

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Doctrine, Precept, Practice

By

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INTRODUCTION

THE THEME AND ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE

IN THE Epistle to the Romans the Apostle Paul vindicates the *righteousness of God* in His dealings with men, especially His righteousness as shown in the Gospel, in which is revealed, as the Apostle says in his introduction, "a righteousness of God by faith unto faith" (1: 17). With this in view he sets forth the character and effects of the Gospel, showing the means God has adopted by which righteousness can be reckoned to men in spite of their sinful state, and further, by which His grace and mercy, now brought alike to Jew and Gentile individually, will yet be ministered to them nationally. The prominent teaching of the Epistle is that this plan of salvation is consistent with God's own character and attributes.

With this then before him, the Apostle, after his prefatory remarks, firstly sets forth the condition of the human race in its alienation from God, showing the effects of the Fall and of the refusal of man to recognize and acknowledge his Creator in the revelation He has given of Himself in nature. In this part of his Epistle he vindicates the righteousness of God in visiting men with wrath because of their sin. Jew and Gentile are thus alike brought under the judgment of God.

All this, however, is only preparatory to an exhibition of the way in which the dislocated relationship between man and God can be adjusted. This has a two-fold side to it—on God's part the means provided in the vicarious death of His Son, on man's part the one thing necessary, faith. Having laid the foundation of the adjustment of the relationship between man and Himself in the death of Christ, God calls upon the sinner to respond to His mercy simply by exercising faith. Faith introduces him into a life in Christ Jesus, which is freely given to him on the ground of His death. This is the subject of the section of the Epistle from chapter 3: 21 to the end of chapter 5.

The character and power of this new life are shown in the 6th and 8th chapters. In this connection the Apostle takes up in

the 7th chapter the subject of the Law, by way of contrast. While showing its inherent perfection he at the same time shows its inability to re-establish the lost relation between God and man, to impart eternal life and to produce righteousness in the life. It is an external force, the effect of which is to reveal the power and exceeding sinfulness of sin. In contrast to this is the internal force of the new life in Christ, which operates by the indwelling of Christ Himself through the Holy Spirit. In the next part of the Epistle, chapters 9 to 11, still "justifying the ways of God with men", he shows how the Divine dealings with the nation of Israel and the Gentile nations are consistent with God's own sovereignty and righteousness, and how salvation is to be brought to all solely on the ground of faith. In these eleven chapters the Apostle displays the sovereign grace of God in spite of the Fall and its consequences, first in the case of those who accept the Divine conditions and then eventually in national deliverance and blessing in the coming age.

From the 12th chapter onward the Epistle is occupied with the effects of the Gospel as seen in the conduct of Christians in their various relations and duties Godward and manward. These constitute the outward expressions and manifestations of the inward life received in Christ through the Gospel.

The whole Epistle thus may be viewed under the three headings of *light*, *love* and *life*, in that order. The first part reveals God as light, in all His holiness and righteousness, and in contrast to the darkness of man's state. Then comes the revelation of God's love in Christ as exhibited at the Cross. Thirdly, as the outcome of the Divine love, we see the Divine life, into which the believer is brought through union with Christ and the effects of which are seen in his conduct.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, 1: 1-16

Verse 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,—*Doulos* is, strictly, a bondservant; it is rendered "bond" in contrast to "free" in 1 Cor. 12: 13, and "bondman" in Rev. 6: 15. "Jesus", Heb. "Joshua", denotes "Jehovah is salvation".

The order of the titles Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus is always significant: "Christ Jesus" describes the One who was with the Father in eternal glory, and who came to earth, becoming Incarnate; "Jesus Christ" describes Him as the One who humbled Himself, who was despised and rejected, and endured the cross, but who was afterwards exalted and glorified. "Christ Jesus" testifies to His pre-existence; "Jesus Christ" to His resurrection and exaltation.

called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,—He was separated, firstly, in the purpose of God, prior to his conversion (Gal. 1: 15); secondly, in actual experience, at his conversion; thirdly, at Antioch, by the Holy Spirit, for his life's service in the Gospel (Acts 13: 1).

Verses 2-6

This passage contains an outline of the subject of the Gospel. There are four headings, and these correspond respectively to the four parts of the Scriptures: (1), the promise of the Gospel (v. 2); (2), the Person of the Gospel (vv. 3, 4); (3), the preaching of the Gospel (vv. 4, 5); (4), the product of the Gospel (v. 6).

The promise is conveyed in the Old Testament; the Person is the special theme of the four Gospels; the preaching is recorded in the Acts; the product consists of those to whom the remainder of the N.T. is addressed.

Verse 2. which He promised afore by His prophets—The work of the prophet is to tell forth spiritual truth, whether predictive or otherwise. Thus of Aaron God said to Moses, "he

shall be thy prophet", i.e., "thy mouthpiece" (Exod. 7: 1; cp. 4: 16).

in the holy Scriptures.—Though the article is absent in the Greek it should be retained in translating. The Scriptures are referred to seven times in this Epistle, three times in the plural, 1: 2; 15: 4; 16: 26, and four times in the singular, pointing to a definite text, 4: 3; 9: 17; 10: 11; 11: 2.

This term is here used, as elsewhere, technically, to denote the collection of writings of the Old Testament.

Verse 3. concerning His Son.—To be connected with what immediately precedes. This title distinguishes the Person from all others, since it indicates in His case, a unique relationship. His Sonship is co-existent with the Fatherhood of God. The timeless existence of the latter involves the timeless existence of the former, for God could not be an everlasting Father had He not an everlasting Son.

who was born—Not "was made", as in the A.V. Cp. "born of a woman, born under the law", Gal. 4: 4. So always in the matter of His birth. On the other hand, "He was made sin" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

The word *ginomai* literally denotes "to become". This is used not only of persons but also of events. Hence what is conveyed here is not merely that Christ was born: the word carries with it all that He underwent both in circumstances as well as in Person, all, that is to say, that was involved in His leaving the glory and coming to earth to be born of a woman.

of the seed of David according to the flesh.—The Gospel of Matthew begins with the description of Christ as "the Son of David", and the book of Revelation closes with His own declaration that He is "the Root and Offspring of David" (Rev. 22: 16).

The word "flesh" is here used to denote humanity. It is that by which the Lord Jesus identified Himself with the human race. This statement as to His humanity is preparatory to the testimony which follows as to His Deity.

Verse 4. who was declared—*Horizō*: this verb has two meanings in the N.T., (1) to ordain, or appoint, as in Acts 10: 42;

17: 31. This meaning would not suit the present passage, as Christ was never appointed as the Son of God.

(2) to mark out, determine or define, in distinction from others, as the "horizon" marks the distinction between earth and sky. So Christ was marked out as, or shown to be, the Son of God "by the resurrection of the dead".

to be the Son of God with power,—"With power" is, literally, "in power", power which was His both in the days of His flesh and in His resurrection.

according to the spirit of holiness,—Christ was distinguished from all other beings as the Son of God in two respects. Firstly, by His life, a life of perfect holiness; secondly, by His death and resurrection. The spirit of Christ, distinct, and yet inseparable, from the Holy Spirit, was essentially and absolutely holy. His sinlessness marked Him off from all merely human beings. This uniqueness involves the supernatural character of His birth. All who have been born naturally have been tainted with sin. He was sinless, Heb. 4: 15; 1 Pet. 2: 22; 1 John 3: 5. Therefore His birth was supernatural. Pre-existent as Son of God, and therefore Himself essentially one in Godhood with the Father, He became incarnate as a human descendant of David. His sinlessness, admitted by friend and foe alike, both during the days of His flesh and ever since, testifies to His Deity, as the Son of God.

by the resurrection of the dead;—This is the second fact which distinguishes Him from all others as the Son of God. His resurrection was an inevitable result of His sinlessness. Death is the consequence of sin. He had none. His death was self-imposed. He laid down His own life, bearing sins, not His own, but ours. His death was unique (1) in that it marked the close of a sinless life on earth, (2) in that He voluntarily yielded to it, enduring it by way of vicarious sacrifice. Consequently resurrection was His Divine prerogative, and not a matter of Divine favour, as in the case of others. Since He was His holy One, God did not suffer Him to see corruption (Ps. 16: 10). Death could not keep its hold in His case. Thus, both by His sinless life and in His resurrection, He was determined as the Son of God.

But not only so, His power, in the resurrection of others,

coupled with the fact of the resurrection of saints at His death, recorded in Matt. 27: 52, as well as His own part in His resurrection (John 2: 19), were evidences of His Deity, as the Son of God; possibly, too, the phrase has in view the fact that His resurrection was both an example and guarantee of that of others.

even Jesus Christ our Lord,—This has the position of emphasis coming as it does at the end of the statements concerning His incarnation, life, death and resurrection.

Verse 5. **through whom we receive grace and apostleship,**—i.e., from the Father as the Source, through the instrumentality of the Son. Cp. 1 Tim. 1: 1 and see Gal. 1: 1.

Grace supplied the capability of the work; apostleship was the resulting function in which the work was to be carried out.

unto obedience of faith—Two translations are possible here, the one given in the text, or the one given in the margin, “unto obedience to the faith”. As faith is one of the main subjects of the Epistle, and considering that this is part of the introduction, the rendering given in the text is probably to be preferred. Faith is the first act of obedience in the new life.

among all the nations, for His name's sake:—This is the paramount consideration in all Gospel work. While the Gospel is intended to accomplish the salvation of souls, yet, above and beyond this, its object is the glory of the Redeemer. The proclamation of the Gospel is a witness for His name. His name expresses what He is, and it is His character that shines out not only in the nature of the Gospel itself, but also in the results which it achieves. Those who yield to the Gospel the obedience of faith, therein reflect the character of Him whom it preaches and whom they receive. Thence onward their lives, as they show forth His glory, bring honour to His name. See Acts 15: 14.

Verse 6. **among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's:**—i.e., ‘you are of those who among the nations have obeyed the Gospel’ (verse 5). The comma after “also” is important. This word goes with its own clause, not with “called to be Jesus Christ's”. We are not here said to be called by Him, though that is true, but called to be His possession. In the language

of the Acts and Epistles the word "called" always denotes an effectual calling, and therefore suggests both the call given by God and obedience to it on the part of believers. Paul has drawn attention in the first verse to the dignity of his own position in relationship to Christ; he now speaks of the dignity of their position in this relationship. If he had received a call, they had also, and that through the voice of God in the Gospel.

Verse 7. to all that are in Rome, beloved of God,—God has a special love for those who are the called, John 14: 21, 23; 16: 27. The measure of God's love to such is the measure of His love to His Son, John 17: 23.

called to be saints :—The saints are such by Divine calling. They are not called to live a holy life in order to be saints, but because they are so, as a result of the sanctifying power of the Spirit of God. Holiness is a condition of separatedness to God by Divine call. To be saints is to partake of the character of God, and so to represent Him worthily. The character of those who belong to Him is the outcome of their relation to Him. The word "saint", in reference to an individual believer, is not found in the New Testament. In Phil. 4: 41, where the singular is used, the saints collectively are in view.

Grace to you and peace—Grace is God's free unmerited favour towards man. Peace is the result to those who respond to His grace. Our hearts are kept in peace as we realize that the favour of God is upon us.

from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—What comes from the One comes equally from the other, a striking testimony to the Deity of Christ. This opening section of the Epistle contains several foundation truths of the faith: (1) that the writers of Holy Scripture spoke from God, (2) that Christ was and is the Son of God, (3) that He became incarnate, (4) that He was sinless, (5) that He was raised from the dead, (6) that the Gospel is God's call to man for the obedience of faith, (7) that the Gospel claims men for Christ, (8) that Christ is God.

Verse 8. First, I thank my God . . . for you all, through Jesus Christ—The Mediator, through whose Person and work thanksgiving to God is alone possible. The order of the titles brings

His Incarnation and Death, His Resurrection and Ascension, into prominence as the basis of thanksgiving.

that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.—*Kosmos* here denotes mankind in general. That the word here signifies the Roman Empire is not likely. Paul probably means that wherever he goes he hears of their faith.

Verse 9. For God is my witness, whom I serve—*Latreuō*, and its corresponding noun *latreia*, originally signified the work of an hired servant, as distinguished from the compulsory service of the slave, but in the course of time it largely lost that significance, and in its usage in Scripture the thought of adoration was added to that of free obedience. Used of the service of God, the word gained the idea of a service characterized by worship. See, e.g., Phil. 3: 3; Heb. 8: 5; 9: 9; 9: 14; 10: 2; 12: 28; 13: 10; Rev. 7: 15; 22: 3.

in my spirit—That is, in contrast to the service of ritual in the Tabernacle and the Temple. Paul's service was not mechanical, it was a matter of worship to, and communion with, God, and therefore was rendered essentially in his spirit.

in the gospel of His Son,—This marks the special feature of his service. That the Gospel of God is equally the Gospel of His Son is a testimony to the Deity of Christ.

how unceasingly I make mention of you,—Constantly recurring prayer is the meaning. *Mneia*, rendered "mention" here and in Eph. 1: 16; 1 Thess. 1: 2; Philem. 4, also means "remembrance", Phil. 1: 3; 1 Thess. 3: 6; 2 Tim. 1: 3, in which last it is used of prayer, as here.

always in my prayers—This is probably to be connected with the following words in verse 10.

Verse 10. making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered—*Euodoumai*, literally, "to have a good journey" is used, (a) of the removal of difficulties in the way, as here; (b) of material prosperity in the daily avocation, 1 Cor. 16: 2; (c) of physical health, 3 John 2; (d) of spiritual health (*id.*).

by the will of God to come unto you.—*Thelēma*, when used of God, signifies a gracious design; cp. 2: 18; 12: 2; 15: 32; the

similar word *boulēma* denotes a determined resolve; see 9:19. Submission to the will of God is not inconsistent with constant prayer. Prayer is often answered in a manner unanticipated by us.

Verse 11. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you—The word suggests the idea of sharing rather than giving. Cp. 12: 8; Luke 3: 11; Eph. 4: 28; 1 Thess. 2: 8. Paul would give of that which God had already given to him.

some spiritual gift,—*Charisma* denotes a gift of grace; cp. 5: 15, 16; 6: 23; 11: 29. What Paul desired to impart came as a gracious gift from God to him by the operation of the Spirit of God upon his spirit. In this way the gift was spiritual. Cp. John 7: 38, 39.

to the end ye may be established;—*Stērizō*, from *stērix*, a prop. A strengthened form is *epistērizō*, for which see Acts 14: 22; 15: 32, 41; 18: 23. To establish is to cause to lean by supporting. Ministry of God's Word which leads us into fuller dependence on God, is ministry which establishes us. The Hebrew word for "believe" literally means "to lean upon"; cp. 2 Chron. 20: 20, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established", where "believe" and "established" represent the same word. The means of this constant confirmation, then, is the impartation of spiritual benefit, and the response of faith (see next verse).

Verse 12. that is, that I with you may be comforted in you,—Establishing produces comfort, both for those who are ministering and for those who are ministered to.

each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.—The evidence of faith in another believer is a means of comfort to the one who witnesses it.

Verse 13. And I would not have you ignorant, brethren,—This refers to believers without distinction of sex. The word "sisters" is used of believers in 1 Tim. 5: 2 only, and there the subject in hand requires it. Here it includes both brethren and sisters in the Lord. Cp. Acts 1: 15, 16; 1 Thess. 1: 4.

that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto),—He had entertained the hope for several years (15:

23). What the hindrance was we are not told. Cp. 1 Thess. 2: 18, where Satan is mentioned as the hinderer. In Acts 16: 6 a hindrance is recorded as imposed by the Holy Spirit.

that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles.—The Apostle seems to have had in view the fruit not only of Gospel work in the conversion of souls, but, as the preceding context suggests, that of the edification of the saints.

Verse 14. I am debtor—He was under an obligation to preach the Gospel, as one to whom a stewardship had been committed; 1 Cor. 9: 16, 17; Eph. 3: 2, 7-9.

both to Greeks and to Barbarians,—These were his spiritual creditors; not, of course, merely the people of Greece, as that would mean that the Romans were Barbarians, an idea far from the Apostle's thoughts; nor Gentiles as a whole, for he distinguishes them from the Barbarians. Inasmuch as Greek was a universal language amongst the civilized nations of the Roman Empire, he means all such nations, including the Romans themselves, in contradistinction to the Barbarians, the uncivilized nations.

both to the wise and to the foolish.—The difference here is that between the cultured and uncultured, from the educational and philosophic point of view.

Verse 15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready—*Prothumos* denotes a willing alacrity, not only readiness, but an inclination.

to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.—"To preach the gospel" represents the one word in the original *euaggelizomai*. A synonym is *kērussō*, which denotes "to give a proclamation as by a herald". This word is not used invariably for the preaching of the Gospel, e.g., at 2: 21.

Verse 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel:—A negative expression is often used as a forceful method of stating a positive fact: he glories in the Gospel; cp. Gal. 6: 14.

for it is the power of God,—The power of God is now mentioned for the second time. The first was in connection with the resurrection of Christ, (v. 4); here it characterizes and conditions

the Gospel. The second is the outcome of the first. In the 20th verse, it has reference to the essential attribute of the Godhead as demonstrated in creation.

unto salvation—Salvation is not only deliverance from the punishment of sin. It describes the effects of the eternal deliverance bestowed by God through His grace in Christ Jesus upon those who believe. It therefore includes deliverance from the bondage of sin (2 Cor. 2: 15; Heb. 7: 25; James 1: 21) and all that is involved in this in the present life of the believer, and further, the culminating act of Divine grace in the redemption of the body, and all that issues therefrom, 5: 9, 10; 13: 11; 1 Cor. 3: 15; 5: 5; Phil. 3: 20; Heb. 9: 28; 1 Pet. 1: 5.

to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—It was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to the Jews, Acts 13: 46. This had been the command of the Lord to His disciples just before He ascended. He had told them that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name unto all the nations, "beginning from Jerusalem", Luke 24: 47. They were to be His witnesses first in all Judæa and Samaria, and then unto the uttermost parts of the earth, Acts 1: 8. Inasmuch as the Jews were the heirs of the promises of God to Abraham, and these promises included the blessings of the Gospel, the good tidings must first be proclaimed to them. On the other hand, the Jew must, at the same time, find his place in the scheme of God's grace through the Gospel on the same ground as the Gentiles. The privilege of the Jew in this respect was merely that of priority of time and not of superiority of condition. That the Gospel was to be preached "to the Jew first" shows both the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise to the chosen seed and His grace toward those who had despised the privileges granted them, and had rejected their Messiah.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, 1: 17 to 11: 36

God's Righteousness seen in the Gospel, 1: 17

Verse 17. For therein is revealed—The tense is continuous "is being revealed", i.e., to each fresh discoverer.

a righteousness of God—The absence of the article suggests a different kind of manifestation of God's righteousness from that

given at Mount Sinai. The character of God is invariable, but is manifested in different ways, and especially in the two contrasting modes of manifestation in the Law and in grace. The Gospel is provided on a righteous basis equally with that of the Law, and the righteous character of God is vindicated alike in each, but His righteousness is displayed differently.

by faith unto faith :—Literally, “from faith unto faith”, see margin. God’s righteousness, revealed in the Gospel, is manifested apart from law, and solely on the principle of faith. Such a mode of justification can be proposed only to faith, for faith is the only alternative to works. The words “unto faith” may be understood in one of two ways: (a) the effects of the Gospel begin by faith; but the first exercise of faith is only the first step in the path of faith. The first step is implied in the words, “from faith”; the phrase “to faith” concerns the subsequent life and is involved in the quotation which follows, “the righteous shall live by faith”. “From faith” points to the initial act; “to faith” to that life of faith which issues from it. Thus the phrase “by faith to faith” would embrace the entire Christian course: (b) the righteousness of God is revealed “by faith”, i.e., on the principle of faith, “unto faith”, i.e., so as to be received by faith. Faith alone can participate in the blessing, if there is to be a revelation of Divine righteousness, and consequently it is to faith, wherever faith may be. The man that has faith gets the blessing. The latter meaning seems preferable, as Paul is here simply speaking of the way in which man is made righteous and lives.

as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.—This statement from Hab. 2: 4 is quoted three times in the N.T. Here the point of the quotation is that a man who is righteous has life, not because of his adherence to law, but by faith. In Gal. 3: 11 the Apostle is teaching the same thing, but there he is combating Judaism, and the force of his argument is that no man, however virtuous, can be justified by law-keeping. In Heb. 10: 38, faith is again emphasized as an essential thing. The prophet Habakkuk showed that deliverance from impending national danger would be granted to the man who had faith in God. In the N.T., the teaching is transferred from the material blessing of deliverance from national danger to the spiritual blessing of eternal life.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN JUDGING SIN, 1: 18 to 3: 20
 INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

In the next part of the Epistle, from 1: 18 to 3: 20, the Apostle draws a picture of man's unrighteousness, firstly in order to vindicate the righteousness of God in His retributive dealings, and secondly as a preliminary to the exposition of the Gospel as the instrument of God's unmerited favour to man on a ground consistent with Divine righteousness.

The Sinful State of the Gentiles, 1: 18-32.

Verse 18. For the wrath of God—While the Gospel declares the message of salvation (vv. 16, 17), it is a salvation granted by One who is a Judge and who, consistently with His own character, has proclaimed, and must carry out, the doom of the ungodly. This is not an arbitrary manifestation of wrath, but the necessary exercise of the infallible judgment of the Judge of men.

The subject of the wrath of God recurs throughout the first part of the Epistle; see 2: 5, 8; 3: 5; 4: 15; 5: 9; 9: 22. In this Epistle, which treats especially of the Gospel, the differing attributes of God are set forth in a manner which reveals His character as a whole. While the Gospel reveals Him as infinitely merciful, His mercy is not characterized by leniency toward sin. The Scriptures never reveal one attribute of God at the expense of another. The revelation of His wrath is essential to a right understanding of His ways in grace.

is revealed from heaven—Present tense, denoting a constantly recurring manifestation. Compare the similar statement concerning God's righteousness in v. 17. The revelation of His wrath is constant, though two great expressions of it await the human race, one at the end of this age the other after the succeeding Millennial age.

against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,—Two aspects of sin are here particularized, (1) as against God, (2) as against man, though unrighteousness is likewise sin against God. *Asebeia*, ungodliness, impiety (literally, irreverence) suggests a disregard of the existence of God, a refusal to retain Him in

knowledge; that habit of mind leads to open rebellion. *Adikia*, unrighteousness (literally, unrightness) is a condition of not being right, or straight, with God, judged by the standard of His holiness, or with man, judged by the standard of what man knows to be right, through his conscience.

who hold down the truth in unrighteousness;—*Katechō* is “to hold fast”, whether by avoiding the relinquishing of something, as in 1 Thess. 5: 21, or by suppressing it so that it may not reach others. Here the latter is in view, and the idea is that of purposive suppression of the truth. See 7: 6; 2 Thess. 2: 6.

Verse 19. because that which may be known of God—Literally, “that which is knowable of God”, referring to the physical universe, in the creation of which God has made Himself known in a particular manner,—knowable, that is to say, by the exercise of man’s natural faculties, and without such supernatural revelations as those given to Israel. The reference here is to the witness of the truth to the conscience, through creation. Cp. Ps. 19.

is manifest in them;—That is, as beings possessed of faculties capable of receiving what may be known of God; not “among them”. God gives an external manifestation of Himself, and has provided men with the faculty to receive it. Hence the Scripture regards ignorance of God as a wilful sin.

for God manifested it unto them.—The tense is the aorist (or past definite), viewing the revelation of God in creation as a complete act. The effect of the aorist tense here, however, is much the same as that of the perfect, which signifies the abiding results of an act, only the aorist stresses the decisive and definite character of the manifestation.

Verse 20. For the invisible things of Him—That is, the invisible nature of God in its different characteristics and qualities. See Job 23: 8, 9; John 1: 18; 5: 37; Col. 1: 15; 1 Tim. 1: 17.

since the creation of the world—This has been understood in two ways, (a) as referring to time, i.e., ‘since the world was created’, but this has comparatively little force and is somewhat tautological; (b) as indicating the natural source from whence the knowledge can be derived. This seems to be the Apostle’s

meaning. From the visible the mind was intended to conceive of the invisible. The physical creation provides the basis upon which certain attributes of God are made known to the mind, and thereby the conscience is affected.

are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power—*Aidios*, everlasting, is used elsewhere in the N.T. only in Jude 6. Both the unchangeableness and omnipotence of God are here in view, as exhibited in creation.

and divinity;—*Theiotēs*, used here only in the N.T., is associated in meaning with *theotēs*, Godhead, which is used only in Col. 2: 9. There is, however, a certain distinction in meaning, and accordingly the former is here translated "Divinity" and the latter "Godhead". The difference in the words is appropriate to the respective passages. Here Paul is speaking of the revelation which God has given in nature of His Divine attributes. Man can thereby know certain facts about Him, such as His Divinity, but cannot know God personally. Such knowledge can come only through the Son of God, cp. John 17: 25 with John 1: 18. In Col. 2: 9 Paul is speaking of the absolute Godhead of Christ, the fulness of which dwells in Him, and not of an external revelation of His Divine attributes. Hence the suitability of *theotēs*, Deity, in that verse.

that they may be without excuse:—It is difficult to choose between this rendering and that of the margin, which is the A.V. text. Grammatically the R.V. text translates according to the regular construction (as in 1: 11; 4: 16; 6: 1, etc.) and the meaning is that it was the purpose of God to remove from man all possible excuse for ignorance of Himself. Cp. 3: 19. This seems to be correct.

Verse 21. because that, knowing God,—*Ginōskō* here suggests, not an intimate and personal acquaintance, which would be conveyed by the word *oida*, but a knowledge of the existence of God and of those attributes already referred to. Man began with knowledge, not ignorance, of God's Being and character. He has become alienated, Eph. 4: 18. The fall implies a descent from the light into mental and moral folly. Man was not created

thus; his present condition is not a primary state but one self induced.

they glorified Him not as God,—The natural creation was intended to lead man to glorify God and to express gratitude to Him. Cessation from praise and thanksgiving to God leads to disastrous consequences, which the Apostle now enumerates. When we leave off praising and thanking God, we open the way for every form of evil.

neither gave thanks;—Thanklessness toward God is a proof of the alienation of man from Him. Thanksgiving is the expression of gratitude toward, and joy in, God, and the acknowledgment of the blessedness of His will. See 1 Thess. 5: 18.

but became vain—*Mataioō* signifies to become useless; the corresponding adjective is *mataios*, which is used in the LXX for the Hebrew word *habal*, rendered "vanity" or "vanities", and frequently applied to idols. Both verb and adjective occur in 2 Kings 17: 15, "they walked after vanities and became vain", and again in Jer. 2: 5. The word is used to express King Saul's admission of guilt, "I have played the fool", 1 Sam. 26: 21. Refusal to recognize God leads to a condition of uselessness, of futility for the purposes for which He created man.

in their reasonings,—*Dialogismos*, chiefly in the N.T. in an evil sense, of reasonings that are the outcome of self-will, reasonings of the natural mind in independence of God. So in the LXX, e.g., Lam. 3: 60, "imagination". Here it denotes the false notions about God, entertained in opposition to the facts revealed concerning Him in nature.

and their senseless heart—*Asunetos* is, literally, "unintelligent" or "without understanding" and is so translated in verse 31 and elsewhere in the N.T.; see 10: 19; Matt. 15: 16; Mark 7: 18. The heart is frequently spoken of figuratively to indicate the hidden springs of the personal life. Here it is used simply of the understanding, as also in Matt. 13: 15.

was darkened.—*Skotizomai* is used of spiritual darkness again in 11: 10 and elsewhere in the N.T. only in Eph. 4: 18. The light that God had given men in nature became darkness in them.

The faculty of reason becomes impaired by its abuse. See Matt. 6: 23.

Verse 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.—Mere profession of wisdom is spiritual hallucination. The condition of heathenism is the consequence of departure from the primitive acknowledgment of God and the recognition of His attributes as revealed in creation; it is not a state from which men have advanced by stages to attain the knowledge of God.

Verse 23. and changed—*Allattō* signifies to exchange one thing for another. They could not actually change the glory of God into anything. His glory is immutable. They made an exchange; cp. Ps. 106: 20, R.V.

the glory—Referring to His everlasting power and Divinity, as in verse 20, and thus denoting the attributes of God as revealed through creation.

of the incorruptible God—*Aphthartos* is used of God, here, and 1 Tim. 1: 17 (wrongly translated “immortal” in A.V.).

for the likeness—*Homoiōma*, a resemblance. The association of the two similar words “likeness of an image”, while practically the same thing as “for an image” serves to enhance the contrast with “the glory of the incorruptible God”, and is expressive of contempt.

of an image—Man is essentially constituted to be a worshipper. If he abandons the worship of God, some other object will be found to take the place of the Creator. In the O.T. the voices of the prophets are raised sarcastically against the folly of idolatry, for God is remonstrating with His own people for turning from Him and falling thus to the level of the nations around them. Sarcasm is, however, conspicuous by its absence when the subject is mentioned in the N.T. The manner in which Paul appeals to the Greeks on Mars Hill is not sarcastic, he is simply stating as a fact the folly of idolatry. The Gentiles, though originally turning from the worship of the Creator, were not guilty of folly to the same extent as Israel. Gentiles are brought up in idolatry. Hence sarcasm is not used in appeal to, or remonstrance with, them.

of corruptible man,—The words “incorruptible” and “corruptible” are inserted in order to expose more vividly in the contrast the folly of the exchange.

and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.—The order of the objects of worship is suggestive of the progressive degradation of the worshippers.

In whatever way idolaters regard their idols, whether as mere symbols of the beings they actually worship or as indwelt and energized by these beings, Scripture knows no such distinction. All such worship is transgression against God.

Verse 24. Wherefore God gave them up—Civilization provides no remedy for, or safeguard against, the evil. The more civilized men became, the more vicious became their idolatry. The knowledge of God is the only means of leading man to purity of heart. The sanctity of the body is implied in the teaching of this verse.

Paradidōmi signifies to hand over to the power of another. The statement is repeated in verses 26 and 28. The same word is used in reference to the death of Christ at 4: 25 and at 8: 32. See also 6: 17. In this passage the reference is to the Divine retribution following upon the sin of exchanging God for an idol. To abandon God is to open a way for complete moral degradation. This retributive dealing is not the outcome of mere despotism on the part of God; for the acknowledgment and worship of the Creator are the means of human happiness. Atheism and polytheism tend inevitably to moral disease. Our moral nature is governed by laws which God has Himself put therein as part of our very constitution. God works in and by these laws in human experience. In acting against them man sins against God as his Creator and sins against himself as the creature. He therefore lays himself open to the Divine retribution expressed in this verse. The process described is not that of mere natural law, it is designed by God and the issue is reached under His control.

It must be remembered that in the solemn description given in this passage, of the consequences of idolatry, the Apostle is not presenting what is necessarily an irretrievable condition, for the Gospel proves to be the power of God unto salvation even from such degradation. Indeed the whole description is a dar

background to the revelation of the grace of God in and through the Gospel.

in the lusts of their hearts—That is, in their condition characterized by the lusts of their hearts.

unto uncleanness,—See 9: 19; cp. the phrases in verses 26 and 28 in this chapter.

that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves:—This dishonour is the retributive effect of their dishonour done to God.

Verse 25. for that they exchanged—*Metallassō*, in the N.T. only here and in the next verse, denotes the giving up of one thing (here the truth of God) in order to receive another (a lie). See note on “changed” (verse 23). The verb here is but a stronger form of the verb *allassō* there.

the truth of God—This corresponds to the “glory of God”, in verse 23. The phrase signifies, not “the truth concerning God”, but “God whose existence is a verity”, that is to say, the true God, as revealed to man by creation.

for a lie,—A terse expression used by metonymy (the substitution of a word describing the nature or significance of an object instead of the object itself) for an idol. Isaiah speaks of the idolater as failing to perceive that there is “a lie in his right hand”, Isa. 44: 20; Jeremiah calls the molten image falsehood, Jer. 10: 14; 13: 25; cp. 16: 19, 20; so “their lies”, Amos 2: 4.

and worshipped—*Sebazomai* is used here only in the N.T. It primarily denotes “to hold in reverence”, and so “to give honour to”.

and served—For *latreuō* see note on verse 9. The order “worship”, and “serve” is constant in Scripture, (e.g., 6: 13, 14). Acknowledgment of the Person Himself must have precedence over activity in His service. Service to God derives its effectivity from engagement of the heart with God.

the creature . . . the Creator,—The difference between the two is immeasurable. The Creator is self-existent, unconditioned and unlimited in power and knowledge. To the Creator the

creature not only owes its existence, but by Him it is conditioned; from Him it received its power and its knowledge, and those limitations by reason of which it enjoys the blessing of dependence on its Creator. To substitute the worship of the creature for that of the Creator is therefore the very height of perverseness and folly, meriting the retribution mentioned in the passage.

rather than—That is, ‘instead of’, not a matter of comparison, but of the abandonment of one thing for another. Cp. “lovers of pleasure rather than (instead of) lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3: 4).

who is blessed—*Eulogētos*, used of God, indicates praise and adoration on the part of the creature, in recognition of the power and prerogatives of the Creator, and the privileges enjoyed at His hands. The word is thus to be distinguished from *makarios*, also translated “blessed”, which, when referring to God, signifies His absolute blessedness in all the perfections of His attributes.

for ever,—Literally, “unto the ages”. The literal translation, however, is to be avoided, as, firstly, it tends to indicate a defined period, an impossible significance in the present instance, and, secondly, because it does not adequately express the phrase as understood in the mind of the Greek speaking peoples. With them the expression denoted undefined duration. Plato, for instance, uses this terminology to contrast something with that which comes to an end. So the word *aiōnios* is contrasted with *proskairos* (temporary) in 2 Cor. 4: 18. Infinite duration is always the significance, unless precluded by the context.

Amen.—This is a transliteration of a Hebrew word, signifying, when used by men, “So let it be”. When said by God it means “It is and shall be so”. In Isa. 65: 16 it is used to describe the character of God as a Being who is faithful to His word (see R.V. margin). In Rev. 3: 14, it is a title of Christ, as through Him the Divine purposes are established.

Verses 26, 27. For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions . . . receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.—Selfwill brings its own suffering. Natural laws have a self executing power in a corresponding requital, like the Law of Sinai (Heb. 2: 2).

Verse 28. And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge,—The subject of the effects of rejecting the Divine revelation is further developed. The refusal (*adokimazō*, literally, signifies “not to approve of a thing”) was not through indifference, but was a self-willed choice after a definite consideration of the circumstances. Men preferred sin to the knowledge of God held out to them by means of both the physical universe and their own natural constitution.

God gave them up—This is stated the third time, each marking a further phase in the retributive justice of God.

unto a reprobate mind,—*Adokimos* is an adjectival form of the verb rendered “refused”. If man rejects God, God makes him reprobate, rejects him, as having failed to stand the test. A mind which is reprobate, worthless, useless, is unable to fulfil its natural functions as designed by God; it confuses right and wrong, failing to distinguish what is pleasing to Him from what is displeasing.

to do those things which are not fitting ;—Determination to refuse the knowledge of God leads, according to the righteous principles and decrees of the Divine counsels, to the pursuit and practice of sin. The very influences which would restrain the ungodly are retributively withdrawn from them. The word *kathēkō* “to be fit”, is here used of what befits the nature of man as God’s creature and his responsibility towards his Creator.

Verse 29. being filled—The tense is the perfect, ‘having been filled’, indicating, in the four evils about to be mentioned, a state which produced the sins and evil characters to be enumerated.

with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ;—The additional word “fornication”, in the A.V., is rightly omitted; it is absent from the best MSS.; it also introduces a specific act into a list of evils of a general character.

For the word *adikia*, unrighteousness, see at verses 17, 18; *ponēria*, wickedness, is used seven times in the N.T., (twice in the plural, Mark 7: 22, Acts 3: 26), to signify all kinds of evil. Covetousness (*pleonexia*, literally, “a desire for more”) is associated with *ponēria* in Mark 7: 22: it is described as idolatry in

Col. 3: 5. *Kakia*, "maliciousness", the noun corresponding to the adjective *kakos*, evil, is a comprehensive term for all evil, especially moral evil (see, e.g., 1 Pet. 2: 1, R.V. "wickedness").

full of—*Mestos* signifies full up, full to the utmost; compare and contrast 15: 14; elsewhere of moral qualities, only in Matt. 23: 28; Jas. 3: 8, 17; 2 Pet. 2: 14.

envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity;—These five evils are of a more specific character. Envy is discontent with, or mortification at, the knowledge or sight of another person's superiority or advantage. For "strife", *eris*, see also 13: 13.

whisperers,—This begins a list consisting chiefly, though not entirely, of personal characters. The verb is used here only in the N.T., and the corresponding noun "whisperers" in 2 Cor. 12: 20 only. The evil is that of secretly conveying information, whether true or false, detrimental to the character or welfare of others.

Verse 30. backbiters,—Literally, "evil speakers". The word, here only in the N.T., does not necessarily involve the absence of the person attacked.

hateful to God,—This represents the one word *theostugēs*, here only in the N.T. The marginal and A.V. rendering "haters of God" is quite possible, and is appropriate to what is expressed by the next two words.

insolent, haughty, boastful,—The first word, elsewhere in the N.T. only at 1 Tim. 1: 13 (injurious), is used of injury done whether by word or deed. The word *hyperēphanos*, haughty, proud, is associated with boastfulness also in 2 Tim. 3: 2.

inventors of evil things,—Literally "inventors of evils". What is indicated is not merely invention by human ingenuity, but also the discovery of things suggested by the powers of darkness.

disobedient to parents,—See, e.g., Exod. 20: 12; Lev. 19: 3; Matt. 15: 4; 19: 19; Eph. 6: 2; and cp. Jer. 35: 18, 19; 2 Tim. 3: 2; *apeithēs*, disobedient, is, literally, "not to be persuaded by".

Verse 31. without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful:—These phrases represent four words in the original. We may render the second “non-covenant-keeping”. Some MSS., not the most authentic, have the addition ‘*aspondous*’, implacable, as in the A.V.

Verse 32. who, knowing the ordinance of God,—That is, what God has declared to be right (*dikaiōma*), here referring to His decree of retribution. The relative pronoun “who”, as in verse 25, suggests that what is now to be stated concerning the sinners mentioned is the cause of the evils just enumerated. The evils are the effect of the refusal to accept and follow what they know to be right. Man’s conscience and experience tell him of the evil character and effects of impurity and cruelty, and their Divine condemnation.

Dikaiōma is used elsewhere in this Epistle in its other meaning of “righteousness” (see 2: 26; 5: 16, 18; 8: 4); its meaning “ordinance” is found in Luke 1: 6; Heb. 9: 1, 10.

that they which practise such things—The verb *prassō*, to practise, is to be distinguished from *poiō*, to do, as expressing a course of conduct, whereas the present tense of *poiō* expresses a series of repeated acts. In John’s Epistles the present continuous tense of *poiō* takes the place of *prassō*, and should not be rendered “commit”, as in the A.V., e.g., in 1 John 3: 8, 9.

are worthy of death,—Not simply the natural termination of life, but the execution of the Divine penalty upon sin. This statement is explanatory of “the ordinance of God”.

not only do the same,—Present tense of *poiō*.

but also consent with them that practise them.—*Suneudokeō*, to consent, expresses a hearty approval of a thing (cp. Luke 11: 48). In such cases not only is the voice of conscience stifled, but the mind has become absolutely callous regarding the moral degradation and ruin of others, and takes pleasure in their sinfulness.

CHAPTER II

The sinful state of the Jews, 2: 1-29

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN THIS chapter the Apostle deals especially with the subject of the Jews, showing that they, alike with the Gentiles, are guilty before God. The argument is thus carried to the point that the whole world is brought under the judgment of God. The Jew's was an increased guilt because of the privileges granted him. Moreover, while condemning the sins of the Gentiles, the Jews were guilty of doing the same things, in spite of the light they had received from God.

(a) *The Divine Judgment (vv. 1-5)*

Verse 1. Wherefore—That is to say, because of the universal facts of the voice of conscience and the knowledge of the Divine condemnation and punishment of sin and of the consequences of practising evil and consenting with it, in spite of that knowledge.

thou art without excuse,—This recalls 1: 20. If the Gentiles are without excuse, so are those Jews who, while judging the Gentiles for their rejection of God, are guilty of the same sins as stand to the condemnation of Gentiles.

O man,—That is, anyone who takes the place of a judge. The Jew is in view, but is not yet specifically mentioned. To have mentioned Jews just here would have marred the trend of the argument.

whosoever thou art that judgest:—*Krinō*, "to judge", primarily signifies to distinguish; then, to distinguish between right and wrong, without necessarily passing an adverse sentence, though this is usually involved.

for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; —*Katakrinō*, a strengthened form of *krinō*, always denotes "to pass an adverse sentence", e.g., 8: 3, 34; 14: 23.

for thou that judgest dost practise the same things.—The reference is not, of course, to the same kind of idolatry as the Gentiles, for that particular evil had been purged from the Jewish nation during their captivity, but to such sins of moral obliquity as are enumerated in 1: 29–31.

Verse 2. And we know that the judgment of God—Krima here, and almost invariably in the N.T., signifies an adverse sentence (see above, on “judgest”). Sometimes it includes the carrying out of the sentence (see next verse).

is according to truth against them that practise such things.—That is, it is according both to facts and the unerring estimate of them by God.

Verse 3. And reckonest thou this,—Logizomai signifies the result of a deliberate process of reasoning (as distinct from the simpler verb *dokeō*, “to think”).

O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?—There is strong stress on the pronoun “thou”. The judgment here points to the execution of the sentence. The idea that membership of the Jewish race ensured the favour of God and spiritual privilege, was deep-rooted in the national sentiment.

Verse 4. Or despisest thou—The word “despisest” bears stress; it stands in implied contrast to the responsibility of glorifying God for His goodness.

the riches of His goodness—*Chrēstotēs* denotes the kindness which disposes one to do good; cp. 11: 22. It is used of God also in Eph. 2: 7 and Tit. 3: 4, and of believers in 2 Cor. 6: 6; Gal. 5: 22; Col. 3: 12.

and forbearance—*Anochē*, is, literally, “holding up”, and so a withholding of punishment.

and longsuffering,—*Makrothumia*, literally, “long-temper”. If forbearance denotes delay in executing judgment, longsuffering denotes the particular disposition which delays it.

not knowing—*Agnoeō* signifies “to be ignorant”, suggesting not only a failure to recognise, but a wilful ignoring of the fact.

that the goodness of God—*Chrēstos* is a shorter form of the word *chrēstotēs* just used. The Lord used it to describe the easy character of His yoke, a yoke not only easy, therefore, but kindly, Matt. 11: 30. The same word is used elsewhere of God, in Luke 6: 35, and 1 Pet. 2: 3, “gracious”, and of believers in 4: 32.

leadeth thee to repentance?—*Metanoia* is, literally, “a change of mind”, but is usually associated with the idea of sorrow for sin. God wills that all men should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3: 9). Here the special privileges granted to the Jews are in view, as a means of leading them to repentance.

