

EXPOSITION
OF
THE EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS.

MANCHESTER :

W. B. HORNER, 93, BLOOMSBURY, OXFORD ROAD.

LONDON :

R. L. ALLAN, 15, PATERNOSTER ROW.

DUBLIN : THOS. WESTON, 18, WESTLAND ROW.

LEEDS : TRACT DEPÔT, 10, PARK ROW.

EDINBURGH : TRACT DEPÔT, 59, COCKBURN STREET.

CHANNEL ISLANDS : J. TUNLEY, GUERNSEY.

NEW YORK : 44, BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

INTRODUCTION.

IT may facilitate our apprehension of the Epistle to the Romans itself, if we take a brief survey of the other epistles of Paul which complete his teaching on the various parts of the same general whole—Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians. A part of 2nd Corinthians furnishes us with the practical application of it. In the Galatians we have the first elements; in Ephesians the brightest results of the same great circle of truth. But some preliminary remarks may facilitate our perception of the different parts themselves contained in each epistle. The point I now refer to is the difference between the counsels of God and the responsibility of man. The counsels of God have their accomplishment in the second man, who is the Lord from heaven. Every intelligent creature is responsible, and the saint in a far higher way than a mere child of Adam. But I now speak of our original responsibility as creatures of God, and consequently in connection with the first Adam.

It is a wondrous and blessed truth that God's purpose and delight was in men. Before the world was the

divine thoughts centred in them, and that in connection with the Son of His love. Purpose was before responsibility. Responsibility necessarily awaited the creation of the responsible creature; for we do not speak of angels here, who were a distinct creation altogether, present when this creation was set up by the power of God. That purpose of God had the last man, the second Adam, the Son of His love, in view, in whom His wisdom and His power were to be displayed; and it was not revealed till after He had accomplished His work, on which, connected with His person, God's glory in it was to be founded. This is very distinctly stated in two passages I will now quote. Titus i. 2, 3: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour." Again, 2 Timothy i. 9: "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works [that is responsibility, according to which judgment is], but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light by the gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles."

The same in substance is stated in Ephesians i. 4, connected with other passages in the epistle, in which it is fully developed. In the well-known passage of Proverbs viii., though not of course as a dogmatic statement, as in the epistles, we have the

same truth of God's thoughts and purposes in man brought out in connection with wisdom personified, which, in its fulfilment, was in Christ. The object of that passage is not to celebrate—that which every pious mind surely owns—the wisdom of God in creation, as often supposed; but declares that wisdom was in God before creation, before His ways began. "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His ways, *before* His works of old; I was set up from everlasting." Or ever the earth was, Wisdom was there, is the statement when no creation was. What was in the mind of Wisdom, of which the created earth was but the sphere? When Jehovah did create, and when He ordered our present world, Wisdom was present with Him "as one brought up with Him, and *I* was daily His delight, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Man occupied Wisdom's thought: Wisdom's delight was there.

Hence when the word became flesh, the angels, that prior creation, celebrate it, acclaiming this, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in men;" not merely good will. It is the same word as when it is said, "in whom I am well pleased." Blessed unjealous praise of those holy beings delighting in God's thoughts, even if others were the object of them! For God's glory was their delight, and Christ eclipsed every other thought, and according to their perfect nature. Purpose was thus in the Second Man, the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the Son of God's love, and in those in whom His delight was associated with Him, to which end He became man, and which, through His death, was to God's glory and righteousness.

But the purpose of God was not first in accomplishment.

That came with the Second Man, when the question of man's responsibility had had its full solution and result, and they were dealt with as lost. The responsibility of man as such, as a mere creature, was fully dealt with, or rather man was under it, first as innocent. There he failed, tested by the simple claim of obedience without an evil lust; but (God having been distrusted, and Satan listened to, in Adam's, or however Eve's soul), God was lost, and lust and transgression came in—characterised now man and his ways, afraid of God, and driven out by Him. The sense of this responsibility was then lost, so to speak, in utter lawlessness, and the flood and judgment came upon the earth. Now God developed His ways anew in positive dealings with man, as outside, to bless or to test. But, before testing, grace was revealed; man was dealt with in grace. A free unconditional promise was given to Abraham, the new root of hope and promise by grace.

It is not without interest to notice the distinction of God's ways before and after the flood. When Adam was judged, no promise was made to him. The first man had lost all but the judgment he had merited, nor could promise be made to sinful flesh. But the total destruction of Satan's power is announced. In judging the serpent, it is declared that the woman's Seed, not Adam (clearly he was not woman's Seed), should bruise the serpent's head. The promises were in Christ. Then, though individuals were dealt with in grace, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, there was no new system or principle set up. Man remained responsible as man; and the earth was lawless, corrupt, and full of violence, and so bad that judgment came, and the world that then was perished. There was no new head and root

of promise. After the flood, man rose up in rebellion to make *himself* a name, not to be scattered ; and God confounded his language, and nations were formed, and Satan introduced idolatry. Save as an abstract root of all worship, as the consciousness of God must be, God was set aside, and men put devils in His place, and and clothed deified lusts with His name.* Then God called out from the world which He had made, and all relationship with it, one to whom He revealed Himself, and whom He made the head of a family belonging to Him, whether naturally or spiritually. To this chosen and called one, this new head of a race, God gave promises directly addressed, not indeed to man as such, but to the chosen and called one. The promise was introduced,† and first deposited in Abraham the father of the faithful ; it was soon after, by a figure intimating the death and resurrection of Christ, confirmed to the Seed. It was more than the judgment by which the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head ; there was direct personal blessing from God to the

* There appear to me to have been four sources of idolatry : first, an ineffaceable consciousness of God ; deified ancestors ; the stars ; and the principle of generation. These were interwoven, the last giving rise to corruption inconceivable, the consecration of degrading lusts. The gods, as popularly known, were deified passions, as Venus, Mars, &c., and the powers of nature. Behind all these was always the unknown God. Conscience had no part in the scheme ; natural benevolence might, as in India ; nor even when something of conscience (for all have one since the fall) mingled with it, as in the Egyptian Amenti, no future intercourse with God, transmigration, exaltation to gods like themselves. But though the root of God-consciousness was always there, fellowship with God was unknown.

† A promise not to destroy the earth was given to Noah, but he was no root of promised personal blessings.

objects of it, and this blessing in the seed of Abraham. The promise and the seed were fully united in the revelations of God.

After this came another very important dealing of God with the fleshly seed of Abraham—the giving of the law, the raising the question of righteousness, and requiring it from man, according to the perfect rule of it as applicable to Adam's children: blessing and life dependent on obedience—an obedience as justly required as the rule of it was perfect. Here responsibility was distinctly brought into relief, sanctioned by God's express authority, and a perfect measure of it given. We know the result. The golden calf was made before the tables of the law could be brought into the camp. To natural responsibility revealed authority and a revealed rule were added; righteousness was defined and claimed from man according to his obligations, measured by God Himself. Transgression came in, as before in Adam.

But then man's responsibility, to say nothing of God's patient dealings with him by the prophets, was dealt with in another and wholly new way. God came into this sinful world in grace, beseeching men to be reconciled to Him; and the promised Seed of David came to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh. But when He came, there was no man; when He called, there was none to answer. Not only sin was developed in lawlessness, and the law met by transgression, but mercy had been rejected, and the promise itself, and the promised One, despised. The trial of responsibility was over; the tree was bad; and all the digging about it and dunging brought no true fruit to

God. The fig-tree on the way bore leaves only, and was judged for ever. The one beloved Son, if He sought fruit, was cast out and slain. If the King invited guests, His invitation was despised. Not only God had driven man out of Paradise, but man, as far as he was concerned, had turned God, come in grace into the ruined world of outcasts, out of it in hatred against Him. Sin was complete, and man lost.

But now, speaking reverently, it was God's turn. They with wicked hands had slain Christ, but it was according to the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. The truth was, He had appeared once *in the end of the world* (the consummation of ages—an expression we can now easily understand) to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Here the Lord, according to every need of man and the divine glory, met the consequences of man's responsibility—made sin, and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Propitiation was perfect, redemption (not yet as regards exercised power, but moral title in righteousness in the value of Christ's work) accomplished; and here, not only man's responsibility had been met, but God perfectly glorified in all that He is: love, righteous judgment against sin, majesty, truth, and devoted obedience to Himself at all cost, and man entered in righteousness into the glory of God, and as Son established heir of all things (see John xiii. 31, 32; vii. 1, 4, 5). Thus in the cross of Christ the full foundation was laid in righteousness, according to the righteousness of God, for the accomplishment of the divine counsels in glorifying the redeemed in the second man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. The putting away the sins of those that had part with Him

was accomplished (those that rejected Him were doubly guilty) ; the revelation of the righteousness of God had now its full ground, Christ being at the right hand of God as man in virtue of it, and the counsels of God could be fully brought out to the glory of God by us, yea, all His plans for the glory of the second Adam, His beloved Son, and of us with Him.

Thus we have these two great subjects before us, the responsibility of man and the counsels of God. I should add, to complete these truths, that Christ thus risen becomes our life ; and the Holy Ghost is given to us that we may enjoy the efficacy of Christ's first coming, in forgiveness and righteousness, and have God's love shed abroad in our hearts, and have the earnest of the inheritance which is before us in glory ; consciously sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

However, the forgiveness of sins and the clearing away of all that belonged to the old Adam on the one hand, and the counsels of God on the other, are now through the cross distinctly revealed and the difference as clearly seen. In one the evil and our responsibility is met by the work of the cross ; on the other the righteous ground of the accomplishment of all God's counsels is laid, so that they can be revealed. We have seen responsible man in his natural state, unfallen and fallen, and that end in the flood ; then in the renewed earth, as to this point, when man sought to make it his own, and God had divided it into nations, God calling out one to be a race and people for Himself, and gave him the promises, confirming them to his seed ; then man, this called people, put under law ; and finally the heir of promise come, and God in Christ

reconciling the world. Man had thus been fully tried in his natural state, and by all that God could do in dealing with him. The result was either lawless sin or enmity against God. God Himself, now in His own work of grace, wrought redemption, and, perfectly glorified in Christ a man amongst men, set Him as man in righteousness in the divine glory, our fore-runner to whom we are to be conformed. Thus forgiveness, righteousness, the setting aside the old thing, were secured, and the counsels of God brought fully out as to having man with Himself in glory, in and with His Son the Lord Christ, the Spirit being given to the forgiven ones, that they might know this redemption fully, stand consciously in the place of sons, and have an earnest of the glory.

Of this the Epistle to the Galatians brings out very distinctly the following points:—promise, in contrast with law, which brought a curse and no justification of man; redemption from that curse, by Christ's being made a curse for us: then through Christ the promised Seed, come of the woman (once the source of sin), and made under the law to redeem those under it, meeting the two great forms of responsibility and consequent judgment before and after the flood, Himself the Son, that the blessing of Abraham, coming on the Gentiles, too, all might receive the adoption of sons. Thus was Christ the fulfiller of promise in contrast with the schoolmaster till He came. But, we being sons by faith in Him, the Spirit is given to us, giving the consciousness of the relationship. We are no more servants but sons, and the Spirit is in contrast with the law. The flesh, our evil nature, lusts against the Spirit; but, if led of this, we are not under law; nor can there be

a law against the fruit of the Spirit. Thus we have the recognition of the natural evil of man, not the full inquiry as to our place under God's dealings, promise, law, the promised One, redemption accomplished by Him, and the consequent gift of the promised Spirit and the Sonship into which we are brought. The ways and dealings of God are fully discussed, our place ascertained; but the counsels of God are not touched upon. Hence I said it was elementary, though most important in its place.

The Epistle to the Romans discusses fully the ground on which a man can be put with God; and how the promise to the Jews, and their present rejection, and the no-difference doctrine as to Jew and Gentile, is reconciled with the promise. Our study of the epistle will bring this out, with the Lord's help, in its place. I only remark that it also treats the responsibility of man, not the counsels of God. But there are such, and our security under them is just touched upon in chapter viii., so that a link with the other point is given.

I would now refer to two aspects of man's state of sin, necessary to understand the distinction between the foregoing epistles and the others previously mentioned. Man may be considered as living in evil ways, alive to sin and lust, so to speak, but, if so, dead towards God. As to the former, death must come in to free him from the evil; in the latter aspect, he is viewed as dead in sin. The Epistle to the Romans treats fully the former, and the remedy by grace; that to the Ephesians treats man as dead in sins. In Romans it is justifying and delivering sinful man, and bringing him out of that condition by redemption;

in Ephesians it is a new creation. Here consequently, while redemption is fully stated, the counsels of God are fully unfolded, and man is seen sitting in heavenly places in Christ. In Colossians we have both—buried unto death, and, when dead in sins, raised with Christ. The believer is seen risen with Christ, having died with Him; but heaven is in hope and prospect: he is not seen sitting there. The Ephesians therefore begin with the counsels of God, first setting us in our place before God morally like Himself—Christ's position, who is gone to His Father and our Father, His God and our God; then, after briefly stating redemption as that which we have as needed to bring us there, and indeed to make God known, God's purposes as to the Christ Himself, head over all as man, are stated; which brings in the inheritance and the earnest of the given Spirit till the redemption of the purchased possession, when glory will be revealed. The present exaltation of Christ, and the working of the same power in us which took Him when dead from the grave to the right hand of God, brings in the church associated with Him; His Body, who is head *over* all things, and *to* it. This work of Christ is unfolded in the second chapter. Christ is first seen in death where we were lying in sins, and (these put away by His bearing them—going down to death for us) God's power comes in and raises us up with Him into the same place of glory and blessing. Thus the purpose of God in the sons and heirs and the church, as His Body united to Him, is fully revealed; the practical consequence gone into. It is a scheme hidden from all ages and generations, impossible to exist or be revealed till the middle wall of partition was broken down. Then the gifts of the Spirit from

the Man on high to build up the saints and evangelise the world, forming the body in union with Christ, are unfolded; and from iv. 17, practical conduct. It is interesting to see that as we are perfectly brought to God in Christ the conduct of the Christian is that of our coming out as a child from Him to display God's own character, of which Christ is the perfect pattern in man. This subjectively depends on having put off the old man and put on the new, which is created *after God*, &c., and the presence of the Holy Ghost, which is not to be grieved. God, as love and light, is the objective measure to be followed, as by dear children, Christ Himself having been the perfect expression of both. It is well to note here that the contrast with and the superiority to law is striking. That takes love to self as the measure of love to others; this, the perfect giving up of self in love as Christ did. Finally, we are God's warriors in Canaan—that is, in heavenly places—and have need of God's whole armour against spiritual wickedness, walking in dependence on God. Such is a brief sketch of the principles of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

In the Colossians saints are not sitting in heavenly places: a hope is laid up for them in heaven. They go farther than Romans, in that we are risen with Christ, a point not treated of in Romans;* but it does not, as the Epistle to the Ephesians, seat us in heavenly places in Him. We are to set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth. But the Romans' and Ephesians' view of the case are in their elements distinctly stated. We are buried with Him

* We are seen *in* Christ in chapter viii. 1, and the church is contemplated in xli.; but this is assumed; the subject is not treated.

by baptism unto death. This is as Romans vi. The believer is looked at as previously alive in his sins, as stated indeed in iii. 7. But then he is also looked at as quickened together with Christ (ii. 13), which is not in the Romans, but is in the Ephesian development of truth; but it does not reach on to the full Ephesian doctrine, that we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ. So, further on, we find, "If ye be dead with Christ" (ii. 20); and iii. 1, "If ye be risen with Christ." Then it is exhortation we are to seek those things that are above where *Christ* sits. There is another truth connected with this which shows the perfection of Scripture and God's elaborate care in teaching His saints fully. In Colossians, save one practical expression which forms no part of its doctrine, the Spirit is not mentioned. It is having put off the old man and put on the new—life as risen with Christ. Ephesians is the full development of sonship and the body. It is by the Holy Ghost we have the spirit of adoption, and are baptized into one body. Hence His presence is fully noticed in that epistle. The body is assumed practically in Colossians as iii. 15, but the Head, Christ, is more its subject. The fulness of the Godhead is in Christ in Colossians. In Ephesians the body is His fulness; completes the head, who fills all in all. In 2 Corinthians iv. 10 and following verses will be found the practical power of the doctrine of Romans in daily operation. Death as to all that was of Adam in Paul is effectuated in everyday life, that nothing but the life of Jesus should be manifested in his dealings with others; God also helping to the same end, by making him pass through circumstances which were death to all natural life (compare 2 Cor. i. 8, 9). In v. 14 we have other

viewed in the light of Ephesian doctrine—all men dead, or Christ need not have died for them. He went down to death, because they were there.* The glory of an exalted Christ is what is especially before his eyes here—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

I trust this survey, though rapid, may enable us to study with more intelligence the Epistle to the Romans, which does not enter on the counsels of God with any development, but lays the ground fully for their accomplishment in putting away sins and giving deliverance from the old man. The responsibility of man is fully treated, God's righteousness explained and established, and grace unfolded as the source and principle of God's dealings with us. The special case of promises to the Jews, which seemed to clash with bringing all with no difference into the same standing before God, is treated in a special appendix.

It may facilitate our inquiries to give the division of the epistle into the parts of which it is naturally composed. The first seventeen verses are introductory, the last giving the thesis of the whole epistle. From 18th to the end of v. 11 is one great division, where sins are treated of, and God's grace in respect of these sins. In this as a whole, i. 18 to iii. 20 gives the full proof that all were under sin; and then the apostle returns to verse 17, and declares how the righteousness of God is now revealed, propitiation having been made through Christ's blood. Chapter iv. speaks of Christ's resurrection as sealing His work to the same purpose. But

* The interpretation "there have all died," as a consequence, I have not the smallest question is a simple blunder, as indeed verse 15 plainly proves.

thus far the imputing righteousness is not carried farther than forgiveness of sins. The first eleven verses of chapter v. give the blessed result and effect of grace in our present standing under that grace. The twelfth verse of chapter v. begins a new subject—the old man, the flesh, sin in the flesh, what we are as of Adam (not what we have done, though these are the fruits and proof of the other). Here our death with Christ comes in, and life in Him (not in Adam). It is deliverance, not forgiveness. This second blessing and our place in Christ and security through Him are stated in chapter viii. This gives occasion to bring the question of the law fully before us. It addresses itself to the child of Adam. As such we have died in Christ. Thus all had sinned, Jew and Gentile, and had the same fleshly nature. There was no difference; and if it was God's righteousness, it was as applicable to one as to the other. But then a difficulty arose. There were promises to Israel as well as law. What about them? Did not they on God's part make a difference? This is met in what I have called an Appendix, chapters ix.-xi. From chapter xii. and on we have exhortation founded on mercies previously treated of.

The Epistle to the Romans furnishes the eternal principles of God's relationship with man; the way in which, by means of Christ, dead and risen, the believer is established in blessing; and the reconciling of these things with the speciality of the promises made to the Jews by Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance.

EXPOSITION, &c.

I MAY now turn to the details; and first to the introductory verses, chapter i. 1-17. We must remember that the apostle had never been at Rome, and writes upon the ground of his universal mission to the Gentiles. Hence, while the personal salutations are very numerous, the epistle is very much of a treatise on the subject he refers to; what we may call the gospel fully reasoned out, the state of man, the place the law really held, and, as we have seen, the position the Jews, who had been nigh, had got into. He begins with his mission. He was separated to the gospel of God. He was an apostle by the calling of God.

