

The EPISTLE to
the
ROMANS

an exposition by

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THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

WITH a little thought, I suppose, most would agree that those who compiled the books of the Bible in their present order, have placed this epistle in its right place. After the Gospels and the Acts, the narrative portion, this epistle is first; though it was not the first to be written. That sound doctrine will lead to sound practice is clearly shown in 1 Cor. 15.³²⁻³³. The doctrine of the resurrection must have a healthful effect upon the life. So as to righteousness; if we have God's standpoint, it will have salutary effects in our lives.

The epistle to the Romans is unique in its character and construction; and every child of God should be well grounded in it. This is at once evident from the fact that Paul was so concerned to bring such teaching before the Romans.

As to character, no other epistle is like it, being as it is, a treatise of the whole of the doctrine of Christ. As to construction, no other epistle is built up in the same order, each portion complete in itself, until the whole may be likened to a magnificent edifice. It commences down in the very foundation and rises to the glorious consummation of God's purposes in Christ. Why should we not possess our possessions?

It is hoped the reader will have his Bible open as he reads this book because the object is not to get you to be acquainted with a certain writer's thoughts, but to be acquainted with the Word of God itself. Moreover, it is for each one to see that what is stated here is according to what the Holy Spirit has said.

Paul, in the first statement, asserts his authority. This is not egotism or pride, the Holy Spirit inspired him to write it. His first thought is that of a servant, a "slave." Then "an apostle," called by his Lord and Master, and "sent," as the word implies, with His authority. "Separated" unto the Gospel also confirms that he was (as he claims in 1 Cor. 3) a wise master-builder. Read on to the end of verse 5 for further confirmation.

The next section shows to whom the epistle was written (vers. 6-15). Note his thanks to God because they also were "called—saints." "Saints" is not a special title for a few who are selected, the term is applied here to "all that were in Rome, beloved of God." That is, all those in Rome who had believed the Gospel. Then note his prayer for them and his earnest longing to see them. There is sufficient here to assure us of their salvation, but there is sufficient also to assure us that Paul was not content for them to stop at that. His concern was that they might be "established" (ver. 11).

He also speaks of being hindered, and so, in order that they might not be lacking in understanding, he wrote this epistle as a groundwork for them, till he should come to them. Oh, that there were the same concern to-day for the establishment of young believers in the sound doctrine of Christ.

Seeing, then, that Paul wrote this letter to a company of believers whom he wished to be established, we may well conclude that he wrote in language that would be easily understood. The letter did not need an interpreter to go with it. So, dear friends, you need have no fears in approaching this letter, as if one needed a special gift of interpretation to unravel it. The great obstacles to understanding this, and other parts of God's Word, are preconceived or prereceived ideas which one is unwilling to give up. The words mean what they say, and we can well afford to reject any suggestions that they "mean" something even a little different.

Reference has already been made to the construction of this book. Paul was an educated man, but more, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write what he did. It is therefore a slur on Paul's ability, and more, on that of the Holy Spirit, to read this letter in a way that ignores its perfect construction. As we go through it we have no difficulty in seeing that it is put together in beautiful order, as stone upon stone in a magnificent building. The fundamental facts of doctrine are placed in position to form the solid structure from the foundation upwards; but the building is not lacking in embellishments. In certain places fitly chosen, the inspired writer breaks out in words that show his delight in his theme. This is outstandingly so at the end of chapters five, eight and eleven. Such passages are intended to help our hearts to praise and worship God. For we are not dealing with inanimate things like the study of metals or finance, but with eternal realities—the essentials of our own personal salvation.

If these remarks help to remove from any mind a sense of fear in approaching our subject, as if it were too deep, they will not have been in vain. But, further, it is hoped that they will be a warning to any who have already given the passage serious thought, lest they should turn from anything that may be expressed in these pages without giving it a fair test in accord with the principles stated above. Many are the erroneous thoughts that men have introduced into this epistle, and multitudes are to-day copying them and quoting passages from it which are taken to mean what they do not say.

Then comes the question of translation and the knowledge of Greek. That the Authorised Version is not a perfect translation most would admit. Inspiration is not in the translation into English, but in the words which the Holy Spirit gave to the writers, who wrote in Greek. Those words have been translated into the English, and indeed, into many other languages. The fact that even translations into English differ is enough to show that the translators were not inspired. This may make some feel that they cannot depend upon the English version,

but must depend upon someone who has a knowledge of Greek. But what if two or more who know Greek do not agree as to the meaning—and there are such cases; to decide that *your* teacher or minister is right is simply favouritism. The next person may decide that his teacher is right, too. This is what is actually taking place with many, and it is a large factor in the present disunity and confusion. What then? We have acknowledged that the Authorised Version is not perfect. But the errors are very few, and what errors there are are not sufficient to be a serious obstacle to arriving at the truth as to doctrine. Therefore, if anyone needs to make his statements of doctrine depend upon that which he asserts is a literal rendering of the Greek, beware of that doctrine. There are some cases where the English translation seems to support teaching which is not right. 2 Thess. 2.⁷ is one such, seeming to support the teaching that the Church will be caught up before the great tribulation. But it can only be used in that way by assuming that it means more than it says. On the other hand, there is full proof that the Church will not be caught up first, without having to depend on the more correct translation of that verse.

So, as to sound doctrine, the ordinary reader can go on with his English Bible with confidence. There is sufficient correctness for him to be established in the truth without a knowledge of Greek. There are, however, cases where a knowledge of Greek will give fuller confirmation, and many such are given in the margin; but treat very guardedly the marginal notes which are preceded by the word “or.” Some of these are quite wrong.

As we proceed through the epistle, if God permit, such passages will be dealt with; and the reader will then see experimentally the application of what has been said above.

It is hoped that these remarks will encourage any who feel dependent upon the statements and interpretations of teachers, to aim at being more established in the truth through the Holy Spirit’s own application of the Scriptures. There is no reason why any believer (for all such come under the promise of John 16.¹³) who is of normal intelligence should not be able to take his stand for the truth from his own knowledge of God’s Word.

One thing, however, is essential, that is, an open mind for God’s teaching and a willingness to alter in view of plain statements of Scripture. If the mind is made up before coming to the Scriptures, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

The TRUTH alone sanctifies (John 17.¹⁷).

The TRUTH alone is consistent with love (1 Cor. 13.⁶).

The TRUTH alone produces unity (Eph. 4.¹⁵).

The TRUTH alone edifies the Body (Eph. 4.¹⁶).

No lie is of the truth (1 John 2.²¹).

Therefore let us love in the TRUTH (2 John 1).

CHAPTER 1

READING, VERSES 1-15

PAUL'S first thought, as he commences this epistle, is that he is a slave of Jesus Christ, as the word servant implies. Not a slave under a tyrant, but nevertheless bought—and therefore not his own. The relation of Onesimus to Philemon is an illustration in measure.

But the next statement, "called—an apostle," shows the dignity and authority of his position. While the further statement, "separated unto the Gospel of God," helps us to realise that he is one who is qualified to treat of this matter as a "wise master-builder," as he describes himself in 1 Cor. 3.¹⁰.

Ver. 2, though a parenthesis, is important. The Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ, is found in the Old Testament, not only in type but actually stated in the prophets. The statement that the Church is not the subject of Old Testament prophecy needs to be qualified. That idea has been carried too far, and is often a barrier to the reception of the truth concerning prophecy. The last chapter bears the same testimony as the first; ch. 16.²⁵⁻²⁶ shews that the mystery as well as the Gospel is to be found in the prophets. An interesting example of this is found in Mal. 1.¹¹. Israel had dishonoured God (ver. 6), but He says that He will be honoured among the Gentiles from East to West. Israel could only offer incense in one place, that was Jerusalem. And the same applies to the future. Therefore this verse can only be understood in the sense of Rev. 5.⁸. This is sufficient for the present; if the simple force of these statements in Rom. 1 and 16 are borne in mind it will help as to prophetic truth.

Further, we notice that the Gospel of God concerns His Son, "... of the seed of David." Another "Jewish" expression which Paul is inspired to use in introducing that which he is pleased to call "my Gospel." Quite a number of distinctions have been made which have no warrant from Scripture, such as "Son of Man" and "Son of God," "the Gospel of the Kingdom" and "the Gospel of the Grace of God." If we build, as to prophetic teaching, on actual statements which give time marks for the events, we are safe. But to build on assumptions based on different expressions like those above, is not only unsafe but very misleading.

It is evident that all that is contained in the Gospel is not stated in these early verses, nor even referred to; that remains to be stated in the structure of the epistle, later. These verses are evidently designed to emphasize Paul's authority for that which he is about to handle. The Messiahship and resurrection glory of the One from whom he had received his apostleship. This is of importance to us, and should help us to prepare our minds to receive without human reasoning or preconceived ideas what God has revealed through His servant.

Ver. 7 shows us to whom he is writing. "All that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints." A "saint" is one who is "set apart"

for God; and every one who truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is that. Hence, this epistle, though it descends to the depths and ascends to the heights of the truth concerning the work of God in Christ, and though there is no one so learned that he can get beyond its teaching, it is nevertheless written to all the believers in Rome; so that the most unlearned can understand, providing he is content to accept every word as it is given and refuse all suggestions that any statement means anything in the least more than, or different from, what the words actually say.

The two principal features of the next few verses are the faith (or faithfulness) of the Roman believers, and Paul's concern that they might be still further established. From ch. 16 it is clear that there was a fairly large gathering at Rome and, though he had not been the means of their salvation and calling out, as "the apostle of the Gentiles" he felt a real loving concern that such a gathering should be thoroughly established in every way.

The epistle itself is chiefly dealing with the doctrine of justification and those things which follow directly from it. Such things as prophecy and ministry are touched upon in ch. 12, but they are not dealt with as they are in the epistle to the Corinthians. The same applies to matters of discipline. The doctrine could be dealt with by writing, inasmuch as it applies equally to all, but the imparting of some spiritual gift, as mentioned in ver. 11, would seem to require Paul's personal presence. The appointment of elders would need personal acquaintance; and both that and the imparting of the gifts as mentioned in 1 Cor. 12 and 14 would normally be by the laying-on of an apostle's hands.

These facts are helpful to us, in that whatever "gifts" may be lost the doctrine never alters. Thus God overruled that it should be put into writing and preserved. Moreover, gifts are not essential, the doctrine is. A house of God is a "pillar and ground of the truth," and if a gathering is not sound in doctrine as the apostle taught it in this epistle, it cannot be regarded as "a house of God," and therefore has no claim upon a child of God. The fact that Paul did not wait till he went to them to expound this doctrine also shows that he felt the importance of it himself as being essential to their establishment. It is therefore incumbent upon every believer to see that he is well grounded in it. And it is not out of place to repeat that the epistle was written for the simplest to understand.

Paul was not only a wise master-builder, he was a loving shepherd. We little appreciate what his journeys meant; the mode of travelling was tedious, and the journeys were often long and hazardous, but nothing was too costly for him to be a blessing to the saints. So we see in these verses his earnest longing for many years (ch. 15.²³), with unwavering prayers. The prayers were eventually answered, and he went to Rome. But what a chain of events led up to it: a prisoner at Jerusalem and at Cæsarea, the storm and shipwreck, and then a

prisoner at Rome. But he counted it all joy to be able to spend and be spent for the sake of those who were as dear children upon his heart. And though he would spend and be spent, he did not consider them to be debtors to him, but himself debtors to them (ver. 14). Fruit among them (ver. 13) was his desire, and the more fruit the greater the reward in that day. Thus the more he could labour for the edifying of the saints, no matter what it cost, the more he was laying up treasure in heaven.

READING, CHAPTER 1.¹⁶⁻³²

Ver. 16: Paul's statement that he was not ashamed has a deep significance. He was a strict Pharisee before he was converted, proud of his position, and a persecutor of the Christians. Then came the great change in his experience. But to the Jews the Gospel was still a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks it was still foolishness. But he was not ashamed. Why? Because the Gospel is God's *power* unto salvation to both Jews and Greeks: cf. 1 Cor. 1.¹⁸⁻²⁴. Paul had proved this. Pharisaism had no such power, nor had any administration of law, no matter how pure it be. But from the day of Pentecost the Gospel had been the power of God unto salvation to thousands. What then was it that gave the Gospel its power? This he makes plain in the next verse.

"For therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith" is the explanation. God was just as righteous in forgiving sins in the old dispensation, because He knew that Christ would die: but the righteousness was not revealed. The Gospel declares Christ to be the sacrificial Substitute for sinners. This, as we have seen in our study of the types*, gives God the righteous ground for dispensing grace to sinners. It also gives assurance to the sinner who believes, because he sees that his sins have been righteously put away and therefore they can never again be laid to his charge.

Possibly the words "out of faith into faith" (ver. 17) are intended to imply a growth of faith—an increasing apprehension of that plan of righteousness.

As we proceed to imbibe the precious teaching of this epistle, we can see that God's righteousness is being demonstrated all through the chapters which deal with God's plan of salvation. Twice Paul asserts this in bold terms. In ch. 3.⁴, in connection with the condemnation of sinners, and in ch. 3.²⁶, in connection with the justification of sinners. But Paul does not hurry to his conclusion. Having declared that God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, he does not pass on at once to explain the Gospel, but goes right to the bottom of the matter and lays the foundation of his structure in demonstrating the righteousness of God in condemning sin and the sinner.

Ver. 18: His first statement is that the wrath of God is (or, is being) revealed. God had visited the earth in various ways in judg-

* "Types in Exodus" and "Types in Leviticus" by the same author.

ment: the Flood, at Babel, Sodom and Gomorrah, judgments upon Israel, judgments upon other nations—i.e., Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The same power operates still, though perhaps not in such a demonstrative way, but with sufficient clearness to any who are minded to see. Then Paul proceeds to set forth the position of man—"without excuse"—and so establishes the righteousness of God from that standpoint.

A reference here to the Greek, and the misuse of it in order to support error, will not be out of place. In ver. 17, the words "the righteousness of God" have been given what is claimed to be the literal rendering, "*a* righteousness of God." The words, having been given this meaning, are then explained to be the righteousness of *Christ*. One needs to be wary of this kind of "literality." By a similar misuse of Greek idiom, some who deny the deity of Christ make John 1.¹ to read "the Word was *a* God." The fact that the Greek has no indefinite article ("a" or "an") is misused to make certain passages mean what is desired to suit the purpose. It is true that the word "the" is not used there (ver. 17) in the Greek. But, if we look at the two contextual verses, we find that in ver. 16 the same rule is followed, where the word "the" is not used in the Greek in the expression "the power of God." But who would think of rendering it "*a* power of God?" Then in ver. 18 the same applies to "the wrath of God." Who would think of reading "*a* wrath of God?" What is the difference between God's love and the love of God; or between God's wisdom and the wisdom of God? None at all. So these verses could be rendered "God's power," "God's righteousness" and "God's wrath." And as there is no difference between God's righteousness and the righteousness of God, there is no reason why the alteration should be made. In fact, there is strong reason why it should not. For, it is not the righteousness of Christ that is being demonstrated in the chapters that follow, but the righteousness of God.

The following verses bring out the inexcusability of man, and therefore the righteousness of God in condemning him. The marginal rendering "to them," as an alternative, is not so good as "in them," to say the least. The word "in" is there in the Greek. This is not difficult to understand, for His eternal power and Godhead are manifested *in* man. If we get back to the beginning of the doctrine of the evolutionist, he would have us believe that that which did not exist came to exist without any outside power. Or that that which had no life took to itself life without any outside power.

The evidence of God's creative power is in man himself, as well as in "nature." And because of this he is without excuse for his departure. We further see that man's early history does not show an evolution upward, but downward. And everything that grows demonstrates the same rule—deterioration—if it is left to itself. Therefore not only the sinfulness, but the foolishness is pointed out in ver. 22.

Another feature of this chapter is the connection between idolatry and sin. Man must have something to worship. This fact is a further blow at both Atheism and Evolutionism. Birds, beasts and insects make various forms of homes and colonies, but none of them build temples. A clearly defined line of distinction is drawn here, and no missing link has ever been found to make up the gap. Atheism only exists where the Gospel has shone its perfect light on the moral darkness of idolatry. But men love darkness rather than light, and rather than walk in God's light they prefer to walk in the light and sparks of their own kindling (Isa. 50.¹¹)—man has become his own God—he worships himself. Such is the present-day attainment, even in the midst of much profession of worshipping God. Heathen religions do not produce holiness, they are the work of the Devil and they bear fruit accordingly.

We may also call to mind God's interventions in those early times, as in the case of Cain and at the Tower of Babel. Seeing then that men did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up. Three times are we told this, vers. 24, 26, 28. Deut. 4.³²⁻³⁶ and Psalm 147.¹⁹⁻²⁰ show the great privilege and favour bestowed upon Israel in contrast to the other nations, but even they cast off the restraint, until God eventually gave them up to their enemies. But before He did it He said, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. 4.¹⁷). The awful condition to which man can sink when left to himself is made manifest by the words of Rom. 1. Can we be surprised that God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly? But this principle of God's acting can be traced further, even to His dealing with His children individually. The Holy Spirit is willing to lead us into all truth, but if we are not willing to be led, we may be left to eat the bitter fruit of our own way. Oh, the folly, as well as the sin of being self-willed!

The Gospel, with its accompanying teaching as to godliness, together with the Holy Spirit's presence in the children of God, has had a great effect upon the civilized peoples. But the failure of God's children to maintain their position has weakened their influence, and the world is once again ripening for judgment, in spite of all its profession of improvement.

Before we leave this chapter, let us take particular knowledge of the fact already mentioned, that before the Gospel era began, the nations, other than Israel, were "given up" by God. It will be found to be important when we come to chapter five.

C H A P T E R 2

READING, VERSES 1-16

THE word "therefore" at the commencement of this chapter takes our minds back to the end of the previous one. There, after the black description of what man is when given up by God, the matter is brought to a conclusion with the censure that men "knowing the

judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in (or, consent with) them that do them." From such words we see that though God had given them up, there still remained with men a knowledge of His judgment. From the time of Cain God had in certain instances made known this judgment to them. But though men had that knowledge they still did the same things and consented with those that did them. So, then, the righteousness of God is established from this standpoint.

Ch. 2.¹ extends this still further. For, while a man may do certain things, or consent with others in doing them, his conscience may become so seared that God drops out of his mind altogether: see 1.²⁸. But the direst savage knows, when another steals from him, that it is wrong. Yet he in turn will do the same. Herein man condemns himself, as ch. 2.¹ shows. We see, therefore, that no matter how ignorant a man may be of either God's law or the Gospel, he condemns himself by his treatment of his neighbour. The first chapter shows that he is condemned under the first commandment—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" the beginning of chapter two shows that he is condemned under the second commandment—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour." Thus the righteousness of God is demonstrated to the full, even in the condemnation of the most ignorant.

Then the question is raised in ver. 3 as to whether one will *escape* the judgment of God. Paul not only answers this in verses 5 and 6, but we remember that in 1.¹⁸ he has already stated that the wrath of God is (continually) being revealed.

Then the alternative question is raised as to despising the goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God. Men are continually asking, Why does not God intervene? To this we might reply by the further question, Why should God intervene on behalf of one sinner against another sinner? For we have already seen that all are righteously condemned before Him. God will intervene, eventually, but when He does it will be with righteousness upon all: see Jude 15. Just imagine the position of one who is in open rebellion against the king asking why the king does not intervene when he is wronged by another. So is the position of the sinner before God. If we appreciate this, it will help us to appreciate the goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God. Whatever manifestations of God's judgment there have been in the past, God never visits men with the fulness of punishment that their sins deserve. Therefore, every instance of judgment is, in itself, a message of warning, and is thus an expression of His goodness. But the fact that there are innumerable instances in which God passes by man's sinful and rebellious ways still further emphasises the long-suffering that He has toward men. To this we may add the testimony of the prophets whom God sent, not only to Israel, but to Gentile nations as well, warning and beseeching them to turn from their evil ways. But what is the result of all this? Man simply treasures up wrath by continuing in his sin without repentance.

God's forbearance and longsuffering are expressed in withholding of judgment; His goodness is manifested in that "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5.⁴⁵). Paul, in Acts 14.¹⁶⁻¹⁷, uses this fact in his testimony to heathen people against their idolatry. A further "witness" against man.

We do well, dear friends, to pause and consider these things. For nearly six thousand years God has been demonstrating these aspects of His glorious character; but what do we hear from man in response to it all? Only complaint. How many complaints are made each day regarding the weather? In town and in country it is the same, the continuous complaint is an index of the condition of the heart.

Such contemplation of God as suggested will surely lead to worship; even before we reach that marvellous expression of what He is as revealed in the Gospel.

The Lord has bidden His disciples to lay up treasure in heaven. What an awful contrast is seen here in ver. 5, "treasuring up wrath." O that men realised the solemn fact. Every day adding to that great accumulation which has to be recompensed upon them in the day of judgment: for God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (ver. 6).

The verses that follow might be taken to suggest that man obtains eternal life by virtue of "patient continuance in well-doing." But we must remember that the whole epistle is one, and the basis of acceptance of any man in the sight of God is not reached till we come to ch. 3.²¹. It is true that He will render to every man according to his works, but Rev. 20 shows that there are a thousand years between the judgment of the saved and the unsaved. But if we follow the thought of the writer in the chapter before us, we see that those who receive eternal life manifest a work of God in their hearts. Verse 13, if taken alone, could be understood to teach that justification is by "doing the law;" but ch. 3.²⁰ tells us just the opposite. The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself, let us therefore see whether the context, in ch. 2, will give us an explanation that leaves no difficulty.

In summing up this part of his subject, Paul breaks off just before he reaches his final statement (ver. 16), and inserts a parenthesis (verses 13-15) which explains the matter, and which is confirmed by chs. 7 and 8; and this is made still more clear by considering other parts of Scripture. Verse 15 speaks of "the work of the law written on their hearts." In Heb. 10.¹⁶ we see that this is an evidence of the new covenant, and that it is God's doing. So in Rom. 2.¹⁵, there is a work of God done in the heart which accounts for them doing the things contained in the law; their nature has been changed by a work of God in grace. But we have before seen that the Gospel has not yet been set forth in the epistle: this chapter is dealing with those who lived in the period of the "law" and before that. In this connection Acts 10 is a help. There we have a man who, though a Roman soldier, was devout,

feared God, gave much alms, and prayed (ver. 2). And before Peter began to set the Gospel before him and his company, he said (ver. 35) that in every nation such were accepted with God. Now in view of the clear statement that no man can be justified by the works of the law, we can only come to one conclusion, namely, that there were, before the Gospel era, those whom God justified by grace on the basis of the atoning work of Christ, and that such were inwrought by God so that the works of the law were manifest in them. Their lack of knowledge of God's ways did not affect their position, though it did affect their experience as to joy in God's grace. And Luke 1.⁷⁷ is a helpful confirmation.

When Peter returned and gave his account of what had happened (ch. 11), in recording Cornelius' words he said, "... words whereby thou and all thy house shall be *saved*" (ver. 14). The word "saved" in Scripture is usually associated with the *experience* of God's grace rather than the fact of justification. Thus, when Peter set the Gospel before them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied, and entered into the joy of the knowledge of God's grace in accord with the character of the new dispensation.

In agreement with what we have here seen, Rom. 10.¹⁰ is helpful. Cornelius must have been a true believer in God, before Peter went to him, for his prayers to have been heard and his alms accepted. Therefore he was justified by grace through faith: that is the first part of Rom. 10.¹⁰ (imputed righteousness). But when Peter preached the Gospel to him, confession was made with the mouth, and salvation in experience came in: that is the second part of Rom. 10.¹⁰.

Returning then to Rom. 2, we see that God's grace is only associated with a life of righteousness. The same is seen in ch. 8, *their* righteousness does not justify them, but if the life does not bear evidence we must question the justification.

READING, CHAPTER 2.¹⁷—3.⁴

"Behold, *thou* art called a Jew" indicates that there is a difference between a Jew and a Gentile. We need to be clear as to this; and to ever remember that statements must be understood in relation to the contexts in which they are used. In the next chapter Paul makes clear that "there is no difference" (vers. 19-23), and the same is asserted in Gal. 3.²⁸. But that relates to the *ground* on which one is justified, and to our position once we are "in Christ." These earlier chapters in Romans are dealing with the matter of condemnation: and as to that there are varying degrees. In Luke 12.⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸ the Lord shows that there will be different degrees of punishment for sin according to knowledge: and this is what Paul is demonstrating in the chapter before us. If "knowing the judgment of God" in ch. 1.³², has a bearing on the person's condemnation, even of Gentiles who are in darkness, what shall we say of Israel? The emphasis on *thou*, in 2.¹⁷, brings out the distinction. In contrast to the ignorant heathen, the Jew *boasts* of his

position. And though it does not require a second thought to see that a man never keeps the law fully, he *rests* in it. What a delusion! The blindness of pride that allows him to rest in such a position has a fuller fruit in hypocrisy, as expressed in the verses that follow. While they instruct and teach and preach and tell others what they should not do, they themselves do those very things. We are not surprised that the Lord said to such, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Reading through the Prophets will fully confirm the words of ver. 24, that the name of God was continually blasphemed among the Gentiles through them: whereas they had been chosen to be God's representatives before all the nations.

But these verses will not have the full value to us unless we see some present application of the principle. Having seen that judgment will be according to knowledge and profession, we cannot but be impressed with the awful weight of judgment that awaits many who *rest* in the law and *boast* of God today.

There is an application, too, that comes nearer to us who, though, thanks be to God, we do not rest in the law, but in God's grace in Christ, have to give account to our Lord nevertheless, as servants. The judgment seat of Christ for the believer will be as strictly righteous as the great white throne for the unbeliever. Our rewards will be glorious; but our *losses* will be real. In view of this, should we not ask ourselves what we are doing with *our* knowledge? To make a profession of knowing the Scriptures without careful attention to the precepts contained therein, will not only mean loss for us, but that the name of the One Whom we call Master and Lord is dishonoured.

We return to the primary theme of the passage. In vers. 25-29 we see that circumcision involves a profession. It was the token of a covenant with God (Gen. 17). But if the commandments of God are not kept, the covenant is made void. If, on the other hand, the uncircumcised keeps the law of God, and thus shows a work of God in the heart, it is evident that he stands in a covenant relationship to God. Such are the "Israel of God" in Gal. 6.¹⁶, and the true "circumcision" of Phil. 3.³ and Col. 2.¹¹. These verses at the end of the chapter are a helpful amplification of vers. 13-15, and have an application to the present time as well as to the past.

In ch. 3 Paul pursues the matter with the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" This is asked in view of what we have seen, that greater knowledge may mean greater judgment. But far from reasoning that it were better to be ignorant, he goes on to enumerate the real advantages. He afterwards asserts that no man can be justified by the law; but if one's heart was right toward God, the knowledge of the law in Israel was a great blessing. Although "the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin," yet a man who sinned could have a consciousness of forgiveness: Lev. 4.^{20, 26, 35}. The sacrifice foreshadowed the death of Christ, and the one who came in God's appointed way, with a contrite heart, was assured of forgiveness. And

even when David had committed sins for which the law made no provision but the death penalty, when he came in true contrition of heart and a sense of being cast utterly on the mercy of God, he found mercy and was assured of forgiveness; and his experience was not only recorded in Psalms 32 and 51, but is also brought forward in this epistle to demonstrate justification by grace (ch. 4).

Paul, as a Jew, says, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3.²⁴). When the lawyer in Luke 10.²⁵, and the young man in Matt. 19.¹⁶, asked what they might do to inherit eternal life, they were both told plainly to keep the law. Thus, in one sense, the Lord taught justification by the law, and this is right: for it is written, "The man that doeth these things shall live in (or by) them" (Rom. 10.⁵). But we must remember that God accepts nothing short of perfection: and the Lord brought both the young man and the lawyer to an end of all hope in their keeping of the law by leading them to realise what the law required. By so doing He was paving the way for the appreciation of the Gospel of grace. There is only one Gospel, for there is only one way of salvation. It was set forth in Abel's sacrifice, and it will be preached by the angel when all human testimony has been stifled in the realm of Antichrist (Rev. 14.⁶). It may not always be presented in the same way because of differing conditions, but Gal. 1.⁶⁻⁷ makes clear that any attempt to introduce an element of justification by works at once renders it null and void as a gospel. The word "gospel" means "a good announcement"; and to present a sinner with the thought of doing one iota towards his salvation is not a good announcement, but a deception. The Gospel allows of nothing but absolute *grace*.

So then, there is an advantage in knowing the law, even though it only leads to a knowledge of condemnation. For that is the position to which every soul must be brought—to realise his dire need and extremity—before he can appreciate the grace of God in the gift of His beloved Son.

