness and difficulty of the reasoning in particular portions of the Epistle, its general argument is singularly simple, and the great truths it proclaims stand out clearly in the course of its discussions. In the midst of the corrupt, guilty and feeble human nature we have been contemplating, the Apostle reveals a Being of perfect holiness, purity, grace, and power, who graciously invites us to attach ourselves to Him, and to be united with Him, from whom, by virtue of that union, we are privileged to receive the moral strength and life we need, and who, by virtue of his own perfect offering to God, is able to plead for the forgiveness and admission to God's favour of all who are one with Him. These are the two elements in moral and spiritual salvation which the Apostle designates in the two words around which Christian thought has centred, Justification and Sanctification—the former implying our full admission, for our Saviour's sake, to the fellowship and favour of God, notwithstanding our sins and imperfection; and the latter involving the whole process of our moral and spiritual purification, and ultimate deliverance from all evil. All human moral and spiritual needs are contained in those

two words—to be assured that here we need not be separated from God on account of our sins, but may draw near to Him in the Name and for the sake of his Son, and that hereafter, when brought before his judgment seat, He will, for the love of the same Lord, deal mercifully with us; and further to be assured that the means are open to us of wrestling successfully with the evil of our hearts, of gaining the victory in that terrible internal war which the Apostle describes, and of being delivered from "the body of this death." The two great miseries of men in their natural condition, as we have just been contemplating them, are directly and abundantly met by this double revelation of grace and power. Though all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; and, in answer to the almost desperate appeal, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" we are enabled to reply, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now what it chiefly concerns us to observe, in this Gospel of the power of God unto salvation, is that it consists entirely of the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as a living and present Person, to whom we are united by faith, and from whom, by virtue of that union, all this Divine grace and power is derived to us. The very heart and centre of the Apostle's argument is to be seen in Chapter vi. of the Epistle, in which, to obviate any possible abuse of the doctrine of grace and forgiveness, he insists with the utmost urgency on the fact that our position as Christians is one of the most intimate union with the Saviour, alike in his death, and in his risen life. The baptism which admits us to our Christian privileges is described by the Apostle as baptism into Jesus Christ, into his death, and into his life. We pledged ourselves

in that sacrament to fellowship and oneness with Him in the supreme act of his life, in that crucifixion in which He died to all sin, living only unto God. Faith in Him, the faith which ensures our forgiveness and justification at God's hands, implies this acceptance of complete fellowship with Christ in that renunciation of all sin which led to his crucifixion, and which was carried out to the full in it; and in proportion as such fellowship and oneness in Christ's death is attained by us, in that proportion are we also united with the Saviour in his present life of power and grace. If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him—not merely, as the context shews, hereafter, but in the present—"knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof." It is not only Christ's death for us in the past, nor his deliverance of us in the future, which constitutes the Gospel which St. Paul proclaims as the power of God unto salvation; but it is his union with us in the present, our fellowship with his death, and our consequent sharing of His present life, in which this gracious revelation consists. This is the simple, clear, vivid reality around which this comprehensive Epistle centres. The person of Christ is introduced into the midst of that guilty, sinning, and suffering world which the Apostle contemplates, and which we see around us. To Him men look up by faith, and attach themselves to Him, and are united with Him; and He takes them as it were by the hand, and stands by their side in the presence of his Father, and asks and obtains their forgiveness; and they, on their part, are striving to be ever more and more one

with Him, and like Him; and He bestows on them, in proportion to their faith and trust and sincerity, his own life and power, by means of his own Spirit. They receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba, Father." That Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that they suffer with Him, that they may also be glorified together.

Now if we apprehend this living and personal character of the message proclaimed by St. Paul in this Epistle, we shall at once perceive its full harmony with the Gospels, and shall see what a gracious light those records throw on it. The Gospels also are the revelation of Jesus Christ, in all his grace, and power, and love, in the midst of sinning and suffering mankind. In the midst of the corruption and despair of his own people and of the world, He comes forward, summoning to repentance, appealing for faith, healing sicknesses, casting out devils, purifying men's souls by word and deed, abasing them by his revelation of their evil and weakness, and raising them again by his mercy and spiritual power. He is rejected by the majority of them, but "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." He is the centre of a new creation, of a new life, spiritual, moral, and physical. There are no limits to the operation of his power; all things are possible, and are shewn by miracle after miracle to be possible, to him that believeth. Faith in Him, submission to Him, complete acceptance of his will and dependence on Him, are the sole conditions He requires; and to all who give Him this faith He proclaims his Father's forgiveness, and gives the power to lead a new and blessed life. This is the Lord Jesus, this is the gracious Person, the source of all life and love, to whom St. Paul directs us in this Epistle. This is the living Lord and Saviour, whom he sees with the living eye of faith, and to

whom he points all who are oppressed with evil. That revelation of life, and power, and love, which he displays to us is the very revelation of the Gospels, and of their immediate sequel after our Lord's resurrection.