First, the Lord had personally called him, and given him his mission to the Gentiles; separating him out of the whole human race, Jew and Gentile, and connecting him with Himself in glory (Acts xxvi. 17). "Delivering thee [taking him away] from the people [the Jews], and from the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee." The Lord had appeared to him for the purpose of his being a witness of the glorified Lord Jesus. Hence we find him speaking of the gospel of the glory (2 Cor. iv.), and

God who caused the light to shine out of darkness shining in his heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Hence, too, he says that if he had known Christ after the flesh—"that is, in His earthly associations"—as Messiah down here, as a Jew would expect Him, according to the word, he knew Him no more. The man glorified after having suffered death, and accomplished redemption, was the Christ he knew. It was the beginning and head of the new creation—the glorified man—the Lord who saved His people as being Himself. Still the *administration* of the mercy recognised the place God had given to the Jews. There was no difference; but it was to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Secondly, he was separated, actually, to active service at Antioch. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." His mission he received directly from the Lord, revealed in glory. He was separated to the glory, to the Lord in it. His immediate separation to his actual work was by the Holy Ghost. He was separated to the glad tidings of God. This has a double character. It was concerning God's Son; but it was the accomplishment of promise on the one side; on the other, the person of the Son of God designated in power through resurrection, the setting aside the effect of sin, not God's judgment of course, but that wherein the power of Satan reigned over man by sin. It is to be remarked here that the person of the Son of God is that which is especially put forward here as the gospel to which he was separated. We shall find propitiation and righteousness fully stated, but first of all God's gospel is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord—first, seed of David according to the

flesh; then Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead.

That power, divine power, which raised Him* from the dead, and proved him Son of God, was manifested all through His life in the holiness which never allowed sin to enter for an instant.

He was quickened by the Spirit—(*ἐν πνεύματι*), but His holiness, separation to God, was by the Spirit also. Resurrection was the public demonstration that He was the Son of God, with power, victory over the full wages of sin as seen in this world; but the opened eye would have seen the same power in the exclusion of sin itself, in absolute and perfect holiness, all His life through.

Thus accomplishment of promise and divine power over death were there, and the Son of God as man in absolute holiness, our Lord Jesus Christ. They were God's glad tidings concerning His Son. Of His work, save in triumph over death, we have as yet nothing; but God has come, in power and grace, where sin and death reigned. Holiness has been manifested in man in this world, and death, under which man lay, has been overcome.

It is important to notice that, in the statement of the glad tidings of God, the person of the Son is first of all brought out; His intervention, in power to deliver,† promise accomplished, but, above all, it is the Son of God. Grace has made Him a man, and resurrection has proved Him Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. There is One revealed to us in perfect grace, but who in grace has a perfect claim over our souls.

* It is not necessarily His resurrection alone. It is abstract; but this was the first grand complete proof.

† In this it partakes of the nature of the everlasting gospel.

Another thing we may remark in this, as will be further seen, is that it is what He is from God. God has accomplished His promise; God has brought in victory over death. It is all in the person of the Son, a man; not what man is for God at all, save the person of Christ Himself. We shall soon see that, as God's Son is revealed in man triumphant over death, God's righteousness is revealed too; then fully the need of man, and how it is met—fully met; but first, what God has Himself brought in, and for Himself, for grace and glory, what has more the character of the everlasting gospel as to the power that is in it—the person of the Son in the man Jesus, and divine righteousness. This is the general aspect; man's responsibility and man's need will come after. But we must first have the thing, as it is for God and before God, though all in grace to us.

But there is another point I must notice here, as it refers to the whole character of the epistle, which is more that of laying the foundation than of building the superstructure: the testimony that Christ is Son of God is resurrection, not glory. The ascension, though assumed of course, as is the church, is not mentioned save occasionally (in chapter viii.) to bring in intercession. Ascension brought in the result in the counsels of God; but already in resurrection God had put His seal on Christ's person and work. Redemption was accomplished; sin atoned for; death overcome; he who had the power of death brought to nothing in the stronghold of his power—all accomplished which made glory to be righteousness. Thus the whole case between man and God was met and established upon a new ground. The

glories which result according to the counsels of God are not gone into. We shall see that our resurrection even with Christ is not spoken of; our death with Him is, because that was necessary to close the old evil, and bring us into a state capable of living with God as fully delivered. Christ's resurrection and our death with Him are necessary to make good our title, and close the old and evil state, and introduce what is essentially new. Our place in that remained yet to be entered into according to the counsels of God.*

The mission of the apostle was for obedience to the faith, the subjection of men's souls to the revelation of God's Son, the risen man, the Lord Jesus—to the truth of God revealed in Him, and the grace which accompanied that truth; for both must be there that we may believe. Nor, indeed, can one be fully revealed without the others, for grace is part of truth where God is fully revealed; nor could grace come without the truth, for what would the grace be about, and how should God be revealed? But God is light, and God is love; and these, coming to us, are grace and truth.

This obedience of faith was "amongst all nations," not of all nations. The grace and truth must go to men as such. God thus revealed could not be only to Jews; but the time was not come to subject all nations by power, but to call a people out of them—"to take out of them a people for His name." Among these the believers at Rome were the called of Jesus Christ. To such the apostle addressed himself at Rome. They were

* Our resurrection with Christ looks at Him as come down in grace into our place where we are dead in sin. Our being then raised together with Him involves union with Him. This is not the subject of *Romans*, but individual justification.

already there. God did not allow Christianity to be founded by an apostle at Rome. These believers were the beloved of God, and saints by His calling.

The apostle then enters into his own feelings as to, and interest in, them; and that connected with his universal commission to the Gentiles, in which the love of Christ wrought to make them the objects of his heart, and precious to him, whom he had not even seen. The apostolic spiritual power he would impart to them, but in unfeigned grace he would be comforted in their mutual faith. "Debtor to Greeks and barbarians" (for, such is the place of love in power), he was ready, to preach the glad tidings to those at Rome also. He was not ashamed of the glad tidings; they were "the power of God unto salvation"—simple words, but how much they contain!

It is not God claiming from man; it is not man acting for God, or making out the means of meeting Him. But, God acting for man, it is power at work in man's favour; and this, not to help or plead merely, but to deliver from the state he was in—to save him.

Next, the way. It was such to every one that believed, Jew or Greek; they wanted saving. God's power, there to save, took man up in his need and sin, not in his titles or claims, even if given of God, and applied to a lost Gentile as to a lost Jew. It was for "every one that believed"—the way of it was faith; the order of it recognised God's ways. It was "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." But this did not alter its character: it was salvation to a sinful Jew. He had to come in in mercy, just like a Gentile, by faith in what was on God's part in grace towards him, though in the order of administration it might first be addressed to him.

Further, it is the power of God to salvation, because in it the righteousness of God is revealed on the principle of faith to faith. Nothing had to be done by man; nothing was required from man. *God's* righteousness, perfect and absolute—that on which He would bless without limit—was revealed for man. More He could not require, more, as to righteousness, He could not give; and there it was for man, and revealed, and thus God's power to save him. This took it clean out of man's doings for God; which I insist on, because it is the great principle of truth, it is God's doing for man. It is on the principle of faith that it might be by grace: man only believed through grace what was revealed. Hence the believer withal possessed it, and so Gentile or Jew. But here the object is its intrinsic nature. It was "*God's* righteousness;" it was revealed "on the principle of faith" (works do not make out God's righteousness, but man's), and hence "for faith." The just were to live by faith.

This closes the introductory verses. The person of the Lord Jesus and the righteousness of God are the great thesis of the glad tidings of God. One revealed as the deliverer, the Son of God, claimed the obedience of faith; the other, still on the principle of faith, revealed as the ground on which man could have a part in purposed blessing through grace. The apostle now turns to what made this righteousness of God necessary for us. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." This is a most important principle. It is not governmental wrath, such as bringing the Assyrian against Israel, or leading them captive to Babylon—a thing of this world, while

God was hidden still behind the veil. It tells us of the incompatibility of God's nature with evil. God's wrath was revealed against every thing inconsistent with His nature—wrath from heaven against all ungodliness; and, where the truth was known, and men might seem to be nearer to God, as the Jews, if held in unrighteousness, wrath was against such as so held it too. Wrath against all ungodliness was revealed from heaven; Gentile, Jew, men in every condition, came under the judgment. It was not a hidden God dealing in earthly judgment, but God Himself fully revealed according to His own nature, abhorrent of evil, in necessary wrath against all evil, wherever it was met with. His nature could admit no evil. Dispensational ways there might have been—government, patience. But now wrath was revealed from heaven against all evil, wherever it was found.

The apostle then shows on what ground the judgment went, as against all men :—on the heathen, to the end of the chapter; on moralisers, in the beginning of ii.; and from verse 17 of ii. on the Jew, which goes on to iii. 20. The ground of the condemnation of the heathen is creation testimony, and their not retaining God in their knowledge; for in Noah that knowledge was. The first ground is stated in verses 19-20; the second in verse 21. They turned the glory of the incorruptible God into images of men, birds, beasts, and reptiles; and as they thus turned God's glory into dishonour, God gave them up to turn man's too, and they degraded themselves in vileness as they had degraded God in idolatry. Yet they knew the judgment of God.

And this made the moralisers, the Socrates, and the like,

inexcusable; they did the things they judged (ch. ii). But God's judgment is according to truth against those who commit such things. Doing them and judging others was not the way of escaping God's judgment; or, were they despising God's mercy leading them to repentance, and heaping up wrath for the day of judgment—of the revelation of God's righteous judgment? God always judges evil morally; but there is a day when that judgment will be revealed; and this dealing with evil takes place in a manifest way, according to the nature of God. We have seen this infinitely important principle in i. 17; not dispensational government on those near or those far off, but God revealing His judgment of evil in man according to what He is. Hence the light of Christianity is thrown here on the grounds of judgment, though the light actually possessed is made to enter into the measure of retribution; but the nature, and, in judgment, the authority of God rejects evil. Jew or Gentile, it is all alike. When He is revealed, evil is dealt with as evil. The special advantages of one may enter into the ground of judgment, and if they have sinned under law, they will be judged by law. But evil is evil, while God is God, be the evil in a Jew or a Gentile; nor is there respect of persons with Him.

But the revelation of God, which thus brings in the knowledge of judgment according to truth, necessarily supposes the truth there, and obedience to the truth became part of the moral testing of man, as well as law and natural conscience. Hence, in ii. 7, 8, we have what Christianity has brought to light; verses 9, 10, tribulation and anguish are upon every soul of man *that does evil*, and glory, honour, and peace upon every soul of man *that doeth good*—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The object of the apostle here is evidently not to show how a sinner could be justified; but that, though God might follow in His *administration* of blessing what He had accorded to the Jewish people, yet now that He had revealed Himself He had to do with realities, and that a godly Gentile was more His delight than an ungodly Jew, whatever the privileges of the latter. The doer of the law would be justified, be he Jew or Gentile; not he who had and broke it. There was no respect of persons with God, and conscience might take notice of right and wrong where there was no law, and thus become a law to a man who had no law as given of God. So they that had sinned without law would perish without it; those who had sinned under it would be judged by it. The discussion is not, here, by what power or grace a man would be led or enabled to walk conscientiously, but that reality of walk, and not privilege of position, was what God owned.

It is well to remark that there is no law written in the heart* of the Gentile—that is the new covenant—but the work which the law requires conscience recognises as right or wrong. Conscience knows it is *wrong to murder or steal*, when no law is given. Man got the knowledge of good and evil by the fall, and it is of all importance to recognise the difference of this and law. Law imposes a rule by authority—here God's authority; conscience on the contrary takes notice of right and wrong in itself, as God does. "The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." That is, conscience takes notice of good

* "Written" agrees with work, not with law; the Greek leaves no question as to this.

and evil in itself, as good and as evil, without any law which prescribes or forbids it; and so far a man is a law to *himself*;—that is, not having the thing prescribed to him, or forbidden, as a law does.

It is well also to remark here that verses 13, 14, and 15 are a parenthesis. The connection is, “judged by the law in the day,” &c.

Remark here also, on the side of man as before of God, it is not governmental judgment, the ways of God with men on earth, visiting, it is true, sins on a people or on a race with long suffering and patience; but the secrets of men's hearts judged—all brought to light, strictly and rightly judged—according to the necessary requirements of God's nature, taking into account the advantages men have had; not governing in patience, but judging in righteousness, according to what is good and what is evil, as none can deny, and where none can escape. The secrets of men's hearts would be judged, and men come out such as they really were, however hidden from the eyes of men.

In ii. 17 the apostle begins definitely with the Jew, insisting on the same truth, but the converse of what he had said of the Gentile—a Jew who boasted of the law and broke it was as bad as he who had none; the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. He only was a Jew who was so inwardly; whose heart was circumcised, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise was not of men, but of God.

We come now to a very important principle—the ways of God, the possession of privileges where there was no renewal of heart to profit by them, and whether this made such any better, more agreeable to God

—for this the Jew pretended (ch. iii). The apostle's argument seemed to level all. It did morally before God, save as privileges added to responsibility; but he fully admitted the existence of very great privileges and advantages where God had placed them. If the circumcised were uncircumcision really unless they kept the law, what advantage had the Jew? Much every way. The apostle fully recognises their privileges, especially in having the scriptures, "the oracles of God;" and if some did not believe, their unbelief would not make the faith—that is, the faithfulness of God—of no effect. God would be true if every man was a liar. He would fulfil His word. But if His accomplishing it in spite of man's unfaithfulness only the more proved His faithfulness, so that He was the more glorified through man's unfaithfulness, this did not hinder His judging the evil. Were it so, He could not judge the world at all. If man's unrighteousness made God's righteousness more conspicuous, why should God judge him for it? This is a general principle, but it has a special application to the Jews; for the more the heathen opposed and were jealous of them, and trampled them down, so much the more God's faithfulness shone out, and He could no more judge the Gentiles, the world, than the Jews. But it is a general principle that man's unrighteousness commending or proving God's righteousness did not make it unjust to judge.

The apostle returns to the form in which it applies to the Jews—that their falseness made God's faithfulness to His promises more glorious, so that He had not to find fault; nay, they might do evil that good might come, returning in this latter to the general principle, as, indeed, some charged the Christian with holding.

As to such principle, the apostle does not condescend to reason, but simply says, "whose damnation is just." No, all our evil does commend this patient faithfulness of God to His promises, and to His goodness. Man would soon reject those who dealt with him as he does with God. But that does not hinder responsibility, and sin, and judgment.

Well, then, the Jews had advantages: were they, then, better than the Gentiles? In no way. The apostle had already proved both under sin. He then quotes, first from the Psalms, then from Isaiah, the plain testimony of scripture, denouncing, as wholly sinners, all they were addressed to.

The Jew boasted these scriptures were for him, and for him alone. Well, says the apostle, we know that what the law says it does say to those who are under it. Let us then hear its voice to such. This is what it says:—"There is none righteous, no not one." The Gentiles confessedly were sunk in all manner of vice, in corruption, and idolatry. The Jew was the privileged race, and the special privilege was that the oracles of God were committed to them. Well, the apostle owned that the law spoke to those under it;—but it declared there was none righteous. The Jew was condemned by his own plea. And now see what is the state of man, under the greatest advantages, possessing what God has to give, as the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son! None righteous; none that understandeth, no intelligence at all spiritually; none that seeketh after God, in will all wrong; none that doeth good, no not one; evil, without exception, when tried. The full forms of evil in which this state develops itself are then gone into. Amiable characters

some may have, as animals may ; but a heart seeking God, or fearing God, not one. Every mouth was stopped, and all the world guilty before God. The Gentiles confessedly so—lawless and reprobate in mind, working uncleanness with greediness ; the Jew condemned out of his own mouth by that of which he boasted. So far from any being justified by the deeds of the law, it brought with it the knowledge of sin. Sin was everywhere—law the special conviction of it.

This closes the apostle's proof of that state which gave occasion to the wrath of God being revealed from heaven, the proof reaching as a whole from i. 19 to the end of iii. 20.

Then the apostle returns to his proper subject, stated in i. 17—the righteousness of God. Man clearly had none. He was proved, Jew and Gentile, all under sin ; but now God's righteousness, entirely apart from law, was manifested. The law and the prophets bore testimony to it. This is the great leading point : God's righteousness is manifested. This is by the faith of Jesus Christ ; such is the manner of its being set forth and received. It is towards all. Were it man's, it must be by the law, and, consequently, only for the Jews, who alone had that law. But it is God's, and by faith, and so *for* all, and actually (since it was by faith of Jesus Christ) *upon* all those that believed. For there is no difference ; all are alike, all under sin ; but God's righteousness was by faith on every one who believed. The justification is free by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

This gives the thesis of the doctrine of righteousness, as a whole, complete in itself. In i. 17, God's righteousness, we are told, is revealed in the gospel. Now, in

contrast with law, which was the way of man's righteousness, having nothing to say to it (*χωρίς νόμου*, wholly apart from the law), we know the manner of this righteousness in its application:—it is by faith of Jesus Christ to all, applicable and held out as the principle of faith to all, and upon all those that believe. All were alike under sin, proved so, the justification of all alike freely by God's grace, through redemption—that redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

We have then additional detail, and the manner of its application to the Old Testament saints and those since Christ. God, the apostle tells us, had set Christ forth as a propitiatory, a place of access on the ground of redemption and blood presented to God as the atonement or propitiation for sins. Now, as regards the Old Testament saints, this now proved God's righteousness in having borne with them, where they sinned. His forbearance had been shown at the time; but where was the righteousness in thus passing over the sins of the Abrahams, and Samuels, and Davids, and the like? This was now shown. It was in view of the propitiation to be wrought by Christ, ever present to God, on the ground of which He dealt as if it was already accomplished, so far as the forgiveness of sins went.

Then, as regards those subsequent to the work, God's full present justice was declared—His righteousness declared at this time; that through which He could be just, and justify; yea, that in which He was manifested just in justifying the believers in Christ Jesus. This was an immense truth. Forbearance had been before, righteousness in exercising it unrevealed; *now* righteousness was revealed, God's righteousness, first in His exercise of that forbearance, justifying His

remission of their former sins, but further righteousness, God's righteousness, being fully revealed, the ground of justifying those who believed in Jesus, God's righteousness in doing so was as clearly manifested as the ground on which it went was perfectly accomplished. God's righteousness was fully proved in setting Christ at His right hand, as we learn in John xvi. 10. He is gone up on high in virtue of having glorified God perfectly on the cross, and God's righteousness therein revealed and declared. In the part of Romans we are now occupied with, we have only the fact that God's righteousness is now declared as to remission of past sins, and justifying believers now, Christ being set forth as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. The value of Christ's blood brings the witness of righteousness in remission of past sins, but it brings a known present justification of them who believe, maintaining fully the justice of God. He is just and the justifier, not a condemner, of those that believe.

All boasting then on man's part is shut out, for it is God's work and God's grace by which he is justified, clearly not by a law of works, there would be man's boasting, but by the law of faith which simply received, through grace, the effect of another's work. We may see here that law is used for a regularly acting principle—the law of faith, the law of works. We shall find this again. Hence, as we cannot mingle the two principles of gaining a thing by working and receiving a thing by faith (and, indeed, another thing—God's righteousness, not man's), one of them excludes the other, and we conclude, not only that a man is justified by faith through Christ's blood by grace, but that it is

without—wholly apart from, to the exclusion of—works of law. God is justifying sinners by His dealings for them, not man righteous by a law which he has kept. For all are under sin.