Again we have digressed from the real theme of the passage, let us return. The object of the inspired writer is still, in these verses, to demonstrate the righteousness of God. Incidentally, the digression above also emphasises this. But Paul's theme is still God's righteousness in judgment. God's faith—faithfulness—will not be affected by Israel's unbelief. If He has spoken of blessing, blessing will be given according to His terms. If He has spoken of cursing, it will stand with equal sureness. God is true. But here the word is, let God "become" true, and every man "become" a liar. A man is neither Guilty nor Not Guilty till the case has been tried. Here God is being viewed as under trial: man is continually complaining against God that His ways are not righteous. Paul takes up the matter and puts God on trial. He raises one point after another, and demonstrates that God is righteous in all His ways. Thus when the verdict is passed, God "becomes" righteous and every man "becomes" a liar. So God is

justified in His sayings, and overcomes when He is judged. A clever man may overcome his adversary by argument, though he be in the wrong; and a strong man may overcome by brute force; but God overcomes in the law-court of justice by His perfect righteousness. In the law-court a thing must be proved. And if a thing is proved, every conscience is satisfied. Instinctively we believe that God is righteous, but God Himself does not want us to accept that verdict without our understanding of the matter being satisfied. He has inspired His servant to take up the matter in this exhaustive manner in order that we might, as it were, look right into heaven and behold His glorious throne, with righteousness like the pure light radiating throughout the whole universe. The following Scriptures should help our worship: Psa. 7.⁹; 89.¹⁴; 104.²; 119.¹³⁷; 145.¹⁷. And what confidence and assurance is brought to the soul as we thus contemplate His glory and majesty, and realise that this God is our God for ever and ever.

The statement in verse 4, "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou are judged," is of such a nature as to express the summing up of the matter. And it can be seen that the next verse begins a fresh aspect of the case. The words are a quotation from Psa. 51, and a consideration of the construction of the Psalm is helpful. The words quoted are used to sum up the first aspect of the case, that is, David's personal guilt for his sin, after having confessed this and sought forgiveness. Then in ver. 5 he takes up the experimental side of the matter, "shapen in iniquity." For this he does not ask forgiveness, but comforts himself in the confidence that God will undertake as to his inner experience (ver. 6). But in the contrition of soul that he is experiencing he keeps reverting to the judicial side of the matter and asking God to cleanse him from his guilt; and then again turning to the experimental side. So, ver. 7, "Purge me with hyssop," is a judicial cleansing. Ver. 8 is restitution to joy—experimental. Ver. 9 judicial again. Verses 10-13 experimental, dwelling longer on that side of the matter. Ver. 14 again brings in the blood-guiltiness, but quickly he passes to the full confidence of his sin being put away for ever, in the words, "and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." So he declares God to be righteous in condemning sin first (ver. 4), then declares Him to be righteous in forgiving, though He desired no sacrifice (of animals) to put away the sin. This beautifully agrees with Rom. 3, where God is afterwards declared to be "just and the justifier of him which believeth in *Jesus*," this passage bringing in the revelation of the New Covenant, "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." This view of the Psalm may help to clear away any difficulty that may have been felt as to David bringing in the condition in which he was born. It is not that he asks forgiveness for that condition, but victory over it.

C H A P T E R 3

READING, VERSES 5-20

So far we have seen that Paul has set the iniquity of man and the righteousness of God over against each other, and has shown that man is inexcusable. In so doing, he has in several places brought in the fact that God will judge the world and render to men according to their works. Now, in the verses we are about to consider, he demonstrates that God is righteous in taking vengeance. He does it too in a way which we would hardly expect. A way which shows that he is not afraid to face the objector. Indeed, it is not Paul, but God who is doing this. And because it is God we may rest assured that He will clear Himself.

So, in ver. 5, Paul puts the words, as it were, in the objector's mouth, and then answers them. What an example of fearlessness as to defending truth! He has demonstrated the righteousness of God on the black background of man's sin; now he introduces a most subtle argument (on behalf of the objector) to avoid the necessity of vengeance.

Verses 5, 7 and 8 present the objector's arguments, and verse 6 gives us the answer. A very brief answer; yet we may be sure it is a sufficient one. Let us then consider what is involved in it. The defence of truth in this epistle is not against Atheism. The defence is of God's **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. In ch. 1.¹⁹ onwards man is seen to be righteously condemned because he has the evidence of God in himself, yet he does not glorify God. Ch. 2.¹⁷ says the Jew **BOASTS** of God. Ch. 2.¹ says that he condemns himself in that he does that which he condemns in others. This last is clear proof of man's recognition that sin should be punished. The fact that men will worship something, though they will not give the Creator the glory due to Him (ch. 1.²⁵), together with the other facts mentioned, shows that God **IS** righteous in taking vengeance. Thus Paul's answer in the form of a question, "For then how shall God judge the world?" throws the objector back on to that which his conscience must admit—which has already been asserted—that God **IS** righteous in taking vengeance.

It is true that the **UN-righteousness** of man will magnify the righteousness of God. It is true that God is glorified in His truth on the background of man's lie. It is true that the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain (Psa. 76.¹⁰). But man is not thereby justified, nor is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance.

The verses we are considering therefore form a confirmation of the words immediately preceding, "that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged."

In ver. 5 Paul says, "I speak as a man," while he is speaking for the objector. Now, in ver. 9, he asks, "Are **WE** better than they?" This must refer to those who are justified (see verses 23, 24) in contrast to

those of whom he has been speaking who are condemned. Well, are WE better than THEY? No, in no wise. For before we were justified by God's grace we were in the same position as all others. Thus He has PROVED, Jews and Gentiles, to be all under sin.

How has he proved this? We have seen that man is condemned purely and solely for that for which he is personally responsible. That for which he is inexcusable. That which he knows. And that which he condemns in others. Not a word to suggest that there is any condemnation because the sin of Adam is imputed to us, nor a word to suggest that it is imputed. Neither is there a word about the sinful nature we inherit. For God to condemn men for either Adam's sin, or the sinful nature we inherit, would be unrighteous. Paul is concerned with establishing God's righteousness in every way. This epistle has been seriously corrupted to support this error, an error which is deeply embedded in the minds of many; largely because distinction is not made between the IMPUTATION to us of the sin which Adam committed, and the inheritance of a sinful nature. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that Adam's sin is imputed to us, and as to the sinful nature which we inherit, ch. 7.⁹ clearly proves that there is no condemnation for it. If the Lord will, we will consider this more fully later; let us pursue the matter as it is presented in ch. 3.

From ver. 10, Paul goes to the Old Testament to still further prove how righteously man is condemned. But even these verses have been corrupted to make out that Adam's sin is imputed to us. For ver. 12 has been made to mean "they are together become unprofitable *in Adam*." And that not in the sense of a *sinful condition inherited*, but in the sense that Adam's sin is *imputed* to us. The reader would do well to refer to Psalm 14, whence the quotation is made, to satisfy himself as to whether the introduction of the words "in Adam" is justified.*

* The addition of the words "in Adam," in ver. 12, as it came to our notice, was based on the Greek word used for "together" (*hama*) and the fact that the verb is "Aorist." The word "*hama*" usually has the meaning "at the same time," but not always. In 1 Thess. 5.¹⁰ it cannot mean "at the same time" for Christ will have been "alive" two thousand years before the saints "live together with Him." We allow that, generally, we should give a word its usual meaning rather than its unusual. But if the usual meaning is (a) not consistent with the context, (b) not consistent with the teaching of Scripture, (c) not consistent with right principles, we ought to, at least, try the unusual meaning, to see if it is more fitting. (a) The context has nothing whatever in it to suggest ADAM'S sin has anything to do with our condemnation; nor is he even mentioned. In ver. 9 Paul says, "we have before proved": and we have seen how he has proved it. That is, by things for which man is without excuse. In ver. 12 he quotes Psa. 14 to corroborate it. It would be quite improper to quote a verse that stated something different, which he would be doing if it referred to "sinning in Adam." (b) "Sinning in Adam" is nowhere taught in Scripture. (c) The thought that God holds men guilty for the sin which Adam committed makes Him to be unrighteous. Therefore on all three points the usual meaning should be rejected.

Further, as the context is dealing with men's conduct, the most that the

The words in ver. 11, "there is none that understandeth," might at first seem to modify man's guilt, if not excuse him entirely. But no, a little reflection on what has gone before will again demonstrate that God is righteous. In ch. 1.²⁸ we saw that men "did not LIKE to retain God in their knowledge." And therefore "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Man's wilful departure is first: and it is the opposition of the heart that robs men of their understanding of God. We do well to recognise also that the same principle works in the case of believers. The heart attitude governs the mind. The Holy Spirit is willing to lead into all truth. If believers do not agree as to God's teaching, it cannot be the fault of the Holy Spirit; the hindrance must therefore be in one or the other, or both of the persons who disagree. This should cause us all to be very careful to allow the Word of God alone to control our thoughts.

As we pursue the passage we notice a development. The understanding being darkened, they go out of the way. Their speech toward one another is affected; their feet become SWIFT to shed blood; and in the destruction and misery that follow they lose all fear of God. Sin hardens, and one passes from neglect to open rebellion. The lives of criminals show the same truth; and indeed we are all criminals before God, till grace comes in.

Verse 19: In choosing Israel and giving them the law, God made, as it were, a sample test of mankind under the most favourable conditions. But their privileges and advantages only increased their guilt. Nevertheless, God has thereby demonstrated the sinfulness of the human heart, and in view of the fact that all other nations have equally failed in their circumstances, He is seen to be righteous in bringing in the whole world "Guilty before God." The law did not relieve the position for Israel, it only gave them a fuller knowledge of sin (ver. 20). Thus we reach the conclusion of this portion of the matter: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." Man is shown to the full to be righteously condemned, and hopelessly unable to help himself.

READING, CHAPTER 3.²¹⁻²⁵

We now enter upon a more joyful aspect of the righteousness of God. It is His righteousness in justifying the ungodly. And "if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."

But it is only fair in dealing with this 21st verse to say something meaning "at the same time" could imply, is, "together they became unprofitable" as to their condition. There is not the slightest ground for bringing in the IMPUTATION of Adam's personal sin to us; which is the object of the one who gives it the meaning "all sinned in Adam." The words of Psa. 14 (Hebrew) will fully bear out all that is said above.

As to the "Aorist," we find that it is also used in verses 13 and 17. So that if we read "became unprofitable in Adam" in verse 12, we might also read in verse 13, "used deceit in Adam," and in verse 17, "the way of peace they knew not in Adam."

about the expression "the righteousness of God" here, compared with 1.¹⁷. The two expressions are exactly the same; and we would avoid giving any appearance of being inconsistent by not giving exactly the same meaning to both. Everyone who knows Greek will agree that it is not possible to give the true sense of the words throughout if we try to use the words "a," "an" and "the," in English, in precisely the same way as they are used in the Greek.

The obvious sense of the passage as well as the context and the general teaching of Scripture, must decide. We have seen that "a righteousness of God," in 1.¹⁷, is not consistent with the teaching that follows. But "a righteousness of God," in 3.²¹, is possible, seeing that Paul is now introducing, for the first time in the epistle, the righteousness which is imputed to us. But whatever may be said as to the use of "a" or "the" righteousness, there is not the slightest reason for suggesting that it is the "righteousness of *Christ*." *

That which is imputed to us is called the "righteousness of God," because it is given to us by God. Just as in 6.²³ the "gift of God" is that which is given to us by God. How we can rejoice that there is a righteousness which is imputed to us who believe, which is God's free gift. The 4th chapter will explain what this righteousness consists in, the verses before us are intended to show on what ground it is imputed, so that God is justified in so doing. So then, there is a righteousness which is "unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference." The rich and the poor alike can give nothing, the Jew is no more acceptable than the Gentile. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Sadly, we have another verse here that has been misconstrued to imply that Adam's sin is imputed to us. The word used for "have sinned," in the Greek, is in a tense that is much misunderstood. Some render this statement, "all sinned," and give the meaning to it "all sinned on one occasion, together": that is, "in Adam." There is not the slightest ground for this thought.

The tense used here is the "aorist," and the name itself means "*un-limited*." That is, that this form of the word is used when it is NOT to be limited in thought to any single action, NOR to imply continuance or otherwise. So then, to limit the words "all sinned" to the one action of Adam in the garden is quite wrong grammatically, as well as being foreign to the teaching of Scripture generally. It simply states the fact that "all sinned" at some time or other; and if it were only once in our experience, that would be sufficient to condemn us. Alas, we know that it is not only once. And the translation "all have sinned" is quite satisfactory from all standpoints.

The second part of this verse has the sense of continuance, and could be rendered "are coming short." That is, "all come short," not "all have come short." Thus, in view of the following words, we are justi-

* See page 6.

fied not only from past sins, but from all sins; ch. 4.⁸ is clear as to this, and gives the believing heart a solid ground of peace.

Verses 24 and 25 show what it is that has secured our justification. It is the redemption which was accomplished in the blood of Christ. His precious blood was shed, He died, His body and soul were offered in sacrifice to God, and that was all-sufficient.

Here again (O how sad it is that earnest Christians allow their preconceived thoughts to affect the meaning of God's words), verse 25 has been misused to support the teaching that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His people.

The word "propitiation" is the same as is used for "mercyseat" in Heb. 9.⁵: not the same as for "propitiation" in 1 John 2.². From this it is argued that the mercyseat in the tabernacle rested on the top of the ark. The ark contained the two tables of stone with the law of God upon them, and it is thus a type of Christ, who had the law within His heart (Psa. xl.⁸ and Heb. 9.⁴). From this it is assumed that the mercyseat being mentioned in Rom. 3.²⁵, we are to understand that the ark is implied, and therefore the obedience of Christ to the law. This may sound very well to those who already hold that doctrine; but the reasoning needs to be tested further.

When Aaron made the atonement (Lev. 16.¹⁴), he was commanded to sprinkle the blood upon the mercyseat and before the mercyseat. Never do we read of the blood being sprinkled before the ark, though the mercyseat was upon the ark. This is but one of the many instances where the Levitical arrangements, in type, bear testimony that Christ's obedience to law had no part in the actual making of the atonement. His sinlessness and perfect obedience were essential, but there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that His obedience was offered on our behalf. He offered up Himself, but His obedience consists in His actions, they are not Himself; what he has done remains His and He must have the reward for it. Lev. 17.¹¹ says, "It is the blood that maketh the atonement for the soul," and that perfectly agrees with what we have seen in Rom. 3.^{25, 26}, the blood and the mercyseat are all that are mentioned as necessary to secure our justification. Rev. 11.¹⁹ provides a helpful counterpart to this. There the ark in the heavenly temple is revealed; but it is not in a context of redemption, but of judgment. The typical teaching is consistent throughout: God has designed it to agree with His pure doctrine. In Rom. 3 the ark is not mentioned: in Rev. 11.¹⁹ the mercyseat is not mentioned: and if we introduce them we spoil the view that God has given. Judgment in connection with the ark, in Rev. 11.¹⁹ is fitting because Christ, as the obedient One, has earned the dominion over all which Adam lost by disobedience. Psa. 45 bears testimony to this, showing that not only "the oil of gladness," but the use of the "sword" are because of His "grace, truth, meekness and righteousness" in His earthly life. So we can rejoice that, though it is sad in itself, the errors of others are

overruled to bring out the beautiful consistency of all Scripture in its testimony to Christ.

Verse 25 speaks of "the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." The word "remission," in this case, is a word meaning "putting aside," and is associated with the sins that are past. Thus showing that the sins that were committed under the old covenant—before Christ—were put aside until Christ came and made the atonement, whereby they were put away for ever. In this God draws our attention to the fact that He was righteous in forgiving the sins of those who were repentant even hundreds of years before Christ died. Heb. 9.¹⁵ bears out this testimony more fully, and we not only therefore rejoice in the righteousness of God, but we see that any thought of man being accepted on the ground of his own works is vain, and worse than vain: for in view of the fact that "there is none that doeth good and sinneth not," God would be unrighteous if He accepted any apart from the offering up of His Beloved Son to bear wrath in the place of the sinner.

Verse 29, however, completes the testimony that this precious redemption is not only for those who lived before Christ; Jew or Gentile, all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, are freely justified from all things, and are assured of eternal life.

CHAPTER 3.²⁶ (a supplement written later)

PART 1.

A large part of this book is taken up with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's obedience, chiefly from the standpoint of refuting what is advanced in support of it, but also pointing out the testimony of this Epistle to the true doctrine of justification by the blood of Christ alone.

But recently the force of the word "declare" in 3.²⁶ has been impressed on my mind. If that verse were not there, there is sufficient in verses 24, 25 to show that justification is by the blood of Christ alone, for it is "justification" that is asserted here, not "merely forgiveness" (as some say), and we have no right to add to Scripture. This I have shown.

But ver. 26 is such as to settle the matter beyond question. Here God says that He has "declared" (shown or proved) His righteousness in justifying the sinner who believes on His Son. Let it be noticed that it is "justification," that is asserted in this passage (verses 22, 24, 26, 28, 30). And quite contrary to the assertion that the obedience of Christ is the righteousness which is imputed to us, God here proves His righteousness in justifying us without saying a word about the obedience of Christ.

It may be proved that a man was in a certain place at a certain time when a crime was committed, but he cannot be found guilty on that alone. The case is not proved, one way or the other, unless everything essential to the case has been cited. If the obedience of Christ, as the

righteousness which is imputed to us, is essential to our justification, it must needs be cited in this context before it can be said that God has proved Himself righteous in justifying the sinner.

This passage, verses 21-28, is the one above all others that is inspired to present the means whereby justification is accomplished. It would be quite wrong in principle to think that those Roman believers would be expected to look elsewhere for something that should have been stated here where proof is being given. Other passages RELATING to this doctrine should be understood in the light of this one, then all will fit perfectly without wresting any. God has proved His righteousness here without mentioning the obedience of Christ. Therefore that obedience has no part in our justification.

The tenacity with which some have clung to this error, and their misuse of Scripture in so doing, has caused much trouble and schism among God's children, and it is still being perpetuated. Few realize the seriousness of the error and they therefore let it pass.

We need to see that when the Lord became flesh He took upon Him the limitations of humanity. He could not be in two places at once: He could not live the life of a priest in Israel: nor could He live the life of a Gentile. He therefore could not make good what either of these had failed to do. But if a substitutionary obedience is required it certainly must be a real one and not mere fiction. He lived one man's life and for that He will have the reward and no one else. (Phil. 2.⁵⁻¹¹: Heb. 1.⁹). He can neither divide up that obedience and share it out, nor can each believer have it all. Thus there is no righteousness in the doctrine. But that which God has set forth in Rom. 3.²¹⁻²⁸, showing that the remission of sins by the blood of Christ constitutes us righteous in His sight, is that wherein He proves Himself to be righteous.

The error itself is serious; as is also the schism that it causes, because others, whose consciences will not allow them to be identified with it have had to sever precious fellowship, and that still continues. Hymns are doing a large part in propagating the error. Imaginary explanations of types and other passages of Scripture, which obscure their real significance, are given and received as Spirit taught ministry.

Many who hold the error see that there must come a revived unity of the faith before our Lord returns, therefore this matter must be rectified before the blessed hope can be realized. Now let each one ask himself, What am I doing about it?

I am prepared to enter into correspondence, or meet for conversation, or address gatherings, as the Lord enables, with those who are prepared to accept what Scripture says, or who have genuine difficulties in their minds but are willing to let God's work speak for itself without private interpretations.

Let us not shirk our responsibility dear brethren, "Behold the Judge standeth at the door."

PART 2

In ch. 3.²¹⁻²⁸ Paul has laid the foundation of his discourse on justification, and that is sufficient to establish the truth of the doctrine; but there is more to be said on the matter. But whatever remains to be said, it must agree with this foundation. And if we have read aright we shall see agreement all through, whatever the aspect being presented. Every part of the plan will fit perfectly in its place according to the mind of the Designer.

So, going back, 3.²²⁻²⁴ asserts that *all* who are justified are justified in the same way. In verses 25-26 God is declaring His righteousness in *justifying* those who believe. Then why does He not use a passage that speaks of *justification*, such as of Abraham in Gen. 15? Why does He speak of the putting aside of sins? The only satisfactory answer is that the putting aside of sins (forgiveness) is really justification.

In ch. 4 the question of 3.²⁹ which is really answered in the next verse, is taken further and demonstrated by the cases of Abraham and David: showing that both these had the like "blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (ver. 6). The one in uncircumcision and the other in circumcision (verses 10, 11).

But in Psa. 32.^{1, 2}, David does not use the word "justified" or "counted righteous" but speaks of transgression *forgiven* and sin *covered*, and, the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord "*will not impute sin.*"

Has Paul, then, failed to produce the evidence for Jew and Gentile being *justified*? No. If God will not impute sin to a man He must thereby count him righteous. If his sins are all put away he cannot be reckoned unrighteous, he therefore must, on that account, be reckoned righteous. Thus again, as in 3.²⁵, it is understood that the forgiveness of sins is justification.

Then, coming to 4.²³⁻²⁵ we find the same standpoint is taken; for in ver. 25 the words, "Who was delivered because of our offences, and was raised again because of our justification" can have no other meaning than that He was raised again because our justification was an accomplished fact before God, because He had been delivered to wrath because of our offences.

Thus in these three instances, 3.²⁵; 4.^{7, 8}; 4.²⁵, the removal of our sins is our justification; the extended thoughts being in perfect agreement with the foundational statement.

Ch. 5.¹ brings us to the position of having that justification applied to us—by faith. A number of further blessings which attach to that of justification are then enumerated; among which is salvation from wrath in the future; which is because we are already *justified by His blood*.

What the position really amounts to is, that those who believe that we are declared righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of

Christ do not believe what God says, that "we are justified by His blood." They believe that His blood procured forgiveness but not justification.

For the consideration of ch. 5.¹²⁻²¹ the reader is referred to the later pages of this book. Sufficient to say here that having reached the point of our actual justification in 5.¹, Paul is not in this chapter explaining *how that was made*. And certainly if justification were said here to be by the imputation of Christ's obedience it would contradict the whole of what precedes. Praise God it does not, the whole is in perfect agreement.

READING, CHAPTER 3.²⁶⁻³¹

In verse 26 we reach a fresh aspect of the righteousness of God: it is His righteousness in justifying the ungodly, as ch. 4.⁵ expresses it. We have no difficulty in seeing the righteousness of God in condemning the ungodly, though Paul goes to such lengths to demonstrate it; but to JUSTIFY the ungodly and still retain His righteousness, how can God do this? The law says, Deut. 25.¹, "They shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." God also says that He will not justify the wicked, in Ex. 23.⁷. But how this illustrates the need of regarding the context of all these statements. When God was dealing with Israel in the covenant of the law, He did maintain the principle of law, and expected them to do the same in their administration of it; and "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," "for all have sinned." But now, in the New Covenant revealed in the Gospel, God has His way whereby the sinner who believes in Christ is justified, while He retains His own righteousness and law is established. What is the answer to this apparent contradiction? It is the BLOOD OF CHRIST.

We have only to look back to verses 24 and 25 to see this. The redemption which is in the precious blood of His dear Son is the one thing that God sets forth as the all-sufficient ground upon which He is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." We do well to notice the repetition of the words "to declare His (God's) righteousness," in verses 25 and 26.

When we first begin to think of the ways of God with men we may have difficulty in tracing His righteousness in some things. But if we humbly pursue His teaching in the Scriptures, we find that He has DECLARED His righteousness. That is, He has given evidence or proof of it in such a way that we can see that it is righteous. Even in the matter of election He has demonstrated that He is righteous. The fact that all are not elected does not conflict with righteousness. If it were ONLY a matter of righteousness, we would all have gone to hell, but grace, love and mercy go *beyond* righteousness; yet through the atoning work of Christ they are in perfect agreement with it, because the penalty of the law has been paid in full.

In this precious aspect of the matter we reach the highest peak, as it were, in the mountain range of God's righteousness: and it behoves us

to avail ourselves of the glorious view that is presented from this eminent position. Let us arise in response to the gracious invitation given in S. of S. 4.⁸. It is the Lord Himself that invites us to come "WITH HIM." Fear not the "lions" or the "leopards," the enemy will do all he can to keep us from this privilege and means of strength, but with the Lord we can go onward and upward and look with Him from those lofty peaks. Amana, Shenir and Hermon are peaks in the mountain range of Lebanon, the highest range in Palestine. Lebanon means white, possibly with reference to the snow-capped heights. This may well speak to us of righteousness, for "God is light," and the snow is typical of imputed righteousness, in Isa. 1.¹⁸. Further, in Psa. 36.⁶ we read, "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, Thy judgments are a great deep." Another type will help to complete the figure: Jonah's experience in the whale is a figure of Christ's three days and nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12.⁴⁰), and while he was in that strange prison he recounted his experience, before the whale swallowed him, while he was in the water. This earlier experience, then, corresponds to Christ's experience on the Cross when He was bearing the wrath of God, before He went to Hades. In Jonah 2.⁵ he says, "The depth closed me round about;" and in ver. 6, "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains."

If we now combine the types in Jonah and Psa. 36, we can see how that the Lord fathomed the "great deep" of God's judgment, going down to "the bottoms of the mountains" of His righteousness when He bore the awful due of all our sins.

But having paid our penalty and procured our justification, death could not hold Him; He is raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God in Heaven. And if we believe in Him and are thereby justified, we also are risen with Him, and from our heavenly point of vantage we can view the position. Standing upon Lebanon we have a mountain of righteousness under our feet, we need not tremble at the height, nor fear ravenous beasts of Satanic forces. We can look on to the consummation of the purpose of God's grace and behold, by faith, our gathering together unto our Lord, when we shall be before the throne of God and of the Lamb, a great multitude which no man can number. We can look further, and in the more distant future see the new heavens and the new earth, as in Rev. 21, and the New Jerusalem with all its glory, and realise that this is the place which He has gone to prepare and where we shall be with Him for ever. The place of which He Himself is the Light.

We turn and look the other way: we look back, we view the ages past. We see Abel offering a sacrifice acceptable to God. We see Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and a host of others, named and unnamed, offering the same sacrifices, which in themselves could not atone for one sin; but which were a foreshadowing of the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.

In the earlier chapters of Romans, Paul has demonstrated God's

righteousness standing as solid mountain peaks against all attacks, so that He is "justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged" as to His dealings with the unsaved. But in the Gospel we reach the highest and most glorious peak of all—the righteousness of God in Grace. We may well take Paul's standpoint in view of this, and say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for therein is revealed the righteousness of God, from faith to faith." Surely boasting is excluded, our mouths are filled with praise. May our lives also be filled with fruit.

Verses 28 and 31 bring us to the conclusion of this part of the doctrine: that is, the way in which justification is brought about. The words, "therefore we conclude" and "we establish the law," are sufficient to show that all that is needed to meet the requirements of God's law, and thus to satisfy His righteousness, has been stated. To say that our justification consists in the imputation to us of Christ's righteousness under law is to belittle the Holy Spirit's wisdom and ability to explain a matter; for He has reached His conclusion without even one word of reference to it. We cannot entertain such a thought. Just as in man's condemnation God sums up the position without one reference to our inherited evil nature, or to Adam's own sin, so with justification, God sums up the position without one reference to the righteousness of Christ. That His obedience is mentioned in 5.¹⁹ we fully recognise; but nothing is said to imply that it is imputed to us. This, however, will be dealt with, God willing, when we come to that chapter.

The establishment of law is a matter worthy of our consideration. This statement—"We establish law"—has been made by some to imply that Christ kept the law on our behalf, and that His doing of it is the righteousness which is imputed to us. One can hardly think of anything more extravagant in the way of interpretation.

"We establish (the) law" evidently means that in the doctrine of justification which we preach—by grace, through faith—we do not ignore the claims of the law, but recognise that God has had full satisfaction in His beloved Son bearing the full penalty. This opens to us another vast view of the righteousness and love of God. For if the LAW is established we see how exactly everything has been dealt with. If the righteousness imputed to us were the obedience of Christ, it would be fictitious: there would be no real righteousness to meet our case. He was never in our circumstances to do what we should have done. For Him to do what constituted the righteousness of a priest in Israel would be sin for Him, for He was not of the priestly tribe. And justification for a priest in the past dispensation is on exactly the same ground as ours. The truth is, that the claims of the law have been met in judgment, *that* He could and did meet to the full. But what a price! By appointment of law, "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Heb. 2.²). The law required "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Lev. 24.²⁰); and for law to be established

there must be an equivalent in judgment meted out upon our precious Substitute, and in that six hours of suffering God's wrath upon the tree, full satisfaction was made. It is beyond us to estimate what that "cup" contained, but He who drank it knew it fully; and with the words of Isaiah 53.¹¹ in mind, we just wonder and worship. Truly He is "just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

I suggest that, in ver. 30, the words "by faith" and "through faith" are not a mere avoidance of repetition. The "circumcision" has the revelation of God, as ver. 2 says, hence they were *in* faith (that is, those who believed). But the "uncircumcision" were without God, and faith came by hearing the Gospel (ch. 10.¹⁷), and they were justified *through* faith.

CHAPTER 4

READING, VERSES 1-9

HAVING seen in ch. 3 how our justification was brought about—that is, by redemption through the blood of Christ—in ch. 4 we are given two examples of individuals who were justified in the sight of God, and as to whom Scripture gives its testimony. Thus Paul could substantiate his own statements as an apostle by words inspired in the Old Testament and demonstrate to any who might object to justification by faith without works, that his testimony was not a new invention, but that which was "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (ch. 3.²¹).

Thus, vers. 1-8 present two examples of this precious testimony, Abraham and David. And as to both, bringing out the same truth, though expressing it in different ways. And using statements of Scripture which are decisive and conclusive in refuting error, but which might easily be overlooked by the casual reader. We will examine these statements later, but before doing so, go a little further with the primary point of the chapter.