Verse 5. but after thy hardness and impenitent heart—“After” means “according to”. The word *sklērotēs*, hardness, i.e., insensibility to God’s goodness, is used here only in the N.T.

treasurest up for thyself wrath—An allusion to the riches of God’s goodness (v. 4); the idea is that of amassing an accumulation of Divine wrath. The responsibility for his doom lies with the sinner himself; “for thyself” bears stress.

in the day of wrath—That is, the time when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness. The word “day” here and in several other passages covers a more or less extended period, and is frequently associated with judgment. It is daylight that presents nature in its true aspect, in contrast to its appearance in the obscurity of night. Thus the present period is called “man’s day” (1 Cor. 4: 3, margin). Therein man forms his opinions and passes judgment upon things, a judgment, however, that is guided by natural and therefore finite reasoning, and perverted by sin. “Man’s day” is to be superseded by the “Day of the Lord”, the Day when the Lord will be manifested to execute His Divine and unerring judgment upon men. Prior to this “the Day of Christ” (Phil. 1: 10; 2: 16) will begin. This period has solely to do with the Church, and thus is to be distinguished from “the Day of the Lord”

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;—In these words the Apostle shows that the wrath of God is not vindictive

or arbitrary, but that the day mentioned will bring a revelation of a judgment passed by One who is infallible in His estimation. Thus in describing the universal sinfulness of the human heart the Apostle at the same time vindicates the holiness of God, and His righteousness in dealing with sin.

(b) *The Means of Life (vv. 6-11)*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

These verses appear at first to present a difficulty in this respect, that they give no indication of the foundation truth of the Gospel, that the gift of eternal life is bestowed on condition of faith in Christ (John 3: 15, 16, 36, etc.). Here eternal life is said to be bestowed as the result of seeking for glory and honour and incorruption and of patience in well doing.

Now (1) the subject of the whole passage is not the means of obtaining eternal life, but the righteous judgment of God against man's sin, and in this respect what is mentioned in verses 8 and 9, as to the punishment of those who do not obey the truth, is perfectly consistent with the teaching of the rest of Scripture on the subject. "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him" (John 3: 36).

(2) It is a fundamental principle, in finding the meaning of a passage of Scripture, that no explanation is legitimate which contradicts the plain teaching of the rest of the Word of God; on the contrary, the passage in question must be understood in the light of plain statements elsewhere given.

(3) That eternal life is conditional upon believing on the Son of God, is plainly taught in numerous passages in the N.T. Nor is the declaration in the present passage, that eternal life is to be the portion of those who seek for glory, honour and incorruption by patience in well doing, inconsistent with the teaching of the Gospel, that the gift of eternal life is bestowed upon the condition of faith; for faith is the initial act by which a believer enters upon a life that is necessarily characterized by patience in well doing and seeking for glory; indeed, if this is absent from the life of one who professes faith in Christ the essential evidence of the genuineness of his faith and of his possession of eternal life is lacking. But the Apostle is not here dealing with the subject of justification and the gift of life through faith in Christ; that

subject he takes up later in the Epistle. Here he is showing that the Jew and the Gentile are on the same ground in the sight of God in the matter of sin, and he is merely stating, in an anticipatory way, that they must both have deliverance in the same manner.

(4) Again, when he says that God will render glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good, whether Jew or Gentile, we cannot take this as an absolute statement apart from the truth of the Gospel. It is consistent with the Gospel in that, in the estimation of God, that alone is good which is wrought in and through His Son. The very first requirement by God of good works on the part of man is that he believes in the Son of God (John 6: 29). Therefore, according to the Divine estimate, a man must be in Christ in order to receive glory, honour and peace, and on no other condition can he obtain these benefits. It is, however, not to the Apostle's point to give these details in this passage. To do so would be an unnecessary digression.

(5) Clearly, a reading of the two verses 7 and 10 together shows that the Apostle is not speaking of the bestowment of eternal life as conditional upon faith in Christ, he is simply dealing with the subject of rewards. Now eternal life is sometimes spoken of in the N.T. as consisting of more than that condition into which a man passes the moment he believes in Christ. In such passages the consequent qualities and capacities are in view.

It is therefore, misleading to suggest that Paul is speaking of the manner in which the destiny of men would be determined if there were no Gospel. The various revelations given in Scripture of the purposes and dealings of God are never inconsistent with one another.

Verse 6. who will render to every man according to his works :—This is predicated as the act of Christ in Matt. 16: 27, and is word for word the same, except for the singular, "doing" (see R.V. margin), instead of the plural "works". Thus the two passages provide a testimony to the equality of the Son of God with the Father, and so to His Deity. See also Rev. 22: 12.

Verse 7. to them that by patience in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption,—"Glory" describes the character of the future of the kingdom of God and the rewards assigned to the faithful in connection therewith in relation to Christ.

"Honour" is inseparably connected with glory, and signifies the token of God's estimate. The word rendered "incorruption" is found elsewhere in 1 Cor. 15: 42, 50, 53, 54; Eph. 6: 24; 2 Tim. 1: 10; Titus 2: 7. The word denotes the absence of decay or destruction, but when used of the state of a believer, it carries with it also the idea of a condition of happiness.

eternal life :—Not mere endless existence, but a life in the enjoyment of communion with God and the experience of His power. The word *aiōnios*, "eternal", denotes indefinite, and so unending, duration. "Agelong" does not express the meaning as understood by the Greeks.

Verse 8. but unto them that are factious,—Literally, "to those who are of strife". Cp. "everyone that is of the truth", (John 18: 37). *Eritheia* here signifies the spirit that resists the will and way of God, and for this reason disobedience to the truth is coupled with it.

and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness,—The construction used in the words "obey" in each case signifies an habitual course of conduct. Such yield themselves to unrighteousness and co-operate with it, fulfilling their sinful impulses. Dislike for the truth leads to its rejection.

shall be wrath and indignation,—The former suggests the feeling, the latter the manifestation of it. God seeks, by a revelation of Himself and of the truth, to lead men to bow to His will. Man in his sinful condition resists God and yields to His enemy, the climax of which is the righteous exercise of Divine wrath.

Verse 9. tribulation—*Thlipsis* is the suffering which results from what presses hard on the soul. The word occurs elsewhere in this Epistle at 5: 3; 8: 35; 12: 12.

and anguish,—*Stenochōria*, literally, signifies the condition of one who is shut up without the possibility of escape, and hence it comes to denote a condition of distress. The four words suggest a series of cause and effect. The first indicates God's attitude towards sin, the second the expression of that attitude, the third the result therefrom, the fourth the realization of entire helplessness. The whole is set in contrast to eternal life. In each respect there is a conscious experience either of woe or of blessedness.

upon every soul of man that worketh evil,—That is, upon every man, the soul standing for the person, as in Acts 2: 41, 43. Cp. Lev. 24: 18; literally, “soul for soul”. The word *katergazomai*, “worketh”, is a strengthened form of the simple verb *ergazomai* (see next verse) and here indicates perseverance in sin.

of the Jew first, and also of the Greek;—Cp. 1: 6. The Jew was the subject of greater privileges, and consequently his was greater responsibility. The word “first” apparently means “especially.”

Verse 10. but glory and honour and peace—This is set in contrast to tribulation and anguish. Note the parallel (with a change in the third word) to “glory and honour and incorruption” in verse 7; the reward exceeds the aim and effort. “Peace” is to be understood in the widest sense, both of acceptance with God and all the happiness resulting therefrom.

to every man that worketh good,—*Ergazomai* is the simple form (see above). The change from the stronger to the simpler serves to bring out the grace and mercy of God. To the one who works good (were it possible), with a simple effort to accomplish it, the reward is proffered, whereas it is one who persists in working evil who is punished.

to the Jew first, and also to the Greek:—The repetition of these words serves to give prominence to the distinction between Jew and Gentile and thereby lends force to Paul’s argument by which he breaks down the distinction between the two in the matter of sin, proving that they are alike guilty before God.

Verse 11. for there is no respect of persons with God.—Literally, “acceptance of the face”, the opposite to impartiality. God will pronounce sentence without regard to circumstances of birth. See also Deut. 10: 17; 2 Chron. 19: 7; Job 34: 19; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 3: 23; Jas. 2: 1, 2. The remainder of this chapter is a development of this truth.

(c) *The Impartiality of God’s Judgment (vv. 12–29)*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Gentiles, who have sinned without external law, must perish without the Law; the Jews who had an external Law, will

be judged by it. The Gentiles have the law of conscience, and that law is equivalent to the Law given to the Jews (vv. 12-15). All men must therefore be judged in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Christ (vv. 12, 16).

Guilt is then laid to the charge of the Jew from the point of view that; while he glories in his privileges and has a form of knowledge of the truth and preaches to others, he himself is a transgressor and causes God's name to be blasphemed (vv. 17-24). So Jews are equally liable to judgment and righteous Gentiles will condemn them (vv. 25-29).

Verse 12. For as many as have sinned—Literally, "sinned", aorist tense, pointing back from the future time of judgment to the sins viewed culminatively during the life on earth.

without law—That is, in the absence of some specifically revealed law, like the Law of Sinai. That there is no definite article suggests that law is viewed here as a general principle. The Law is a declaration of God's will concerning man's conduct. The Gentiles were without that. Yet that fact will not save them from doom. God's wrath against them will be just, but their judgment will be administered altogether apart from the Law of Sinai. They are to be judged by another standard. Man will never be subject to condemnation through ignorance of that which has not been made known to him.

shall also perish—*Apollumi*, signifies ruin in regard to condition, loss of well-being, not loss of being. Neither this nor any other word in Scripture denotes annihilation. The Gospel promises everlasting life for him who believes. The failure to possess this life will involve the utter ruin of those that perish.

without law :—See note above. The reference is to an external law, not the law of conscience, for that is the standard by which Gentiles are actually to be judged. The Apostle shows that the fact that God has given the Law to one section of the race, constitutes no departure from the truth that there is no respect of persons with Him. He appeals now to a principle which includes all law, and which therefore applies equally to the Jews and the Gentiles. In other words, he is speaking here not specifically of the Law of Moses but of law as a principle which affects God's

relations with man. The matter is viewed here as regards responsibility and not privilege. For the immediate subject is sin and its effects.

and as many as have sinned under law—Literally, "in law", i.e., within the scope of the precepts of a law, the reference being to the Law of Sinai.

shall be judged by law;—The judgment includes here the passing of the sentence, the standard of right and wrong being the moral law Divinely revealed.

Verse 13. for—This follows probably in immediate connection with verse 12.

not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified:—This is the first occurrence of the word "justify" in this Epistle. The context in each case explains its meaning. The application here is legal and the meaning is "free from all ground of condemnation", "pronounced righteous". The Apostle has not yet begun to develop his subject of justification by faith. He is now affirming a general principle, and is making a conditional statement which is in strict accordance with the words of Lev. 18: 5. For an O.T. use of "justify" in this sense, see Deut. 25: 1.

Verse 14. for when Gentiles—The principle of verses 12 and 13 is now applied to Gentiles in order to show its universality. By the absence of the article attention is drawn more particularly to the condition of Gentiles as distinct from that of Jews. With Gentiles conscience takes the place of an external revelation.

which have no law—They have no documentary revelation such as was given at Sinai.

do by nature—That is, according to natural impulse, in contrast to obedience to the decrees of God given by an external law. The subject is not nature in contrast to the dealings of grace.

the things of the law,—The Law of Sinai. The conduct of Gentiles is the result of internal forces, incident upon their natural constitution.

these, having no law, are a law unto themselves ;—Their conscience guides them instead of an external revelation. Conscience in their case is what the law is to the Jews. As far as their conduct is right, it is a proof of the existence of this inner law. Conscience becomes a guide not only to each man individually but leads to a mutual understanding with others as to what is right and what is wrong.

Verse 15. in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts—There are two possible meanings to this, (1) what is done in obedience to the Law, (2) what the Law itself does, its practical effect. The latter seems to be the meaning. They show the work, though they are not possessed of the actual letter.

their conscience—Conscience is the mental faculty by which man judges his actions and passes sentence thereon. "Conscience" is, literally, "co-knowledge", a knowledge of the right or wrong of an act.

bearing witness therewith,—That is, bearing witness in agreement with a moral standard generally recognized among them, unwritten, but corresponding to the Law of Sinai.

and their thoughts—*Logismos*, elsewhere in the N.T. only at 2 Cor. 10: 5. denotes "reasonings".

one with another—That is, one person with another, not one thought with another.

accusing or else excusing them ;—"Accusing" is put first because a condemnatory verdict in man's judgment upon his fellows is far more frequent than the opposite. All this goes to show that man is inwardly possessed of a law which corresponds to the Law of Sinai, and which therefore provides a standard by which he must be judged hereafter.

Verse 16. in the day—See note on verse 5. In this verse, if connected with what immediately precedes, the Apostle is viewing the standard of conscience as that by which the Gentiles are to be judged.

when God shall judge the secrets of men,—The hidden things upon which men have passed sentence according to their own

conscience, and so the inner motives of their actions. Cp. "the hidden things of darkness", 1 Cor. 4: 5, where the same word is used. See Eccles. 12: 14.

according to my Gospel,—The Gospel not only preaches salvation, it also proclaims principles upon which God will exercise judgment hereafter. Paul's preaching and teaching constantly maintained this truth. See, e.g., Acts 17: 31; 1 Cor. 4: 5; 2 Cor. 5: 10.

by Jesus Christ.—The order of titles suggests that the One who is going to act as the Judge is the One who became incarnate (thus entering personally into the experience of human nature) and then ascended to God's right hand.

Versè 17. But if—This introduces a supposition regarding the Jew the answer to which is given at verse 21. This paragraph is really a continuation of the proof that God's judgment will be exercised without distinction of persons. It would be futile for a Jew to argue that God Himself made the distinction, for the Jew has abused his privileges.

thou bearest the name of a Jew,—"Jew" stands here as equivalent to Israelite. It was, however, a name of which the Jews were proud, Gal. 2: 15, and see Rev. 2: 9; 3: 9, and verse 28 below. The name Jew first occurs in 2 Kings 16: 6.

and retest upon the law,—Although the Law put the Jews into a special relationship to God, it became a ground of self-confidence, even though they transgressed it. For an illustration see the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Such Jews regarded the Law as an evidence of God's favour rather than as a guide for conscience and conduct. Cp. Mic. 3: 11, where the Sept. has the same word for "lean upon" as here.

and gloriest in God,—The believer rightly glories in God when he acknowledges His greatness and power, His mercy and love. Hence, however, the thought is that the Jew boasts in Jehovah as the God of his race, and yet, living in sin, comes under the condemnation of the very Being in whom he exults.

Versè 18. and knowest His will,—Literally, "the will" perhaps a term in general use among the Jews for the will of God, the perfect will.

and approvest—Approving is the result of proving. The process of proving is to distinguish between one thing and another. The approval here mentioned results in a mere acquaintance and a vain compliance with the Law.

the things that are excellent,—This is preferable to the more literal rendering, “the things that differ”; for the Jew would naturally boast, not in a mere capability of distinguishing things, but in the moral sentiment by which he approved of the excellent.

being instructed out of the law,—*Katēcheō*, to instruct, whence our words “catechize”, etc., primarily denotes oral instruction. The law, the O.T. Scriptures, was read and explained every Sabbath.

Verse 19. **and art confident**—Literally, “art persuaded”, suggesting that what follows is the result of an idea not only of superiority but of self-complacency.

that thou thyself art a guide of the blind,—*Hodēgos*, literally, “a way-leader”; cp. Matt. 15: 14; 23: 16. He was ready to undertake the training of those who lacked the light he himself had received.

a light of them that are in darkness,—The reference is especially to the state of the Gentiles; cp. Isa. 42: 6; 49: 6; 60: 3. See, however, concerning the darkness of the Jews, Isa. 9: 2; 59: 9.

Verse 20. **a corrector**—*Paideutēs* is, literally, “a trainer”, one who does all that ought to be done for the young. It includes instruction as well as correction.

of the foolish,—*Aphrōn* is here used of those who are immature in things moral and religious. Cp. the Lord’s use of the word in Luke 11: 40.

a teacher of babes,—There is doubtless a special reference to proselytes.

having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth;—*Morphōsis*, form, is that by which the inward character of a thing is made known to our senses. The word, however, had a tendency to attach special significance to the outward presentation. Here the contrast between the outward and inward is not

emphasized; the mere appearance is not in view, but rather the expression of the truth contained in the Law and therefore of the knowledge imparted by it.

Perhaps knowledge is put first as a suggestion that the Jew was inclined to attach much importance to it.

Verse 21. thou therefore that teachest another,—Stress is not on the “thou” (the pronoun is not in the original) but on “teachest”, literally, “the teacher of another”.

teachest thou not thyself?—The claims of the Jew were valid though they increased his responsibility not to leave himself untaught, while presuming to occupy the position of professed holiness. Cp. the Lord’s remonstrance against the Pharisees, Luke 11: 40.

thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?—*Kērussō* (“preachest”) is “to herald a message”. A herald acts as the medium of the authority of the one whose proclamation he makes. The Jew professed to act thus for God, and yet committed the very things which he himself condemned.

Verse 22. thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?—Including a reference to the sin mentioned in Matt. 19: 8, 9. The great vindication of the faith is a holy life.

thou that abhorrest idols,—The Jews had been taught, by the severe discipline of the Captivity, to obey God’s decree against idolatry. The nation had been purged from its grossness in this respect, and so the Jew learned to share the Divine detestation of idols.

dost thou rob temples?—*Hierosuleō* signifies “to commit sacrilege”. See the corresponding noun in Acts 19: 37. The treasures of the idol temples perhaps attracted the avarice of the Jews, who would excuse themselves on the score of the wickedness of idolatry.

Verse 23. thou who gloriest in the law,—Literally, “in law”, suggesting that, while the Law of Sinai is in view, yet the Jew made much of it merely as a matter of law, adding his tradition

to it. The phrase thus stands in contrast with those that follow in which the article is used.

through thy transgression of the law dishonourest thou God?—This is explained in the next verse. Each word, “dishonourest” and “God”, bears stress in the original. Cp. the Lord’s words to the Jews, in John 8: 49.

Verse 24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written.—The quotation is from the Septuagint of Isaiah 52: 5. See also Ezek. 36: 23. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, all declare that with the people of God His character and honour are at stake, opinion of Him on the part of others being formed from the condition and conduct of those who own His Name. The captivity of Israel and Judah, consequent upon their sins, caused the Gentiles to scoff at God. The word by Isaiah had, then, a prophetic application to the normal conditions of the Jews in the Apostle’s time.

Verse 25. For circumcision—This was the seal of God’s covenant with Abraham and his descendants, and therefore another token, besides the Law, of the special privileges which were granted to the Jew and in which they gloried.

indeed profiteth,—See 3: 1. The position of a circumcised Jew was superior to that of an uncircumcised Gentile, granted that the Jew kept the Law.

if thou be a doer of the law :—Not the absolute fulfilment of every commandment is in view, but a sincere endeavour to live in conformity to the Law.

but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision.—Here, again, the reference is to a habit of life and not a condition resulting from a breach of one point of the Law.

Verse 26. If therefore the uncircumcision—This carries the argument a step further and views the subject from the standpoint of a Gentile, who seeks to spend his life in conformity with what he knows to be right in the sight of God.

keep the ordinances of the law,—This does not imply sinless obedience but an effort to act rightly according to the dictates of conscience, and so practically according to the Law of God. See Acts 10: 35. The word *phullassō*, “to keep”, suggests the assiduous care of one who is guarding something.

shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned—The self-constituted judge was practising what he condemned in others. Did he reckon to escape God’s judgment? God is true, His reckoning is unerring and just. The Apostle compels an answer from the Jew in recognition of the fact.

for circumcision?—That is, as equivalent of circumcision. The value of an ordinance is to be measured by the moral end at which it aims.

Verse 27. **and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature,**—That is, as the outcome of circumstances incident to nature, in contrast to external influences such as the Law given to the Jews.

if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law?—Cp. the case of Cornelius. *Krinō* here denotes “to pronounce sentence upon”. Compare the teaching of the Lord about the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South, Matt. 12: 41, 42, where, however, *katakrinō*, “to condemn”, is used. Stress is thrown upon each word, “judge” and “thee”

Verse 28. **For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh;**—The distinctive feature implied in spiritual circumcision cannot be determined by natural circumstances. God looks on the heart. Nothing external constitutes spiritual relationship to Him.

Verse 29. **but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly;**—Literally, “in secret”; i.e., the Jew in secret is a Jew in reality. The same phrase occurs in Matt. 6: 4, 8.

and circumcision is that of the heart,—This is parallel to, and confirmatory of, the preceding statement. Circumcision of the heart is spoken of in Deut. 10: 16, and 30: 6, utterances which,

albeit they were made under the Law, yet contained anticipatory intimations of the Gospel.

in the spirit, not in the letter;—The spirit is that part of the believer's being upon which the Holy Spirit acts. The phrase "in the spirit" is practically explanatory of "the heart", and at the same time prepares for the contrast of "the letter". See 7: 6 and cp. 2 Cor. 3: 6–8. Here "the letter" signifies the command relating to the rite of circumcision. The Apostle shows that the God-fearing Gentile is viewed in the sight of God as on the same ground as a God-fearing Jew.

whose praise is not of men, but of God.—The word Jew is derived from "Judah", for the meaning of which see Gen. 29: 35, and 49: 8. The play on the word "Jew" leads to a statement of the Divine verdict. The self-complacency of the Jew is thus finally rebuked.

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CHAPTER III

NONE RIGHTEOUS BY WORKS OF LAW, 3: 1-20

THE ARGUMENT is advanced by the method of question and answer. There are four questions in the first nine verses. The first asks what advantage the Jew has, and the reply is that God gave to the Jew His oracles. He will always prevail in judgment. The second question is whether, considering that human unrighteousness commends God's righteousness, it is right that He should punish man for what makes for His glory. The answer is that God is Judge and therefore must punish sin. If this were not the case He could not be God. The third is that if a lie actually enhances God's truthfulness, why should man not do evil that good might come. The answer exposes the wrong of such a principle. God's position as Judge is impregnable. The fourth is whether, after all, the Jews are actually in a worse condition than the Gentiles (see R.V.). The reply is in the negative, for both Jew and Gentile are unsaved. The Apostle guards his teaching hitherto against perversion, and in doing so vindicates the character of the Law of God.

(a) *A Question and its Answer (vv. 1-4)*

Verse 1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision?—The argument is as follows: if circumcision is really inward and not outward, and yet God enjoined circumcision on the Jew as an outward ordinance, wherein lies the privilege and benefit of it? The former question has regard to superiority over others, the latter to personal benefit derived.

Verse 2. Much every way: first of all,—Not necessarily the first in a list, but rather "principally". One thing is mentioned, but the intimation is that others are in view.

that they were intrusted—That is, not only on their own account but on behalf of others as well.

with the oracles of God.—*Logia* is, literally, “utterances”, a word used by the Greeks for the prophetic utterances supposed to be given by their gods, by way of oracular response to enquiries. Here it refers not merely to the Law of Sinai but to all the written utterances of God through the instrumentality of the Jews. That God revealed His purposes in this way was due to their being brought into covenant relationship with Him through circumcision. That the Scriptures are thus spoken of is a testimony to their uniqueness, dignity and Divine origin. For a similar use of the word see Acts 7: 36; Heb. 5: 12; 1 Pet. 4: 11.

Verse 3. For what if some were without faith?—The argument seems to be as follows:—Certainly the Jew has advantages in being entrusted with the oracles of God. Is then the fact that numbers of the Jews proved unfaithful going to invalidate the faithfulness of God, in causing Him to refrain from fulfilling His promises? It surely is impossible that man’s unbelief will militate against one of the attributes of God. The reply goes to show both that God’s character remains consistent and that He is free to fulfil His promises according as He pleases.

shall their want of faith make of none effect—*Katargeō*. The literal meaning of this word is “to reduce to inactivity”. It is rendered in a number of ways,—cumber (Luke 13: 7), make of none effect (here and at verse 31 and 4: 14), be done away (6: 6), discharged (7: 2, 6), bring to nought (1 Cor. 1: 28; 2: 6; 6: 13; 2 Thess. 2: 8; Heb. 2: 14), done away (1 Cor. 3: 14; 10: 1; 13: 8; Gal. 5: 11), put away (1 Cor. 13: 11), abolish (1 Cor. 15: 24, 26; Eph. 2: 15; 2 Tim. 1: 10), passing away (2 Cor. 3: 7, 11, 13), disannul (Gal. 3: 17), severed from (Gal. 5: 4). The word never means “to annihilate”. The general idea in the word is that of depriving a thing of the use for which it is intended. Thus it implies, not loss of being, but loss of well being.

the faithfulness of God?—*Pistis* may signify either “faith” or “faithfulness”. The latter is the meaning here, for the reference is to the consistency of God’s character, which is a guarantee of the fulfilment of His promises.

Verse 4. God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar;—Literally, “may it not be . . .” A person is true

when his words are in perfect accordance with facts. It is impossible for God to lie, Heb. 6: 18; Titus 1: 2; Num. 23: 19. He cannot deny Himself, 2 Tim. 2: 13. If God's methods seem to be contradictory to man's ideas or expectations, he has reason only to impute failure and inconsistency to himself, and to acknowledge the faithfulness of God. Here, this is involved, that a believing Jew can claim the fulfilment of God's covenant and pledge, in spite of the fact that large numbers of his nation have turned away from God. Albeit his nation is at present in unbelief, that does not nullify the advantages of belonging to a people to whom God has committed His oracles and given His promises.

as it is written,—Scripture invariably vindicates the character of God, a fact which testifies to its Divine origin.

That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and mightest prevail when Thou comest into judgment.—The quotation is from the LXX of Ps. 51: 4. David's confession there is made, not to establish God's truth, but that God might be seen to be righteous. David's sin had the effect of vindicating the unerring character of God's dealings. David was willing to condemn himself to the utmost, that the justice of God's punishment might become evident. The words of the quotation suggest a lawcourt scene, in which the righteousness of the verdict of the judge compels an acknowledgment on the part of the accused. This must inevitably be the case where God is Judge. The effect of the quotation is to show that the Apostle's argument is consistent with the teaching of the Old Testament. That God had given His promises to Israel did not provide a guarantee that any unrepentant Jew would escape doom.

This first section of the chapter incidentally provides a strong comfort to the believer that, in spite of all adverse circumstances, God's words will assuredly be fulfilled.

(b) *An Objection and its Answer (vv. 5-18)*

Verse 5. But if our unrighteousness—The Apostle has just been speaking of unbelief; he now expands this into the broader subject of unrighteousness, which includes unbelief.

commendeth the righteousness of God,—God is a Judge, and as such is righteous. His righteousness is brought into greater

prominence by man's unrighteousness. The present aspect of the righteousness of God is not the same as in 1: 17; there the Gospel was viewed as a revelation of the righteousness of God in showing mercy, and that is the general teaching of the Epistle on the subject. In the present passage the Gospel is not the subject; here God's righteousness is simply contrasted with man's unrighteousness. Since God's dealings with mankind in the matter of sin are in conformity with the principles of His Law, man is compelled to justify God.

what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath?—The argument is that since man's unrighteousness only brings into greater prominence God's righteousness, how can God consistently punish men for that which makes for His glory?

We might have expected the objector to say "Is God not unrighteous?" In which case the objector would look for the answer "Yes". Instead of this, with a view to vindicate the character of God, the question is put in a way which demands a negative reply.

(I speak after the manner of men).—This does not suggest that the Apostle's words were not inspired. He merely means that he is presenting a human point of view. For to argue in any way whatever, as to whether God is right or wrong, is to speak merely as a man and to give evidence of the unfruitfulness of the human mind.

Verse 6. God forbid : for then how shall God judge the world?—The stress in this sentence is on the word "judge". In view of the objection that, since man's sin only gives evidence of the holiness of God, how is He just in punishing sin? The answer is that, were it otherwise, God would not be a Judge at all. Now it is an attribute of God, that He is Judge of man's ways. That God will judge the world is an axiomatic truth with the writers of Scripture. Moreover, God is righteous. Therefore His estimation as Judge is undeniably accurate. His acts of punishment are in every case just. Therefore the inference derived from the fact that man's sin only brings out God's righteousness, is wrong, and the argument falls to the ground. With this passage chapter 9: 14-24 should be compared. In both passages Paul is vindicating the sovereignty of God.

Verse 7. But if—This verse gives a further proof that, were God unrighteous in visiting His wrath, He could not exercise the function of Judge. The question now to be asked is an extension of the preceding one, and covers the first section of the argument of this chapter.

the truth of God—This stands for the truthfulness of God. Cp. verse 4.

through my lie—That is, through the lie with which his detractors charged the Apostle.

abounded unto His glory,—That is, so that He is glorified. The sentence is parallel to the first question in verse 5.

why am I also still judged as a sinner?—That is, when it is recognized that the effect of his sin is to enhance God's glory. The pronoun bears stress.

Verse 8. and why not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.—His adversaries charged the Apostle, on the ground of the Gospel he preached, with encouraging sin as a means of enhancing the glory of God's grace. The argument of his question and answer does two things: (1) it shows that so far from being delivered from judgment, on the ground that the (supposed) lie makes for God's glory, he must thereby himself come under Divine judgment, and (2) it dooms his detractors to judgment, for they stand condemned in their very condemnation of him. This is the only alternative to the scandalous principle in verse. Since, for example, David's sin only vindicated God's justice (v. 5), all sin will do the same.

Verse 9. What then? are we in worse case than they?—That is to say, if this is so, is the argument to lead to the conclusion that the Jews, so far from being better off than the Gentiles, are in such a position that their very privileges bring them into greater condemnation than that which the Gentiles will suffer. The A.V. is misleading here.

No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin;—*Hamartia* is,

literally, "a missing of the mark". The word, however, is used in a comprehensive way for sin in general. Sin, virtually personified, is viewed here as a power controlling man, from which escape on his part is impossible.

Verse 10. *as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one*;—The Apostle shows that the sinful state, of both the Jew and the Gentile, is confirmed by the testimony of Scripture. This first quotation is introductory, and is a free rendering of Ps. 14: 1-3, which states the universality of sin. In the following quotations there is perhaps a more special reference to Israel, but the tenor of the whole passage is an enforcement of the fact that both Jew and Gentile are under sin. The quotations consist of (a) generalizations (vv. 10-12), (b) specific sins (vv. 13-15), (c) three statements of a general condition (vv. 16-18).

Verse 11. *There is none that understandeth, There is none that seeketh after God*;—The quotation is from Isa. 52: 15. Contrast Rom. 15: 21. Here lack of understanding is shown to be characteristic of the unregenerate condition; in 15: 21 the possession of understanding is shown to be the effect of the Gospel.

Verse 12. *They have all turned aside, They are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one*:—The word *achreioomai* is a translation of a Hebrew word meaning "to turn aside", and so "to become useless". The corresponding adjective, *achreios*, "useless", "good for nothing", is found in Matt. 25: 30 and Luke 17: 10 only; an associated word, *achrēstos*, only in Philem. 11. That latter means lacking in what is good, while *achreios* means lacking in utility.

Verse 13. *Their throat is an open sepulchre*;—Jer. 5: 16 describes the quiver of the Chaldeans as an "open sepulchre", but there the phrase is symbolic of power of destruction. Here, as in Ps. 5: 9, the reference is to the noxious character of that which proceeds from their mouths, as of exhalations from a grave.

With their tongues they have used deceit:—This is from the LXX of Ps. 5: 9; the Hebrew has "they make smooth their

tongue". The tense of the verb in the Greek is the imperfect, signifying continuous action.

The poison of asps is under their lips :—This is from the LXX of Ps. 140: 3. The suggestion is that of the malicious infliction of pain.

Verse 14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :—A shortened quotation from the LXX of Ps. 10: 7, which adds the word "deceit". The Hebrew has "deceit and oppression". *Gemō*, "to be full of", conveys the idea of being heavily laden with. It is to be contrasted with the passive form of *plēroō*, which simply means "to be filled". Cp. Matt. 23: 25, 27.

Verse 15. Their feet are swift to shed blood ;—A free rendering of Isa. 59: 7, where the LXX and the Hebrew agree. The suggestion is that of murder committed on the slightest provocation.

Verse 16. Destruction and misery are in their ways ;—This points to the desolation and distress which mark their tracks. *Suntrimma*, destruction, primarily a bruising, is found here only in the N.T.

Verse 17. And the way of peace have they not known :—That is, the way that is characterized by peace. Cp. Luke 1: 79.

Verse 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.—This is from the LXX of Ps. 36: 1. This last quotation sums up the whole condition just described. God, whose very presence should inspire men with the fear of doing wrong, is entirely disregarded by them. They are destitute of any sense of His presence, let alone any regard for Him.

(c) *The impossibility of Justification by the Law (vv. 19, 20)*

Verse 19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith,—*Oida*, "we know intuitively", it is a matter of common knowledge. The preceding quotations, taken from the Psalms and Isaiah, indicate that by the Law is to be understood the Old Testament as a whole.

it speaketh to them that are under the law;—The word rendered “speaketh” is *laleō*, in contrast to *legō*, “saith”. See preceding note. The difference, broadly speaking, is that *laleō* signifies the utterance of speech, as opposed to silence, while *legō* declares what the speaker actually says. The two verbs occur together with this distinction in Mark 6: 50; Luke 24: 6, e.g. In the present passage “saith” suggests the contents of the message, “speaketh” the fact of the utterance.

that every mouth—Jews ‘as well as Gentiles’, with special reference to the Jew, who regarded the Gentiles as sinners. See Gal. 2: 15, where the Apostle speaks ironically, taking the Judaizers on their own ground.

may be stopped,—*Phrassō* is said physically of the mouths of lions, in Heb. 11: 33. The only other place where it is found in the N.T. is 2 Cor. 11: 10, where the literal rendering is “This boasting shall not be stopped to me”. Here the meaning is that all excuse is taken away, both from Jew and Gentile.

and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God:—“The world” stands for humanity in general. A literal rendering is “may become under judgment to God”. The phrase “subject to the judgment” represents the one word *hupodikos*, which is found here only in the N.T. Man, being without excuse for sin, remains exposed to punishment from God, under the searchlight of Divine revelation, such revelation being given whether by creation (1: 20) and being made known to conscience (2: 14, 15), or by the written Law itself.

Verse 20. because by the works of the law—The absence of the definite article before “works” and “law” indicates that, while the Mosaic Law is prominently in view, yet all efforts to fulfil law Divinely imparted, whether externally or internally, are referred to. This comprehensive view is confirmed by what follows.

shall no flesh—“Flesh” here stands for mankind, in the totality of all that is essential to manhood, spirit, soul and body. For this sense see also Matt. 24: 22; John 1: 13. Thus the word stands for humanity conditioned by that through which actions

are performed. There is perhaps also a suggestion of the weakness of the creature.

be justified in His sight :—*Dikaioō* is “to show, or declare, to be right”. In the N.T. it mostly signifies “to declare a person to be righteous before God”. Ideally the fulfilment of the Law of God would provide a basis of justification in the sight of God (see 2: 13). The Apostle has already shown that actually no such case has occurred in mere human experience. If a man should keep the whole Law and yet stumble in one point he is guilty of all (Jas. 2: 10). All men whether Jew or Gentile, have failed to secure the approval of the sole Lawgiver and Judge. The quotation is from Ps. 143: 2, and the Apostle thereby shows that the Old Testament gives its *imprimatur* to what is being set forth.

for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.—The human conscience convicts man of the fact of sin, but the external revelation of the will of God by the Law only intensifies the consciousness of sin. This subject is extended in chapter 7. The word for “knowledge”, is *epignōsis*, “full knowledge”.

A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BY FAITH, 3: 21–5: 21

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The following passage shows, by a striking contrast, how the righteousness of God has been manifested in a different way from that of the giving of the Law. It is necessary to distinguish between the righteousness of God (subjective) as a Divine attribute and the righteousness (objective) which he reckons to a believing sinner by the means which He has adopted consistently with His own attributes. The former is specially in view in verse 25. The primary object of the Epistle is to vindicate God's righteous character and then to show how, consistently with this, the sinner is reckoned righteous. We are thus introduced to the subject of God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and this stands out in contrast to the universality of human sin.

(1) *Justification through Faith, 3: 21–26*

Verse 21. But now apart from the law—Literally “apart from law”, i.e., apart from the works of law.

a righteousness of God hath been manifested,—Cp. 1: 17. The reference is to the character of God. His righteousness was revealed in the Law, the decrees of which were an expression of His own character. Now through the Gospel His righteousness is revealed in another way, and is expressed in the means by which He has provided a ground upon which righteousness can be reckoned to a sinner. "Is manifested" is, literally, "has been manifested"; that is, at the Cross.

being witnessed by the law and the prophets;—"The Law" here signifies the Pentateuch, and "the Prophets" includes the Psalms; the expression therefore includes the whole of the Old Testament. An example of each case of this witness is given in chapter 4, first in regard to Abraham and then from one of the Psalms of David. The statement shows that the Gospel, so far from being incompatible with the Old Testament and the position of Israel under the Law, receives confirmation from it.

Verse 22. **even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ**—More closely to the original we might read "and (or but) a righteousness of God". Whatever connecting word is used, it is explanatory of verse 21, marking at the same time a contrast to the manifestation of God's righteousness under the Law. Here the phrase "the righteousness of God" still points to His character as the Just One, calling for faith, instead of for obedience to a law, which could not be rendered.

"Faith in Jesus Christ" is the correct rendering and not as in the A.V.

unto all them that believe;—Manuscript evidence supports the single preposition "unto", as in the R.V., rather than "unto and upon", as in the A.V. The ministry of Divine grace is fully comprehended in the single preposition. Faith is the means by which God's righteousness is brought to bear on men in their favour whether Jew or Gentile.

for there is no distinction;—That is, between Jew and Gentile, whether in the matter of sin, or in the display of God's holy character in the Gospel and the terms upon which righteousness is reckoned by God to the sinner.

The following contrasts in this passage should be noted:—

(a) "the Law" (v. 19) and "grace" (v. 24); (b) "through the Law" (v. 20) and "through redemption" (v. 24); (c) "under judgment" (v. 19) and "justified freely" (v. 24); (d) "the works of the Law" (v. 20) and "faith in Jesus Christ" (v. 22); (e) "all the world" (v. 19) and "them that believe" (v. 22).

Verse 23. for all have sinned.—This provides a proof that there is no distinction. The original has the aorist, or point, tense, which simply adds precision and definiteness to the fact. The English perfect, "have sinned", gives an adequate rendering.

and fall short.—Present continuous tense; "fall" is a preferable rendering to "come", as the latter presents an ambiguity in the matter of past or present time.

of the glory of God;—*Doxa* stands here for the moral glory, the perfections of His character, which present a standard, with its requirements, for man, who has been made in the image of God. Compare and contrast 1: 23, and see 6: 4.

Verse 24. being justified.—This brings before us the subjective side of justification. God has been shown to be just, and now the Apostle shows how we can be just with God. Justification is here the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge, and the pronouncement of the believing sinner as righteous in His sight. The verb is in the present continuous tense and thus indicates a constant process of justification in the succession of those who believe and are justified.

freely.—*Dōrean* is, literally, "as a gift", "gratis". It indicates the absence of any cause in the person who is the object of the action.

by His grace.—Grace is God's free, unmerited favour towards man. This is the character of His justification of the believing sinner.

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;—*Apolutrōsis* is a strengthened form of *lutrōsis*, which signifies "deliverance", here deliverance from the guilt of sin. The corresponding verb is *lutroō*, "to deliver", "to redeem". These words are to be distinguished from *exagorazō*, "to redeem", literally, "to buy up".

A person may be purchased without actually being set free. *Exagorazō*, to redeem, lays stress upon the price paid. *Apolutrōsis* lays stress upon the actual deliverance. The two sides of redemption should be kept distinct. The purchase price was the blood of Christ. The full redemption is the deliverance accomplished. Here both price and redemption are in view.

Verse 25. whom God set forth—*Protithēmi* may mean either "to determine", to "purpose" or "to set forth", so as to be manifest. Either sense would convey a Scriptural view here, but the context bears out the latter meaning. The verb is in the middle voice, which lays stress upon the personal interest which God had in doing what is said, as predetermined in His eternal purpose. The aorist tense indicates the definiteness of the act in the past.

to be a propitiation,—*Hilastērion* here signifies an expiatory sacrifice. The word is used elsewhere in the N.T. only in Heb. 9: 5, where it denotes the Mercy-Seat. The lid of the ark in the Holy of Holies was sprinkled with the blood of the expiatory victim on the day of atonement, the significance being that the life of the victim, not chargeable with the sin of the offerer, was presented to God, and that on the ground of this offering God provided a means of the acceptance of the people in His sight and on that account passed over their sins.

The corresponding Hebrew word primarily signifies "a covering"; cp. Ps. 32: 1. Here the word is not simply antitypical, but stands directly for Christ as Himself the propitiatory sacrifice, Christ being, in His sacrifice on the Cross, the means Divinely appointed for the gratuitous justification of the sinner consistently with God's justice.

through faith, by His blood,—These words are to be taken with "propitiation". The commas which precede and follow "through faith" are important. The rendering "faith in His blood" is incorrect. Faith is never said to be in the blood. Faith is imposed in a living Person. Faith is the means of making the pardon ours; the blood is the means of its effect. The preposition *en* of the original is instrumental. The phrase "by His blood" expresses the means of propitiation. The blood of Christ stands not simply for the physical element, nor merely for a life

surrendered, but for His sacrificial death under the judgment of God by means of the shedding of His blood. Since blood is essential to life (Lev. 17: 11), the shedding of blood involves the taking, or in His case the giving up, of life in sacrifice. It is not merely that death takes place, but it is the giving up of a life as a victim or sacrifice in expiation of sin. This was the significance of the sacrifice of victims under the Old Covenant.