And is God only the God of a people, even of His people? Is He not God of all nations? Surely He is, and indeed now in grace, just as He is for the Jew, who needed it as much as the Gentile. For it is one and the same God who justifies the circumcision (who sought their own righteousness by law) on the principle of faith, freely by grace, and, if a Gentile had that faith, that Gentile by the faith that he had. This is the force of the words translated “by” and “through.” “By” is on the principle of; “through,” by means of, when one possessed it. The Jew sought righteousness on a wrong principle. The gospel revealed the true one—faith. If the Gentile had the faith, he had the justification which was given on that principle.

If then this justification was by faith to the exclusion of law, did it set aside the law? In no way. The law brought the conviction of sin, nay, brought the curse, from which he who was under it had to be delivered; and the justification of such an one, the deliverance of such an one from the curse by such a means as Christ's bearing it, gave the highest possible sanction to the law. That Christ should bear its curse established the authority of law as nothing else did. The apostle had just used it to bring the Jew fully under conviction, so that the blood of Christ, and grace, and redemption were needed; and the introduction of them as needed by the Jew, who was under the law, if it set aside all righteousness by law, recognised fully

the authority of the law as bringing them under the transgression from which they had to be justified. The paying a debt recognises the debt, and the obligation which made it such, though (and in that in which) it puts an end to it. There is more than this in the law, it is true. I only use the image to show that putting an end to anything may fully prove the obligation of it.

Righteousness by faith was on a principle incompatible with law. In one, God's work in grace justified freely; according to the other, man's work in righteousness made peace, redemption, and God's work unnecessary. Nor did obedience under law produce what grace did after all. It was not, if accomplished, God's righteousness, but man's. But redemption, and grace, and Christ's blood, effectual through faith, recognised the authority of law, and gave its sanction to it, by meeting in another way the sins and condemnation incurred under it. It went on a different principle, wholly incompatible with law as a way of righteousness; but it recognised the claim of righteousness made by the law as made by God, and, when man had failed, met that claim in grace. The two could not work together, for they contradicted each other in every point: one rested on grace, the other on work; one on God's work, the other on man's. One consequently gave man's righteousness if fulfilled, which it was not; the other, God's by a perfected work. But the grace that was incompatible with law owned and met the claim of law, in order to justify freely him who had failed under it.

But there was more in Israel's history than law. There were the Abrahams and Davids, promises, and divine faithfulness that owned the promises. What ground did they stand upon? What has Abraham found?

Was he justified by works? If so, he has whereof to glory. But it is not so before God (proof before men, to make it good in testimony to them, there may have been and was), but before God he was counted righteous through faith. Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. If a man works, reward is of debt, not grace; but to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. This is established by the case of David. "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin." Note here that thus far the imputation of righteousness goes no further than the forgiveness of sins. There is more farther on; but here that is all. A man is justified from what he is guilty of—from his sins, and so far accounted righteous. For such is the force of imputing righteousness. His faith is reckoned to him for righteousness. It is not so much put to him to account.* Abraham believed God, and was reckoned righteous because of his faith. It was not that his faith had so much intrinsic value, which was put to his account, as so much righteousness; but he was esteemed or reckoned righteous for his faith. God held him as a righteous man because of his faith. So David speaks of one accounted righteous without any works. No sin was imputed to him. He was accounted, held to be wholly clear of it before God, when it was forgiven and covered. The responsibility of man was fully met, and he looked on as clear from sin.

* Another word is used for that, *ὑλογείται*, as v 13, and in the Epistle to Philemon, "put that to my account." Here *λογίζομαι*, to "esteem, reckon, count."

Was this only for the circumcision? Our thesis is that faith was counted for righteousness to Abraham. When? When he was circumcised or uncircumcised? Uncircumcised. There is thus, in no less an example than Abraham, an uncircumcised person justified by faith. Circumcision was only a seal of the righteousness which he had when uncircumcised; and thus he was the father of all that believe (even if not circumcised, as believing Gentiles), that they might be accounted righteous also through faith; and, further, the father of true separation to God (as I understand it, though the form of the sentence be somewhat strange), not only for circumcised Israel, but for whoever walked in the faith of Abraham—circumcision, not in the letter but in the spirit.

The apostle then develops the principles of the case of Abraham. The promise to Abraham to be the heir of the world was not through law, but through the righteousness of faith. If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void. To make Israel as under the law exclusively heir destroyed the principle on which Abraham had the inheritance. He had it by faith, and not by any law at all. Promise is not law; and to found the inheritance on law, and give it to Israel because of the law, made the promise of none effect. Promise, and faith in it, went together. Law was man's work, and on God's part requirement from man, not promise to him. And indeed the law works wrath instead of giving an inheritance; for where no law is, there is no transgression, for there is nothing to transgress: working wrath and bringing in transgression is not surely promise. But the inheritance is of faith, not of law, that it might be by grace; for faith just believes in

the grace shown, and thus the promise is sure to all the seed, for grace can give it to a Gentile, and faith in a Gentile can receive it, not simply give it to the seed under the law, though faith there could receive it, but to every one who had the faith of Abraham, who is the father, not of Jews only, but of us all (as it is written, "I have made thee a father of many nations") before God, the God whom he had believed.

But this introduces another principle. When Abraham received the promise, he was as good as dead. The God in whom he believed is a God above human failure and weakness, and calls things that are not as though they were. Abraham believed God in spite of his deadness and that of Sarah; it was a quasi-resurrection there. This introduces yet another great and important principle. Grace on the part of God, and faith on the part of man, we have had, in connection with promise on the one hand, and the redemption that is in Christ on the other. Now power comes in—God's power; not a dealing with man according to any good or capacity that is in him, but God that raises the dead, and according to this power calls things that are not as though they were. He can make them to be as He calls them. This applies to Abraham's case, to the Gentiles, and, as to the power in its nature, Christ's resurrection.

Law does require power in man to fulfil it. God's raising the dead clearly required no power in the raised one; and things that are not have no capacity to become things that are. Abraham believed God, considered no circumstances which, as to man's weakness, made it impossible; because He who spoke in truth could do all things in power. This Abraham assumed. Hence, if God spoke, the thing was certain. No lack

of power would make it fail ; and this owning of what God was, this faith (which through grace justified God in His word, gave Him His true character) was imputed to him for righteousness. When man justifies God in His works and words and ways, not himself, God justifies him. Those ways are in Christ. But our faith, though in principle the same, yet has in one very important respect a different character from that of Abraham. He believed that God was able to perform what He had said. We believe that He has raised Christ from the dead. His work is an accomplished work. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

But note, the faith here spoken of is faith in Him who raised Him. Righteousness is imputed to us as believing on Him who raised up Christ from the dead. So that we own not merely Christ's work, but God's acceptance of it, and God's power to quicken the dead ; as John said, " God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." God has come in in power, as satisfied, to raise up Christ from the state where our sins (He having taken them on Him through grace) had brought Him. Not to speak of His person, God could not leave Him there, for He was satisfied as to the sins, and righteously raised Him from the dead in public testimony of it.

And now see how complete the statement we have had as to our sins is. We are justified by God's grace freely. We have redemption in Christ Jesus. We have His blood, a propitiatory through faith in it ; God's righteousness in remission ; justice in justifying the believer ; Christ having been delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, God Himself having raised Him

from the dead. Thus all that concerns sins, guilt—what had to be answered for in the day of judgment—has been fully met; and forgiveness, justification, redemption clearly brought out in righteousness, and that by perfect grace; the whole work of Christ, as to that which had to be answered for complete, God's seal put upon it in resurrection; grace in this respect complete (for it has much to give also); and we believers, justified through faith in the sight of God. We shall see that another question arises. But as regards our sins, all we have done, what we should have had to answer for in the day of judgment, the question is completely settled. God has wrought His own work in grace; Christ, who was delivered for our offences, is raised from the dead; God has put His seal on the completion and efficacy of His work. It is in the God who has done so we believe. His grace has justified us in righteousness.

There is a point here which it is well to note. We have in this part of the epistle no experience. Happy in forgiveness, as a result, no doubt we are; but it is not an internal process issuing in deliverance in the power of divine grace, but a complete work done, through which God's righteousness is declared, God's work meeting the sins by reason of which He has pronounced upon us as guilty—none righteous, no not one—and proved us such. He has demonstrated all, Jew and Gentile, to be under sin, justified freely by His grace. It is *proved* guilt, not experience; complete justification by Christ's being delivered for our offences, not what passes in our hearts. The experience of what is within, and the deliverance, comes afterwards in vii. and viii.

This shows the completeness of this part of the epistle as to its proper subject, and how the gospel refers, first,

to guilt and clearing from it—our justification from that guilt; not to our state or nature, though the fruits of the old man constitute that guilt. It shows, too, how a full free gospel can be preached without touching on our nature, and state by that; though a solid settled condition of soul cannot exist without the experience and deliverance of the subsequent part of the epistle. The natural man can understand forgiveness, the payment of a debt, a child about to be punished, what it is to be pardoned; but a soul under the exercises produced by the Spirit of God can alone understand what sin is within, and deliverance from its power. It is quite true that to have a real work, even as to forgiveness, there must be the conviction of guilt under our sins. Conscience must be reached, guilt must be owned; the statement of the epistle as to that guilt, that we are under sin, must find its personal application and echo in the conscience, our just condemnation endorsed by the conscience as to oneself; so that we should be conscious that we—I—have to be freely justified. But we can see that with the mere consciousness that we have sinned, without any real sense of the existence of the old man, of our exclusion from God by it, forgiveness can be understood, nay, it can be supposed, though no real forgiveness is possessed, nor reconciliation effected. It is not insincerity, it is self-delusion; but it shows how the gospel of repentance as to sins of which we are guilty, and remission of these, may be preached without the experience of what we are in ourselves having been wrought in the soul. Genuine acknowledgment of our guilt in the conscience there must be, to have any reality of repentance or forgiveness, but no experimental knowledge of self. This may come before the

knowledge of forgiveness, and will generally then be accompanied by great distress of soul, and forgiveness and permanent rest of conscience will come together. But the two things are clearly distinguished in the epistle, the experience of what we are, coming last; the testimony—God's testimony, proof, and judgment as to universal guilt, forgiveness, and justification, with its blessed results, through Christ's work, delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification—being complete at the end of the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter. Of the experience itself, and our state in the flesh through Adam's fall, we will speak when we come to the subsequent chapters. All I do now is to show the distinction between the two.

But there is another point I would notice before I return to the course of the epistle's teaching. In the third chapter we find allusion to the mercy-seat; in the end of the fourth the history of the scapegoat, at least what answers to the two. Hence the real word in chapter iii. 25 is mercy-seat, through faith in His blood. Hence past sins are referred to, and then, not as yet the bearing of sins, but such a glorifying of God's character as revealed Him to be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. And this is the testimony to the whole world. Christ is *set forth* as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. That first goat was the Lord's lot. All that God is has been perfectly glorified in Christ's death; His majesty, truth, justice as against sin, love (John xiii. 31, 34; xvii. 4); without saying who, or how many would be saved. Hence the message of grace and beseeching can go forth to all the world. God is satisfied, glorified, in that blood He has under His eye, and says "Come." Here it is used for forgive-

ness, and that God might be just in justifying. In the end of the fourth chapter it is, He was delivered for our offences; and "ours" is brought in—the offences of those who can speak in faith and say "ours." And here it speaks consequently of positive offences, for which Christ was delivered up (as the high priest confessed the sins of the people on the head of the scape-goat); for bearing sins, "our sins, in his own body on the tree," is a different thing from glorifying God in His own character, in that He died where sin had come in. Both had their place and special importance; one for God's glory, and that grace might be free in righteousness; the other for clearing us from sin, as needed.

I return now to the general subject defined in the first eleven verses of the fifth chapter—the full statement of the effect of this redeeming grace of Christ's being delivered for our offences, according to the infinite grace of God. We have two distinct statements in this epistle of the blessedness of believers. The passage which occupies us, v. 1-11; and viii. The former gives us what God Himself is for us in grace, with its blessed consequences; the other the believer's place in Christ before God, and what God is for him there. The latter presents the believer more fully and completely before God, his evil nature as detected by law, and deliverance from it having been discussed; but the former furnishes more largely and fully what God is in Himself in grace. One is what God is to the sinner, and hence more what God is in Himself, with its consequences in grace; the other, the believer in Christ before God, an advance as to the saint, and most specially blessed in showing what God is for him, but not so fully what He is in Himself through Christ

to men. This is more richly unfolded, consequently, in v. 1-11. We have the whole rich blessing that flows from Christ from peace with God to joying in Him; but it is love commended to us while we were sinners (and for that very reason more what it is in God Himself), not a man in Christ before God. Of this we shall see more when we come to chapter viii.

Thus much we must already remark that down to the end of v. 11, the teaching of the blessed Spirit refers to sins; from ver. 12 to the end of viii. the question is as to deliverance from sin. The former speaks of Christ delivered for our offences; the latter of our being crucified with Him, and so having died to sin. But our present theme is that He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. We have been also fully taught that it is received by faith as that which is done; that God has accepted it as a satisfying propitiation, proved in raising Christ from the dead—raised consequently for our justification according to God's righteousness. We have had propitiation through faith in His blood in chapter iii.—God's righteousness fully declared, just and the justifier of him that believes; and now, in chapter iv., Christ's resurrection for our justification when He had been delivered for our offences. This work, done outside us (our only part in which was our sins, and thank God that we who believe can say they were there, unless we add the hatred that with wicked hands crucified and slew Him), the fruit of God's sovereign and free grace, and Christ being delivered for our offences, has God's seal upon it in resurrection as complete and satisfying (much more, though we go no farther here) as it is the fruit of God's free grace and love to us.

Hence, not only God's righteousness is declared, "just and the justifier of him that believes," but, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. All that was between us through our sins cleared away, and God having sealed it to us by the resurrection of Christ, we, knowing it by faith, have peace with God. This is a very full expression. Peace with God is with God such as He is. If there was a thing that disturbed His holy nature morally, or if our conscience had got anything on it, we had not peace with God ; but there is not. Our justification is absolutely by God Himself, known by faith ; so that no spot, no cloud remains. We have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He has made it, and it is perfect. But by Him also we have access into the grace or favour in which we stand—our present condition ; a favour better than life—divine favour. When I look up to God I find, as my present relationship with Him, nothing but divine favour resting upon me. The light of His countenance is unclouded. With the love wherewith He loves Jesus He loves me, and in that I rest. The hope that is before me—such is the worth of Christ's sacrifice—is the glory of God. I triumph in that hope. Into that glory He will bring me. The hope of it brightens with heavenly light the path in which I walk.

This completes what I receive as the effect of the blessed work of Christ and the grace that gave Him, and to me a part in that work by faith ; but it is not all. Twice the blessed Spirit adds, "Not only so." I have indeed, in these three points, peace as to all that could make me guilty and take away peace, present favour, and the hope of glory ; all that is given me, right into glory, fully stated. Past, present, and future—an eternal

future—all perfectly settled in grace; but there is the way there, and, more than that, the Giver as well as the gift to think of. All that concerns me as to what grace gives is complete; but I have much to learn, much to be corrected, perhaps much to be subdued, much that tends to hinder my seeing the hope clearly, and fixing my heart upon it. I find tribulations on the way, and I rejoice and glory in them also. They work patience, a subduing of the will, and the quietness of spirit which that gives. This leads me to fuller knowledge of myself, separation of heart from the world through which I pass, a clearer consciousness (my portion being in another) of what God is for me by the way; as Israel learnt in the desert what they were, and the patient goodness of God all along the road. They were humbled and proved to know what was in their heart, but manna never failed, if they loathed it; their clothes waxed not old, nor did their foot swell those forty years. If through unbelief they turned back from the mount of the Amorites, and must stay in the wilderness some thirty-eight years more, their gracious God turned back and went with them. But this by analogy; for here the apostle does not speak of failure, but of tribulation and its profit—that in which he rejoiced and gloried. In failure he could not. There is such an exercise of heart as both renders us more capable of spiritually discerning what we hope, and weans from the world which tends to shut it out of sight. Our hope is clearer, and we more mature in the consciousness that our whole hope and home is where the new man finds its portion.

But there is another very important element in this, besides the subjective fruit in the state of our soul. I

have both the key to all these tribulations and the power which enables me to bear them, and to know their meaning; to connect them with a blessedness which lifts us above them all, and turns us to the grace that uses them, all to give deeper and eternal blessing—the grace of Him who withdraws not His eyes from the righteous, who deigns to watch over us in detail, to follow our characters and state, and to make everything work together for our good. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. That which is in God—what He is in His nature—is shed abroad, is not only known, but pervades in its power our hearts. It is God's love, but in our hearts, and this by His own presence, here noticed for the first time—the Holy Ghost given to us. The cleansing and justifying being complete and absolute, every obstacle thus removed, the Holy Spirit can come and dwell in us, and bring in what God is in His nature into our hearts. The clearance of evil made way for this, and now the presence of God, such as He is (and He is love), fills the heart.

But the introduction of the Holy Ghost in this place is a truth of the utmost importance. The baptizing with the Holy Ghost was one of the two great acts ascribed to the Lord in John 1. This is the practical application of it consequent on the value and efficacy of that blood by which the sins of those that believe have been put away. So, in the Old Testament, the leper was washed with water, then sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil. So we are washed with the word, sprinkled with Christ's blood, and then anointed with the Holy Ghost. It is not being born again. That applies to the Holy Ghost's work in unbelievers; it is after we believe that we are

sealed. Further, this sealing is, I think, always associated with forgiveness. "Repent and be baptized," says Peter, "for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In Acts x. 43, it is when Peter is announcing the remission of sins that the Holy Ghost comes down on believing Cornelius. And here in Romans the mention of the Holy Ghost comes in when forgiveness and justification have been made known, as in chapter iv., and indeed in chapter iii., and before the experience of what we are, and our being in Christ, is entered upon.

This has its practical importance for souls. The ground of acceptance is clear; the fulness of God's grace to us in Christ, and the hope of glory connected with it, is made sure to us by His death. We are forgiven and sealed. The grace presented to us here is not a matter of what is commonly called experience, but God's perfect love to us when we were sinners, and had no experience of good, at any rate, at all. It depends on Christ's work *for* us, the value of which is *on* us before God. Being thus accepted, we are sealed. The completeness of this as to salvation, and joy in it, confidence in God, it is of moment to see. Experience has its place, and an important one, but God's love in salvation, and judgment of Christ's work, is of all importance. Some Christians would oblige souls to have the experience of the seventh chapter, in order to the salvation of the fifth being true. It may come before when it does, and acceptance in Christ is seen in simplicity. All the subsequent Christian life is one of assured grace, save cases of special discipline; but the acceptance of chapter v. may be known by itself first (but then justification is forgiveness, applies

to what we have done, is not our being the righteousness of God in Christ); but if so, self-knowledge and our place in Christ must be learned afterwards.

Remark, further, how, while the enjoyment of the love is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, the knowledge and proof of it is in a work done outside of us, and wholly independent of us, indeed for us, when in an evil and wholly incapable state. "For," continues the apostle, "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Ungodly, and without strength—such was our state when the glorious work of God's love was accomplished for us. But this gives us the certainty that the purity and perfectness of God's own work and nature were in it. It suits us, is without a motive for it in us save our ruined state. God's love as of Himself alone is its source and efficient cause. It is what is His own. Perhaps for a righteous man some might die—for some good one—dare to die; but God commends His love (that which is proper and peculiar to Himself) in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We now get a principle of grace full of blessing for us. The Holy Ghost, who reveals the truth, does not reason from what we are to what God will be. Such is ever the reasoning of awakened man, and naturally so, because for conscience and judgment it must be so: only there is defective sense of sin, and a vague thought of mercy which enfeebles the effect of what sense of it there is. But even in the repentant soul this reasoning takes place till we have really met God, and known His grace; as the prodigal talked of being made a hired servant when he had not met his father. The Holy Ghost makes us see clearly that we are lost on the ground of judgment; but

He reasons from what God is and has done to the consequences for us. He reasons according to the grace which He reveals. So here (verses 9, 10), much more being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. If when enemies we were reconciled by His death, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. The Spirit thus reasons from what God is in grace to its consequences, not from our state to its consequences with God. Wherever this last is going on the soul is yet in a legal state. There is either carelessness and self-delusion, or a mixture of law and grace. In the Holy Ghost's teaching there is no mixture; clear condemnation on the ground of responsibility, and salvation and blessing from grace through righteousness.