Abraham, being the father of the nation of Israel, might easily be taken to stand in a like place to David in this matter; but there is a difference which Paul would have us to recognise. If a man is circumcised, he is a debtor to keep the whole law (Gal. 5.³). The wisdom of God, as well as the need of careful attention to the exact wording and actual facts of Scripture, is demonstrated in the way in which Paul brings out the important point that Abraham was declared to be righteous (Gen. 15.⁶) *before* he was circumcised (ch. 17). In Rom. 3 Paul raises the question as to whether Jews only are involved in the blessedness of justification. In ch. 4 he answers it by the fact that Abraham was justified before being circumcised; which means that he was justified as a Gentile, not as a Jew, not being under the law. Thus Abraham, before the law, and David, under the law, are given as two examples of the same blessing, that *all*, Jew or Gentile, might have hope.

The important fact that justification is by faith without works, in all dispensations and to all peoples, is here stressed to the full. To

him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. God has pledged Himself as to the works of the law, that the man that doeth them shall live by them (Rom. 10.⁵). Thus if a man kept the law (fully), God would be under *obligation* to give him the reward—eternal life. Paul clearly shows that no one has ever done this; therefore, if any are to be justified, it must be on the ground of grace through the death of Christ. It is evident here that Paul takes it for granted that those to whom he wrote would know that Christ was the exception, that He had kept the law and had justified Himself thereby; and that in resurrection He will have His reward. But as to men, Abraham had no more to glory of before God, as to justification, than the vilest sinner that ever came to Christ.

Now let us examine more closely the statements that are made regarding these two men who are named as being justified. The Scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This counting, or reckoning, or imputing (the same word in the Greek) of righteousness is justification. In ver. 9 we see that it is referred to as "this blessedness." But when we come to David we find that the wording is quite different; yet we see plainly from the purpose of the passage as a whole, that his justification is asserted as definitely as Abraham's.

Of David we read, "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." But it is "described" (said) in the words that follow, "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." In Abraham's case we are not told of the forgiveness of sins; while in David's case, so far as the quotation from the Old Testament is concerned, we are not told of the imputation of righteousness. But the words "even as also" at the beginning of ver. 6 are most emphatic that the same thing is being said of David as of Abraham. The words "even as," in the Greek, express most strongly the similitude of the two statements, and the word "also" is so placed as to leave no doubt that David said exactly the same thing of himself, in Psa. 51, as the Scripture does, in Gen. 15, of Abraham. There is, therefore, only one conclusion left to us, that is, that the forgiveness of sins *is* justification. This passage, from the fact of the two forms of wording, is sufficient in itself to refute all assertions that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. God has a wonderful way of meeting error in advance. When the Scriptures were written, the doctrine (which is now so commonly sung in hymns and found in commentaries everywhere) that the righteousness which is imputed to us is the righteousness of Christ under law, was not known. But God knew what would happen, and has made provision beforehand to meet the error without advertising it. Now that the doctrine has become so common, it behoves us to speak plainly and show from God's Word the falsity of it.

In ch. 3 not one word is said as to Christ's personal righteousness

in the part which shows how our justification was made: and in ch. 4, where we are shown how justification becomes ours, not only is nothing said about His personal righteousness, but wording is used that entirely excludes the thought of it being imputed to us.

There is with many an attitude of heart that is very unbecoming to a child of God: that is, that doctrinal matters such as we are dealing with here are to be avoided, as not being profitable to the spiritual experience. This is doubly wrong. These things are essential to our spiritual profit, and to neglect them shows a selfish disregard of that which pleases or displeases God.

The imputation of the sin of Adam to his seed, and the parallel error, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to His people, are doctrines which can only be maintained by the perverting of Scripture all through. Statements in the books of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets, as well as in the New Testament, are wrested and given fanciful meanings which obliterate the Holy Spirit's true meaning. This cannot be spiritually helpful nor pleasing to God: though many sing the doctrines and accept them without ever questioning whether they are right or not.

The attitude of being content to know that one is saved, and refuse to be occupied with anything further, is not only a very selfish one, but it makes one question whether such an one is really saved. When one is born of the Spirit, we expect to see a concern for that which pleases the Lord who gave Himself to redeem us, and our loving Father who is ever concerned for the welfare of His children. In the old dispensation God showed His displeasure with those who altered His arrangements for worship, sometimes with swift and severe judgment. And though He does not act in the same way today, can we think that He is not grieved when these doctrines are expressed in worship, as well as in teaching, which by their nature and assertions impute unrighteousness to Him!

We have already noted some of the perversions referred to in ch. 3. The passage we are now considering has also been perverted to do away with its plain teaching that the removal of our sins *is* justification, and that *that* is the righteousness which is imputed to us—the righteousness of having neither sins of omission nor sins of commission reckoned to us, because our Lord Jesus has put them away, legally, by bearing the judgment for them.

In the attempt to refute the plain and necessary meaning of this passage, the word "blessedness" has been perverted. True, the lexicons do give "pronouncing a blessing" as one meaning of the word (*makarismos*), but the meaning "blessedness" is also given. The word only occurs three times in Scripture: Rom. 4.^{6, 9}; Gal. 4.¹⁵. Where God intends the thought of *pronouncing* a blessing, in Gal. 3.^{8, 14}, the word "eulogia" is used. Surely the Greek Scriptures and not the Greek Classics should be our guide. But even if the thought of pronouncing a blessing is introduced, it does not alter the fact that the

blessing of having no sin imputed is the same as having righteousness imputed; otherwise the argument of the passage is destroyed, that is, that two persons, one circumcised and one uncircumcised, were *justified* by faith.

May God grant that we may all, by His Spirit, be led more and more into all truth, that we may worship Him in spirit and in truth, and with one mind and one mouth glorify Him.

READING, CHAPTER 4.¹⁰⁻²⁵.

Though we have considered verses 1-9 for the special reason that they are emphatic as to a certain point of doctrine, we now need to consider the passage as a whole, that we may appreciate its general teaching.

We have seen, too, that Abraham and David are examples chosen with the object of showing the justification is on the same basis for one under the law as for one not under the law. It is "through faith" and "by grace," not by works. But Paul is always careful not to leave any occasion of thinking that justification by grace is associated with careless continuance in sin. As to David, he had broken the law, and that in such a way that he was doubly worthy of death. Hence, though under the law, he could not be justified by his works. But anyone who knows anything of David's life, knows that those sins were not characteristic of him; and the Psalm which is quoted in Rom. 4.^{7, 8} shows plainly that this consciousness of sin had brought him to a grief-stricken condition of heart, together with a holy desire to do the right. Thus God's grace to him in forgiveness produced in him the more earnest desire to be what God had said of him—"A man after mine own heart." If a profession of faith in Christ is not associated with like repentance and desires toward God, we may well doubt whether such an one is forgiven. But the wisdom of God is to be seen in that such a case as David's is chosen, because it gives to the most desperate law-breaker a real ground of hope, if he comes in true repentance to the Saviour who made redemption in His precious blood.

But Abraham was not under law, as we saw previously; but his life was characterized by faithfulness and obedience to God. Yet for all that, his works could not justify him in the sight of God. He left Ur of the Chaldees at the command of God, he sojourned in the land of promise as a stranger, he offered up Isaac in obedience to God; but all this did not save him: the Scripture says "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Thus the two things go together, faith and works; not faith without works: such faith avails nothing, as James makes clear in his Epistle. So Paul makes clear in the chapter before us (ver. 12) that righteousness is imputed to those who "*walk in the steps* of that faith of our father Abraham."

In John 8, the Jews gloried in that they were the children of Abraham. But the Lord showed that there was nothing in that to rest on,

for they were going about to kill Him. Thus they were not the children of Abraham in character. Paul also, in ch. 9, shows the same thing; while here in ch. 4 he shows that all, both Jews and Gentiles, are the children of Abraham, if we walk in the steps of his faith. In *uncircumcision* he stands as the father of the Gentiles who believe; and in *circumcision* he stands as the father of those who are circumcised—providing that they manifest the same faith. Moreover, in Abraham's case circumcision availed nothing as to justification, it was the seal that he was already justified: and because he was justified God entered into covenant with him concerning a "seed" through whom he would become the father of many nations. If the chapter is read through, these thoughts will be seen. In vers. 10-17, the fatherhood of which we have been speaking; in ver. 13, the "promise" of the covenant; in 17-21, the "seed" through whom all should be accomplished. Here the seed is obviously Isaac; but God looked ahead for many generations to the Seed—Christ: this is made clear in Gal. 3, which should also be read through to get the full view which God presents.

Abraham, we are told, is "the father of us all." How can this be, seeing we are Gentiles? If we manifest the faith of which we have been speaking, that is the evidence that we have been born of God's Spirit and are therefore His children. And if we are His children, we are also "members of Christ." So then we are the true seed of Abraham because we are "in Christ" and He is the promised Seed, and because we walk in the steps of his faith.

Isaac was but a stepping-stone to the end in view. Faith like that of Abraham could not of itself save us. But the true Seed—Christ—must needs come, God manifest in the flesh, that by His death for the atonement for sin, both of Jews and Gentiles, all who believe in Him might have justification and life as God's free gift. And His promise to Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude is thus fulfilled in Christ, and Abraham becomes "the father of many nations."

In the last three verses of the chapter, God's concern that His people should have the comfort and assurance of the Scriptures is manifested: for we see that it was not only said to Abraham, it was also "written" for our sakes. What a mine of wealth we have in the Old Testament! Let us not neglect it. It is essential that all believers should be established in the teaching of such an Epistle as this, but let us go on to possess all our possessions.

Again we reach a concluding point in the structure of this Epistle. We have seen man's condemnation brought to a conclusion first, without any reference to Adam's sin. We then saw, in ch. 3, how our justification was accomplished, and the matter concluded without any reference to Christ's personal obedience or righteousness. Now we see the actual imputation of righteousness to ourselves, "if we believe," again without reference to His obedience. All that we are told is that

He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

In order to get the full value of this last verse, it is necessary to understand that the word "for," used twice (Greek, "dia" with Acc.), is not capable of having the several meanings that are possible to the English word. Many have thought that the final statement here means that Christ was raised to procure our justification. This is not so. The word "for" has the same meaning in both cases: so that just as He was delivered "on account of" our sins, not to procure them, so He was raised again "on account of" our justification. That is to say, that He was delivered to bear the curse of God in our stead, on account of our sins: and having borne all the judgment due for them, our justification was accomplished. His atoning work, in bearing judgment for us, put away all our sins; for they were all laid upon Him, and God will not demand twice payment; and therefore in God's law court we are cleared of every spot of sin, all are forgiven; God will never impute sin to us once we believe. So then, our justification being an accomplished fact, God raised Him from the dead. Death could not hold the Son of God. He had no sins of His own, and He had paid all that was due to ours in that six hours of agony on the tree, our justification was a settled matter before God, and He must be raised again.

We need to distinguish here too, between the fact of our justification being a settled thing before God, as far as the necessary atonement was concerned, and that justification becoming our actual possession. The first was when Christ died, the second was when we believed. Until we believed in Christ Jesus as having died for us personally, we were at enmity with God and under condemnation. But God knew the end from the beginning, and His purpose according to election must stand. He knew that in due time we would believe, and the provision was already made for us when that time came.

Before leaving this chapter and passing on to the next, please permit a word of warning. Though there may be a certain amount of repetition in it, it is necessary. Those who hold that the obedience of Christ is the righteousness which is imputed to us, rely very much on the next chapter. But their position can only be maintained by reading into it what is not there. The seriousness of the doctrine does not appear on the surface, but it will be seen when the words are given close attention. Let us respect the Holy Spirit's wisdom in the construction of the Epistle, and note the entire absence of such teaching in all that we have considered so far, and we shall be prepared for His instruction in the next chapter.

C H A P T E R 5

READING, VERSES 1-11

Justification is the first thing in the experience of the believer; and it is the first thing in God's movement in grace toward the sinner. The blood of Christ has put away our sins, and upon that fact God reckons

us to be righteous. Without that righteous atonement in the blood of Christ, God would have no righteous ground for showing mercy to us. But on the basis of that atonement He is free to come out in the fulness of His love and mercy to us. The forgiveness of our sins is just, for all the requirements of the law have been met. So from this point God goes forward to add grace upon grace.

The perfection of the structure of this epistle is seen as we proceed. The chapters we have considered have shown the righteousness of God in our justification; and that the righteousness which we have imputed to us is that which consists in the fact that all our unrighteousness has been removed by the blood of Christ. ("Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"—Isa. 1.¹⁸). Now we proceed to those things we enjoy, or should enjoy, as justified ones. So ch. 5 commences, "Therefore *being* justified by faith, we have peace with God." Once we apprehend, by faith, the precious fact of our justification by the blood of Christ, the old enmity against God can no longer exist. We are at peace. It is possible, in these days of confusion, for one who is truly justified not to enjoy that blessed sense of peace with God that he should. Lack of knowledge of God's Word is often responsible for this; and it is with the hope that some may be helped to enter into the possession of their blessings in Christ, that these lines are written.

Ver. 2 goes on to say that it is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have access into this grace. The epistle to the Ephesians (2.¹⁷) helps us to see that Christ in resurrection is the One through whom peace is preached. The power of Christ is present in the preaching of the Gospel. Mark 16.²⁰ tells us that, after His resurrection, "they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord *working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus through Him we have access into this grace, with the consequent rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. We have good ground for rejoicing. Our sins are put away for ever, we look forward to the glory of that eternal day when we shall be with our Lord in the place He has gone to prepare. What an effect this should have upon our lives! So the next verse continues: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." If we have a grasp of the glory that awaits us, we can not only put up with trials, we can glory in them. Why? The following verses explain: "Tribulation worketh patience." We often feel we need more patience: tribulation is God's means of developing it. How can we learn to be patient without feeling the things that call for patience?

"And patience (worketh) experience." Experience of the right kind. The experience of God's power in our lives: experience of meeting the enemy in his many crafty forms of attack. What is it that makes a competent lifeboatman? Only the experience of the buffeting of the waves. So it is only the patient endurance of tribulation that makes the competent Christian. Let us therefore "glory" in it.

"And experience, hope." If we enter into our heavenly calling and

so find ourselves involved in tribulations, we shall not be inclined to make this world our resting place; we shall more and more realise that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth. The "hope" of the coming of Christ will therefore become all the more real and precious to us. The mariner may have a certain pleasure even in facing the dangers and discomforts of the voyage, but to continue in such an experience without ever thinking of returning home would be a poor existence. Contrariwise, the prospect of the return helps to uphold the spirit through the trials; and as the home port is neared, so the hope burns the brighter. So we come back to ver. 2: we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Ver. 5: "And hope maketh not ashamed." Paul could say that he had become a fool for Christ's sake, yea, "the offscouring of all things." What a position for an "ambassador of Christ!" But he was not ashamed. He knew that he had served his Lord and that henceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him at that day. So, whatever the world may think, we need never be ashamed in view of our blessed hope. But a further explanation is given, that is, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." First, let us realise what a gift this is. The very Spirit of God, given to abide with us for ever. What lives of victory we should live! Despondency, discontent, murmuring, all these things should be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. And if by the Holy Spirit the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, certainly we shall not be ashamed of being anything for His sake Who has done so much for us.

And what is it that the Holy Spirit uses to produce this love in our hearts? Ver. 6 tells us: it is the knowledge of God's love to us. Paul would have us to dwell upon the thought of God's love. In the earlier chapters he has expounded the doctrine of how we are justified, but the "love of God" is not mentioned there, it is His righteousness which is the theme. Thus, justification having been fully explained, we are now being occupied with the love that brought it about, in this chapter. Verses 6-8 are one statement. Our helplessness first, showing that we could do nothing to save ourselves. But Christ died for us. We were neither righteous nor good. A righteous man may be admired for his righteousness, but that does not make the appeal to the heart that would cause one to die for him. But goodness goes beyond righteousness, and that might make such an appeal to the heart. Perhaps for a good man one would even dare to die. But we were neither righteous nor good, but God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us. And "we love Him because He first loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Ver. 9. The statement here, "being now justified by His blood," is a simple summing up of the earlier chapters, wherein we have seen that nothing is mentioned of the righteousness of Christ. Our justifica-

tion was procured by the shedding of His blood alone. That is, His bearing of wrath whereby our sins were put away and we are constituted righteous. Justification is here brought in again, as it is in ver. 1, to make the fundamental starting point from which to proceed to something further—"We shall be saved from wrath through Him." Ver. 10 proceeds to explain, from the standpoint of reconciliation. This is the outcome of the atonement. We are at peace with God—we have been reconciled. Christ having died for us, He rose again; and He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

The many sons for whom He died must be brought to glory. The words "saved" and "salvation" in Scripture go beyond the thought of the forgiveness of sins, they involve the deliverance from the power of sin that the forgiven one should know. And in some cases mean the final deliverance from this corruptible body at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Saved by His life" here obviously refers to His resurrection life. We ought to experience the power of His resurrection now in overcoming sin and the opposition of the devil, as Paul shews in Phil. 3.⁷⁻¹⁴.

Ver. 11: As the margin here shews, the word "atonement" is really the word "reconciliation." We do not receive the atonement, God received that in the blood of Christ when He died in our stead. But we do receive the reconciliation, for we were once enemies. Thus we "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Holy Spirit has inspired the construction of the Epistle, so that the foundation of righteousness is laid first, then we are led on to see the outworking of grace from that. But the Holy Spirit has also been given to abide in us, that we may know, by His help, the experience of the things that are written. What fuller provision could God have made for us? Surely His love passes knowledge. May we, like Paul, reach forth to apprehend more and more of this wonderful fulness.

READING, CHAPTER 5.¹²⁻²¹.

These ten verses are a section in themselves; with a special purpose. I think one may safely say that there is not another passage in the Bible which has quite the same character. It has been much misunderstood, and consequently misused to support teaching that is not according to the sound doctrine of Christ. There are several reasons for this; and the chief one is, that Scripture is not read as it is written. No one would think of reading other books as the majority of believers do their Bibles. If one commences a course of study, whether it be grammar, electricity, astronomy, or anything else, he knows that to start reading a few paragraphs from page 169, then turning to page 40. then to page 75, and so on, would be simply foolish. He would find things referred to on page 169 which the reader is expected to understand because they have been explained earlier in the book. And for the student to put his own meanings to such things without learning

the explanations given earlier would be greater foolishness. Yet this is the very thing that many are doing with the Word of God. Truly, in more ways than one, the children of this age are wiser than the children of light (Luke 16.⁸). A student may find it necessary to turn up a certain passage in a technical book to decide or confirm some particular point; but that is only done after a proper grasp of the subject has been obtained by starting at the beginning and building up from a sound foundation. The Bible is intended for intelligent study; but we would not overlook the fact that some are saved late in life, or their minds have not been trained to do much thinking, or they may have little or no knowledge of grammar. Are these to be excluded from finding blessing to their souls in the precious Word of God? Far be it! There is plenty in the Book that will meet their need. But how different it would be if the "pastors" and "teachers" had heeded the above principles. Paul forewarned the "elders" at Ephesus, not only of the "grievous wolves" that would come in, but that even of the elders themselves there would arise some "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20.²⁹⁻³⁰). One does not suggest deliberate perversion in every case, but godly men with good intentions have erred in doctrine through not giving heed to the above principles, and students and teachers copy those who have preceded them without fully testing what is received. Then, when the mind has become established in a certain way of thinking, it is difficult to see the truth when it is presented. How we ought to pray for "pastors and teachers" such as are mentioned in Eph. 4.¹¹, that the "body of Christ" might be built up as that chapter shows. Then the illiterate would be guided by those who have more ability, into the one truth.

The passage we are about to consider has suffered very much from this lack of, shall we say, common-sense reading; with the result that serious error has been propagated (whatever its origin) and is still being maintained, by taking these verses to mean what they do not actually say, instead of recognizing that they are intended to further implement that which has already been made clear in the preceding chapters.

What could be more fundamental in doctrine than God's own righteousness? If God were found to be unrighteous in the least detail, we have no hope of eternal security whatever. For if He resorted to anything that was not strictly righteous, we would have no security, even after we have reached the heavenly glory by His own righteous method. He might change and unrighteously turn us out. Of course, such a thing cannot be allowed a place in our thoughts for a moment; but this demonstrates the fact that, as God *cannot* be unrighteous, any doctrine that implies that He does anything unrighteous in the least must be rejected at once and finally.

In order to weaken the force of the above, and to keep to doctrine which does make God to be unrighteous, some have said, "We cannot *see* that God is righteous in 'election,' but we accept it because we

know that He is." Such a mode of argument is not only weak, but very unsafe. We shall *see*, as the Lord enables, when we come to chapters 8, 9 and 10, that God is righteous even in election, and that we are not expected to accept the teaching blindly.

Righteousness is not only the characteristic of God, it is that of His true people in all times. The expression "the resurrection of the just" (i.e., the righteous) proves this; including all from the time of Abel. And when God gave the law to Israel, through Moses, it was clearly intended to teach them practical righteousness. God has at all times educated His people to know what righteousness is, that they may manifest it among themselves. While as to His own righteousness, we have seen that the first three chapters of this epistle are occupied with demonstrating *how* He is righteous, first in condemning sinners, and then in justifying such of them who believe in His beloved Son. So we are not expected to accept these things blindly. To *see* that God is righteous in all His ways is a powerful help to the worship which He delights to receive and of which He is worthy. No right-minded person would wish to use words that are an attack on His character; yet through wrong instruction many are doing it unknowingly.

At the beginning of this section (ver. 12) we have the word "wherefore," which means, that what is about to be said is "on account of" what has already been said. So that what has been said in chapters 1-3 is to be the basis upon which we are to understand what is contained here. This we have seen to be only reasonable. Moreover, we have seen how that, in those three chapters, we reached a "conclusion," both as to the condemnation of sinners, and the justification of those who believe. It would therefore be out of place to make chapter 5 to present fundamental thoughts concerning the making of our justification, especially as we see that verses 1-11 have already led us on to things that follow in our experience *after* justification.

In the earlier chapters we saw that no mention whatever is made of Adam's sin in connection with our condemnation; nor of the obedience of Christ in connection with our justification; but both are now introduced in chapter 5. The reason is, not that the previous explanation is incomplete, the Holy Spirit's wisdom in constructing the epistle is above that. It is because Paul is not merely discoursing on a dead theme, such as one of the sciences; he is telling how God in His perfect wisdom and righteousness made it possible for His love to reach out to a condemned sinner and snatch Him from hell, rightly deserved, and bring him to eternal glory. Such a theme makes his heart pulsate with joy; he is one who has thus been rescued, and he looks forward to the day when he will see His Saviour face to face. Therefore, having dealt with the matter from the standpoint of the law court, and established the whole position in righteousness, he now leads on to this series of comparisons which present the various aspects of the glory of the work of Christ, as a glass prism throws out the various colours of the light that passes through it, that our hearts may

not simply be left cold with the law court aspect, but be led to the realisation of the fulness of the blessing that we who believe in Christ receive. This section is thus seen to be, not an explanation of the doctrine of justification, but a series of comparisons whereby the excellencies of the work of Christ in redemption are seen to go altogether beyond the sad and evil consequences of Adam's sin.

As we proceed with the study of each verse, we shall see that this view will be perfectly consistent with what the words actually say, without adding any human thoughts or explanations.

At the beginning of these papers reference was made to marginal readings. Some of these are helpful, but some are definitely misleading. In ver. 11, the word should be "reconciliation," not "atonement," as the margin says; but in ver. 12 the suggestion "in whom," instead of "for that," is definitely wrong. The alteration in ver. 11 is correct according to the Greek, but in ver. 12 the margin does not agree with the Greek.

Those who are not able to refer to the Greek for themselves need not be discouraged at this, for on the whole, the common version as it stands will be sufficient for sound doctrine. The word "atonement" in ver. 11, is not misleading, for everyone knows we can only receive the *benefit* of the atonement, not the atonement itself. But "in whom," in ver. 12, leads to serious error. We shall see as we proceed that the words as they stand in the text are quite sufficient, but where a more sound translation is given in the margin it makes the matter more clear. That the brackets which mark these verses as a parenthesis are rightly placed is clear from the word "therefore" commencing v. 18 which picks up the argument from v. 12 which is incomplete in itself. We therefore consider this parenthesis as it stands first.

Verses 13 and 14 take us back to the period before the law was given through Moses; and we need to be acquainted with the conditions of that period to understand these verses. In ch. 1 we have been given a very dark picture of the sin that was in the world then, and the threefold statement is made that God gave them up to their own sinful ways. He did not appoint leaders and teachers to instruct them in righteousness, and judges to enforce it, as he did to the children of Israel—they were left. So we appreciate the meaning of "For until the law, sin was in the world." The actual condition of men is what is being considered; and that confirms that in ver. 12 there is no thought of the imputation of Adam's personal sin to all men, nor that all sinned in Adam.

Then the statement is made, "but sin is not taken into account, law not being." The word given in the A.V. as "imputed," in this verse is different from that which is used in ch. 4 and translated "impute," "count," "reckon." It has a related meaning, but signifies that as there was no law given at that time, there was nothing whereby man could be judged, and therefore men's sins were not "taken into account." There is an intended contrast here with the conditions under law, as

expressed in Heb. 2.², where every transgression and disobedience received (by appointment) a just recompense of reward. Thus again, there is no suggestion of the imputation of Adam's sin, men's own sin is under consideration.

We must not infer that because, at that period, there was no law, and sin was not taken into account, that God will not punish the sins of that time. There was no administration of punishment then through human judges; but ch. 2,^{5, 6} makes plain that there will be judgment in God's future day of wrath.

We should also note the difference between ch. 4.¹⁵ and ch. 5.¹³. The first is an expression of a general rule, the second is a statement that the rule was actually in operation at the time mentioned.

Now ver. 14 tells us that though there was no law to impose the death penalty, "nevertheless death reigned." And it reigned "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam was under law. He had received a command not to eat of the one tree, and a penalty had been expressed for disobedience; but those "from Adam to Moses" were not under law, and therefore were viewed differently. But for all that, death was reigning over all. That this was because Adam's sin was imputed to them is without the slightest foundation in Scripture. Ver. 12 has plainly said it was "for that all have sinned." Where sin was reigning, death was reigning. Or, where sin was operating, death was operating. It is not a matter of penal settlement, for all do not sin to the same extent; it is a matter of God's providential dealing, wherein He acts according to His sovereign power and gives no account of His matters. Judgment for sin *under law*, in this world, and at the great white throne in the future, are both strictly in accord with righteousness, suitable to the sin committed.

The words, "who is the figure of Him that was to come," have been much misused by those who teach the imputation of Adam's sin to his seed and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to His people. It is commonly asserted in such literature that "Adam was the federal head of the first creation, and Christ is the federal head of the new creation." Upon this it is asserted that "we are viewed as having sinned when Adam sinned, we sinned in him." In the first place, the unrighteousness of such a thing is sufficient to condemn it. Secondly, there is no such thing as one person sinning "in" another in Scripture. Thirdly, there is no mention of "federal headship" in Scripture. We are told in this verse that "Adam is a figure," and we need to treat this with the same reverence as all other figurative expressions, that is, that we allow the Holy Spirit Himself to indicate in what way the figure is intended. Some have even said that Adam was our representative and sinned representatively. Whatever the eternal issue of the imputation of Adam's sin would have meant to one of his seed, we need not trouble about; for God to *look upon* one person as being guilty of another's sin would be essentially unrighteous,

and that is sufficient to make it an abomination. The following verses will show in what way Adam is a figure of Christ.

We may be sure of this: that God has never left any matter of doctrine ambiguous. In the earlier chapters of this epistle everything is asserted in the clearest language. There is no doubt that justification is by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by our works. Nor is there any doubt that it is through the redemption accomplished in His blood. Ambiguous statements are to be found regarding such doctrine, but only in passages addressed to those who already know it. Such would have no difficulty as to the meaning. So it is in these verses. We have been told in the earlier chapters how we are justified, and in the 12th verse we have been told how death passed through to all men, it is "for that all have sinned." Now let us be simple enough to understand any ambiguous statement in accord with what we have been already told.

In verse 15 the effect of Adam's sin and the effect of the work of Christ are contrasted. The words "if through (or by) the offence of one, many be dead," are ambiguous. They *could* mean that death was the direct result of Adam's sin, apart from our condition, but not necessarily. In such a case we should act on the principle expressed above — we should understand them in agreement with what has already been taught.

That those words *need* not mean that death is the direct result of Adam's sin, is seen from the mode of expression used in ch. 3.²⁸. There we are told that "a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law." Does that mean that faith alone justifies, without the blood of Christ? Certainly not. That has been made clear before. Hence, "through the offence of one must be understood as in v. 12, not Adam *alone*," but "for that *all* sinned." So we should understand all these statements in ch. 5. Further evidences of the impossibility of the imputation of Adam's sin will be given as we proceed.

With this clearance made, we can now enjoy that which the verse is intended for. Through the offence of one many died (as stated in ver. 12). But the grace of God and the gift by grace, through Jesus Christ, hath *abounded* unto many. It is not a comparison, it is a tremendous contrast; note the words "not as" at the beginning. Thus would the Apostle lead out our hearts in adoring worship as we contemplate the immensity of the blessing of those who are cleansed by the precious blood of Christ.