"The fundamental principle on which God deals with sinners is expressed in the words 'apart from shedding of blood', i.e., unless a death takes place, 'there is no remission' of sins (Heb. 9: 22). But whereas the essential of the type lay in the fact that blood was shed, the essential of the antitype lies in this, that the blood shed was the blood of Christ. Hence, in connection with the Jewish sacrifices, 'the blood' is mentioned without reference to the victim from which it flowed, but in connection with the great antitypical sacrifice of the N.T. the words 'the blood' never stand alone; the One who shed the blood is invariably specified, for it is the Person that gives value to the work; the saving efficacy of the Death depends entirely upon the fact that He who died was the Son of God." (Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 168.)

to shew His righteousness,—This is explained in verse 26. Now He makes known to all that He was righteous in doing what He did in view of the work of Christ. This was not clearly manifested before.

because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime,—The word *paresis*, "passing over", is used here only in the N.T. It signifies, not the remission of sins, but the withholding of punishment. It is somewhat distinct from *aphesis*, "remission". Those who sinned in the period from the Fall to the Cross could receive mercy from God only prospectively, in view of the sacrifice of Christ. Through the Cross it is seen that God was righteous in His forbearance, but until the Cross this was not demonstrated.

in the forbearance of God ;—i.e., a temporary suspension of God's retributive dealings; see 2: 4.

Verse 26. for the shewing, I say, of His righteousness at this present season ;—The original has a change of preposition from

eis in verse 25 to *pros* here. In the former case we might render "for an exhibition", and here "with a view to an exhibition". We should probably take this phrase at the beginning of verse 26 in immediate connection with the end of verse 25. Thus the phrase "for the shewing of His righteousness" is not a mere repetition of what is said in the first part of verse 25, for the phrase "at this present season" stands in contrast to "aforetime" in the preceding verse.

that He might Himself be just, and the justifier—This explains what has just been said about the exhibition of God's righteousness as the design for which He set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation, and as the reason of His forbearance. The two words "just" and "Justifier" express, first the character of God as Judge, and then the pronouncement of His sentence consistently with His character as Judge. Stress is laid upon His character by the word "Himself". The word "and" should not be taken to mean "and yet", as if the two thoughts of the righteousness of God and His act in justifying were set in contrast. Instead, what is set forth is that His act is consistent with His character. No act more fully displays His righteousness than His justification of the believing sinner. Again, we cannot take the word to mean "and therefore". There is no reason to insert any other word. God's righteousness in providing a propitiation, and His justification of the believing sinner, are shown to be perfectly harmonious. Without the death of Christ justification would have been unjust and impossible; for to justify sinners is forbidden in the Law (Deut. 25: 1). On the basis of His death, that is both possible and consistent with the attributes of God.

of him that hath faith in Jesus.—Literally, "of the one (who is) of faith in Jesus", that is to say, every one who is characterized by faith, whose character is formed by faith in Him.

(2) *All boasting excluded, 3: 27-31*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

In the following passage faith is regarded as a law, or principle, which excludes all human glorying. It shuts out all possibility of works as a means of justification (vv. 27, 28).

Hence in the matter of faith Gentiles are on the same ground as Jews, and the confirmation of this lies in the fact that "God is One"; that is to say, there is not one God for the Jew and one for the Gentile. The argument is based not only on His character but upon His work, which is consistent therewith.

Verse 27. Where then is the glorying?—*Kauchēsis* is the act of glorying, whereas *kauchēma* is the ground or matter of glorying, as in 4: 2.

It is excluded.—Literally, "It was shut out". The aorist, or point, tense indicates the completeness of the act. The Divine means of justification excludes absolutely all self-approbation.

By what manner of law?—That is to say, "by what sort of principle has the glorying been excluded?" Law here stands for a principle of procedure.

of works? Nay : but by a law of faith,—That is, "is glorying excluded by a sort of principle of works obtained by merit? Nay, but by a principle which demands faith only on man's part." The phrase "law of faith" stands for the Gospel. There should be no definite article, as in the A.V. The absence of the article, instead of stressing a particular law, lays stress upon the two contrasting laws or principles themselves.

Verse 28. We reckon therefore—The Sinaitic MS. and other MSS. confirm the reading "for" instead of "therefore". That is to say, verse 28 introduces, not a conclusion, but a confirmation of what has just been stated. "We reckon" conveys the idea of confident assurance.

that a man is justified—*Anthrōpos*, "man", stands, not for man in distinction from other beings, but for anybody of the human race, whether Jew or Gentile, without reference to sex or nationality.

by faith apart from works of the law.—Faith and works of law, as a ground of justification, are mutually exclusive. See Gal. 2: 16. The definite article here shows that the Law refers

to the Mosaic Law, and that in its entirety, both ceremonial and moral.

Verse 29. **Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also :**—The first question suggests the alternative. Faith is not a national quality, so neither is God merely a national God. Justification is not granted on a condition which only those under the Law can fulfil.

Verse 30. **if so be that God is one,**—That is to say, there is not one God for the Jew and one for the Gentile. The “if so be” does not imply any uncertainty, but signifies that it is left for the readers to recognize the fact. It was a foundation truth of the Jews’ religion that there is only one God. See Deut. 6: 4; Isa. 42: 8; 44: 6.

and He shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.—The future tense “shall justify” does not indicate mere futurity, it suggests an unalterable principle, upon which God acts, a principle with which His acts are ever consistent. The first part of this verse states the great attribute of God, His unity, the second His action, His mode of justification. The two are entirely harmonious. His acts are the expression of His attributes. Then as to man’s condition, since Jew and Gentile have sinned, and there is only one God over all, the means of justification are the same for all. The change of preposition from “by faith” to “through faith” is to be noted. It is not, as has been suggested, simply an alternative without distinction. In the case of the circumcision the phrase is, literally, “out of faith”, and this seems to suggest that justification is not “out of” the law, as a suggested source from which Jews could seek righteousness. They had been tried on the principle of works of the Law, which the Gentiles have not been. There was no such external source possible to be suggested for the Gentile, so the uncircumcision is said to be justified simply “by means of” faith.

Verse 31. **Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid : nay, we establish the law.**—Since the Apostle is obviously anticipating an objection on the part of a Jew (for he has been specially appealing to Jews in this passage), the

word "law" here, in spite of the fact that there is no definite article in the original, would seem to refer to all that is embodied in the Old Testament as the Divine standard of right and wrong. The question asked is whether the effect of the preaching of salvation by faith is to deprive of their authority the moral enactments of the Law.

CHAPTER IV

EVIDENCES THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RECKONED ON THE CONDITION OF FAITH

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

TWO INSTANCES are now given from the Old Testament to confirm the truth that a sinner is pronounced righteous by God on the ground of faith apart from works. There is first the case of Abraham, and then the testimony of David in Psalm 32,—a witness from the Law and the Prophets. In connection with these examples of the way in which the Old Testament confirms the Gospel, two facts are next set forth to advance the argument. Firstly, the blessedness of the forgiveness of sin cannot be confined to the Jewish nation, for righteousness was reckoned to Abraham while yet in uncircumcision. Circumcision, which was a seal of his righteousness, could not be a condition upon which it was granted. The Divine purpose in reckoning him righteous apart from circumcision was that he might be the Father of all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. The Jew, who claims natural descent from Abraham, must receive spiritual blessing on the same ground as the believing Gentile (v. 12). Secondly, the promise given to Abraham concerning his seed was made before the giving of the Law. It was therefore conditional solely upon faith, and was a matter of grace. Hence, again, the promise is secured to Abraham's spiritual children.

The latter part of chapter 4 deals, firstly, with the character of Abraham's faith. The importance of the written record is first stressed, and then its purposes (vv. 23-25). It was written, not for Abraham's sake only, but for our sakes, so that we might believe on Him who raised up Jesus from the dead (v. 24). This leads to a statement of the two great foundations of the Christian faith, namely, the Death and Resurrection of Christ, and their connection with human need. This forms an introduction to chapter 5.

(a) *Twofold Witness from the Law and the Prophets (vv. 1-8)*

Verse 1. What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, hath found?—Abraham was the progenitor of the Messiah and regarded as head of the Jewish race.

The phrase "according to the flesh" can be taken grammatically either with "our forefather" or with "hath found". Opinions regarding the choice differ. If the latter connection is taken, the question asks what righteousness Abraham obtained by works, that is, by natural effort and attainment. This is in keeping with what follows in verse 2. If the phrase is connected with "our forefather", it signifies natural relationship in contrast to the spiritual relationship established by faith, a contrast stressed in verse 11.

Verse 2. For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory;—That Abraham was justified is agreed both by the Apostle and the Jew who objects. If Abraham's justification were by works his works would provide him with a ground of glorying. The present tense "he hath" draws attention to the record as it stands prominently in Scripture.

but not toward God.—For Abraham would have done no more than it was his duty to do. His glorying would be in his own righteousness, and God would be simply a paymaster; but all such glorying is excluded (3: 27).

Verse 3. For what saith the scripture?—The Scripture is here virtually personified. See 9: 17; John 19: 37; Jas. 4: 5. For the Apostle and his readers the Scripture was the final and infallible court of appeal.

And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.—Abraham took God at His word (a fact represented by the word "it"), and so his faith was the instrument in his justification.

The word *logizō*, "to reckon", is best so rendered, rather than by the varying words "count" and "impute". Whatever is reckoned to a person cannot have been his originally and naturally (cp. Rom. 2: 26). Abraham, in common with all the descendants of Adam, was a sinner, Rom. 5: 12; that is to say,

viewed from the Divine standpoint, he was destitute of a personal righteousness. Hence if his relationship with God was to be rectified, and this is what is meant by justification in such a case, it must be accomplished otherwise than by his own meritorious deeds.

The preposition "for" does not mean "as" or "instead of". That would make faith an act of merit as equivalent to righteousness. It has already been shown, in chapters 2: 15-17 and 3, that men are incapable of doing anything as a ground of justification in God's sight.

Righteousness thus far in the Epistle has been mentioned only as an attribute of God (1: 17; 3: 5, 21, 22, 25, 26). Now for the first time it is spoken of as that which is reckoned to one who believes.

The man who trusts in Christ becomes 'the righteousness of God in Him', 2 Cor. 5: 21, becomes in Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself. Because Abraham accepted the word of God, God accepted him as one who fulfilled the whole of His requirements.

Verse 4. Now to him that worketh,—This and the next verse confirm the statement that Abraham was justified apart from works. At the same time what is now stated is by way of a general principle. "Worketh" means the fulfilment of the requirements of the Law.

the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.—Inasmuch as that cannot be given as a favour to a man which is owed him as a debt, Abraham's faith and the faith of his spiritual children set them outside the category of those who seek to be justified by self effort.

Verse 5. But to him that worketh not,—This specifies in contrast the company to which Abraham actually belongs.

but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly,—*Asebēs*, ungodly, is, literally, "impious"; cp. the noun in 1: 18. Not that Abraham is marked out as an ungodly man; the word is used generally, as characterizing mankind lying universally in sin, and the strong term is chosen in order to set in the greatest contrast man in his own worthlessness and God in His mercy in justifying

by faith. Moreover, where faith is not exercised, man remains ungodly and therefore exposed to the wrath of God.

his faith is reckoned for righteousness.—Faith, then, involves the recognition of one's sinnership and the reliance upon God's mercy to justify a person on His own conditions.

Verse 6. Even as David also—Introducing the second witness. The "even as" connects the statement immediately with that at the close of verse 5, and shows that it is sinners whom God justifies, when, like believing Abraham, they put faith in God.

pronounceth blessing upon the man,—The word *legō*, "to say", "to speak", signifies here a formal declaration, and this exactly describes the opening of Psalm 32. The word "blessing" signifies, not simply the state of being happy, but the declaration of blessedness as bestowed by God. It is rendered "gratulation" in 4:15.

unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works,—See notes on verses 3-5. That God reckons righteousness to a person is another way of saying that God reckons him righteous. The effect is the same, namely, justification, a pronouncement by the judge of freedom from guilt.

Verse 7. Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,—The quotation is from the LXX. The word rendered "are forgiven" is in the aorist tense, expressing the definiteness of the act.

And whose sins are covered.—The aorist tense again. The word *epikaluptō* is a strengthened form of *kaluptō*, "to hide". It is used here only in the N.T. and is the equivalent to the Hebrew word for "to atone". It signifies, not merely a covering, but the removal of guilt under the covering; this involves the removal of Divine wrath from the sinner. The English word "atonement" is not to be split into its parts as if it stood for "at-one-ment". "At-one-ment" is the effect of atonement. The atonement stands for the sacrifice itself of Christ. See note on "propitiation", 3:25.

Verse 8. **Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.**—This is a negative way of expressing the reckoning of righteousness. It does not indeed convey all that is involved in justification, but it implies it. So in Eph. 1:7, redemption is described as the forgiveness of sins, though the latter does not express all that redemption signifies.

(b) *Twofold Proof from History (vv. 9-16)*

Verse 9. **Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness.**—The subject of circumcision here relates to Abraham, and the question arises as to whether the blessing of justification granted to Abraham, and confirmed by his descendant David, is limited to Abraham's natural descendants.

Verse 10. **How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision:**—Gen. 15, which records Abraham's justification, has no mention of circumcision. That took place about fourteen years later, and is recorded in Gen. 17; so that the relationship between God and Abraham, confirmed by a covenant (Gen. 15: 18), was established simply on the ground of faith.

Verse 11. **and he received the sign of circumcision,**—A sign that betokened the accomplished fact of his justification and the covenant relationship into which he had entered (see Gen. 15: 18 and 17: 11).

a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision.—Literally, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith, that, namely, which was his in uncircumcision". The Rabbis spoke of circumcision as the seal of Abraham. A seal was primarily used to authenticate and ratify a covenant. Metaphorically it is used here of an external attestation of what had been decreed or covenanted.

that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them;—That is to say, Abraham is thus viewed as the

spiritual father of all who believe, and that altogether independently of circumcision. Believing Gentiles are thus spiritual heirs of the promise given to him.

Verse 12. and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision,—That is, who not merely have the outward sign in the flesh. The words “to them”, instead of “of them”, indicate the advantages of the relationship as well as the relationship itself.

but who also walk in the steps—The word “walk” is figuratively used to describe the activities and conduct of the life. The word in the original here is *stoicheō*, which signifies the general conduct of a person in relation to others. The more frequent word *peripateō* signifies activities and conduct of the individual life, that is to say, apart from relation to others.

of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision.—That is, whoever as a Jew is to enjoy spiritual descent from Abraham, with all the blessings it brings, must do so, not on the ground of natural relationship, but on the same ground as believing Gentiles.

Verse 13. For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world,—The R. V. rightly stresses the phrase “not through the law”, and, while the immediate reference is to the Law of Sinai, yet the article is not used, and therefore “law” is here represented as a principle. The argument is continued and extended now with reference to the Law of Sinai. As the blessings Divinely promised to Abraham have been shown to be independent of circumcision, so now they are shown to be independent of the Law. In Gal. 3: 16 the Apostle speaks of Abraham’s seed as signifying Christ. Here the word “seed” is used in the collective sense of descendants, as in Gal. 3: 29. The promise is particularly that mentioned in Gen. 15: 5, 6. The promise which is spoken of in this chapter was ratified at the time recorded in Gen. 17: 5.

but through the righteousness of faith.—See note on verse 11. Here it is set in contrast to obedience to law.

Verse 14. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void,—Perfect tense, “hath been made void”, *kenoō* signifies either to empty, as in Phil. 2: 7, or to make empty or void, to deprive of force (1 Cor. 1: 17; 9: 15; 2 Cor. 9: 3 only).

and the promise is made of none effect :—For *katargeō* see notes at 3: 3, 31. The verb is again in the perfect tense. Faith and the promise go together, and in line with these is justification. All are nullified by law. Cp. Gal. 3: 18.

Verse 15. for the law worketh wrath ;—That is, the Law brings men under condemnation and therefore renders them subject to the wrath of God. The Law serves but to stimulate sin (see 7: 9).

but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.—*Parabasis*, transgression, literally, “a stepping over”, always implies a breach of law, and especially of the Law of Moses (as in 2: 23; Heb. 2: 2; 9: 15). It is used of the prohibition in Eden (Rom. 5: 14; 1 Tim. 2: 14).

Verse 16. For this cause it is of faith,—Because the law worketh wrath, and the promise given to faith would thereby be made of none effect; the promise, with all that it brings, is conditional upon faith only.

that it may be according to grace ;—That is to say, that the fulfilment of the promise may not be according to man’s merit, but to God’s unmerited favour. The mention of grace indicates that there is no intrinsic merit in faith. The promise, faith and grace, are set in direct contrast to law, works and merit.

to the end that the promise may be sure—Faith was made a condition of the promise, that its fulfilment, apart from human merit, might be secured for the recipients. Had its fulfilment depended upon human works or merit, it could not have been assured, because it could not have been attainable thus.

to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all—The seed (see note on verse 13) here stands for all the children of Abraham who accept God’s condition of faith, whether

Jews or Gentiles. The promise given to Abraham will be secured to the nation of the Jews, but not on the ground of law-keeping, and meanwhile all believing Jews are, alike with believing Gentiles, the spiritual children of Abraham.

(c) *The Character and Effect of Abraham's Faith (vv. 17-22)*

Verse 17. (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee)—The quotation is from the LXX of Gen. 17: 15.

before Him whom he believed,—This goes with the clause at the end of verse 16, "who is the father of us all". More literally it is "in the presence of Him", that is to say, in the sight of, in the judgment of. In God's view the future is alike with the present. He foreknew every member of the whole multitude of Abraham's seed. The words "he believed" may be taken as referring both to Gen. 15 and 22. The faith Abraham exercised as recorded in the 15th chapter determined his attitude in the circumstances of the 17th.

even God, who quickeneth the dead,—That is, makes the dead to live; see verses 19, 20. The prerogative and power for this belong to God alone, for it is an act which requires almighty power (Deut. 32: 39; 1 Sam. 2: 6; 2 Kings 5: 7; Ps. 68: 20). Faith in God as the One who exercises this prerogative, enabled Abraham to look forward with assurance to an innumerable seed.

and calleth the things that are not, as though they were.—The simplest explanation of this is that God speaks of, and so treats, non-existent things, upon which He has determined, as being already existent. A possible meaning is that God commands the things, etc.

Verse 18. Who in hope believed against hope,—The order in the original is "who against hope in hope believed". "Against hope", that is, contrary to human expectation; "in hope", literally, "upon hope", that is, on the basis of a hope inspired by God's promise, God being regarded by him as the One who could do what is impossible to nature.

to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be.

—The “So” refers to what God had said about the stars (see Gen. 15: 5).

Verse 19. And without being weakened in faith—This verse sets forth the object of the phrase “against hope” in verse 18. Verses 20 and 21 set forth the meaning of “in hope”.

he considered his own body now as good as dead—This follows the reading of the oldest MSS. and the Syriac Version. The word “not” seems to have been put in by some copyist in order to make sense. The point, however, is that Abraham was not blind to facts, nor did he ignore difficulties; “he did consider carefully” (*katanoēō*, a strengthened form of *noēō*, “to consider”) the whole situation, but the circumstances, so impossible to nature, in no way weakened his faith. The phrase “without being weakened in faith” itself supports the omission of the “not”.

(he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb :—The word “being” is, in the original, not *eimi*, the verb “to be”, but *huparchō*, which always suggests more than the mere fact of being; the suggestion here is that he was confessedly that age; that is to say, the fact was recognized by himself, and has received general recognition. This is a fundamental fact in the circumstances. The reference is to Gen. 17, an event thirteen years later than the birth of Ishmael.

Verse 20. yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief,—There is no word corresponding to “looking” in the original, but the phrase there suggests it, rather than, as some would render, “with regard to” the promise of God. The clause is in a position of emphasis, and requires something more definite than that rendering. Faith turns from natural impossibilities to rely upon the word of God. Faith therefore becomes the instrument of man’s part in putting him into definite relationship with God Himself.

but waxed strong through faith,—Literally, “was made strong”. It was the promise of God which was the primary means of his strength. Hence in the original the phrase “through faith” is not put in an emphatically instrumental form.

giving glory to God,—Abraham, by relying upon the word of God, acknowledged the attributes of God, and thus adopted

a right attitude towards Him. This is the immediate effect of faith. See notes on 3: 21-26.

Verse 21. and being fully assured that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.—The word *plērophoreō*, the particular form of which is here rendered “being fully assured”, literally signifies “to carry fully”. It suggests that spontaneity and liberty of soul which, unhindered by obstacles, grasps the promises of God and His ability to fulfil them.

Verse 22. Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.—The “Wherefore” refers especially to what is contained in verses 18-21. What is now said is not actually recorded in Gen. 17 but is expanded from Gen. 15 and embraces Gen. 17, the condition of faith being fulfilled by Abraham in each case. It is just that acceptance of God’s word in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ and the supra-natural facts relating to Him, as, for instance, His atoning death and resurrection, that puts right with God him who believes, bringing to him at once the justifying efficacy of Christ’s death and the impartation of eternal life. This is therefore the same spirit of faith in regard to Christ that was exercised by Abraham in regard to the promise of God.

(d) *The Purposes of the Record (vv. 23-25)*

Verse 23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him;—At the beginning of this chapter the Apostle asked “What saith the Scripture?” (v. 3). After answering the question from the Genesis record, he now shows that the Old Testament Scriptures are not merely a record of facts, but that they are permanently designed for the benefit of all believers (cp. 15: 4).

Verse 24. but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned,—The phrase is not simply the future tense. It might be rendered more fully thus:—“For whom it is appointed to be reckoned.” The reference is not to a day still future, but to the design of God concerning all believers, past, present and future.

who believe on Him—More literally, “the believers upon”. The preposition *epi*, “upon”, signifies, not merely the acceptance

of a statement, but the restfulness of faith that leans upon the Person Himself.

that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,—Abraham's faith rested upon God as the One who quickeneth the dead, i.e., who could bring life out of natural deadness. We also believe in Him who quickens the dead, but in this case His almighty power has been already put forth in the resurrection of Christ; cp. 1 Pet. 1: 21 and Eph. 1: 19, 20. The Resurrection of Christ is the corner stone of Gospel truth (1 Cor. 15: 4 etc.). It unites all the other facts of the Gospel. The verb is *egeirō*, to awake.

Verse 25. who was delivered up—The word *paradidōmi*, "to deliver up", is the same as that in 1: 24, 26, 28. It is used in the N.T. of the act of the Lord Jesus Christ in submitting to death (Gal. 2: 20; Eph. 5: 2, 25) and of the act of God in sending Him with that in view, as here and 8: 32. Sometimes it is used of the act of men in delivering Christ up (Matt. 10: 4; 27: 2, 26; Acts 3: 13).

for our trespasses,—Or "because of our trespasses"; that is to say, because of the fact that we had committed trespasses. The statement of the fact in this way is in keeping with what was set forth in 3: 9-23.

and was raised for our justification.—Literally, "because of our justification"; the same construction as in the preceding clause "because of our trespasses". The clauses are parallel. Christ was raised because all that was necessary on God's part for our justification had been effected in the death of Christ. We had sinned, and therefore Christ was delivered up. The ground of our justification was completely provided in the death of Christ, and therefore He was raised. It is true that the believer is justified only when he exercises faith, but that is not the point of this verse. The stress is on that which has secured justification for the believer, namely, the death of Christ. The propitiation was complete (John 19: 30), and His resurrection was the ratifying counterpart, the confirmation of the absolute completeness of the atonement. Cp. 1: 4, and see Notes there.

CHAPTER V

THE EFFECTS OF THE REMEDY, 5: 1-11

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE GREAT subject of this chapter is the effect of faith: firstly, with regard to the individual, 5: 1-11, secondly with regard to the race, 5: 12-21. Again, the 5th chapter shows what we have through Christ, while the 6th shows us what we are in Christ (see R.V.). "Through Christ" is the keynote of chapter 5. This chapter unfolds the subjects of the effects of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, all being based on the doctrine of 3: 21-26. The opening sentence of the chapter is at once deduced from the closing statements of chapter 4. The leading thought, "through our Lord Jesus Christ", is expressed at both the beginning and end of the first part of the chapter, verses 1-11, and at the end of the second part, verse 21, the order of the titles being changed there, so as to emphasize the title "Lord", the special stress on this title being introductory to chapter 6.

Verse 1. Being therefore justified by faith,—The verb rendered "being justified" is in the aorist tense, and indicates the definite time at which each believer, upon the exercise of faith, was justified in the sight of God.

let us have peace with God—The preponderance of MS. evidence, being in favour of this rendering, the Revisers adopted it. Exegetically much has been said to support the rendering which gives a statement rather than an exhortation, "we have peace". It has been argued, for instance, that an exhortation seems out of place in this part of the Epistle, which is of a didactic character. Yet as the Apostle, having in a considerable argument laid the basis of the Divine mode of justification, now begins to deal with its subjective effects in the heart of the believer, especially effects which are experienced in varying degrees in the case of different believers, there is nothing inappropriate in an exhortation here, nor is it incompatible with an immediate return to

further statements concerning the Death of Christ and God's grace therein. The point of the exhortation is not our submission to God, but the conscious and constant enjoyment of the justification which has been procured for us.

through our Lord Jesus Christ ;—This is the keynote of this chapter; see the introductory note above.

through whom also—A continuation of the leading thought of the chapter. See the preceding note and link with 3: 24.

we have had our access by faith—*Prosaqōgē*, access, is, literally, a bringing in, an introduction. Here in Rom. 5: 2, the thought is rather that of our acceptance with God and the enjoyment of His grace, as those who have been justified.

into this grace wherein we stand ;—This is expressive of the permanency of our position as justified ones, in contrast to our former state of condemnation.

and let us rejoice—Here the word in the original may be translated either "we rejoice", or "let us rejoice". It is not a case of difference of form or spelling in the Greek word; for the word is the same, whichever rendering is given to it. This was not so in the case of the phrase in verse 1. "let us have peace". The decision does not therefore rest on MS. evidence. Yet, again, the exhortation "let us rejoice", as already noticed in verse 1, is not inappropriate, for the justification and access granted to us are incentives to rejoicing.

in hope of the glory of God.—The preposition *epi*, rendered "in", is really "on", that is to say, "on the basis of"; the hope provides the ground of our exultation. The glory of God, when referring especially to the glory which He possesses, is the outward and visible expression of His essential attributes and character. When used objectively, of that which He bestows, it refers to that state of blessedness by which the believer will enjoy hereafter the realization of these attributes.

Verse 3. And not only so, but let us also rejoice in our tribulations :—The change from the thought of future glory to present sufferings serves only to enhance the reality of the believer's

triumphant exultation. The joyful endurance of tribulations is a fitting accompaniment of the assurance of coming glory.

knowing—*Oida*, “to know” (from *eidō*, “to see”), signifies a clear perception of a fact, and so means “to be fully aware” (in contrast to *ginōskō*, which denotes a discriminating apprehension of circumstances etc.).

that tribulation worketh patience;—To rejoice in tribulation is not to rejoice in the midst of them, but as being actuated by them. The meaning is that endurance, the effect of tribulation, is not something transient or partial, but thorough and abiding.

Verse 4. and patience, probation; and probation, hope:—*Dokimē*, when used in an active sense, denotes “a proving”, “a trial”, as in 2 Cor. 8: 2; but here it has its other meaning, of approval, as a result of proving (see also 2 Cor. 2: 9; 9: 13; Phil. 2: 22), the condition of one who is conscious of having endured tribulations effectually, the spiritual state resulting being in accordance with God’s designs.

Verse 5. and hope putteth not to shame;—The article is used with the word “hope”, as if signifying the hope just mentioned and produced by the process in verses 3 and 4. That hope does not put the believer to shame suggests that, on the contrary, being freed from illusion and despair, he is able to go boldly on his course through this life, knowing that he will not be disappointed.

because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts—This is the first mention of love in this Epistle, and the reference here is to God’s love to us (see v. 8; 8: 35, 39). This love is “shed”, *ekchunō*, literally, “poured out”. The word is used of the gift of the Holy Spirit, in Acts 10: 45. Since the heart is the chief organ of physical life, the word is used figuratively for the inner springs of the personal life, the seat of the affections.

through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.—This is really the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle (see note at 1: 4). Each believer received the Holy Spirit when he believed, John 7: 39; cp. Acts 5: 32 and chapter 8: 9 of this Epistle. Since the believer was then “born of the Spirit” (John 3: 6), and lives by the Spirit (Gal. 5: 25), He is his inalienable possession.

Verse 6. For while we were yet weak,—This introduces a proof that God loves us (vv. 6–8), and that the hope based on His love cannot fail (vv. 9, 10). The phrase “while we were yet weak” is a reminder of our powerlessness to obtain justification by works as set forth in the passage 3: 19 to 4: 25. The word rendered “weak” is, literally, “strengthless”. The immediate cause lies in this, that we had not received the Spirit of God, and so were unable to please God.

in due season—Literally, “according to season”, that is to say, a time Divinely appointed as opportune for the manifestation of God’s love in Christ.

Christ died—There is stress on each of these words, as indicated by their order in the Greek sentence. The order is, significantly, as follows: “Christ, we being weak, in due season, for ungodly ones, died.” The death of Christ is expressed in various ways in the N.T. It is stated as here in 2 Cor. 5: 15.

for the ungodly.—*Huper*, on behalf of, in the interests of; the same preposition is used of the Death of Christ in verse 8, below, and 8: 32 and 14: 15. This preposition is not equivalent to *anti*, which means “instead of”, see Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 6.

There is no article before the word “ungodly” in the Greek, and its absence indicates that those who are mentioned are not a distinct class from the godly, but that the term describes mankind in general; the meaning is that Christ died for all as being ungodly. The description, by the very vividness of its reality, serves to bring out more forcibly the character of God’s love.

Verse 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die :—This continues to present, by way of contrast, the greatness of God’s love.

The word *dikaïos*, righteous, rightwise, here denotes one who is right in his general conduct. See 1: 17, where, as in Gal. 3: 17, the word describes one who does right according to human standards. The meaning is different in 5: 19 (where see note).

for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.—The word *agathos*, good, denotes one who acts beneficially towards others, devoting himself to their welfare. For the distinction between *agathos* and *kalos*, the admirable, that which is

intrinsically good, beautiful, see at 7: 18, where both words are used.

Justice is the empowering motive of the righteous man; love is that which inspires the good man. The former meets with respect; the latter meets with affection. Bearing this in mind, and with regard to the "for" before "peradventure" at the beginning of this second statement, the meaning may be set forth somewhat as follows:—"To die for a righteous man is difficult—perhaps the idea may be considered improbable in any case—and yet I would not say this, for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die." This meaning has regard to the difference between the righteous and the good, as well as to the fact that both sentences begin with "for". In the Greek there is no definite article before "righteous", but there is before "good", and this serves to bring out the distinction as in the explanation.

Verse 8. But God commendeth His own love toward us,—This continues and expands the subject of the love of God, presenting it now by way of contrast between what we can conceive might be done for the good man and what Christ has already done for sinners. For *sunistēmi*, "to commend", "to give a proof of", see 3: 5, and contrast what is said there about that which gives proof of God's righteousness, with what is here mentioned as a proof of His love. There is stress on the pronoun "His", which necessitates the rendering "His own love", and brings out both its Divine origin and its uniqueness. There is stress also on the word "God", standing as it does, in the original, at the end of the clause.

in that, while we were yet sinners,—*Hamartōlos* is, literally, "one who has missed the mark", the most general term used to describe the fallen condition of the human race.

Christ died for us.—For *huper*, "on behalf of", see note on verse 6. The unique and conspicuous character of the love of God lies, firstly, in the relationship of Christ to Him as His Son (this is brought out in 8: 32); secondly, in that Christ has died for ungodly sinners.

Verse 9. Much more then,—The phrase rendered "much more", when used in a comparison regarding quantity, denotes

a greater abundance (see 11: 12). Otherwise, as here, it denotes a greater certainty (cp. vv. 10, 15, 17).

being now justified by His blood,—For the phrase “by His blood” see note on 3: 25. The preposition *en*, literally, “in”, is instrumental here as there.

shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him.—This is the first mention of the verb *sōzō*, to save, in the Epistle. Here salvation is the object of hope, as it will be fulfilled, when the Lord comes. See 13: 11; 1 Cor. 3: 15; 5: 5; Phil. 3: 20; Heb. 9: 28; 1 Pet. 1: 5.

The wrath of God from which we shall be saved includes the wrath that is coming upon the world at the close of the present age. The Church is to be delivered from that (see 1 Thess. 1: 10, R.V., and 5: 9, 10). This deliverance will be their portion at the *Parousia* of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 15: 51–56.

Verse 10. For if, while we were enemies,—The “if” is virtually “since”. The word “enemies”, while true of our hostile attitude toward God, signifies also that we were under condemnation, exposed to His wrath (John 3: 36). Note the three expressions “ungodly” (v. 6), “sinners” (v. 8), “enemies” (v. 10). The last word anticipates the mention of reconciliation.

we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,—The significance of the word “reconciled” is clear from the context. The subject is that of justification and of the grace of God in pronouncing us clear of guilt. In verse 11, reconciliation is seen to be something that we have received. It is therefore a mercy which God bestows.

Again, in 2 Cor. 5: 19 reconciliation is said to be what God accomplishes. What is especially in view, therefore, is the exercise of His grace on the ground of the Death of Christ. See also Eph. 2: 16; Col. 1: 21. The laying aside of our hostility is not here stressed, but the exhibition of the love of God in the Death of Christ.

much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life ;—Our justification cost the Death of His Son. Our present preservation and our future deliverance are dependent upon Himself as the Living One. The love that was displayed in His Death

is the guarantee not only of our present maintenance but of our future redemption, the redemption of the body (8: 23; see also Heb. 7: 25).

Verse 11. and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,—The leading phrase of the chapter. This, and the preceding phrase "in God" afford the ground and point of all true rejoicing or glorying.

through whom we have now received the reconciliation.—With the noun *katallagē*, "reconciliation", cp. the corresponding verb *katalassō*, "to reconcile", verse 10. The reconciliation is the effect of the Death of Christ. That we have received the reconciliation stresses the attitude of God's favour toward us. The rendering "atonement" is incorrect. Atonement is the offering itself of Christ in sacrifice on the Cross. This we do not receive. What we rejoice in is the effect of the atonement, namely reconciliation.

DEATH THROUGH ADAM'S SIN, AND LIFE THROUGH CHRIST'S DEATH, 5: 12-21

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

In this second part of chapter 5 the Apostle continues the subject of the effects of the Death of Christ, with reference to the human race. The chief themes before us now are, on the one hand, sin, death and the Law; on the other hand, righteousness, life and grace, all serving to illustrate the great subject of the justification of sinners on a basis of Divine righteousness.

The main point in the whole section is the comparison between Adam and Christ, in this respect, that as Adam was the means of bringing in sin and death, Christ has brought in justification and life.

First then as to Adam, the argument is as follows: (1) a penalty implies a broken law; (2) death is a penalty; (3) now sin is not imputed where there is no law; (4) Adam's sin was the transgression of a law; so were the sins of the people of Israel under the Mosaic law; (5) between Adam and the time of Moses sin did not partake of the character of transgression, for there was no law (the law of conscience is not in view here); (6) yet

death reigned from Adam to Moses; (7) as then death is a penalty of a broken law, all men were subject to death because of Adam's transgression, his posterity sharing thus in the effects of the act done by the head of the race (vv. 13, 14). That point being established, the parallel between Adam and Christ can now be stated. Adam was a figure of Christ (v. 14). As we are condemned in Adam, so we are justified in Christ. The Apostle is not here speaking of the effects of the Law; this he does later. He is showing how sin and death have become universal because of Adam's sin. As these came through the act of another, so justification and life can, in like manner, become ours only through the act of Another, even Christ.

Verse 12. Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world,—This, which arises from the first part of this chapter, takes up the whole subject of human sin and how God has dealt with it, as set forth in the preceding part of the Epistle, and introduces a comparison and contrast in regard to Adam and Christ and their connection with the race.

The word *anthrōpos*, "man", is to be distinguished from *anēr*, "a man", "a male", i.e., as indicating his sex, and signifies a member of the human race, without reference either to sex or nationality. That sin "entered into the world" conveys not only the idea that sin began its course in the world, but that mankind became universally sinful.

and death through sin;—The reference is primarily to the death of the body, as is indicated in verse 14. The term may, however, have a more general sense, as including death spiritual and eternal; for these are the penal consequences of sin, and the whole argument points to death as a penalty thereof. Moreover, the life which is brought to the believer through Christ is set in contrast to death (v. 17) and this eternal life is more than simply antithetic to physical death.

and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—This has been understood to mean, either that all sinned in Adam's sin, or else, that all have been guilty of acts of sin. The Apostle has laid it down that sin is the cause of universal death, and that by reason of the solidarity of the human race, sin and its consequence have been transmitted from one to all. The sin

of the head of the race is thus attributed to all the members, and this is what seems to be implied in the aorist tense. The fact of universal death presupposes both the principle of sin in general, and actual sin in all.

Verse 13. for until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law.—The verb *ellogēō* is found elsewhere in the N.T., only in Philem. 18, where it is rendered “put to account”. It here signifies to lay to one’s charge. The principle here enunciated applies to the Law. Between Adam’s transgression and the time of the Law of Sinai sin did not partake of the character of transgression; for there was no Law. It is true that the law of conscience existed, but that is not in view here.

Verse 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses,—Death is here personified. The word “reigned” bears stress in the original and the figure employed suggests the unmitigated tyranny of death.

even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression,—Adam’s transgression was the breach of a revealed commandment of God. That was not the case with those who lived in the time between Adam and the Law. Death in their case was the effect of Adam’s sin; in Adam, sin and death had been inseparably joined.

who is a figure of Him that was to come.—*Tupos*, English “type”, signifies a “mould”, “pattern”. It primarily signified a mark or impression made by a stroke or blow. Here it is used to signify that the characteristics of a person, or the circumstances connected with him, bear a correspondence to those connected with another.

Verse 15. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift.—The comparison between Adam and Christ is now changed to a contrast. The point of similarity is that each stands at the head of a race, and that the effects of their influence has been upon all those who are under their respective headships. The dissimilarity lies in the character of their acts and the effects thereof.

For if by the trespass of the one the many died,—"The many" here stands for all mankind; they are spoken of as "many", not only because of the largeness of the number, but as standing in contrast to the one man, Adam. The "if" is equivalent to "since". The past definite tense, "died", expresses cumulatively the effect of Adam's transgression.

much more—This introduces, by way of contrast, a statement expressive, not of a greater degree of efficacy, but of legal certainty.

did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.—The word rendered "gift" is *dōrea*, which is derived from *didōmi*, "to give", and stands simply for a gift in the general sense of the word. Contrast *charisma* in the preceding part of the verse. The phrase "the gift by the grace" is, literally, "the gift in grace". The grace of God expresses the source. The gift by (literally, in) "the grace of the one Man" expresses both the instrument and the channel by means of which the grace comes.

The article before "one man", which has been omitted in the A.V., is important. It stresses, firstly, the fact of His grace in becoming man, in order that through His death the gift of justification might be granted, and, secondly, the fact of His Headship over the new race (the "many brethren" of 8: 29; cp. 1 Cor. 15: 45), in contrast to Adam's headship over the fallen race. "The many" again expresses the large number of those who actually partake of the effects of the Death of Christ, and come thereby under His one Headship.

Verse 16. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift:—This introduces the second contrast and extends the first statement in verse 15. The contrast to the gift in this first part of verse 16 is the judgment by which condemnation was passed upon Adam and his descendants, as the latter part of the verse shows.

for the judgment came of one unto condemnation,—The word *krima*, "judgment", signifies judgment carried out; see 2: 2; 3: 3, 8. The "one" may be either masculine or neuter. The contrast presented in the remainder of the verse points to the neuter, that is to say, "one trespass". If "the one" is

regarded as masculine, it must be taken with the preceding part of the verse, where "the one" speaks of Adam.

but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.—This second contrast is one of quantity. Condemnation was passed as a result of one trespass; justification is declared in regard to many trespasses.

Verse 17. **For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one;**—This, which confirms verse 16, introduces a third contrast, not as previously between one and many, but between the legal effects of the one trespass and the effect of the abundance of grace in the future destiny of the justified.

much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—This makes clear that only that part of the race which consists of believers, actually receives justification and life. The word "receive" bears stress. The limitation has a bearing on what follows. On the one hand sin and death are universal, on the other hand life is bestowed only upon those who receive grace.

reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.—The precise contrast to "death reigned" would have been "life shall reign", but the contrast is far greater than this. It is not that life reigns instead of death, but that those who receive grace will themselves reign in life. That we are to reign in life involves much more than participation in eternal life; it indicates the activity of life in fellowship with Christ in His Kingdom.

Verse 18. **So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation;**—The way has been opened in verses 13 to 17 for the resumption and completion of the comparison introduced in verse 12. What has intervened leads to certain alterations in the first part of the comparison: "as through one trespass" is put instead of "as through one man", in view of what is said in verses 15-17; "condemnation" is put instead of "death", in view of what is said in verse 16, namely, "the judgment came of one unto condemnation".

even so through one act of righteousness—The R.V. rendering is important. The word *dikaiōma* is rightly rendered "act

of righteousness". It refers to that which Christ accomplished at His death, and stands in contrast to *dikaiosunē* righteousness simply as a quality. That the reference is to the Death of Christ is clear from verses 8-10. Moreover, we are never said to be justified by the righteousness of Christ, but by the righteous act on the Cross. Some would take *dikaiōma* to mean a decree of righteousness, as in verse 16, but the meaning of "act of righteousness" stands in immediate contrast to the trespass of Adam.

the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.—The italicised words, "the free gift came", are necessary in the English Versions, and are rightly taken from verse 16. That the gift came unto all men must not be taken to mean that, as all men came under condemnation so all men become possessed of the free gift. The gift was free for all, but only those who accept it are justified. It was provisionally, but not actually, for all, but not all accept it. The universality of the expressions is not co-extensive. Moreover, the Apostle is not here bringing out the subjective side of justification, that is to say, the actual appropriation of the Divine gift on the part of believers, with the effect of their justification, but the objective side, the provision made by God. The limitation in regard to those who believe and are thereby justified, is intimated in the change to "the many" in verse 19, where see note. The limitation is moreover enforced by the whole line of reasoning in the Epistle, which in this respect reaches its culmination in 8: 30. The phrase "justification of life" signifies "justification which results in life".