This closes the first addition to the full statement of salvation found in verses 1 and 2. Hope not making ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us; and then we reason from divine grace to its blessed consequences. But this is yet not all—"Not only so;" thus, knowing God, we glory in God Himself, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation. We rejoice not only in the salvation received, but in the God who is made known to us in it: as He has been revealed through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, we joy in God. Blessed truth! It is natural we should rejoice in the salvation given, in the hope of glory, but it is more yet to have learned to joy in God Himself, and to know Him so as to do it. This closes the first part of the epistle. Justified in God's favour as a present place, and having glory in hope, we have the love of God, a key to all

we find on the way, and joy in Him whom we have known through this great salvation.

But in this mere Judaism disappears, and the apostle consequently takes a wider range of thought, and views the whole state of man through the sin of him who stood first as man before God, and involved his race in the consequences of his defection from God. Each one has added his own sins, and that constitutes personal responsibility; but there is the universal state of all. Adam involved his whole race in sin and death, and in alienation and exclusion from God: only each added his own part; and thus—the reasoning passes from verses 12 to 18—by one offence, though all were not condemned because of grace, yet the bearing and tendency of the act was universal on the whole race; so by one righteousness was it for justification of life. All were not justified, no more than all condemned, but the bearing of the act in each case was universal, and had the whole race for its sphere, as that on which it bore, to which it applied. It is not *upon* all, but the bearing and direction of the act in each case. It is the same word as “unto” all, in contrast with “*upon*” all that believe, in iii. 22. Adam’s work bore on all, and so did Christ’s work too.

Then, in a parenthesis from verse 13 to the end of 17, we have the place the law holds in connection with this point, beside the acts of the two great heads of ruin and blessing. Sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, when no law was yet there; but specific acts could not be put to charge where there was no law forbidding them. The word “imputed” is another word here from the general word for

"imputing righteousness," and means putting a specific thing to the account of any one, which the other does not: it is found, as already stated, in Philemon 18. Where no law forbade an act, you could not charge it as a transgression. Yet death reigned—the effect and witness of sin being there—over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; that is, who had not violated an actual commandment, as Adam did. This is a quotation from Hosea vi. 7, where the same principle as to Adam and Moses is stated. They (Israel), like Adam, have transgressed the covenant. Adam had a formal law; a formal law was given under Moses. But between the two, where there was no formal law, sin and death were there. The ruin was universal: ought not the grace and bearing of Christ's act to be so? That is the force of v. 15. But what was the bearing of the law on this? That, when grace came in, it had a multitude of offences to deal with, as well as in general sin and alienation from God; that is verse 16. Then the superiority of grace is further shown in verse 17; that (whereas by one man's offence death reigned by one) not life should reign, but they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness would reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Thus, in every way, much more could be said of grace than of sin. It might have a multitude of offences to deal with, but it must at least be as large in its bearing (and as to those to whom it was addressed) as the sin of man. It was also by one man, of whom the first man had been but the image: the first, the responsible man; the second, the man who was in God's counsels before the world began. Further, if it was applied, it was not merely meeting the case, and life.

reigning where sin and death had, but those who received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness would themselves reign in life. This is the bearing of the parenthesis of verses 13 to 17.

In v. 18 we have the universality of the bearing of the act of Adam and of the blessed Lord ; in v. 19, the actual efficiency or effect on those who were actually connected with these two great heads. "Many" is, "the many"—the mass of persons actually connected with each of these heads. The sin of Adam did not confine itself, in its effect, to him. By the disobedience of one, the many connected with him were constituted sinners. By the obedience of Christ, the many connected with Him were constituted righteous. This is not responsibility and imputation (there every one is dealt with according to his own works, to which judgment and propitiation apply), but a state into which the many were brought by the head to which they belonged, in contrast with personal responsibility. One—Adam's disobedience—involved those connected with him in the condition of being sinners ; the obedience of One—Christ—constituted those associated with Him righteous, put them in that state and condition before God. It is in contrast with individual responsibility, though each individual connected with the head is placed in the state consequent on what characterised his conduct. The "many," in their condition, were such before God in consequence of the conduct that characterised the head. It was not what met the actual conduct of the individuals, but a state of the individuals, which was the result of the characteristic action of the one who stood as the representative and head of his race before God. It was a state dependent on the conduct of the

head. This is the great point here. The Lord and Adam, by their act and conduct, bring those connected with them into a certain condition.

The law came in by-the-by (*παρὰ τὴν θέαν*) in contrast with a state which the respective heads brought those connected with them into. What is important to see in this passage is, that the state was the consequence of the conduct of the head, not the conduct of the members met by that of the head. Judgment refers to works: this is a state the result of Adam's disobedience or Christ's obedience. The law came in between the two with a special object: it came in that the offence might abound. This is not the state constituted, but the act of the person under the law which forbid their acts, in contrast with that which affected the universal race by one man's disobedience, and all believers in Christ by His obedience. The law came in by-the-by between the two heads of opposite states, the disobedient and the obedient man, and came in with this intent—to make positive offence abound (not sin). God can do nothing that sin may abound; but, where sin already is, He can send a special prohibition of it, a law, which brings it out in a fuller character—that it is not only evil but a defiance of His authority, an offence and a transgression; a law which the perverse will of man uses as a provocation to offending. Such was the law.

Then the apostle changes his term to go back to his main theme, saying (not where the offence, but) where sin abounded, wherever a child of Adam was, law or no law, wherever the evil was, grace (God coming in in paramount goodness) did much more abound. Sin had reigned unto death, as the

present proof of it in all men. Had righteousness, the natural correlative of sin, reigned, it must have been condemnation; but God is love, rich in mercy, and so grace reigned, the sovereign title of God in goodness; but then there must be righteousness, and so it is: grace reigns through righteousness. Not man's, indeed, or it would not be grace; but, through the obedience of One, the many are constituted righteous, and grace reigns through righteousness (it is the abstract statement of the nature of what is opposed to sin's reigning) unto eternal life, as sin to death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. A full and clear statement of the ground and way of our salvation. It is remarkable how, in a few words, scripture brings out the whole truth. In these few words the whole source, and way, and end of our salvation are completely and clearly stated.

In chapter vi. the practical consequence is gone into, the state and condition reviewed experimentally, now there is deliverance from sin, and the bearing of the law upon the question; and thus experience comes in. The doctrine as to how we get out of the power of sin is stated distinctly in the sixth chapter. We may note here that in the first division of the epistle (i. 18 to v. 11) we have no practical conduct as the fruit of grace. We have full exhortations in chapter xii. and following chapters as the result of the whole truth, specially indeed of chapter vi.; but in the former part the result of our walk in judgment is stated, but no connection of walk with the grace there spoken of. You have the full complete clearance of the guilty sinner, all having been proved to be under sin and guilty before God, but no consequences drawn as to conduct. The righteousness of

God is declared in clearing from guilt and forgiving, in justifying the ungodly, peace with God, standing in His favour, and the hope of glory as the consequence ; God Himself joyed in ; but no consequent walk. God justified the ungodly righteously, and they had peace. Salvation is stated by itself, as far as brought to us here by grace. Here, where the state is spoken of, divine life is fully spoken of ; not indeed the details of practice in the way of exhortation, but the principle of divine life in power, delivering us from sin, and setting us in divine liberty in our walk ; a liberty, that is, which comes from God, and in which we yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead.

The point settled in the end of the fifth chapter is, that by *One* man's obedience the many in connection with Him are made righteous. The conclusion the world and fleshly reasoning would draw from this is, that if it be so we may live on in sin. To this the apostle answers in what follows. His obedience was unto death. It is by having part in Christ's death that we have part in this righteousness. But having part in death (that is, dying) is not the way to live on in what we are dead to. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein ? Our very profession of Christianity by baptism was that of being baptized to His death, having a part in it, made one plant with Him in His death.

Our resurrection *with* Christ is not spoken of here ; that involves union with Him. But we have been buried with Him by baptism unto death ; the old man is a judged and crucified thing, by our very profession of Christianity, that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life. It was not now merely a holy

blessed life in all that was good, true as that was, in Christ's own life down here; but divine power came in when, for us, He was dead, and bringing Him into a new place as man according to all the glory of the Father engaged in His resurrection, so our life was to be a new one analogous to that. And if it be true that we are planted in the likeness of His death, the other will follow, as surely as life in resurrection by the glory of the Father followed in His case. In its full result this is true even of our bodies. As yet this consequence is not fulfilled; but in His death, as Christians we have avowedly and professedly taken part, so that death to sin is our settled portion down here.

We draw the conclusion as to life, morally now, in full power hereafter. But death to sin we have professedly taken our portion in, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The body of sin is, I apprehend, sin as a whole. The word translated "destroyed" means annulled, rendered powerless, *καταργηθῇ*. That body which, if alive as the old man, is the seat of lust and doer of sin, is crucified, so as in this character to be set aside and annulled; it has closed its existence. He that is dead is justified from sin. It is not here sins or guilt: a man who has died may have to answer for sins, but you cannot accuse him of sin. He has neither evil lusts nor a perverse will. And the question now is of our state and condition.

But we see the power of death destroyed by the resurrection of Christ. He is risen, He dies no more, death has no more dominion over Him. For His death was not a mere natural consequence, so to

speak, of His state. He came about sin, to take our place as sinners, and died to sin. It was with the object of grace to us, and in respect and view of sin that He died, and did it once, when He had, for our sakes, need to do it. But He did it once for all. It was a work which He had to do in respect of sin, and He has done it—has no more to do with sin. Sinners He will judge, no doubt, but has done with sin, as occupied with it, once and for ever. Up to the cross He, the sinless one, had to do with sin; on the cross sin was the whole question, though for the glory of God He was made sin; but now He has done with it once and for ever. He lives past having to do with sin. There is but one thing, even viewed as man, which constitutes His life, one thing which fills its outgoings—God. In that He lives, He lives to God.

In His life down here He served God perfectly, and lived by the Father, and every step was perfect, having God His Father always before His mind; but He had to do with sin all around Him; was pressed by it, grieved, a man of sorrows through it; had for us to be made sin; perfect in love manifesting God, perfect in obedience as man come to do His will. Still He came about sin, and was necessarily assailed by it in all around, and, as I have said, was finally to be made sin for us, when fully proved the sinless one Himself—He who knew no sin. But now He has done with it for ever. He died to it here, passed (perfectly accomplishing His work) through death out of the whole scene where He had to do with it, in resurrection into a new state as man, where, in thought, object, and life, He has to do as to His state of life with God only. In that He lives; He lives to God. Nought where He is but what is filled with

God—so filled that nothing else can be there save what ministers to His glory. It is not merely the perfectness of His intention (that was always as perfect as His walk; in that sense he always lived to God), but that in which and to which He lives, where for His soul nought else is. It is a blessed thought of man's life. His death was a single act in which He died to sin; His life a perpetual present, in which God is all from His soul to His object.

So we are to reckon ourselves (our old man being crucified with Him) dead to sin, and alive to God through Him. It was a new and free life; for the believer was entitled to reckon himself dead unto sin: it was his condition and place as a believer to do so. If we are alive, we are alive to God, not through Adam at all, but through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus it was wholly new, and, reckoning ourselves dead to sin, entirely free. It is not that sin in the flesh has not its lusts; but the believer as such does not let it reign in the body to obey it in its lusts, seeing he is free in the power of a new life; for so the believer is accounted free to walk in the power and after the things which belong to this new life. He holds the reins, and does not allow sin to use the body for its lusts—the lusts of sin. Nor does this freeman give up his members to be instruments of unrighteousness unto sin—that evil thing to which he was once a slave. He yields himself to God as one alive from the dead, for, as to his life born of Adam, he had died to sin, but now lives, and yields himself and his members as instruments of righteousness to God.

For sin has not dominion over us, *because* we are not under law, but, under grace: a grave and im-

portant sentence. Being under law leaves me under the dominion of sin. What we want is a free life, free from bondage to sin; for he that commits sin, says the Lord, is the slave of sin. Law gives neither life nor freedom and strength, nor even an object which may turn our hearts elsewhere. It forbids, rightly and necessarily, the sins, but gives no life nor power. But under grace we have power. Life is given, strength is given, and an object is given; none of which, as we have seen, law gives. Thus, under grace, sin has not dominion over me: under law it has. It is beautiful to see while it is all grace, still how we are given to yield ourselves to God—true freedom, in which sin has no dominion over us; and, while the power comes from on high, we are really set free, and allowed to give ourselves willingly and freely to God.

Here, then, the apostle takes up this freedom and reasons on it—freedom, not in the old and sinful Adam, but, in that I am alive to God through Jesus Christ, I am free. The law forbids sin and lust, but does not deliver. I am not under it. I am freed from the dominion of sin, and not under law; freed from the dominion of sin, because I am not placed under law, but under grace. Shall I then sin because I am not under a law which forbids it, and curses me if I do it? God forbid.

And now he returns to the great principle of the Gentile condition. If I yield myself to sin, as a slave, to obey it, I am its slave; and sin reigned by death without law being there. Death was the natural and appointed wages of sin, and that as the judgment of God. We could not say obedience unto life; for if we obey, we *are* alive unto God through Jesus Christ

our Lord, but it has the fruit of practical righteousness. And note the character here of what is opposed to sin; not in itself righteousness—the doing right as known by conscience or law—but obedience. We are alive to God, and that is, and must be always, obedience. We cannot live to God otherwise than in obedience. So Christ lived. He was the obedient man—came to do God's will. His Father's will was the motive of all He did. He lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. His path, consequently, was practical righteousness, and the pattern of it. So the apostle thanks God that, whereas they had been slaves of sin, they had obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to them.

And here we learn the spring and character of this obedience. It is the obedience of faith, the reception of the word of God into the heart. This forms the link of obedience between the soul and God. The same reception of the word gives life. Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. It is life, it is an obedient life; in truth, the life of Christ in us, and He is the obedient man. Thus made free from sin—for that is the great point here—they had become, yielding themselves up to obey, slaves to righteousness (using slave as a figure he excuses, for it is true liberty, but to make it plain to flesh's infirmity of understanding); for as they had formerly given up their members as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness, only to be lawless, let loose an evil will which bore no fruit, so now he exhorts them to yield their members (for they were free) slaves to righteousness. But here there was a blessed result—holiness; a separa-

tion of heart to God, in the true knowledge of Him—the soul brought into His image, as expressed in Col. iii. 10; Eph. iii. 23, 24 (there more in its nature, here in practical growth, but the same general truth).

The apostle continues the figure, and appeals to their consciousness of what had passed. They had been slaves of sin, and in no way subject to righteousness. What fruit had they then in the things they were now ashamed of? It was fruitless wasting of their members in lawlessness, and the end death. But now, free from sin—his great theme, as we have seen—free, in the sense of out of bondage, no longer its slaves (such alone is the sense of the words here), and become slaves to God, entirely given up to serve Him, we have our fruit unto holiness; not only the end everlasting life, but by the way growing in knowledge of God, and likeness to Him, and separation of heart to Him from all evil, according to what He is. Walking in the path of obedience to Him, and so with Him, the soul is in that delivered from the power of evil, which is in will and lust, neither of which is its obedience.

This is an immense privilege, this growing up into the knowledge of God, and intimacy with Him, acquaintance with God. Will never can do this. But in our right place with God we grow in His knowledge—live more in those things that are formed with Him, that He takes pleasure in; and that is holiness. Obedience is not holiness, a heart given up to obey God; but it is the path in which holy affections, springing from Him, and free before Him, are found. The end is everlasting life, received in its full result in glory, as it is in the purpose of God. But that is the gift of God. The path to it is the

path of obedience and holiness, but itself is the gift of God. Death we have earned—it is the wages of sin; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is not merely that eternal life is the gift of God, but the gift of God is nothing less than eternal life. Death is purposely looked at in its simple character of death. No doubt it is judgment on sin here in this world, and implies, unless redemption comes in, the judgment which comes after. It is the present effect of judgment on sin, and the divine officer and witness of sin, to conduct us to judgment, according to wrath revealed from heaven. But here it is the end of life which fruitless sin worked. It does lead to judgment—judgment of works done while living. God gives eternal life.

To recapitulate this important chapter. First, in reply to continuing in sin, we have found part in death, Christ's death, in order to be justified; that is, not living on in that life, but the contrary. Christ has died, and we esteem ourselves dead (compare 1 Pet. ii. 24, iv. 1); the Christian being thus alive to God in the power of a new life. The first principle then in which the flesh's judgment of the effect of the obedience of One constituting us righteous is controverted is, that we have part in the righteousness by having part in death, by being associated with Christ in His death (that is, in death to sin, which is not, clearly, living on in it). And we are to reckon ourselves dead, and alive to God in Jesus. But then comes the difficulty. We are not really dead, though called on to account ourselves so: how can we be free from the power of sin? This brings in the contrast with law. Law did not give power over sin in the

flesh. It forbad its working and fruits, as it ought to do, but gave no freedom from it, no power against it. But sin shall not have dominion over us who believe, because we are not under law but under grace, and grace does give power, does set free. I am not to let sin reign; and this frees me from its dominion. I am made free from sin, i.e., delivered from captivity to it. Being free, I am to yield myself to God and righteousness, give myself up to Him, and my members, once instruments of lusts, as instruments of righteousness. It is the freedom of grace and divine life in power.

This is the general doctrine: Christ having died, we reckon ourselves dead as if we had done so. He who is become our life, the true I, has died. I have died—have been crucified—with Him, and, as a Christian, do not own the flesh to be any more alive at all. I speak of all that has happened to Christ as if it had happened to me, because He is become my life, and I live by Him; as a son (whose father had not only paid his debts, but made him a partner) would speak of “our capital, our connections,” because he is partner, though he brought nothing in, and all was done and acquired before he became partner; so we in much truer, because living association with the Lord. Only, as I have remarked, we have not ascension, nor union with Him, nor resurrection with Him, which involves it; but the death of the old man, and life in Christ, and so freedom from sin—the full answer to the allegation that having righteousness in Him gave license to sin. One important remark to make here is, that the true question is one of power. A rule of right is not power over an evil nature. Of this we shall see more; but even here

we find that the reigning of sin in our mortal bodies, having dominion over us, is the real question. In point of fact we are not under law; but that is substituting power in life, grace which gives it, for a mere, however just a claim of righteousness from one that was a sinner.

The first answer to the allegation that being constituted righteous by Christ's obedience gives license to sin is, that we have been planted in the likeness of His death—have been crucified with Him. This applies to sin in the nature. But, besides this, we have grace contrasted with law, giving liberty from the dominion of sin and the slavery we were under to it, which law did not. We are *free* to live to God.