Ver. 16 presents another contrast. This time it is not the abundance of what we receive, but the "many offences" from which we have been justified. The judgment was by one to condemnation. Does that mean that we were all condemned for Adam's sin? It does not say so. Righteousness forbids it, and the earlier verses have shown otherwise. This also illustrates how we should act with an ambiguous statement. The part of the verse that presents the contrast is not dealing with the persons, but with the offences. One offence brought condemnation

upon Adam, but for our justification Christ had to bear the *many* sins of each individual. Again our hearts are drawn to worship as we consider the awful load that was laid upon Him when He bear our sins in His own body onto the tree.

In ver. 17 we continue on the same line. The result of the one man's offence is that death reigns, but we who receive the gift of righteousness, by God's grace, shall reign in life by Jesus Christ. Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, death, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

If death is the legal penalty upon mankind, for the sin of Adam, and not a matter of God's providential arrangement, then every single soul must die, or the righteousness of the penalty would fail (if such a thing could be righteous); whereas we know that at the coming of Christ there will be a great multitude "caught up" without dying. If it be argued that Christ's death has freed them from it, then inasmuch as Christ has died for all His own, *none* of them should die. This is enough to show that death is not a legal penalty at all.

CHAPTER 5.¹².

The only reason one can suggest for the insertion of the words "in whom" in the margin here is that the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his seed was in the minds of those who compiled the marginal notes. The doctrine had been long taught by Rome, and is still taught. When the Reformers separated from Rome, they saw clearly the truth of justification by faith without works, but they perpetuated a number of the errors they had learned, and this was one of them. Consequently we find it taught in almost all the literature of that time, and being set forth by those who suffered for the truth which they did hold, it was the more readily accepted, and so has been perpetuated by teachers ever since. Some have renounced it, and there have been writers who have shown the fallacy of it.

The words "in whom" are given as an alternative to "for *that* all have sinned." But no Greek scholar would allow "in whom" as a satisfactory translation. Many, however, who acknowledge this, nevertheless try to maintain the error by saying that we must understand the statement to mean "for that all have sinned *IN ADAM*." To thus add the words "in Adam" is a clear case of making the Word of God fit the doctrine that is in the mind, in spite of the warning in Prov. 30.⁶.

The two words in the Greek (*epi ho*) which are translated "for that" sometimes mean "upon which fact," and refer to something already said. But this meaning does not give sense in this passage, no matter how it is applied. But there are places where they have the meaning "upon the fact that," and lead on to that which is about to be stated. They have this sense in two places: 2 Cor. 5.⁴, "not *FOR THAT* we would be unclothed": and Phil. 3.¹²: and 4.¹⁰, where the word "where-in" would be better rendered "for that." This meaning exactly corres-

ponds to Rom. 5.¹². It is simply showing that one thing happens as a consequence upon another: "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Mr. B. W. Newton is well known as one who, in his day, advocated the teaching of the imputation of Adam's sin. In his book, "Remarks on the Revised English Version," 1881, p. 128, he says—

"*Eph ho* is, like justification, a forensic term. It is an expression frequently found in treaties and legal documents. If it be used of a stipulation respecting the future, it is to be rendered 'on condition that,' as when we say, 'we will agree to do so-and-so, on condition that you will do so-and-so.' . . . But if 'eph ho' or 'eph hoto' be used (as in the present case) with reference to a *past* event from which certain consequences have resulted, then it is to be translated, on the ground that. — — —. The truth that death penetrated unto all men, not on the ground of their own personal sin, but on the ground of the transgression of another being imputed to them, is proved by the apostle in the verses that succeed."

Mr. Newton was a scholar well acquainted with the Greek manuscripts of the Scriptures, and also the Greek Classics. To support his statement that "eph ho" is a forensic—that is, a "law court" expression—he gives three quotations from the Classics, but NONE from the Scriptures. To support the further statement that the meaning is "on the ground that," he quotes a statement (from the Classics) that is quite different in construction from that in Rom. 5.¹². Moreover, in the translation which he gives of the passage—

" . . . you have no ground on which to treat me thus," the words "no ground" stand for the word "meden" (nothing) in the Greek, and that which stands for "eph hoge" is "on which" (you have nothing *on which*). Obviously this is a very unsuitable comparison with Rom. 5.¹²; and misused as well.

On referring to the Scriptures we find that there are other passages where the expression is used which do show both meanings clearly. There is no need to refer to the Classics at all. The two passages cited above, 2 Cor. 5.⁴ and Phil. 4.¹⁰, are just the same in construction as Rom. 5.¹², and therefore are a clear guide as to the meaning. Five other passages: Mark 2.⁴, "wherein"; Luke 5.²⁵, "whereon"; Luke 11.²², "wherein"; Acts 7.³³, "whereon"; and Phil. 3.¹², "that for which," are found which afford ample means of deciding the meaning. *Nothing whatever* can be found to support the law court aspect as being *necessary* to it. Mr. Newton knew well enough that the words could not mean "in whom," indeed he says so. But to support his doctrine he must find some ground for asserting "death penetrated unto all men, not *on the ground of* their own personal sin, but *on the ground of* the transgression of another being imputed to them."

While thus criticising the writings of Mr. Newton, one would not overlook the fact that he was a man who gave up much for his Lord.

But just as the Reformers suffered much for the truth which they saw, even martyrdom of the most cruel forms, and yet perpetuated other parts of Rome's teaching; so other godly men that have followed, while standing fast for certain parts of truth, have nevertheless misapplied their scholarly ability, which should have been a help to them, in defence of things which were already accepted without testing. It would not be so serious if it were but a matter of "trivialities," as some have said. God's own righteousness, the glory of Christ, and the foundation of our justification are attacked by these things, and the fact that they are taught by such men makes the position more dangerous. The child of God who has not a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is at a disadvantage, and must either accept the teaching or discredit the teacher. But it is hoped that all who will give their minds to the subject will be able to see the inconsistencies and the groundlessness of the assertions of a real scholar, even when he deals with the Greek. Nor is he the only scholar who has done this. These men, unable to find an actual statement for their belief in the Scripture, quote or copy one another. Thus Mr. Newton, in the same book, p. 126, quotes Dr. Owen, who, rightly stressing that it is the sin of the one man Adam that is intended in the first part of Rom. 5.¹², utterly ignores the statement of the second part, "and so death passed upon all men, for that ALL have sinned," and goes on to say—

"yet it is the guilt of Adam's actual sin alone that rendered them all obnoxious unto death upon the first entrance of sin into the world."

This quoting of one another, and of creeds, is characteristic of most who endeavour to uphold these errors.

Moreover, the condemnation upon all men which is supposed to be on account of the imputation of Adam's sin alone is not limited in their minds, to simply the death of the body; Mr. Newton says, p. 140:

"It was an act altogether external to ourselves. ADAM committed it, not WE. Yet, by committing it, he opened the fountain whence has flowed down to us all the condemnation and woe and misery that we have seen and known as men and which will, to all who are not delivered, end in the second death."

How an intelligent man can make such assertions without realising that he is attacking God's own righteousness, passes understanding. From this he goes on to say:

"Its cause is found in the *one offence* committed by another while standing as our representative—a terrible truth which the human heart ever frets and rebels against, and not infrequently spurns. Refusing to wait until God has unfolded and explained the methods of His grace, it rages against the thought of representative action."

Again the scholarly intelligence of the man does not save him. He must defend what he calls "a terrible truth." He therefore passes

on to speak of the grace of God through Christ. But God's grace to us would not undo the wrong of the imputation of Adam's sin. If we do wrong we should do all in our power to put it right; but even then the fact remains that we *did* wrong. God cannot be placed in such a position as this. In the case of those who are not saved, it means that they carry to the grave, and beyond it, the condemnation for that sin that Adam committed. But even in the case of those who are saved it means that, from the moment of birth to the moment of being justified through faith in Christ, God *viewed* them as being guilty of this sin that Adam committed. This of itself would make God unrighteous, and therefore it is not only impossible, but sin for anyone to suggest it.

There is only one case where it is righteous for one to have the sin of another imputed to him: it is that of the Lord Jesus Christ. But His case is altogether different from ours: He is God, and therefore He has a right to exact the penalty from us. If, of His own free will and by the will of His Father, He takes such a position, no one is wronged. All glory be to Him eternally for such unspeakable love. But for God to impute the sin of Adam to all men without their consent or even their knowledge, a sin in which they had no part whatever, is too awful to be entertained for a moment.

If, dear friend, you are in any way identified with those who hold such unrighteous teaching, you are in a solemn position before God. Many of the hymns that speak of "the fall" were written by those who held this error, and that is what is meant by the use of such expressions. To sing these things must be a continual grief to God; it may be well intended by those who sing, but it cannot be the worship "in spirit and in truth" which He seeks.

The reason why Mr. Newton asserts that the meaning of "eph ho" is "on the ground that," and that it is a "forensic"—legal—term, is obviously because of the doctrine he is endeavouring to maintain. This is proved by his own words, "that death penetrated unto all men, not on the ground of their own sin, but on the ground of the transgression of another being imputed to them." But "on the ground that" would not be a suitable expression to use in either 2 Cor. 5.⁴ or Phil. 4.¹⁰. And in none of the passages can it be regarded as a legal expression. Of course, it *could* be used in legal expressions, but that does not make it a legal expression in itself. So once more we repeat the simple words, "death passed upon ALL men for that ALL have sinned."

The next thing that we should be clear about is the meaning of the word "death."

In Gen. 2.¹⁷ God said, concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old. In attempting to reconcile these things, some have wrongly emphasised the Hebrew words in the margin. It is common practice in Hebrew to use a repetition of words for emphasis. Thus, in ver. 16 we have "eating

thou shalt eat"; and in Isa. 26.³, "Thou wilt keep him in peace peace" for "perfect peace." In Gen. 43 we have four examples of this: ver. 7 "asking asked us"; ver. 7 "knowing could we know"; ver. 16 "kill a killing"; ver. 20 "coming down we came down." That Adam commenced to die on the day when he ate, and was dying for nine hundred and thirty years is not the intended meaning. Those who deny eternal punishment make use of this forced literalism, but if we have respect to the idiom of the language, we see that God said emphatically "IN THE DAY." There is therefore a death which is not the death of the body, but the condition of being "dead in sins" (Col. 2.¹³). This came upon Adam the same day, resulting in a condition of alienation from God, in which, as to spiritual things, he was dead. But at the end of ch. 3 God pronounced other things as a result of his sin. This included sorrow and sweat, the thorns and thistles, and eventually his own return to the dust. Here the death of the body is introduced.

The condition of being dead in sins is that in which we are born, and is the cause of sin manifesting itself in us. But the death spoken of in Rom. 5.¹² is not the cause of sin, but the result of sin. It must therefore be the death of the body—physical death. This relationship between sin and death is seen in the words of ch. 1.³², "that they which do such things are worthy of death."

In God's early dealings with men nothing was revealed as to eternal things. The curses in Gen. 3.¹⁷; 4.¹¹; 9.²⁵, are all to do with the present life, and ch. 9.⁶ says nothing of what comes after death. The law of Moses also dealt with punishments in this life. But in Romans Paul is dealing with the eternal issues; and whereas the judgments of the Old Testament are legal in their own sphere, they are quite distinct from the legal issues of life, which only eternity can settle. At the great white throne (Rev. 20.¹¹) the settling up of the whole account of the lives of the unsaved will be effected in absolute righteousness. God will then deal with "the secrets of men," which earthly administration cannot deal with. So after speaking of "death," which men knew they were worthy of, Paul goes on to show the eternal issue in "the day of wrath"—Rom. 2.⁵⁻⁶.

Physical death must, in the nature of things, be only a partial dealing with sin. If a man commits ten murders he can only be put to death once. Moreover, whereas God forbade anyone to slay Cain, the first murderer, He appointed blood for blood by Noah—Gen. 9.⁶. Death, like the sweat of the face, plagues and famines, is a matter which God can vary as He sees fit. It is part of that treatment of men which He administers according to His own sovereign right, without giving account of His matters—Job. 33.¹³. The fact that some will be "caught up" when the Lord comes is further evidence of this.

To support the imputation of Adam's sin, some have advanced 1 Cor. 15.²²—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be

made alive." It is clear from the context that this chapter is dealing with believers, indeed none but believers will be made alive in Christ. Therefore it is of *believers* that it is said "in Adam all die." Is that because Adam's sin is imputed to them? By no means. Has not God justified us, and do not the words apply to us, "blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin?" Yes, verily. Then we do die in Adam, but it is not because his sin is imputed to us. We have been quickened by God's Spirit, and He dwells in us; but that does not affect the condition of the body. We wait for the adoption—the redemption of the body—Rom. 8.²³. Physically we are in Adam: but we are not in him spiritually or legally. This proves that death is not because of the imputation of Adam's sin: and the fact that Paul says, in ver. 51, "we shall not all sleep," proves that it is not a *legal* result of our own sin. If it were legal there could be no departure from the rule.

There is another statement which bears out what has already been said. This is Rom. 6.²³, "the wages of sin is death." And it looks as if death *were* a legal penalty; but we will consider further. There are two words that are used for "wages" (or "hire"), they are "misthos" and "opsonion." The Holy Spirit has used these with an exactness that makes the difference of meaning clear. Where an agreement or contract is involved, which gives the worker a *LEGAL* right, the word "misthos" is used. Matt. 20.⁸: Luke 10.⁷: Jas. 5.⁴ ("hire"). John 4.³⁶: 2 Peter 2.¹⁵ ("wages"). These all have the aspect of an agreement, and show that "misthos" has a legal meaning. Incidentally, by using this word, John 4.³⁶ shows how perfectly just will be our reward for labour when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ. But the word in Rom. 6.²³ is not "misthos," but "opsonion." This is used in Luke 3.¹⁴ to the soldiers, "be content with your wages." A soldier is sworn to accept whatever the military authority appoints. His "wages" ("opsonion") includes food and clothing, but if he is in circumstances where these are not available, he cannot bring a claim against the authorities, he must lose them. In 2 Cor. 11.⁸ Paul says, "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service." But we know from other passages that Paul had no appointed allowance, and there was certainly no thought of an agreement which gave him a legal claim. And this word being used in Rom. 6.²³, the position is clear. The military authorities use their own discretion as to what is issued to the men. And God does the same: normally death follows as a result of sin; but if God is pleased to make an exception, He can, and justice is not violated, because it is not a legal matter.

Mr. Newton's attempt to make the words "for that," in Rom. 5.¹², mean "on the ground that," in a legal sense, is purely because he is bent on making it teach the imputation of Adam's sin. The very nature of the doctrine compels him to describe it as a "terrible truth"—surely a more correct expression would be "a terrible lie": for it imputes unrighteousness to God. One thing, however, must be said

for Mr. Newton, he says plainly what he means. Others to-day are propagating this doctrine with ambiguous expressions which only leave the reader in a maze of confusion.

Some have argued that they cannot see how God could allow us to be born with a sinful nature except by first imputing Adam's sin to us. By such a statement they show that they want to avoid what, to them, is unrighteous; but in order to do it they add what is actually unrighteous.

There is no unrighteousness on God's part in our being born with a sinful nature, for in Rom. 7 Paul shows that no one will be judged for that sinful nature, nor for the sins that arise out of it, unless the person is responsible for the acts. All sin is not to be attributed to the evil nature with which we are born, as if that were the sole root of it. It was not Adam's evil nature that caused him to sin: he was made perfect, and with a will to exercise one way or the other. The sinful nature followed as a result of the sin. The Devil also sinned of his own choice, without even another to tempt him. So with us, men manifest this principle in the fact that they do at times resist and overcome their own natural inclinations. We will see further into this as we proceed, if the Lord will.

Do we not see in all this how gloriously righteous God is? Truly, He will be demonstrated to be just, and overcome when He is judged—Rom. 3.⁴.

It is very important that we should be quite clear about the real teaching of this verse. The errors that have been built up from it are not only far-reaching and serious, they are also very subtle, and are often presented by men who have good reputations as teachers. The doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his seed appears to many to be a sound explanation of the problems that arise in the mind concerning the fact that we inherit a sinful nature, and other things that arise out of that. The doctrine, however, as we have seen, is unrighteous, and therefore only increases the difficulty. Nevertheless it makes an appeal to many minds.

Most believers at once recoil from the suggestion that the Scriptures are not inspired, or from anything that questions the Deity of Christ. But the doctrine we are considering has been so generally accepted that very few question it. A concealed danger is always worse than an exposed one. Hence the need of going very thoroughly into the matter to get it rooted out.

Again, when men who have a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew set themselves out to establish a thing, it is to be expected that they will produce evidence for their case which the average person will not be able to refute, and will not be inclined to question. But it is remarkable how inconsistent such men can be, and how widely they may err, even in those things in which they excel. It is therefore proposed that we should deal with another of Mr. Newton's statements on this verse, that the position may be made clear. But let it be

clearly understood that Mr. Newton is not the only one who has done this kind of thing. Many assert this doctrine without giving any explanation or offering anything as proof; but there are many who do attempt to prove it, and wrest the Scriptures in the attempt, as he has done.

Extract from "Remarks on the Revised English Version," B. W. Newton, p. 127:—

"The apostle does not say, 'on the ground that all personally sinned,' or 'on the ground that all became corrupt,' but on the ground that their head or representative 'sinned'."

Does the apostle say "on the ground that their head or representative sinned?" No. He says, "for that all sinned." Few would dare to put it as Mr. Newton has, but that is the interpretation given by those who hold the doctrine, though often stated in language that is confusing. It is useful to have someone's statement that is clear; we know then what we have to deal with.

It is true that the apostle does not say, "on the ground that all personally sinned," but he does say, "*all* sinned"; which is the same thing; the word "personally" is not needed. Mr. Newton did not find it necessary to put in the word "personally" in his other expression, "all became corrupt." There are many places in Scripture where the word "all" is used, but we do not find the expression "all personally." It is not necessary, and that is why the apostle did not say it. But such dealing with the matter reveals the mind of the writer. He is intent on establishing the imputation of Adam's sin, and he must needs resort to this kind of thing because the plain statement of Scripture is against it. This could be easily detected by anyone who was alert in reading, but his next statement is more subtle. In order to substantiate his above remarks, he proceeds to say:—

"Observe the use of the aorist 'hemarton.' The reference of the aorist in dependent or relative clauses, is the point of time fixed in the leading clause that precedes. Here the point is the period when Adam, with whom we had a legal oneness, sinned."

By the way, there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that we had a "legal oneness" with Adam; it is purely fictional. But the real point at issue is the time denoted by the aorist in a dependent clause. With all due respect to Mr. Newton as a scholar, it can be proved that the reference of the aorist in dependent or relative clauses is *not* to the point of time fixed in the leading clause that precedes, but to the point of time fixed in the clause to which the relative clause relates, or the clause upon which the dependent clause depends. By presenting it as he does, he paves the way for his own interpretation. The verse consists of four clauses, and we are here deciding the meaning of the fourth, "for that all sinned." Mr. Newton makes the fourth clause relative to, or dependent upon the first clause; because he wants to make it mean that death passed upon all men "on the ground that their head or representative sinned." But the fourth clause relates to

the *third* clause; and the simple words of the Holy Spirit are, "death passed upon all men for that all sinned." His wording does not agree with the words of the Holy Spirit at all.

Now to prove that it is *not* "the point of time fixed in the *leading* clause that precedes," but in the clause to which it is related, let us consider a similar passage. Though fifty grammarians agreed with Mr. Newton's statement, if we find one passage in Scripture where it is impossible, that is sufficient to refute it. Such a passage we have in Phil. 4.¹⁰. Here we also have four clauses related, and they are all "aorist," just as in Rom. 5.¹² (1) "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, (2) that now at the last your care of me (hath) flourished again; (3) wherein (for that) ye *were* also careful, (4) but ye lacked opportunity." According to Mr. Newton's rule, the time of the clause, "but ye lacked opportunity," would be that of the first clause, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly." This, on the surface, is impossible: for how could Paul rejoice in the fact of their care of him flourishing in the sending of a gift, at the same time as they lacked opportunity to send? When they "lacked opportunity" they were careful (mindful), but they sent when they *had* opportunity.

Now let us be clear as to the issue of these things. In the first place, Rom. 5.¹² neither teaches nor gives any ground for the teaching that Adam's sin is imputed to us. It clearly states that death, in our case, is because of the presence of sin in the world; but that it is not a legal penalty because, as we have seen, some will never die. This gives a foundation for the understanding of the verses that follow.

Secondly, we need to beware of "interpretations," as distinct from what Scripture actually says.

Thirdly, we need to beware of explanations of the Greek and Hebrew, even by scholarly men. Once the mind is set in a certain direction no man is to be trusted, no matter how great a scholar he may be. A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is very useful, providing it is used rightly. But if anyone presents teaching which can only be maintained by quotations from the Greek or Hebrew, which differ from the common version, beware of it and beware of him. The common version is not a perfect translation, but it is sufficient for the establishment of all truth, which is of such importance as the matters with which we are dealing.

Our next paper brings us to verse 18, which is the continuation from verse 12. The parenthesis (verses 13-17) we have already considered. This will bring us to consider the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to His people. And we shall see that there is no more foundation for this than for that which we have already considered. We shall also see that Scripture is wrested to establish this, just as it is for the other.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness to us is a doctrine that at first sight seems very attractive, and many regard any questioning of it as attacking a most precious part of truth. But if a thing is right,

no one should hesitate to have it tested. Truth will stand the severest test: let us be open-minded and accept only that which can be *proved* from the Word of God. Deadly nightshade has a pretty flower, and its berries are very pretty too, but they are poisonous. Unsound doctrine may appear very beautiful to those who have not seen the evil of it exposed; but be sure, a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The attractiveness of the thing only renders it the more dangerous. To take the attitude, "I don't see that there is any harm in it," is to open the door for the enemy to bring in anything that he pleases. And be sure, the corrupt tree will produce *corrupt* fruit. The methods of dealing with the Scriptures to support the errors are sufficient evidence of this, and the corruption will be manifest in other ways too. Therefore let us remove the tree, root and branch. The truth alone sanctifies; a counterfeit for truth can only produce a counterfeit for sanctification.

READING, CHAPTER 5.¹⁸

"Therefore, as through one offence unto all men unto condemnation: so also through one righteousness unto all men unto justification of life." This is the actual wording of the verse in the Greek, with the understanding that there is an additional word used which strengthens the word "therefore." It will be noticed that as the verse stands in the Authorized, there are some words added in *italics*, for the purpose of more clearly expressing the sense of it. This fact should be taken into account. It is customary to omit words in this way in the Greek when a thing has just been stated more fully, or in referring to something that is well known. This, in itself, is an indication that the verse is not intended to teach something new—not even a new aspect of the same matter; but that it refers to something already known.

The word "therefore" at the commencement shows that a connection is intended with what has preceded. It is a connection which implies that the statements which follow are made on the basis of what has been stated previously. We have seen that verses 13-17 are a parenthesis. Verse 12 is not complete in itself, it requires a further statement. But Paul, at ver. 13, broke off at the main statement to extend his thought and explain the presence of sin and death in the world, to make the meaning of ver. 12 more clear. Then, having drawn certain comparisons in verses 15-17, he resumes his main line of thought in verse 18. There is no other verse in the passage which makes a logical connection with ver. 12, and we therefore see that, both from the fact of words being omitted and by the use of this word "therefore" (or "therefore then"), ver. 18 must be understood in agreement with what has been said in ver. 12.

Perhaps it is desirable here, for the sake of any who are not conversant with these things, to point out the difference between "imputation" and "impartation." "Imputation" means that God legally reckons anything to us. "Impartation" means that in our experience

we receive something that is expressed in our own actions. So when the imputation of Christ's righteousness is spoken of, it means that the obedience of Christ to the law of God in His earthly life is legally reckoned to us as if we had done it. This is the error against which we are contending. At the same time we rejoice in the truth that when we are born of the Spirit of God, the power to work righteousness is imparted, which is the power of the resurrection of Christ: see 1 Cor. 1.³⁰; Phil. 1.¹¹ and 3.¹⁰.

In considering ver. 12, we saw that death is *not* because Adam's sin is imputed to us, but because *we* sin. We must, therefore, understand ver. 18 to mean, not that we are condemned because Adam's one sin is imputed to us, but that the present condition of sin and condemnation was brought into the world through him. What is lacking in ver. 18, has been stated in ver. 12. There the links have been provided which make the chain of events complete, and these links must be understood throughout.

Let us also note that *none* of these verses say that either the "sin" or "the offence" or "the disobedience" is *imputed* to us. Therefore to say that they *mean* that is to add to God's Word.

Now as to the second part of the verse, we see that there is a strict parallel with the first part. It does not say that the "one righteousness" is *imputed* to all men, but that through one righteousness a result came unto all men unto justification of life.

Permit a digression here to consider another point. Do you believe that justification of life has come to *all* men? No. You believe that some will go to eternal condemnation. But this verse says "all men." This illustrates what was said earlier, that the statement here must be understood in agreement with what has been said previously. In ch. 3.²² we were told that it is unto all and upon all that *believe*. It is a further evidence that these verses are not written with the object of expounding the doctrine of justification. That has already been done in the earlier chapters. They are written that, by making certain comparisons between the entrance of sin and death into the world, and the bringing in of justification, our hearts might appreciate the magnificence of the work of Christ.

To resume, it should be noticed that the word "righteousness" here is different in the Greek from that which is used, for instance, in ch. 4.²². It is from the same root, but instead of signifying a quality or condition, it signifies "a righteous thing." The fact that it is sometimes plural confirms this, (righteous things). It is used in the following passages. Rom. 1.³², translated "judgment"; Rev. 15.⁴, "judgments": evidently in these passages "righteous decrees." Rom. 5.¹⁶, "justification" (a righteous declaration). Luke 1.⁶, Heb. 9.¹ & 10, "ordinances" (righteous requirements). Rom. 2.²⁶, 5.¹⁸, 8.⁴ and Rev. 19.⁸, "righteousness." From this we see that in Rom. 5.¹⁸ it is "one righteous transaction" that is intended.

We now seek the Holy Spirit's own explanation as to what righteous transaction is to be understood. This verse does not tell us, nor any of the verses in this section. But if we go back to ver. 9, we are there told that we are "justified by His blood." Obviously that means by the righteous transaction of shedding His blood for us. We go back to ch. 3.²⁴⁻²⁶, and we see that this same transaction is the righteous ground for our justification. Throughout we have seen that the death of Christ, wherein atonement for our sins was made, is the only thing that is mentioned in connection with our justification. So then, let us be humble and reverent enough to accept what the Holy Spirit says without adding any thought of our own, or allowing anyone else to add his. The Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. 10.⁴⁻¹⁷, gives a clear statement that the Lord Jesus came to do the will of God in the offering up of Himself, and by that one offering we are perfected for ever.

Now let us remind ourselves of the strict parallel between the two parts of ver. 18. If the first part of the verse means that Adam's offence is imputed to us, then the second part means that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. Sufficient has been said to show that this is not so. If, then, the first part of the verse does not mean that Adam's offence is imputed to us, then the second part does *not* mean that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. It either teaches that *both* are imputed or *neither*. We cannot hold the imputation of Christ's righteousness without holding the imputation of Adam's sin. This is important. Many wrongly rejoice in the belief that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, but if asked whether they believe that God views every one that is born into this world as being *guilty* of the sin which Adam committed, they would immediately reply, "No." Or, at least, would hesitate to say they do. Why is this? Is it because their own consciences tell them that it would be unrighteous for God to do so? The unrighteousness of it we have already seen: and we shall also see that the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us would be unrighteous too.

Many rejoice in singing such words as "Clothed in His (Christ's) righteousness alone, faultless to stand before His throne"; or, "Clothed in our Saviour's merits"; or, "The riches of His merits stand by imputation ours"; or other like expressions, the meaning of which is equally clear. But why is it that the imputation of Adam's sin is not expressed with equal clearness in the hymns? We find the expressions, "a ruined race," and "ruined by the fall"; but do those who sing such things realise that in many cases the writers of such hymns used those expressions with the meaning that we stand condemned before God because He regards us as being guilty of the sin that Adam committed? It is so. But why do not the hymn-writers assert the one as boldly as they do the other? And further, why do we find bold statements in the front pages of magazines, and articles equally clear, asserting the imputation of Christ's obedience under the law to all His people; but the imputation of Adam's sin to all his seed, while definitely held by

the writers, is kept in the background? If these things are true, is it right to glory in one part of truth and be ashamed of another? We can be perfectly sure that there is no part of *truth* of which we need be ashamed. True, we should not cast pearls before swine, but every child of God should be able to appreciate and glory in every part of the revelation of God's ways.

What, then, is our conclusion as to the verse before us? According to ver. 12, Adam sinned and death followed. Through him the sin entered into the world. And because we have *all* sinned, death has passed through unto us. Therefore (ver. 18) as *through* the one offence condemnation has come to all, so through one righteous transaction—the offering of the body of Jesus Christ—justification has come to all who believe.

READING, CHAPTER 5.¹⁹.

“For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one the many shall be made righteous.” Though the essential meaning of the verse is not altered by this more literal rendering, there are one or two helpful points which are brought out by it. As has been said, the Authorised Version, as it stands, is sufficient for the understanding of the true doctrine.