Verse 19. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,—The immediate purpose of verse 19 is to show the means by which the effects of God's grace were brought about, and to set forth the precise contrast to the effects of the one trespass. *Kathistēmi*, here rendered "were made", signifies "to set down", "to constitute", and so "to render", or "cause to be". This would seem to be the meaning here rather than that they were regarded or treated as sinners.

even so through the obedience of the one—Here again the reference is not to the life of Christ but to the culminating act of His obedience in His Death on the Cross, the same act as is described in verse 18 as "one act of righteousness". That is

the means of justification (see 5:9). The description "act of righteousness" presents the legal aspect of the Death of Christ. That it was an act of obedience presents its moral aspect.

shall the many be made righteous.—As with reference to "all men", in the two parts of verse 18, so with regard to "the many", in the two parts of this verse, the company comprehended in the latter is not co-extensive with that in the former. Because "the many" in the first part of the sentence embraces all mankind, we may not conclude that "the many" in the last part does so. The subject is here regarded from the point of view of the result, for evil or for good, of the acts of the heads of the representative companies, and the Apostle is here speaking of the effect of these representative acts respectively of disobedience and obedience, upon those ranged under the two heads. The latter part of verse 18 presented the matter of the free gift as provisional. Here the actual effect is stated. Hence the change from "all men" to "the many"; it is not said, "As all were made sinners, so all shall be made righteous".

Again, the word *kathistēmi*, "be made", denotes "constituted", that is, "legally declared" to be righteous. The word "shall", as in some other places in the Epistle, does not merely signify futurity, as of something that is to take place hereafter, but rather the inevitable consequences, viewed as resulting from a special act, here the Death of Christ.

Verse 20. And the law came in beside,—The subject of the Law is now re-introduced that it may have its bearing upon the abundance of God's grace. The mention of the Law is thus to be connected with verse 13. It entered in addition to sin.

that the trespass might abound;—The Law does not make men sinners, for sin was already in the world, but it does make them transgressors. It not only multiplies the trespass numerically, it brings out the character of sin, causing it to be revealed in a form in which it could not be mistaken. The statement here is expanded in chapter 7. The Law was given that the trespass, as such, might be shown up in its true character.

but where sin abounded,—The change from *paraptōma*, "trespass", to *hamartia*, "sin", takes us back to the subject of sin

as viewed in its general aspect. The change to the word "sin" is made with a view to what is to be said about sin in verse 21, as to its reign in death.

grace did abound more exceedingly :—The phrase "to abound more exceedingly" is a translation of the one verb *hyperperisseuō*, a strengthened form of the simple verb *perisseuō*, which corresponds to *perisseia*, "abundance" (verse 17). Great stress is thereby laid upon the operation of grace. It has far surpassed the increase of sin (verse 21).

Verse 21. **that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**—Grace exercises its royal power in securing eternal life, life for the believer; and this is brought out by "by means of" (*dia*) righteousness, that is to say, the exercise of God's righteousness in reckoning the believing sinner righteous on the ground of the Death of Christ.

CHAPTER VI

LIFE IN CHRIST AND ITS EFFECTS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CONDUCT, 6: 1 to 8: 39

Life in Christ unto God, 6: 1-23

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE APOSTLE'S aim in this chapter is to show the inconsistency of continuing in sin after being justified by grace. He makes clear that newness of life and continuance in sin are a contradiction of terms. In developing the subject he describes the character of the new life in Christ. Chapter 5 constitutes the basis of the teaching of chapter 6. Chapter 5 speaks of the means by which God has bestowed spiritual life, chapter 6 of how we are to live the life.

The leading theme of this chapter is identification with Christ; that is the very essence of the new life. While the key-note of chapter 5 is "through Christ", that of chapter 6 is "in Christ". The R.V. rendering "in", instead of "through", in verses 11 and 23 is to be noted. There we should read, not "through Jesus Christ" as in chapter 5, but "in Christ Jesus". In the fifth chapter the order of the titles is suggestive of the fact that the One who here accomplished our redemption through His Death, is now in exaltation and glory. Here in chapter 6 the order is reversed throughout. "In Christ" (verses 3, 11, 23) suggests that we are in union of life with Him in the glory, on the ground of what He accomplished on the Cross.

Chapter 6 has another key-note, namely, "unto God". That expresses how the new life is to be lived (see verses 10, 11, 13, 22). Hence a suitable heading to chapter 6 is "In Christ unto God". The immediate basis of the subject of chapter 6 regarding life in Christ is to be found in the closing verses of chapter 5.

Verse 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin,—*Epimenō*, "to continue", is a strengthened form of *menō*, "to abide" (it is incorrect to stress the literal meaning of *epi*, as if

it meant "upon"; it simply intensifies the verb), and indicates persistence in what is referred to.

that grace may abound?—The question is whether we are to endeavour to further God's designs of grace by continuance in sin, on the ground that such continuance will only enhance His superabounding grace in our justification.

Verse 2. God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?—There is special stress on the pronoun "We", and indeed on the whole clause, which gives a description characteristic of believers, and intimates at once the preposterousness of continuing in sin. The reference is to a definite occasion in our past, namely, when through faith in Christ we passed from death unto life. Death to sin liberates for a new life, involves separation from, and discontinuance of relation to, sin. As material objects do not affect the dead physical body, so spiritually a believer is to consider himself as having entered into a corresponding spiritual state with regard to sin.

Verse 3. Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized—Not singling out some believers from others, but implying what was recognized as true of all. The word *baptizō* was necessarily transliterated into English, as there was no equivalent in our language. "To immerse" would be simply "to plunge into". To baptize is to put into water and take out again. It involves immersion, submersion, and emergence,—death, burial and resurrection. The word was used among the heathen Greeks of articles which underwent submersion and emergence, as in the case of the dyeing of a garment.

into Christ Jesus—Spiritually the first moment of faith in Christ is the moment of resurrection. There and then the believer passes out of death into Christ. This is followed in experience by the ordinance of baptism. In Gal. 3: 27 the phrase is "baptized into Christ". Here the double title is used, suggesting that the believer is baptized unto Him as the exalted and glorified One (Christ) who came forth for our salvation (Jesus). It stresses therefore the fact that baptism is into Christ, the Living One, on the ground of His death.

were baptized into His death?—He not only died vicariously as the Bearer of sin's penalty, He also died to set us free from the old power that had enslaved us. In this respect the believer is identified with Him, and is legally to be regarded as having died to sin.

Verse 4. We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death:—This statement alone makes clear the Scriptural mode of baptism. Burial is the natural consequence of death and the attestation of its fact. The words "into death" go with the word "baptism" rather than with "we were buried". This connection is confirmed by the close of verse 3, which states that we were baptized into His death. The article in the original before the word "death" is not to be translated, as death is used in its abstract sense here, though the reference is to the death of Christ.

A person must have life in Christ in order to realize his death with Christ, and his identification with Christ in His resurrection; that is what the teaching of chapter 6 specially stresses. Ideally, spiritual life in Christ, which is imparted on the ground of faith, and death to the former state, are simultaneous, but in baptism it is one who has life in Christ who expresses his identification with Him figuratively in the threefold way of death, burial and resurrection.

that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,—The resurrection of Christ is most frequently mentioned as the act of God the Father, as, e.g., Acts 2: 24, 32; 3: 26; 10: 40; 13: 30; 2 Cor. 4: 14; Eph. 1: 20; Col. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 1: 21. See also Rom. 8: 11; 10: 9. For the word *egeirō*, used here, see notes on 4: 24. The same word is used by Christ Himself (with reference to His resurrection as His act) when speaking to the Jews of His body as a temple, which, while they would destroy it, He would raise up in three days (John 2: 19; cp. also 10: 17, 18). This fact makes clear the absolute oneness of the Son with the Father. The word *doxa*, "glory", stands here for the excellence of God's almighty power as manifested in the resurrection of Christ. "The glory of the Father" involves a reference to Christ as His Son.

so we also might walk in newness of life.—This states both our identification with Christ in His resurrection and the effects

thereof in our life in Christ. The word *kainotēs*, "newness", is from *kainos*, new in quality, which is to be distinguished from *neos*, new in time.

Verse 5. For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death,—This phrase gives a confirmation of what has just been stated in verse 4. The word *sumphutos*, "united together", is found here only in the N.T. It literally means "planted together", (from *sun*, "with", and *phuō*, "to bring forth", "beget", "grow"). Hence its second meaning "to be united together with". The R.V. is right in supplying "Him" here; for the point of the whole passage is our identification with Christ.

we shall be also—This does not merely refer to the future, though the future is included, but expresses rather the inevitable consequence, both now and hereafter, of our identification with Christ in His death. This is confirmed in verses 6, 7.

by the likeness of His resurrection;—As His resurrection was the assured sequence of His death, so our union with Him in resurrection is the inevitable sequence of our having died with Him. The phrase rendered "by the likeness of" goes, in the original, both with "His death" and "His resurrection". The "newness of life" in verse 4 is expressed now in the phrase "the likeness of His resurrection".

Verse 6. knowing this, that our old man—That is, our former self, what we were before we were in Christ.

was crucified with Him,—Christ in His crucifixion was judicially dealt with as to the question of sin. He who believes on Christ acknowledges God's judgment against sin to be righteous, and accepts the death of Christ as the execution of that judgment upon his "old man".

that the body of sin—The word *sōma* denotes the body as the organic instrument of natural life; it is here used figuratively with that as its essential significance. See also 7: 24; 1 Cor. 12: 12; Eph. 1: 23, etc. In the phrase "the body of sin", then, sin is regarded as an organized power, acting through the members of the body, though the seat of sin is in the will.

might be done away,—For the word *katargeō*, “to render inactive”, see notes at 3: 3, 31. That the body is to be rendered inactive as the instrument of sin, is the effect of the believer’s death with Christ.

that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;—*Douloō* signifies to fulfill the duties of a slave, for whom there was no choice either as to the kind or length of his service. Crucifixion would bring an end to all that, rendering the body useless for the purpose of sin, and this is how the believer is to regard his body in the matter of sin.

Verse 7. **for he that hath died is justified from sin**.—That is, in the legal sense. There is no legitimate method of terminating sin’s claims except by death. Death both snaps all bonds and annuls all obligations. The statement of this verse covers the whole of the preceding argument and does not apply merely to the figure of bondage as just mentioned. The special reference is to the subject of crucifixion, the death penalty which Christ endured. Our identification with Christ, as the One who endured the penalty for us, removes the legal sentence from us and thereby delivers us from a condition of bondage to sin. There is both the removal of the penalty and the deliverance from the power. A corpse can neither be punished nor can it become subservient to the will of another.

Verse 8. **But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him**; This again, as in verse 5, is not a matter of mere futurity, but the inevitable result of our having died with Christ. There can be no other consequence of this, than that we live with Him now, and shall do so for ever. This is confirmed in the next verses. Life with Christ, upon which the believer enters when he is born of God, never ceases. Its continuance rests, not upon our efforts any more than salvation by grace does.

Verse 9. **knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more**;—His voluntary submission to the power of death is a thing of the past for ever. His resurrection, being the abiding seal of the work He accomplished in His death, is the guarantee of the resurrection life of those who are His.

death no more hath dominion over Him.—*Kurieuō* signifies to have the power of a lord (*kurios*) over another. The word is used again in this Epistle in 6: 14; 7: 1; 14: 9. To this power of death Christ voluntarily submitted Himself. This second statement of the verse is made for the sake of emphasis, and in it the word "Him" is emphatic.

Verse 10. For the death that He died, He died unto sin—In His death he had to do with sin. As the sinless One who had refused all the claims of sin, He could stand forth as our Representative and render up His life—not forfeited like ours, but free—to set us free. The prominent thought in the statement here is separation.

once:—*Ephapax*, "once for all", once and completely, to be distinguished from *pote*, "once upon a time". It is a strengthened form of *hapax*, which has the same significance, "once for all", and is used with reference to the death of Christ in Heb. 9: 26, 28; 1 Pet. 3: 18. The word in this respect marks the absolute sufficiency and finality of the death of Christ for all the purposes for which He died.

but the life that He liveth,—This phrase suggests all that is involved in His life, its fullness and power.

He liveth unto God.—The contrast between this and the death that He died is in the matter of relation to sin. He has nothing more to do with that. His life as being "unto God" makes good the effects of His sacrifice in the case of those who believe on Him.

Verse 11. Even so reckon ye also yourselves—Since what we are to reckon is a matter of Divine revelation to us, it is necessarily likewise a matter of faith on our part, governing our conscience and will. There is stress on the word "ye".

to be dead unto sin,—This should be expressed more fully, as in the original, "to be dead indeed" (i.e., on the one hand) unto sin. The word *nekros*, "dead", describes a permanent state and here signifies the spiritual condition of believers in relation to sin. The condition is not merely that of freedom from the penalty, it constitutes the believer's whole attitude towards sin.

Whenever the old master claims our service, we are to reckon ourselves corpses.

but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.—The phrase “in Christ Jesus” should be noted (in contrast to the incorrect rendering “through” in the A.V.; *en* is not “through” but “in”). It expresses here the believer’s spiritual and eternal position in his identification with Christ. This verse sums up the whole of the first section of this chapter, bringing to bear upon us all that has been set forth by way of baptism with its threefold significance, and all as an argument against the preposterous idea of continuing in sin.

Verse 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,—It is now mentioned as mortal, not simply because it is liable to death, but because it is the organ in and through which sin carries on its death-producing activities.

that ye should obey the lusts thereof:—*Epithumia*, usually rendered “lust”, signifies desire of whatever character. It is used of a good desire only in Luke 22: 15 and Phil. 1: 3. Everywhere else it has a bad sense, and here refers to those evil desires which are ready to express themselves in bodily activity. They are equally “the desires of the flesh”, Gal. 5: 16, 24; and Eph. 2: 3, a phrase which describes the inner emotions of the soul, the natural tendency towards things evil. Such lusts are not necessarily base and immoral; they may be refined in character, but are evil if inconsistent with the will of God.

Verse 13. neither present your members unto sin—“Present” is in the continuous sense, indicating the normal condition of the unregenerate state. *Paristēmi* signifies “to put a thing at the disposal of another”, and so voluntarily to present. See further at 12: 2. The word “members” is virtually equivalent to “the body” but expresses the differing powers of the bodily organs.

as instruments of unrighteousness;—*Hoplon* is, primarily, an “implement”, and more generally was used to denote a military weapon. Here the military metaphor is not necessarily to be pressed. Unrighteousness is personified as a power which can make use of our bodily members for the purpose of sin.

but present yourselves unto God.—The tense is now changed from the present to the aorist, indicating an act carried out with definite decision and abiding results. The whole being is thus to be presented.

as alive from the dead.—Literally, “as living (ones) from dead (ones)”. Both words bear stress. The meaning is, “as those who no longer are destitute of spiritual life, dead through trespasses and sins, but as those who have been spiritually raised into life in Christ”.

and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.—*Dikaïosunē*, “righteousness”, here stands for right action, as in the remaining four occurrences of the word in this chapter. God is to have the complete use of all that we are and have.

Verse 14. **For sin shall not have dominion over you :**—This is set in contrast to the words “unto God”. The statement is not a command or an exhortation, but a promise.

for ye are not under law, but under grace.—The absence of the article before “law” shows that it here stands for law as a principle.

Verse 15. **What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.**—This recalls the question in verse 1, and introduces an answer based upon the teaching in verses 2–14. There is a natural tendency to feel that sin can be committed with impunity because of the dominion of grace. We need to guard against the idea that we can sin without fear or restraint. Such laxity can result only in turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4).

Verse 16. **Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience,**—For the word “present” see verse 13. The word rendered “servant” is *doulos*, as in 1:1. Obedience is the certain effect of the presentation. The word is not a verb, as in the A.V.

his servants ye are whom ye obey ;—“No man can serve two masters”, with stress upon the word “masters” (Matt. 6:24).

Here stress is upon the words "servants". The slave is the property exclusively of his master.

whether of sin unto death,—Sin is personified. The effect of such mastery is death (cp. 5: 12, 17, 21). Death here signifies the death of both body and soul.

or of obedience unto righteousness?—Obedience is personified as the alternative master; in the former part of the verse obedience was the effect and was not personified. The effect of service to obedience is righteousness. *Dikaïosunē* is not here "justification", for that is the outcome of faith on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ; righteousness is here right conduct.

Verse 17. **But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin**,—The special stress in the original, on "ye were" necessitates the addition of the word "whereas" in English, so as to introduce and emphasize the necessary contrast between the former state of the readers and that of their new life as believers. The Apostle's gratitude to God lies in that their former condition is a thing of the past. The contrast expresses the absolute incompatibility of living in sin on the part of the believer.

ye became obedient—Literally, "ye obeyed", aorist or past definite tense, pointing to the time when they believed the Gospel and indicating it as an act of decision leading to permanent results.

from the heart—Expressive of the voluntary and earnest character of their acceptance of the truth.

to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered;—*Tupos*, "a form" (Eng. "type"), is here used metaphorically of a cast, or frame, into which molten material is poured, so as to take its shape. The believers themselves are likened to the molten material and the truths of the Gospel are the mould. To become obedient to it is to be conformed to Christ through its teachings. The Word of God not only brings deliverance from all our former state, but shapes our character. We were delivered from bondservice to sin and handed over to the truth, that it might accomplish the Divine purposes in us.

Verse 18. and being made free from sin.—Literally, “being freed”, continuing the metaphor of bondservice.

ye became servants of righteousness.—“Ye became servants” translates a single form of the verb in the passive voice and might be rendered “ye were made servants”. The change of masters was not their own act; it was consequent upon faith on their part. The power of God wrought the change.

Verse 19. I speak after the manner of men.—Literally, “I speak humanly”; that is, he adopts common phraseology, referring to his figurative use of terms of slavery.

because of the infirmity of your flesh :—The word “flesh” stands here for the weaker element in human nature. The meaning of “infirmity” is to be gathered from what is next stated in the verse; considering their manner of life in their unregenerate state, there would be a tendency to yield to its influence and not to apprehend what was involved in the change to the new service into which they had been brought.

for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity.—Sin, which was spoken of as unrighteousness, is now regarded in the two aspects of impurity and iniquity (literally, “lawlessness”). The former defiles the being, the latter violates the Law of God. *Anomia*, “lawlessness”, signifies, not merely the abstract idea, but disregard for, or actual breach of, the Law of God. In 1 John 3:4 lawlessness is stated as a definition of sin (see end of verse, R.V.).

unto iniquity.—This may express either a purpose, “with a view to a course of lawlessness”, or the effect, “with the result of a course of lawlessness”. The phrase in verse 22, “your fruit unto holiness”, would point to effect as the meaning here. Sin has a power of development; it goes beyond the primary intentions of those who give themselves to it.

even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification.—*Hagiasmos* signifies (1) separation to God, as in 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; (2) the course of life which benefits those who have been separated to God. This is its meaning here and in verse 22. Sanctification is a state

which God has predetermined for believers, and is the state into which in grace He calls them and in which they begin their course as believers. On this account they are called saints, *hagioi*, "sanctified ones". Whereas formerly their behaviour bore witness to their standing in the world in separation from God, now their behaviour should bear witness to their standing before God in separation from the world.

As there are no degrees of justification, so there are no degrees of sanctification; a thing is set apart for God, or it is not, there is no middle course; a person is either in Christ Jesus, justified and sanctified, or he is out of Christ, in his sins and alienated from God. But while there are no degrees of sanctification, it is evident there can and should be progress therein; hence the believer is urged to "follow after . . . sanctification" and is warned that without it "no man shall see the Lord", Heb. 12: 14.

Verse 20. **For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness.**—Literally, "free to righteousness"; that is to say, righteousness laid no sort of bond upon them, they had no relation to it in any way.

Verse 21. **What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed?**—Some would punctuate as follows: "What fruit then had ye at that time? Of which things ye are now ashamed." This is possible as a rendering, but that given under the text is preferable and is confirmed by the strong contrast between "at that time" and "now".

for the end of those things is death.—*Telos*, "end", marks the limit, either at which a thing ceases to be what it was up to that point, or at which it ceases its activities hitherto, or expresses the final issue or result of a condition or process. Here the word is used not merely of physical death but in its most comprehensive sense.

Verse 22. **But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God,**—The phrase "become servants" represents the verb *douloō*, as in verse 18.

ye have your fruit unto sanctification,—For *hagiasmos* see note on verse 19.

and the end eternal life.—The “end” is here, again, the issue of present experience (see note above). The future is in view, when the believer will be with the Lord. The word *aiōnios*, “eternal”, which is derived from the noun *aiōn*, “age”, a period of undefined duration, is used here, as in most of its occurrences in the N.T., to signify that which is undefined because endless. It is used of the resurrection body of the believer (see 2 Cor. 5: 1), which is also said to be “immortal” (1 Cor. 15: 53).

Verse 23. For the wages of sin is death ;—This verse expresses in general terms the subject which has been dealt with in the preceding passage. The former metaphor of unpaid slavery, expressed in the word “bondservants”, is changed to that of service that is paid for, thus intimating that sin deserves death which is sin’s just wages. Both figures of speech depict the disastrous nature of sin.

but the free gift of God is eternal life—Not a mere prolongation of existence, any more than that death is a cessation of existence. Death, as the wages of sin, is a change of state involving separation from God; eternal life is the enjoyment of activity in communion with God.

in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Not “through” as in the A.V. See note on verse 11. That was the key word in chapter 5 (see 5: 11, 21).

CHAPTER VII

The new life in Christ in relation to the law, 7: 1-25

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

TO UNDERSTAND the 7th chapter it must be read as a development of the teaching of the 5th and 6th, and further as introductory to the 8th. The 5th chapter showed what grace has wrought in bringing us into justification and life. The 6th defended this new position against the presumptuous argument as to the possibility of continuing in sin, and showed that, as we are under grace and not under law, our newness of life both demands service to God and empowers us to render it. The 7th chapter proves the truth of this position, first making clear, by an illustration from nature, how it is that we have been set free from the Law (vv. 1-6). The latter part of this chapter guards against the idea that our freedom from the Law argued a defect in it. The passage, on the contrary, vindicates its authority.

Verse 1. Or are ye ignorant, brethren—The connecting conjunction shows how closely this chapter is joined to the last. The opening words are to be taken especially in connection with 6: 14. The alternative introduced is this, either let them acknowledge the truth that they are no longer under the Law, with all that that freedom involves, or they must be ignorant of the very nature of law.

(for I speak to men that know the law),—There is no article in the original before the word "law", and this points to law as a principle. The passage does refer to the Law of Moses. At the same time the Apostle is speaking of those who, whether Jews or Gentiles by birth, were acquainted with the principles of law, and so were familiar with what is conveyed in the following statement.

how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth?—The phrase "for so long time as he liveth" lays

stress upon the permanent claim of the law up to the time of death.

Verse 2. For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth ;—The word *hupandros*, rendered "that hath a husband", literally signifies "under (i.e., subject to) a man". It occurs here only in the N.T. The phrase "to the husband while he liveth" is, literally, "to the living husband". That the authority of law is binding as long as life lasts, is strikingly illustrated by the law of marriage.

but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband.—The word rendered "is discharged" is *katargeō*, to make ineffective. See at 3: 3, 31; 4: 14 and 6: 6. The tense is the perfect, literally, "she has been discharged".

The phrase "the law of the husband" means the law concerning the husband. Cp. "the law of the leper", Lev. 14: 2, "the law of the Nazarite", Num. 6: 13. The basis of this law is the primary institution given in Eden, Gen. 2: 24; its legal enactment is the seventh commandment, Exod. 20: 14. For the connected regulations see Lev. 18: 20; Deut. 24: 1, 4; Matt. 5: 27-32. The death of a woman's first husband makes void her status as a wife in the eyes of the Law.

Verse 3. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man.—The phrase rendered "so that she is" can be alternatively rendered "so that she may be", as expressive of the purpose of the freedom consequent upon the husband's death. This would be especially consistent with the analogy in what follows. Perhaps, however, so far as verse 3 itself is concerned, the preference is to be given to the text.

Verse 4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ ;—The body of Christ is that which was nailed to the Tree, in sacrifice for our sins. It stands here as the physical instrument of His death. For the purpose of His death and for our sakes He partook of flesh and blood, thus assuming a body and identifying Himself with man in the constituent elements of manhood, Heb. 2: 14. The word

"body" is used instead of "death", with this especially in view and as appropriate to the analogy here drawn. By the death of Christ believers were made dead, literally, "were put to death", to the Law, as that under which they were held as bondservants.

that we should be joined to another.—The literal rendering is "that we should become for another", a phrase used in reference to marriage in the LXX of Lev. 22: 12, 13; Ruth 1: 12; Ezek. 23: 4. Hence the union of the believer with Christ may be regarded figuratively in this way in continuation of what was set forth in verse 3. The spiritual application to the believer in verse 4 runs parallel to the illustration in verse 3, with one exception. In spiritual experience the three conditions are:—(1) the union between the Law and the person as he was in the flesh; (2) the death of the latter "through the body of Christ", dissolving that union; (3) the new union of the person with Christ.

To put it more fully, and to note the exception in the analogy:—(1) parallel to the union between the first husband and the wife is the union between the Law and our old self; (2) parallel in idea, but in point of fact in contrast, to the death of the first husband, is the death of our former self. The contrast lies in this, that in the illustration the husband dies, in the application the latter remains, but our former self died; (3) parallel to the marriage between the wife and the second husband is the union between the believer and Christ. Some take the first husband to be our old nature, "the old man", to which as long as it was alive we were bound under the Law, just as the wife is bound to her husband by law. But this explanation, while it may seem simpler, is hardly consistent with the sixth verse, which says that we have died "to that in which we were holden", that is to say, the Law. The R.V. "having died" gives the correct rendering, as the Law does not die.

even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God.—This recalls 6: 4, 5, 9. The resurrection of Christ is stressed here, firstly, to set it in contrast to the reference to His death in the first part of the verse, "the body of Christ"; secondly, to confirm the fact that the believer is united by faith to the living and life-imparting Son of God.

Verse 5. For when we were in the flesh,—"The flesh", *sarx*, stands here for the unregenerate state of man (see again at 8: 8, 9). The clause is just another way of saying "when we were united to the Law".

the sinful passions,—Literally, "passions of sins"; *pathēma* has two distinct meanings, (1) a suffering, or affliction, (2) a passion, affection, emotion; the latter is the meaning here, and in Gal. 5: 24.

which were through the law,—When we were in the flesh, the Law served, by its prohibitions and commandments, to kindle inward desires to do the very things that were forbidden. See verses 7, 8.

wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.—The members are those of our body, as in 6: 13, 19. "To bring forth fruit" expresses the result of the excitement of passions of sin by the Law, the effect being to swell the garner of death.

Verse 6. But now we have been discharged from the law,—*Katargeō*, the same word as that in verse 2.

having died to that wherein we were holden;—This is the accurate rendering, not, "that being dead", as in the A.V., speaking of the Law; it is not the Law that has died but the believer, who has been made dead to the claims of the Law through the body of Christ, in contrast to, and yet parallel with, the woman in verse 3.

so that we serve—The metaphor changes from that of marriage to that of service again, as in 6: 22.

in newness of the spirit,—While "newness of spirit" may stand for the new state or the new life of the believer, as in 8: 4, yet it is impossible to dissociate this from the Holy Spirit, by whose power the believer renders his service.

and not in oldness of the letter.—"The letter", *gramma*, here stands for the Law with its external rules of conduct, mere outward conformity to which has yielded place, in the believer's service, to a response to the operation of the Holy Spirit. Cp. 2 Cor. 3: 3, 6.

Verse 7. What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?—That is to say, can it be that, as the sinful passions were through the Law (verse 5), the Law is itself a principle of sin? In other words, is the Law evil? For this use of the word “sin” cp. Mic. 1: 5.

God forbid. Howbeit,—This is the correct rendering, instead of the A.V. “Nay”; for it introduces, as a contrast, after the denial that the Law is sin, the fact that the Law was the means of making sin known.

I had not known sin, except through the law:—While the Apostle uses the first person singular, he refers to his own experience, not simply in a rhetorical manner, nor as representing an ideal conflict, but as typical of what is common to all believers.

for I had not known coveting,—*Oida*, in contrast to *ginōskō* above, suggests a knowledge gained by intuition.

except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet:—The tenth commandment is quoted here, not as a sample of what the Law says, but as containing a principle involved in all the rest. The very prohibition stirred up the desire to do the wrong thing. The commandment not only made known the evil as such, but also revealed its evil source within.

Verse 8. but sin, finding occasion,—Sin is here viewed as the corrupt source of action, an inward element producing acts. The word *aphormē* was frequently used to denote a “base of operations” in war. The commandment, then, provided sin with a base of operations, an attack upon the soul.

wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting:—The aorist tense does not here express one act of crisis, but serves to give definiteness to all the past action of the principle of sin. The phrase “through the commandment” goes with the verb “wrought”, as in the R.V.

for apart from the law sin is dead.—Not that a person is sinless without the Law; what is conveyed is that sin as a principle is not roused to activity. Such a state of powerlessness is here suggested by the term “dead”. Without a commandment the sinfulness of sin is not realized.

Verse 9. **And I was alive apart from the law once :—**There is stress on the pronoun "I", and this stands in contrast to "sin" as mentioned in verse 8; see also verse 20. "I was alive" translates the imperfect tense of the verb "to live", and refers to a continuous experience in the past. The condition referred to is that of freedom from a disturbing conscience, a condition of supposed happiness through the absence of a realisation of alienation from God.

but when the commandment came,—That is to say, when it presented itself to conscience and so broke in upon the fancied state of freedom, imposing its restriction upon the natural tendencies.

sin revived,—Literally, lived, came to life again; it sprang into activity, manifesting all the evil inherent in it.

and I died ;—That is to say, "became conscious of the sinfulness of sin and realised that I was in a state of separation from God". Separation is the essential feature of death; physical death is the separation of the soul from the body; spiritual death is the separation of the spirit from God. This condition of alienation from God involved the absence of any ability to work righteousness and the realisation of condemnation and doom.

Verse 10. **and the commandment which was unto life,—**It promised life as a reward for obedience. For the commandment was given by the Author of life, who said "This do and Thou shalt live". Life, as here mentioned, is not merely a principle of activity, it is first and essentially life as God has it, and as the Son of God manifested it. From that man became alienated through the Fall (Eph. 4: 18). Inseparable from that life are its moral associations of holiness and righteousness.

this I found to be unto death :—This explains what has been said in verses 8, 9. This was the actual effect of the commandment in the experience mentioned. The former imagined state of happiness had given place to a realization of the actual condition in the sight of God.

Verse 11. **for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.—**This runs parallel

to verse 8, but contains greater detail. In the original the order is altered. There the first and emphatic word was "occasion"; here it is "sin". On the other hand, just as in verse 8 the phrase "through the commandment" goes with the word "wrought", so here the same phrase goes with the word "beguiled". The verb *exapataō* is an intensive form of *apataō*, "to deceive". There is evidently a reference here to Gen. 3:13, and this is borne out by the use of the two verbs in 1 Tim. 2:14, where they may be distinguished by paraphrasing thus:—"Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being thoroughly beguiled" etc. So what is said in Gen. 3, of Satan, is here said of sin.

Verse 12. **So that the law is holy,**—It partakes of the nature and character of God Himself, for it exposes the true character of sin.

and the commandment—viewing the Law in its detail.

holy, and righteous, and good,—This expresses, in a three-fold way and with vivid descriptiveness, the character of the Law in its specific commandments. Besides being holy, it reveals the righteous character of the Lawgiver. Thirdly, it is good, *agathos*, not simply that which is intrinsically good (*kalos*), but that which is also beneficial in its effect. All three words express the character of Him whose commandment it is.

Verse 13. **Did then that which is good become death unto me?**—God forbid. **But sin, that it might be shewn to be sin,**—That is to say, "but sin became death unto me, etc." The purpose was that sin might be exposed in all its heinous character.

by working death to me through that which is good; that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.—This is the third occurrence of the phrase, "through the commandment" in this passage, the fifth if we include the phrase "through the Law" or "through law", in verses 5-7; now the phrase is thrown into a position of great emphasis. What was wrought by sin was the working of a Divine purpose by the Law in the manifestation, to the human conscience, of the true nature of sin and its effects, the indication being given, at the same time, of the perfect character of the Law, the very holiness of which was instrumental in bringing about the purpose intended.

The inability of the Law to deliver from sin (vv. 14-25)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Apostle speaks of his own experiences. This he does, not as in distinction from those of other believers, but as representing what is common to all believers. Again, his main subject is not that of the conflict between the old nature and the new; he is showing the impossibility of fulfilling the Law by self-effort and so escaping its condemnation. He gives these experiences as a warning that, if a person puts himself under the Law, he will only find how fearful is the power of sin within him.

It is not a case of Paul's speaking of himself as he was in his unregenerate condition, nor of his speaking of some particular phase in his Christian life. He is giving a vivid description of the character and energy of sin in relationship to the Law, so that he may lead up to a statement as to the power of Christ to deliver (v. 25), and the power of the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to mind the things of the spirit and to mortify the deeds of the body (8: 1-13).

This section consists of three parts: (a) verses 14-17, here he shows his inability to keep himself from doing what he disapproves of; (b) verses 18-20, here he shows his inability to carry out that which he approves of; (c) verses 21-25, finally, bringing his discussion to its appointed conclusion, he shows how deliverance from this condition is to be effected.

Verse 14. For we know that the law is spiritual:—There are two ideas essentially connected with this word, *pneumatikos*, those of invisibility and power. It is said of that which owes its origin to God and is therefore in harmony with His character. Here the word "spiritual" sums up the three qualities, holy, righteous, and good, in verse 12.

but I am carnal,—*Sarkikos* is "fleshly", in the ethical sense, in contrast to *sarkinos*, which is "fleshly" in the material sense, i.e., consisting of flesh. It is said of human nature rather than character. It suggests that one who is under the Law is dominated by the weaker element in nature, in contrast to the spiritual, which finds its origin and source in God, and is in affinity with God.

sold under sin.—That is to say, as fully under the domination of sin as a slave is under his master. What is expressed is not the condemnation of the unregenerate state, but the evil of bondage to a corrupt nature, and the futility of making use of the Law as a means of deliverance.

Verse 15. For that which I do I know not:—The verb rendered “know” is *ginōskō*, to recognize as a result of experience. This is the result of being like a slave, who is the instrument of another man’s will. He does not discern the true character and effects of what has been wrought.

for not what I would, that do I practise;—This is the true order and emphasizes the clauses in a way which the A.V. rendering fails to bring out. “Practise” (not “do” as in the A.V.) expresses the constant activity which operates in the working out just mentioned.

but what I hate, that I do.—The word now rendered “do” is *poieō*, which, while it still describes a habit, differs from the preceding word *prassō* in this, that *prassō* implies that the practice has a conscious aim in view, while *poieō* simply describes a series of acts which may be void of such conscious aim and be merely mechanical. Such language as is contained in this verse, and in the passage as a whole, represents an experience possible in the case of any believer in a time of spiritual conflict, in a struggle against adverse moral and spiritual influences.

Verse 16. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good.—*Kalos* signifies the moral excellence of the Law. This verse again points to the experience of a believer. He finds himself in agreement with the Law by his disapproval of that which is forbidden by it. That he acts contrary to it is no evidence that he has a bad opinion of it. The conflict is not between the Law and the believer, it is between the believer and what the Law condemns.

Verse 17. So now—The “now” means “this being the case” It is not here an expression of time.

it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.—The “I” is again emphatic. It expresses the true self. “Do”

is here *katergazomai*, as in verse 15. As with the "now", the "no more" is not an expression of time, but of argument, as if to say "it can no longer be maintained that . . ." There is great stress on the word "sin". This verse provides no ground of excuse on the part of anyone for sinning, as if it was not the person who did it but the responsibility lay upon an inward principle. That is not the Apostle's meaning at all. Moreover, it runs contrary to his whole line of argument, which represents the believer as in a struggle under the realisation of the sinfulness of sin as evoked by the Law and as one who disapproves of the act.

Verse 18. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh,—The flesh is here the weaker element in human nature, as in 6:19, and stands for such nature considered as the man himself, apart from Divine influence.

dwelleth no good thing :—There is stress on the word "good". Whatever may be considered good from the purely natural point of view, is in reality void of that quality in the absence of right relationship with God. The statement affords a further proof of the fact of indwelling sin. "Good" here is *agathos*, see 5:17.

for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.—*Katergazomai* as in verse 16. "Good" here is *kalos*.

Verse 19. For the good which I would I do not :—*Poieō*, as in verses 15, 16. This verse is similar to verse 15, with this difference, that in verse 15 the contrast is between good desire and bad act; here it is between good desire and failure to act.

but the evil which I would not, that I practise.—As with the word "good" in the preceding sentence, so here the word "evil" is marked by emphasis.

Verse 20. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.—Compare and contrast verses 16 and 17. Here again the pronoun "I" bears stress. The first "do" is *poieō*; the second "do" is *katergazomai*, corresponding to the order of the verbs in verses 15 and 16.

Verse 21. I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present.—The law which he now mentions is probably

to be understood as a controlling principle defined by the statement which follows. Possibly, however, "the law" refers to the Mosaic Law, and this may be supported by the fact that the conjunction "that" comes, in the original, after "to me who would do good", and before the clause "evil is present". On the whole the preference is to be given to the former meaning.

Verse 22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:—This expression approximates to "the mind", as mentioned in the next verse. The law of the mind guides the inward man, i.e., the inner self of the believer, as approving of the Law of God.

Verse 23. but I see a different law in my members,—This is a principle by which evil is present despite the desire to do good. It is the same as the law of sin, in the latter part of the verse.

warring against the law of my mind,—This corresponds to that delight in the Law of God mentioned in verse 22. The *nous*, "mind", stands for the new nature which belongs to the believer, in virtue of the new birth. It stands in contrast to the flesh.

and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.—This is the "different law" of verse 23. It is set in opposition to the Law of God: two opposing masters, each with a law. For the word *melos*, "member", see verse 5. There are three different laws mentioned in verses 21–23, corresponding respectively to the three subjects mentioned in verses 14–20; these were (1) the Law of God, (2) the man struggling under the law, (3) sin. So in verses 21–25 there are (1) the Law of God, (2) the law of the mind, i.e., of the man who intellectually consents to the Law of God, (3) the law of sin, a principle of evil, keeping the will captive.

Verse 24. O wretched man that I am!—Literally, "miserable man I!" This expression introduces a consummation of the leading thought in the whole chapter, namely, the still imperfect condition of the believer in his conflict with sin.

who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?—For *ek*, out of, see preceding note. The body is the physical body, the

instrument of sin, which produces death, a slave shackle, by which sin brings one into death. See note on 6:6.

Verse 25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—That is to say, “I thank God that deliverance will come through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This will take place when the Lord returns. Then the body will be redeemed. The Apostle is anticipating, not death, but the Lord’s return. This expression of thanks foreshadows the references to His Second Coming in chapter 8.

So then I myself—Here the Apostle, speaking as before, as a representative believer, sums up in the concluding statement his line of argument, going back to present experiences from future anticipation as just expressed in his thanks to God.

with the mind serve the law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin.—For notes on the mind, and the Law of God, and the law of sin, see on verses 22, 23. In this verse the phrases “the Law of God” and “the law of sin” are, in the original, without the definite article, and this has the effect of stressing the nature of each law, the first Law as that which was given by God, the second law, as a principle of evil acting with the authority of sin.

CHAPTER VIII

Life in Christ in relation to the Spirit, 8: 1-39

*The Spirit as the means of life and the power for righteousness,
8: 1-11*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN THIS chapter the Apostle continues the central theme of his Epistle, regarding life in Christ. In chapter 5 he showed the basis of this life; in chapter 6 its practical effect Godward; in chapter 7 the inability of the Law to effect the deliverance necessary for its fulness. In chapter 8 he shows (a) the character of this new life under the operation of the Spirit of God, and (b) the future issues, all exhibiting the effects of deliverance from the power of the Law through Jesus Christ our Lord. In thus setting forth the power of the indwelling Spirit of God in contrast to the inability of the Law, he teaches at the same time the eternal security of the believer.

There is a five-fold division of the chapter, somewhat clearly marked by the references to the glory which awaits us, in each case a climax.

The first section ends with verse 11. The aspect of glory there presented is the quickening of our mortal bodies. The second section ends with verse 17. The aspect of glory there is our joint-heirship with Christ as the issue from present suffering with Him. The third section ends with verse 23, pointing to the redemption of our bodies and its issue in the deliverance of the groaning creation. The fourth section ends with verse 30, telling of our being glorified with Christ as the crowning act of God's grace towards us. The fifth section closes with the assurance of our indissoluble enjoyment of the love of God in Christ.

Verse 1. There is therefore now—The inference is immediately derived from what has just been stated in chapter 7, though at the same time it introduces a conclusion based upon the whole of the preceding argument from chapter 3: 19 onward.

no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.—The word “no” stands in the position of very marked stress, and is an emphatic negative. For *katakrima*, condemnation, see 5: 16, 18. The meaning “handicap”, which has been suggested, is to be rejected. In the A.V. the latter part of the first verse is wrongly inserted. According to the most authoritative MSS. the right position of that clause is at the end of verse 4.

Verse 2. For the law of the Spirit of life—There is a new law for the new life. It is here the animating principle by which the Holy Spirit acts as the Imparter of life. The phrase “the Spirit of life” is not subjective, “the Spirit who has life”, but objective, “the Spirit who gives life”. “It is the Spirit who quickeneth” (John 6: 63). Cp. the phrases “justification of life” (Rom. 5: 18), and “the Bread of life”, i.e., “the Bread which nourishes life” (John 6: 35).

in Christ Jesus—This is probably to be taken with the following words “hath made me free”. There is peculiar stress on the phrase in the original, as if to say, “Certain it is that in Christ the believer is set free”. Compare the same emphasis in 1 Cor. 4: 15 and Gal. 5: 6. The phrase “in Christ Jesus” here sets forth the spiritual union of believers with the Lord through His death and resurrection. What is involved in this was set forth in chapter 6: 3–11.

hath made me free—The tense is aorist, marking a definite time in past experience. Into this freedom from bondage the believer enters when he receives Christ by faith. He is to enter into the realization and power of it, and looks forward to its consummation in the redemption of his body.

from the law of sin and death.—As set forth in the preceding chapter; see especially verses 13, 21, 23, 25.

Verse 3. For what the law could not do,—Literally, “the inability of the Law”. The meaning may be either “the weakness of the law”, or “that which was impossible for the Law”. The latter is perhaps preferable. The significance is the same in effect; the Law could not give freedom from condemnation, could neither justify nor impart life. Literalism is impossible in rendering, but the sense is clear.

in that it was weak through the flesh,—Literally, “in which (‘wherein’, R.V. margin), it was weak”, i.e., in its inability it was weak by means of the flesh,—weak, that is to say, to accomplish, by means of the flesh, that which God alone could do and has done. Not the reason of the inability is stated, but the point of its powerlessness. The inability and its cause have been set forth in 7: 14–25. The Law itself is perfect. It could not, however, through the instrumentality of the flesh, effect the end in view. “The flesh”, the weaker element in human nature, as in 6: 19.