On this follows a full discussion of *law*. We are free from law, following the same great fundamental principle that we have been crucified with Christ. Now law has power over a man as long as he lives. This is illustrated by the case of marriage, and the law or bond of husband and wife, which lasts evidently as long as one lives, and can no longer; the survivor is free to be to another when one is dead. It is of all importance to the understanding of this chapter to see that the whole subject treated is the bearing of the law—the connection of a soul with it. First, the doctrine on the subject and the distinction of a soul being under law, or connected in life with a risen Christ; and then the experience of a soul quickened and renewed in its desires and delights, but not knowing deliverance by the knowledge that it has died with Christ, and is now connected with another—Christ raised from the dead. The description of the deliverance follows, and the condition of the delivered soul in chapter viii.

Law has power over a man as long as he lives—cannot any longer; the person to whom it applies exists no longer. If one to be punished for crime dies, law can no longer reach him. We have seen, in chapter vi., that the fact of not being under law does not cause to live in sin; but that, being under law, one has no power to resist it. It requires, but does not free from the dominion of sin. But we have become dead to the law by the body of Christ. Had the law reached ourselves, it would have been death; but it would have been condemnation. But we are delivered, being dead to the law, by the body of Christ. The figure is changed. Death puts an end to the bond, but it is we who die; yet not actually we, but Christ effectually for us; and now we are united to Him who is raised, that, the power of life being there, we should bring forth fruit—not merely be dead to sin—unto God.

Having thus died as Adam's children, in that Christ has died, we are no longer in the flesh, in that nature or place and standing before God. We do not stand as Adam's children before God at all. We have died as such. We say therefore, "*when* we were in the flesh"—a thing we could not say if still in it; when we were, the motions of sin which were by the law wrought to bring forth fruit unto death. The prohibition of a will or lust, though right, does but provoke it; makes you think of the object, and does not take away the lust; does not change the nature. Were I to say to a lover of money—"You must not desire that gold," it would only awaken the desire. Do I resist a wilful child, he only pushes the harder against the obstacle opposed to him. The motions of sins are

by the law—a poor way of holiness or righteousness. They wrought in us to produce actual sin unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held. The life in which we were connected with it is ended; the bond which attached to that life exists no more—ends with the life it subsisted in. The law addressed itself to the child of Adam, and required from him what was according to God's will. Man was in sin, not subject to the law of God; nor could his sinful flesh be so, or it would not have been sinful flesh. The law only stirred up that flesh in its will and lusts, but now in Christ we have died; the bond with the law is broken in our death with Christ, and we are connected with Christ risen, serving in the newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter; bound to a husband—not to the law, but to Christ. *We could not have both together.*

That is the great point here. Chapter vi. laid the ground-work of doctrine and truth, viz., that our old man is crucified with Christ. We are for faith dead. Chapter vii. takes up the effect of this on the connection of the child of Adam with law. Death has dissolved the bond,* and we are to another—to Christ risen, now to bring forth fruit to God, for we are alive unto Him. The whole point of the passage is, that we cannot have the law and Christ together—the two husbands at once. It is impossible. But our deliverance from the law is by having died to sin. Christ risen is now our life and husband, where there is power to bring forth fruit to

* It is not, "that being dead in which;" as if the law had died. The text has been changed in one letter in Greek to keep the apparent comparison perfect to the destruction of the whole doctrine of the passage.

God, which the sinful flesh never could do. The contrast of Christianity with law is not only for justifying, but for life, obedience, and fruit-bearing. Under law we are under the dominion (not guilt merely) of sin; in Christ made free, and able to bring forth fruit to God.

But this is not all. The law has its use, viz., in bringing out the consciousness of what we are—of our state. Was it the fault of the law, this dominion of sin, while we were under it? Nay, it was the fault of the sin, and lust which the law condemned. "But that," says the apostle, "I had not known, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust." If he had murdered, he would have known the fact; his natural conscience would have taken cognizance of it. But we are not treating of sins now (as before observed), but of sin. I had not known that, unless the law had dealt with its first movements as evil. Many have committed no crimes—have neither murdered, stolen, nor committed adultery. But who has never lusted? It would be to say, I am not a child of Adam at all. And note here, we are not speaking of guilt by acts, but of state; not of judgment, not of forgiveness, but of deliverance, of setting free. And note further here, how great the error of those who hold lust not to be sin if not consented to. The object here is to detect the evil nature by its first motion—lust. Not, indeed, what we have done, but what we are; and the sinfulness of flesh is detected by that first movement, which is lust—will in evil. It proves, by its sinfulness, the sinful source in me. I know that in me dwells no good. Important, though humbling discovery! Not, I repeat, what I have done, but what I am; but how important that! What simple folly the

thought to make the child of Adam good, unless he be born again !

God's way is, not to improve the wilding, but to cut it down and graft it. Then, when we are grafted with Christ, the fruit of that life is to be brought forth. Law does not condemn the nature. It supposes it is yet to be proved and trusted ; but it forbids what is its only first movement—lust. It thus gives the knowledge of what it is. The true force of the word translated “nay,” in verse 7, is “but.” And note, it is sin, not sins ; for he would not, as natural men do not, have judged and taken cognizance of lust in himself as evil and sin, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. The law was thus a means, not of righteousness, but of the knowledge of sin. By it, moreover, sin deceived and killed us. It took its occasion, or point of attack, from the law. Thus did Satan come when Adam was innocent. Now sin takes the prohibition to provoke the will and suggest the lust ; for, till the law came in and forbade it, the conscience took no cognisance of lust.

We must remember he is not treating of sins, but of sin. This was provoked and stimulated by the commandment ; without it, sin was dead. But when the commandment came, sin revived, and guilt and death came upon my conscience. Otherwise there was no sentence of death in the conscience by sin. Sins would be judged in the day of judgment, bringing condemnation ; but a sinful nature, as such, does not give a bad conscience. We remain alive, untested, unawakened. I was a living child of Adam, unconscious of sin, as we see hundreds ; but when the law of God forbade lust, the conscience was

affected, and I died under its judgment. What had said, Do this and live, was thus ordained for life, I experimentally found to be to death. I took up the law, thinking I had power to be good and righteous by it: sin profited by it thus to deceive me and bring me into death by the commandment. Still it was to profit. Sin became by the commandment exceeding sinful. It was there, and I unconscious of it as a fatal evil in my flesh (we are not speaking of committed sins); but it appeared as sin when the law came, and became exceeding sinful. It appeared in its true nature of sin, and took the characteristic, moreover, of opposition to, and transgression of, the holy, just, and good will of God.

But another element comes in here: the spiritual judgment which can thus estimate all this—"We know." This is a technical expression for knowledge belonging to the Christian as such (1 Cor. viii. 4; 1 John iii. 2, v. 13; and other places). We know the spirituality of the law; not applying it to crimes merely, but to the inward man. But if I look at myself as a child of Adam, I am carried a captive to sin, sold under it. I say, a child of Adam; for the apostle says, "in me, that is, in my flesh." He is looking at the man as standing on that ground with Christian knowledge as to it, but as married to the first husband—the law: "When we were in the flesh." It is Christian intelligence applied to the judgment of the state of (not an unrenewed person in mind and desire, but) one under the law. Hence the law only is mentioned, not Christ or the Spirit, till the cry for deliverance from that state comes. It is not a question whether the flesh is in us; but "when we were in the flesh," the motions of sin

there, and we met in that state by the requirements of law in our conscience, not as redeemed and dead with Christ, delivered and having the power of life in Him, consciously in that state.

Three immensely important lessons are learned, under divine teaching, in the conflict connected with this state. First, in me—that is, in my flesh—dwells no good thing. This is not the guilt of having sinned, but the knowledge of what we *are*—that is, as flesh. Next, I learn that it is not *I*; for, being renewed, I hate it—would it not at any time: the true *I* hates this. It is then sin in me, not *I*—a very important lesson to learn. Thirdly, if it is not me, it is too strong for me. To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I know not.

But it is well to enter into this a little more in detail. It is not really any individual person, but the judgment of a nature; but a nature which (till I know redemption, and that I have died to sin in Christ, and am in Him) constitutes myself for the conscience. It is to be remarked that the will is supposed always right, and good *never* to be done. This is not the Christian state. We can do all things through Him that strengthens us.

Further, the man here is a slave; in viii. 2 he is set free. In verse 5 we are supposed to be in the flesh; in viii. 9, we are not in the flesh, if the Spirit of God *dwell in us*. If a man be not dead with Christ, he is fully in the flesh. If he do not know it, the conscience and mind are on that ground with God. What he is, not what Christ is, is the ground on which he judges of his state before God. As to his conscious standing, he is in the flesh; and it is the process of deliverance

from this by the thorough humiliation of self-knowledge that is here described. The operation of the law is what is contemplated; grace working in the man, but he, as to his mind and conscience, under law undelivered. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Grace has given him to see that the law is spiritual. It is not sins but sin which is in question. Conscience has by grace recognised that the law is good, yea the spirit consents to it; more than that, he delights in it, after the inner man. He is a renewed man.

We have first, then, the state of the man. Light from God has come in. The law is spiritual for him; but he is carnal—a slave to (sold under) sin; for he sees himself in flesh still alive—in that life of a child of Adam in which the law asserts its claim. “I am [that is consciousness, individually] carnal”—“sold under sin.” That is, you have a man looking at himself as in flesh, and knowing that the law is spiritual—perceiving it by divine teaching.

We have then, further (this being the state of the person's soul), two points in respect of the law—nothing, mark, in respect of Christ and the Spirit. He is not there yet, but on the way, getting, while taught of God, knowledge of sin (that is, of himself under law). In the first case he is doing evil, but would not—does what he hates. He does wrong, but would not. He consents to the law that it is good. His conscience and mind accept it as right—coincide with it, but he does the contrary; but thus under grace, by this very word, he is taught that it is not he does it, but sin that dwells in him. He has a new man, a new life, in which, thus taught, he can treat sin as a stranger, though dwelling in him—as not himself. And now he has experimentally

learnt, not mere doctrine, even though taught of God, as to something outside himself—"we know"—but something about himself, and a great lesson too: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." The flesh is a judged nature, a great point of progress. And now the second point in the renewed man comes out—the positive will to do good. He delights in the law of God in the inner man—not merely consents—has it as his own approved rule in conscience; but he would do good; but evil is there—he cannot perform it. Power is wholly wanting. The law gives none. There is a law in his members, a constantly operating power of evil which brings him into captivity, though now against his will. Poor wretched man! But (immense advantage) he knows it; he knows himself. Desires and efforts to do right have resulted in this—in the knowledge of himself and his real state: in him, that is, in his flesh, there is no good thing. But it is not (now he is quickened of God) himself at all. But that makes out no righteousness for him, no deliverance from the power of sin; he is still under it, being under law. It is an immense lesson to learn, that we have no power. (Like the poor man at the pool of Bethesda, the disease of which he had to be healed had taken away, even if he willed, the strength through which he could get healed.) Thus taught, the man ceases to look to being better, or to doing; he has learned what he is, and looks for a deliverer. The moment God has brought him there all is clear. He thanks God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But though the subject treated be the experience of the soul under the law when its spirituality is known, through grace, the thing learned is not what the law is

but what sin is—what we are. By the law is the knowledge of sin. Hence, though the process be carried on under law, by which through the secret working of grace that knowledge is acquired, yet the thing we have learnt to know—what sin in the flesh is—is always true.

Hence, although as we have said it is the description of a soul under law, yet it is in a way in which the lesson remains for the Christian at all times. Not that he is ever under the law, or in the flesh—he never is; he has died as connected with that first husband, and for faith the flesh is dead, and he is delivered; but the lesson he has learned remains always true. In him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing. And it is experimentally known. The flesh may deceive him if he is careless, and he forget to bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, but it can no longer deceive him as to what it is itself. He may have left a door open in his house to an unfaithful servant, but he does not now take him for a trustworthy or unsuspected one. And the difference is immense. The power of flesh is broken. And, further, he has no thought of being in the flesh before God. The Galatians show his position. “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, that ye may not do the things that ye would.” “But if ye be led of the Spirit ye are not under the law.” You are not in Romans vii., though the evil flesh be there. You are free with the liberty wherewith Christ has set you free. Be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Hence, too, after the deliverance is spoken of here, the abiding fact of the two natures is affirmed, though going no further than the law, the subject before us. “So, then,

I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

In result, then, the state described is that of a soul under the law, but sin comes to be known, and conflict with this remains—flesh remains flesh. But it is a very different thing to have to say to it, when we have no strength, when we are sold under it, and it has us down, in the combat, under the law of sin, and to be able to say, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The natures are the same; but it is one thing, having them, to be under the law, which is the strength of sin, and having died with Christ to have the life and Spirit of Christ, which is the strength of godliness; to be led captive as a rule or law by sin, though hating it, or to rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. This freedom, and the state of the believer in it, we shall find developed in chap. viii. The two points before us are, deliverance, and the abiding of the law of sin in the flesh: only that it is not **L**. That is the mind which serves the law of God. That is experimental and learned.

But there are two things the apostle now assumes of the Christian. What constitutes him such—being in Christ, and the Spirit of God dwelling in him? What belongs to such is another thing. That is being a Christian. But we must remark that the measure of walk and practical effect is limited, as all here is, to human responsibility. One passage alone connects us with the counsels of God, and then only as a great general truth. But the result in practice takes the measure of human responsibility, whatever the deliverance needed to enable us to meet it.

For the man in Christ, then, there can be no condemnation. Such is the first statement in this chapter. It will be remembered that it was said there were two passages descriptive of the Christian's blessing—v. i-ii, and viii.; the former already treated of, and what now occupies us: that, the blessing flowing from what God was towards us in grace; this, the believer's status before God. Hence here it is: "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"—not for those for whose sins Christ has died. These last are forgiven, the man justified, fully blest; but it is not his new standing as one who has died as in the flesh, and is alive to God in Christ; who is married to Him who is risen from the dead. How could there be condemnation for those who are in Christ? It would be, so to speak, like condemning Christ.

But the reason is given in connection with what precedes; and that on the side of good in the power of life in Christ on the one side, and as to the evil, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, on the other. The being in Christ is the great and sure ground; but the conditions and ground of it are added when this is the case.

The law of sin and death has lost its power. I have another principle of life in power in me, which has its own constant nature and rule; for such is the force of "law" here—"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This alludes to the breath, or spirit of life, breathed into Adam. Now it was spiritual or divine life in the power of the Spirit of Christ in us; and this had its constant law and character, and was power which had made the Christian free from the law of sin and death—the deadly principle which ruled in

him before, as alive in the flesh. It is there, no doubt; but he is set free from it. It has no dominion. There is another operative life and power, which has its own determined and unvarying characters, and which works in power; so that I am not under the dominion of sin. That is the side of God—what I am before God in life.

Then comes the evil nature, and why I am not condemned for it. The law could not work good nor righteousness in me because of it; could not bring the question of flesh to an end before God; could neither justify nor deliver me; could not clear me of the evil that is in it before God. There sin in the flesh was. Law could not hinder its acting, nor justify me while it was there—could not operate the good it required. It only required the good, and provoked the sin. But “God, sending His own Son”—sinless surely, but in form and fashion of one of these sinners in flesh, “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” that is, as a sacrifice for sin—“condemned sin in the flesh.” The evil thing, so hateful, condemnable for God and for the new man, has been condemned when Christ was a sacrifice for sin. Death and condemnation of sin in the flesh went together, and I am dead to it; and its condemnation is past and settled when Christ was a sacrifice for sin. There is no allowance of it, which the new man even could not bear. A nature is not to be forgiven. But its condemnation was in that which removed all condemnation from me, and was at the same time death to it.

Thus there can be no condemnation for one in Christ. Not only are the sins blotted out, but the nature which produced them has been condemned—that is, sin in the flesh; and, as to my actual state, the Law of the Spirit of

life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of it. Thus the old man is condemned and dead, and the new man lives and walks, so that the claim of the law (its righteousness, the sum of what it requires) is fulfilled in us, because we are not under it, but under grace. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free, and I walk not according to the flesh, which the law forbids, but according to the Spirit, against whose fruits there is no law; yea, through the power of the Spirit of God I walk after that which it leads me into—the life of Christ in this world. And this walking after the Spirit gives its true character to the walk of the Christian in this world.

As I have said, as Christ is contrasted with law for righteousness, the Spirit (Christ as life in the power of the Spirit) of God in us is contrasted with the righteous but powerless law for our walk and rule; deadness to sin, and life in the power of the Spirit of God. This the apostle developes. In fact, commencing with the “no condemnation,” to the end of verse 11, is the unfolding of the answer to “Who shall deliver?” On the words “who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit” hangs a full description of both; of the Christian life as flowing from the Holy Ghost, and of the flesh. Each has its own objects according to its nature. There are things of the flesh and things of the Spirit—not merely right and wrong, but objects which belong to each.

Thus we have two natures, with their respective objects, and with the new one the power of the Spirit of God, instead of one, and a law which fruitlessly forbade its desires as well as its acts. They that are after the flesh are governed by its principles; mind, will,

have their object in the things which that nature craves after. They that follow the leadings of the Spirit are under His power in the things the Spirit brings to us, and sets the mind upon. Now the mind of the flesh is death; the mind of the Spirit, life and peace. That is, they are characterised respectively by these things as immediately and necessarily flowing from them, or accompanying them. For the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, resists His authority, rejects His will, rises up against Him and His authority, does not like it should exist, and consequently hates Him. It is not hence subject to the law, nor can be. Its lusts will not have what it claims, nor its self-will bow to the claim itself. God comes in by law, asserts authority, and forbids lust; but the flesh knows no obedience, loves its will and its lust, and hates God. Self-will cannot like subjection because it is self-will, nor lust what forbids lust. But God must come in thus with law to flesh. What is essential to flesh, it is essential to God to contradict, and it is enmity against Him. They that are in the flesh cannot then please Him. Those whose life is in the first Adam cannot please God. There the flesh leads and governs. Their place and standing is in Adam life. But this is not so if the Spirit of God dwell in us. This characterises, leads, forms the life of him in whom it dwells. God's Spirit, in living power, forms and characterises the state of the soul.

This, then, characterises the Christian, and distinguishes him: the Spirit of God dwells in him. Such an one is not in the flesh (that is not his standing), but in the Spirit. This is clearly and in terms the contrary of the state, "when we were in the flesh;"

that is, of the seventh chapter experience. Then the motions of sin, which were by the law wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. And, note, it is not here being born again. It is the Spirit of God dwelling in us. True, if we are born again, there are new desires, the evil of the flesh is felt. But this is not liberty and power. But where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, with God and from sin. It is the fruit of redemption by Christ—of the ministry of righteousness and the Spirit. Christ has redeemed, justified, and cleansed us. The blood of sprinkling having made us perfectly clean* in God's sight, the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in us, the seal of the value of that blood, and consequently, so coming to dwell in us, gives us the consciousness that we are in a new place before God—not in the flesh, not in our natural Adam state, but in the condition in which the Spirit sets us in God's presence. This position belongs only to those who have the Spirit. It is the Spirit of Christ. If any man have not this, he has not the proper Christian place, is not of Christ, does not belong to Him according to the power of redemption, which brings us before God according to its own efficacy, of which the Spirit's presence and indwelling is the characteristic seal and living power—that by which those who have entered into this place are distinguished.