The word “for” shows that this verse gives a *reason* for the statement of ver. 18. If “made righteous” in this verse meant “have righteousness imputed,” there would be no difference in meaning from ver. 18, and the Holy Spirit would be thus unnecessarily repeating Himself. But accepting the distinction which He has made between being “made righteous” and “having righteousness imputed,” we see that ver. 18 is supported in its assertion by the evidence of ver. 19. It is quite the usual thing to use a thing that is seen to illustrate or evidence a thing that is not seen. The Lord's parables show this. So here, the fact that we have been “made sinners” in condition and practice, *through* the first sin of Adam, is manifest to all. But our condemnation, which results from our own sin is not manifest, it is a legal standing before God. No natural eye can discern whether a man is condemned or justified in the sight of God, but the natural eye can discern whether a man is righteous or a sinner in practice. From this standpoint then, as everyone knows that men are made sinners (and the saints to whom Paul wrote, at least, would know that “the many” who believe in Christ are made righteous, in practice), we can see that these two verses are not mere repetition, but that which is apparent in ver. 19, is made the ground for the assertion of that which is not seen, though a fact, in ver. 18. And the word “for” is seen to have its proper force.

The words “just as” are somewhat stronger than merely “as,” and though the sense is the same, the emphasis is thrown more on the manner in which we were made sinners, according to ver. 12.

"The many," not simply "many," makes it more definite. *The* many who believe, as in 3.²², agreeing with the sense in which "all men" is to be understood in ver. 18. There is no ground for "universal salvation" here.

We notice that there is a distinct parallel, for it is obvious that the "one righteousness" in ver. 18 is the same thing as the "obedience of the one" in ver. 19. And that the "one offence" in ver. 18 is the same thing as the "disobedience of the one man" in ver. 19. But, as has been shown, if the effects in the two verses were the same, there would be but mere repetition. The effects in the two verses are not the same. And the Holy Spirit has made the distinction in the words used. Throughout the chapters we are considering, the word "justify" is used freely and exclusively where the imputing of righteousness is meant. It is used in 2.¹³; 3.^{4, 20, 24, 28, 30}; 4.^{2, 5}; 5.^{1, 9}; 8.^{30, 33}. But in 5.¹⁹ a different word is used, and the translators have shown this by rendering it "made righteous" and not "justified." The same applies to the word "made sinners," it is quite distinct from the word "condemned" which is used throughout the passage. But though the Authorised Version shows the difference, it is needful to examine the Greek and bring out the difference, when scholarly men have set themselves to establish error by references to the Greek which leave others at a disadvantage.

The word for "made" in both cases, in ver. 19, is "kathistemi," literally it means "to set down." For the purpose in hand we cannot do better than consider a statement by Mr. B. W. Newton, in "Remarks on the Revised English Version," page 125. Mr. Newton is not now living, but his statements are clear, a contrast to some who teach the same today. His arguments are still being used; and by avoiding present-day errorists one does not advertise them. But sufficient will be said to meet the requirements of any case that may come up at the present time. Mr. Newton writes as follows:

"'Constituted' (. . .) is a forensic word. If the law appoints that the guilt of a representative person with whom we have a legal oneness, should attach to those who are represented by that person, then they who are so rendered guilty are said to be constituted sinners. To be 'made sinners,' which is the translation of *kathistamai* adopted in our version, is (to say the least) ambiguous. It might mean, and it is by most persons supposed to mean, the being made personally corrupt."

This reveals his standpoint. A "legal oneness" and "sinning representatively." Neither of these can be found in Scripture. His explanation of the word *kathistamai* is therefore given to agree with his doctrine. To support his statement that it is a forensic—legal—term, he quotes the Latin versions (incidentally showing the connection with the Romish "original sin") nothing from the original Scriptures. If the word were not used elsewhere in Scripture one might be justified in seeking help outside, but the word is used in twenty other places

in Scripture, which are sufficient to decide the point in question. But first let it be realised that *any* word can be a legal term if it happens to be used in that connection. The point is that it is *not necessarily* a legal term, and that can be proved. As to "made sinners" being ambiguous; yes. But so is the Greek word "kathistemi," and the word "constituted" too. A thing can be physically, chemically or politically constituted, and so on, according to its nature. If it is legal in Rom. 5.¹⁹ it must be proved on some other ground.

We ought also to be clear as to what we are dealing with. The imputation of Adam's sin, as it is taught, is distinct from our personal corruption (see Mr. Newton, above). So the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as it is taught, is distinct from our personal righteousness. Both are regarded as legal reckoning apart from our actual condition. Now, does this word (kathistamai) imply that? Here are the instances where it is used. Acts 6.³; "appoint." Here the seven men were certainly officially placed. Acts 17.¹⁵: "conducted." Is there any thought of a legal reckoning or representative action in "conducting" a person to a place? The literal meaning, "to set down," can be seen to apply, but not the other thought. Mat. 24.^{45, 47}; 25.²¹; Luke 12.^{14, 42, 44}; Acts 7.^{10, 27, 35}; Heb. 7.²⁸; 2 Pet. 1.⁸; "to make." Again in making one a ruler there is an official appointment. But 2 Pet. 1.⁸ is worthy of notice. The context shows certain things which are to be allied to our faith: virtue, knowledge, etc., and these things will make or constitute us neither barren nor unfruitful. Here it is purely a matter of our own doing, and in like manner, in Rom. 5.¹⁹, we are made sinners or made righteous in the sense of what we do. Imputation is out of the question. Titus 1.⁵; Heb. 5.¹; 8.³; "ordain." Here again, though a priest is officially placed, it is that he may practice the work of a priest. Heb. 2.⁷; "set." Jas. 3.⁶; 4.⁴; "be." "So is the tongue" is a description of its actual condition and functioning. Not what it is legally reckoned to be. And in Jas. 4.⁴, if we understand it to mean "legally constituted" an enemy of God, the most that can be asserted is that *kathistemi* may or may not be a legal term according to the context.

It remains therefore to be proved that it is a legal term in Rom. 5.¹⁹; but such proof cannot be found. But if any insist that it does mean legally constituted sinners and legally constituted righteous, they can only maintain their doctrine by adding to Scripture and making it read "through *the imputation of the disobedience*" and "through *the imputation of the obedience*." So that there is no ground for asserting either the imputation of Adam's sin or the imputation of Christ's righteousness in these verses. And Mr. Newton and others are making Scripture mean what it does not say, to establish their own doctrine. But that the legal aspect is not intended, is sufficiently clear from the fact that, in this case, the Holy Spirit has not used the word "justify," which is an essentially legal expression, whereas He has used it everywhere else.

Our conclusion then is, from a strict and reverent attention to the actual words, that *through* the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners (in practice), so also through the obedience of the one man the many shall be made righteous (in practice), without any thought of imputation.

This removes the repetition referred to, which is necessitated by the other view, gives full value to the word "for," requires no forced meaning or adding of words, and is in agreement with the clear statement of ver. 12 and all the earlier statements in the Epistle.

But there are a few other things to be said regarding this verse; and later, if the Lord will, a comprehensive list of the Scriptures that have been misused to support the error in question will be considered.

READING, CHAPTER 5.^{18, 19.}
THE ONE RIGHTEOUS TRANSACTION AND THE
OBEDIENCE OF THE ONE

It is generally agreed that the "righteousness," in ver. 18, is a "righteous transaction." But those who hold that that righteousness is imputed to us make this to mean "the one righteous transaction of His whole life." And to support this, Phil. 2.⁶⁻⁸ is advanced. We certainly shall not spend our time in vain by a thorough investigation of this, but as is frequently the case, a greater fulness of truth will be seen through the testing of the error.

Reverence for God requires that we acknowledge His wisdom in the way in which He expounds His own truth. And to trace out this wisdom will help towards such reverence. Paul was inspired to write to the Romans an epistle which would give them a grounding in the doctrine of Christ, of which justification is a most important part. In considering the first four chapters, we have seen divine wisdom in the way Paul has built up the whole matter. We have seen, too, that not a word has been said about the righteousness of Christ or His obedience under law, or the fact that He became a servant. Only His death as an atonement is mentioned as the procuring cause of our justification. To omit His life obedience from ch. 3, where we come to a conclusion on the matter, would be weakness, to say the least, on the part of the writer, if that obedience were imputed to us. But when we come to ch. 5, and read of this righteous transaction, and still find no reference to His obedience under law or as a servant; to read such things into the passage shows a lack of respect for the Holy Spirit as a Teacher. No doubt this is quite unintentional on the part of those who do it, but should we not desire to avoid even those grievances to God which are unintentional?

But we may go further. If the epistle to the Philippians is necessary to explain the epistle to the Romans, how could Paul expect that the Romans would understand, seeing that the epistle to the Philippians was not written till several years after? This not only shows the folly of this comparison, but should help to preserve us from thoughtless comparisons of any kind. The marginal references of our Bibles are

usually helpful, providing we use them with due respect to the contexts in which they are found. We should not mix together verses of Scripture from different contexts simply because the same word is used in them. We should “compare spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2.¹³). Not merely “Scripture with Scripture.”

A few simple facts concerning Phil. 2 will not only help as to the doctrine in hand, but will also help a devotional exercise of heart in meditating upon the glory of our Lord. The whole epistle, like all other epistles, has a character of its own. It is not written to expound doctrine, and justification is not so much as mentioned in it. It was written to check the beginning of disunity in that Church (ch. 4.²), and a little careful reading will show that ch. 2 is leading up to that. We have not space here to dwell upon this important aspect of things, but sufficient for the present to notice that the theme in ch. 2 is “Christ as our example.” We find not a word as to anything accruing to us; we do not read that His death, in ver. 8, procured our forgiveness or anything else. What we do read is that on account of that beautiful life of obedience, even unto a death of a cross, Christ *Himself* is highly exalted.

This is not only the important feature of this one passage, it is consistent with the whole of Scripture testimony. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that Christ’s obedience under the law procured anything for us. Never do we read that His righteousness was offered to God on our behalf. Nor that it ever formed part of His atoning work. We shall have abundance of confirmation of this later on. Christ offered up Himself—but His good works are not Himself. His glorious righteousness—His perfect obedience—remains His; He alone has the merit of it, and He alone will have the glorious reward. That is the example that is set before us, and if this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus, we also shall have a full reward at His judgment seat. What a call to humble obedience to His Word! This, then, is the purpose of the passage, and how inappropriate it is to bring it in as an explanation of Rom. 5.

If, then, we want to know what this one righteous transaction is, let us seek our explanation from what has already been told us in the same epistle. This gives credit to the writer as an inspired teacher, and is safe. In ch. 3.²⁴ we were told that we are justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In ch. 5.⁹ we were told that we are justified by His blood. This then, is the only ground of our justification, and the one root cause of every other blessing which we have in Christ. For the power of His resurrection could never reach us if He had not died for our sins.

Although we acknowledge that the righteous transaction in ver. 18 and the obedience in ver. 19 are the same, there is a reason why the Holy Spirit has varied the expression. Two distinct aspects are presented. Though perfectly voluntary, the laying down of His life

for the sheep was an act of obedience—John 10.¹⁸. The atonement made by this transaction procured our justification; but the obedience of making it is not reckoned to us, it is an act of obedience on His part for which He will be rewarded. This is seen in Rev. 5.⁹. There we see that the shedding of His blood not only provides redemption for us, but brings a reward to Him. His act of obedience to God, even in this, constitutes Him WORTHY to open the seals.

It is also helpful to compare John 17.⁴ with 19.³⁰. In the first, our Lord is speaking of that work which His Father had given Him to do as the Faithful and True Witness. This testimony ends with ch. 12, and though He was brought before the High Priest and Pilate and the multitude, His silence is eloquent from this standpoint.

On the cross His words were not, “I have finished,” but, “It is finished.” “It is finished” is fitting to the fact that the atoning work was a transaction between Himself and God as the Judge to whom we are responsible. In this the Father was also involved, in that He, as the Judge, poured out His wrath upon His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. The cost to the Father as well as to the Son is thus seen. But as an act of obedience, the same undertaking requires that Christ shall have a reward for it. His bride will be a reward, it is true; but we rejoice in the Rev. 5 aspect too. And this leads to a further thought which is important.

The right to open the seals is associated with the one act of redeeming to God by His blood: the Phil. 2 aspect of obedience not being mentioned. Does not this help us to see that this righteous transaction is viewed in a separate way? Indeed, a little thought will bring us to the conclusion that that one command mentioned in John 10.¹⁸ is not, and cannot be, a part of the law under which Christ came when He “became of a woman, became under law.” This put Him in the position of a man, an Israelite, bound to fulfil all the requirements of the law. But the law did not require a man to die as a substitute for others; indeed, it forbade it—Deut. 24.¹⁶. And with all reverence we can say that God could not command ANY man to die for others, in an atoning sense. The only One who could do this is the One who is God as well as Man. If any created being had been judged and punished for our sins it would have involved God in unrighteousness. And herein we see that which Paul so emphasised in Rom. 1, the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in the Gospel. Hence this righteous transaction is again seen to be quite distinct from that obedience which is presented in Phil. 2.

As a further confirmation of what has been said, we might consider Heb. 10.⁵⁻¹⁰. Here we have a quotation from Psa. 40; but a comparison of the two passages will show that every reference in the Psalm to the obedience of Christ to the law is omitted, and one statement is actually altered to present the particular aspect required by Heb. 10.¹⁰, “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.” In the Psalm we read—ver. 8—“Yea, Thy law is within My heart.” This

is omitted in the passage in Hebrews. We see, too, that the words "I delight" are also omitted. And we see that the words in the Psalm "Mine ears hast Thou opened," are altered in Hebrews to "a body hast Thou prepared Me." The words of the Psalm are fitting to a context of keeping the law, but the words of Hebrews are fitted to the context of offering the body. We would not dare to alter Scripture in such a way, but when the Holy Spirit inspires such a thing, surely we ought to pay attention to it, and recognise that He intends to focus our attention upon the offering of the body of Jesus Christ as the sole ground of our perfecting, without the works of the law. At the same time we are reminded that it is "the WILL of God" that He was doing, and therefore there is a reward for Him, as we have seen from Rev. 5.

Having proved that the "one righteous transaction," in ver. 18, and the "obedience," in ver. 19, refer to the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ, and not to His obedience under the law, we may proceed to note some aspects of the opposite view which would involve God in unrighteousness. This will, by contrast, help us to see the glory of that truth that He is *just* and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. But before doing so, let us be clear as to what would be unrighteous in such a case.

Righteousness requires the punishment of wrong doing, ch. 1 has shown this. It also requires the reward of right doing. Heb. 6.¹⁰ makes this evident: "God is not *unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love." On the other hand it will not allow of twice payment, or the paying of the debt *and* the suffering of the penalty as well. Therefore, in all our considerations of the glorious work of justification, we must see that nothing is allowed a place which is not strictly in accord with these principles; otherwise we allow that which attacks God's righteousness. Men may overlook small things, but God overlooks nothing. He rightly demands a complete satisfaction and takes nothing beyond.

In view of this, those who say that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, must show that such a thing is perfectly righteous. That God receives that which is a perfect satisfaction for our unrighteousness and no more. This they cannot do; but we can show that their doctrine involves God in unrighteousness.

We must also remember that it is disobedience to omit what God commands, just as much as to do what He forbids. In this connection the Epistle to the Galatians is very helpful. Ch. 3 of this epistle gives a clear statement as to how our justification was brought about; and in so doing deals with the matter from the standpoint of our omission of what we should have done; for ver. 10 says "cursed is every one that *continueth not* in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." If the righteousness of Christ were imputed to us to make up for our omissions, surely this is the place where it would be stated; for this passage deals with the matter from the standpoint

of omission. But we are told here that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (ver. 13): and that is the only thing mentioned as being necessary to "the blessing of Abraham" coming upon us: which blessing is obviously that which is spoken of in ver. 8, i.e., justification.

From this we see that God's righteousness is fully satisfied by Christ bearing the curse in our stead. But if He had made good our omissions by His doing of the law, and then paid the penalty as well by bearing the curse, that would have been twice payment and it would have been *unrighteous*.

The word "merit" is commonly used by those who hold that the obedience—or righteousness—of Christ is imputed to us who believe. Thus it is said, "His merits are made ours," and other such expressions are used. "Merit" simply means "worthiness." And worthiness, in view of righteousness, necessitates a reward. Whatever exists in, or is legally reckoned to a person, whether of sin or righteousness, *must*, because it is worthy and because God is righteous, receive what it merits, either in punishment or reward. Thus, if a man died with Adam's sin imputed to him, he would, of necessity, have to receive the punishment for it. So, if the merits of Christ are imputed to us, we must, of necessity, receive the reward due to those merits. Otherwise God would fail as to righteousness.

We cannot entertain the thought that we are to receive the reward of the merit of Christ's earthly life; much less could we think of receiving the reward of His merits in making the atonement. The righteousness of God cannot fail, therefore we must rule out the doctrine that His merits are imputed to us.

But we are not left to what we think on these things, the Scriptures are definite. In Phil. 2.⁹⁻¹⁰ we are told that because of His life of obedience as a servant, God has "highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Will that be ours? It would necessarily be so if His merits were imputed to us. But Heb. 1.⁹ asserts the contrary. It says, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Psa. 45.²⁻⁷, from which this is quoted, is worthy of notice from this standpoint alone. There we see a threefold testimony to the same truth. Ver. 2, "Grace is poured into Thy lips, *therefore* God hath blessed Thee." Verses 3, 4, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously *because* of truth and meekness and righteousness." And ver. 7 (above quoted) showing His exaltation *above* His fellows for the same reason.

These Scriptures have to do with Christ's obedience as the Faithful and True Witness before men. But in Rev. 5 His worthiness in making atonement to God is set forth. The heavenly beings (living ones and elders) sing, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the

seals thereof; *for* Thou wast slain," etc. If His merit, of offering up Himself, were imputed to us (and we cannot exclude that from the "one righteous transaction" of Rom. 5.¹⁸), we would need to have this reward also. But apart from the question of righteousness, this is impossible, because we shall not be caught up till after the seals have been opened.

The above clearly shows that the imputation of the merits of Christ to us would put us on a level with Him. But Scripture is equally clear that we shall receive reward for faithfulness, since we have been saved—2 Cor. 5.¹⁰. If, then, the imputation of His merits puts us on a level with Him, the added reward for our own works would put us above Him!

Those who teach error do not usually test it out, but look for some means of establishing their own thoughts; and having found that, to their own satisfaction, they are content. In this way, Isa, 53.¹¹ has been misused to support the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. To do so, a special rendering of the Hebrew has to be used. But those who do it do not realise that they are attacking the work of atonement from another direction.

It is true that "He shall make (or cause) righteousness for the many" is the correct meaning of that part of the statement; but the next word "for" has been given the meaning "and." This is not justifiable. The word used here commonly has the meaning "and," but not always. In many cases it cannot mean "and," but must mean "if," "then," "though," "but," "for," etc., and is so translated in the English. The sense of the passage must decide the meaning in each case. Davidson, in his lexicon, gives twelve meanings to this word. Therefore, for anyone to say that it is literally "and" is stretching the point, and to build important doctrine upon it is presumption. As the verse stands in the English, the sense is plain, and the doctrine it expresses is in full accord with that of the New Testament. But if we read "He shall make a righteousness for the many, *and* He shall bear their iniquities," we make two separate works of it. Which also means that our righteousness was made without His bearing of our iniquities, and that the bearing of them was something additional. Such a translation has supported thoughts and expressions which make the *death* of Christ *no more than* the means of making His righteousness available to us.

The verse as it stands in the English is quite satisfactory. The meaning is that "In (or by) His knowledge, shall My Righteous Servant cause righteousness to the many, *for* He shall bear their iniquities." This makes a helpful comparison with Rom. 5.¹⁸, "by one righteous transaction (the free gift came) upon all men unto justification of life."

Only the One who is God as well as man could have sufficient knowledge of the requirements of God's holy law against our sins; indeed, only He could know the fulness of those sins. And only He could bear the awful curse due to those sins and survive. But what righteousness demanded, love supplied. God is light and God is love.

May our hearts not only adore but love Him, in view of this surpassing love. And may our love to Him cause us to be zealous for the honour of His name and uphold His righteousness.

READING, CHAPTER 5.^{20, 21}.

These verses are the conclusion of this part of the doctrine. Concluding remarks are often of a summarising or decisive nature, and we shall find it so here.

The statement, "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound," obviously refers to verses 13, 14, where the period before Moses is described. During that period men were condemned on the ground that, in spite of the evidence of the existence of God, and of His authority in creation, "they glorified Him not as God"; and that they themselves did that which they condemned in others. This is shown in chapters 1 and 2. When the law of Moses was given, this shed a new light upon sin, in that man's duty towards God and his neighbour was clearly set out. Thus with this additional light there was the greater condemnation. This is shown in chapters 2 and 3.

The one offence of Adam in the garden of Eden was not made to "abound" by the coming in of the law of Moses, for the law makes no reference to it. It would be out of place for Moses to give further instructions concerning that tree, seeing that, once Adam had sinned, access to the tree was cut off by the closing of the garden, as well as that God had given all the necessary instructions to Adam before he ate of it.

It therefore becomes evident that the offence which was made to abound was not Adam's offence, but the offences for which men are condemned as shown in chapters 1, 2 and 3, coming to the conclusion in 3.^{19, 20}.

The verse (5.²⁰) continues, "but where the sin abounded the grace did much more abound." The offence, therefore must be that from which we are justified, as verse 16 states.*

Thanks be to God, He has brought out our sins into the fullest light and shown them up in all their heinousness, and then dealt with them in absolute righteousness in giving His beloved Son to bear the full weight of judgment due to them. Grace did MUCH MORE abound.

Here, then, we see that this concluding remark clinches the matter as to the meaning of the whole passage. It is not Adam's sin that is the ground of man's condemnation, not even to physical death; but,

* Having proved above that "THE offence" and "THE sin" cannot refer to Adam's sin, the fact is illustrated that the word "the" is not used in the Greek as it is in the English, and that the omission of it in the case of "the sin" (where sin abounded) is quite in order. Ignoring this fact, some who try to maintain the imputation of Adam's sin, have made use, wrongly, of the presence of that word. The meaning here is, "moreover, the law entered that the offence (whatever it be) might abound." Under the law, "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." So that each offence, whatever it was, when brought into the light of the law, was seen in its true character before God.

as verse 12, the beginning of the section says, it is "for that *all* sinned."

If anyone who reads these lines has in his mind any objection to God's ways on the ground of the idea that man is in any way condemned for what Adam did, let him put it out of mind once and for all. God holds nobody guilty for anything but that for which he is personally and righteously responsible, having due regard to all the circumstances. But let him realise at the same time that God will overlook nothing, that His inflexible righteousness demands a full satisfaction and the penalty will have to be paid to the last mite. Let him flee to Christ for refuge while it is yet the acceptable time.

Verse 21: "That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the final comparison of the passage. Throughout, "death" has been used as referring to the death of the body: and we should therefore regard it in that way here, as also at the end of chapter 6. The "second death"—eternal judgment in the lake of fire—is not dealt with by Paul in this epistle as it is dealt with in other parts of the New Testament. There are, however, statements which involve the same truth. The righteousness of God being so emphasised in the early chapters of the epistle would necessitate degrees of punishment according to works, as indeed he says in chapter 2.⁴⁻⁶. "The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment" are given in Heb. 6.² as elementary truth, and the believers at Rome were not altogether new to the faith. There are other matters of importance, contained in other epistles, which are not found in this, and it seems that Paul was inspired to write that which met the need of the time then present; but oh, the wisdom of God which has preserved it for us in these last days! Hence, though death in these passages refers to the death of the body, it would be understood that that would be the entrance upon the eternal condition of judgment.

But the subject of the passage is death, brought in by Adam's sin originally, to make a background for demonstrating the glorious results brought about by that one righteous transaction of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus *eternal* life is contrasted with mere death. Well may our hearts rejoice if we have really become partakers in this grace.

READING, CHAPTER 6.¹⁻⁷.

The relationship of chapter 6 to the preceding chapters illustrates the relationship of doctrine to practice. Grace, when truly received into the heart, results in holiness, righteousness and truth. There are those who receive the doctrine of grace in the head, but their hearts are not affected—Jude 4. They "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." But the Lord showed in the parable of the sower—Luke 8.¹⁵—that the seed which fell upon good ground is like those who "in an honest and good heart, having received the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

So Paul asks, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin

that grace may abound?" And, in answering, introduces a fresh aspect of the matter, namely, "death in identification with Christ." In dealing with justification, he has said nothing about "dying with Christ when He died, and being raised when He was raised." Such statements are commonly made in support of the errors exposed in the preceding pages, supposing that we are justified in Christ's justification. Verse 7 of this chapter has been perverted to support this thought. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of "dying WHEN Christ died (from God's standpoint) and being raised WHEN He was raised." Most of the passages which speak of our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, are shown by the context to be a matter of our own voluntary doing. Justification is a matter of God's legal reckoning, but this identification with Christ is a matter of actual experience. The chapter we are considering shows that we came into this position by baptism, which, though performed by another, was an act of our own voluntary will. Col. 2.¹² is precisely the same, and Eph. 2.^{5, 6} associates this identification with our "quickening." In those days baptism followed quickly upon regeneration. When the new birth took place, God identified us with Christ in this new position. When baptism took place, we identified ourselves with Christ in His rejection by the world. May God give us all grace to rejoice in practical truth and not in abstract theories.

In answering his question in ver. 1, Paul makes a remarkable statement. How shall we that are DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein? For though put in the form of a question, it is a very strong way of asserting it, for it assumes that they will all agree that they are "dead to sin." But when we think of our actual experience, can we say that we are dead to sin? Are we not conscious that every day of our lives we have to ask our Heavenly Father's forgiveness of our sins? Do we not know by painful experience that it is only by continual conflict, in the power of the Spirit of God that we can overcome the sin that is within us! How then can we be said to be dead to sin? Certainly not in actual experience.

The next verse says, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" And the next verse, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death." It is baptism that brings us into this position of death. And baptism is our own voluntary act. By giving ourselves into the hands of another to be buried under the water, we signify that we have died to the old course of life. Not in the sense that it is henceforth an impossibility for us to sin, but that we have renounced the old course, and indeed the life henceforth should manifest a radical change. Christ has died to this world, and is risen to a new sphere. When we were baptized we identified ourselves with Him, and from our new standpoint we look back on the old experience as dead.

But Christ is no longer dead, as the passage reads on, "that like as

Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In ver. 5 the word "likeness" is important. It shows that it is not actually the same thing. Christ really died in the body; we, in baptism, only passed through a symbol or likeness of that death.

We must remember throughout that no actual death has taken place in our experience. And from this standpoint we must consider the words "we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection," which are based upon the other, "IF we have been planted together in the likeness of His death." Thus resurrection is here made to depend upon our baptism, as it were. Some would object to this, but let us consider the words. It should be noted that ver. 4 says we "SHOULD walk in newness of life," but ver. 5 says, "we SHALL be . . . in resurrection." The word "for" at the beginning of ver. 5 shows that this verse is made the argument or ground for what is said in ver. 4. If we understand this word "for" in the sense of "because," this is clear.

So then, we understand, we have been buried with Christ by baptism, and therefore SHOULD walk in newness of life. Because, if we have been planted (baptized) in the likeness of His death, we SHALL be in the likeness of His resurrection. What an argument for rising up in the power of the Holy Spirit now to this new experience. Think of the glorious prospect—"we shall be like Him." If our bodies are to be fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:21), should we not now seek to be changed into His image spiritually (2 Cor. 3:18)?

But now let us come to the point as to whether our resurrection depends on our being baptized. To understand Scripture we must put ourselves into the Scripture's standpoint. When Paul wrote to the Roman believers, the present-day confusion and corruption was not known. Then, there was no such thing as a believer being received into a local church without being baptized. Baptism was then the initial step in confessing faith in Christ. Infant baptism was then unknown, and the sprinkling of even a believer was not accepted as baptism. These corruptions came in later. Sprinkling is not baptism any more than sprinkling a little earth on a dead body is burial. Yet there are many who feel hurt if they are not invited to the breaking of bread, but are unwilling for the Lord's appointment as to baptism. What right have we to pick and choose as to which of the Lord's ordinances we are going to obey? We do not say that a believer who has not been baptized will not be in the resurrection of the saints, but we do say that the language used here reveals a standpoint which should not be treated lightly.