God, sending—The “sending” is that from the glory which He had with the Father into the world, by way of the Incarnation, and not a sending out into the world subsequent to the Incarnation. So in John 3: 17; 5: 36, etc. It was as the Son in relationship to the Father that He was sent and came into the world. He did not become the Son of God at His Incarnation.

His own Son—This phrase bears stress. It expresses not simply the closeness and dearness of the relationship, but the greatness and power of the Person who was sent, and this is what is set in contrast to the weakness of the Law.

in the likeness of sinful flesh—There is stress on the word *homoiōma*, “likeness”, which conveys the thought not merely of resemblance but that of form. The phrase, literally, is “in likeness of flesh of sin”. The flesh stands for the human body, which in man has become the seat of indwelling sin. Sin, however, is not inherent in man’s nature, as created by God. What is here set forth is, that Christ took true human flesh, “of the substance of the Virgin Mary His Mother”, apart from sinfulness, which has been acquired in fallen man. The flesh, in the likeness of which Christ came, was the same as that of which man consists. The likeness, then, expresses, not the semblance, but the reality. The reality was His, sin apart. There is both identification and contrast: identification in regard to the flesh, contrast in regard to sin, and both points are stressed here.

and as an offering for sin,—The italicised words have been rightly added in the R.V., as the phrase is frequently used in the Septuagint as regards a sin-offering (see, e.g., Lev. 4: 32; 5: 6, 7, 8, 9; 2 Chron. 29: 24; Ps. 40: 6; see also Heb. 10: 6, 8).

With this verse 3: 25 should be compared. There Christ is spoken of as a propitiation . . . by His blood (see notes). The sacrifice was expiatory, and Christ, the Person Himself, is in this respect the basis upon which God shows mercy to the sinner. In the Old Testament the offerings are frequently spoken of as "making an atonement", literally, "a covering". In the fuller unfolding of the subject in the New Testament the word "atonement" is not found. In 5: 11, the only place where "atonement" is found in the A.V., the word should be "reconciliation", as in the R.V.

condemned sin in the flesh :—This has been understood in various ways. The preceding context would lead us to understand the phrase "in the flesh" as referring to the fact that Christ, having taken human nature (sin apart), and having lived a sinless life, died under the judgment due to our sin. God thus condemned sin both by the sinless life of Christ (not that Christ bore our sins in His life, but that His life was a veritable condemnation of sin) and then in the crucifixion and death of His own Son. Both these points are in accordance with the two preceding clauses, "in the likeness of flesh of sin" and "as an offering for sin".

Verse 4. that the ordinance of the law—*Dikaiōma* here stands collectively for the precepts of the Law, all that it demands as right. Distinguish the meaning here from that in 1: 32 and 5: 16 and 18.

might be fulfilled in us,—The fulfilment is "in" us, not simply "by" us, for it is primarily the work of God in us, accomplished by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (vv. 2 and 9), and this operation is designed to meet with a willing response on our part. Not simply justification seems to be in view here, as if the opening words of the chapter were being amplified; for the Apostle is leading up to the character of the life and work of the believer, a life in which he is to please God (v. 8). Further, the "in us" is not simply "in our case". It is that, with the additional thought of the response on our part just referred to. That believers do not in point of fact attain to sinless perfection in this life, is not an objection to this view; for what is here set forth is God's design in the sending of His Son, and the ideal

standard set before us, as an outcome of His death and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.—*Peripateō*, “to walk”, describes the whole activity of the believer’s life. The flesh here stands for corrupt human nature, the dominating element in unregenerate man. The spirit would here seem to stand for the renewed inward man, as mentioned in 7: 22 (see vv. 10 and 16 below), which in the believer is to be the dominating factor instead of the flesh. To walk “after the spirit” is indeed to walk under the operating power of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5: 18); for the spirit of the believer is the sphere of the operations of the Holy Spirit (v. 16 below).

The whole phrase “who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit”, describes those in whom alone the ordinance of the Law can be fulfilled, on the ground of the death of Christ and by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and as those who in Him are freed from condemnation (vv. 1–3).

Four contrasts (vv. 5–8)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

These contrasts distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate. They are as follows: (1) a contrast in persons (v. 5a), (2) a contrast in aims (v. 5b), (3) a contrast in effects (v. 6), (4) a contrast in conditions (vv. 7, 8).

Verse 5. For they that are after the flesh—That is, those who live in accordance with the dominating principle of the corrupt nature in man.

do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit.—*Phroneō*, to think, to feel, here means to regulate one’s mind by something, to seek the instruction or guidance of. See notes on verse 4.

Verse 6. For the mind of the flesh is death ;—*Phronēma*, “mind”, is the noun corresponding to *phroneō* in the preceding verse. It is found in the N.T. only in this chapter, in this verse and verses 7, 27. It signifies that which one has in mind, the thoughts and purposes, and is to be distinguished from

phronēsis, an understanding, prudence. For the subject of death see 6: 21. Here not only eventual doom is in view, but the present experience of alienation from God (see v. 7 and cp. 1 Tim. 5: 6).

but the mind of the spirit is life and peace :—Peace is not here the act of reconciliation, accomplished through the death of Christ, as in 5: 1, but the enjoyment of the condition of reconciliation itself.

Verse 7. because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ;—The reader is now directed, not simply to a present condition as such, but to the attitude toward God. This is the all important matter. To that point Scripture in all its teaching leads. The Bible is not a book of moral philosophy. Everything hinges upon God's view of things and upon the condition of persons in His sight. The mind of the flesh is therefore set in antagonism against God, refusing to acknowledge His claims.

for it is not subject to the law of God,—The tense is present continuous, expressing a constant or normal condition. The verb is in the middle voice, signifying the voluntary subjection of oneself to the will of another. The meaning, then, is that the mind of the flesh does not submit itself to the Law of God; it refuses to be controlled thereby. What is involved is not mere indifference but actual hostility.

neither indeed can it be :—As a matter of essential characteristic the mind of the flesh is not subject to God's Law, and as a matter of inherent nature it cannot be so; it is impossible to improve it into being subject to Him. The natural man neither receiveth the things of the Spirit nor can he know them (1 Cor. 2: 14).

Verse 8. and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.—The word "and" instead of the A.V. "so then", should be noted. It links this statement with the first in verse 7, which it confirms; "not to please God" is to be at enmity against Him. "They that are in the flesh" is another way of describing those who are "after the flesh" (v. 5). The one expresses the state, the other expresses the characteristic effects.

Verse 9. **But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.**—As the phrase “in the flesh” expresses the state of those who are “after the flesh”, so “in the spirit” expresses the state of those who are “after the spirit” (v. 5). The contrast is between the dominating elements which govern the different kinds of persons (see notes on vv. 4–7).

if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.—This does not express a condition according to which the believer may be in the spirit, it states a fact true of every believer; for this passage distinguishes between the regenerate and the unregenerate, as the next statement shows.

But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.—This teaches the doctrine of the Tri-unity of the Godhead; for the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. To have the Spirit of God indwelling us is to have the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers from the moment of their regeneration, to indwell them; “having believed” (i.e., upon believing) they are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1: 13). Since He is the Spirit of Christ, to be without Him is not to belong to Christ. See 2 Cor. 13: 5. The contrasting conditions are, “not in the flesh” and “none of His”.

Verse 10. **And if Christ is in you,**—That the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling of Christ Himself, see Eph. 3: 16, 17.

the body is dead because of sin ;—The body, the human frame, contains the seeds of decay and is mortal, i.e., doomed to death, in the ordinary course of events, on account of sin. Cp. 5: 12, 14. The body of the believer is said to be dead (albeit he is living in the body), so as to set forth the inevitableness of the fact.

but the spirit is life—The spirit, having been quickened at regeneration, is possessed of the inalienable principle of life, but only as being secured to it eternally in virtue of the power of the Spirit of God.

because of righteousness.—That is to say, on account of the fact that righteousness is reckoned by God to him who believes.

Verse 11. **But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you,**—This is the longest title of the Holy Spirit in the N.T. For the subject of the resurrection of Christ, see 4: 24, 25; 6: 4, 9; 7: 4. As in the other places, so here, “from the dead” is literally, “from among” (*ek*).

This is the second and only other place in this Epistle where the single title “Jesus” is used. The first was in 3: 26 and was there used to describe Him as the object of faith. Here, in connection with His resurrection, it is used of Him as the One who is pledge of all that is secured in Him for the believer.

He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies—For the double title of Christ, as in the R.V., see notes on 1: 1. For the word *zōopoieō* see note at 4: 17. It does not denote reinvigoration. The reference is not to the impartation of some special energy of life and power to our bodies in their present state, but to the effect upon them of the shout of the Lord at the time of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4: 17; Phil. 3: 20, 21; 1 Cor. 15: 52, 53). What is mortal will then be “swallowed up of life”. The statement in this eleventh verse is to be put in connection with that at the close of the seventh chapter, where the assurance is given that Christ will deliver us “out of the body of this death” (7: 24).

through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.—The well supported marginal reading, “because of His Spirit”, is to be regarded as correct. Scripture does not speak of the Holy Spirit as the One who will raise the dead and change the living saints. He is not the means but the cause. Their coming glory is assured to them first by the resurrection of Christ and then by the fact of the indwelling Spirit. There are two references to this in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, one in 1: 22, “God . . . sealed us and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”; the other in 5: 5, “He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave us the earnest of the Spirit”. The power that wrought in Christ is the power that will accomplish the quickening of our death-doomed bodies (Eph. 1: 18–20).

The Spirit, the means of Sonship and the pledge of future Glory,
8: 12-27

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

This section is divided in two parts. Verses 1-11 have spoken of the indwelling of the Spirit of God; now follows an unfolding of the operation of the Spirit within us in a twofold way, firstly as to His leading and the effects of our response thereto (vv. 12-14); secondly, as to the inward witness given by the Holy Spirit, that we are the children of God, and the effects of this, issuing in our being glorified with Christ (vv. 15-27).

Verse 12. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:—Believers owe nothing to the flesh. What they derive from that is death. They are therefore under no obligation to it.

Verse 13. for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die;—The contrast, in the word “live”, at the end of the verse, indicates that the death here is not merely that of the body. Cp. 1 Tim. 5: 6.

but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—The contrasting parallel to verse 12 would have been “we are debtors to live after the spirit”; the conclusion is, however, put in a very striking way, and with a change from “we” to “ye”, recalling the similar change in verse 9. The “Spirit” now mentioned is the Holy Spirit, not the human spirit. The verb *thanatoō*, “to put to death”, is the same as in 7: 4, where it is used in the passive voice. That was the act of God through the death of Christ. This verse states the responsibility of the believer himself. The power for this is not his own, but that of the Holy Spirit.

In Col. 3: 9 the believer is said to have “put off the old man with his doings”. That is recorded as the initial act of the new life, to be followed by the constant fulfilment of the putting to death of the deeds of the body as mentioned in this verse. The body is here regarded as the instrument of the flesh, the principle which tends to animate it.

Verse 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,—The word *agō*, “to lead”, is almost always used in the N.T. of persons, and implies co-operation on their part with the one who is leading, or is associated in the object in view. Here, therefore, the wholehearted response to the leading of the Holy Spirit, is suggested. To be led by the Spirit of God is to walk after the spirit (v. 4).

these are sons of God.—The emphatic “these” signifies “these and none but these”. The word *huios*, “son”, signifies primarily the relationship of offspring to parent (see John 9: 18–20; Gal. 4: 30); but it is frequently used in a sense suggestive of distinct moral characteristics. The moral characteristic in evidence here is that of being led by the Spirit of God. For the contrasting word *teknōn*, see verse 16, below. *Huios* expresses the dignity of the position into which the child is brought, and the character which is consistent therewith. In his standing a believer is a child of God; in his state he should be a son of God, and only as he gives evidence that he is a son of God can he really claim to be a child of God. The Lord Jesus brought out the special significance of *huios* in His remarks in what is called the Sermon on the Mount, e.g., in Matt. 5: 9, 44, 45. See also 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18, and verse 19 below.

Verse 15. For ye received not the spirit of bondage,—There is no definite article before “spirit”; we may therefore render the clause “not a spirit of bondage”. That is a spirit possessed by, and characteristic of, slaves.

again unto fear;—That is, tending to fear, the fear of death, for instance (Heb. 2: 14, 15), such a fear as characterized them in their unregenerate state (cp. 1: 4, 18), the fear of an unwilling slave.

but ye received the spirit of adoption,—*Huiothesia* is, literally, “son-placing” (from *huios*, “a son”, and *tithēmi*, “to place”), i.e., a place and state of a son, given to one to whom it does not belong by natural descent (see 9: 4). That very fact indicates that the Holy Spirit is in view here, by whom alone the relationship is established in the case of the believer. Just as natural relationship is established upon the event of natural birth, so

spiritual relationship is established immediately upon spiritual birth.

whereby we cry Abba, Father.—In the parallel passage in Gal. 4: 6 it is the Holy Spirit that is said to cry this. So intimate is the relationship between the Divine Spirit and the human spirit in the regenerate, that what is said in one place of the former is said in another place of the latter. It is the action of the Spirit of the Son on the spirits of the sons that enables them to cry "Abba! Father!" Cp. 8: 26, 27.

"Abba" is the cry of the infant, the simple, helpless utterance of unreasoning trust, the effect of feeling, rather than knowledge. It is an Aramaic word (cp. English "papa"). It was a form of address forbidden among the Jews to be used by a slave to the head of the family. "Father" (Greek and Latin, "*pater*") is not a translation of "Abba". It is another mode of address. It is relationship intelligently realized by the one who utters it, a word of filial confidence, communion, and obedience, answering to, and expressing, the enjoyment of the complacent love of God the Father. The two expressions together indicate the love and intelligent trust of the child.

Verse 16. The Spirit Himself—The A.V. "itself" is inaccurate. The Holy Spirit is a Person in the Godhead and has just been mentioned as "the Spirit of adoption". The misrendering "itself" is due to the fact that the pronoun is neuter in the original, in grammatical agreement with the word *pneuma* (spirit), which is neuter only as a matter of grammar.

bearcth witness with our spirit.—This is not to be rendered by "to our spirit". This statement expands the latter part of verse 15. The cry "Abba, Father", while it is the utterance of our own spirit, is at the same time, produced in us by the Spirit of God. All that we are and experience as God's children is the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

that we are children of God :—*Teknon*, "child", is connected with the verb *tiktō*, "to beget". Both *teknon*, and *huios* (see v. 14), are frequently used to describe the relationship between believers and God, effected in the new birth. This verse provides ground for the assurance of salvation on the part of believers. At the

same time it bears testimony against the doctrine of pantheism, which confounds the human spirit with the Divine.

Verse 17. and if children, then heirs ;—The word means one who receives by lot, and so one who receives an allotted possession by right of sonship. Believers, in virtue of the sonship bestowed upon them, are, as heirs, to share in all that belongs to Christ, and therefore in all that will be established at His return. This verse brings us to the issue of the argument, which follows from the statement “ye shall live”, at the end of verse 13. Since we are the children of God, the inheritance our Father has for us is secured to us.

heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ;—This makes known the dignity of our position. All that the Father has belongs to the sons (John 17: 10, R.V.). Whatever we have as children of God is shared with us by Christ. His is the inheritance in virtue of His eternal relationship with the Father, and through His death and resurrection He shares His inheritance with those who by grace are children of God.

There are marked differences between the conditions attaching to this inheritance and those relating to an earthly inheritance. A natural inheritance is most frequently possessed upon the death of the father. The inheritance to be enjoyed by believers is to be bestowed by and shared with One who never dies. Again, under Jewish law, the eldest son received the largest share, and the daughters were excluded, unless there were no sons. Under Roman law sons, daughters and adopted children shared an inheritance equally. All believers will share Christ's inheritance. Moreover, the inheritance has been won for them by His death, and will be received by them through grace.

if so be that we suffer with Him,—This is not to be taken into such close connection with the phrase “joint-heirs” as to make that position conditional upon our suffering with Him here. The word *eiper*, “if so be”, indicates here that to suffer with Christ is characteristic of believers generally. True Christianity is, in one way or another, a suffering quantity in his world. What is in view here is not the rewards hereafter to be given for the endurance of sufferings in this life, but the eternal portion of those who are in Christ as distinct from those who walk after

the flesh and do not belong to Him. The sufferings of Christians arise from the same cause as the sufferings of Christ in the days of His flesh, namely, the hatred of the world to God. Man hated Christ, not because of His good work, but because He revealed His Deity. The world does not hate Christians because of their good works; it hates their confession of Christ and their testimony to their relationship with Him. Into the fellowship of His sufferings Paul desired to enter that He might thus become conformed to His death, and attain here and now to the ideal state of "the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3: 10, 11).

that we may be also glorified with Him.—This is not to be rendered "glorified together", as in the A.V. God has designed that present suffering should issue in future glory, and that in association with Christ, an association which will be a recompense for participation in His sufferings; the joy which is to be ours at the revelation of His glory is given to us now as an incentive of our joy in partaking of Christ's sufferings.

This verse brings us again to the subject of the future glory at the coming of the Lord, as in verse 11. The threefold proof of the coming glory in this section is that, (1) believers are led by the Spirit of God, showing that they are sons of God; (2) they have received the Spirit of adoption leading them to cry "Abba, Father"; (3) they have the inward witness of the Spirit that they are the children of God, involving joint-heirship with Christ, and consequent glory after present suffering.

Verse 18. For I reckon—This is not an expression of opinion or a supposition, nor is it simply a calculation. It conveys a considered judgment and an assurance.

that the sufferings of this present time—The word is *kairos* "a season", a period marked by special features, in distinction from *chronos*, "a time", which simply indicates the length of a period.

are not worthy to be compared—Literally, "not worthy in comparison with". The word *axios* was used originally of drawing down a scale; hence it had to do with weight, and so of that which is of value. The idea, here, then, is that sufferings are of no weight in comparison with glory; they are not to be balanced in the scale with it.

with the glory which shall be revealed to usward.—Literally, “with the glory about to be revealed to usward”. The verb *mellō*, “shall (be)”, is used, not to express mere futurity, but of that which is destined to certain accomplishment, and upon this the word lays stress here. The time of the consummation of God’s plans is not definitely stated. Neither is it stated in a way which necessarily relegates it to a distant time. That the time is regarded by human beings as protracted is consequent upon the limited faculties of human calculation. What the Spirit of God would impress upon us is the certainty of the prospect. The glory is already existent and embodied in Christ. It is destined to be revealed to us at the return of Christ. The preposition *eis*, signifies not merely direction but the effects upon the subjects of revelation. We shall not only witness the glory (that would be expressed by the dative case of the pronoun), but it will come upon us and affect us, and this has already been stated at the end of verse 17.

Verse 19. For the earnest expectation of the creation—*Apokaradokia* is suggestive of the stretching forth of the head in expectation of something. The only other place where the word is found is Phil. 1: 20, “according to my earnest expectation”. The object of attention there is the magnifying of Christ in life and death, Christ Himself being the absorbing object. Here the object in view is the revealing of the sons of God.

waiteth for—*Apekdechomai* is an intensive word, stressing the thought of expectancy.

the revealing of the sons of God.—When the Lord returns in manifested glory, the saints will be in association with Him and thus will be revealed to the creation. They will come as those who manifest a likeness to their heavenly Father, hence the appropriateness of the title “sons” here. That event is here put as a beginning of a proof that present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with future glory.

Verse 20. For the creation was subjected to vanity—This is the first of three reasons why the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For *hupotassō*, “to subject”, see at verse 7. *Mataiotēs* signifies what is devoid of good results, and is used in

three places in the N.T. Here of frailty, failure to achieve the full design of its being; in Eph. 4: 17, of the depravity of the human mind, the perversion of the powers bestowed by God; in 2 Pet. 2: 18, of words devoid of truth and usefulness. For the creation this condition was consequent upon the entrance of sin into the world. Creation shares in the effects of the curse that fell on man for his disobedience. There is stress on the word "vanity".

not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it,—This is the second reason why the creation waits for the event mentioned. The phrase "not of its own will" continues the personification of nature, and shows that the present condition of failure to fulfil the design of its being is contrary to those qualities and powers bestowed upon it.

Verse 21. in hope—This may be connected with the first part of verse 20, expressive of the condition upon which the creation was subjected to vanity,—a condition consequent upon the overruling providence of God. Hope describes the happy anticipation of good. The hope of the creation, like that of the believer, contains no element of uncertainty fraught with the possibility of disappointment. It is sure of fulfilment. It has to do with what is yet unseen.

that the creation itself also shall be delivered—That is, in addition to the children of God. For the verb *eleutheroō* cp. 6: 18, 22; 8: 2, there rendered "made free". This hope gives the third reason why the creation waits for the expected event.

from the bondage of corruption,—*Phthora*, "corruption", which expresses the effect of the withdrawal of those powers by which life or activity is maintained, is used in the N.T. either of decay and death, in the physical sphere (as here and in 1 Cor. 15: 42, 50; 2 Pet. 2: 12), or of moral degeneracy (as in 2 Pet. 1: 4; 2: 19), or of that which is necessarily shortlived (as in Col. 2: 22; Gal. 6: 8). The phrase "bondage of corruption" is taken by some in an objective sense, as signifying bondage which produces corruption, by others subjectively, as the bondage which consists in corruption. The latter seems to be the meaning.

into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.—This expands the phrase at the end of verse 19, "the revealing of the

Sons of God". Liberty will be the characteristic of the glory. Creation is to share in the liberty which will belong to the children of God in their glorified state. For creation, instead of failure to realize then the design of its being, will have full scope for the exercise of the powers imparted to it by God. Its new state will match the condition of redeemed man (see e.g., Isa. 65: 17; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1).

The change from "sons of God" (verse 19) to "children of God" is significant. The former was appropriate to the thought of manifestation in glory, for then the saints will, as sons of God, fully represent their Father's character and display His power. The phrase "children of God" recalls the thought of adoption and heirship in verses 15-17, and is appropriate to the mention of "the liberty of the glory".

Verse 22. **For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.**—Literally, "groaneth-together and travaileth-in-pain-together"; that is to say, creation, in all its parts together, unites in the groaning and travailing. This is contingent upon its being subjected to vanity. Here the suggestion is the travail out of which a new condition of creation is to be born, when the sons of God are revealed. The phrase rendered "until now" suggests the unintermittent character of the groans of creation from the time when it was subjected to vanity.

Verse 23. **And not only so, but we ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit,**—The Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, is the firstfruits of the full harvest of the Cross. In His whole Person He is given to each believer at the new birth. The phrase "the firstfruits of the Spirit" does not mean that believers possess a part of the Holy Spirit now and will possess Him entirely hereafter. He Himself is the earnest of the liberty of the glory hereafter to be enjoyed both by the children of God and by creation. So Christ is spoken of in His Resurrection in relation to all who have fallen asleep in Him (1 Cor. 15: 20, 23). So, again, believers now are spoken of in relationship to the whole of the redeemed in Jas. 1: 18 and in an alternative reading in 2 Thess. 2: 13, of the rendering "from the beginning", the well supported rendering being "God chose you as firstfruits". See 11: 16, and 16: 5.

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.—Believers are already possessed of adoption in their relationship to God by grace and in the gift of the Holy Spirit; they still earnestly wait for the redemption of their body as the assured completion of this adoption.

The redemption spoken of is the future actual liberation of the body from its present condition of sinfulness, weakness, decay and death. That redemption is otherwise spoken of as our being "clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven" (2 Cor. 5: 2),—not a temporary condition till the resurrection and rapture, but that which will then take place. The redemption of the body is not precisely identical with the adoption but is included in it.

Verse 24. For by hope we were saved:—This does not mean that hope was the instrument of our salvation, but that it was an essential feature associated with it. Hope is the joyous anticipation of good, in this passage the redemption of our body.

but hope that is seen is not hope:—The word "hope" stands for the thing hoped for, as in Acts 23: 6; 26: 6, 7; Gal. 5: 5; Eph. 1: 18; 2: 12; 4: 4; Col. 1: 5, 23; 1 Tim. 1: 1; Titus 2: 13. Realization removes expectation.

for who hopeth for that which he seeth?—Since the Word of God presents certain things to the believer as the object of his hope, the assurance of their fulfilment brings present spiritual realization of them.

Verse 25. But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—What is secured for us being yet future, the anticipation is to be characterized by patience. Patience suggests the existence of adverse circumstances which demand its exercise.

Verse 26. And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity:—Without the aid of the Holy Spirit our patience would fail and we should succumb to despair. The word *sunantilambanomai*, "to help", is found elsewhere in the N.T. only in Luke 10: 40. It denotes, literally, to take hold of anything with

another, and so means "to give assistance by sharing a burden". The most authentic MSS. read "infirmity", not "infirmities" as in the A.V. The singular indicates a general condition of weakness.

for we know not how to pray as we ought ;—A more literal rendering would be, "what we are to pray according to our need we know not", i.e., we do not know how to express ourselves so that our prayers shall correspond to the need. Not a mode of prayer is here especially in view, but the subjects.

Proseuchomai, "to pray", is always used of requests addressed to God, whereas *deomai*, "to pray", may be used of requests addressed to man as well. *Proseuchomai* carries with it a notion of worship which is not present in the word *deomai*.

but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us—As the indwelling Holy Spirit alone knows how to interpret our needs, He makes His intercession within us, inspiring our yearnings, and thus fulfilling His gracious function as the other Comforter (or Advocate) whom the Lord Jesus promised, a Comforter of like character with Himself. Since we know not what to pray for apart from His help, we are exhorted to pray "at all seasons in the Spirit" (Eph. 6: 18).

with groanings which cannot be uttered ;—Creation groans, we groan, and the Holy Spirit groans. But the Spirit groans within us, and in doing so strengthens us to bear our trials with confidence and courage, and at the same time directs our hearts to God. These groanings do not necessarily find expression in actual speech, but they are effective with God. Human language is, it would seem, not essential to Divine intercession.

Verse 27. **and He that searcheth the hearts**—God, in His omniscience, is entirely acquainted with these desires, even though they cannot be uttered. For this aspect of God's omniscience see Psa. 139: 1-6; Jer. 17: 10; Rev. 2: 23.

knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.—The word *hoti*, rendered "because", may also mean "that" (see margin), and this is probably the meaning. God's knowledge of the mind of the Holy Spirit is not consequent upon the nature

of His intercession in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is one in Godhood with the Father and with the Son. Since the Spirit's groanings are in accordance with God's mind, His intercession in our groanings is consistent with God's dealings with us and the fulfilment of His purposes toward us.

The phrase "according to the will of God" is, literally, "according to God", and has the position of emphasis.

God the Justifier, the pledge of glory; the love of Christ, the power for victory, 8: 28-39

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Having shown that suffering is not incompatible with a life of hope, the Apostle now extends this to make clear that suffering is part of the working out of God's all-wise purposes for us, and that neither affliction nor anything else can prevent this or thwart God's ultimate designs for us. Here, too, he confirms the doctrine of the justification of the believer and establishes that of his eternal security.

Verse 28. And we know that to them that love God—This is the only place in the Epistle where our love to God is mentioned. The phrase "them that love God" is descriptive of believers as a class, and at the same time suggests that only those who love God realise that all things work together for their good.

all things work together for good,—An alternative rendering is "He worketh all things together for good". The "all things", while applying to circumstances in general, has special reference to those of adversity, as indicated in the context. All things, however contrary to us, are under His control. The statement carries the suggestion that God works all things, for those who love Him, with designs for their good (see margin). Troubles, therefore, do not hinder Christian progress, they serve but to further the designs of God's grace.

even to them that are called—The two descriptions, "them that are called" and "them that love God", are to one another as cause and effect. Those who love God are necessarily those

who are called. The call (always in the Epistles an effectual call) produces the response of love to Him who calls.

according to His purpose.—The special significance of this clause is twofold: firstly, it shows that the fact that some men love God is attributable solely to His sovereign grace, and, secondly, it confirms the fact of their eternal security.

Verse 29. For whom He foreknew.—This and the next verse confirm verse 28, providing the ground of the certainty that God works all things together for good. While God foreknows all men, according to His attribute of prescience, yet obviously the word here refers to those who have been described as “them that love God”. He foreknew them as the objects of His favour. All idea of human merit is absent from the passage, as what is being stressed is the absolute sovereignty of God in all His purposes and actions. Foreknowledge is not the same as predestination; the very sentence before us distinguishes the two. His foreknowledge marks out the persons, His predestination determines His purposes and acts on their behalf.

He also foreordained—The verb *proorizō* literally signifies “to mark out beforehand”. It is used in the N.T. only of God, and, besides this verse and the next, is found only in Acts 4: 28; 1 Cor. 2: 7; Eph. 1: 5, 11. It was not the fact of our faith as foreknown by God that moved Him to foreordain us. The blessings and mercies here recounted are the result of His eternal purpose in Christ.

to be conformed to the image of His Son.—The word *summorphos*, “conformed”, conveys the thought, not merely of an external appearance, but of the expression of what constitutes the nature of anything. The word *eikōn*, “image”, is more than a real resemblance. It conveys the idea of representation and manifestation. Believers are to be conformed not merely to something that is like Him but to what He is Himself both in His spiritual body and in His moral character. In the latter respect Christ is to be manifested in believers now. The conformity will be fully and permanently accomplished, spirit, soul, and body, when the Lord comes to receive them to Himself. This, again, in its full fruition, is determined not by their self-effort, but by the foreknowledge and foreordaining grace of God.

that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren :—The Divine purpose has as its great object the glory of the Son of God. The word *prōtotos*, used of Christ, does not refer to His Birth. Its chief use, indeed, has no reference to natural generation but rather to priority, dignity and supremacy. Thus an Israelite was forbidden to make the son of a second wife the firstborn in place of the son of a first wife. There are six passages in the N.T. where the word is used of Christ. Taken in chronological order they are as follows: firstly, Col. 1: 15, where His eternal pre-existence is referred to, and He is mentioned as the One who produced creation (an objective clause, not subjective, as if classing Him with creation). Secondly and thirdly, Col. 1: 18 and Rev. 1: 5, which refer to His priority and supremacy in resurrection. Fourthly, the present passage, which speaks of the future day when Christ will be seen in His pre-eminence above the redeemed, who are spoken of as “the Church of the Firstborn Ones” (Heb. 12: 23). Fifthly, Heb. 1: 6, which refers to His Second Advent, when God will again bring Him into the world. See the R.V., which rightly puts the “again” after the beginning of the clause, the “again” not introducing a new quotation, but referring to the bringing in of the Firstborn a second time into the world, i.e., in manifested glory hereafter.

Verse 30. and whom He foreordained, them He also called :—The Divine counsels in eternity find expression in the course of time. The call is not simply that of the Gospel, though the Gospel is the instrument (2 Thess. 2: 14); the call is what is effected in the bestowment of life in Christ (cp. 1 Cor. 1: 9, 24). The aorist tense is used in these verbs and those which follow, not to indicate past history, but to signify the completeness and decisiveness of each act.

and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.—Though the glorifying is still future, it is stated as an accomplished fact, in keeping with the preceding aorist tenses, as marking definiteness and certainty. In this series the Apostle omits the present experiences in connection with the bestowment of the Holy Spirit, about which he has been writing in this chapter, for the argument in that respect has been completed, and the gift and operation of the

Spirit of God are so inseparable from the calling and justification that no further mention is required. The series of acts of Divine grace stretches from the eternity of the past to the eternity of the future. This is the fourth reference in this chapter to the time of the Rapture. See the introductory note to the chapter.

Verse 31. What then shall we say to these things? if God is for us, who is against us?—The strength of the adversary sinks into insignificance in comparison with the strength of God. Moreover, the efforts of our adversary, being under His absolute control, serve but for the fulfilment of His all wise purposes towards us.

Verse 32. He that spared not His own Son,—This presents the chief point in the proof that God is for us, the greatest exhibition of the love of God towards us. The reference to Abraham's offering of Isaac is evident. The word rendered "spared" is the same as in the Septuagint of Gen. 22:16. The phrase "His own Son" stands antithetically not only in its reference to Abraham but also to what has been said about "adopted sons" (v. 15).

But further, the intimation is evident that the Son of God was and is of one nature with the Father. The emphasis in the phrase marks, too, not merely a comparison with natural relationship, but a unique relationship which extends back into the eternally pre-incarnate existence of the Son with the Father. Cp. Gal. 4:4, where the expression "born of a woman" marks, in the original, the circumstance of the sending, thus making clear that the One who was sent forth in this way was already the Son of God prior to His birth.

but delivered Him up for us all,—See 4:25. This states the delivering up as the act of God the Father. In Gal. 2:20, where the same word is rendered "gave (Himself) up", the act is mentioned as that of the Son Himself. The simple form *didōmi* is used of the Son in Gal. 1:4, the two statements thus providing clear intimation of the oneness of the Son with the Father. The "delivering up" was to "the death of the Cross".

how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?—The greatest gift ensures all the rest. There is a definite article

before the word "all" in the original, which perhaps points to all that has been brought before us in the Epistle, as made good to us in Christ. Perhaps there is a direct reference to the same word in verse 28. In that case the "all things" recalls even those things which are recorded as opposed to us, but which in point of fact are made a blessing to us. In any case the word may be taken without limitations. The single verb rendered "freely give" is *charizomai*, which literally means "to bestow as a gift of grace".

Verse 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?—This and the next two verses contain metaphors from a court of justice. In the case of the prisoner at the bar there are, so far as this passage goes, (1) the accuser, (2) the accused, (3) the judge, (4) the executioner. These are indicated in the three rhetorical questions in these verses, and (1) and (4) are seen to have no place in the sight of God with regard to the believer. Thus the Apostle is recalling in a vivid way the great statements of truth in the preceding part of the Epistle as to the way in which God justifies the sinner through faith.

The word "elect" gathers up the preceding terms "fore-knew", "foreordained", "called", "glorified", "justified". See 9: 11; 11: 5 and cp. 1 Thess. 1: 4; Eph. 1: 4. Election signifies that act of the mind by which we choose a portion or certain number out of a whole. The act involves freedom on his part who makes the choice. Whatever God does He does without being influenced by things external to Himself, for apart from Him there is no good. The reason for His ways and acts lies entirely within the scope of His own attributes and purposes.

It is God that justifieth;—A more literal rendering is "God is the (One) justifying", i.e., the Justifier, with stress upon the word "God".

Verse 34. who is he that shall condemn?—This may be taken closely with the preceding statement, as is indicated in the R.V. For if God justifies He is Himself the Judge and so condemnation is impossible.

It is Christ Jesus that died,—Possibly the marginal reading is right, "Shall Christ Jesus who died, yea, rather . . .?" He

it is to whom all judgment is committed (John 5: 22, 27). His death has secured our justification, and in His resurrection life He is altogether for us. The best MSS. have the full title "Christ Jesus", which marks Him as the exalted One who humbled Himself.

yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God,—This marks the position as one of dignity, power and authority, a position which is His prerogative as the One who has perfectly fulfilled the will of God, and has met the claims of Divine righteousness.

who also maketh intercession for us.—This was said of the Holy Spirit in verse 27. The word is used elsewhere of the Lord Jesus in Heb. 7: 25 only. For examples of the Lord's intercession see Luke 22: 32 and John 17, and for the unfolding of the subject see Heb. 4: 15; 9: 24; cp. 1 John 2: 1. The mention of His position of authority serves to stress the efficacy of His intercession.

Verse 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—That would be the work of the executioner (see v. 33). To be separated from the love of Christ is death. Death involves separation. The body apart from the spirit is dead. The believer, separated from the love of Christ would be spiritually dead. But this is impossible, according to His own statement in John 10: 28, 29. There is stress on the word "us".

Earlier in the Epistle the Apostle mentions the love of God (5: 5, 8), as he does here again in verse 39, a proof that the love of God is the love of Christ and an intimation of the essential oneness of the Father and the Son and so of the Deity of Christ. So believers are said to be beloved of God (1 Thess. 1: 4) and beloved of the Lord (2 Thess. 2: 13). See also 2 Cor. 5: 14 and Eph. 3: 19.

shall tribulation,—See 2: 9; 5: 3.

or anguish,—See 2: 9.

or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—These complete a sevenfold series of adversaries, all of which were experienced by the Apostle, and which in one respect or another have been the common lot of believers. They are in

various ways the instruments of devilish and human hatred, but cannot interrupt the love of Christ towards us.

Verse 36. **Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.**—The quotation is from the Septuagint of Ps. 44: 22. Here the note is one of triumph. Hence we have a striking example of the increased force and new character of many of the New Testament quotations from the Old. The difference is due to the death and resurrection of Christ. A new significance attaches to the words “for Thy sake”. There is no discrepancy between the Old and the New, but what the Apostle is about to say shows by what means the opposition of adversaries is turned to a means of triumph. To suffer for Christ’s sake and so to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings, transmutes the affliction into joy and victory, enabling the suffering saint to glory in tribulation.

Verse 37. **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors**—The word *hupernikaō*, literally, to be super-victorious, has no adequate English equivalent. It is used here only in the N.T. Not only are our adversaries deprived of power to snap the tie of the love of Christ, but their opposition is turned to our account, enhancing the power of our victory through Christ. As Chrysostom says, “This is a new order of victory, to conquer by means of our adversary”.

through Him that loved us.—The aorist tense, while referring specially to the great expression of His love in that He died for us (see v. 34), also conveys the fact of His love as timeless and immutable.

Verse 38. **For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life,**—Death was the last item in the list in verse 35. The word is to be taken in its most comprehensive sense. Life is more dangerous for the believer than death.

nor angels, nor principalities,—This is the only place where principalities are mentioned in this Epistle. The two terms are used in a general sense, though the context obviously points to beings of a hostile character. Principalities are first in the lists in Eph. 6: 12, there indicating their superior order as spirit beings.

nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,—The word *dunamis* may here refer not merely to angelic powers but to human potentates, as in the case of its associated word *exousia* (see 13: 1), though the latter also is used of angels. The difference between *dunamis* and *exousia* is that *dunamis* signifies power in general and *exousia* the ability to use it.

Verse 39. nor height, nor depth,—This refers to dimensions of space, just as “things present”, “things to come”, referred to matters of time. The words “height” and “depth” may here indicate heaven and earth (see also Isa. 7: 11).

nor any other creature,—The order in the R.V., which is undoubtedly correct, places the various objects in alternating groups, according as they are personal and impersonal, the word “creature” at the end comprehending all besides those mentioned. The arrangement accordingly is: (a) neither death nor life (impersonal); (b) nor angels nor principalities (personal); (a) nor things present nor things to come (impersonal); (b) nor powers (personal); (a) nor height nor depth (impersonal); (b) nor any other creature (personal).

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—This forms the crowning arch of the whole Epistle. The love of God has been brought before us, first in 5: 5; and in its essential connection with Christ in 5: 8; in 8: 35 it was spoken of as the love of Christ. Here it is definitely stated to be resident in Him, with the suggestion that it operates through Him.

The whole of chapter 8 contains the mention of particular details in chapters 5 and 8. They are as follows:—

Peace with God (5: 1 and 8: 6); the hope of the glory of God (5: 2 and 8: 20, 21); patience (5: 2-4 and 8: 25); the love of God (5: 5 and 8: 28, 29); the death of Christ (5: 6, 8, 10 and 8: 32); righteousness in life in contrast to sin and death (5: 12-21 and 8: 2-4); walking in newness of life and walking after the Spirit (6: 4 and 8: 4); life unto God (6: 6, 11, 13, 22 and 8: 13); eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord and the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (5: 23 and 8: 39).

CHAPTER IX

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WITH REGARD TO ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES, 9: 1 to 11: 36

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE APOSTLE is still continuing his subject of the vindication of God's character and ways. He has shown in the first eight chapters that God is righteous in the exercise both of His wrath and of His grace. He now proceeds to establish the righteousness of God in His dealings nationally with Jews and Gentiles. Chapters 9 to 11 run parallel to chapters 3 to 8. We find a striking harmony between the development of the theme in the ninth chapter and the argument of the third chapter. The tenth follows on with the subject of faith, just as the fourth chapter did. In the eleventh chapter the subject of God's grace and mercy through Christ corresponds to those of chapters 5 to 8. The themes are the same, the setting different.

The chief subject of chapter 9 is the sovereignty of God. That of chapter 10 is the possibilities of faith. That of chapter 11 is God's grace and mercy.

This section shows that Divine retribution is not merely arbitrary, but is consequent upon man's own hardness of heart. The sovereignty of God has not been exercised by way of predestinating men to sin, as if they were helpless machines forced on by a predetermined fate and compelled thereby to reap the consequences of an evil for which they were not primarily responsible. The present condition of the Jews is chargeable, not to God, but to themselves.

As to the parallelism between chapter 9 and the first part of chapter 3, in the third chapter three questions were asked which represent supposed Jewish objections raised against the teaching that Jew and Gentile were on the same ground before God in the matters of sin and justification by faith.

The first objection was that such an equalization would abrogate the distinctive privileges of the Jew. The question in

3:1 was answered in 3:2. So now chapter 9 shows what are the distinctive privileges of the nation (vv. 4, 5).

The second objection in chapter 3 was that the validity of God's promises would be destroyed (3:3). That was answered in 3:4. Similarly chapter 9 shows that the unbelief of Israel is no evidence that the Word of God is come to naught (vv. 6-13).

The third objection in chapter 3 was that God would be unrighteous (3:5). That was answered in 3:6 to 8. This is taken up again in Chapter 9, verse 14, where the question is asked, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" The answer is given in verses 14 to 33.

Verse 1. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not,—The strong character of this language indicates that the Apostle's Jewish opponents had charged him with hostility to his nation and insincerity in his actions. He begins his reply by a statement the force of which is to show that his fellowship with Christ makes insincerity impossible.

my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost.—Not "my conscience bearing me witness". His conscience bore witness in accordance with his word. Moreover it was a conscience enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 2. that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart.—There is stress upon the words "great" and "heart". The heart stands here for "the hidden springs of the personal life".