Being born again does not give this. It may (and, by itself, does) lead to the cry—"Who shall deliver me?" It does not tell us we are redeemed. It gives desires and hopes, but may equally increase fears, because it strengthens the sense of responsibility, giving spiritual

* Compare the case of the leper, washed, sprinkled with blood, and then anointed.

apprehension of the measure of it ; but it gives no power of deliverance from the evil it makes us sensible of. But the redemption which is in Christ delivers. There is no condemnation for those who are in Him. And if we are in Him, He is in us—the power, as the source, of a new life ; yea, that life itself. And this is the Christian : such an one is actually His.* One born of God may be under the law as to their state of mind, dwelling on their own responsibility as alive in flesh, this side of redemption—married to the first husband, and the bond not broken by death, as to *their* state. They are not united to the second husband in their faith—to Him who is raised from the dead—passed into a new sphere (which is indeed the fruit of redemption for us), where there can be no condemnation ; for we are accepted in Christ, and the presence of the Holy Ghost characterises our position.

We now find (ver. 10) the power which produces the effect, doctrinally stated in chapter vi. as our position. “If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin.” Sin is its only fruit if it lives ; but if Christ be in one the power of life, the body, as to all will, has its place in death. What then is practically life ? The Spirit : that is, to produce righteousness. This is the full answer to its being liberty to sin, or leading to it, because we are not under law.

But this deliverance goes farther. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us,

* It is *αὐτὸν*, not *αὐτῷ*. Note in verse 1 we are in Christ ; here He is in us :—two things inseparable. One is in a place before God ; the other, power of life before the world. It is the practical development of John xiv. 20.

He who raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken our mortal bodies by reason of His spirit which dwells in us." This is full and final deliverance, even as to the body. We may remark that the Spirit is spoken of in three ways here:—the Spirit of God, as contrasted with flesh—with man as he is; as the Spirit of Christ, or Christ in us, as formative of our practical state; thirdly, as the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus, and the assurance of our mortal bodies being quickened, and thus our possessing full liberty in the highest sense. For all this is not forgiveness sought, nor justification, but deliverance from a state we are made conscious of being in.

A further remark (which leads us to the structure of the whole chapter) has here to be made. In the verses we have been considering, the Spirit, though spoken of as indwelling, is viewed as the source and power of life characterising the man: "The Spirit is life, because of righteousness." After this He is spoken of as a distinct and separate person, acting on and in us—"with our spirit." This is the second part of the chapter. The third and last part is, not what God is in us by His Spirit, but for us, securing us in the blessing which it is His purpose to give.

We may now come to the second part of the chapter. It is preceded by two verses of practical consequence, 12, 13. "We are not debtors to the flesh." It has no claim or title over us. It has done us all the evil it can, and only evil, and it has been condemned on the cross of Christ; and we are dead to it, having been crucified with Him. Living after it ends in death, but,

mortifying the deeds of the body (the things which flow from its will if left to work), we shall live.

But now the instruction goes farther, and shows us the relationship the Spirit brings us consciously into, and not merely the state as hitherto: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." This flows directly from the whole position we are brought into, in contrast with that we were in under the law—a position God had brought us into by grace, through redemption—not the bondage and fear in which we were toward Him under the law; the fruit of divine grace in Christ—not the effect of failure in responsibility in presence of a divine claim upon us. We are sons of God, and cry, "Abba, Father," having the consciousness of being sons by having the Spirit, which is in us a Spirit of adoption.

It is well to remark, as so frequently occurring in this chapter, that "for" expresses in very many passages no direct inference on the part of the apostle, but introduces some statement confirmatory of the general principle which is in the apostle's mind. Thus, in verses 13, 14, there is no direct inference, though the connection be more immediate in verse 13. Verse 14 goes on to give the whole condition of him who has the Spirit, suggested by the mention of the Spirit exercised in moral power over the walk in verse 13. Such a mortifying of the deeds of the body is natural in the Christian, for such and such is their real state and character as having the Spirit. But it is in no way "Ye shall live, for," &c. But he has in all the chapter the man in Christ before his eyes, showing what is his character, and what qualities and privileges belong to him as such.

We have now to consider what is said concerning the Spirit as dwelling in us. We are sons, and by the Spirit cry, "Abba, Father," in the consciousness of being so. The Holy Ghost Himself (here we have Him definitely as a distinct person) "bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God." It is a distinct definite testimony of the Spirit who dwells in us that we are such; not a proving by the word on examination of ourselves (a false and unscriptural and evil procedure), but the testimony of the Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in us, which He bears to us as so dwelling in us. We have the consciousness and estate of the mind of the Spirit *in* us; but He Himself, as dwelling in us, bears consciously also *to* us the witness that we are sons. We are in the conscious relationship, but He who is in us gives the confidence producing testimony.

But if we are children, we are heirs. We are heirs of God naturally as His children, and (as Christ is the great heir and firstborn) joint-heirs with Christ. But then the whole path and character of Christ as man characterises us. His life and Spirit being in us, the spring of what we are, our mind must be in character and nature His. But He suffered here, and now is glorified as man, ready to inherit all things. We too, then, must suffer with Him; not exactly for Him—that is a special privilege—but with Him. He could not (walking in holy love and grace, holy in all His ways, and heavenly) but suffer in the midst of a sinful world rejecting His love. His Spirit must have been ever grieved by sin, and the sorrow that was all around Him. So the saint in the measure in which he walks in the power of His Spirit, as he says in Timothy, "If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him." It is a

whole Christ: the same life has its natural consequences here and in heaven in the place of sons; a heavenly man in this world, and in the heaven of God in holy glory. We are co-glorified, and co-sufferers. But the sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory.

I apprehend "in us" is our whole state as well as our persons.

We have, then, a beautiful connection of the suffering and glory, through the dwelling of the Spirit in us. He gives us to know we are sons, and is an earnest and revealer of the glory while we are in this world of sorrow. The creature is in the state which results from the fall, but grace causes it on the other hand to wait for our being in glory for its deliverance. It must be so: the unintelligent creature cannot be brought to the rest of God's glory when the heirs for whom it is ordered are not there. It waits for the manifestation of the sons. The liberty of grace it cannot enter into (that is intelligent and spiritual—"soul-salvation"); but the liberty of glory will be *its* deliverance also. It was subjected to vanity—not by its will, but by reason of another, Adam—but not ever to be left there. It also will have its deliverance in the liberty of glory; for that applies to the whole state of things—not merely the relationship of souls with God.

Such is the general statement. And in this we get the first and fullest glimpse in Romans of the counsels of God. We shall find something of them as to the Jews in chapter xi., but in this the general result in the sphere of glory of the Son of man, though only briefly stated in connection with the subject of deliverance, which here applies to the whole creation. But this is the general statement of this truth.

What follows is our personal connection with it as Christians. We know (we Christians, having the mind of Christ, know) that the world which flesh is trying to improve as its home is groaning and travailing in pain through the fall (though grace and deliverance and reconciliation are received by us). And this is not simply true of the creature around us—our body is part of this. We being creatures have to wait for the redemption of this—the actual adoption and salvation. The redemption of the body and of the purchased possession go, in a general sense, together. The redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, we have; but the Spirit we have received in consequence is only the earnest of the other. It is in this sense we are saved in hope. What was in God's purpose to give us in salvation we have not yet (that is in glory with Christ); but the work is wrought which saves us, and we have it by the Holy Ghost. We stand (having received the Holy Ghost) between the accomplished work which saves us and entitles to the inheritance (and know it is accomplished, having, withal, been sealed for the day of redemption), and the exercise of power which shall bring the full redemption in when Jesus comes again. We, by the Spirit, look back to the accomplishment of the work, and understand its value; and by the same Spirit look forward to Christ's second coming to accomplish all and bring in the glory. Meanwhile we have these earthen vessels, our unredeemed bodies—unredeemed as to power and deliverance; for the body also is the Lord's, bought with a price; and though we have the first-fruits of the Spirit (for the Spirit will again be poured out as the latter rain for millennial blessing), we suffer with Him who

suffered here, connected with the glorious inheritance by the Spirit, and with the creation fallen in the first Adam by the body; and we groan (saved in hope) for the redemption of the body, and wait for that and the inheritance with patience—for that which is not yet seen.

We have seen that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are sons, and so heirs—heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. For the inheritance we wait. But He takes part also in the infirmities in which we find ourselves, through our connection with the fallen inheritance through the body. But the part we take through the body in the sufferings of the fallen creation is not in the selfishness of a sufferer, but we become, by the Holy Ghost, the voice of all this sorrow according to God. There are cases, no doubt, where we know the will of God, and can (praying in the Holy Ghost) expect an answer according to our demand of God. But there is a mass of sorrow which we feel according to God by the Holy Ghost, for which we know not what to demand as we ought; but the sense of the evil pressing on the heart is wrought by the Holy Ghost, and in our weakness through this poor body the mind of the Spirit is there through the Spirit's working.

Thus He who searches the hearts, and scrutinises what is found there, finds, not our poor selfish feelings or complaints, but the mind of the Spirit—what the Holy Ghost has produced in them; for the Holy Ghost Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. He makes intercession for the saints according to God. Wonderful privilege in our sorrows and sufferings, that, when God searches

the heart, He finds the mind formed by the Spirit there, the Spirit itself, as in us, making intercession for us according to God! It is a privilege to be in suffering thus, God by His Spirit taking part in it. As Christ personally felt all the sorrow perfectly through which He passed, so we through grace by the Spirit take our part in it (not according to selfishness, but) according to God, with the increased sense of our infirmity and weakness, of our dependence and connection with a fallen creation from which we cannot escape down here, and feeling it so much the more as we see the glory, but given by the power of the Spirit to take part in it according to God—to be its voice, so to speak, in grace felt by ourselves, though having part in it. It is the mind of the Spirit in it which God finds in us when He searches the hearts, and the Holy Ghost Himself is there making intercession for the saints according to God. It is wonderful grace: the heart of man is searched; the mind of the Spirit is there, because the Holy Ghost Himself is there interceding, but, though Himself, in groans which are in our hearts.

But (for such is the force of it), though we do not know "what to pray for as we ought," we *do* "know that all things work together for good to them that love God." God works of and from Himself in our favour—and makes everything work together for our good. We know not what to look for. Perhaps in the present state of things there is no remedy, no direct setting aside or remedy for what makes us groan; but this is certain—God makes all things work together for good to them who love Him. The sorrow may not be remedied but the sorrow is blessed. He is called

according to God's purpose, and God orders everything for his good.

This evidently brings in God working *for* us (with out us—not *in* us); and this is the third part of the chapter. The work in us we have seen, in life by the Spirit, and the presence of the Spirit giving us the conscience of being sons, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, and helping us—taking part in the scene of the infirmities and sorrow—being come down from heaven to dwell in us while we are in the midst of, and, as to our bodies, connected with, the fallen creation, subject to corruption through the first Adam. The will is right; power is there by the Spirit for the inner man, and hope of the glory to come; and that just makes us feel the infirmity and sorrow, but felt through the Holy Ghost according to God. It is a blessed place, and shows how true and complete is the deliverance from the power and evil of the flesh; for in that, in which by the body we are connected with the fallen creation, the will is not—"not willing," though we be still subject to the effect as sorrow. As the will of the flesh, it is dead and condemned; but, on the contrary, He who searches the hearts finds the mind of the Spirit—a divine sense of the evil, and sorrow through it; the Holy Ghost interceding for us, in that which is beyond the measure of human thought, but God entering, as in our hearts, into the sorrow. It is a wonderful deliverance in, though not yet out of, the sorrow.

We have now brought to us the counsel and favour of God—His own purpose. If through grace any have loved God, they were called according to His purpose.

The purpose is not here, nor indeed anywhere, simply sovereignty in election. It includes that to which they were called. They were foreknown; but whom He foreknew He predestinated to a glory which was in His mind and counsels before the world began, namely, to "be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren."

Here we may remark the epistle goes wholly beyond and out of its subject:—the responsibility of man and his failure, and the way that is met by the death of Christ. But the delight of divine wisdom was in the sons of men before the world was. Hence the Son became a man that His redeemed ones might be conformed to Him in glory. Meanwhile the first Adam was set in responsibility, and this had to be met, and was met in the cross, but therein a righteous ground laid also for the accomplishing the counsels of God, which consequently was then revealed (Titus i. 2, 3; 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Compare Eph. iii. and Col. i.). In the Romans, however, the instruction does not go beyond the individual, even in speaking of the purpose of God. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. This surely is clearly sovereign grace. To set poor worms, and dying worms, in the same glory as the Son of the Father has nothing to do with responsibility, or meeting it, although the act by which our failure in it was met did lay the ground for it, in that *man* perfectly glorified God; and hence *man* is set in God's glory. Our sins and our sin were met on the cross, as we have seen. But besides that God was glorified; and man, exalted to His

right hand, entered into the glory as our forerunner. For, besides His personal and eternal title, it is because of what He did for us that Christ is entered into the glory. Here then we pass beyond responsibility and get on purpose: only that in this epistle we do not go farther than the individual place, we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son. And so scripture constantly testifies: "We have borne the image of the earthy," says 1 Cor. xv., and "we shall bear the image of the heavenly Adam." "When he shall appear we shall be like him," says the apostle John (1 John iii.). "He will change our body of humiliation, and fashion it like his glorious body," says our apostle (Phil. iii.). Such as to this point is the wondrous counsel of God. For how, as to state, could we conceive anything more glorious, more blessed, than to be conformed to the image of God's Son; to see Him as He is, and be like Him?

The Spirit then blessedly states the security of those whom God has predestinated to be so conformed, stating the steps by which they are brought to the great result, only wholly omitting the work in us, which had been fully stated previously, because He is speaking of that which God is for us in His own purpose as its source, and securing that purpose in grace up to its accomplishment, and not of man's responsibility and the necessary requirement of God's nature and righteousness. These have been discussed in the previous part, both as to guilt and righteousness, and as to nature and state, so as to render it possible to have to say to the holy God. Grace has wrought that, but has wrought what was needed that we might be reconciled to God. Here

(as already stated), alone in Romans, he touches on purpose and counsels. So in Eph. i. 4. There it is so according to the purpose of His own will. Men must be holy and in love to be before Him ; but making us sons is according to the purpose of His own will. He might have made us something lower—could not, indeed, if we think of Him. It was part of His perfection to think and purpose thus. But we can think as a fact of a lower place. But His counsel was to make us sons, “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his kindness towards us* by Christ Jesus.” Part of His glory—of what angels learn—would have been lost else ; part of the glorious offering of the atonement. This could not be. Well, He called them, justified them, and brought all to perfection in His plan—has glorified them. It is not as yet in historical accomplishment, but all one unbroken chain with God.

We have then the great and blessed truth derived from it all—God is “for us :” if so, “who shall be against us ?” It is the great central truth of grace ; God is for us. He is for us, in giving, in justifying, and in securing that in all difficulties nothing shall separate us from His love ; “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us.” With Him given, we can reckon on receiving everything else. No gift like this : how should He then not give everything else ? Again, it is God Himself who justifies. It is not here justified before Him, but He justifies us Himself—little matter who condemns us then. God is for us in this also (compare Zechariah iii).

Further, there are difficulties, trials, dangers in the way, death, the high and holy place so far removed, Satan's power against us. First, as to difficulties and trials, we more than conquer. It is the very path of blessing and honour: there Christ trod; there His power and mind are with us. Take all on high moreover, or in the depth: angels and powers, all are creatures—creature power or creature weakness. They cannot separate us from the love of God: this is more, more sure, more strong than any creature; yet it is in Him who, as man, has met for us all of hostile power and death in the way, and is on high for us. It is the love of God, the sureness of divine love, and that in Christ Jesus our Lord, who has been through all, and is now on high for us. This secures us against all and through all for glory.

Here alone in this epistle, to bring in His intercession, the ascension is spoken of: "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." He has gone down to the depth for us in sorrow and the ruin of man, and risen in power and victory over it now as the exalted man, is interested in us, intercedes for us, finding needed help and mercy: what then shall separate us from His love? Here it is the love of Christ, that we may know Him and His love, as man gone down to depth, and gone up on high as man, still interested in and caring for us. In verse 39 it is the love of God in Christ, that we may know the love to be divine, supreme, and immutable, above everything that might separate in us—stronger than everything which, without us, might seek to separate us from this love.

This closes the doctrine of the epistle, carrying us on personally to glory, according to God's counsels, but not beyond our personal place according to those counsels; and surely it is high and blessed enough. Otherwise the epistle goes no farther than the responsibility of man, of which the law is the perfect rule, and where even redemption and the Spirit (our being dead to sin, and alive through Christ to God) have set us free, it is still "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit." It is being thus dead and alive in Christ which is the way of deliverance. But no one can read vi. 14, and chapter vii., without seeing that the great object of the apostle is to show that being taken wholly from under the law and put under Christ—being delivered from the law—is the way of godliness as well as of peace; that the law, which gave no new life and left sin its power—left us therefore under its power, is contrasted with our having died, for faith, to sin, and with being alive through Christ and the power of the Spirit. That is, obligation, sin, and no new life, which is our state under law, is contrasted with life and the Spirit (having died to sin), giving us power and liberty, though the flesh remains just the same though the mind be renewed.

But in one case we, even if renewed, are still under the power of, and slaves to, sin; in the other, we are set free to live to God. Law is bondage to sin; our new place is life and liberty, sin in the flesh being condemned in the cross. The natures are the same; but to be bound down by the evil one and unable to deliver ourselves is a different thing from being set free by power, and able to keep it under. But this we have through the very

fact that this epistle confines itself to the responsibility of man and the way God has met it in grace, his justification and deliverance, with only just a slight mention of counsels at the end to bring in his security. Thus the whole ground of his personal standing as so justified (God's salvation) is with wonderful fulness completely set forth, searched into, and grounded on God's work of grace, from the utter sinfulness of man alienated from God to the perfect security of the called one, so that nothing can separate him from God's love. This is of unspeakable value. Sin is fully stated, searched out; the law, as condemning and convicting of sin, forgiveness, justification, deliverance from the power of sin, all gone into; every question examined relating to how a man can be just with God; divine judgment, and human experience, fully ventilated; and divine righteousness, through grace, effectually established as the ground on which the believer stands, and which he will never be off. It does not go far on into counsels and privileges connected with the establishment of Christ's glory as Head; but our standing is most completely revealed and gone into by the Holy Ghost's reasoning, by the word of God.

The three following chapters are a special appendix, for the purpose of reconciling the doctrine that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile with the faithfulness of God to the promises made to the Jew, or Israel. The Jew might say, "I have nothing to answer to your plea against me by the law. I did break it, and hence must give up my claim under it to be a favoured people. But there were promises even before the law, and not with a legal condition. How do you

set these aside, so as to make no difference between Jew and Gentile?" This had a colour of reason, and the Spirit of God, jealous of God's faithfulness, and of the sureness of the promise made to His people, now fully clears up this point, showing, and that triumphantly, how Israel had forfeited it altogether, and yet that God, faithful to Himself, would accomplish these promises all the same: only that thus, in His divine wisdom, the Jew would have to come in as a mere sinner, entitled to nothing, just as a Gentile would.

But the apostle was charged by the Jews with indifference to Jewish privileges. Against this he eagerly defends himself. He had, he declares (the Holy Ghost bearing witness to him in his conscience), as much love as Moses when he wished himself blotted out of God's book if they were not forgiven. He too had* (as beside himself in zeal for them) wished himself accursed from Christ for their sakes, and thus recognises all privileges as theirs. As the Lord, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, speaks of the elder brother, "All that I have is thine." So all, even Christ Himself, according to the flesh, came of them. Nor had the word of God none effect, but all were not Israel that were of Israel. And now the apostle brings in the sovereignty of God.