Passing on to ver. 6, we see that this is a continuation of the thought of ver. 4, bringing in crucifixion as a further expression of the same truth, and that which more graphically illustrates the idea. Ver. 5 thus stands as a parenthesis. The figure of crucifixion here helps us to understand the sense in which the word "destroyed" is used. Gal. 5:²⁴

says, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." As we have seen, in those times all believers took their stand with their Lord whom the world had crucified, and signified this by the act of baptism. It was not a matter of attainment by a minority who had reached a higher stage of sanctification; it was the standpoint of the whole: identification with Christ in His death. Crucifixion was not a state of death, but it led to death. The hands of the Lord Jesus could no longer minister in love to others, as they had done, once they were nailed to the tree. Nor could the hands of the thieves continue to steal. The word "destroyed" used here does not mean "annihilated," but to "render non-working." This exactly agrees with the figure—crucifixion—and with the truth in actual experience. We judge our "old man" to be worthy of death and have in our heart attitude crucified him. We have not crucified our bodies literally; but we have said to self, "Thou art worthy to die," and in our walk in newness of life we set ourselves to put, and keep, our old self in that position of crucifixion, where the members are not allowed to work as they would do, as the verse continues, "that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Concerning ver. 7, it is questionable whether the insertion of the Greek word "justified" in the margin helps to the understanding of the truth. There seems to be sound reason why the translators used the word "free." If we use the word "justified" here with the sense of being legally declared righteous, then we make it difficult to find a meaning to the verse which has any relation to the passage as a whole. It certainly would not fall into line with the trend of the passage, or provide any further argument, as the word "for" requires. If it read "he that is justified has died to sin," it would fit the passage better, but it does not. The word "justified" usually has the sense of a legal reckoning; but there are two passages besides this one where it seems that the actual change in one's conduct is meant. 1 Cor. 6.¹¹ says, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." Justification—God's declaration that we are righteous, because our sins have been put away by the blood of Christ—is the first thing; but here it is made the last. But if we take it here to mean "made righteous," then we have an order in the statements that shows a progression (not made righteous in the absolute sense, but as 1 John 3.¹⁰⁻²⁴ teaches, God's children are righteous in contrast to the children of the devil. Being born of the Spirit of God, we are possessed of the divine nature, and thus are able to fulfil the exhortation we are considering in Rom. 6. Growing in grace and abounding more and more in every good work). Moreover, this meaning fits the context, which is a matter of actual condition all through: made righteous being a fit contrast with the "unrighteous" at the beginning of ver. 9. The final words "by the Spirit of our God" also favours this, because we are declared righteous by the blood of Christ, but we are made righteous in our practice by the Holy Spirit. The other passage is Rev. 22.¹¹. There again the context is one of actual

condition throughout. We could hardly render it "he that is righteous, let him be justified still"; but it is this same word.

So, then, if we understand Rom. 6.⁷ to mean "he that died is made righteous from sin," we see the logic of the whole passage is one, and the word "for" has its due force. It is, as it were, a repetition of ver. 2. There it was put as a question, which answers itself, and is used as a commonly accepted fact: here the apostle comes back to his starting-point and, by the use of the word "for," makes it the ground of his assertions. "FOR he that dies" (not Christ, but the one who has identified himself with Him in baptism) "is made righteous from sin."

READING, CHAPTER 6.⁸⁻²³.

Having seen the true standpoint at the beginning of the chapter, we can now follow the same line of thought right through. So, if on account of a personal faith in Christ we have taken our stand in identification with Him by the voluntary act of baptism, we believe that we shall also live with Him (in resurrection). Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. His resurrection declares Him to be the Victor, because His own perfect life is fully acceptable to God, and the death that He died fully met all the claims of law on behalf of those for whom He suffered. Hence His resurrection is the guarantee that all whose sins are removed by His precious blood SHALL live with Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. By faith we behold Him hanging on that tree, in agony of body and in agony of soul. Forsaken! Not merely to the cruelty of men, but cut off by God—becoming a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the broken law. "He died unto sin." Not His own sin, He had none; but ours. And in that awful experience of the curse, He put away our sins for ever. Thus, "He liveth unto God."

Now upon this basis comes the exhortation of ver. 11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word "reckon" and the following words "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,*" show that we are not actually dead to sin, but that we are to treat our old selves as being in the place of death—crucified. The seventh chapter speaks of "a law of sin in our members," and the eighth says "if we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live." But we are to reckon ourselves dead to that law of sin and not allow it to have dominion over us. Death has no more dominion over Christ now that He is risen.

But death is only one side of the matter. Christ lives, and even now, those who are born again partake of His life, not in their bodies but spiritually. He lives unto God: and so should we. We notice in ver. 11 the added title, "through Jesus Christ our LORD." Those who are truly born again of the Spirit of God acknowledge Christ as Lord. He takes control henceforth of the whole life. Baptism has a deep

significance. It is not merely a ceremony of initiation. Let us ask ourselves whether this is really so in our experience. Are we giving Christ His rightful place as Lord in everything? Are we reckoning ourselves dead to any other standpoint? His words are searching, "Why call ye Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?"

The marginal note to ver. 13, "arms or weapons," narrows down the meaning too much. The word has a wide meaning. It is used for implements of any kind: whether those of a craftsman or a soldier. This is just what our hands, etc., are; and in our new relationship to God every member should be sanctified to His use. The tongue is a little member, but it can do a lot of good, or it can do a lot of harm. If it is sanctified to God, it can be used to maintain sound doctrine and reprove evil. It can minister words of comfort and exhortation. And so with all the members: instead of manifesting that ugly list of evils in ch. 3.¹⁰⁻¹⁸, they can express the fruit of the Spirit as in Gal. 5.²²⁻²³.

The principle expressed in ver. 14 is enlarged upon in chapters 7 and 8; we may therefore leave that for the moment. Sadly enough, the words, "ye are not under the law, but under grace," have been misused by many to justify disobedience. Disobedience is sin: note how the words "obey" and "obedience" are used in the verses that follow to indicate the new life of sanctification in contrast to the old one. It is true that we are not under "the law," i.e. of Moses, but we are under law to Christ (1 Cor. 9.²¹), and in 2 Cor. 10.⁵ we are exhorted to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. How the thoughts will run wild if we allow them. When Paul says, "ye are not under the law, but under grace," it is from the standpoint of justification. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law," therefore the law has no further claim upon us: we are justified. And in this new standing before God, sin does not "have dominion" over us, because those who are justified receive the Holy Spirit, who gives us the power to overcome. The law made its demands upon us, but gave no power to help us to fulfil them: see Gal. 3.¹¹⁻¹⁴.

Twice in this epistle it is made clear that we are under the law from the standpoint of the new covenant, having the law "written in our hearts" (Heb. 10.¹⁶). That is, that it is now our delight to keep God's law. Ch. 8.⁴ says "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," and 13.⁸⁻¹⁰ actually quotes from the ten commandments and shows that we fulfil them when we love our neighbours. We are not expected to keep the ceremonial part of the law, sacrifices and the observance of "clean" meats, etc., but where the New Testament appoints any ordinances, as baptism, the Lord's Supper, the covering or uncovering of the head in prayer, or any arrangements of Church discipline, we are to be as definite in OBEYING this law of Christ as a Jew was to be in obeying the law of Moses. Not only are we to obey the commands of the Lord as recorded in the Gospels, but if we are spiritual we will acknowledge that the things which Paul commanded

were the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14.³⁷). So the next verse, Rom. 6.¹⁵, asks, "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? Far be it." And the verses that follow are emphatic as to our position as servants.

In all these things we see the need of paying attention to the context, not only of the same chapter, but of the whole epistle. Nothing could be more clear from the following verses that we are SERVANTS. The fact that we are shown to be "sons" in ch. 8 is not to be made to imply that we are not servants. Moreover, the servant position is set out first. It is true that the Lord said in John 15.¹⁵, "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends"; but it is evident from the context that they were still servants, for the verse before says, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I COMMAND you." And in ver. 20 He refers to them in the word "servant."

The most perfect Son was the most perfect Servant. In Phil. 2 this is brought forward for our example, and is followed by three beautiful instances of believers who thus showed a likeness to their Lord: Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus. Note in ver. 22, "as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel." Mal. 3.¹⁷ shows God's own appreciation of such a son; and the son that is not willing to be commanded is not worthy of the name.

How many have proved the solemn truth of ver. 16. As soon as we yield ourselves to anything, any desire that may come upon us, we begin to bring ourselves into bondage. How many to-day are in bondage to habits which have forged chains stronger than steel. Not only drinking and gambling, which would be condemned by many because of the ruin that they bring in their train, but smoking and novel reading have become taskmasters to far more than the other things mentioned. But God be thanked (ver. 17), the believers at Rome though they were servants of sin, had OBEYED from the heart the doctrine of Christ to which they had been delivered. The margin here gives the more correct idea. The doctrine is seen as a mould into which we are placed that we may be conformed to it. This implies a plastic condition on the part of the one concerned; and is a condition which we all need to cultivate—a readiness of heart to respond at once to the teaching of the Word of God as a whole, so that we become living models of that teaching, known and read of all men.

So the verses continue, we were in servitude to sin, but the glorious Gospel of Christ has made us free from that, and we now rejoice in a new bondage—a bondage of love to the one who redeemed us by His precious blood.

But in ver. 19 Paul says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh." We little appreciate the great difference in the experience of those early believers when they were converted to Christ. But Paul did, and the instruction is not out of date to-day. So the matter is presented in this way, that we might have,

as it were, a method whereby to overcome. That is, to set the mind on a new order of things. It is not a position where Christ comes in and does it all for us; it is a position where we are to exercise ourselves and lay hold of the power of the resurrection of Christ and set ourselves to overcome.

The final statement of the passage being, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The end of a life of sin is death: and what is the profit of that in view of the day of God's righteous judgment. But to know that we are going to live for ever with the One who redeemed us from judgment, this supplies the urge for the effort to glorify Him.

C H A P T E R 6

READING, VERSE 23

In other papers which I have written I have drawn attention to this statement, and have given the explanation of it in the course of dealing with other subjects. But I find that it has become a very useful text for those who teach the total extinction of the ungodly in the lake of fire. This is a matter which should give every child of God a concern as to how to meet the case. And it also raises the point of its use in gospel testimony in general.

If this text is quoted to an unbeliever, will it not leave the impression that, when he dies, that pays the wages of sin and therefore there is no more to worry about?

If we are to be "approved workmen" we must "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2.¹⁵). And that involves a careful consideration of all Scripture and its application lest unwittingly we play into the hands of the enemy.

It is commonly thought that this word "death" applies to the "second death," which is the description given of the lake of fire. But the term "the second death" does not occur in the inspired word until Revelation 20, which was almost the last book to be written; and as Paul never uses it, we may question whether it was ever used till it was given to John.

Moreover, when Paul refers to the final judgment, he calls it "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2.⁵). And never in that Epistle does he use the term "death" for that final judgment.

The death of the body is one of the results of Adam's sin. This is made clear in ch. 5.¹². Not that we die because Adam sinned, but because we all have likewise sinned. And where sin reigns, death reigns. We therefore have no reason to believe that Paul in ch. 6.²³ is referring to anything more than the death of the body to draw a sharp contrast with "eternal life," in the same way that he concludes the chapter before, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now we may ask, Is then the death of the person the wages of his sins, and therefore the settlement of the matter? Certainly not; for it is written, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9.²⁷).

This brings us to the point which should make every preacher of the Gospel careful to avoid the use of these words, "the wages of sin is death," unless his meaning is made clear. And the meaning of the words is *not* "the second death."

The explanation is found in the correct meaning of the word "wages." There are two words used in the Greek which are translated by the one word "wages," because we have no other convenient word for expressing the difference between the two Greek words.

The word which means strictly "wages," i.e., a true and just settlement for anything done, so that neither party has any ground for complaint, or can raise any further claims, is the word "Misthos." It is found as "hire" in Matt. 20.⁸; Luke 10.⁷; Jas. 5.⁴; as "reward" in Matt. 5.^{12, 46}; 6.^{1, 2, 5, 16}; 10.^{41, 42}; Luke 6.^{23, 35}; Acts 1.¹⁸; Rom. 4.⁴; 1 Cor. 3.^{8, 14}; 9.^{17, 18}; 1 Tim. 5.¹⁸; 2 Peter 2.¹³; 2 John 8; Jude 11; Rev. 11.¹⁸; 22.¹²; as "wages" in John 4.³⁶; 2 Pet. 2.¹⁵. These passages clearly bring out the thought of the labourers *right* to his wages, and the fact that, in resurrection, there will be a perfectly righteous settlement for everything; both for the sins of the unsaved and for the service of those whose sins have been blotted out by the righteous settlement made for them in the sacrifice of Christ.

But the other word, used in Rom. 6.²³, is "Opsonion"; and does not convey the idea of a righteous settlement. In Luke 3.¹⁴ the margin gives the word "allowance." A soldier is normally given so much pay and food and other "benefits." But if circumstances arise which deprive him of any of these he can make no legal claim. So also in 2 Cor. 11.⁸. Paul had no agreement with the churches as to a wage; he accepted whatever they were pleased to send. And in 1 Cor. 9.⁷ (charges) we come back to the first idea of a soldier's allowance. From this it is clear that in Rom. 6.²³ this word does not imply a real settlement for sin. But just as the authorities in the Army appoint certain allowances which can be varied according to circumstances, without the violation of any law, so God has appointed that death shall normally prevail as a result of sin. But he can deliver from death, that is, in the sense of those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, who, like Enoch, will be translated that they should not see death. Also, it should be noted that though Christ died for our sins, believers still die. If death were the real wages—settlement—for sin, then those for whom Christ died should not die. The real settlement for sin which He made consisted in His conscious bearing of the wrath of God in His own soul—something infinitely beyond the pains of crucifixion; so that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" in our glorious Substitute (Heb. 2.²). That alone constitutes a righteous atonement.

To sum up this part of the subject we see that Rom. 6.²³ does not refer to the second death with its final judgment, because that is a righteous settlement: and the word for "wages," here does not mean a righteous settlement, but an appointment which can be varied at will by the One who has appointed it. For these reasons therefore it is better for us to avoid quoting these words in gospel testimony. There are plenty of others which we can use.

Perhaps the question may arise as to the use of such words as "Christ died for us" (Rom. 5.⁸). "The death of Christ," like "the blood of Christ," is an expression which covers all that took place when our Lord was nailed to the tree and became a *curse* for us according to Gal. 3.¹³. None of such passages asserts that His *death* is in itself the *wages*.

ETERNAL TORMENT

Having seen that physical death is not the penalty for sin, otherwise there would be no lake of fire, we come to consider the real settlement in that dread place. The annihilationists assert that endless torment for sins committed in this life would be unrighteous and therefore it cannot be. But the Scriptures plainly assert eternal torment for the unsaved in Rev. 14.⁹⁻¹¹; 20.¹⁰, etc. The twisting of these passages to avoid their plain truth we can only condemn. But we should not be satisfied till we can see for ourselves the righteousness of it.

There are two parts of this matter that need to be considered, the nature of the fire that causes the torment and therefore the torment itself; and, the reason for its continuance.

The nature of the fire must be decided, not by what we usually see in the natural sphere, but by what God has shewn of the supernatural. In Ex. 3.² Moses saw that "the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed." In Lev. 10.² fire went out from the presence of the Lord, and *devoured* them (same word as "consumed" in ch. 9.²⁴) and they died before the Lord. Nevertheless their dead bodies still remained to be buried, not even their coats being burnt. And even natural fire was withheld from burning the three who were cast into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3). God is not limited and we must bow to what He has said.

Scientists (?) have declared that this earth has a crust only as thick as an eggshell by comparison, and that the whole of the interior is a mass of fire. If any are inclined to believe it let them take an eggshell and put a live coal in it and then think what would happen if the coal could be kept burning indefinitely. If this theory were true the volcanoes would not be sufficient to give vent to the gases generated.

But the Scripture shews Hell (sheol or hades) to be in the interior of the earth and the rich man in Luke 16 was tormented with flame there. From this we can conclude both, that the fire is supernatural,

and that the soul, which alone goes to hades, is not destroyed by that fire.

When death and hades are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20.¹⁴) we are told that this is the second death. But we are not told that those cast in die. Death is a state of existence, see Eph. 2.⁵; 1 Tim. 5.⁶.

In that final judgment, God will render to every man according to his works (Rom. 2.⁶). There will therefore be degrees of suffering.

When we think of the rich man in Luke 16, we naturally think of something like a person falling into the midst of a great fire and remaining conscious for ever. But this brings us to consider the nature of the *torment*, and to do this we must consider this word from the Greek: for like the word for wages, the Greek reveals a very different aspect to the case.

The noun "torment" (*basanos*) is explained by Liddell and Scott as, the touchstone by which gold was proved; and so, by usage, a test to try whether anything was genuine. The purity of the gold was decided by the mark left on the stone, on which it was *rubbed*. Hence *basanos* was used for examination by scourging, etc.

This word is translated "torment" in Matt. 4.²⁴ and Luke 16.^{23, 28}. Another form of the same word is found in Rev. 9.⁵; 14.¹¹; 18.^{7, 10, 15}. Another form in Matt. 18.³⁴. It is also translated "pain" in Rev. 12.². In its verbal form it is found in Matt. 8.^{6, 29}; Mark 5.⁷; Luke 8.²⁸; Rev. 9.⁵; 11.¹⁰; 14.¹⁰; 20.¹⁰. This is also translated "toss" in Matt. 14.²⁴; "toil" in Mark 6.⁴⁸; "vex" in 2 Pet. 2.⁸. The last three of these references shew a very different view from that of a man fallen into a furnace, and will exactly fit with the truth of degrees of suffering.

Another word "*odunas*" is found in Luke 16.^{24, 25}; and in Luke 2.⁴⁸; Acts 20.³⁸, translated "sorrowing."

God's regulation of the fire in the past shews us that He can, and therefore will, regulate the suffering accorded to each according to his deserts, in a way corresponding to the last few passages above.

And now as to the righteousness of the continuance; we see that in Rev. 9.^{20, 21} and 16.¹¹ sinners do not repent when God's judgments are in the earth. And the "gnashing of teeth" in Matt. 8.¹², etc., is not an expression of pain, as in Rev. 16.¹⁰, but of the fiercest hatred, as in Acts 7.⁵⁴.

Thus their trial by torment demonstrates continually their fierce hatred of God and rebellion against His righteous judgment; thereby incurring further judgment, which we may be sure will be regulated according to their sin.

The righteousness of God demands the punishment of all sin. If He allowed any to pass unpunished He would be unrighteous. Men know that they sin against Him but they will not repent. How thankful we should be that a righteous settlement has been made for us in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, and that with forgiveness God has brought us to be reconciled, and when we enter into

the future state of bliss, being already reconciled, there will be nothing for us to repent of because sin, for us, will be a thing of the past. Therefore, as our glorious Substitute has paid the penalty for all our sins in this life, there is no reason at all for Him to suffer eternally to make the righteous atonement.

But as to the unsaved, we need to realise that God is the Creator of all, and therefore, has the right to expect absolute obedience without grudging from His creatures. He is more than righteous. He is bountiful: even though man has rebelled against Him (Matt. 5.⁴⁵). Man should therefore not only be thankful and render joyful service (and His commandments are not grievous), he should submit without murmuring when God administers a righteous recompense for sin not repented of. But contrary to this we find only hatred and further rebellion against his righteous judgment. Therefore, the righteousness of God requires the punishment of that further sin. And so it will be for ever.

Let us not be shaken by the annihilationists' cry of unrighteousness. Neither let us put a weapon into their hands by expressions of an "eternal torment" which are not scriptural. For they delight to rake up all such and use them to turn uninstructed ones from the truth.

The scriptural view of eternal torment is unassailable, because it is righteous; and we do not need to corrupt the plain statements of the word of God.

CHAPTER 7

READING, VERSES 1-6

We pass on, in this chapter, to another precious aspect of relationship and responsibility. In ch. 6 it was that of servants to God. In this it is that of a bride to Christ. In order to understand it we should first notice the parenthesis in ver. 1, "for I speak to them that know the law." Not to them that are *under* the law, or were under it. They were Romans, not Jews; but they knew the law, for the Old Testament was the early believer's Bible. So that whatever is found here applies to Gentiles as well as Jews if they believe in Christ.

Verses 2 and 3 show that before we were joined to Christ we stood in relation to the law of God as a woman does to a husband—that, as a woman can only be freed by the death of her husband, so we can only be free from the law by the death of the law.

Verse 4 says that WE are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; but that is the reverse side of the matter. According to verses 2 and 3 the LAW must die. This is presented in ver. 6.

That we have died with Christ is clearly shown in ch. 6, which we have already considered. Now we need to consider the other side, the death of the law.

The text of the A.V. makes a clear statement as to this; but the marginal note reverses it. This implies that there is some difficulty here, and we therefore need to look into it.

The fact is that neither the text nor the margin gives a strict translation of the words used in the Greek, for it reads,

"But now we are rendered unproductive from the law, being dead, *in which* we were held." The text reads "in which". The margin reads "to that"; which is incorrect translation.

There are two MS. readings for "being dead", (a) gen. sing., which leads to the insertion of "that", to make good English reading, in the text. (b) Nom. plu., which has led to the marginal translation. "Being dead", a participle, gen. sing., must agree with "the law", which is also gen. sing.

There is no justification for the translation "to that"; "in which" or "wherein" is true to the Greek. The word "that" which is inserted, in the text, is only to make up for what is expressed in the Greek by the inflections of "being dead" which are the same as of "the law". The English does not possess these inflections.

The correct rendering, as in the text, is of value in refuting the error that the ten commandments, given through Moses, are still in force, specially with regard to the Sabbath.

V. 6 corresponds to V. 2. And reading the whole six verses we see the same truth as in 1 Cor. 9.²¹, "under the law (lit. "in-lawed") to Christ".

If we take the view that when the husband dies the wife dies also, TO THAT RELATIONSHIP, that would allow the proper force to the word "in" and agree with the doctrine taught elsewhere as to the death of the law. (The word "in" commonly has the meaning "through" or "by," but there is little, if any, ground for rendering it "to," as in the margin). As to the death of the law, this is taught in Eph. 2.¹⁴⁻¹⁵ and Col. 2.¹⁴. In Eph. 2 there is a reference to the vail in the temple as "the middle wall of partition" which barred access to God. This partition is here described as "the enmity—the law of commandments in ordinances." That is to say, that just as the vail in the tabernacle or temple barred the way to God, and none dare go in under penalty of death, so the law of God stands between us and Him, until we are identified with Christ. Then, because He has "slain the enmity" (for we had broken the law), we have boldness of access to God even as Father. Col. 2.¹⁴, in the words "nailing it to His cross," shows that for all who believe in Christ, God regards the law as having died when He died.

Heb. 10.²⁰, in the words "THROUGH the vail, that is to say, His flesh," shows that the vail is also a type of the body of Christ, and alludes to the fact that at the death of Christ the vail in the temple was rent from top to bottom. The Lord Jesus Christ was, in His body, the perfect expression of the law. Thus the two views blend into one, Christ and the law both died in the one death; and we are free to be united to Him spiritually, now that He is raised from the dead.

This, again, shows us the righteousness of God in all His ways. There is not one detail in all the workings of God that is not worked out in scrupulous consistency with righteousness. How this inspires confidence in the hearts of those who trust in Him.

There are those who profess to accept Christ as a teacher and example, but refuse God's teaching as to the atonement made in the shedding of His blood. To all such the perfect example of Christ only means the greater condemnation. For we have now, not only the written law to condemn us, we have also the perfect example of Him who kept it, to show up our disobedience. What a blessed thing to be trusting to His perfect atonement and to be enjoying the position we have been considering above, in contrast to the delusion of thinking that God will accept us on the ground of so-called following the example of Christ.

When we were married to the law the only fruit we brought forth was sin unto death. But now there is fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Now we can go on to see how this is accomplished in our experience.

In ver. 6 the distinction is drawn between the newness of spirit and the oldness of the letter. The law prescribed many things in detail, in amplification of the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But the law did not put into the heart the disposition to carry it out. In our selfish self-will we disobeyed, and brought ourselves under condemnation. But now, not only is Christ raised from the dead, we also have been "quickened with Him." And in this new union there is the power of His resurrection at work, and a new disposition is implanted in our hearts. Instead of the law being merely so many letters written for our eyes to see, it is now written in our hearts, as Heb. 10.¹⁶ says, and is the evidence of being in God's new covenant. So that our new condition does not lead to despising the commandments of God because we are not under law, but to a joy in carrying them out to the fullest. For instance, the law said, "If thou see thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." If a Jew became a Christian, would he say, "I am not under the law now, so am not required to bring it back?" Of course not! As a Christian he is under law to Christ. And He taught His disciples that whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we were to do the same to them. And since in the new position Jew or Gentile makes no difference, but faith which worketh by love, the true disciple would rejoice in putting himself to an inconvenience to take the animal back.

And so it is with all the requirements of the law. We therefore see that in this respect the law is not dead. There is a sense in which the law cannot die. It is the law of God, the expression of His mind and will as to things which cannot be altered. God has perfect liberty to make laws imposing restrictions as to what meats are to be eaten, and then later to remove them; or to appoint a priesthood and later to abolish that. But "God that cannot lie" can never alter His moral law—that is eternal.

From the standpoint of being under law, we were condemned because we had broken it. The death of Christ puts us in a position of death to that relationship; but our new relationship to Christ brings us to a new relationship to God, and therefore to His law. Not that our justification depends upon our keeping it, that depends on the blood of Christ, but that we may be instructed by it as to how we are to please God, and find our joy in so doing.

We should also remember that, although this great change was effected by the death of Christ, it was not until we were quickened by the Spirit and believed in Him that it availed us aught. Until then we remained under condemnation.

In ver. 5 we read, "the motions of sin, which were BY the law." This gives rise to the question in ver. 7, "What shall we say then, is the law sin?" And out of this is developed some very important teaching. No, the law is not sin: it is "holy and just and good," as ver. 12 says. But when man is confronted with it, sad to say, sin is

brought forth. Again we see what a deception it is for any to think of justifying themselves for heaven by their good works. These verses show, not only that when the law comes it sheds a light upon us that reveals our corruption, but that when it comes, far from finding a ready response in our hearts, there is at once an attitude of rebellion to it.

We would also notice the words in ver. 5, "when we were in the flesh." Every child of God knows that at our conversion the body was not affected. Our physical flesh did not change, nor was that tendency to sin which was in us eradicated. What, then, is the difference that the above words imply? It is that being justified by faith we are brought into a new relationship where earthly parentage counts for nothing. We are a new creation in Christ. And, although the old nature has not been eradicated, a new nature has come in, the new life in Christ. Thus, henceforth God regards us as no longer "in the flesh," but "in the spirit," and this distinction is observed throughout the next chapter.

READING, VERSES 7-13

We have seen that verses 1-6 have been dealing with the period of the believer's life when he was under the law, that is, before he was justified by faith. But verses 7-13 deal with the period of infancy—before one comes under the law and the moment when the law "comes" (ver. 9).

Let us be clear that ch. 5.^{13, 14} is not referring to infants, but to those who lived before the law of Moses was introduced. The passage we are now to consider is the one which tells us how an infant stands before God; and it is of the utmost importance. Strict attention to what is actually written here will lead to the overthrow of the most popular and fundamental errors of the present day.

Verse 5 says, "the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." This gives rise to the question in ver. 7, "Is the law sin?" And the answer is, "No." This is proved by the fact that the law brings sin to light. Eph. 5.¹³ says, "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." And again, John 3.²⁰, "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." No, the law is not sin.

In order to demonstrate the truth in hand, Paul takes the sin of coveting. If he had taken the sin of murder, one might have said, "Oh, that does not apply to me." But who can escape conviction under the law "Thou shalt not covet"? Coveting or lust (they are the same word here) is perhaps the most common and least regarded of all sins. We see it in infancy. A little child lusts for something that another has. It takes it; and no matter how much the other cries, it will not give it back. But if compelled to do so, it will cry itself. This reveals two things. The lust is there, and the lack of conscious-

ness of it. Often it can be seen that when a child is not allowed to do what is wrong, it is offended, not because it wilfully sets itself to do what it knows to be wrong, but because, not knowing the wrong of it, it feels that it has *been wronged* in not being allowed to do what it wanted. So that though the child has no consciousness of sin, it nevertheless has the evil disposition to rob another to satisfy itself.

So we read, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Let us notice carefully, not, I had not "had" lust, but I had not "known" lust. Not absence of the sin, but ignorance of it, until the law sheds light upon it.

Now ver. 8 goes a step further. When lust is known by the coming of the commandment, instead of the person revolting against the sin, he revolts against the commandment. He is no longer in ignorance, he is now an accountable person. The righteousness of God is thus demonstrated again, man is inexcusable.

The last clause of this verse, "without the law sin was dead," cannot contradict the teaching of ch. 1, where we see that men, before the law was given, were giving themselves up to the vilest sins; nor can it contradict what we have seen above as to infants. That is, to say that "sin was dead" cannot mean "sin was not operating." There must be another meaning to this word "dead." Scripture shows that, in certain places, it means "condemned," that is, "dead judicially": and the same sense must be allowed to the expressions "killed" and "slew" in the immediate context. But there is another meaning to "dead" in Scripture, and we had better consider that before we go further. In Eph. 2.⁵ we read of being "dead in sins." This comes in connection with being "quickened." It therefore refers to that condition, in which we are born, which necessitates the *new* birth. But this meaning will not fit the statements made in Rom. 7.⁹, for we have seen that the infant is "dead in sins" before the commandment comes. The only meaning that will fit this passage is the judicial one. But before we consider that, there is another thought that should be dismissed.

Some have given the meaning of ver. 9 as, "I *thought* I was alive," and "I *found that* I was dead," but if this were the meaning, would not the Holy Spirit have said what He meant? The words "to think" and "to find" are used in other places, and could have been used here. The judicial sense to the words "I was alive" and "I died" requires no addition or alteration of the actual words.

Now, to establish this meaning, we find an instance of it in Gen. 20.³. Judicially condemned is the only possible meaning here. In 2 Cor. 3.⁷ the ministration of the law of Moses is called "the ministration of death"; and in ver. 9 it is called "the ministration of condemnation." Two terms for the same thing. In Jas. 1.¹⁵, however, we have a statement which is very similar in nature to that of Rom. 7.⁹. It is presenting the working of sin in the figure of birth. Lust conceives by the temptation, and sin is brought forth. And when the

sin is “finished” it bringeth forth death. “Finished” here has the sense of “completed away,” and gives the idea of sin coming to exist as a separate entity, just like a newly-born babe. This is an experience which can happen a thousand times over. Every time that lust conceives and brings forth sin, so there is another death (judicially), that is, another condemnation. Rom. 7.⁵, speaking of the time when we were under the law, says that we brought forth fruit unto death. Thus both passages show death upon death—condemnation upon condemnation—as each fresh sin comes forth.