There are but two differences, which do not affect the essential character of the revelation, or the harmony of its two-fold exhibition. The Saviour to whom St. Paul points us is no longer visible, and we cannot see Him and speak to Him in the flesh. But we can speak to Him and commune with Him as really, as immediately, as when He was on earth; and He speaks to us, and guides and controls us, not less really and immediately by his Spirit. The communion of Christ with his disciples while He was upon earth is but the example and visible illustration of the communion to which we are admitted now, through his Spirit. The other difference is a more important one, and has given occasion to that sense of some divergence between the teaching of the Gospels and Epistles, which, to some minds, has seemed to need explanation. It is to a different part of our Saviour's work and life that St. Paul more immediately directs our attention. Our Lord had died, and had risen again; He had ascended into heaven, and had assumed all power at the right hand of God; and henceforth it was inevitable that these great and cardinal acts should take precedence of all others in Christian thought. The death of Christ was the final and complete exhibition of the whole spirit of his life, and was the consummation of his propitiatory work. That death, therefore, with the blood that He shed, embodies, in one terrible act, all other acts and words of his priestly and prophetical ministry; and Christian thought is thenceforth concentrated upon it with peculiar intensity. On the other hand, the new power He assumed after his resurrection, the far greater and more diffusive influence He exerted through his Spirit, similarly takes precedence in Christian thought of the powers He

exhibited before his death. We cannot be content to contemplate Him now as He was before his exaltation. He is the same in character, the same gracious Saviour, the same source of healing, of forgiveness, and life. But his power is now primarily spiritual, hidden, and exerted within our souls in secret spiritual communion, and by methods different in some respects from those which He employed on earth. The power of God unto salvation is now, as then, revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, as a living and present Person, but the acts and conditions by which that power operates on us are now contained in the grand events of his death, resurrection, and ascension; and to these accordingly, as in the creeds of the Church, St. Paul directs our main attention. But that we may have faith in Christ as a living and present Person, as much as when He was visible, and even more, so as to follow Him in his death to sin, and to live with Him in his risen life—that we may be one with this living Lord of life and love—such is the simple, but at the same time comprehensive and mighty, Gospel which the Apostle proclaimed; and it is but the completion of our Saviour's revelation of Himself in the four Evangelical narratives.

It would be a great assistance to us in our spiritual life to grasp, and ever to bear in mind, these considerations. So far as we allow Christian doctrines to be separated in our minds from the apprehension of Christ as a living Person, will they lose their power over our souls, and will they be in danger of assuming the unreality which has sometimes seemed to attach to them. But that danger will be avoided in proportion as we remember that we enjoy the grace of justification and forgiveness before God, not by virtue of a mere belief in Christ's atoning work in the past, but by virtue of our living faith and trust in Him in the present; and similarly that our sanctification, our continued victory over the sin in us and around us, depends on the reality

and constancy of our daily and living communion with Him. We shall then understand and prize the doctrinal statements of our faith, as the guides to its living truths and realities, and as a guarantee for them; but we shall live in the life and light of the great realities themselves. If we fall short of the gracious and glorious picture of Christian life given by the Apostle, is it not because we fail to live, as he did, in this living communion with the Saviour? His gracious influences are bestowed, now as ever, upon those who live with Him, love Him, trust Him, and pray to Him. Let Him be to us the most living and real companion of our lives; and then shall we understand better what it is to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

HENRY WACE.

ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN THEIR BEARING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

XVI. SENNACHERIB AND HEZEKIAH.

THE thrice-told history of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (2 Kings xviii., xix.; 2 Chron. xxxii.; Isa. xxxvii., xxxviii.) has made his name more familiar to English readers of the Bible than that of any other Assyrian king. We have here a record which brings before us the character of the man as well as the events which brought him into connexion with the history of Israel, and have accordingly more ample materials for a comparison of what is thus told of him with what he records of himself in his own monumental inscriptions. It will be seen that the Jewish and the Assyrian chronicles look at the same events from a very different