And here I may remark, it is not national election, but precisely the opposite. The Jews claimed that, and

* I do not read it as "could wish," but as "had." He refers expressly, I believe, to Moses, in respect of his love to the people. As to God's people, I believe if we have Christ's Spirit, it cannot be otherwise. It is not a sober wish, but desire of the blessing of God's people at all costs to self.

the apostle is setting it aside, and he does it thus: You claim to be children—exclusively children of promise, as Abraham's seed: but it is written, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." You must let in the Ishmaelites, if you take it as a descendant according to the flesh. The Jew would answer, "Ah, that was a slave—not a true child of promise." Still it showed that the children according to the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of promise; for this word is of promise (so we should read it): "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall bear a son." Nor is this all; when Rebecca had conceived by one, Isaac (here there could be no subterfuge as to a slave), before the children were born and had done good or bad, it was said the elder shall serve the younger. If it be title according to fleshly descent, you must let in the Edomites. If the Jew did not consent to this, he must consent to sovereignty in election.

This sovereignty (verse 24) God would use in favour of Gentiles as of Jews. But the apostle treats some other points and objections before arriving there. Verse 14, we have the common objection suggested, there is unrighteousness with God. The apostle then quotes Moses in reply, affirming that sovereignty: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." This was sovereign, but it was sovereign mercy. And when we examine this and the following case, in both we find the wickedness there. For sovereignty in mercy and compassion supposes the evil, and pardoning was not as to good. But when we examine the case this will appear more strongly still. When the passage

quoted from Moses was spoken, Israel had made the golden calf, and God had threatened all with excision, and on Moses's intercession retreats into His own sovereignty to spare any. Had He not been sovereign, had He acted in righteousness, all (save Moses and Joshua) would have been cut off. But He was sovereign, and could use mercy, and did. The apostle draws the general conclusion. It is not willing or running on man's side, but God that shows mercy. No righteousness was attained by man's willing or running, but God showing mercy when man was unrighteous.

So on the other side, in the case of Pharaoh, God was showing His power and making His name known, and Pharaoh is set up as one in whom it is to be done. He was already a wicked man who defied Jehovah: "Who is Jehovah that I should obey him? I know not Jehovah." Well, says Jehovah, you shall know, and all the earth too; and hardens him, that he may be a monument of His judgments to those that defied His power. Both were wicked—Israel and Pharaoh. Righteousness would have condemned both. He has mercy on one, and hardens the other. He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens, where simple righteousness would simply have condemned both. This is sovereignty. He proves Himself not merely righteous (the day of judgment will prove that), but proves Himself God; and that is of all importance for us all—without it none would be saved.

But then there is still the human objection, which the apostle clearly states, and looks man in the face: "Why then doth he yet find fault, for who hath

resisted his will?" Here it is not simply righteousness, but power exercised according to His will. It is the objection of man, referred to the impossibility of resisting. The sovereign exercise of God's will is no answer really on man's part to the exercise of his own. But man does so because if God does what He pleases man pleads it as an excuse: it rests with God, and why blame man? But the apostle does not reason on the unreasonableness of it, but, as is most fitting, puts God in His place, and man in his. The thing formed is not to say to Him that formed it, "Why hast thou made me thus?" God, as the potter, can of one lump make a vessel to honour and another to dishonour. If He does, none can say, What doest Thou? There is no word that He has done so; but the first of all righteousnesses is that God should have His place, and this the apostle asserts. This is the first point—God will judge man. It is not for man to judge God. God is sovereign. No word that He does make a vessel to dishonour; but if He did, man could only bow.

Then see the holy wisdom of God. He has power to do what He sees good. "But what if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, *endured* the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of his mercy—on the vessels which *he* had afore prepared for glory?" First, man is not to reply to God. He has power, if He saw good, to make vessels to honour and dishonour of the same lump. Then the case is put without weakening that. What if He *endured* vessels fitted for destruction; not which He had fitted, but, like Pharaoh, showing His wrath in these

already such? and then make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy. And now the work in them was His doing, which He had afore prepared for glory. They were vessels of mercy, and He prepared them for glory itself. So with us who have believed through grace. The others were vessels of wrath, and in them (fitted for destruction) He displayed His wrath and made His power known, as in Pharaoh. All were evil to begin with. He displayed His divine title and ways in both mercy and glory. He is sovereign in Himself, preparing for glory "even us," says the apostle, "whom he has called of Jews and Gentiles." He forces the Jew to admit the sovereignty, or he must admit Ishmaelites and Edomites, and have been cut off himself—all but Moses and Joshua; and then shows He uses this sovereignty to call Gentiles, who had no title by promise, and Jews, who had forfeited it. He then quotes Hosea, stating both: the Gentiles, chapter i.; the Jews, when rejected, chapter ii.* and then Esaias's testimony, that only a remnant of Israel would be saved; and but for a very small one they would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah. What is the result? Gentiles, not looking for righteousness, have found it—the righteousness of faith; and Israel, following after the law of righteousness, did not attain to it, seeking it by works of law, not by faith. For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone which Isaiah had declared would be laid in Zion—a sanctuary indeed, but a stumbling-stone; but it would be by faith that they would have the blessing. He that believed should not be ashamed; but, as a body, they had stumbled at the stumbling-stone.

* Peter, speaking only of Jews, quotes only chapter iii.

But this must be more fully developed. For we have now, not the sovereignty of God letting in the Gentile and sparing a remnant of Jews through mercy, but Israel's rejection, as to the mass, as a nation, and the question whether it was final. The desire of the apostle's heart, was for the salvation of Israel. He testifies of their zeal towards God, only it was not according to knowledge; and this last statement he now develops to explain their casting away. The next chapter treats the question whether it is final or not. They were ignorant of God's righteousness (his great theme in the epistle), and, setting about to establish their own under the law, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. That was Christ, and Christ was the end of the law—closed it wholly for righteousness to every one that believed. The schoolmaster went on in his office up to faith for those who had been put under his care till the time appointed of the Father, and so practically and usefully too for many a soul (for most Christians are under law). Then came the Son, and the whole economy and dispensation of the law closed. So it was in dispensation—they could not have two husbands at once; and so it is in conscience, for so it is the mind and truth of God: it is another ground and way of righteousness. One is by our doing; the other, God's righteousness—ours by faith in Christ who has perfectly glorified Him. Christ closes the claims of God against us by law, which is condemnation and death, and is Himself our righteousness who believe through grace.

But here the special point is, He is the end of law. It is done with for righteousness: Christ takes its place.

The law knows nothing but the person who is under it fulfilling it. It says, he that doeth these things shall live in them; and this is most righteous. The righteousness which is by faith speaks wholly differently. It is, "If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved;" for the real question is the salvation of the sinner, not of keeping the law to live. The allusion is to Deut. xxx., where the question of responsibility was closed as to keeping the law; and, the people being in captivity for their sins, the keeping of it to live was wholly over, they being cast out for not doing so.

The apostle introduces Christ as the hope then, as indeed He was to the Jew: only through Him could the law be written in the heart according to the new covenant, even in Jewish hopes; and then he turns to the proof of Christ being the one whom Israel was thus taught to look to; but then it let in the believing Gentile: "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." Wherever the word was in the heart and in the mouth, that is the word of faith preached; for law was over, and faith was not law—it was another way of righteousness. Law spoke one way, faith another. We have then, on the statement of the principle which let in the Gentile, the no-difference doctrine coming out beautifully in contrast with the first use of it. First, we had, "there is no difference: for all have sinned;" here, "no difference, for the same Lord is rich unto all that call on him." "For whosoever [how the apostle glories in these "whosoever!"] shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"—consequently a Gentile who did.

The original immediate application was deliverance in Zion for a remnant (Joel ii. 32). But God had furnished the blessing in terms which let in the Gentile too when the time was come, and this way of grace of His was more important far than the Jewish privilege. This supposed the testimony which made known the Lord on whom they were to call.

This brings in the relative position of Jew and Gentile under it. The testimony in grace proclaimed to Israel was a clear doctrine of the Old Testament, for which he quotes Isaiah lii. 7. But they had not all obeyed the testimony. So Isaiah declares in liii. 1: "Who hath believed our report?" (*ἀκοή*). So faith comes by this report—the *ἀκοή*, the testimony heard—and that by God's word. But were the Gentiles not the object of God's testimony? Has the testimony not been sent? God's testimony *was* meant for the Gentiles. It is gone out into all the world. The main object here I believe to be to show that, in God's mind, testimony (God's testimony) was to go out to the whole world—not how it was done. But was Israel unaware of this bringing in of the Gentiles? The ancient testimony of Deut. xxxii. proved the contrary. When Israel first was established as a nation before God, Moses foretells their departure from Him, a foolish and unwise people. They were to be provoked to anger by those that were no people. But Isaiah is very bold. God was found of them that sought Him not (the Gentiles); made manifest to them that asked not after Him (again the Gentiles); but to Israel, "All the day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." Grace had not been wanting, but there

was no response. God had called in vain ; the divorce had come (see Isaiah l.).

Was the rejection then of Israel final ? Surely not. The apostle then gives three proofs that it was not final rejection :—a remnant was owned now ; the reception of the Gentiles, to provoke the Jews to jealousy—not therefore to reject them ; and, finally, the testimony that the Redeemer would yet come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so Israel be saved as a whole : “all Israel”—not merely the Jew, nor yet as a remnant. With this the like responsibility of the Gentile is revealed. First, then (as himself of Israel according to the flesh, and blessed), he declares God has not cast away Israel ; but as in the days of Elijah, when he even pleaded against them as wholly adversaries to God and His prophet, a remnant according to the election by grace had been preserved, so now, of which he, Paul, was a proof. But “if by grace, not by works, otherwise grace was no more grace.” Israel had not obtained what they sought amiss, but the election had obtained it, and the rest were blinded. And so it was written, as Moses testifies (Deut. xxix. 4), and David, in spirit, in judgment on their rejection of Christ (Psalm lxix. 22, 23)—from the close of their history in the wilderness dealt with in patience till Messiah was rejected ; and they now stumbled at the stumbling-stone, and were blinded. But was it that they might fall ? Was this God’s purpose about them ? Nay, but their fall was the occasion of salvation to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy.

This is the second proof it was no final purpose to cast them off. It was ordered to provoke them to jealousy,

that is, *not* to cast them off. And so the apostle laboured. His service to the Gentiles he magnified as tending to this; so far was he from thinking little of Israel. For if their casting away was the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their restoration and fulness?

This leads the apostle to bring out the relative position of Jew and Gentile as to the place of promise in this world—a most important point, and bringing out the real position of the Gentile professing body in this world; and into this I must enter a little.

When, after the flood, men had (casting off God) set up to make themselves a name, that they might not be scattered, God scattered them in judgment and formed them into nations. They gave themselves to idolatry, and God called Abraham (Josh. xxiv.) (when they were in this state), and made him the root of a separate family in which the promises were according to the flesh, or in Christ, in a special way, by grace. Up to that there had been, for good, no head of a race or family. But Adam was the father of sinners; Abraham, of the seed of God in the world. In him, election, promise, and calling were thus established—not merely individually in grace, but as a root and tree of promises. He was the first-fruit—the root. The natural tree was Israel. Some of the branches were broken off, for he will say no more. It is looked at as a continuing tree of promise, and Gentiles by grace grafted in in their place, to partake with them of the root and fatness of the olive tree. We have not here Jew and Gentile brought into one *new* man—one body in Christ; not a body united to Christ in heaven, where there is

neither Jew nor Gentile; not a mystery hidden from ages and generations, but Israel, the olive tree of promise, subsisting from Abraham, in possession of the promise, and now some broken off from the place where they were because of unbelief. The root remained in the same tree where they were, and Gentiles were grafted in among them; but they were not natural branches, but only had their standing by faith.

The Gentiles were not to be high-minded, but fear. God had not spared the natural branches: what of the Gentile, who was only grafted in? It is not the church as the body of Christ. There is no breaking off there. Then the Gentile is fully warned, and shown the principle of God's dealings;—the goodness and severity of God on them which fell, the Israelitish branches cut off: "In thee goodness, *if* thou continue in his goodness." Otherwise the Gentile branches would be broken off, as the Jewish. Have they so continued? Has Gentile profession continued in the faith and walk once delivered to the saints? If not, that will be cut off, as the Jews were—solemn word and warning to Christendom!

But the tree of promise remains, and the Jewish branches will be grafted in again into *their own olive tree*—the original place of Abrahamic promise, "for God is able to graft them in again." Not again into the church; for, so far from being there, they were broken off when it was founded (as touching the gospel, enemies, to let in the Gentiles); but still, for the fathers' sake, loved as a people chosen of God,

elect ones—enemies as touching the gospel; that is, Jews (as God's chosen people as such), but broken off for unbelief, as the Gentiles in similar case would be, and the Jews grafted in again. The Jewish system closed, we know, to let in the Gentiles. The Gentile will close, to let in the Jews back as such to the place of promise, which will then indeed extend, in its own way, over the earth. Not that there was any failure, nor could be, as to God's accomplishing His own work of grace; but blindness in part had happened to Israel till the fulness of the Gentiles had come in: all the Gentiles who had part in Christ's glory—the true church, in a word;—what completed the number thus brought in by the gospel.

Then the Gentile history of grace and the church would cease, and Israel be saved as Israel, as a nation (which of course cannot be while the church time is going on, where there is neither Jew nor Greek); and not only the Jews, but all Israel; when Christ should come, the Deliverer, out of Zion—not from heaven to take to heaven, but turning away ungodliness from Jacob in the place of His power on the earth. The Gentile professing system will be cut off, unless Popery and infidelity be continuing in God's goodness. And, note here, it is not God's goodness continuing. It is just then it is displayed in the fullest way; the fulness of the Gentiles will be come in, and taken up then to heavenly glory. But as a system on earth, *they* will not have continued in God's goodness, and, as such, *they* will be cut off. These are the ways of God on the earth, not the security of the saints for heaven. There is a place of promise and blessing into which

men are introduced ; and they outwardly partake of what can be participated in on earth, but are not necessarily really partakers of Christ. So Heb. vi.

God's covenant to take away Israel's sins is sure. It shall be accomplished when Christ comes ; for, note, the apostle speaks of Christ in Zion in a time yet to come ; for God's gifts and calling suffer no change or setting aside, and Israel is His, by gift and calling, as a people. "As touching the gospel, they are enemies"—the now rejected nation ; but, as touching election, ever and unchangeably loved as a people, and that in connection, not with law, but with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The law was conditional blessing : "If thou obey my voice, thou shalt be," &c. With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, it was purpose, and unconditional gift and calling. This difference runs through Scripture. Dan. ix. refers to Moses ; Lev. xxvi. 43, it is Jacob and Abraham ; so Ex. xxxii. 13 ; and in many other places. The final restoration of Israel will be on the ground of the promises made to the fathers, "for his mercy endureth for ever."

But there was a display of God's wisdom in this, which the apostle does not forget. Israel had promises. If he had come in on the ground of these, it would be so far a right, though grace had originally given them. But he would not, but rejected Christ, in whom they are all to be fulfilled, and thus became a mere object of mercy, like a Gentile, though God was faithful to fulfil them. As the Gentiles had been unbelieving, and mercy had been the only ground of their entering in, so now the Jews had not believed in the mercy

showed to the Gentiles, had rejected the grace that let them in, and were mere objects of sovereign mercy themselves.

It will be seen that I have translated the 31st verse differently from the authorised version; but I am satisfied it is the only true way. As it stands in English, it directly contradicts the 28th verse. They are not saved by the mercy to the Gentiles, if they are enemies, as concerning the gospel for the Gentiles' sake.

God had concluded all in unbelief, that it might be pure mercy to all. It is this that calls out the adoring praise of the apostle in contemplating the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Thus he closes his survey by the Spirit of the redeeming and justifying grace which had dealt with sinners, and of that wisdom which had known how to conciliate this faithfulness to His promises, on the part of God, with those who were heirs of the promise coming under mere mercy as behoved a sinner and the riches of God's grace. He now, though briefly summing up his doctrine further on, turns to the practical consequences which should flow from these mercies of God.

The practical exhortation takes the ground of the whole doctrine of the epistle, with which indeed the last special part as to the Jews closes withal—mercy on all, Jew or Gentile. There was no other ground of hope, and this mercy had been fully developed in the doctrinal part. The first general principle refers directly to the doctrine of chapter vi. We have seen that the first part, closing at ch. v. 11, gives neither experience

nor practice. It is just the full mercies of God in redemption. Then, set free, and in the new power of the Spirit of life, we present the body having no will (an instrument I dispose of), a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is my intelligent service. I am not innocent, I am not under the dominion of sin, and I have the privilege in the free power of life to give up my body as a sacrifice wholly to God, but in living service. It is consecrated to Him, set apart, and acceptable. The intelligent soul knows what it is doing in this. It is not a blind ceremony, done according to rule, nor a legal obligation, a yoke "neither we nor our fathers were able to bear;" but the free service of a willing mind, offering with intelligence all its powers to God, and in particular that body which (if it governed us—had a will of its own) would be the seat and power of sin bringing us into captivity, but is now a living sacrifice to God, and an acceptable one.

This answers perfectly to the practical point of the epistle, while in Ephesians the Christian is seen as having been dead in sins, and a new creation as directly coming from God. Hence the Christian walk is seen as following God in love, and being light in the Lord. The epistle to the Romans does not reach that ground. It has seen the body as the practical seat of sin, and as such called flesh, and brought in death. We are to reckon ourselves dead; but then (being alive to God in Christ, free from the law of sin and death, through the power of grace) we can yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead; present our bodies a living sacrifice to God. It is the purpose and divinely wrought will, the intelligent service of the free Christian, but

who has to view his dealing with the body as a sacrifice to God through a living one.

The next point is, that the world around us, being all astray from God, an immense system built up by the enemy, we cannot as Christians be conformed to it; only it is not a mere outward discordance, but a difference flowing from an inward renewing of the mind. Hence it goes much further—has its positive side. The Christian seeks through this world the path of God's will—that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Not acceptable to us, as sometimes said, but in itself, acceptable to God Himself, but in its very nature, acceptable to every one that judged rightly. This is a great privilege, to have a will of God in a world departed from Him. Christ has marked it and revealed it, in walking with divine perfectness as man in a way of which His walk was the perfection and the pattern. It was not mutual righteousness, for all were against Him, and went their own way; it was not, I need not say, wrong. It was a heavenly way on the earth, a life of perfect obedience; but a life of grace on the earth—God manifest in the flesh. There needed no way in Paradise, but to remain where and what man was. Where the whole system was departure from God, and man had left Him, there was no right way in it, none but to return to God; but back again—this was impossible. Innocence was over, never to be recovered—the tree of life lost. The Son of God could bring down heavenly motives on earth, and live a life of grace and separation from all evil in the midst of all the evil in the world, holy and obedient, displaying a new and divine character on the earth, heavenly in its nature, yet adapted in grace to man, such as he

was on the earth. This way we have to learn, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God—that will Christ came to do, and in which He has walked in the midst of the evil; a way not only right, but of obedience; God fully restored to His place, and man to his as a perfect one, of grace (that is, above the evil, but suited in goodness to those in it) not only to win and save, but in our own demeanour so as to represent God. Here, however, it is represented in its character of God's will. It is the obedience of one who has yielded himself to God, and now seeks what His will is, knowing it is perfect, and delighting in it, in itself, and as obedience.

This self-sacrificing subjection to the will of God hinders our setting up self, and that by its very nature; and the mind takes quietly its place where God has set it. That it does with more firmness, because it does it as serving God. It quietly serves there, where God has set it, and made it a duty. What it does in faith, it does with God in service. And each takes his place in the one body as God has set it, confines itself to its own service, and waits upon it—one body in Christ, and all members one of another. Here alone we find the body in the epistle. Christian position is assumed in various respects. We are in Christ, we are members of His body: the developed doctrine of the epistle enters into none of this. The point of exhortation is not going beyond the gift given by grace, but serving in it.