But “without the law sin was dead,” says Rom. 7.⁸. Sin had no *legal* existence before God—it was dead till we became of accountable age and could appreciate the “commandment.” Though it manifests itself in the infant, yet it is of no account in God’s sight. “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived (lived up) and I died” (ver. 9). “Life” and “death” in this passage are thus seen to be a matter of judicial standing before God.

Two important errors, or two parts of the one error, are thus cleared away by the plain statements of this passage and James 1. The teaching that Adam’s sin is *IMPUTED* to his seed is refuted, because the imputation of Adam’s sin is said to leave every newborn child guilty of the sin which he committed. But Rom. 7.⁹ says that the infant, before the law comes, is “alive,” that is, not guilty. So also as to inherited sin. God says that the infant is “alive”—not guilty; though we know that the sinful nature inherited manifests itself from the cradle.

There are some who, while not holding that Adam’s sin is *imputed* to his seed, nevertheless believe that we are “born” children of wrath because we inherit a sinful nature. In order to support both of these thoughts, Eph. 2.³ is perverted by making the words “by nature” to mean “by birth,” whereas the context speaks of our walk. We will give further consideration to this later. Both the errors make God to be unrighteous on the face of the matter. The confusing arguments that are resorted to to maintain these teachings cannot obliterate that simple fact. For it would clearly be unrighteous for God to either hold the infant guilty for what Adam had done, or to hold it to be worthy of wrath for the sinful nature it inherits. Thanks be to God for His goodness and wisdom in giving us simple teaching in the passage before us that the infant, before it becomes accountable to answer to God’s law, is not guilty. It is not condemned, it is “alive” unto Him. This gives no handle for the infidel to complain; but it gives abundant cause to the believer to worship. And we can say with Paul, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, . . . for therein is revealed the *RIGHTEOUSNESS* of God from faith to faith.”

In fairness to the majority of those who hold these errors, except Romanists, it should be said that they do not believe that one who dies in infancy will go to eternal judgment. They believe that the

blood of Christ avails for them. But if they believe that the blood of Christ cleanses them from guilt, before asserting it they should find the Scripture that says so.

It has been asserted by some that Scripture does not teach "a personal fall." The unwary usually assent to this without knowing what is meant. A parent looks at the little infant and sees evidences of a sinful nature, and says, "Yes, it is born in them." But that thought is quite beside the point. Those who make the assertion that Scripture does not teach a personal fall, do not usually refer to the inheritance of a sinful nature, but to the IMPUTATION of Adam's act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. That is, that "we all fell in Adam" LEGALLY; and that quite apart from the sinful nature which we possess from birth. We need to be careful to distinguish between these two things. The sin which is manifested in the infant is, we may say, its own. But the sin which Adam committed was his own: and for God to reckon the child to be guilty of that would be unrighteous. That we do not have a personal fall AS TO OUR CONDITION we allow; but as to our LEGAL STANDING before God, we do have a personal fall, and that is what is taught in the verses we are considering. We fall legally when the commandment "comes." God has, in wisdom, withheld any statement as to the age at which this happens. Parents should be concerned to fulfil their responsibilities from the beginning.

Reference has already been made to the perversion of Eph. 2.³, "by nature children of wrath." To support the statement that we are born "children of wrath," the attempt has been made to prove that "by nature" means "by birth." Well, if the Holy Spirit had meant "by birth" He could have said so, for the word is used in Scripture, but He did not. Birth is an event. Nature is a condition. The idols mentioned in Gal 4.⁸ had no birth and do not inherit anything: but "by nature" they are what they are. Our nature may be the result of at least three things: (a) What we inherit. (b) Environment. (c) Development. If our nature were only what we inherit, there would be no difference between any, seeing we all come from the one father; whereas it is possible to find two of the same family with quite different natures. But all this has to do with our condition. Where do we read anything of inheriting Adam's *guilt*? For that is what some are seeking to establish.

The expression "Jews by nature," in Gal. 2.¹⁵, has been made use of to support the idea of birth. But instead of giving our own interpretation to statements to support what is already in our minds, we should consider the context to see why the statements are made. In this case we see that Paul contrasts "Jews by nature" with "sinners of the Gentiles." Are we to conclude then that Gentiles are born with a sinful nature, but Jews are not? (For they assert that "by nature" means "by birth".) Or, are we to conclude that Gentiles have Adam's sin imputed to them, but Jews have not? The question answers itself.

But if we appreciate what Gentiles were in their manner of life, in contrast to what the apostles had been (see Phil 3.⁴⁻⁶), we can appreciate also the force of Paul's argument in Gal. 2 by reading the whole context. Peter, a Jew by nature, that is, having a Jew's standpoint and mode of life, was leading Gentiles (heathen) to look for justification by works.

So in Eph. 2.³. The context is describing our conduct during the period of responsibility before we were quickened.

Again, the distinction between "SONS of disobedience" and "CHILDREN of wrath," in Eph. 2.^{2,3}, has been stressed to further support the error. But we find in Scripture that terms of this kind are frequently used simply to express characteristics, and have no connection whatever with birth. For instance, in Matt. 11.¹⁹, "Wisdom is justified of all her children." In 1 Thess. 5.⁵, "children (sons) of the day." In John 21.⁵ the Lord addressed the disciples as children, "little lads"; just as an officer might call his men "lads," and so remove that sense of distance between them. In Acts 4.^{27 & 30} the word "child" here is actually "boy." This sounds to us irreverent. But in the East, to this day, native servants are called by the term "Boy." The Old Testament would illustrate this usage of terms even more fully. So then, "by nature children of wrath" has nothing to do with birth, and the misuse of it to support the imputation of Adam's sin is wresting the Scriptures to one's own end.

Where this error originated it would be difficult for anyone to say. One thing, however, is clear, it has long been taught by Romanism, and is one of their most important dogmas. It is included in their teaching concerning what they term "original sin." Here are a few quotations from "Catholic Belief," by Joseph Faa di Bruno: —

"This concupiscence, or inclination to evil, in fact, still remains in those in whom the guilt and stain of original sin have been entirely washed away by the Sacrament of Holy Baptism" (page 5).

We should notice here the two words "guilt" and "stain." These two are used with a distinct meaning in this book; so that the infant not only inherits a sinful nature, but is held guilty of the sin which Adam committed. But "baptism" entirely washes it away. So they teach. What, then, is to be said for the infant that dies without baptism?

We are told on page 57 in the following words: —

"Baptism is a sacrament absolutely necessary for all, without which no one can enter the Kingdom of God, for Jesus Christ has said: 'Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'."

Whatever may be said about being "born of water," this clearly teaches that a child that dies without baptism is eternally doomed, because God holds it to be guilty of Adam's sin.

Such teaching is a very serious attack upon the character of our righteous God.

It is not difficult to see what a powerful lever is brought to bear upon mothers by this doctrine, urging them to see that their children are "baptized," and so identified with the "Church."

On page 6 the writer quotes Rom. 5.¹² as, "and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." This should be noticed by those who strive to make that verse mean "all sinned in Adam"; though they know that "in whom" is not a correct rendering of the Greek.

On page 7 we have the following:—

"Beside the GUILT of original sin, which is that habitual state of sinfulness in which we are born (because our human nature is deemed to have consented in Adam to the rejection of original justice), there is also in man the stain of original sin, entailing the soul's privation of that supernatural lustre which, had we been born in the state of original justice, we all should have had."

This paragraph not only distinguishes between guilt and stain, but puts us in the position of having "consented in Adam" when he sinned, and so forfeited his righteousness.

Protestantism has perpetuated the errors of Romanism to a far larger extent than is usually realised. We honour those who suffered martyrdom for the truth which they saw, but those who followed, instead of going on to recover the whole of the New Testament teaching, have gradually drifted back, and are still drifting, into that from which they were delivered by the blood of the martyrs. Nor is it to be wondered at while such a gross error is allowed to remain at the foundation. May we realise our individual responsibility to stand for the truth.

Rom. 7.¹⁰⁻¹³ continue the argument of verses 7-8 to show that the law is not sin. That such attention should be given to this point is a clear indication of its importance, and we should therefore consider it accordingly.

The law of Moses did not only consist in "meats and drinks and carnal ordinances," there were many things prescribed which are comprehended under the commandment, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which, if they had been heeded, would have made life among the people of Israel a foretaste of heaven. The law was "HOLY and JUST and GOOD." But man's "inexcusable" disobedience brought condemnation, trouble and chaos. Thus it is that in the light of the law, sin becomes "exceeding sinful," and the righteousness of God is demonstrated.

In chs. 1-3 we see the light of the law shed on those who lived before Moses, as well as on those who lived after, showing all to be "guilty before God." In ch. 7 we see the application of the same principle to the individual, showing that this holy, just and good law is rejected as soon as one becomes old enough to be conscious of right and wrong.

But our hearts may well rejoice that upon this solemn background

the righteousness of God in justifying the ungodly is set forth, through redemption by the precious blood of Christ.

READING, VERSES 14-25

This seventh chapter covers a wide range of experience. Verses 1-6 dealing with the period when we were under law, and the blessed deliverance through being united to Christ. Verses 7-13 with the period of infancy and the "coming" of the commandment. Now we come to the latter half of the chapter which deals with our present experience, leading on to the glorious deliverance which is to come when we are changed in a moment at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in verse 25.

That this latter half is dealing with Paul's experience at the time when he wrote, is clear from the use of the different tenses. In verses 7-11 we notice that each thing is spoken of as a past experience, but in verse 14 we see the change to the present tense, "I AM carnal," and so on to the end of the chapter into the eighth. Nor do we find anything to suggest that he ever passed out of the experience described in these verses. Rightly understood, they do not set forth a low level of spiritual experience, but a very high one. Alas, most of us have to confess that far too often we "find" ourselves overtaken in some fault, and have to ask forgiveness of the sin; instead of "finding" the law of sin within and dealing with that before the evil fruit was brought forth. However, while that is a very important aspect of the case, it is not the primary intention of the passage, which is, to show the difference between sin for which we are not accountable in contrast to that for which we are accountable. This being established by the fact that ch. 8.¹ says, "there is THEREFORE now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

May we consider this last point before going back to deal with the individual statements. Chapter breaks are not shown in the Greek manuscripts, they have been made by the translators; and whereas they are helpful in some respects, they sometimes disconnect passages which are really part of one another. The word "therefore" in ch. 8.¹ clearly shows the reason why there is no condemnation; it refers to the things which have been stated in the chapter before; and the chief feature of the verses which lead up to ch. 8 is the fact that there was in Paul a law of sin which asserted itself, but which he set apart, in his standpoint, as something not himself. This will be sufficient for the present, we will consider it more fully when we come to that chapter.

In ch. 7.¹⁴ Paul says, "the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." This word "sold" calls for special consideration. It is clearly passive, "having been sold." Not that Paul had sold himself, but that he had *been* sold. For a man to be sold meant that he came under bondage as a slave. And this is exactly what the passage is

treating of. There was something asserting itself in him contrary to his own will, and bringing him into captivity, and from which he cries for deliverance in verses 23-24.

Our own experience, as well as Scripture, witnesses to the fact that Adam's sin had resulted in our inheriting a sinful nature, as well as the fact that "the whole creation groans and travails in pain." We are not condemned—held guilty—for the sin which he committed; neither is there any unrighteousness with God in allowing us to be born in these conditions. As to material things, "He daily loadeth us with benefits." Nor is that restricted to those that love Him, for "His tender mercies are over all His works," as Paul, at Lystra, testified of Him, saying, "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Psa. 68.¹⁹; 145.⁹; Acts 14.¹⁶⁻¹⁷). Man is thus indebted to God for His goodness, though he be a rebel against Him all the while he is upon the earth. While as to the eternal issues, man is condemned for nothing but that for which he is personally responsible. We have seen this in the first chapters, and we shall see it again here.

Verses 15-20 show that Paul was continually conscious of the power of sin within him, which hindered him from doing what he wished to do, and made him do what he did not wish to. And for this he takes no blame to himself, because, as verses 17 and 20 say, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." These words clearly teach us that the sin which is the result of our sinful nature inherited from Adam, and which we do not "allow," is not reckoned as ours and there is no condemnation for it. This has its bearing upon verse 9, which says, "I was alive without the law once": and confirms that the infant, before the commandment comes, is not held guilty for those manifestations of the sinful nature which it inherits, and is therefore "alive"—not condemned—unto God. And we may further conclude that if one grows to years of accountability for his own sins, he is still not condemned for those things which are the direct result of his inherited sinful nature and done without his consent. The difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate man is brought out in ch. 8; but we see sufficient here to remove any thought of God being unrighteous in permitting us to be born with a sinful nature.

As to ourselves, who are regenerated, verse 21 has its message. Paul could say, "I find then a law." It is not for us to be careless about this corrupt condition within, but to be watching that "law" for the very first appearance of its activities. No one but God can draw the line exactly between the sin for which we are not accountable and that for which we are; but every one who has a true love for Christ and appreciation of His redeeming love will desire to have Paul's standpoint and experience as set forth in this passage.

In order to obtain a proper understanding of the matter before us we need to be clear that the word "law" has two distinct meanings, which apply in the spiritual sphere just as they do in English in the material sphere.

There are laws which are written and which we have to obey. These we will call "written laws." There are others which, without being written, express themselves quite independently of us. These we will call "operative laws." It is the latter which control all the movements of nature. By the operation of these laws we have the light, heat, rain, and everything that supports life. Two of these operative laws we may take to illustrate the spiritual teaching of this and the next chapter. The law of gravity is that power which causes everything to fall to the earth. It is a power which never ceases to operate, whether we wish it to or not. Man cannot alter it, but he has within his power the means of overcoming it in some measure. One means is that of causing another law to come into operation which is more under his control—the law of magnetism. If you let go the needle it will fall to the earth: gravity pulls it down. But if you take a magnet and hold that over it, it will leave the ground and fly to the magnet, and will be held by it so that the law of gravity is entirely overcome by the law of magnetism.

Now in Rom. 7.¹² we read of "the law," which is the law of Moses—a collection of written laws—which were written to be obeyed, but which had no power to compel men to obey. But in ver. 21 we have not a written law, but an operative law. It is not a commandment given to be obeyed, it is a power in itself which operates quite apart from the will, and even in opposition to the will of the one in whom it is found. Like the law of gravity, it is always exerting a power downward—away from God. In ch. 8.² we read of "the law of the Spirit of life." This is another operative law which, like magnetism, when applied, overcomes the law of sin and makes us free to please God. We have gone ahead of our subject a little here, but it is necessary to get a clear understanding of this law of sin with which we are occupied in ch. 7.

In ver. 23 Paul speaks of this law of sin in his members as warring against the law of his mind. And in ver. 25 says that with the mind he served the law of God. His mind was in agreement with the written law of God, but the operative law of sin warred against it, so that he could not do the things that he would. We could not think of him as one that excused sin, or as one whose spiritual experience was on a low level. But he had such a view of the grace of God in Christ that nothing short of perfection satisfied him. So in Phil. 3.⁷⁻¹⁴ he shows his standpoint, not counting himself to have attained, but ever reaching forth to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended.

May this be an exhortation to us. May the magnetism of Christ's love to us find a response in us as true steel, so that the law of the

spirit of life in Him may be continually in operation, lifting us up to increasing heights in fellowship with God: in contrast to the experience of having to deal with actual sins that we have fallen into because we have not been sufficiently watchful. Thus looking on to that blessed appearing of our Lord, when we shall know the freedom from this warfare entirely.

C H A P T E R 8

READING, VERSES 1-5

FIRST, let us be clear that Paul does not suggest getting out of the experience of ch. 7 into that of ch. 8: he has no hope of that until he is delivered from this body. Death, of course, brings that deliverance, but the great and universal deliverance will be when the Lord comes. On the other hand, ch. 8 brings in the counterbalancing truth of the law of the Spirit of life by which the law of sin can be overcome. To get out of ch. 7 would be to have the law of sin eradicated. But while we are in this body that will never be. In actual fact we should be in both chapters at once. Conscious of the law of sin, but overcoming it by the law of the Spirit of life.

Another point to be observed is, that we read nowhere that the blood of Christ atones for either Adam's own sin, or for the law of sin that is in us. How then is that law of sin dealt with in the sight of God in His holiness? Twice in the previous chapter Paul says, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." And where such words apply it would not be righteous to condemn the person. So, in ch. 7.⁹, he says, "I was alive without the law once"; that is to say, in infancy, before he came under the law, he was not condemned, though he was born with the law of sin in his members. But as soon as he came under the commandment, he "died": he came under condemnation because then his will came into operation as a responsible person, and he voluntarily did that which he should not have done.

The reason for there being "no condemnation" (ver. 1) is of a double nature. The word "therefore" implies on account of what has just been said in ch. 7. Not on account of what has been said in ch. 3, where justification through redemption is mentioned. This should be noticed. It is true that we are free from condemnation through that precious redemption, but that is not the statement here: and if we bring it in here we spoil the teaching which the Holy Spirit intends. This verse teaches us that there is no condemnation to us (in connection with that law of sin which is in us), because "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That, however, is only part of the reason. Ver. 2 says, "FOR the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." When we have righteousness imputed to us we also receive the Holy Spirit, who begins His gracious work of deliverance. Paul's attitude was to hate the law of sin and consent to the law of God,

and this is regarded as the normal attitude of the child of God. Walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Thus we see the twofold reason, no condemnation for the law of sin itself, and no condemnation while we of our own wills do not consent to it. Happy indeed are we while we maintain such a condition; but it will always involve a great struggle. And the maintenance of it will never be perfectly continuous while we are in this body. See Matt. 6.¹².

We have now seen that what applies to the infant applies also to the believer: that is, that there is no condemnation for the law of sin which is inherent. Now we can see that if it would be unrighteous for either the infant or the believer to be condemned for it, so would it be for the unbeliever. But the unbeliever, instead of consenting to the law of God, consents to the law of sin. Hence he is condemned, but only for that for which he is personally responsible; and this is the standpoint of the whole of the earlier chapters: that is, "without excuse." Thus God is seen to be absolutely righteous in all His dealings with sin. There is not a particle of judgment laid upon anyone but that which is due to him as a responsible person.

Now may we consider the expression "for sin" in ver. 3 ? In Heb. 10.⁶ the word "sacrifices" is in italics, indicating that it is not in the Greek. So that the passage reads simply "for sin," just as in Rom. 8.³. This expression "for (or concerning) sin" is usual, and has the sense of a sin offering. So, reverting to Rom. 8, we see that sin was condemned in the flesh of the Lord Jesus, as the sin offering for us.

This same verse also speaks of "the weakness" of the law. The law was written to be obeyed; but it provided no power to enable us to do so. We need some power to enable us to overcome that continual downward tendency, just as the magnetism overcomes the gravity. This power is supplied through Jesus Christ: and we may see some reasons why the passage is worded as it is. It is helpful sometimes to notice what is not said, in order the better to appreciate what is said. It does not say that through sin being condemned in the flesh of the Lord Jesus we have forgiveness, or we have eternal life: that would be true, but it is not the point here. The statement here is, "condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." There are other places where a second effect to the death of Christ is given without the first being mentioned. Gal. 1.⁴ says, "Who gave Himself for our sins that we might be delivered from this present evil world," not that we might be forgiven. And Titus 2.¹⁴ says, "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Deliverance is thus set forth, not merely as a process by the operation of a power, but that which is the outcome of a work of surpassing love. And it is this love which acts like the magnetism, drawing us to the One who loved us, and making us hate the sin

which took Him to the tree to bear the curse in our stead. It is "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5.⁶). The law could not do this, for it simply made its righteous demands upon us and left us to fulfil them. Well may we say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1.¹⁶).

It is commonly accepted that the words "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," in ver. 1, were not in the original writing. But if we take the whole statement, verses 1-4, as being one, we have the same words at the end, so placed that they qualify the whole. And this we see to be agreeable to the teaching of the whole passage. If it had read, "IF we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," that would have left it an open question as to whether we do or not. But the Holy Spirit has so worded it that it implies that those who are in Christ DO so walk. For if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation (2 Cor. 5.¹⁷). The verses that follow, in Rom. 8, are based on this principle, showing the characteristics of the two classes, those "in Christ" and those not.

So in ver. 5 we read, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." This expresses the standpoint of the whole passage. And if that is borne in mind it helps us to understand why there is no condemnation to the true believer, whereas the unbeliever (who walks after the flesh) is condemned.

It may be, however, that as we meditate on these things we become very conscious of our own shortcomings. And that in a way that we cannot regard as coming under the heading which Paul expresses in the words, "the thing which I do I allow not." We are compelled to admit that there are definite occasions when our own desires and impulses are allowed to govern our actions, so that we consent to the law of sin which is in our members, or, at least, do not sufficiently keep under our corrupt nature, with the consequence that there are manifestations of the flesh. The true believer, upon becoming conscious of this, will at once confess the sin to his Father and seek forgiveness and power to overcome. In view of this, one may wonder why Paul has presented the matter as he has in ch. 7. God presents the matter from the standpoint of the matter in hand. The object of the passage as a whole is clearly to show that there is no condemnation for the law of sin itself, which is in our members. Because of the two reasons given above, and because there is this essential difference between the one who is in Christ and the one who is not, as given in ver. 5. The other side of the matter is given in Gal. 5.¹⁶, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh": showing that it is possible for a believer so to fail. So in Rom. 8.⁵, no one thinks that it can be said of God's children that they are always minding the things of the Spirit, and never minding the things of the flesh. But the two things are so presented as to express the general characteristics of those two classes which contrast the one to the other.

And further, if this standpoint is borne in mind, it will save from misinterpreting the verses that follow. Some, through not having regard to this and taking single statements away from the context, have built very serious error upon them.

Truth alone can sanctify us: and if we have the sound doctrinal meaning of the passage before us, it will help us in practice. We shall exercise ourselves to show that we are in Christ by not allowing that law of sin, but manifesting that we are made free by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And though we do not attain to perfection, we shall continue to press toward the mark, waiting for the glorious deliverance at the coming of our Lord.

READING, VERSES 6-9

Though it is necessary to deal with our subject in sections of a few verses at a time, we must realise that the different sections are but parts of one whole and, in the present case in particular, very closely connected. Verse 5 begins with "For," referring to ver. 4, and ver. 6 begins with "For," referring to ver. 5. If we keep this in mind we shall be helped as to what follows.

Ver. 6 is not speaking of "carnally minded" believers. The word "for" connects the two verses. Those who are carnally minded in ver. 6 are the same ones as those in ver. 5 "that are after the flesh"—unbelievers. ("Carnally minded" is "fleshly minded"). The whole of this section is constructed on this principle, contrasting the two classes. The passage comes to its peak in the words, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *THEY* are the sons of God." Paul does not entertain the thought of "carnally minded believers." To such, he would say, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." Thus, ver. 6 does not teach that a carnally minded believer will lose eternal life, nor does ver. 13, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." If it did, it would also teach that we *obtain* eternal life by mortifying the deeds of the body. The use of the word "ye" is allowable in such a context, just as in John 1.⁸, "If *we* say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The argument is that our manner of life indicates to which class we belong.

First, let us consider that the statements here are not intended to be taken in the absolute sense, but characteristically. As we have seen, "There is none righteous"; yet we read of some who are described as being righteous. None righteous absolutely; if so, they would be justified by works. But there are those who, because of the work of God's grace, are righteous in their general behaviour, though not perfect. Now, when we read ver. 8, we are not to conclude that those who are in the flesh cannot do a single action that pleases God. The Scripture witnesses otherwise. In 1 Kings 21.²⁵ we read, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." God had

pronounced judgment upon the nation on account of this; but when Ahab heard it, "he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." And God saw it and said to the prophet, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? Because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days'." Surely here is a case where an ungodly man did something that pleased God. And we must acknowledge that there are many acts of kindness and sound principle done by men who are "in the flesh," i.e., are not born again: even as Isaiah 40.⁶ says, "All flesh is grass, and all the *goodliness* thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." We must not regard every tiny detail of the life of the unsaved as being sin, any more than every tiny detail of the life of the saved is perfect holiness. But the general characteristic should show to which class we belong. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" is the summing up of their life. They are wrong at the foundation. Being respectable and honourable in the sight of men, and even religious, they cannot give Christ the right place, because they are not resting on His atoning death for their salvation, but upon their own works. And he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father. Again, if they are not born of the Spirit they certainly cannot bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Now there are some children of God who take these two verses in the absolute way. Or at least they say they do when endeavouring to support doctrine that is unsound.

We have seen that man is not condemned for that law of sin which is born in him. But when he consents to it, his will comes into operation and for that he is judged. Moreover, all forms of sin and vice that are yielded to soon bring a person into bondage. Men and women make themselves slaves to habits by yielding to customs. And if they put themselves in such a position, who is to blame but themselves? They love darkness rather than light, and refuse the good and choose the evil. And the description of such is as given in these two verses: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Now some, instead of acknowledging man's inexcusability as the earlier chapters have shown, say that man is born in a state wherein he *cannot please God*, and yet God condemns him to eternal judgment for it. If an atheist said it, we could understand, but when children of God say it, it sends a pang to our heart. But why do they say it? Because they have imbibed the teaching that Adam's sin is imputed to his seed. They acknowledge that for God to condemn men on such ground would be unrighteous; but they say that Adam's sin being imputed, God is righteous in so condemning. That is to say that God reckons everyone as soon as he is born to be *guilty* of Adam's own sin. And therefore God is not unrighteous in allowing him to

be born in such a state and condemning him to Hell because he cannot please Him. Surely the most simple minded will see that, instead of clearing God of unrighteousness, such teaching makes double, yea, treble, the unrighteousness. What a contrast is the glorious teaching of the epistle as a whole, and specially in connection with this matter, where it is said, as to the condemnation of the ungodly, "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged" (ch. 3.⁴). When a judge passes judgment, he himself is judged. The court expects justice. Hence there is a court of appeal. So when God judges He will be judged. But the whole universe will be compelled to confess, unsaved included, that His judgment is just.

With the understanding that these verses are setting forth the characteristics of the two classes, we appreciate the force of ver. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh" (and therefore not carnally minded), "but in the Spirit, *if so be* that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Here is drawn the clearly defined line. "None of His." What an awful position. And finally to hear Him say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you." What is it that decides? The Spirit of Christ dwelling in you—born of the Holy Spirit.

READING, CHAPTER 8.¹⁰⁻¹⁵

"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." In what way are we to understand that the body is dead? The words, "If Christ be in you" seem necessarily to apply to both parts of the verse; and that being so, "the body is dead" only in the case of those in whom Christ is dwelling. In other words, it does not apply to the unsaved. The expression "dead in sins," which is found elsewhere, is applied to our unsaved state and therefore applies to all who are unsaved. But "the body is dead because of sin" applies only to those who are saved, i.e. those in whom Christ dwells: and therefore it cannot mean "dead in sins."

In ch. 7.²⁵ Paul speaks of his body as a "body of death." This, from the context, is because of the law of sin which is in it. But this also is true of unbelievers; and therefore "the body is dead" cannot refer to this either.

It seems that we must look still further back in the epistle for the explanation. In ch. 6.² we are described as being "dead to sin" because we have taken our position with Christ, being "buried with Him by baptism into death." By baptism we condemned the "old man." And death we have seen in other places to stand for condemnation (see ch. 7.⁹; 2 Cor. 3.⁷; James 1.¹⁵). Thus, by baptism, we condemn the old man, we take the position of having died because our Substitute died for us, and embarking on a "newness of life" we "reckon" ourselves to be dead to sin. This seems to be the intention in the words we are considering, "the body is dead because of sin." If Christ is in us, that is the attitude which the Holy Spirit indicates as being normal.

Then we have the next statement to consider, "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Referring again to ch. 6, we see that when we die to sin we do not come to a condition in which it is impossible to sin. But in ver. 11, for instance, we see ourselves as "alive unto God," with the exhortation following, "let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." So that, being quickened by the Spirit, we are alive, and therefore to overcome sin. So in 8.¹⁰ the "Spirit is life," with the added words "because of righteousness." Here is another allusion to the earlier teaching of the epistle. Why do we judge our bodies as dead? Because of sin. And why is the Spirit life to us? Because of righteousness. Ch. 6.⁷ says, "he that died (by baptism) is justified (made righteous) from sin." Sin brought our condemnation, but the grace of God in Christ brought our justification; and because of this righteousness imputed the Spirit of God brings in new life.

But this life is "because of" righteousness (Rom. 8.¹⁰). Righteousness (imputed) is not *because* we have life in Christ. We are not justified "in Christ." But because of righteousness (imputed) we have life, which is in Christ. This puts things in their right order. As to our experience the two things are together. We are justified and quickened at the same time. But the words "because of" make the position clear that all the blessings associated with a new life in Christ are because of, or upon the basis of, our being "justified by His blood." Rom. 3.²⁴⁻²⁶ shows that in the blood of Christ, God has established His own righteousness in justifying those who believe in Jesus. And this justification must be the basis of all further blessing, for it is obvious that we could have no part in the new creation, in Christ, unless our sins were put away and we were thereby constituted perfectly righteous.