Verse 3. For I could wish—The ellipsis to be supplied is not "but I may not" but "were it possible". He means that his love for Israel is such that he could desire what he expresses were it not for certain reasons which prevent it.

that I myself were anathema from Christ—The Greek word *anathema*, frequently translates, in the Septuagint, the Hebrew *cherem*, which signified a thing devoted to God, whether for His service, as in the case of the sacrifice (Lev. 27:28), or for its own destruction, e.g., an idol (Deut. 7:26), Jericho (Josh. 6:17). The term acquired the more general meaning of the disfavour of God, as in Isa. 34:5; Mal. 4:6. This is its meaning here, as

also in Acts 23: 14; 1 Cor. 12: 3; 16: 22; Gal. 1: 8, 9. Perhaps the love of Paul for his fellow-countrymen can be fully apprehended only by those with love as great as his. But whatever he might find in his heart to wish, in order that they might be saved, two things are plain, that the wish was impossible of accomplishment, and that had it been possible it could not have availed to secure the end he desired.

for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh :—The word "flesh" is here used of natural relationship; cp. 1 Cor. 10: 18; Gal. 4: 23.

Verse 4. who are Israelites ;—This is the national name, including all the descendants of Jacob, who from God obtained the name of Israel, "a prince with God" (Gen. 32: 28). Cp. Hos. 12: 3, and Gal. 6: 16, where the phrase "Israel of God" suggests a contrast between a true and a false Israel. The title Israel connotes the dignity and privileges attaching to those who come under the term.

whose is the adoption,—The reference is probably to Exod. 4: 22 and Hos. 11: 1. The relationship referred to is external, indicating that Israel was brought into a peculiar relation to God in contrast to other nations (cp. Exod. 4: 22; Deut. 14: 1; Jer. 31: 9), a collective relationship rather than that of individuals.

and the glory,—That is, the special favour granted them of the manifestation of the presence of God in their midst. See especially Exod. 29: 43, where God declared that the tabernacle would be sanctified by His glory; also Exod. 40: 34; 2 Chron. 5: 14; Hag. 2: 7.

and the covenants,—This refers to the promises made by God at various times to the patriarchs, that, e.g., originally given to Abraham (Gen. 12: 1-3), and confirmed in a vision (Gen. 15: 18), and again by the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21), and by Divine oath (Gen. 22: 15-18). Cp. Eph. 2: 12.

Whereas the English word "covenant" signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties or more, who agree to discharge certain obligations, the word *diathēkē* does not involve the idea of joint obligation, but signifies that which is undertaken by one person only. Hence it is frequently interchangeable with

the word "promise", as in Gal. 3: 16, 18. The covenants referred to here were of this character.

and the giving of the law, and the service of God,—The original has simply "the service", *latreia*, a word specially used of the worship connected with the Tabernacle and the Temple and of the ordinances relating thereto. Cp. Heb. 9: 1.

and the promises;—The word here signifies those undertakings graciously given to Abraham and his seed (Gal. 3: 16). The promise given to Abraham in Gen. 12: 1–3 was purposely repeated. The first contained in itself all subsequent promises. Hence the plural involves all that God has undertaken to bestow upon Israel.

Verse 5. whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh,—Literally, "from whom", not "whose", as in the preceding clause, as if Christ was the special property of the people of Israel, but signifying that He sprang from their race, being born of the Virgin Mary. That He thus sprang from the nation of Israel is the highest of all the privileges enumerated. The provision made in His Person was universal.

who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.—The words rendered "who is" consist, in the original, of the article with the present participle, literally, "the One being". This kind of phrase is not a statement of fact, though that is involved, but is descriptive of what is essential and characteristic. The same phrase is found in John 1: 18, there showing that his Sonship is essential and unoriginated.

Alternative translations of the whole sentence are mentioned in the margin of the R.V. The rendering given in the text of both the A.V. and the R.V. is to be taken as right. It is a construction which would be unhesitatingly adopted by Greek scholars, apart from questions of doctrine. The preceding context, all the details of which speak of Christ, lead up to a climax concerning the Deity of His Being, rather than a detached doxology. The statement as to the Deity of Christ puts the crowning arch upon the privileges and blessings enumerated concerning Israel. That the reference is to Christ is supported without exception by all the ante-Nicene Fathers who refer to it. The

statement is consistent with the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, as set forth by Paul himself as well as by his fellow-apostles. Lastly, as the Apostle himself declares categorically that Christ is the Creator of all things (see, e.g., Col. 1:16), that the reference is to Christ is consistent with what is said of the Creator in Rom. 1:25.

God's sovereign right to choose (vv. 6-13)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

In this section the Apostle meets an objection that his teaching as to the rejection of the Jews would argue a failure on God's part to fulfil His promises. This is the first step towards his argument as to the righteousness of God in calling the Gentiles into blessing.

The following are the steps in the argument:—(1) The subjects of the promise (v. 6); (2) The character of the promise (vv. 7-9); (3) The basis of the promise (vv. 10-13).

Verse 6. But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought.—That is, the promise God made to Abraham.

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:—That is, the number of those who are of Israel is not determined by natural descent. One of the objects of the argument in the present chapter is to show that God had purposed to bring Gentiles into His favour. The phrase "which are of Israel" probably refers to the patriarch Jacob, and the meaning is that not all that are born of Jacob belong to the true Israel, the people of God. Israel as subjects of the promise does not consist simply of the natural descendants of Jacob.

Verse 7. neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.—The promise was not conditional upon natural birth. The Divine choice was made according to God's own will. Ishmael was set aside. Accordingly not all the natural descendants of Abraham are spiritual children. Cp. Gal. 3:7, "they which be of faith the same are sons of Abraham". Zacchaeus (Luke 19:9) was not "a son of Abraham" because of natural descent, but because of

his faith in Christ and the acknowledgment of His claims. Again, as God rejected Ishmael, so He would reject unbelieving Jews.

The word "called" is virtually the same as "to choose" (Isa. 48: 12; 49: 1), which involves the bringing of the subjects of promise into its fulfilment.

Verse 8. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God ;—The thought here is not quite the same as in Gal. 4: 22–31. Here the immediate point in the argument is the sovereignty of God in His selection of one and rejection of another. At the same time there lies behind this what is set forth in the Galatians passage, that Abraham and Sarah planned according to the flesh and sought to hurry the fulfilment of God's promise, with disastrous consequences.

but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.—The choice made by God depended not upon the works of the flesh but on His own promise. The phrase "the children of the promise" signifies children who are such in virtue of the promise. Hence this verse is not exactly parallel to the phrase "the children of the flesh", for they are children of the flesh as such. As God discriminated in the case of Abraham's children so He is doing still. In this the ways of God, who is a law to Himself, are inscrutable.

Verse 9. For this is a word of promise,—There is stress on the word "promise", and the absence of the definite article lends emphasis to its character as a promise; that is to say, the fulfilment was conditional solely upon the word of God and upon His own power.

According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.—The season was that in Gen. 18: 10. The quotation indicates more than the simple promise that Isaac should be born; that was to take place in consequence of God's giving, i.e., through the manifestation of His own power.

Verse 10. And not only so ; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, even by our father Isaac—The same fact is illustrated in the case of Isaac's children. This provides a still more patent instance of the sovereignty of God's choice. So far a

Jew might have replied that Ishmael and his descendants were reasonably rejected because he was a son of a bondwoman, but now even such an argument is rendered invalid in that Esau and Jacob were sons of the one mother.

Verses 11, 12. for the children being not yet born.—The selection of Isaac was only after Ishmael's birth, but the selection of Jacob was made before both he and his brother were born. The parenthesis which the A.V. inserts at the beginning of this verse interferes with the connection of the following verse. The form of the negative "not" in the original represents the circumstances not simply as a fact of history but as a part of the Divine plan, and so with the next clause.

neither having done anything good or bad,—Not only are claims of birth ruled out but claims of merit also. If this holds good in the case of Jacob and Esau it must also hold good in the case of Ishmael and Isaac.

that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.—This is quoted from the LXX of Gen. 25: 23. The fulfilment of this lay, so far as the individual sons were concerned, in the circumstances of Esau and Jacob. What follows, however, shows that there was more than the individuals in view. In other words, the principles of God's dealings apply both to the individuals and to their descendants.

Verse 13. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.—That the whole history of the nations of Edom and Israel is illustrative of the principles here laid down is confirmed by the quotation from Mal. 1: 2, 3. The word "hated" is to be understood in the light of all that is said of God's rejection of Esau. It stands for the attitude which He adopted in acting consistently with His Divine attributes, and presents the antithesis of the attitude adopted towards Jacob as expressed in the words "Jacob have I loved". These words must therefore be distinguished from their use with reference to mere human emotion. God's love to Jacob was undeserved; His hatred of Esau had a moral ground and Esau deserved it.

God's Sovereignty stated in the Old Testament and His Righteousness established (vv. 14-18)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The argument thus far has established God's sovereign right to exercise the privileges of the Gospel to whomsoever and on whatever terms He please, natural conditions and human merit being ruled out. Accordingly, if the Jews refused the Gospel God's decision to reject them and offer salvation to the Gentiles was unchallengeable. The Jew might object to this, that to make no distinction between Jew and Gentile in regard to merit or demerit would be inconsistent with Divine righteousness. To this Paul answers that God's sovereignty in these matters was (1) stated, (2) illustrated, in the Old Testament.

Verse 14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.—That is, in choosing one and rejecting another.

Verse 15. For He saith to Moses,—This implies the assumption that the Scriptures are the Word of God, an assumption which his readers likewise took for granted. There is stress on the word "to Moses", and the mention of Moses would especially appeal to a Jew.

I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.—This was said to Moses in answer to his intercession for Israel after God's refusal to go up with them to the land of promise because of their sin in worshipping the golden calf. The quotation is from the Septuagint. The conclusion is that since God showed mercy to Israel after such a flagrant breach of the covenant into which they had entered with Him, surely He could show mercy to Gentiles who had not been guilty of such an act. But for the Divine mercy and sovereignty none would be blessed. The point established is that the mercy and compassion shown by God are determined by nothing external to His attributes.

Verse 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy.—That is, the cause

lies neither in human will nor in human effort ("runneth" is suggestive of the intense effort of a racer). Man cannot in any way boast of having been responsible for the blessing of salvation. The inference from what has been stated confirms the principle of God's sovereign right to exercise mercy.

Verse 17. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,—This personification of Scripture intimates its permanent authority and living power, as well as its Divine inspiration. This appeal to the Word of God is again a forceful argument in replying to a Jew who made his boast in the Law.

For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might shew in thee My power, and that My name might be published abroad in all the earth.—The special instance of Pharaoh and the hardening of his heart, serves to explain the hardened condition of the Jews, which is the particular subject of this chapter.

As a matter of fact, the narrative in Exodus, as correctly given in the R.V., states that to begin with Pharaoh persistently hardened his own heart. The whole record is deeply significant in this respect. Firstly, Exod. 3:19 establishes the prescience of God. Then 4:21 simply foretells what God will do as to Pharaoh's conduct. The effects of the first plagues were that Pharaoh was responsible for hardening his own heart. See 7:13, 22, 23; 8:15; 9:7, "Pharaoh's heart was stubborn". At 9:12 we find the statement of the Lord's intervention in this matter: "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh". Yet again in 9:35 the hardening is ascribed to the monarch. After that in each case it is ascribed to God (10:1, 20; 11:10). Clearly, therefore, the hardening was retributive and not arbitrary. Yet, while God did not make Pharaoh wicked, and his punishment was nothing more than he deserved, the argument in Romans stresses the absolute sovereignty and righteousness of God. The recipient of pardoning mercy can never boast in his priority of merit. He who is punished can never charge God with unrighteousness.

This idea, therefore, is not merely Pharaoh's exaltation to kingship but his being maintained in that position instead of being immediately cut off for his self-will. Not the creation of the man is in view but the object for which God permitted him so long to be kept in authority.

Verse 18. So then He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.—There is stress on the phrase “whom He will”. The reason for God’s dealings is inscrutable. The secret, therefore, lies with God Himself. Man can never charge Him with injustice. His acts, and whatever significance He makes plain regarding them, are for man’s recognition and instruction. They are neither capricious nor arbitrary. That he hardens a man or a people is not an uncalled for procedure but a judicial act.

God’s Sovereignty unchallengeable;—His longsuffering and mercy (vv. 19–24)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Apostle now meets a possible objection arising from his statements in verses 7–18. This may be put as follows: If God hardens man, or if He has mercy on him, according to His own determination, and if man’s wrongdoing subserves God’s purposes, how can it be reasonable for Him to find fault with what simply accomplishes His irresistible will? The answer to this is twofold. Firstly, the objection reveals the ignorance of the relation between God and man, for man, being the creature, is not in a position to challenge his Creator (vv. 20, 21). Secondly, it reveals ignorance of both the character of God and the sinfulness of man. For He has used His sovereign will to exercise longsuffering (vv. 22, 24). Thus the Apostle both establishes the sovereignty of God and shows in what a merciful way it has been directed. As regards the first, he argues, not from the fact of man’s sinfulness, but from that of God’s righteousness. In the second he enforces his argument from the facts of man’s sinfulness and God’s mercy. All men have forfeited any claim upon this, on account of sin. God has not made any man wicked. No one can therefore argue unrighteousness in His dealings nor can He be charged with partiality. The folly is urged of the creature’s setting himself up against his Creator, and this is illustrated from the potter’s art, but then again God has restrained His merited wrath. Then, too, the very fact of God’s longsuffering implies the exercise of man’s free will, and this was actually the case with Pharaoh. Again, He makes known the riches of His glory by displaying His mercy and this is seen in

that Gentiles are included as well as Jews, consistently both with the prerogatives of God and with the principles of His righteous dealing.

Verse 19. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He still find fault?—That is to say, why does He blame anyone for hardness of heart?

For who withstandeth His will?—The word rendered “will” is *boulēma*, which signifies a deliberate purpose and is to be distinguished from the more frequent and general word *thelēma*, which, while it may sometimes have much the same meaning as *boulēma*, frequently has the meaning simply of a desire, or spontaneous will. Here the Apostle speaks of the determinate counsel of God which overrules human action. Man is able to resist the will, the *thelēma*, of God, but whatever takes place God’s determinate counsel, *boulēma*, is never prevented from fulfilment.

Verse 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?—The objection raised in verse 19 is repelled rather than refuted, as it is shown to be a case of ignorance of the relation existing between the creature and God the Creator.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?—See Isa. 29: 16; 45: 9. While the Apostle’s argument is not precisely the same as that of Isaiah, yet he has the nation of Israel and its condition also in view.

Verse 21. Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part of a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?—The “Or” suggests the alternatives, that either there must be a recognition of the absoluteness of God, or there must be a denial that the potter has power over the clay. To what use a particular part of the clay is to be put depends not upon its quality but upon the will of the potter. This verse stresses the unqualified sovereignty of God as Creator in contrast to the creature. For the removal of any possible objection to this that it argues the complete helpfulness of man, see next verse.

Verse 22. **What if God,**—Literally, “But if God”. The “But” marks a change to a consummating reply in the argument, and introduces a sentence which the Apostle does not finish, nor was there any need to finish it, as the actual fact, though introduced by a hypothetic “if”, is unanswerable. The contending Jew might have been ready with what he would consider to be a cogent reply. But now that the Apostle stresses the longsuffering and patience of God, there is more force in the unfinished sentence than if it had been completed. The “But”, then, marks the contrast between what God had a perfect right to do and what He has actually done.

willing to shew His wrath,—This seems best understood in the sense of “having the will to show His wrath”. The Apostle is not suggesting that this is a reason for His action or that His showing mercy is carried out in spite of His wrath. The word “willing” recalls the implication, at the end of verse 19, of God’s irresistible power to will, the stress being upon the fact of God’s sovereignty.

and to make His power known,—By so doing He would manifest His character.

endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath—There is no definite article, as what is being referred to now is not simply the special example of Pharaoh but a general principle with an including reference to the rejection of Israel. The phrase is not subjective as in Jer. 50: 25, where the meaning is that they are instruments by which God executes His wrath, but objective, “vessels doomed to wrath”.

fitted unto destruction :—The “fitting” is not imputed to God, as if God had prepared these vessels for wrath in contrast to those He has prepared for mercy. God has not created men with a view to their destruction. As a matter of fact, although the metaphor of the potter’s vessel has been used, in which the material itself is helpless, yet that must not be pressed in the matter of the application to persons. The form of the word rendered “fitted” may be regarded as in the middle voice, which implies action done by oneself with a view to one’s own aims and interests. There is a suggestion, therefore, that the persons referred to as “vessels of wrath” have fitted themselves for

destruction, and this was actually the case with Pharaoh, as we have seen from Exodus. The Apostle could have used a form of expression stating clearly that they had been fitted by an outward agency unto destruction. That form, however, is set aside in order to use one which throws the responsibility upon man for the hardness of his heart. God, then, has restrained His merited wrath. The objector might have had some reason if he had said "What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, executed His judgment upon the vessels of wrath". What he says instead is that God has endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath who have fitted themselves unto destruction.

The word *apōleia*, "destruction" (here only in this Epistle) like its synonyms, means "not the destruction of being but of well being, not annihilation, but its ruin so far as the purpose of its existence is concerned".

Verse 23. and that He might make known the riches of His glory—The glory here refers to the actings of God's grace towards believers, as mentioned in 8: 18, 21.

upon vessels of mercy,—Mercy is the manifestation of pity; it assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him that shows it.

While God has provided salvation for all men (Titus 3: 5), the vessels of mercy are those who actually receive it. But the idea underlying the present phrase is that, according to the foreknowledge of God, they are destined to mercy.

which He afore prepared unto glory,—This is in striking contrast with what is said of the vessels of wrath. See note on "fitted". The Apostle does not simply say, as might be expected, "(vessels) prepared unto glory", but "which He afore prepared unto glory". While stress is laid on the gracious actings of God, there is a plain intimation that those who enjoy the glory of Heaven are prepared on earth. There can be no entrance there without that preparation by which they are born of God and receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Christ.

Verse 24. even us, whom He also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles?—This brings the special point

in the argument to a head, stressing the fact that Gentiles are included among the vessels of mercy as well as Jews, and that this is in accordance not only with the prerogatives of God (vv. 20, 21), but with the principles of His righteous dealing (v. 14).

God's Sovereignty in relation to Israel and the Gentiles foretold in the Old Testament (vv. 25-29)

Verse 25. As He saith also in Hosea, I will call that My people, which was not My people : and her beloved, which was not beloved.—The quotation is from the Septuagint of Hosea 2: 23 with variations, the order of the statements being inverted. The Hebrew is, literally, “and I will have pity on the not-pitied-one (the gender being feminine), and I will say to not-My-people My people art thou.” The word “pity”, or “mercy”, in the LXX is changed to the more tender word “beloved”, love taking the place of mercy.

Verse 26. And it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called sons of the living God.—This quotation is from Hosea 1: 10, almost word for word from the Septuagint. Thus the two passages in Hosea are connected and are quoted in the opposite order.

The Apostle shows that in the mind of the Spirit the promise embraces Gentiles, who would be brought into God's favour through the instrumentality of the Gospel, this being in accordance with the principles set forth in Hosea's prophecy. Since Israel had placed themselves on a level with the Gentiles by their departure from God it was both reasonable and compatible with God's mercy that in recalling a remnant of Israel from their alienated state He should call in others also who are, as Israel had become, not His people.

Verse 27. And Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved :—This quotation is chiefly from the Septuagint Version of Isa. 10: 22, 23; with a modification recalling Hosea 1: 10, especially with regard to the word “number”. Salvation was to be limited to a remnant of the people of Israel.

That is the point in this phase of the argument concerning the exclusion of Jews.

Verse 28. for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short.—This amplifies the thought in the preceding quotation. The word “work” in the A.V. is not the meaning of the word *logos*. Hence the necessary change in the R.V., where “the word” is that which the Lord fulfils in the execution of His judgments upon the nation, the mass being rejected and the remnant saved. That God finishes His word means that He brings it to an end; that He cuts it short would seem to indicate the summary and decisive character of the Divine action. The rest of the quotation as given in the A.V. is not in the best texts.

Verse 29. And, as Isaiah hath said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom, and had been like unto Gomorrah.—This quotation agrees with the Septuagint, where the word “a seed” replaces the Hebrew word for a small remnant. The word “Sabaoth” is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning “hosts”.

While Paul laments the condition of his nation, he shows the righteousness of God in dealing retributively with His people. If the reduction of the nation to a small remnant was based upon God’s righteousness, the Jew could not complain of the Gospel; for in the matter of salvation, in reducing the number of the people to those only who believe, God was acting with perfect consistency. The Gospel was, after all, doing only what Isaiah had prophesied. Isaiah foretold of a remnant yet future; Paul speaks of a remnant in the present day.

The problem explained; faith the key (vv. 30–33)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Apostle now shows the ground upon which God has dealt both with Jew and Gentile: This recalls the teaching of the earlier part of the Epistle, that God reckons righteousness on the ground of faith.

Verse 30. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even

the righteousness which is of faith:—The reference here to attainment does not suggest the result of human effort but the reception of the blessing granted to faith. Righteousness here signifies the justifying act of God's grace by which righteousness is reckoned to a person consistently with God's own attribute of righteousness, and in response to faith at the time of conversion.

Verse 31. **but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.**—The phrase "law of righteousness" may be taken to indicate a general principle, presenting righteousness as the outcome of keeping a law, the Law of Moses being especially in view. The Israelite, being possessed of such a Law, looked upon righteousness as a possible outcome of keeping it. Their efforts found righteousness beyond their reach.

Verse 32. **Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works.** The phrase "as it were" is, literally, simply "as", that is, in the belief that righteousness could be so obtained. The responsibility of the choice is here seen to lie with man, and this gives the other side relative to the subject of God's sovereignty as mentioned in the preceding part of the chapter. Man has only himself to blame for his failure.

They stumbled at the stone of stumbling;—An alternative reading, making this one sentence with what precedes, is given in the margin: "because doing it, they stumbled at the stone of stumbling." Christ is definitely introduced as the one Object of faith, and the definite article indicates Him as well known in this respect. Salvation by faith in a once crucified Messiah, was utterly opposed to all their ideas. Yet both the plan of salvation and the way in which it would be rejected were foretold in the Old Testament.

Verse 33. **even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.**—Two passages from Isaiah are combined, one from 8: 14 and the other from 28: 16, and the two are put together, that from 8: 14 closely following the Hebrew, that from 28: 6 giving a free rendering of the LXX. The passage in 28 was a warning against false confidence

and the desire of the people of Israel for a league with Ephraim against the Syrians. That in the eighth chapter was an exhortation not to fear the alliance between Syria and Ephraim (see 7: 2). There was a better ground of confidence for God's people, in their true Messiah; He would be a stumbling-stone to the many but a reliable ground of confidence to believers. As in other quotations the application goes far beyond those immediate circumstances.

The word rendered "offence" is *skandalon*, originally the name of that part of a trap to which the bait was attached and hence the trap or snare itself. It became metaphorical of anything that arouses prejudice or becomes a hindrance to others, causing them to fall, the hindrance being good in itself, as here, of Christ, and those who stumbled being unbelievers, or the hindrance being evil.

CHAPTER X

*The Righteousness of Faith as being in accordance with
the Old Testament, 10: 1-21*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS chapter, in the series of chapters 9 to 11, runs parallel to the fourth chapter in the series 3 to 8. See the introduction to chapters 9 to 11. Here in chapter 10 the argument is continued that the Gospel is in perfect harmony with the teaching of the Old Testament (cp. 9: 25-29). The Apostle also confirms, what he has pointed out at the end of chapter 9, that the present rejection of Israel finds its explanation in their persistent rejection of God's way of salvation, in spite of the witness of the Law and the prophets, and in their efforts to obtain righteousness by their own works; further, that the terms upon which salvation is offered were to be open alike to the Gentiles or Jews, faith not being the exclusive possession of believing Jews. This chapter expands 9: 24-33.

Verse 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.—Literally, "the good pleasure of my heart and my supplication towards God is unto salvation". The word *eudokia*, "desire", is, literally, "good pleasure". It is used of believers elsewhere only at Phil. 1: 15. It is frequently used of God. It expresses not merely a benevolent attitude but an active pleasure, and, when used of something not yet realized, indicates a fervent desire. Spiritual desires should always be turned into prayer.

Verse 2. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.—Their religious zeal, in which in former days Paul had shared (Acts 22: 3; 1 Tim. 1: 13), was the reason for his heart's desire and supplication. This is implied in the connecting word "For". Zeal not regulated by knowledge leads to the substitution of error, and inspires a

persecuting spirit. Paul's attitude is an example to us to pray for such as have a mistaken zeal for God.

Verse 3. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own,—"God's righteousness" stands for both His own character and His counsels and acts by which He reckons righteousness to the believing sinner. The substitution of human effort for God's way of salvation in Christ shows a complete misunderstanding of God's attitude toward man.

they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.—The verb rendered "subject themselves" is in the middle voice, and implies an intelligent interest in the subjection which in their case they refused (cp. 8: 7). Subjection to God's righteousness, with all that that means, involves the laying aside of self-effort.

Verse 4. For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth.—For the word *telos*, "end", see at 6: 21, 22. This statement expands precisely and succinctly how the Jews were mistaken. That Christ is the end of the Law as stated is best explained by Gal. 3: 23-26; where the meaning is, that we were kept in ward under the Law . . . with the coming of Christ in view, until that took place. There was no way of escape from the domination of the Law. The condemnatory power of the Law was not an end in itself. Its restraints were necessary that Christ might be welcomed when He came.

Verse 5. For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the Law shall live thereby.—The quotation is from Lev. 18: 5. Literally it is "the man that hath done these things", the whole past life being under review. The doing is to be lifelong and is never for a moment to fall below the Divine standard. A Jew thus perfectly meeting the requirement of God would thereby find life. No one, save Christ, has ever acted so.

Verse 6. But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus,—The means by which a believing sinner is reckoned righteous is virtually personified and so is said to speak in the language of Scripture.

Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down :)—The quotation, which is used to show that the book of the Law taught the very principles of the Gospel concerning justification by faith, is from Deut. 30: 11–14. It is taken from the Septuagint, with certain modifications and with some parenthetical explanations, so as to apply the details of the passage the more pointedly. Thus, “Who shall ascend into heaven?” is explained by the statement, “that is, to bring Christ down”; in other words, to bring about His reincarnation.

Verse 7. or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)—The Deuteronomy passage has, “Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us?” In the quotation the thought of going across the sea is changed to descending into the abyss. The word “abyss” is found in the N.T. elsewhere only in Luke 8: 31 and seven times in the Apocalypse. In the Old Testament it was sometimes applied to the sea as fathomless, e.g., Gen. 1: 2, 7: 11 (Septuagint). It is often set in contrast to heaven, cp. Gen. 49: 25 (Septuagint). It stood frequently for the region in which are fallen spirits and lost souls. In the present passage it stands, as in the Old Testament, for Sheol, or the region of the dead, into which Christ went at His death. To think of a repetition of the death and resurrection of Christ would be to impute incompleteness to that which was accomplished once for all and stands eternally in its absolute efficacy.

Verse 8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach :—The explanation shows that in the mind of the Spirit these words of Moses, though used by him of the Law, were intended to bear also an interpretation with reference to the Gospel, and that, in certain respects, what was true of the Law was applicable to the Gospel. That changes are made from the literal meaning to the spiritual, and that the passage is thus applied to the Gospel, is accounted for by the fact that Christ had accomplished His redemptive work on the Cross and had ascended to Heaven. The Spirit of God prepared, through Moses, the way for the Apostle to apply the words to the subject of justification.

While presenting a contrast between the righteousness which is of the Law, and the righteousness which is of faith, he shows that there is this point of similarity, in that both the Law and the Gospel were not inaccessible, but were "in the heart and in the mouth". He shows, too, that the essential difference between the Law and the Gospel lies in the facts of the Advent, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, events which could never have been brought about by human effort. Man could neither bring Christ down from heaven nor raise Him from the dead. Works are ruled out. Man can do nothing. God has done all. The facts must be accepted by faith.

Verse 9. because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord,—The stress in the Divine titles is upon "Lord". The confession is the acknowledgment, as a testimony to others, of the supreme and absolute authority of Jesus Christ; that is, the One who, having been despised and rejected of men, was afterwards glorified as the exalted One to whom all authority is given, who has been invested with all His mediatorial prerogatives and power.

*and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved :—*This exercise of faith is more than the acceptance of the historic fact of the Resurrection of Christ. It is a matter of the heart, not simply of the mind. It therefore involves the appreciation of the promises of God as fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ and an appropriation of His Person. The confession and faith are, then, the response to "the word of faith" (v. 8). Confession is put first for the following reasons: (1) as being appropriate to the order, mouth and heart, as in verse 8; (2) because the order of the Lordship of Christ and His resurrection from the dead are in agreement with the order in verses 6 and 7, verse 6 speaking of His present position in heaven, verse 7 of His resurrection from the dead; (3) because confession of the Christ as Lord is the evidence of faith; (4) because this confession provides the distinctive difference between those who have been justified by faith and those who are seeking righteousness by their own works (cp. 1 Cor. 12: 3).

Verse 10. **for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**—The actual order of experience is now given: faith first, then confession. In order to be saved righteousness must be reckoned, and this depends upon faith, but faith necessarily leads to confession. Absence of confession betokens lack of faith.

Verse 11. **For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.**—This repeats the quotation in 9: 33. There the object was to show that Israel's failure was due to unbelief; here the point is that faith is open to Jew and Gentile, and this is stressed by an alteration in the quotation. Isaiah says "he that believeth". Paul says "everyone that believeth", showing that even Isaiah's words were not confined to the Jewish nation. The subject of confession is dropped, for the argument has to do especially with faith, and faith alone is here dealt with.

Verse 12. **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek :**—Compare and contrast 3: 22. There the Apostle said "There is no exception, for all have sinned"; here he says, "there is no distinction, all may be saved".

for the same Lord is Lord of all,—In 3: 29 the Apostle showed that God was the same God for both Jew and Gentile; here he states that the same Lord is Lord of both.

and is rich unto all that call upon Him :—The argument passes from the universal provision of salvation to the bounty of the Provider, stressing at the same time the fact that He has absolute authority. The reference here is to Christ. In Scripture calling upon God is always a habit, not a single act. Cp. Gen. 4: 26; Zech. 13: 9; Acts 2: 21; 9: 14; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 22; 1 Pet. 1: 17.

Verse 13. **for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**—This confirms verses 11 and 12 by a quotation from the LXX of Joel 2: 32. The prophet foretold that salvation would be granted, not on the ground of nationality, but on that of calling upon the Name of the Lord. In the words "all flesh", in Joel 2: 28, there was an intimation of the obliteration of national distinctions. In the passage in Joel "the Lord"

is Jehovah. This quotation, applied to Christ as Lord in the matter of man's salvation, gives a clear testimony to the Deity of Christ.

Verse 14. **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?**—Here the Apostle turns from the “whosoever” aspect of faith to the means of its production. The four questions asked in verses 14 and 15 strengthen the argument as to the universality of the Gospel. Each question tacitly assumes this universality. He is vindicating the offer of salvation to Jew and Gentile alike.

and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?—This is the accurate rendering, in contrast to the A.V., which inserts the word “of” before “whom”. The voice of Christ is heard through His messengers; the quotation intimates that the voice of the preacher is the instrument of the voice of Christ.

Verse 15. **and how shall they preach, except they be sent?**—There would have been no sending if Jewish prejudice had its way. The Holy Spirit had come, His will had overridden the antagonism of this prejudice, and, in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, He had Himself sent forth heralds of the Gospel to proclaim the glad tidings. It was the Holy Spirit who said, in the Church at Antioch, “Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13: 2). This prerogative and power of the Holy Spirit should not have been replaced by human devices. He still calls, equips and sends His messengers of peace, where churches seek to obey the revealed will of the Lord instead of following human tradition.

even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things?—This is quoted freely from Isaiah 52: 7; the words “upon the mountains” are omitted, the symbolic giving place to the actual.

Verse 16. **But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?**—This confirms what has just been said, that the unbelief of the Jews was foretold by the prophets.

Verse 17. So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.—Though Isaiah's words were immediately applicable to Israel, they suggest by implication the universality of the glad tidings. The main point here, however, is, that there must be a report to be believed, that is to say, there must be a proclamation of the Gospel, if it is to be heard, and that there must be a hearing if the word is to be believed. As faith is demanded from all men, the proclamation of the Gospel, which is pre-requisite, must be universal.

The phrase "the word of Christ", which is supported by the majority of MSS., signifies "the word concerning Christ".

The subject of faith in verses 1-17 may be taken under the following headings, with a suggestion of chronological order: (1) The word of faith (v. 8); (2) The object of faith (vv. 4, 9); (3) The hearing of faith (v. 17); (4) The righteousness of faith (vv. 6, 10); (5) The saving power of faith (v. 9); (6) The confidence of faith (v. 11); (7) The universality of faith (vv. 12, 13).

Verse 18. But I say,—This introduces two rhetorical questions to meet the two possible excuses which might be advanced on behalf of Jewish unbelief, namely, (1) that all had not an opportunity of receiving the good tidings and (2) that the information was not given.

Did they not hear?—This question implies that the first excuse is invalid.

Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.—The answer to the first excuse is from Ps. 19: 4, which, while primarily referring to the universal testimony to God in nature, is here shown to have contained a foreshadowing of the universal proclamation of the Gospel. The Psalm itself couples together the voice of creation and that of the written word.

Verse 19. But I say, Did Israel not know?—There are two ways of understanding this question: (1) Did Israel not know the Gospel? (2) Did Israel not know that God would save Gentiles? The latter is perhaps more in keeping with the context, and is indicated by the quotations which follow.

First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you.—In this, from Deut. 32: 21 (see also Hos. 1: 9; 2: 23), the only difference in the wording from that in the Deuteronomy passage is that “you” is substituted for “them”, making the reference to Israel more pointed. Moses, then, had foretold not only that God would show favour to Gentiles, but that, as Israel had moved God to wrath by their rebellion and rejection of His word, He would, by means of the favour shown to Gentiles, move Israel to jealousy. The word “nation” stands for Gentile people in general.

Verse 20. **And Isaiah is very bold,**—He prophesied at the risk of his life. He goes further, too, than Moses.

and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I became manifest unto them that asked not of Me.—This is quoted almost verbatim from the LXX of Isa. 65: 1, save that the two clauses are inverted, perhaps to give immediate prominence to the first, and to express the more pointedly the fact of the reception of the Gospel by Gentiles.

Verse 21. **But as to Israel**—The rendering should not be “to Israel”, as in the A.V., but “with reference to Israel”.

He saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands—This gives the suggestion of a gracious attitude of entreaty and invitation.

unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.—This quotation is from the LXX of Isa. 65: 2, with a slight change in the order of phrases. The word “disobedient” translates the verb *apeitheō*, the same word as in 2: 8. It literally means “to refuse to be persuaded”, and so signifies either to refuse compliance or to refuse belief.

This final quotation in the series lays to the charge of Israel the cause of their condition. In spite of God’s longsuffering and patient invitation, they had persisted in guilt both in act (“disobedient”) and in word (“gainsaying”). They were not without knowledge nor without understanding of the will of God. The ignorance referred to in verse 3 was the result of stubbornness and pride. With the Gentiles it was different.

CHAPTER XI

God's Sovereignty shown in His Grace and Mercy, 11: 1-36

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE SUBJECT of this chapter is the exhibition of God's sovereignty in grace and mercy, in the case both of Israel and of the Gentiles, individually at the present time, and nationally in the future.

In regard to Israel, though they have not attained to righteousness, owing to their unbelief (chapter 9), and have brought Divine retribution upon them by their disobedience and gain-saying (chapter 10), yet their rejection is to be neither (1) total nor (2) final. That it is not total the Apostle proves from present facts; that it is not final is established, he says, upon Divine election, and upon the gifts and calling of God. Consistent with the fact that the rejection is not total, is the bringing of individual Gentiles on to the same ground of grace as the believing Jews, who form a present spiritual remnant; and, owing to the fact that the rejection is not final, the restoration of the nation will involve the blessing of all the Gentile nations. Grace is shown towards the Jews in that there is a present spiritual remnant (v. 5), and towards Gentiles in that salvation has come to them (v. 11). Mercy is to be shown nationally first towards Israel (v. 20) and so toward Gentiles as nations (v. 32).

This chapter gives a beautiful illustration of the interweaving of God's providential arrangements. The circumstances under consideration are seen to be to one another as cause and effect: (1) Israel's downfall has resulted in the carrying of the Gospel to the Gentiles (vv. 11, 12, 15, 30); (2) but this present mercy to Gentiles will lead to the obtaining of mercy by Israel (vv. 26, 31); (3) the mercy thus shown in the restoration of Israel will result in universal blessing (v. 15).

To the opening question, "Did God cast off His people?" there are three replies, which cover the ground of the whole chapter. Israel is not utterly given up, for, (1) Paul himself is an Israelite, and therefore a spiritual remnant exists (vv. 1-10);

(2) one of the reasons why God is calling Gentiles into His favour is in order that He may show mercy to Israel; so He could not have rejected His people (vv. 11-24); (3) God will fulfil His promise to the nation on the coming of their Deliverer (vv. 25 to the end).

Verse 1. I say then, did God cast off His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite.—The meaning is not that, being an Israelite, he could not believe that God had cast off His people, but rather that his own experience of God's salvation is a proof that God had not thrust away the nation, and that the Apostle himself had not taught such a thing.

of the seed of Abraham.—A descendant of the one to whom God gave the promises.

of the tribe of Benjamin.—This tribe was preserved from destruction (Judges 21) and with Judah remained faithful to God after the return from exile (Ezra 4: 1; 10: 9).

Verse 2. God did not cast off His people which He foreknew. Or know ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah.—The words "of Elijah" are, literally, "in Elijah"; that is to say, that part of the Hebrew Scriptures relating to Elijah. The Scriptures were frequently so designated in Jewish writings.

how he pleadeth with God against Israel.—The word *entugchanō*, which signifies to plead either on behalf of others or against them, is used in the former sense in 8: 27, 34, and in the latter sense here.

Verse 3. Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have digged down Thine altars: and I am left alone and they seek my life.—Elijah did not mean that he was the only prophet left in the nation, but that he was the only faithful one remaining.

Verse 4. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.—This is taken from the Hebrew of 1 Kings 19: 18, with the addition of the words "for Myself", by which stress is laid upon the electing prerogative and power of God (see the following verses).

Verse 5. **Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.**—That is to say, there is a spiritual remnant as a result of the Gospel. This fact is a pledge that the nation is not completely and permanently forsaken.

Verse 6. **But if it is by grace, it is no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace.**—As to the additional statement in this verse in the A.V., the weight of MS. evidence is in favour of its omission.

Verse 7. **What then? That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not ;**—This recalls 9: 31, 32 and 10: 3. The aorist tense, rightly rendered “obtained not”, regards the attitude of the nation of Israel as definite and as a crisis.

but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened :—The election is the same as the remnant (v. 5). The hardening has been a matter of definite retribution. Cp. the case of Pharaoh, 9: 18.

Verse 8. **according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day.**—The phrase “a spirit of stupor” is taken from Isa. 29: 10, while the rest of the quotation is taken from Deut. 29: 4. The words “unto this day” form part of the latter quotation; accordingly, there is no reason for the brackets in the A.V.

Verse 9. **And David saith,**—This introduces a quotation from Psa. 69: 22, the first part being an explanation of the Hebrew, the second almost verbatim from the Septuagint.

let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them :—The table stands by metathesis for that which is associated with it. It is here symbolical of the special privileges granted to Israel and centring in Christ.

Verse 10. **Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, And bow Thou down their back alway.**—This part, from the Septuagint, differs from the Hebrew, which reads “make their

loins continually to shake". Weakness, fear and dejection are indicated in both. The bowing down of the back is a figure of the decrepitude of age, in contrast to that youthful activity which is indicative of the favour of the Lord. Such a state is so grievous that, though it called forth the Apostle's prayer at the opening of the chapter, at the same time it is a solemn warning to all against the neglect of God's mercies, the rejection of His revealed will and the refusal of His claims.

Verse 11. I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall?—This is again a rhetorical question, not calling for an answer but proving a point. The Jews stumbled over Christ, but not so as to fall irretrievably. The idea conveyed by falling is here suggestive of what is impossible of recovery.

God forbid: but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,—The word rendered "fall", *paraptōma*, is different from that in the question preceding. It denotes a moral trespass, as in 5: 15. Neither is the rejection of Israel total nor is it final; more still, their present condition has been overruled for blessing to the Gentiles.

for to provoke them to jealousy.—The conversion of Gentiles was intended to react upon the Jews, not to stir them to jealousy in the ordinary sense of the word, but to arouse them to emulation, and to a desire for a recovery of Divine favour. Cp. 10: 19.

Verse 12. Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles;—That is, if their fall, with their consequent temporary rejection by God, has meant that the spiritual riches of the Gospel have come to all men. The thought here is perhaps an actual diminution of the nation, but there is the additional suggestion of spiritual loss.

how much more their fullness?—That is, what still greater blessings will accrue from their ultimate national restoration? The Divine riches will then be bestowed not merely on individuals as now but upon the nations of the world as a whole. The word *plērōma*, here applied to Israel, indicates the time when as a nation they will all be converted, in contrast to the present existence of a remnant. Here again the significance is full and

national prosperity. Verse 12 sums up the whole subject as regards the Divine dealings with nations.

Verse 13. But I speak to you that are Gentiles.—This is not addressed to a new set of readers but immediately to those believers who were nationally Gentiles. Those were probably considerably in the majority in Rome.

Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry:—This is expressive both of his appreciative recognition that the ministry of the Gospel to the Gentiles was especially entrusted to him and of his zeal in the faithful discharge of his ministry, the object ever being before him that the salvation of Gentiles might lead also to that of Jews.

Verse 14. if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them.—This explains both the statement “I glorify my ministry”, and that at the close of verse 11. The same word is used here as there. The Apostle’s aim is indicative of the close connection between the present and the future, the testimony of the believer and the work of the Gospel in the present age and its future effect both individually and nationally. The purpose both intimates that conversions take place one by one and makes clear the necessity of denoting one’s utmost effort to win souls.

Verse 15. For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world,—The word *apobolē*, “casting away”, differs from that in verses 1 and 2. It here refers to the exclusion of the nation from its position of favour. The reconciling of the world does not mean that all men will be reconciled, but that all who will may be reconciled. The scope of reconciliation is the whole world and the instrument is the Gospel.

what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?—Life from the dead does not here signify physical resurrection but a state of the worldwide enjoyment of the favour and blessing of God instead of the present condition of alienation from Him. In this verse the four dispensational events intimated in verse 12 are recalled, but in a different way: (a) the fall of Israel is now spoken of with reference to their “casting away”; (b) “the

riches" of the world is now called "the reconciling"; (c) "the fullness" of Israel is here spoken of as "the receiving of them" into God's favour, i.e., in Millennial blessing.