But the apostle passes on to more general service, as giving, unfeigned love, and then many other points in Christian life. But all this part of his exhortation refers

to personal qualities or characters, and state—the spirit in which we are to walk. If a man give, it should be with freedom of heart; his love is to be unfeigned, abhorring evil and cleaving to good, kindly affections, brotherly love, and putting others before oneself. Grace and generosity of heart should in general characterise the Christian; sympathy with others; not heeding the fashion of the world or high things, but associating* with those of low estate (it is not at all “condescending”); walking so as to have things irreproachable before men, and, as far it depends on oneself, walking in peace with all: in nothing overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good—a noble, indeed divine, principle. I am *myself* by grace in spite of the evil of others, do not avenge self, am above the evil of others, as God is, in principle, doing good to those who hate us. All this is personally characteristic—the spirit in which we walk.

Chapter xiii. turns to relative duties, with the addition of the Lord's near coming. Two principles are presented thus in the chapter: duty, to which he exhorts as the principle of love with which they were imbued in Christ; and that the night was far spent, and the day at hand.

First, he exhorts to subjection to the civil authority. These are God's ordinances; the powers that exist are ordained of Him—a precious direction, sparing us all question of who has the right, and political partizanship. The powers that be—that is all I have to concern myself about. There is no power but of God. Where

* “Condescending” is a false translation of *συνανταγόμενοι*.

power therefore is, it must be of God ; and I own Him in it. Wherever power is established, the Christian obeys. Resisting it is resisting God's ordinance. They are God's ministers to maintain order. On the same principle we pay tribute.

From this the apostle passes to every one's *due*, tribute, custom, honour. The Christian pays it, owes no man anything, save one debt that always remains ; and this it is which fulfils the law, for love to our neighbour will work him no ill. The principle of love makes good the requirements of law, which the law itself could never make good. This is the first great principle. Then the thought of the Lord's coming is used to enforce it : "It is high time to awake out of sleep ; for our salvation is nearer than when we believed." The night of this world is the absence of the Sun of Righteousness. Let us clearly conceive this. In the busy and pleasure-seeking course of this world it is still, for him who has understanding, and to whom Christ is known, night ; the gloom of night is over it, but the day has dawned to his faith, the Morning Star is arisen in his heart ; but the world is asleep in the still-continuing, darkness of night. For us indeed the night is far spent, but the world is asleep in the night. The waking soul sees in the horizon the Morning Star, the dawn along its edge, and waits for day. The heart is in the day, and walks as in the day. We have done, as Christians, with works of darkness. In conflict we are still, but our armour against evil, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, is the light in which we walk. The power of light and truth and godliness and judgment of evil which belongs to that day is in

our heart, and the weapons and snares of darkness are foiled and detected, get no entrance into, no hold upon, the soul. We walk honestly as in the day, put on in our ways and heart the walk and character of Him who is the true light of it, the Lord Jesus Christ. Having the hope of being like Him there, we purify ourselves as He is pure, we walk as He walked. We do not provide for the lusts of the nature which belongs to the darkness, to satisfy it, but walk as Christ walked.

Such is the Christian in view of Christ's coming and bringing on this dark and benighted world the light and day of God, in His effectual power; and such are the two springs and characters of Christian conduct: recognition of, acting up to, every relative duty in love; and knowing the time, the near approach of day to which he belongs (compare 1 Thess. v.). "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

The apostle now turns to special cases of the spirit in which Christians should walk in their relationships with one another. There were those weak in faith, not living fully in the light and power of the new creation as dead with Christ to the rudiments of the world. It was weakness of faith, but Christ was loved: they were the purchase of Christ's precious blood. Christ had died for them. They were to walk in grace, receive the weak, but not to doubtful questions which might bewilder his faith. And as to that wherever he was weak (meats, days, &c.), as a Jew might well be, though it be weakness, the weak should not judge the strong as doing evil because *his* conscience did not allow him

to do it, nor the strong despise the weak because he had scruples which a fuller faith would have delivered him from. It was judging another's servant. He stood or fell to his own master, and God was able to make him stand fast, weak as he was. That every one was to be fully persuaded in his own mind, not act on another's faith. The Christian does not live to himself, but to Christ. To Him they must look as the Lord to whom they were responsible, as Him to whom they had to live.

The apostle, as ever, then breaks out as to that which belonged to Christ in this respect. Christ was Lord of dead and living; to this end He died and rose again. Finally, He alone was judge. It was to God every one would give account of himself. All would be before Christ's judgment-seat; every knee bow to Him; "every one of us give an account of himself to God." This, rather, the Christian should judge, not to put a stumbling-block in his brother's way. It is uncharitable to destroy, as far as the bearing of our act goes in leading him to violate his conscience, or drive him back from Christ, as if Christ made lawless one for whom He died. He that serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God, and approved of the sound judgment of men. We are to follow what makes for peace, and edifies others. "To the pure all things are pure;" no meats are defiled meats, if the heart is pure; but if a person defiles his conscience, even through an unfounded scruple to him, it is unclean. Happy for him who, in boasting of his liberty by faith, does not go beyond his faith in what he does—does not offend in what he allows himself to do; for whatsoever is not of faith (done with God as

that which is allowed with Him) is sin. If a man thought he ought to honour such a day, or abstain from such and such food, and, to show his liberty, does not, to him it is sin. It is not of faith with God. If a man has faith as to these things, better to keep it to himself before God, than stumble his brother by acting on it where it does so.

The first seven verses of chapter xv. are a summing up of the same point, and belong to chapter xiv. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. So acted Christ. He did not seek to please Himself, bearing in meekness the reproaches that fell on Him, and walking so faithfully, so perfectly with God that, when men were disposed to reproach God, the reproach fell on Christ: so perfectly did He present God in His ways—the image of the invisible God. Christ served others (such should be our path), did not please Himself: His life, on the contrary, was a life of reproach which He bore, but it was the reproach of God He bore. The quotation of this passage gives occasion to the apostle to justify his use of it by a principle of the utmost importance, that what was written aforetime was written for our instruction; that walking in patience, perhaps in reproach here, the comfort of the scripture might be ours, that we might know that God's mind was in it, our reproach His reproach, because as serving Him we had our part with Him, and hence have hope and bright confidence of soul in any and every trial in the whole path of faith. For all these things brought the apostle and the right-minded saint into the patience of the gospel; and that is the path of love, serving others, and for Christ's sake. But

God is the God of patience, (of patience, how great with us all!) and, blessed be His name, of comfort too. What a name to give to God, perpetually bearing with us, our stupid, ignorant, and often inconsistent hearts, and occupying Himself with all our little trials to comfort us! He comforts those who are cast down, never withdraws His eyes from the righteous, is patient where we are impatient even with Him, and comforts us in grace. So have we to walk, like-minded one toward another, and receiving one another as Christ received us—weak in faith, that we might be to the glory of God. This closes the exhortations of the epistle.

The apostle proceeds to sum up briefly the leading elements of what he had taught, especially the letting in of the nations to the privileges of the gospel. Christ “was a minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers.” The nations, on the other hand, had no such promises. They had to glorify God for His pure *mercy*. We have already seen how the accomplishment of promise to the Jews had become pure mercy by their rejection of the Christ of promise. The apostle then quotes several passages from the Old Testament, showing that this mercy to the nations was always contemplated of God, and that there should be a root of Jesse, and one to rise to reign over the nations, and in Him should the nations hope. The apostle then thinks of them as such, and says, resting on this word “hope,” “now the God of hope [for the full promises are not fulfilled, and He gives us hope, and we are saved in hope as to that fullness] fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy

Ghost." Such is the natural condition of the Christian, full of joy and peace in believing; the Holy Ghost dwelling and acting in him so that his spirit rises in abundant hope, trusting in God, and looking forward to the bright and holy and blessed time when all shall be accomplished in the light—when we shall be with Jesus.

He then refers to his ministry. He trusted that they were able to edify one another; but he wrote to them as having this ministry to the Gentiles confided to him; ministering the gospel of God, in order to the offering up of the Gentiles as an offering to God, acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Thus a divine public ministry was confided to him by Jesus Christ in the things pertaining to God. In this the apostle presents himself figuratively as a priest (such is the force of the word "ministering" the gospel), offering up those of the nations to God; for such are Christians—an offering out of the world to God—a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. So the Levites were offered up, instead of the first-born of Israel. We are consecrated, sanctified to God by the Holy Ghost.

He then shows the power with which he had laboured, and how he had gone, not where Christianity was already planted, but to poor souls far away from God and light. Now his ministry was closed in these parts. He had accomplished his service; others might build up, but his work was done. He was a master-builder to lay the foundation; resisting, indeed, energetically the inroads of evil; but even he had his own place, and only that. It was an energy which had a sphere where energy

had its place. He could preach, in spite of every danger, where no one had been; form, establish, ordain, enter into all details needed for this, and resist evil and false doctrine, so that his building might not be thrown down; and from Jerusalem to Illyricum he had fully preached, completed, filled up the measure of the gospel work. Christianity was founded, and his work was done. The Greek world was Christianised and settled, as far as true church work went. The Latin world was before him; those which were at Rome also; for his work was done in these parts, and there was no more place for him; there he would be out of his place—ill-placed. A man, even now, may finish his work in a place (the formation and establishing work), and only be in the way if he remains, hindering others, and so felt—an energy not adapted to the quiet care of everyday service, which occupies itself with the details of souls, and would only harass them. It is wise to learn when this is so, and work elsewhere when God calls. At any rate his service in the Grecian sphere of his labour was closed; he had no more place in these parts.

But God would not allow Latin Christianity to have an immediate apostolic foundation. Christians were already at Rome, as we learn from the epistle, and Paul, as we find here, did not go on (when his service was closed on the eastern side of the Adriatic) to pursue them with free apostolic energy in Rome, but goes to Jerusalem with alms and offerings. The apostle went only as a captive to Rome. Christianity (save those residing there as inhabitants) began as a captive in Rome. He had been long desirous of going there, but even now does not speak of it, though labouring

wherever he found himself, as a general rule, at a place which was a direct object of apostolic labours. He did not found the church at Rome—it was already there: He could not say, “where Christ was not named:” it is only—“When I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you *on my journey*, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat *filled with your company*.” Spain he was going to; he would see them on the way. That Peter had been, or was there, the epistle wholly excludes the idea of. Christianity founded itself at Rome. No wise master-builder was there. It is not the custom of God to take worldly capitals as the centre of His work. “Hazor aforetime (we read in Joshua) was the head of all these kings.” It, and it alone, was destroyed of all the cities that stood still in their strength. Paul was going to Spain. He would see them on the way. But as far as scriptural history goes (that is, in God’s representation of the closing scenes of the gospel), he never goes to Spain, is brought a prisoner to Rome after two years’ captivity in Cæsarea, remains two years captive in his own house in Rome; and there, with the judgment of the provincial Jews, the history closes. This is a remarkable and, I believe, not unintentional account of the character of Paul’s intended visit to Rome, coupled as it is with the actual history of his imprisonment and arrival there as a prisoner more than two years after. We have his early history in Galatians for doctrinal objects, but no such history of frustrated plans in any other epistle. That was at Rome only, and recorded by the Holy Ghost—surely not without intention.

But now he went to Jerusalem to minister to the

saints. His apostolic ministry was closed in the east; he undertakes a diaconal service to Jerusalem, and never resumed a free apostolic service again, as far as we have any direct historical account. His purpose, as stated in this chapter, he certainly did not fulfil as intended (see verse 23). Indeed his fears as to what might happen in Judæa are stated in verses 30-32. I do not enter here on the question, on which so much has been written, whether he was freed from a first captivity in Rome, and again taken prisoner. It depends mainly on inferences from 2 Timothy, compared with Philippians, Philemon, and the twentieth chapter of Acts. The direct scriptural account closes at the end of the Acts, supplemented by what we have here (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon having been written in captivity); to which there must be added Hebrews, if we esteem it to be written or composed by the Apostle Paul—xiii. 23, 24 applying directly to the question. The question affects in no way the moral or ecclesiastical bearing of any of the epistles.

The close of the service of the great apostle, as we have it in scripture, is deeply affecting. Made even here so like his Master, though at a distance, as it could not but be; but all failing in this world, and closing, however wonderful—yea divine—the energy in exercise in the work, in failure in result here, because of the materials with which the divine workman had to deal; yet the ultimate purpose of God only so much the more wonderfully accomplished, the work only so much the more evidently divine, when we consider the materials wrought on, and the failure as displayed in them (compare Acts xx. 29-33; and still more Isaiah xlix. 4-6).

But the comparison of our chapter (verses 23-33) with the closing chapters in the Acts will bring home to us more than any commentary the true state of the case: only in Acts xix. 21 we should read, I have no doubt, "in spirit," the *Tō* having the practical force of "his" (xxi. 4 must be compared). I would remark that the Jews, who, to please their countrymen, had recommended him to go into the temple, never once appear in the difficulties they had brought him into by it. But the Lord stood by him and strengthened him, and all was ordered of God.

A witness to *all* the authorities from the Sanhedrim to the Emperor, the providence of God had ordered his path, and the Lord's grace sustained him in it. If the free service of apostolic power in the Spirit was now to close in an unwilling captivity, yet he is delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles to suffer at their hands, in the perfectness of grace, if not in the perfectness of the blessed Lord Himself. For who is as He was? No highs and lows, as the energy of the apostle could and did experience, but the calmness of unvarying perfection was there, if it were not in the thought of drinking the cup none else could, and that, if it could be, was more perfect than all.

If as yet a stranger at Rome, his heart is at home with many there. No forgetfulness of service to himself, nor of that done to the Lord, marked the apostle's spirit. His heart too for nearly all had an epithet or a remembered service, which went to their heart, and individualised and gave reality to the remembrance. He could not write to them as an assembly he had had to

say to, for there was (xvi. 5) one there, yet he could to almost all as saints that he had known. He filled himself in spirit with their company, as those known in their faith and service. And this, under the circumstances, is as beautiful as it is apposite. He was apostle of the nations, and as such had his service at Rome, as elsewhere; but the apostle of the nations had bound by the links of faith, and with a large and individualising heart, one and another and another to the service that he was performing for Christ, and by the heart that performed it. We do service as a whole, so did the apostle—a whole that embraced all the counsels of God; but he did it with a heart that could link up all the elements into the bonds of a charity which thought of each to make them a whole in Christ in love. The fruits will be hereafter.

We find many here, remark, who in various ways served diligently in the sphere in which God had placed them; from those who were of note among the apostles, to Phœbe, the deaconess or servant of the church at Cenchrea, who had been a helper of many. None of them are forgotten before God, although their names are not recorded even by the mindful fervency of the apostle's love.

The apostle then judges those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine they had learned: activity of mind, seeking personal self-importance, working mischief to themselves and others. Such activity separates the heart from God, with whom subjection of spirit is always wrought in us, a confiding learning in the secret consciousness that all is received

from God. We see this spirit so sweetly in John Baptist; and so wherever the Spirit of God works. Its coming from God brings not only knowledge but the love of God into it. It is no charity to sanction such working of the human heart. We are to avoid them. And faithfulness in this, in ever such a weak one, brings a testimony from God with it which has power—more power than the pretension of man—and works by the Spirit to preserve the saints wherever the Spirit of God rules in the heart, wherever the soul is subject to God. The rest are made manifest. The hearts of the simple are preserved: the mischievous though fair speeches are judged for them.

This leads to a most beautiful principle for the guidance of our hearts, which Christianity alone can give: “I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.” The wisdom of the world must know its crafts in order to avoid them; but God has a path of His own in the world which wisdom has traced. By His teaching the heart is well informed in what is good—good as to the path which is in this world: Christ’s path, the path of divine goodness and wisdom as to everything around in man. Learning this, I need not know all the evil or any of it. I shall walk in the wise and holy path I know, and need not know the rest. It is avoided and remains unknown, and the heart more conversant with what is good, lovely, and of good report. This is a most healthful and blessed preservative, a path marked out of God for us in this world. It is great grace. If I know the one right path across the waste, I need not learn all that lose themselves in it. “By the words of thy lips I have

kept me from the paths of the destroyer." It was sufficient for the blessed Lord to say, when tempted for us, "Man shall *live* by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." We have the salutations of, as well as to, the saints; for fellowship in love characterises the spirit of the gospel.

We have also what shows us Paul's way of writing his epistles, save that to the Galatians; he dictated them while another wrote. Here one Tertius wrote it, and salutes with the rest. From 2 Thess. iii. 17 we learn how they were verified, their accuracy secured for letters which had the character of commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. xiv. 37): this was important.* The salutation at the end came from his own hand, which verified all that was in the epistle as his—that is, as of apostolic inspired authority. We see what he thought of his own epistles; the accuracy he thought important, just because they were not his but from the Lord.

The reader may remark the three steps in the reception of divine truth in 1 Cor. ii. 12-14. The things freely given of God are known, revealed by the Spirit, then communicated by words† which the Spirit taught, and then received through the grace of the Spirit (compare, as to the two first points, 2 Pet. i. 19-21). So at the end of our epistle.

* Hence what came from his own experience, however elevated, was distinguished (1 Cor vii. 12).

† It is not "comparing," but using a spiritual medium of communication.

The apostle closes with ascription of praise to the only wise God; but, in doing so, and owning Him as He who is able to establish them according to His gospel, he recalls the character of the testimony contained in that gospel—that of which he speaks in so many places in so remarkable a manner. In this epistle he has not developed this mystery: his object was to show how a soul stood in liberty before God; and that is individual, and must be so. Conscience and justification are always necessarily individual. Still he supposes the Christian estate (as in Romans viii. 1) that we are in Christ, and (in xii.) that we are one body in Christ, as here the full scope of the counsels of God in the mystery hidden from ages. None of them are unfolded in the epistle; but his preaching of Jesus Christ was according to the revelation of the mystery, which set Christ at the head of all things; and not only so but brought Jews and Gentiles as one body, with all distinction lost, into union with Him in heaven as Head—a truth which left the system of the law entirely aside, though confirming its authority in its own place. This had been kept secret since the world began, but was in the counsels of God before the world was (compare 2 Tim. i. 9; Titus i. 2; Eph. i. and iii.; and Col. i.), and was revealed now that the foundation for the heavenly and eternal blessing was laid in Christ's work.

But a very important principle is added here: it is not "the scriptures of the prophets" really here, but prophetic scriptures. Such was this epistle, and Ephesians, and Colossians—in a word, all the inspired epistles; and by these this truth was made known to the nations

"according to the commandment of the everlasting God." He whose counsels were not confined to Judaism, but had His own purpose in the Son, and now revealed this to the nations, and commanded it to be sent forth to them; He who, while He had been in a special manner in time God of the Jews, had His counsels and views in man, and in the Seed of the woman would accomplish the counsels in power. And now this original purpose of God was made manifest for the obedience of faith to all nations. But the inspired and prophetic character of the scriptures of the New Testament is here distinctly affirmed. The only question is, since there were such, are those we have in the New Testament they?

Published at 93, Bloomsbury, Oxford Road, Manchester.

R. L. ALLAN, 15, Paternoster Row, London.

T. WESTON, 13, Westland Row, Dublin.

POST-OFFICE ORDERS PAYABLE TO W. B. HORNER, OXFORD ROAD
POST-OFFICE.

(MANCHESTER SERIES.)

JAR. P. WILKINSON, Printer, Guttenberg Works, Pendleton, Manchester