Verse 16. And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump:—The reference is apparently to Num. 15: 21, where the command to Israel was to give to the Lord the first of their dough as a heave offering. Cp. Neh. 10: 37; Jer. 2: 3. Here only is the word *aparchē* rendered in the singular. Elsewhere it is in the plural, "firstfruits". See at 8: 23. Two Hebrew words are thus translated, one meaning the principal part, Num. 18: 12, Prov. 3: 9, etc.; the other the earliest ripe of the crop or of the tree, Exod. 23: 16; Neh. 10: 35, etc.; they are found together in Exod. 23: 19, etc., "the first of the firstfruits".

and if the root is holy, so are the branches.—This second metaphor is that of the olive tree. The reference in both the firstfruit and the root is specially to Abraham, the progenitor of Israel. To him the promise was made regarding his descendants. Since he, as the firstfruit and the root, is holy, that is, belongs to God, then the nation which is sprung from him, the lump and the branches, must also belong to God.

Verse 17. But if some of the branches were broken off,—This speaks of unbelieving Jews. They were the more numerous, but the character of the subject now makes the delicate reference to them as "some of the branches" appropriate. The description of them as branches makes clear that they are not the root. They were broken off by their rejection of Christ.

and thou, being a wild olive,—That is, the Gentile who, though now a believer, is, naturally, a member of those nations which God had suffered to walk in their own ways (Acts 14: 16), and who therefore remained unfaithful to God. The wild olive being a tree of comparatively little value, this part of the metaphor sets in contrast the glorious position of relationship into which God had brought Israel on the ground of covenant promise.

wast grafted in among them,—That is, admitted into the privileges of God's favour, which some of His own people have forfeited.

and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree ;—The Gentile believer had become a spiritual descendant of Abraham, partaking of the spiritual life and blessing which belonged to him and his descendants by Divine covenant, and so of “the root of the fatness of the olive tree”.

The process of grafting is almost invariably that of putting the good shoot into the inferior stock. Whenever the reverse process was adopted it was to invigorate the fruitful stock and not to fertilize the wild shoot. What is set forth here, therefore, does not correspond actually to either method, but is selected in order to suit the subject, namely, the enrichment of individual Gentiles by their admission to the blessings forfeited by some of God’s ancient people through their unbelief.

*Verse 18. glory not over the branches :—*This warning is against any tendency on the part of a Gentile believer to regard himself as being either better in himself or in a better position than Jews who were broken off. There is never any ground for a believer from among the Gentiles to hold a Jew as such in any measure of contempt or inferiority.

but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.—Salvation was from the Jews (John 4: 22). Converted Gentiles, then, had no reason for glorying over Jews who became subjects of Divine disfavour through unbelief. It is through Abraham and his offering that God’s mercy has come to Gentiles.

Verse 19. Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.—The fact that the rejection of Israel occasioned the advantage of Gentiles, afforded no ground for glorying.

Verse 20. Well ; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith.—Granted that Jews were rejected because of their unbelief, there was no personal merit in Gentiles by which they became recipients of the Divine favour. That favour was bestowed on the condition of faith, and faith excludes boasting (3: 27). Accordingly the real cause of their rejection is sufficient to correct a false inference.

Be not highminded, but fear :—Highmindedness is the fore-runner of stumbling. A privilege granted affords no room for self-glorying. On the contrary there is room for fear of the danger of stumbling, as Israel had done.

Verse 21. **for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee.**—If the natural descendants of Abraham, and partakers of the blessings of the covenant, were deprived of their privileges through unbelief, verily the Gentile has reason to beware of the danger that God will not spare him, who by nature was a stranger from the covenant of promise (Eph. 2: 5).

Verse 22. **Behold then the goodness and severity of God : toward them that fell, severity ; but toward thee, God's goodness.**—The severity lies in the present, temporary, retributive dealings of God with the unbelieving nation. His goodness lies in showing mercy to the Gentiles through the Gospel.

if thou continue in His goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.—The warning here does not signify that a believer can lose his salvation. Paul is not now dealing with the subject of individual union with Christ. That he had shown in chapter 8 to be inseparable (8: 1 and 30 to 39). He is here speaking of the principles upon which God has acted towards Jew and Gentile. The Gentile needs to be warned of the danger of an evil heart of unbelief as much as a Jew, and of coming under the disciplinary severity of God.

Verse 23. **And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in :—**The reference here is not to the restoration of the Jewish nation, the point is that the rejection of Jews is not irrevocable.

for God is able to graft them in again.—The obstacle lies in unbelieving Jews themselves, as long as they continue in their unbelief. There is no difficulty with God. On the contrary the next verse shows that, from the point of view of the illustration, it is more to be expected that God would restore the Jews to His favour than that He should bring Gentiles into it.

Verse 24. **For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good**

olive tree :—That is, if a Gentile, who was a stranger to the covenants of promise, was taken from his natural condition and brought through the Gospel into the spiritual blessings contained in God's promise to Abraham.

how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?—That is, it is still more probable that Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, should be brought into the spiritual privileges contained in the promise given to their own ancestor, for nationally they have a covenant relationship with God already, which is not the case with Gentiles.

This illustration of the olive tree views the kingdom of God as essentially one in two different phases. The tree is the same tree with two stages of growth. The change brought in by the Gospel was a new development of the one kingdom, in which latter phase unbelieving Jews were excluded from the kingdom and believing Jews brought in.

Verse 25. For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery,—A mystery in Scripture is always a subject of Divine revelation, something which God intends His people to know. This is confirmed here by the desire that the readers should not be ignorant of the mystery about to be mentioned. At the same time a mystery is something beyond the ability of the natural mind to discover. It could be made known only to those who are enlightened by the Spirit of God.

lest ye be wise in your own conceits,—The knowledge of the mystery was to be a preventative against an assumption of superior wisdom on the part of believing Gentiles, as if it was due to them that what Israel had refused they had received.

that a hardening in part has befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in ;—There are thus two limitations to the "hardening", (a) extent; (b) duration. That it is (a) not universal, has just been stated; now it is shown (b) not to be final. The time limit is the coming in of "the fulness of the Gentiles". This phase cannot mean the blessing of the Gentiles as a whole, for that is to be consequent upon Israel's restoration, and not preliminary to it. Nor, again, does it denote the consummation of the times of the Gentiles, the period during which

world dominion is granted to Gentile powers. Nor can it mean the consummation of Gentile iniquity. The reference seems to be to the whole number of Gentiles who partake of the blessings of salvation in the present age. The phrase does not stand for quite the same thing as the Church, for Jews who have accepted Christ have become part of the Church, and those are distinct here from Gentiles. Paul is speaking of God's dispensational dealings with Jew and Gentile.

Verse 26. and so all Israel shall be saved :—That is, nationally; not all Israelites in the past, but the nation as such at the time of Christ's Second Advent, and the inauguration of His Millennial reign.

even as it is written,—The restoration is, then, a subject of Divine revelation. The quotations are especially from the Septuagint of Isa. 59: 20, 21 and 27: 9.

There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer ;—The Septuagint puts "out of Zion", instead of "to (or for) Zion" as in the Hebrew. Both are true. See Ps. 14: 7; 53: 6; 110: 2; Joel 2: 32; 3: 16; Zech. 14: 4, etc.

The title "the Deliverer" consists, in the original, of the definite article with the present participle, literally, "the delivering (One)". The same construction is found in 1 Thess. 1: 10, where instead of "which delivereth us", we might accurately render "our Deliverer" (the A.V. "delivered" is wrong). The construction is virtually equivalent to a noun. In the Hebrew the word is "Goel", the Kinsman—Redeemer—Avenger (a three-fold combination).

He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :—The plural is used in the original, "ungodlinesses", "impieties". The Hebrew, literally, is, "There shall come a Redeemer for Zion, and for them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord"

Verse 27. And this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.—The sentence "this is My covenant" is found in Isa. 59: 21. The next clause is from the LXX of Isa. 27: 9. For this new covenant, a fulfilment of the pristine promise to Abraham, see Jer. 31: 31-34; Heb. 8: 8-12; 10: 16.

Verse 28. As touching the gospel.—In the preceding section, verses 25–27, it was pointed out that the present state and future restoration were matters of Divine revelation. Now in verses 28–32 they are shown to be consistent with God's character, and this in three respects, His wisdom (v. 28), His immutability (v. 29), His mercy (vv. 30–32).

they are enemies for your sake:—The phrase “for your sake” is, literally, “on account of you”. This would be a more accurate rendering. The meaning is that God is judicially opposed to the Jews because of their disobedience, and owing to this He is bringing Gentiles into the mercy from which Israel as a nation has been temporarily excluded.

but as touching the election.—The reference is to the remnant, as in verse 7.

they are beloved for the fathers' sake.—They are the objects of God's love because of the unalterable covenants made to the fathers (Gen. 15: 18; Deut. 9: 5; 10: 15; 16: 3, etc.). The phrase “for the fathers' sake” signifies “on account of God's promises to the fathers”.

Verse 29. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.—This expresses His immutability. Having been chosen as His people, the nation is assured of future restoration. God changes His attitude toward men consistently with His own character, owing to their change of attitude toward Him, but this does not alter His promises. The immutability of His own character ensures the fulfilment of His covenant. God's various dealings with men are the actings of His eternal, unchanging counsel, and are in accordance with His foreknowledge of the ways and doings of men. The “gifts” are those privileges which have been enumerated in chapter 9, verses 4, 5. The “calling” is the Divine relationship into which Israel has been brought as a nation.

Verse 30. For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience.—While this begins a confirmation of verse 29, it also introduces three statements showing how God's plans in regard to Jew and Gentile have worked out and will work out in the exercise of His mercy.

Verse 31. even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you they also may now obtain mercy. —Verses 30 and 31 present God's providential arrangements in two parallels, which may be set out as follows:—(a) The Gentiles were disobedient; (b) but now through the disobedience of the Jews (c) the Gentiles have obtained mercy. (a) The Jews are now disobedient; (b) but by the mercy to the Gentiles (c) the Jews will obtain mercy.

Verse 32. **For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all.**—This verse brings the argument to its climax and gives a final proof that God will yet show mercy to Israel and so to the world. The statement recalls chapter 3: 19–24. The passage again demonstrates how all the world has been brought under the judgment of God, and how, whereas all have sinned, God's grace is extended toward all. It shows the interweaving of God's plans with a view to His worldwide mercy. God has so ordered that the disobedience of the Gentiles and of the Jews may be brought home to them, and that they should all of them stand convicted in His sight as sinners. The statement is similar to that of Gal. 3: 22. There the Apostle's point was that the impossibility of keeping the Law of God was the evidence of the sinful condition of mankind, and that God shut up all under sin that the promise of life and righteousness through faith in Christ might be given to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile; there was no possibility of escape from the effects of sin by human effort. Here the point is that God has so ordered in His providence that all men should be convicted of disobedience, without possibility of escape from the position by human merit, in order that He might display His mercy. Jew and Gentile must receive mercy on the same footing, namely, sovereign grace.

There is no intimation in this verse of universal salvation; the plain meaning is that God has had mercy on the human race in the present age by offering the Gospel to Jew and Gentile alike, without any distinction of nationality, and that when Israel as a nation is restored to Divine favour and privilege in the earth, He will show His mercy to all nations, i.e., in the Millennium. The word "all", in reference to Israel, is to be viewed in the light of verse 26, and, as to the Gentiles, in the light of what is said in verses 12–25. In whatever way man enjoys salvation he will

never be able to attribute it to anything but the pure mercy of God.

Verse 32 falls in line with the two preceding verses in the following way: Verse 30, (a) disobedience (Jew and Gentile), (b) mercy (Gentile); Verse 31, (a) disobedience (Jew), (b) mercy (Jew and Gentile); Verse 32, (a) disobedience (Jew and Gentile), (b) mercy (Jew and Gentile).

INTRODUCTORY NOTE, verses 33-36.

This stanza of ten lines consists of three parts: (1) verse 33, the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom and knowledge and ways, (2) verses 34-35, His independence of all creatures, (3) verse 36, His relation to creation, and the glory due to Him.

The five couplets may be set out antithetically, in chiasmic, or crosswise, order, as follows: (a) O the depth (b) of the riches, (c) both of the wisdom (d) and the knowledge of God! (e) How unsearchable are His judgments, (e) and His ways past finding out! (d) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? (c) Or who hath been His counsellor? (b) Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompensed to Him again? (a) For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen. The innermost pair, (e) (e), correspond in the expressions "unsearchable" and "past tracing out"; the next, (d) (d), in "knowledge" and "mind"; the next, (c) (c), in "wisdom" and "counsellor"; (b) and (b) in God's "riches" and the impossibility of enriching Him. In (a) and (a) the exclamation, as to the depth of God's riches, wisdom and knowledge, finds its counterpart in the closing statement as to His infinitude.

Verse 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!—From the point of view of translation this may either be rendered as in the English texts, in which the word "riches" describes both the wisdom and the knowledge of God; or the word "depth" may describe the three things, namely, the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. This may be confirmed here by the fact that the latter part of verses 33 and 34 speaks of the wisdom and knowledge of God, while verse

35 refers separately to His riches. Moreover 10:12 contains a separate statement that "the Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him", and the Apostle may have had that in mind. On the other hand the phrase "the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge" is paralleled by the similar phraseology in 2:4, the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering.

With regard to wisdom and knowledge, speaking generally, knowledge relates to the apprehension of facts, wisdom to matters connected with them, their relations one to another, to details of cause and effect and arrangement and the way in which facts may receive a practical application.

how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!—"His judgments" are here all His providential dispensations, His decisions, and decrees. The phrase "past tracing out" represents the single word *anexichniastos*, which is found elsewhere in the N.T. only in Eph. 3:8, where it is rendered "unsearchable". The ways of the Lord are the outworkings of His judgments. See Deut. 32:4.

Verse 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?--This verse confirms verse 33. The first question seems to have special reference to the judgments of God, the second to His ways. This is a quotation from Isa. 40:13. Cp. Jer. 23:18. The verbs are in the aorist tense, and while no particular time is in view, yet the tense in each case indicates a decisive question.

Verse 35. or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again?--This recalls the earlier arguments which ruled out all human merit and works in the matter of justification, both in the first eight chapters and again in the section chapters 9-11.

Verse 36. For of Him,--Literally, "from Him". God is the personal Source, the first Cause of all things. See also 1 Cor. 8:6. This lends no support to the pantheistic doctrine that everything is an expression or phase of the Deity. On the contrary, all things owe their existence to Him.

and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen.—He is the ultimate object, and all things are for His glory. In Col. 1: 15, the same facts are expressed in regard to Christ. There, however, the first of the three prepositions is *en*, in (an instrumental use). In Him as the architect, by Him as the Creator, and for His glory, were all things created.

CHAPTER XII

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS, 12: 1 to 15: 13

The believer's response to the righteousness of God in showing mercy
12: 1-21

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE VARIOUS exhortations which follow, issue from, and are dependent upon, the doctrine already given, and show what is to be the effect of the Gospel on the believer, his mind, his body, and his various relationships. Doctrine determines duty. Christian practice is inseparably related to Christian truth. The purpose of truth is holiness.

Chapter 12 may be viewed under the following headings: (1) verses 1, 2, conformity to God's will; (2) verses 3-13, communion with saints; (3) verses 14-21, conduct towards fellow-men. Again: (1) verses 1, 2, individual life; (2) verses 3-8, church life; (3) verses 9-21, social life.

The Apostle first mentions the natural body, the individual, which is to be presented to God (v. 1); then the spiritual body, the corporate (v. 5).

Verse 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.—This verse and the next present (1) the outward activity of the body in service to God, (2) the inward impulses of the mind in proving the will of God. These verses give the basic exhortations which govern all the duties subsequently mentioned. A life regulated towards God results in a life regulated towards man.

to present your bodies—The word *paristēmi* is here used in the aorist, or point, tense as in 6: 19. The body stands here practically for the complete man, the part being put for the whole by a figure of speech called synecdoche. Cp. 5: 9; Jas. 3: 6; Rev. 18: 13. While the man is sometimes identified with his body (see Acts 9: 37; 13: 36), yet, as indicated by the metaphorical

use, a man can exist apart from his body (2 Cor. 12: 2, 4; Rev. 6: 9; 20: 4).

a living sacrifice.—That it is to be a sacrifice intimates that it is to be realized as the outcome of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. That it is to be living sets it in contrast with animal sacrifices, whether those appointed by God for the Jews, or those offered in idolatrous worship by Gentiles. Secondly, it suggests that the sacrifice is to be constant.

holy, acceptable to God.—For the word *hagios*, “holy”, see 1: 7; 7: 12; 11: 16; it signifies that which is set apart to God. As the burnt, or ascending, offering under the Law caused a sweet smelling savour to ascend to God, so does the believer’s presentation of himself.

which is your reasonable service.—For the word *latreia*, “service”, see at 9: 4 and cp. the corresponding verb in 1: 9. The presentation of the body is an act of worship. The word *logikos*, “reasonable”, indicates that which appertains to the mind, the reasoning faculty. The sacrifice is therefore to be intelligent, and the idea suggested is by way of contrast to the sacrifices offered under the Law by ritual and by compulsion. The presentation is to be in accordance with the spiritual intelligence of those who are new creatures in Christ.

Verse 2. And be not fashioned—The word *suschēmatizomai*, elsewhere only at 1 Pet. 1: 14, lays stress on that which is external. The prefix *su*, which stands for *sun*, “together with”, intimates an association involved in the conformity. This is represented in the word “according” in the next verse.

according to this world :—*Aiōn*, “world”, or “age”, here signifies the condition of humanity, which, since the fall, is in spiritual darkness, with a nature, tendencies, and influences controlled by the powers of darkness in opposition to God, and now under the prince of this world.

but be ye transformed—The word *metamorphoomai* is rendered “transfigured” in Matt. 17: 2; Mark 9: 2, and “transformed” in 2 Cor. 3: 18. While the word *schēma* (see the verb in the preceding clause) stresses what is outward, the word

morphē lays stress upon that which is essential and inward, and which finds expression in outward manifestation. Both words represent what is real and not merely apparent, the difference being in the prominence given to what is outward and inward respectively.

by the renewing of your mind,—This renewal of the mind means the adjustment of our moral and spiritual vision to the mind of God. It is designed to have a transforming effect upon the whole life.

that ye may prove,—For *dokimazō*, “to prove”, with the effect of approving. See 1: 28 and 2: 18. It is here used in the present continuous tense, indicating that the proving is to be a habit.

what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—This clause may alternatively be taken as in the margin of the R.V., “the will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect”. It is good, i.e., beneficial in its effect. It is acceptable as being well pleasing in God’s sight. It is perfect, *teleios*, as being not only complete but conditioned by maturity in Divine things. To prove, and approve of, the will of God in these respects is impossible without the presentation to God of ourselves as a living sacrifice, abstention from conformity to the world, and the transforming power of the Spirit of God in the constant renewal of our mind.

Church Life, 12: 3–13.

Verse 3. For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.—The corresponding verb is found once, in Titus 2: 4. The phrase may be rendered more literally as follows, “not to be highminded above what is necessary, but so to be minded as to be sober-minded”. A right estimate of oneself will always be a humble estimate, and will be confirmed in the realization of the fact that, whatever we are and whatever we do that is pleasing to God, comes from God. There is stress on “to each” which is appropriate to the thought of the diversity of gifts. That everything is derived from God is a corrective against self-complacency

and pride. What room for glorying is there in that which we have received?

Verse 4. **For even as we have many members in one body,**—Cp. 1 Cor. 12: 12; Eph. 4: 15. The illustration suggests not only vital unity but harmony in operation.

and all the members have not the same office:—With the unity there is diversity; both are essential to the effectivity of the body. The word *praxis*, “office”, is the same as that rendered “deeds” in 8: 13. It represents not a position but a function discharged.

Verse 5. **so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.**—This unity is due not to external organization, but to a common and vital union in Christ, common because of our being in Christ, vital because we are members one of another. Corporate unity involves mutual responsibility.

Verse 6. **And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy,**—Prophecy, literally, “forth-telling”, signifies the telling forth of the mind of the Lord. Predictive prophecy is only one kind of prophecy. With the completion of the Canon of Scripture prophecy passed away, 1 Cor. 13: 8, 9. In his measure the teacher has taken the place of the prophet; cp. the significant change in 2 Pet. 2: 1. The message of the prophet was a direct revelation of the mind of God for the occasion; the message of the teacher is gathered from the completed revelation contained in the Scriptures.

let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith;—This recalls verse 3. It is a warning against going beyond what God has given and faith receives. This meaning, rather than the other rendering, “according to the analogy of the faith”, is in keeping with the context. “Proportion” here represents its true meaning. That there is a definite article before “faith” in the original does not necessarily afford an intimation that the faith, the body of Christian doctrine, is here in view. The presence of the definite article is due to the fact that faith is an abstract noun. The meaning “the faith” is not relevant to the context.

Verse 7. or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry ; or he that teacheth, to his teaching ;—*Diakonia*, ministry, represents service of whatever character, and specially voluntary service, in contrast to bondservice.

Verse 8. or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting :—Exhortation is often coupled with teaching (cp. 1 Tim. 4: 13; 6: 2), and is addressed to the conscience and to the heart.

he that giveth, let him do it with liberality ;—As applied to giving, the word *haplotēs*, rendered "liberality", suggests singleness of heart, freedom from selfishness of aim, and where this is the case liberality is inevitable. Mixed motives wither liberality.

he that ruleth, with diligence ;—*Proistēmi* means "to take the lead". It is rendered "to be over" in 1 Thess. 5: 12, "to rule" in 1 Tim. 3: 4, 5, 12, where it is used of the family, and in 1 Tim. 5: 17 of elders and their care of the church, as here.

he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.—Showing mercy here especially refers to relieving distress, and such actions are to be done in a spirit of cheerfulness, indicating joy and gladness in the service and its results.

Verse 9. Let love be without hypocrisy.—This is said of love again in 2 Cor. 6: 6 and 1 Pet. 1: 22; of faith in 1 Tim. 1: 5 and 2 Tim. 1: 5; and of wisdom in Jas. 3: 17. The hypocrite was originally a stage player, one who acted a part other than that of his true character. The love spoken of here is probably that shown by the fulfilment to be shown to all men. Its genuineness is to be expressed by the fulfilment of the exhortations which follow.

Abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good.—The original gives these clauses and those which follow as descriptions of the way in which the previous injunction is to be fulfilled; with it they are grammatically connected; we should render as follows: "Let love be without hypocrisy, abhorring that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good." They are accordingly explanatory clauses. Love that makes no discrimination between good and evil is merely sentimental and worthless. To hate what is bad without cleaving to that which is good begets censoriousness.

Verse 10. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another ; in honour preferring one another ;—The phrase “love of the brethren” represents the single word *philadelphia*, “brotherly love”, the mutual affection of those who are children of God.

Verse 11. in diligence not slothful ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ;—These three exhortations are to be connected closely. The first might be rendered “not flagging in zeal”. The fervency is in the realm of the spirit, as that which is guided by the Holy Spirit. If constant zeal and fervency of spirit are to characterize service for the Lord, zeal must be controlled by prudence and exercised not for self-interest but for Christ. Devotion to the Lord, then, is the inspiring motive.

Verse 12. rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing steadfastly in prayer ;—These three exhortations are likewise closely associated. Perseverance in prayer produces joy in hope and patience in tribulation. Communion with God is essential as a controlling influence in our joy and in our patience under trial. Otherwise joy may be mere ebullition of feeling and patience mere Stoicism.

Verse 13. communicating to the necessities of the saints ;—In this verse there is a return to relationships with other believers, as in verse 10. The verb *koinōneō* signifies to take part with another in anything, and especially to have in common ; not simply to communicate, but to share.

given to hospitality.—The verb rendered “given to” is *diōkō*, “to pursue”. We are earnestly to seek opportunities of hospitality rather than to wait for an occasion to rise. Cp. Heb. 13: 1, 16.

Duty towards all men (12: 14–21)

Verse 14. Bless them that persecute you ; bless, and curse not.—It is not sufficient to abstain from retaliation against those who do us injury ; we must take pains to seek their welfare. The exhortations in this section are to some extent parallel to those in the Sermon on the Mount, which was designed by the Lord

to be applicable in the present age as well as in the time when He was on earth. See Matt. 5: 44 and cp. 6: 28.

Verse 15. Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.—Here the exhortations pass from returning kindness for unkindness, to the call of sympathy both in joy and sorrow: not merely absence of selfish interest or disinterestedness, but a spirit of sharing in the feelings of others. While it is in one sense easier to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice, yea, as Chrysostom observed, it is natural to sympathize with sorrow, but it requires a noble soul to rejoice in the joy of others.

Verse 16. Be of the same mind one toward another.—In the original this goes closely with what precedes and is, literally, “minding the same thing one towards another”. Thus it extends the thought of rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. This one-mindedness results from realising that we have a common nature; it is likewise a manifestation of the spirit of Christ. His first miracle was performed in rejoicing with them that rejoice and His greatest miracle while weeping with those that wept. The pride and ambition which cause us to set our mind on high things is a hindrance to the unanimity which expresses itself in practical sympathy.

Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly.—Here again the sentence is connected, in the original, with the preceding injunction, which it expands; hence we should render by “not minding high things, but condescending to things that are lowly”. The high things are those upon which pride sets itself. They are not the spiritually high things which are above, but those things which foster selfishness and self-esteem.

“Condescend” is not the most suitable rendering of the word *sunapagomai*, which rather denotes to let oneself be carried along with. The most helpful influences over us come from things that are lowly, and the effect of such is harmony and peace.

Be not wise in your own conceits.—This injunction forms the climax to the preceding exhortations. Being wise in our own

conceits is one of the great hindrances to concord among the saints.

Verse 17. Render to no man evil for evil.—This is not an exhortation simply concerning one's enemies. It has to do with anyone who may act with animosity upon any occasion. In no case is the believer to retaliate. The teaching is identical with that of Matt. 5: 43-48. There is stress on the words "no man"

Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men.—The last word "all men" bears stress. This injunction is closely connected with the preceding one, though it is of general application. In taking thought for things honourable in the sight of all men we not only abstain from retaliation against evil, but therein we avoid justifiable suspicion and criticism.

Verse 18. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.—This again is closely connected with what precedes, for the verb rendered "be" is in the present participle, "being", in the original.

The exhortation is necessarily conditional. The word "you" bears emphasis, and this indicates that the believer is to see that he himself is not responsible for breaking the peace. Peace is a mutual relation possible of breach by either party. The preservation of it does not always lie within the believer's control. Faithfulness to God must never be sacrificed for the sake of peace. On the other hand, we are to see to it that we do not cherish feelings of bitterness and retaliation. The responsibility for discord must never lie at our door.

Verse 19. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.—Here again the verb "avenge" is in the present participle, showing the close connection with the preceding exhortations. In other words, this indicates one way of living, as much as in us lieth, at peace with all men. The command is plain, and forbids any mode of retaliation.

The exhortation to give place unto wrath has been understood in various ways. We may notice three: (1) that the wrath is that of the injured person; (2) that it is that of the person who injures; (3) that the wrath is God's.

The first of these would mean that the injured person, instead of indulging his wrath, is to abstain from exercising it and so to let it pass. But the original will hardly bear that meaning.

The second would mean that the injured person is to allow the wrath of his enemy to be expended upon him, and so to make room for its action. This is a possible meaning of the original. But this explanation does not fit with the context. For, as to what has preceded, the evil inflicted is not necessarily a matter of wrath. Nor does this interpretation find support from the succeeding context.

The third explanation seems to be the right one. For the Apostle assigns as a reason why the believer is to give place unto wrath instead of avenging himself, that "It is written, Vengeance belongeth unto Me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." Moreover the Apostle has constantly spoken of the wrath of God in the preceding part of the Epistle (see 1: 18; 2: 5, 8; 3: 5; 4: 15; 5: 9; 9: 22), and nowhere hitherto has it been mentioned in any other way. Both retrospectively and prospectively, therefore, the word points to that which it is God's prerogative to exercise. The believer is not to usurp God's authority. Nor does the injunction suggest that he is to desire that the wrath of God shall be inflicted upon his injurer. In giving place to God's wrath he simply leaves the matter to Him who will deal with it according to His perfect wisdom. Compare the Proverb, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil: wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee" (Prov. 20: 22, and see 24: 29).

Verse 20. **But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink:**—The "But" sets what follows in contrast to the self-avenging mentioned in the preceding exhortation, and continues the precept in verse 18.

for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.—The meaning which suits the context best seems to be, that by repaying hostility by kindness the hard heart of one's enemy will be subdued to repentance, with resulting manifestation of friendliness.

Verse 21. **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**—The evil refers to what the evildoer does. The good is

that which the one who suffers it is to show. The evil done is not to gain the mastery over the believer; it is to be the very means of the display of the opposite.

If we act in a spirit of vengeance, the grace which should work in our hearts is subdued. That gives a twofold victory to the wrong. If we return good for evil we subdue the antagonism of our foe, and bring him to a better mind. There are, of course, cases where kindness only hardens, but these are exceptional, and are not in view here.

CHAPTER XIII

The duty of exhibiting Christ to the World, 13: 1-14

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE INJUNCTION to be in subjection to the higher powers, while important in every country, would have a special force in Rome, where the Government would rigorously repress any religion which tended to run counter to that of the State, and especially Christianity, for Christians were largely regarded as a Jewish sect, and propaganda considered in any sense to be Jewish would be suspected as being of a revolutionary tendency. There was also a danger, no doubt, that Christians might entertain wrong notions of the Kingdom of Christ and its present relation to the kingdoms of this world. To Jews, conscious of the covenant relationship of their nation to God, there was a natural repugnance to submit to heathen rulers.

Verse 1. Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers :—The word *exousia*, “power”, denotes, firstly, freedom to do anything, and then authority to carry it out. Rulers hold, from God, freedom to act, however much they may abuse their authority.

for there is no power but of God ; and the powers that be are ordained of God.—These are the two great reasons for being subject to rulers. Civil authority is derived from God, and is arranged by Divine appointment. The first stresses the absolute supremacy of God, a supremacy which no adverse power can hinder or thwart. The second stresses the fact of God’s power to exercise His authority in setting up and removing rulers. Whatever may be the form of government by the persons who exercise it, it is determined by Divine providence. See the book of Daniel *passim*, and especially 4: 25, 34, 35.

*Verse 2. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God :—*Since civil government is God’s design,

and those who exercise it derive their authority from Him, resistance to that authority is disobedience to God.

and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.—Whether the judgment is Divine or human is not specified. What seems to be referred to is the punishment inflicted by rulers as ministers of God. Circumstances in which rulers overstep their authority, and in which it becomes necessary for servants of God to say, “We must obey God rather than man”, are not in view in this passage.

Verse 3. **For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil.**—Though Nero was ruling when this was written, the unrighteousness of his tyranny and his acts of persecution are not in view in this statement. What is enforced here is the duty of the civil authority in the discharge of its regular functions, which punishes wrong doing and favours right, and after all even the persecution of Christians was aroused by motives which, though mistaken, had in view the preservation of civil order.

It is in this respect that the good work and the evil (literally, “good works and evil”, both being in the plural) are to be understood, inasmuch as the discharge of the function of rulers has regard to man’s actions only.

And wouldst thou have no fear of the power?—This negative question does not suggest an exhortation, as in the A.V., but rather is by way of an appeal to the reasonable desires of the subject to live so as to have no fear of punishment by civil authority.

do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:—The Divine design of government is again here in view, and not the abuse of authority by tyrants. The believer is called, not to resist, but simply to do good. Thereby also he wins the praise of those who discharge civil functions, and experiences God’s goodness in providing such authority.

Verse 4. **for he is a minister of God to thee for good.**—This means that the service he renders is for the welfare of the subjects under him. His rightful exercise of authority, under God, has in view its beneficial effect upon society in general.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain :—A sword was actually worn by emperors and magistrates, as an emblem of their power of life and death ; hence the metaphorical use of the phrase here. There is an intimation of the rights of capital punishment, though what is in view is the carrying out of any form of judicial sentence.

for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.—The word *ekdikos* denotes one who deals justice. It is used of God in 1 Thess. 4: 6. The wrath, *orgē*, here referred to is the wrath of a human ruler.

Verse 5. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake.—The former is external, the execution of judgment on the part of the ruler ; the latter is internal, a matter of conscience towards God and the recognition of the ruler's right. We are ever directed to view earthly relationships and circumstances in the light of our relationships with God.

Verse 6. For this cause ye pay tribute also ;—*Phoros*, "tribute", was especially the yearly tax levied on persons or real property. It was frequently used of the tribute laid upon a subject nation, Neh. 5: 4 ; Luke 20: 22. Here it is used in a general way, of any kind of tax levied by a government for the exercise of its power.

for they are ministers of God's service,—Conscience is to be in exercise in this respect, in that rulers are God's appointed agents for the maintenance of civil authority. By being in subjection to them, and paying tribute, we recognise the ordinance of God, and so do honour to Him. The word *leitourgoi*, rendered "ministers of (God's) service", differs from that in verse 4, where *diakonos* was used. The *leitourgos* among the Greeks was a public servant appointed for any work, civil or religious. This word stresses here the fact that the service is rendered to God on behalf of the people. Rulers do not, of course, all serve God consciously. But whether or no, they discharge functions which are the ordinance of God.

attending continually upon this very thing.—This has been taken by some to refer to the exacting of tribute, by others to

the service of God. Probably both are in view, for they are regarded as definitely connected.

*Verse 7. Render to all their dues :—*This summarizes the preceding exhortations, and includes all who in any way exercise civil authority.

tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ;—The *telos*, “custom”, was an indirect tax on goods. Both kinds of tax were paid to the Roman Government through the *publicani*, the agents who collected them, and who were bitterly hated. It was a constant practice to stir up plots against them, and revolutions against the whole system. Abuses on the part of the tax-collectors were so great that a little later than the date of this Epistle Nero laid proposals before the Roman Senate for stringent reforms.

fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.—This latter, while immediately referring to what is due to those in authority, perhaps also suggests what is inculcated elsewhere, namely, the duty of other individuals one toward another.

Verse 8. Owe no man anything, save to love one another :—This follows on from the beginning of verse 7, “render to all their due”, but the exhortation widens out to the subject of love, which in all ways seeks the best interests of others. Here, while the interests of the creditor are in view, the precept is not limited to that; all obligations are to be discharged, including those mentioned in verse 7. The debt of love, however, is always owing. Any payment made in this respect does not release us from continued indebtedness. Do what we may for our neighbour, we are to love him. This is now enforced by two considerations: (1) that love fulfils the law of God (vv. 9, 10); (2) that the time is short (vv. 11–14).

for he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law.—Among Israel “neighbour” stood for a fellow-Israelite. The Lord widened its scope. See the parable of the good Samaritan. What constitutes the claim of the Law of God goes beyond the needs of fellow-nationals to needs of anyone of whatever race.

Verse 9. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.—The Mosaic Law is viewed here as expressing the general principle of right and wrong. The commandments mentioned are given as specimens of the whole Law. He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled all the commandments contained therein, and has carried out in action the whole principle of law. Paul and James express the same thing concerning the Law, but in different ways (see Jas. 2: 9–11). The former says that in keeping the one commandment we are keeping all, the latter that in breaking one we break all. Each therefore stresses the unity of the Law. James argues that the unity of the Law is the effect of the oneness of the Law-giver, being the expression of a single Will (v. 11, and 4: 12).

There is an apparent difference between the Lord's treatment of the subject and that here. For Christ declares that the whole Law and the prophets hang upon both love to God and love to one's neighbour. Here, as in Gal. 5: 14, the Apostle sums up all in that of love to one's neighbour. There is no real distinction, however, for love to God finds its expression in love to one's neighbour. Moreover, Christ was answering a question as to the right interpretation of the Law, whereas the Apostle is dealing with the responsibilities of believers towards all men.

Verse 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.—This verse runs parallel to verse 8, but puts the first part negatively. Love is personified, as in 1 Cor. 13. Moving us to do good to others, it likewise keeps us from doing them harm. Again the article is absent, in the original, before the word "Law", stressing the principles in the Law.

Verse 11. And this, knowing the season,—This signifies being fully aware of the significance of the present time.

that now—The word *ēdē* denotes "already"; that is, there must be no delay, no neglect in the matter of the command to love one another. This word goes with "to awake".

it is high time for you to awake—The verb is in the aorist tense, and has the significance "to awake at once".

out of sleep:—This is the only place in the N.T. where *hupnos* is used of spiritual lethargy. In the five other places where it is found, it is used of natural sleep. In 1 Thess. 5: 6, where the verb *katheudō* is used, believers are warned against falling into soul slumber; here they are exhorted to awake out of it. This is the only kind of the sleep of the soul referred to in Scripture. Cp. Matt. 24: 42, 43; Eph. 5: 14.

for now—The word is *nun*, “at this time”; contrast *ēdē* in the first part of the verse. There is a progressive narrowing in the passage, of the expressions of time to a climax; (a) “the season” (the whole era); (b) “high time”, literally, “hour” (the present hour); (c) “now” (the immediate moment).

is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed.—This salvation is deliverance from present conditions and from the coming wrath, at the return of the Lord to receive us to Himself. Cp. 1 Thess. 1: 10 (R.V.); 5: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 5, 13.

The Apostles were ever consistent in their instruction concerning the Lord's return as an event to be regarded as imminent. Discussions as to whether any of them changed their view as to its imminence, or whether they were mistaken, are entirely beside the mark. The exhortations they gave were designed for the saints throughout the present era. To wait for the Son of God from Heaven not only was the actual attitude of the church of the Thessalonians, their example was to be followed by all believers in each generation till the event takes place.

Verse 12. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand:—This represents in another form what has been said in the latter part of verse 11, and continues the metaphor of the first part of that verse. “The night” signifies the whole period of man's alienation from God; cp. 1 Thess. 5: 5, 7. The verb rendered “is far spent” is not to be pressed into its literal translation “was far spent”, as if it referred to the first Advent; the tense is equivalent to a perfect. “The day” is “the day of Christ”, to be introduced when the Lord comes to receive His saints to Himself.

let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,—The verb *apotithēmi*, “to put off”, or “put away”, is used in the N.T.

only once of material things, in Acts 7: 58, with reference to clothes. In the seven other passages, as in the present one, it is used metaphorically. The verb is in the aorist tense, suggesting immediate decision and completeness. To hate one's brother is to walk in darkness (1 John 2: 9, 11), and with such a condition fellowship with God is incompatible (1 John 1: 6). Again, the believer is to have "no fellowship with darkness" (2 Cor. 6: 14; Eph. 5: 11).

and let us put on the armour of light.—As the believer is now in the night season, he is involved in conflict with the spiritual forces of darkness, and victory can be gained only by putting on the armour of light. The word rendered armour is plural, literally, "weapons" (*hopla*).

The verb *enduoō* rendered "put on" is again in the aorist tense, suggesting a decisive and complete act. It is used elsewhere, in this metaphorical sense of putting on spiritual armour, in Eph. 6: 11, 14 and 1 Thess. 5: 8. The figure is appropriate to the description of the believer as a soldier (2 Tim. 2: 4). As spiritual light can be received only by those who are born of God, so alone by such can righteousness in character and conduct, of which the armour of light consists, be worn. For they alone are "sons of light"

Verse 13. Let us walk honestly,—The word *euschēmonōs* denotes "becomingly", decently, which was the primary meaning of "honest". It is used of the believer's walk also in 1 Thess. 4: 12, where it is said of conduct towards unbelievers. Here it is set in contrast to the world's evil social conditions.

as in the day ;—That is, as one walks in the day, and so, as those who spiritually belong to the day, when we shall be like Christ and shall see Him as He is (1 John 3: 2). Cp. "as children of light" (Eph. 5: 18).

not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy.—The word *kōmos*, "reveling", is in the plural, as in the two other places where it is found in the N.T. (Gal. 5: 21, and 1 Pet. 4: 3). It is always associated with drunkenness. The exhortation shows that the sins which characterize the world, in which believers once had their manner

of life, remain as dangers against the ingress of which they are to be on their guard, and resistance to which can only be successful by the power of Christ.

Verse 14. **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,**—This is contrasted with the conduct described in the preceding verse; it also recalls verse 12. The believer is so to apprehend the true meaning of the union with Christ into which he entered when he put on Christ (Gal. 3: 27, cf. Rom. 6: 3), that Christ becomes the element in which he lives, the moral raiment which displays His character.

and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—The word *pronoia*, “provision”, is, literally, forethought; hence we may render by “take no forethought”. This negative command corresponds to the positive exhortation to “mortify the deeds of the body”, 8: 13. Expressed as it is here it suggests the self-will with which sin is premeditated. The flesh is, here, the seat of sin in man.

CHAPTER XIV

MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS, 14: 1 to 15: 13

Mutual forbearance, and Christ as Lord, 14: 1-12

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN VERSES 1-12 the Apostle deals with the moral responsibilities of the strong brother toward the weak, and of the weak toward the strong. The strong are not to set at nought the weak; the weak are not to judge the strong. The mutual relations are to be viewed in the light of the authority of Christ over each, and of His Judgment-Seat.

There is a connection with what has preceded. In the preceding chapters the need of mutual love has been stressed (e.g., 12: 9, 10; 13: 8-10). This is now made to govern the particular subject of the relations between the weak and the strong. At the end of the preceding chapter attention has been drawn to the imminence of the Day of Christ. Accordingly the strong and the weak are to remember that all have to appear before the Judgment-Seat. The Apostle has been giving injunctions against the indulgence of the flesh. This is now applied to the need of abstaining, on the one hand, from the abuse of liberty, and, on the other hand, from the indulgence of a critical and censorious spirit, in things morally indifferent. The injunction to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (13: 14) influences the new subject in a twofold way: firstly in the emphasis placed on the authority of Christ (14: 6-9), secondly, in the presentation of Christ as the Pattern for believers (15: 1-4).

Verse 1. But him that is weak in faith—The “But” shows that there is a definite connection with what has preceded. The weakness is “in faith”, not “in the faith”, as in the A.V. Though the article is present in the original, it does not here signify the faith, the body of Christian doctrine.

As to whether the definite article is to be translated or not the context is usually a guide, and here it decides the meaning,

for the next verse speaks of faith and so verse 23 says, "He that eateth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin".

The form of the word rendered "weak" (the present continuous tense of the verb) suggests that the trouble is not an inherent characteristic, but a condition into which a brother has been brought by outward influence.

As to the significance of the terms "weak" and "strong", he who is weak in faith is so through lack of an apprehension of the liberty into which one is brought who, trusting in Christ alone, is delivered from all bondage and finds freedom in serving the will of Christ as Lord of the life. The weakness is the effect of scruples about details that lie outside the scope of those things which the Christian faith demands. His danger lies in judging the brother who is strong, and in a liability to take offence. The "strong" is one who, while acting conscientiously toward God, is not fettered by scruples of that sort. His danger is two-fold, namely, of despising the weak brother, and of setting a stumbling-block before him.

receive ye.—The verb rendered "receive" is again in the present continuous tense, which indicates that the attitude adopted in receiving is to be continued.

yet not to doubtful disputations.—Literally, "not to judgments of reasonings", or, as the margin reads, "not for decisions of doubts". The brother who is weak, is not to be received with the purpose of judging his reasonings; the reception is to be unreserved. There is to be no setting up of oneself as a judge of the weak brother's scruples.

Verse 2. One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs.—With regard to those now mentioned, in the case of the former his faith enables him to eat anything without fear of defilement (cp. Mark 7: 15). The latter has scruples which impose abstinence from all meat or wine. Reference is not merely to abstention from unclean animals, or from meats offered to idols, as in 1 Cor. 8, but from all meat. The Apostle expresses no disapproval in either case. The right or wrong of the matter is left an open question. He is concerned with the feelings involved.

Verse 3. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not ;—The strong are not to adopt this attitude towards the weak, imputing superstition and narrow-mindedness to them.

and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth :—He who for religious reasons lived on a vegetarian diet was not to adopt a censorious attitude towards the one who ate meat, regarding him as unscrupulous. The warnings given in each case are against the dangers of unbrotherliness, against the tendency to criticise one another upon matters concerning regulations and precepts not given in the Word of God.

for God hath received him.—The tense is aorist, referring to the time of conversion, when God received him, on the ground of faith and confession of Christ as Lord. That the strong brother partakes of meat does not argue, then, against his acceptance with God.

Verse 4. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?—This provides a second ground of appeal to the one who is weak, against condemning one who is strong, namely, that he is the servant of the Lord. The word for “servant” is *oiketēs*, which signifies a household servant, in distinction from an ordinary slave (see Acts 10: 7).

to his own lord he standeth or falleth.—It is presumption to pass sentence of condemnation upon a liberty which God has not condemned. The terms “stand” or “fall” might be understood (1) of acquittal or condemnation or (2) standing upright or falling into sin in using liberty, and that is to be judged by the Lord and not by the weak brother. This second meaning would seem to be the one intended.

Yea, he shall be made to stand ;—The “Yea” is really “But”, as suggesting a contrast to falling. Since what he does is a matter of faith (v. 2), he shall be maintained in his integrity through the power of His Lord. What Paul opposes here, then, is not scrupulousness itself, but scrupulousness which produces Pharisaism; on the other hand he clearly intimates that the enjoyment of liberty is morally successful only through the grace and power of Christ as the Lord of His servants.

for the Lord hath power to make him stand.—The word rendered “stand” is in the aorist, or point, tense, signifying the

decisive character of the act. The believer stands, not in his own strength, but in that which Christ imparts to Him. What is in view here is, not that the strong man will fall and be restored, but that Christ is able to maintain him in spite of what his liberty may involve.

Verse 5. One man esteemeth one day above another : another man esteemeth every day alike.—The observance of days has reference to the Jewish Sabbath, and other days, as mentioned in Col. 2: 16; cp. Gal. 4: 10. It is the weak brother who esteems these as necessary to be regarded with strict observance. The strong brother esteems every day. The word “alike” is not part of the original and should be omitted. It does not help the sense of the statement. There is no suggestion, of course, that the strong brother is one who regards every day as a day upon which he can act as he likes, but rather that he is one who regards every day as consecrated to the Lord, and to be spent for Him; just as he regards meat as legitimate for consumption.

Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.—One’s convictions are to be one’s own, through an apprehension of responsibility to the Lord and to His revealed will. The believer’s action should not be determined simply by another man’s opinion. The mind is the seat of moral consciousness, and this, when enlightened by the Spirit of God, enables the believer to do His will and prevents the demoralising experience of doing something merely because others think it right.

Verse 6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord :—The word “regardeth” represents the verb *phroneō*, for which see at 8: 5; it signifies the setting of one’s mind upon a thing.

The second statement in the A.V., “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord doth he not regard it”, does not rest on good manuscript evidence, and does not suit the Apostle’s argument. He has no intention of suggesting that any day should not be observed as set apart to God.

and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.—Here, in contrast to the observance of days

the insistence is made that both in eating and in abstaining, the course adopted is to the Lord. There is stress on "unto the Lord" in each statement, and the reference in the title is to Christ.

Just as the weak brother, who regards one day above others, may meet criticism by saying that he observes the day to the Lord, so may the brother who eats all things maintain that what he partakes of begets gratitude to God on his part; he could not give thanks for what he knew God had forbidden. Again, just as he who eats evinces his devotion to the Lord by giving thanks, so he who refrains evinces the same thing by his thankfulness for his simpler fare. Each regards himself as acting in responsibility to the Lord and in accordance with His will.

Verse 7. For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself.—The subject passes from the particular cases of those who regard special days, and those who eat flesh and those who abstain, to the case of every believer and his relationship with Christ as Lord. The reference now is to the daily Christian experience. The significance of the statement "none of us liveth to himself" is not as to how a believer's conduct affects others, but as to what is his attitude towards the Lord.

Verse 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—A believer's end in life is not his own will and interest but the Lord's. So with his death, he chooses neither the time nor the manner of it, nor does death itself alter the relationship. He still remains the Lord's possession, and lives to Him. Time and circumstance are determined by the Lord's will. Believers may differ in their opinions as to what the Lord requires of them individually in certain matters, but the deciding principle in every case and every condition is that Christ is Lord.

Death, then, does not bring a cessation of service for Him; His authority as Lord continues over us in the spirit state. Not simply the fact of death is in view; the present continuous tense suggests also what follows that.

Verse 9. For to this end Christ died, and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.—The death

and resurrection of Christ are the facts on which His possession of, and authority over, His people, are founded, both here and hereafter.

Verse 10. **But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother?**—Such judgment is both a usurpation of the prerogative of Christ and inconsistent with the relationship of believers to one another.

or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother?—This is again addressed to the strong brother, as the preceding remonstrance was to the weak.

for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.—“God” is undoubtedly the right reading here. The Judgment-Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 10) is thereby that of God. The *bēma*, or judgment-seat, was originally a raised place mounted by steps, and so a platform. Hence the word signifies the official seat of a judge (Matt. 27: 19; John 19: 13; Acts 18: 12 etc.). At the *bēma*, the Judgment-Seat, of God and of Christ, believers are to be made manifest, that they may each one “receive the things done in (or through) the body, according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5: 10). At that Judgment-Seat in the “Parousia” of our Lord Jesus (i.e., His presence with His saints after His return to receive them to Himself), the saints will receive rewards for their faithfulness to the Lord, and will there see the effects of the service rendered to Him in accordance with the will of God as revealed in His Word. See 1 Thess. 2: 19; 3: 13; 5: 23; 1 Pet. 5: 4; 1 John 2: 28. For all that has been contrary to His will they will suffer loss; they will themselves be saved, “yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3: 15).

Verse 11. **For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.**—This is a free quotation from the Septuagint of Isa. 45: 23. Both the Hebrew and the Septuagint have “By Myself have I sworn”, a Divine oath also uttered in the case of Abraham, Gen. 22: 16. The Apostle gives the equivalent expression “as I live” (cp. Num. 14: 21, 28; Deut. 32: 40, R.V.), a form of oath expressive of Divine power and authority. The bowing of the knee is expressive of the recognition of, and subjection to, the Lord’s

authority; the confession of the tongue indicates the acknowledgment of the inerrancy and rightfulness of His judgment.

Verse 12. **So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**—In the original the two phrases “each one of us” and “of himself” are put together, with stress on the latter, thus giving emphasis to the argument against judging one another and introducing verse 13.

Mutual forbearance and edification, 14: 13–23

Verse 13. **Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.**—This is addressed to the strong. There is a slight change in the use of the word *krinō*, “judge”, amounting almost to a play on the word. It now signifies “let this be your decision”, or “determination”. Decisions thus made, in the exercise of our judgment in our service here below, will determine the nature of our reward at the Judgment-Seat of Christ.

Verse 14. **I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus,**—That is to say, not as a result of his own reasoning, but in virtue of his union with the Lord and the instruction received from Him.

that nothing is unclean of itself:—This statement reasserts the principle of liberty, but with a view to urging upon the strong brother the necessity for a loving consideration of the weak brother. The phrase “of itself” signifies “of its own nature” in distinction from what conscientious scruples estimate it to be.

save that to him that counteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.—The argument here is that the weak brother must not be stumbled, for, as far as his conscience alone is concerned, his scruples are valid, and everything must be done to prevent his violating them. Conscience alone is not an infallible guide as to the right or wrong of a thing in itself; but to act against one's conscience, even when it is misguided, is always wrong.

The Apostle is not speaking here of what is morally impure, but simply of what is ceremonially so. To apply the statement

that nothing is unclean of itself to what is morally impure, is to pervert the meaning of this Scripture.

Verse 15. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved,— That is to say, if on account of what is eaten by the strong brother the weak brother is distressed.

thou walkest no longer in love.—The one who thus causes grief to the weak brother, departs from the path of love in which he has been walking as a believer.

Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.—The word *apollumi*, “to destroy”, denotes to deprive of the possibility of fulfilling the object of one’s existence. It is found elsewhere in the Epistle only at 2:12, where see note. Here the tense is the present continuous, indicating a process involving spiritual disaster. In giving way to what is to him sinful, the weak brother is liable by that step to be led into a path of departure from the will of God, with consequent ruin to his present spiritual life.

It is not a case merely of being pained at seeing what the strong brother does, and perhaps hardened against him in censoriousness of spirit; what is here in view is that the weak brother has been caused to stumble by acting against his conscience.

The mention of the death of Christ forms the climax of the appeal. The Divine love displayed at the Cross is put in striking contrast to the selfishness which sets more value upon one’s own desires and enjoyment than upon the spiritual welfare of a brother, and even runs the risk of bringing disaster upon him.

Verse 16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:—The “good” is that which can be enjoyed or used with advantage; here it refers apparently to the stronger faith and greater liberty which are not to be exercised detrimentally to the weak brother, and prejudicially to the cause of Christ, through evil report on the part of unbelievers; cp. 2:24. Possibly there is a reference to what the weak brother esteems to be good, namely, abstaining from meat and from wine.

Verse 17. for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,—The Kingdom of God is the sphere of God’s rule. In view,

however, of the rebellion that has been raised against Him, the phrase most frequently signifies the sphere in which at any given time His rule is acknowledged. The evidence that a man has entered into the Kingdom of God, and that its powers work in him, is seen, not in adherence to principles which have to do with outward things, such as eating and drinking, or refraining therefrom, but with inward, spiritual and essential matters, namely, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.—These three subjects, *righteousness*, *peace* and *joy*, have been already taken up in the first part of the Epistle in the same order. Righteousness forms the main subject of the first four chapters, and the three are brought together at the beginning of the fifth, *righteousness and peace* in verse 1, *joy* in verse 11. The same themes are resumed in a different connection later in the Epistle, *righteousness* in chapter 10: 3–13, *peace* in 10: 15, *joy* in 12: 12, 15. While in the first part of the Epistle the three have to do with the provision made by God in the matter of justification and reconciliation with resulting joy, the present passage has especially in view the practical effects in the life of believers, namely, right moral relations one with the other, the peace that results from unity of heart and purpose, and joy in one another kindled by the Holy Spirit. The phrase “joy in the Holy Ghost” signifies, not only that the Holy Spirit is the Minister of joy, but that the joy can be experienced only in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18. For he that herein serveth Christ is well pleasing to God, and approved of men.—The powers of the Kingdom of God which are expressed in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, work by way of service to Christ. He who feels free to eat meat may be serving Christ as much as the one who abstains, but neither one nor the other can serve Him if righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit are lacking. On the other hand, where these things are in exercise he who manifests them can be assured of being pleasing to God and approved of men. God judges the inward motives. Man sees the outward effects.

Verse 19. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.—A more

literal rendering is "the things of peace and the things of edification towards one another". The things of peace include righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit (v. 7). Mutual upbuilding in the faith can proceed effectively only under conditions of peace.

Verse 20. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God.—The verb *kataluō*, "to overthrow", literally means "to loosen down". Here it is used of the marring of spiritual well-being, the pulling down of the work of God in a brother's life, and is set in contrast to building up (v. 19). The phrase "the work of God" suggests both the individual believer as constituting a part of God's spiritual building, and the effects in him of the spiritual teaching by which the building proceeds. Cp. 1 Cor. 3: 17.

All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.—This has been taken in two ways: (1) as referring to the strong brother, who, by his eating, causes the weak brother to stumble; (2) as referring to the weak brother who, by his eating, stumbles through acting against his own conscience. It is true that the strong are here addressed, but that is not a sufficient indication to guide us, for the evil is not necessarily predicated of the action of the party addressed. Verse 23, to which the argument is leading, indicates that Paul is speaking of the weak brother and of the condemnation into which he falls through eating against the dictates of his own conscience; he thereby lapses from spiritual integrity.

Verse 21. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.—This statement broadens the principle already set forth, so as to include abstinence from everything on the part of the strong which would be prejudicial to the weak.

Verse 22. The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God.—This recalls verse 2. The appeal is still to the strong and provides a further reason for abstinence. The faith spoken of is that by which he who is strong regards it as lawful to partake of all kinds of meat. He is not called upon to renounce a principle or to think that anything was wrong which was not

actually so, but rather to exercise his liberty with a view to the welfare of the weak brother. Faith is necessary indeed, but it is not to be displayed, as if to show one's superiority to those who have scruples about things. The responsibility is to act before God, that is, in the secrecy of communion with Him.

Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth.—This follows closely with the preceding sentence and shows the value of faith so exercised. It also recalls the closing statement of verse 5, "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind". The happiness consists, not so much in being free from scruples about doing anything, but in being free from having to judge himself for running the risk of stumbling his brother. He may approve of eating meat, but if he abstains in order not to stumble the weak brother, he will be saved from having to pass sentence upon himself for his action.

Verse 23. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith;—The strong brother is reminded that the weak brother who is influenced to act contrary to his conscience, and consequently is troubled about his act, is condemned; not that he comes under the condemnation referred to in chapter 8: 1, but that he is proved to be guilty of having acted apart from faith, and therefore of displeasing the Lord. This, though addressed to the strong, is intended as a warning also to the weak.

and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.—Faith is the basis of the believer's relation to Christ, and should be the guiding principle of all his actions, leading him to do whatever he does because he belongs to Christ, whom it is his aim to please, and because he must give account at His Judgment-Seat. If a believer acts from any other motive than that of faith, if he acts, for instance, through simple compliance with the opinion of another person, his act is sin. Right motives never justify wrong actions. What is evil cannot be excused on the ground of good intentions.

CHAPTER XV

Glorifying God by living in harmony, 15: 1-7

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN THIS section the support of the weak is urged, and the subject develops into the broader view of seeking one another's best interests. The whole is set in the light of the example of Christ.

Verse 1. Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.—The word "ought" is in the position of emphasis. While this injunction is based upon those in chapter 14, it has especially in view what is about to be said of the example of Christ. So far the exhortations have been to avoid stumbling the weak, and to follow things which make for peace and edification. There is something more to be done. The strong must actually support the burdens of the weak by submitting to self-restraint. They must regard their self-denial not merely as so much virtuous abstinence but as a means of bearing the infirmities of the weak (cp. Gal. 6: 2). The infirmities are those scruples which arise through weakness of faith.

and not to please ourselves.—A Christian can claim liberty as a believer, but he is never to use it as a means of self-pleasing. Refusal to bear the burdens of others is mere selfishness.

Verse 2. Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good, unto edifying.—Whatever makes for the edification of a fellow-believer is good. If I consult for the good of another I consult for his edification. To please my neighbour, in the sense of this verse, is not weakly to comply with his desires, but to act with a view to his lasting benefit.

Verse 3. For Christ also pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me.—We might have expected that the Apostle would show how Christ acted for our good in accomplishing our salvation.

Instead of this he gives the higher motive which filled the heart of Christ, that of the accomplishment of the Father's will, with the suffering involved therein, and quotes from the Septuagint of Ps. 69: 9.

The force of the quotation lies in this, that if Christ, instead of acting in self-gratification, voluntarily endured the effects of man's hostility to God, and that with a view to saving us from the consequences of our sin, what an obligation have we to abstain from self-gratification, submitting to the restraint involved therein in order to advance the welfare of others! How insignificant is any inconvenience or suffering caused to us in comparison with the sufferings which Christ endured!

Verse 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.—The quotation in verse 3 is thus made the basis of a most important principle, namely, that all the Old Testament Scriptures are of permanent and binding value, as given to instruct us. Thus the particular quotation just recorded, while directly speaking of Christ, was written for our sakes, that we might receive and carry out the instruction and derive the comfort. The character of Christ in Ps. 69: 9 was described that we might have the mind that was in Him.

that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures—The definite article is used in the original before both "patience" and "comfort", and here there is an advantage perhaps in translating by "the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures", that is to say, the patience and the comfort which they effect.

Both the patience which persistently endures and the comfort which animates and empowers are required in the fulfilment of the injunctions given to the weak and the strong. The strong, who exercise patience, and the weak, who are supported by the comfort, both derive it from the Scriptures.

we might have hope.—The patience and comfort imparted by the Scriptures inspire those who subject themselves to them with hope of the glory of God. While the definite article also occurs before hope, it is not necessarily to be rendered in this case.

Verse 5. Now the God of patience and of comfort—We may translate the definite articles, which are used here again, and

render by "the God of the patience and the comfort", that is, those just mentioned in verse 5. From the Scripture as the source of patience and comfort we are pointed to God as the Author of these qualities and this is made the basis of a desire for like-mindedness.

grant you to be of the same mind one with another—The fulfilment of this would banish all bitterness, harsh judgment, recrimination, and petty controversies.

according to Christ Jesus:—This recalls verse 3. In not pleasing Himself, but acting for our good, Christ manifested that patience which it is necessary for us to imitate if we are to fulfil the will of God in our attitude one toward another. The example as set by Christ is designed to manifest in us both patience and comfort and harmony. But this has a still higher object in view, as mentioned in the next verse.

Verse 6. **that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—Unity of mind and harmony of testimony are essential if God is to be glorified by believers. Where such unity exists, the difficulties with which the Apostle has been dealing in chapter 14 vanish, and God will be glorified.

Verse 7. **Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you,**—Cp. 14: 3; what was there said of God is here said of Christ. The R.V. "you" is right.

to the glory of God.—This is to be taken with the immediately preceding statement "as Christ received you". The glory of God was the object in view in the reception of each by Christ, and the same object is to govern the attitude of believers one toward another; it is to be kindly and considerate, not a mere toleration, but a hearty reception.

Glorifying God—Gentile and Jew alike, 15: 8-13

Verse 8. **For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,**—The connection with the preceding verse might be put in this way: "Christ has received you to the glory of God, and this became possible because of

His grace on behalf of the weak and the strong, for He became a Servant of the Jews, for the sake of the truth of God, in order to confirm by this fulfilment the promises made to the fathers, and that by this means Gentiles might be brought into the blessings of salvation." Jews and Gentiles, weak and strong, both have then a common interest in this ministration of Christ, and so this becomes an additional motive for Christian forbearance.

that He might confirm the promises given unto the fathers,—Christ came to minister primarily to the Jewish people. He Himself said, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15: 24. Cp. 10: 6).

Verse 9. and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy ;—That Christ was a Minister of the circumcision in the days of His flesh was but preliminary to the carrying out of the ministry of the Gospel to all nations. Therefore Jewish believers should not pass censorious judgment upon Gentile believers who claim liberty from certain religious scruples.

as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy Name.—This is from the Septuagint of Ps. 18: 49. The language of David in celebrating his conquests over the nations is seen to be prophetically the language of Christ expressed through Gentile believers in giving thanks to God for their salvation. Ultimately also the prophecy will be fulfilled in the Millennial Day.

Verse 10. And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people.—This is taken from the close of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32: 43), which gives a history of the nation of Israel from its earliest times till the overthrow of Antichrist and the Gentile nations gathered together under him, and the setting up of Messiah's Millennial Kingdom. The sword of Jehovah will destroy "the head of the leaders of the enemy" (v. 42, R.V.), that is to say, the Antichrist himself. In view of the overthrow of the great persecutor and his associates, and the deliverance of the Jews, the joyful summons goes forth to the world, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people". The national blessing of Gentile peoples is dependent upon the deliverance of the Jewish nation.

The same principle has held good in things spiritual, and hence the Apostle applies such passages to the Gospel.

Verse 11. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles ; and let all the people praise Him.—This is from the Septuagint of Ps. 117: 1.

Verse 12. And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and He that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles ; on Him shall the Gentiles hope.—This closing quotation goes further than those preceding, and specifically mentions Christ as the subject of Old Testament predictions concerning the blessing designed for Jews and Gentiles. In Isaiah, again, the scope is Millennial, and while the Apostle's application is to the Gospel, in this case it necessarily includes the future period as well. The reference to Christ as the Root of Jesse intimates (1) His Incarnation as a descendant of the father of David, and (2) His fruitfulness as the Source of all Divinely appointed prosperity for the nation.

The four quotations are taken from all three parts of the Old Testament, the Law (v. 10), the Psalms (vv. 9, 11), and the Prophets (v. 12). Accordingly the truth of the inclusion of Jew and Gentile in Christ through the Gospel is shown to extend through the whole range of Old Testament prophecy. This, adds point to the preceding exhortations as to mutual forbearance.

Verse 13. Now the God of hope—Literally, “the God of the hope”, because He is the Author of that hope and therein His grace is set before both Jew and Gentile in Christ. The hope is not mere expectancy; it carries with it the assurance of faith.

fill you with joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.—This verse not only brings to a close the main part of the Epistle but affords a final reason for concord among brethren, in view of the unifying character of the hope set before us. We shall be dwelling in harmony in the future, why not in the present?

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS, etc., 15: 14 to 16: 27

Verse 14. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness,—*Agathosunē*,

“goodness”, signifies, not moral excellence of itself, but a disposition to do good, to show a kindly activity toward others.

filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.—*Noutheteō*, “to admonish”, is used of both instruction and admonition. The combination of goodness with knowledge is requisite for effective ministry in instructing and admonishing.

Verse 15. But I write more boldly towards you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God,—This is a beautiful combination of humility with authority. He has a Divinely imparted authority for writing, but the bestowal of it was an act of God’s favour. He instructs them, not from the lofty pinnacle of an ecclesiastical authority, but as one who, whilst Divinely commissioned, is a sharer with them of grace. Cp. 12: 3.

Verse 16. that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,—The verb *hierourgeō*, “to minister”, is again a term of priestly service; see the next note. It is used only here in the N.T.

that the offering up of the Gentiles—The word *prosphora*, “an offering”, is used here of the presentation of believers themselves to God.

might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.—Literally, “having been sanctified”. This completes the references to the Levitical sacrificial offerings. (1) The Apostle is, figuratively speaking, the priest, not by natural descent but by Divine call; (2) the Gentile believers are the offerers and the offering, presenting themselves as living sacrifices (12: 1); (3) as the sacrifices of old were to be free from physical defect and must be cleansed with water, so the offering of believers themselves must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, that all may be acceptable to God, in contrast to those sacrifices in which God had “no pleasure” (Heb. 10: 6, 9).

The Holy Spirit is said to be the Agent in sanctification in 2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 2, and here only. Cp. also 1 Cor. 6: 11. In all these the sanctification is associated with the electing grace of God, and is a Divine act preceding the acceptance of the

Gospel by the individual. This is indicated here by the use of the perfect participle "having been".

Verse 17. **I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God.**—There are two further reasons which justify his glorying: (1) it is "in Christ Jesus" and not in himself; (2) it is "in things pertaining to God", i.e., not pertaining to his own advantage and interests, but to the service of the Gospel and its effects, which he has just described as an offering to God.

Verse 18. **For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed,**—It is plain from verse 20 that he had in mind the fact that others were engaged in Gospel work besides himself.

Verse 19. **in the power of signs and wonders,**—*Sêmeion*, "a sign", is "a token or indication, whether given by man to man, 2 Thess. 3: 17; Matt. 26: 48; or appointed by God to be observed by man, as circumcision was, Rom. 4: 11; or whether given by God in natural phenomena, Luke 21: 25; or in the trend of human affairs, Matt. 16: 3; or through His Son, John 2: 11; 20: 30; or His servants, Acts 5: 12; 7: 36; or whether given by Satan through his agents, Matt. 24: 24; 2 Thess. 2: 9; Rev. 16: 14."

A wonder is "something strange, exceptional, causing the beholder to marvel. 'Power' declares the source to be supernatural; 'sign' expresses the purpose and appeals to the understanding; 'wonder' describes the effect upon the observer and appeals to the imagination."

in the power of the Holy Ghost ;—Cp. verse 13, and see note there. Cp. also 1 Cor. 2: 4. This clause probably applies both to what was stated in verse 18 and to what has just preceded. The Holy Spirit was the Agent not only in the preaching but also in the signs and wonders. The effectivity of Gospel ministry depends, then, not upon human power of eloquence, but upon the Lord, who works all by the Holy Spirit.

so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ ;—Literally, "I have

fulfilled", *plēroō*. Cp. 8: 4; 13: 8. The word is suggestive of both the geographical extent of his evangelical ministry, as in the context, and the accomplishment of his ministry itself.

Verse 20. **Yea, making it my aim so to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation,**—The motive for this no doubt lay considerably in the realization of the tremendous needs of regions unreached by the Gospel, but also from the determination to avoid "glorying in other men's labours" (see 2 Cor. 10: 13-18).

Verse 21. **but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of Him came, and they who have not heard shall understand.**—This quotation, from the Septuagint of Isa. 52: 15, confirms the statement as to the scope of the Apostle's ministry.

Paul's purpose to visit Rome, and to go further, 15: 22-33

Verse 22. **Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you:**—What prevented him from coming had been his effort to visit places where Christ had not been proclaimed, though the demands made upon him in this respect were not the only reasons.

Verse 23. **but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you,**—To have the assurance that any particular service committed to us has been completed, is necessarily the outcome of the habit of walking with God and of our having received the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 24. **whenever I go unto Spain**—Spain passed under Roman rule in 133 B.C., and became a "Province", though the conquest of the whole country was not complete till 19 B.C. By the Apostle's time it contained large numbers of Jews, and this would probably strengthen his desire to preach Christ there. There is some evidence that he did so. In an Epistle to the Corinthians written by Clement of Rome, a follower of the Apostle, it is stated that Paul "went to the end of the west".

(for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)—The fact that, in our path of service for the Lord, circumstances take place very differently from our expectations and desires, affords no necessary indication that we are not being guided of God. On the contrary, our very disappointments issue in the accomplishment of far greater things than we anticipate, and always in the fulfilment of God's all wise purposes. So it was with the character of Paul's actual stay in Rome. As an outcome of his imprisonments there the churches have had all his later Epistles.

Verses 25, 26. but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia—The districts stand for the churches in them. The two provinces comprise the whole of Greece.

to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem.—There was evidently a large number of poor amongst the saints. The arrangement referred to in Acts 2: 45, for a community of goods, had left an aftermath of poverty. It could be in any case only a temporary expedient. The statement in this verse plays an important part in enabling us to fix the date of this Epistle. It must have been written soon after 2 Corinthians, and just before Paul's visit to Jerusalem, mentioned in Acts 20: 21, that is, about the year A.D. 57.

Verse 27. Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things,—That is, those blessings which primarily, in the providence of God, belonged to Israel, but which also appertain to the Gospel.

they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things :—The verb *leitourgeō*, "to minister", is used here only in this Epistle. For the noun see 13: 6.

Verse 28. When, therefore, I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain.—This phraseology indicates the sacredness in God's sight of ministering material assistance to the saints.

The material help was the fruit of his spiritual ministry to the saints in Greece. But this spiritual blessing to Gentiles emanated in the first place from the Jewish nation. Hence, in meeting the needs of the saints in Jerusalem, the churches of the Gentiles were but bringing forth the fruits of their having shared with them in spiritual things.

Verse 29. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.—*Eulogia*, “blessing”, here expresses the sum of the favour shown by God to man in Christ. The addition of the words “of the Gospel” in the A.V. does not rest on good MS. authority.

“Would a forger, writing under the name of the Apostle in the second century, have drawn a picture of the future so opposite to the way in which things really came to pass?” (*Godet.*)

Verse 30. Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit,—This second ground of appeal might mean either the love which the Spirit of God shows, or the love which is exercised by believers as the outcome of the Spirit’s work in their hearts; this latter is probably the meaning here.

that ye strive together with me in your prayers—The request is suggestive of the spiritual foes whose efforts are directed against the prayers of God’s people. Cp. Dan. 10: 12, 13; Eph. 6: 12, and Col. 2: 1.

to God for me ;—The order in the original is “on my behalf toward God”, which throws emphasis upon the latter words. Paul’s personal trust in God, and the Divine assurance given to him, did not make him independent of the prayers of the saints. Prayer is never rendered superfluous by any circumstances, not even by the knowledge of God’s will and purpose. On the contrary, the revelation of that will is an incentive to prayer. See Ezek. 36: 37.

Verse 31. that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judæa,—Unbelief is disobedience; faith is an act of obedience. See at 1: 5; 16: 26.

and *that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem, may be acceptable to the saints*;—Suggesting that, in addition to the opposition of unbelieving Jews, there was a likelihood of misunderstanding and prejudice on the part of Jewish Christians, especially those who had inclinations towards Judaism.

Verse 32. that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest.—God hears prayer, but the manner of the answer often differs from that which the suppliant anticipates.

Verse 33. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.—His request for prayer on their part leads him to offer prayer for them. The title, “the God of peace”, frequent in the Apostle’s writings, was sometimes suggested by way of contrast with troubles amongst his readers, as in 1 Thess. 5: 23; sometimes by the sufferings and distractions which his readers were experiencing, as in 2 Cor. 13: 11, cp. Heb. 13: 20; sometimes in anticipation of the fulfilment of his exhortations, as in Phil. 4: 9. Here it seems to be set in contrast with the circumstances of danger to which he has just been referring.

CHAPTER XVI

Verse 1. I commend unto you—This is more than a mere mode of introduction; *sunistēmi* suggests the praise which our word “commendation” carries with it. Letters of commendation of a more formal character are referred to by him in 2 Cor. 3: 1, and became general in the intercourse of the churches, in order to provide safeguards against imposture. The commendation here given was not of this character.

Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreæ:—This is the only instance in the N.T. of the use of the word *diakonos* of a woman. It denotes one who renders service of any character to another. There is no ground for assuming that Phœbe was a “deaconness”.

Verse 2. that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints,—That is, in such a manner as befits those who bear the name of saints.

and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a succourer of many, and of mine own self.—*Prostatis*, “succourer”, is a feminine of *prostatēs*, and is a word of dignity, evidently chosen instead of another which might have easily been used. It indicates the high, not to say honourable, position which perhaps she occupied.

Verse 3. Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,—Priscilla (see Acts 18: 2) is the diminutive form of Prisca. Here and in Acts 18: 18, and 2 Tim. 4: 19, the wife's name comes first, perhaps suggesting that she was the more distinguished in Christian service. In 1 Cor. 16: 19, where they send salutations, the husband's name naturally comes first.

Verse 4. who for my life laid down their own necks;—The original has the singular, “neck”, indicating that the phrase is figurative. The actual character of the danger is not known, but his life was frequently in peril of one sort or another.

unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles :—This makes clear that the circumstance referred to was widely known, and suggests that it was not of very recent occurrence, sufficient time having elapsed for the news to spread among the churches. Paul was indeed grateful to them for their devotion to him; his statement about the gratitude of the churches not only is indicative of the deep-rooted affection which the churches entertained for him, it expresses what he realised, without any self-congratulation, that his love and service for God among them was valuable to them. The phrase "the churches of the Gentiles" signifies the churches which had been formed in the various Gentile nations.

Verse 5. and salute the church that is in their house.—In Ephesus their house was a meeting-place for the saints (v. 5 with 1 Cor. 16: 19). The character of their occupation enabled them to put a room at the disposal of the Lord's people for the purpose. Cp. Col. 4: 15; Philem. 2. There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for Christian worship within the Roman Empire before the third century.

Salute Epænetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.—That Epænetus was the first saved as a result of the Apostle's testimony would make him very dear to Paul.

Verse 6. Salute Mary, who bestowed much labour on you.—Two forms of the name Mary are found in the Greek text: Mariam, which represents the Hebrew Miriam, and thus is Jewish, denoting bitterness, and Maria(n), a Gentile name. In the former case it is the only Hebrew name in the chapter. The latter is the more probable reading.

Verse 7. Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles,—That the Apostle speaks of them as his kinsmen indicates: (1) that they were Jews; if so, his mention of them in this way is consistent with what he had said about his fellow-nationals already in this Epistle (cp. 9: 3), or (2) that they were his blood-relations; this seems not unlikely from the emphatic way in which he speaks of them.

who also have been in Christ before me.—Literally, “they have become in Christ before me”. They were evidently among the very early disciples. If, then, they were Paul’s relatives, he had family relations in Christ while he himself was persecuting the saints.

Verse 8. Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord.—Ampliatus was a Roman slave name, and is frequently found so in inscriptions.

Verse 9. Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ,—Urbanus is a name also found in a list of Imperial freed men, which suggests that he may have obtained his liberty.

and Stachys my beloved.—Stachys is a Greek name, of masculine gender, and comparatively rare.

Verse 10. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ.—This suggests that he had in some way been tested, had stood the test, and had gained the approval and esteem of his brethren.

Salute them which are of the household of Aristobulus.—This refers to his slaves rather than his kinsmen.

Verse 11. Salute Herodian my kinsman.—He was probably therefore a Jew.

Salute them of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.—Narcissus was probably another slave-owner. The addition “which are in the Lord” makes clear that only some of this household were converted.

Verse 12. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord.—These were almost certainly sisters by natural relationship.

Salute Persis the beloved, which laboured much in the Lord.—As her service is spoken of as in the past (contrast what is said of the two preceding sisters), she may have been in advanced years at this time.

Verse 13. Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.—Rufus is a Latin name. Possibly the person

referred to is the same as that in Mark 15:21, whose father bore the Cross of Christ. If so, it may be that the father was dead and his widow and Rufus were living at Ephesus. Rufus was "chosen in the Lord". This would scarcely refer to the election of grace, which is common to all believers, but indicates some special approval by which he was distinguished for his excellence or his usefulness in service to Christ.

Verse 14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them.—In places like Rome, where Christians came from various lands, meetings were held in different houses, there being no public building where large meetings of believers were possible, even had they been permissible. This seems to be indicated in the present phrase.

Verse 15. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them.—Julia was probably the wife of Philologus. Possibly Nereus and his sister were their children, and Olympas was of the same family or household.

Verse 16. Salute one another with a holy kiss.—*Philēma*, "a kiss", was an ordinary mode of greeting between those of the same sex. The kiss was to be "holy", *hagios*, i.e., free from everything unworthy of their calling as saints (*hagioi*).

Moreover there was to be freedom from prejudice arising from social distinctions, and from partiality towards those who were well-to-do. In the assembly, masters and servants would thus salute one another with freedom from an attitude of condescension on the one part, and from disrespect on the other.

All the churches of Christ salute you.—The phrase "the churches of Christ" is found here only in the N.T. It marks them in their relationship to Christ, as His possession.

Verse 17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling.—It has been suggested that those of whom he is now speaking promulgated the errors of Antinomianism, with which he had dealt in chapter 6, or belonged to the party referred to in chapter 14.

Possibly the opposition was that arising from Judaistic teachings, with which Paul and his fellow-labourers were continually confronted.

contrary to the doctrine which ye learned : and turn away from them.—The “ye” bears emphasis, which serves forcibly to distinguish their true teachings from the false. In exhorting them to turn away from the false teachers, the Apostle is not speaking of excommunication, but of personal dissociation from the offenders.

Verse 18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ,—There is a certain stress on the negative, which practically conveys the thought of refusing to serve.

but their own belly ;—A phrase indicative of any base interest, not necessarily gross, sensual indulgence, as in Phil. 3: 19, though this is possibly also intended.

and by their smooth and fair speech—The word *chrēstologia* is suggestive of an insinuating mode of speech, and one which simulates goodness. *Eulogia*, which usually signifies “blessing”, here indicates a fine style of utterance with the appearance of reasonableness.

they beguile the hearts of the innocent.—He who adopts an attitude of never expecting evil is liable to be deceived. To those who are not instructed in the ways of God as revealed in Scripture, the smooth and fair speech of those who propagate false teaching is especially dangerous. Safety lies in a knowledge of, and adherence to, the Word of God.

Verse 19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoyce therefore over you : but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil.—They were to be wise in the acceptance and pursuit of that which is according to the will of God, and so beneficial in its effects. Their attitude, therefore, was to be one which would keep them free from taint. The word *akeraios*, “simple”, and, in the only other two places where it occurs, “harmless” (Matt. 10: 16; Phil. 2: 15), means, literally, “without admixture”. It was used of wine unmingled with water, of unalloyed metal, etc. Hence

it means "without admixture of evil". Here, then, it would mean that his desire for them was that they might be untainted by the influences of evil teachers and the divisions and stumbling-blocks caused thereby. Thus would they be wise in adherence to the truth. If we are to be kept from admixture of what is baneful we must be steadfast in the faith, abiding in the truth.

Verse 20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.—This promise would seem to have immediate reference to the efforts of those who were antagonistic to the peace and harmony of the saints. Such efforts are put forth by Satan unremittingly and are continued till the promise is fulfilled by God. Cp. what is said about the Judaizing opponents in 2 Cor. 11: 12-15, where they are spoken of as ministers of Satan. There is also doubtless a reference to the promise in Gen. 3: 15. The phrase *en tachei*, "shortly", may mean "quickly", "with speed". This is the meaning in Luke 18: 8; Acts 12: 7; 22: 18; and perhaps in Rev. 1: 1; 22: 6. It also means "soon", at a time not far distant, as in Acts 25: 4.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.—There is no real indication that the Apostle primarily intended his Epistle to end here. Probably this is to be taken in immediate connection with the preceding context, in view of what is intimated about the opposition of Satan.

Verse 21. Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you ;—From 2 Cor. 1: 1, we learn that Timothy was with Paul in Macedonia when he wrote that Epistle (that was in the latter part of A.D. 57). Possibly the Apostle came on to Corinth alone. He was with him just before setting out from Corinth for Jerusalem (Acts 20: 4).

and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.—The first of these may have been Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13: 1), the second the Jason mentioned in Acts 17: 5; the third name is a longer form of Sopater, as in Acts 20: 4.

Verse 22. I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord.—That the Apostle's amanuensis should insert this salutation is, firstly, a mark of the genuineness of the Epistle, as no

forger would have mentioned his doing so; secondly, an instance of Paul's characteristic courtesy, it would not have been like him to dictate such a salutation in the third person; thirdly, of the sympathetic spirit and whole-hearted co-operation of this brother in the work in which the Apostle was engaged. His spiritual joy therein is likewise intimated by his mode of salutation "in the Lord".

Verse 23. Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.—If Gaius was one of the elders of the church at Corinth, he certainly fulfilled the qualification of an elder or bishop, as mentioned in 1 Tim. 3: 2.

This Gaius is almost certainly the one of 1 Cor. 1: 14 and probably the Titus Justus of Acts 18: 1-8, his full name being Gaius Titus Justus, with whom Paul lodged on his first visit to Corinth after he stayed with Aquila.

Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you—This was possibly the same Erastus whom Paul sent with Timothy into Macedonia before leaving Ephesus (Acts 19: 22), and to whom he refers in 2 Tim. 4: 20, as having remained at Corinth. The fact that the one here mentioned held a position of considerable importance in the city is not sufficient in itself to make the identification unlikely, as he may have relinquished his position after the time of the writing of the present Epistle.

and Quartus, the brother.—The article does not imply that he was related to Erastus naturally, or any of those who had been mentioned; it suggests rather that he was known both to writer and readers as a brother in the Lord.

Verse 25. Now to Him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel—The spiritual confirmation of the saints is in keeping with the teaching of the Gospel, which not only proclaims remission of sins and justification through faith (3: 21 to 5, end), but a new life in Christ, which is maintained by the power of the indwelling Spirit (chapters 6 to 8), and effects the fulfilment of all righteousness (chapters 12: 15).

and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery—That is, the Gospel and the preaching of

Jesus Christ, were in accordance with the revelation of the mystery, or, rather, "a mystery"; the absence of the article indicates that the mystery referred to is one among others. In speaking of the revelation of the mystery, he does not here imply that a special revelation had been given to him; he is merely stating in a general way that what had been hidden before by God had now been revealed. It was of another mystery that he wrote in 11: 25.

which hath been kept in silence through times eternal,—There had been no Divine pronouncement on the subject. God's providential dealings with man are varied though continuous. His plans have unfolded gradually, each detail having its own Divinely predetermined time for its disclosure, each being given not only as a self-revelation of His nature, His attributes and counsels, but also appropriately to the conditions and needs of the particular period allotted to it.

Verse 26. **but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets,—**Literally, "by prophetic writings". The Apostle is referring to the means by which the manifestation of the mystery was being given, and for this purpose his own inspired writings were being used. He is pointing, therefore, not to Old Testament Scriptures, for this revelation had not been given through them, but to those parts of the New Testament which had already been, and were in process of being, written. This Epistle which he had now completed formed part of those prophetic writings. It is true that the Old Testament Scriptures were prophetic writings, and that the apostles made use of them in unfolding the truth of the mystery, but that in itself would not adequately interpret his words here.

according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith;—That is, faith which is characterized by obedience; for faith is an act of submission to God, a fulfilment of His command (John 6: 29, and 1 John 3: 23).

Verse 27. **to the only wise God,—**Or, rather, "to God only wise". These last two words bear emphasis, and the description is appropriate to all that the Apostle has now stated about the

Divine purpose. The title is also an appropriate close to the whole Epistle.

through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
—This ascription of praise is undoubtedly to God the Father, but the Apostle has framed the order of his words that Christ may likewise, at least by implication, be the subject of the praise and adoration by which the being, character and attributes of God are recognized by His people.