From this point may we look on to ver. 13 to note the connection of this aspect of truth. The body is not actually dead (incapable of sin), otherwise we would not be told to "mortify" its deeds. But as we are told to do this in this same context, we see that the teaching is exactly the same as in ch. 6. However, there is no mere repetition of things, but a use of expressions already made clear, in bringing in this further emphasis on the two classes of persons—those in the flesh and those in the Spirit.

Ver. 11 contains another precious promise. But this again is based on an "if." This helps us to appreciate why these two classes are being contrasted again and again. The Holy Spirit is leading on to one of the strongest passages in Scripture asserting the eternal security of those who are justified. But He never gives the promise of this assurance simply upon the basis of lip confession. If these Roman believers are to have the assurance contained in the end of the chapter they must first make it evident that they are in the right company. They must show their faith by their works.

So He says, "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Again, disregard to context has allowed of this verse being misused to teach the healing of the body of diseases now. But to "quicken" means to "make to live." It is not the word for healing. By attention to the context we see the force clearly in agreement with ver. 13, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." Those who have not the Spirit will be raised at the last resurrection, only to be judged and cast into the lake of fire, "which is the second DEATH." But those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them will, when Christ comes again, be raised from the dead to live with Him for ever. That will be the quickening of the mortal body.

In ver. 10 "death" and "life" are our present condition, as already explained. But in ver. 13 they are both future. It is true we have eternal life now, "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." But we are to have it "more abundantly" when the Lord comes (John 10.¹⁰). This mortal must put on immortality and then will mortality be swallowed up of life (1 Cor. 15.^{53, 54}).

Ver. 12. True we are debtors, but not to the flesh. What do we owe to the flesh? Nothing! We know that ever since God's saving grace commenced in us, the flesh has been our most subtle enemy. The temptations of the world we may avoid, but where can we go to escape those things within? A monastery will not solve the problem, to be shut up to self is to court trouble. No, the flesh is with us and all we can do is to mortify it, and continue the warfare till the great deliverance comes. But we are debtors. Yes, there is a debt that we can never pay. The debt of love we owe to our Lord. We were debtors in another sense, debtors to God in that we had not rendered to Him what was due. But our blessed Lord and Saviour stood in the breach. He paid our penalty in His own blood and blotted out the debt for ever. But the other debt remains, and alas, we feel how little we have rendered even of this. Nay, our wandering of heart and yielding to the flesh have grieved Him again and again. We might sink in despair but for the fact that we know that He knew the end from the beginning, and knew full well what He was undertaking. He will bring us to glory, we shall be "like Him." And what shall we say when we see Him face to face?

"But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. *For* as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

"Adoption," in English, means placing one as a son who is not a son. But it is not so here. The meaning is rather that of "coming of age," as Gal. 3 and 4 show (no longer under a schoolmaster). We are sons and we are conscious of it. And we have received this Spirit of adoption (lit., "placing as a son"), which is God's gift, to enable us to call Him Father. Many are calling Him Father who have no right

to. Only those who are born of His Spirit have this right. But if we are sons, then let us rise up to our privileges. We may be conscious of failure, but when we come before God and confess it, does our heart witness truly that we are His children and He our Father? If so, let us rejoice. Let not the enemy get a further advantage through crushing our spirit and discouraging us for the fight. Let us lay hold of the precious promises of God. Let us reach out to lay hold of more of the fulness which is in Christ and set ourselves again to the task, in the power of His resurrection.

Permit, dear friends, another reminder of the importance of context. Read your Epistles through again and again. It is the only way whereby each individual passage or statement can be properly understood. By so doing we not only avoid the many errors which have been established upon isolated statements, but we also see the beauty of God's teaching, each part in relation to each other part, constituting one harmonious whole.

READING, CHAPTER 8.¹⁶⁻²³.

The further statement of verse 16 puts a strong emphasis upon the inwrought conviction that we are children of God. This is one of the primary functions of the Holy Spirit, to witness together with our own spirit that this is so. Our own spirits do not object to or oppose this blessed ministry, they happily agree with it. But we notice a change in this verse from the word "sons" to "children." This word is from the root "to bring forth." This shows actual living relationship, so that our placing as sons is on the real basis of actual birth into the family. So that if we can come through verses 5-14 and our consciences bear witness that we are walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit, we come now to the most blessed assurance as to our eternal security.

For the next verse says, "if children, then heirs." There is no question about this. In resurrection there will be differences of reward for service and faithfulness; but if one is a child, there is an inheritance for him. We think sometimes of the lives of God's noted servants, and conscious of our own failures, we may feel that our reward will be small. But let us keep our eyes on the inheritance that is assured. Even if our reward is small by comparison, we have "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." And in 1 Peter 1.³ also, we see that this is what we are "begotten" to. If we have been born again the inheritance is sure. Let us think of the New Jerusalem, our future home as depicted in Rev. 21 and 22. That is the place that the Lord has gone to prepare for us. That is the place too that the worthies of Heb. 11 had in view; and because of that they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth. And if we keep the inheritance in view it will draw us away from earth, and the sense of the riches of God's grace,

in what is assured to us, will do more to help us to lay up treasure in heaven than all our doting upon our successes and failures.

But there is something more that still further enhances this glorious prospect. We are "joint-heirs with Christ." To be in that "place" is blessed, but in John 14 the Lord does not stop with the thought of a place. He adds, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." He will have us to be with Himself. So our inheritance is to be with Him. Whether it be in the heavenly position or reigning on earth, all is a joint-heirship. What would the New Jerusalem be without Him? "The Lamb is the light thereof."

We are to be "glorified together" with Him. Obviously not *when* He was glorified, for He has been glorified over 1900 years already; but we are to be taken into that sphere of glory with Him. Incidentally, this helps us as to ch. 6, confirming what we saw there, that we are buried "with" Christ, not when He was buried, but when we were baptized. So in Rom. 8.¹⁷ as to the suffering *with* Him. His suffering ended long ago, but ours is in identification and fellowship with Him.

Paul here makes our glorification to depend on our suffering with Him; but in ver. 30 there is no "if." This is no contradiction. In those times it was the normal thing for all believers to suffer with Christ, therefore the "if" in ver. 17 is comparable in its force to the "if" in verses 11, 13, etc.: that is, if we belong to that class—those who suffer with Him. And truly, when we think of being where He is and beholding His glory, does it not encourage us to take up the cross now and bear His reproach?

So it was with Paul, in ver. 18. What are sufferings here, compared with the glory to be revealed? In 2 Cor. 4.¹⁷ he contrasts the light affliction which is but for a moment, with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

There is no difference, in the Greek, between the words "creature" and "creation." So in verses 19-22 we may take all the statements as referring to the "creation," and not simply to our mortal bodies. The point is that creation is waiting for the resurrection and manifestation of the sons of God. Because through the sin of Adam this present condition of "vanity" has been brought in. The words "by reason of" are usually rendered "because of" or "on account of," and this seems to refer to Adam; but if we regard Adam as the one who "subjected" the creation, through his sin, it makes a difficulty in that it is subjected "in hope." Adam could hardly be said to have done this. But Gen. 3.¹⁷ tells us plainly that God put the curse upon the ground for Adam's sake, and in view of this we can understand God to be the One who has subjected the creation *in hope*. The Seed of the woman promised in the garden of Eden will come in glory and the whole creation will be delivered from its bondage and groaning. The earth will bring forth in abundance comparable to the garden of Eden, and the animals will no longer devour one another, and men will beat their swords into

ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, because the nations will not learn war any more, the Prince of Peace shall reign.

The word "vanity" is interesting here, signifying uselessness. The book of Ecclesiastes, the "vanity of vanities" book, gives a graphic picture of this aspect of the world. What does man labour for? If he is alienated from God, all is indeed vanity. But in the coming reign of Christ, man will come into his right relation to God, and His people "shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

But one important fact here is, that creation will be delivered from its groaning, our bodies will be redeemed (by power), and we shall be manifested (in glory), all at the same time. In other words, the Church will remain on earth through the tribulation and be caught up immediately before the Lord comes for His Millennial reign.

But not only creation, we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit also groan, says ver. 23. The firstfruits is not the harvest, it is but a sample of it. So we, while in these bodies, can only know a very small part of our possessions in Christ. Still subject to weariness, pain, sickness, difficulties, injustices, and worst of all, still with a law of sin in our members, we wait for the "adoption." It is clear from this verse that there is a further aspect of adoption, yet to be realized, beyond that of ver. 15 and Gal. 4.⁵. True, we are sons of God now, if born of His Spirit; but regeneration does not affect the body. If one has been accustomed to a life of dissipation, the new life may be a blessing to him physically. But in other cases, taking up the cross and following the Lord may bring strain upon the body that will leave its mark, even as Paul said, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." But our bodies have also to come into the adoption (the placing as sons), and it is for this that we wait. It is called here the "redemption" of the body. Another interesting word.

In the Old Testament the word is often used in the sense of putting forth power to take what is already legally acquired, usually by vengeance upon oppressors. Gen. 48.¹⁶ and Ex. 6.⁶ are examples, note in the latter "with a stretched out arm," not with the blood of the Passover.

Before the Lord comes His people will have come again under persecution; but as 2 Thess. 1 tells us, the Lord will come with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance; and it is then that the saints are promised rest. That rest involves both the living and the dead of God's children. When the Lord comes with His mighty shout, the dead in Christ will rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4). That wonderful change that is to come to our bodies, in a moment, is akin to the raising of the dead. It is the exercise of God's power on our behalf, whereby we are not only to be delivered from persecution, but from all that is undesirable in this present body and the world in which we live. Even death itself will

be overcome. Nothing is too hard for our Lord. And in Psa. 49.¹⁵ the word "redeem" is used in connection with this act. This is the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power. But after the thousand years of Christ's reign there will be another resurrection (see Rev. 20), but those who are raised then and are not found to be written in the Lamb's book of life will be judged for their sins and cast into the lake of fire. Who can measure what we are saved from and what we are saved to? And who can measure its cost? Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

READING, CHAPTER 8.²⁴⁻³⁹.

"For we are saved by hope." There are many who hope to be saved, but they put off any prospect of being sure till after this life. What a difference there is between such a standpoint and that presented in the latter part of this chapter.

The word "for" at the beginning of the verse connects it with the previous verse and thus shows us that the hope in view is "that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2.¹³), when our bodies will be changed.

The word "saved" has more than one application. In Rom. 5.⁹ we see that we *shall be* saved from wrath through Jesus Christ because we are now justified by His blood. When wrath is meted out we shall not taste of it. The BLOOD of Jesus Christ guarantees that. Then, in verse 10, we see that "being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Here is presented the daily experience of the power of the LIFE of Christ, raised from the dead. Salvation is thus a continuous experience of power by which we overcome sin; and it is interesting to note some of the things that the Word of God tells us are the means of supplying this power. In Luke 18.⁴², to the blind man, "thy FAITH hath saved thee." Rom. 11.¹⁴, salvation through being provoked to jealousy. 1 Cor. 1.²¹, salvation through PREACHING. 1 Cor. 9.²², by Paul's SELF DENIAL. 1 Tim. 4.¹⁶, by Timothy's TAKING HEED. Titus 3.⁵, by REGENERATION. Jas. 1.²¹, by RECEIVING THE WORD. 1 Peter 3.²¹, by BAPTISM, and in Phil. 2.¹², by WORKING IT OUT. By reviewing these different means of salvation we are helped to appreciate what it means to be saved by hope.

Hope is a most powerful sustainer even in the natural sphere. Take hope out of the ordinary man's life and there is nothing to live for. The business man, the soldier, the sailor, the school boy or girl, all are sustained by hope, and it is true in that sphere also that "hope maketh not ashamed." So it is in spiritual life, hope is one of the most powerful incentives to perseverance, yea, even with suffering. For what is our blessed hope? No earthly prospect compares with it. We are to be conformed to the image of the Son of God! We are to behold His glory! We are to be with Him, in that place which He has gone to prepare!

There are some in the world who seem to have no hope. They simply drag out an existence. Their case is most deplorable. There are others who have false hopes of getting to heaven. How terrible will be their awakening! But our hope is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil." Such a hope must have a saving power with it. It makes us NOT ASHAMED (Rom. 5.⁵). It has a PURIFYING effect (1 John 3.³). It gives BOLDNESS (Phil. 1.²⁰). And it gives PATIENCE (Rom. 8.²⁵). In 8.²⁵ hope leads to patience; in 5.⁴ patience leads to hope. It works both ways.

In ver. 25, "Hope that is seen" is obviously the *thing* hoped for. We look at the things which are not seen—or should do. Faith and hope are both contrasted with sight; and when both these give place to sight, love will continue ever. Faith and hope are God's provision to sustain and encourage us through the darkness of the long night till the day dawns and the Light-bearer arises (2 Peter 1.¹⁹).

Verses 26-27 bring in another blessed factor in our daily salvation—prayer. But it is prayer of a particular kind, and is obviously intended as an extension of the preceding thoughts. The groaning of creation as well as of ourselves is spoken of in verses 22-23. What child of God is there but knows the sense of weakness as to what to pray for, as he looks out on to the heaving sea of humanity in this present evil age? And who knows the depths of his own heart, that he should be able to approach God with the prescription for the remedy that he needs? Nay, he cannot even express the symptoms of his trouble. Other passages tell us a good deal of how prayer should be made to God. But this one just presents to us the most dire aspect of our case—and leaves us there? No. Thanks be to God, there is One who knows. The Holy Spirit indwells if we are Christ's. And whereas John tells us that if we ask anything *according* to His will, He heareth us, here we are told that the Holy Spirit who knows our case and knows the will of God perfectly, intercedes for us. Dear child of God, don't be downcast when you feel that all you can utter is a sob or a sigh. The Holy Spirit can interpret it and intercede accordingly. And with His intercession within and Christ's intercession in the heavenlies, our needs are met.

Then comes the blessed assurance in 28, "And we KNOW that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Don't become occupied with the littleness of your love, and so deprive yourself of the blessing of these words; get occupied with the blessing—and the Blessor—and you will spontaneously love Him more. For, note the double description of the persons concerned in this verse, not only those who love God, but those who are called as well. Not two classes but one, with a double description. Are you among "the called of Jesus Christ"? Then it goes without saying that you love Him. We all know the

leanness of our love, and that is why we “groan” partly. Let us live more in the blessed confidence of what is contained in the following verses and our love will grow accordingly. And as to this verse, be assured that ALL things are working together for your good. You have failed. You have lost awhile the light of His presence. You are conscious of chastisement. Privileges are suspended and your soul is bowed down. You feel you can never speak for the Lord again. All THESE things are working together for your good. For “no chastisement seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12.¹¹). “The fiery trial” is for our purifying. “Tribulation worketh patience.” And all with the object that we should be to the praise of His glory.

In the next verse we have the foundation statements of the glorious doctrine of election, which is dealt with more fully in ch. 9. Here is the simple plain assertion set in a context which makes it obvious that it is intended to be of great comfort to our souls.

Alas, this doctrine has been attacked by many. But the Word of God is final and we must not alter one syllable to conform it to our own ideas. Moreover, if we accept God’s doctrine as Scripture presents it, we shall find nothing to stumble over. Those who oppose election do not present it as God Himself does. They set up a perverted view of it and then object to that.

To say that God has called everyone, is true in a sense, for conscience is continually calling even to the darkest heathen, according to ch. 1.^{20 & 21}. But that is not the call that is meant here. If it were, then every soul of man would be justified and glorified. For “WHOM He called, THEM He also justified: and WHOM He justified, THEM He also glorified.” The call here is like that which brought Lazarus out of the grave. Many are called (like those who were called to the marriage in Matt. 22, but they made light of it)—but few are chosen. Here it is the predestinated ones who are called, and they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. Let us accept these foundation statements just as they are given, and then we shall be able to understand and appreciate the details of ch. 9.

Here, in ch. 8, we have the glorious programme of God from eternity to eternity. Chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1.⁴) and predestinated to show the exceeding riches of His grace in the ages to come (Eph. 2.⁷). It is on this solid rock foundation of the purpose of God that our “hope” is established. Well may we have boldness.

Moreover, it is this blessed position of security in the eternal purpose of God which is the cause of the exultation in verses 31 to the end. Nor can the apostle pass on without reference to the cost of all this blessing. “He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all”; here is the cost, and if God was willing for that, there

is no question about anything else. The "all things" are given freely and they are all for our good.

Some prefer to read the words "Christ that died, etc." as a question in answer to the first question in ver. 34. In the same way that one question answers the other in ver. 35. It is possible from the Greek, but it makes no difference to the sense of the passage.

Beyond this, comment seems unnecessary; the words carry us away with their own force, like a mighty current sweeping through a gorge. NOTHING can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Read them for yourself, beloved child of grace, and let your soul shout aloud for joy.

CHAPTER 9

READING, VERSES 1-14

THE statement that Paul makes at the beginning is asserted in the most emphatic terms in a threefold way. "I say the truth in Christ"; "I lie not"; "My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." This strong assertion is, "That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." And for whom is this sorrow and heaviness? For his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. But there is a statement that comes in between, and it is one that has presented difficulty to many minds. One wonders how Paul could wish himself accursed from Christ. If he could be accursed from Christ, would that in any way benefit them? No. The translation here is certainly faulty. The tense is "I used to," not "I could," referring to his unconverted state. But the word for "wish" is capable of other meanings. It can have the sense to "boast," "to protest loudly" or "to avow." Either of these would give a fair representation of Paul's earlier life; and the word accursed ("Anathema") means to be "devoted" or "set up," frequently as a sacrificial offering; not necessarily accursed by God, that is, doomed to judgment.

So, then, if we read the statement "For I used to avow myself devotedly set apart from Christ" as a parenthesis, it gives a most fitting expression of his condition before he was apprehended in grace. The record of Acts 9 shows how devotedly he set himself against the Lord Jesus and His people, until he was smitten down on the way to Damascus by the light of His glory. But truly from that moment, when he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Instead of being given up to the position "from Christ," he was for ever after devoted *to* Christ. So that at the last he could say, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

Now perhaps we can appreciate the strong assertion of his position, now that he is so devoted to Christ. We look again at the record in Acts and we find years of persecution at the hands of his people, the

Jews. As he had persecuted the Church, so they now persecuted him. Could he now have any love or regard for them? Yes, he had. Saul the persecutor had become Paul the imitator of Christ. He had caught the spirit of his Master, though he had not heard Him say, "Do good to them that persecute you, pray for them that despitefully use you" and "Love your enemies." So he asserts his attitude towards them in the strongest terms, and gives the reason for it. He was once in the same place as they.

Then, in ver. 4, he views their position; and as an Israelite runs his mind over their advantages and grieves over their sad state.

The first he mentions is the "adoption." It is the same word as in ch. 8.¹⁵, the spirit of "adoption" whereby we cry, Abba, Father, the placing as sons: and it shows the great difference between being a son and acknowledged as one, and being placed as a son, merely as we use the term adopted, without really being a son.

Moses was told to say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my first-born . . . let my son go, that he may serve me." And in John 8.⁴¹ we see how the Jews stoutly asserted, "We have one Father—God." But the Lord said, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me." And before this God had said by Malachi, "If then I be a Father, where is mine honour?" Israel were given a position, as it were, on probation; but they never made good. The "glory" had departed from them. The "covenant" they had broken. The "law" they had made void by their traditions. The "service of God" He had turned His back upon. And "the promises"—ah! Some they had forfeited, but others could not be broken. "The fathers?" Yes, they were still recognised by God in a covenant of grace, and the promises to them still stood and must be fulfilled. The outstanding promise was the "seed" Himself. He was promised and in due time (concerning the flesh) of them He came. But He is not only of the flesh, He is over all, God, blessed for ever.

Some who deny His deity in these days have dared to render this "God-blessed for ever." Making Him to be only a created being—though blessed of God. But the words cannot honestly be so translated. But it illustrates the craftiness of the enemy of the truth who is behind it. He is a liar and the father of it. But our hearts say with Paul, to every word, "AMEN."

Now from this point Paul goes on to demonstrate the grand truth of election which he asserted in ch. 8.²⁸⁻³⁰. But he broke off from his main theme and began to exult in the glory of his security in Christ. So that verses 33-39 are a parenthesis: and as such help us to see that ch. 5.¹²⁻²¹ is of a similar nature. The purpose is not to *teach* the doctrine, but to help us to rejoice in it.

There are many who profess to believe in election as taught in the Scriptures, but it seems, only because they cannot deny that the word "elect" and "choose" are repeatedly used (only the one word in

the Greek). When such express themselves on the matter we find that they rob the word election of all its force and make the believer to be the one who chooses (elects) to be saved.

One writer was recently noted to say, virtually, "God only elects to service. And He elects those whom He knew would believe." This is based on John 15.¹⁶ and Rom. 8.²⁹. But if that be so, we have to face the fact that whom He called *them* He also justified. And no others. And the Lord said, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Here is a call like that which brought Lazarus out of the grave. It was not a general call that Lazarus chose to respond to, the power of God was in the call. So it is with us when we are quickened. We pass from death unto life.

There is another side to the matter, in Matt. 22.¹⁴, at the end of the parable of the "Marriage," the Lord said, "For many are called, but few chosen." In this case the call goes beyond those who are chosen. Many refused; but one is seen who responded but had no wedding garment. So it is to-day. Many refuse the invitation "Come." Some respond, but there is no real work of grace that makes them fit for the kingdom of God. But "whom He called *them* He also justified," we read in Rom. 8.³⁰. This shows that there is a general call, but there is also a call that carries life with it, which is directed to those whom He foreknew.

But what do we understand by this foreknowledge? Not that God simply knew who would believe and who would not; "to know" in Scripture has a deeper meaning in some places. In Matt. 7.²³ we read the Lord's words to some, "I never knew you." Did He not know them when they were making their empty profession? Of course. But in John 10.¹⁴ the Lord said to the people, "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." Here is the sense that we must give to God's foreknowledge. He knows us as His own.

If we say He only chooses those who choose Him, we make the term election of no value. In fact we reverse the position. Invariably we are viewed as the elected or chosen ones. But the above view makes us the choosers, we choose God.

At a political election the choice is made by the electors. So we are the elected and God is the Elector.

If we proceed with ch. 9 on this basis, we shall find that all will perfectly agree, and be in strict accord with righteousness.

Many feel that election, as set out above, is not righteous. But that is because they do not realise the whole of the teaching. We do not say that Scripture teaches that some were predestined, before the world was, to eternal judgment. No such statement can be found. Election shuts out nobody: but it brings in a multitude, *none* of whom would have come had it not been for that life-giving call. As

the Lord said to the Jews, "And ye *will not come* to Me that ye might have life." And none of us would have been any different if the decision had been left with us.

It is helpful to note that though Paul, in dealing with doctrine in this chapter (and it is reasoned out and demonstrated fully) does not make it merely a matter for the head, his heart is feeling the truth.

Though he has such sorrow for his kinsmen, as is expressed earlier, he has the consolation that the Word of God has had an effect; there is a remnant who are saved, and he therefore glories in God's election of them.

In verses 6, 7, 8, it is interesting to see that terms "Israel," "children" and "seed" are each used for both the saved and the unsaved elements of the nation. This helps us to appreciate the words of the Lord in Matt. 5.⁴⁵, "That ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven." Children by birth, but children in character too.

The greater part of the chapter is occupied with God's choice of certain men for certain purposes. But we must not overlook the fact that these are used to illustrate the principle and nature of election as it applies to "us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (ver. 24).

In verses 7-9 we have the case of Isaac. Abraham had a son, Ishmael, by Hagar. But though Abraham said, "Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee," and God pronounced a blessing upon him, yet he was not accepted as the heir (Gen. 17.¹⁵⁻²²). Paul brings forward the words, "at this time will I come, and *Sarah* shall have a son." God had chosen Isaac before he was born, and none could take his place.

Then in verses 10-13 we have the case of Jacob and Esau. And in passing, it is worthy of note that statements are made here which have their bearing on God's attitude toward inbred sin. The "struggling" of the children before the birth (Gen. 25.²²) is an evidence of the inherited law of sin. For the word is used usually in a bad sense. But from the standpoint of accountability, they are said neither to have done any good or evil. Thus there is no reason, as to anything in the children, for God to prefer one before the other. It is simply "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth." Now two things are to be noticed here: (a) that the "call" is something quite different from the "call of the Gospel" which many reject. It is that sovereign, irresistible call which is associated with justification in ch. 8.³⁰. (b) We are also told that this purpose of God stands "not of works," but of Him that calleth. Now, if God's predestination were based upon His knowledge as to who would believe, and He chose such, not only would the deciding choice be that of the person and not of God, there would also be introduced an element of "works." There would be some merit attaching to the person for his belief and choice. This principle

can be seen throughout the chapter. Indeed, if it were not so, the argument would be quite different; and there would be no occasion for Paul himself to raise the question, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" He could simply say that God chooses according to His foreknowledge of the person's attitude and ways, and the matter would be ended. But the whole passage is making God the One who is solely responsible for the choice.

Many have found a difficulty in seeing that God's righteousness is in no way impeached by election. In fact, it seems that because some cannot see an agreement between the two, they have set out to find an explanation for election that satisfies their minds as to righteousness. But this is because election, in the first place, was not understood. Once let it be realised that those who are elected would never have been one whit better than the others, that we all would have opposed and all gone to perdition if God had not elected us, and we are well on the way to clearing the difficulty.

There is, however, one important factor to be taken into account. It is, that righteousness and love are quite distinct. If God had never shown love (in the sphere with which we are dealing), nor any mercy, nor any compassion, He would still have been righteous; for we, by our own sin, have forfeited our right to anything but judgment, and righteousness therefore would have demanded our eternal doom. God's election in absolute grace is our only hope. This we shall see is the theme of the chapter.

In verse 12 we have the words quoted which were spoken before Jacob and Esau were born. Was there any unrighteousness in that? No. God has a perfect right to do as He wills in such a case. Just as He has the right to decide from which tribes of Israel the kings and priests are to be. Moreover, we find that though there was a special advantage to the one elected, the other one was not wronged or deprived of anything to which he had a right. In point of fact, both Ishmael and Esau were blessed very definitely, see Gen. 17.²⁰ and 27.³⁸⁻⁴⁰.

But in verse 13 we have another quotation from the Old Testament. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Why this hatred on the part of God? The marginal reference shows that this statement was not made at the time of their birth, but many years after, when the individuals had died and their progeny were two nations bearing the names of their fathers respectively.

The quotation is from Mal. 1.¹⁻⁵. Malachi, the last of the prophets, is making a final appeal to Israel before the coming of Christ. And in so doing opens with the words, "I have loved you, saith the Lord." This protest of love is another instance of the way in which electing love works. Israel had behaved shamefully to God, but He still loved them. They were no more deserving than Edom (which is Esau). But if we look at other prophecies concerning Edom, we find that there

is a real reason for God's hatred, a perfectly righteous hatred. In Amos 1.¹¹⁻¹² we see that their own sins called for the judgment. In Obadiah 10-16 we have another account of why God hated the descendants of Esau. And if we go back to the time when Israel came out of Egypt we have the first example of this national antagonism against the people of Israel, and see that God's hatred of the nation is fully vindicated (Numb. 20.¹⁴⁻²¹).

The case of the Ishmaelites is not so pronounced; but the same principles are to be seen. We have noted the blessing pronounced in Gen. 17; but not being satisfied with the bounty God had bestowed upon them, they must needs rob and plunder, and very quickly took the opportunity of warring against Israel as soon as God, in chastisement, removed His protecting hand from them.

So then, to sum up this part, we see that there was nothing in the chosen seed to call forth God's election. Israel were sinful in the extreme, even after they were separated as God's people, yet He loved them.

As to the ones not chosen, God definitely blessed them beyond anything they deserved, yet they rebelled and manifested enmity against Him, which can only call forth judgment upon that for which they are definitely accountable, and which is an essential part of God's righteousness.

So then, we can answer the question as Paul himself does, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" "Far be it."

If, then, election is so fundamental to our calling and justification, it must be an essential part of the Gospel. For election is contrasted to works in ver. 11; and ch. 11.⁵⁻⁶ shows that election and grace are one, as indeed does the whole of chs. 9 and 11.

If, then, election is a fundamental part of the Gospel, we can see in ver. 14, where Paul raises the question of God's righteousness, that he is still pursuing the same line of thought that he started with in ch. 1.¹⁶⁻¹⁷, the righteousness of God in the Gospel. As was said earlier, God does not want us to accept a certain part of His doctrine as being righteous simply because we know that He is righteous; and so give Him the benefit of the doubt, though it appears unrighteous to us. He wants us to *see* and *understand* that it is righteous. And if we do see that, it will lead to praise and worship to Him, as well as be the cause of strength and stability to us.

If only we can be clear that every soul who is not elected is tremendously indebted to God, and that he will only be punished for those sins for which he is fully accountable; and that every elected soul would have resisted God's grace just as much as the others, if that grace had not been irresistible; in other words, that election shuts none out, but brings in those who otherwise would not have come, all difficulty should be removed.

READING, CHAPTER 9.¹⁵⁻²⁹

In support of God's righteousness, which we have seen was called in question on the matter of Jacob and Esau, Paul now refers to the case of the Children of Israel when they made the golden calf. In Ex. 32 the account of this is given; and in ch. 33 we have Moses' further intercessions on behalf of the people; and then his request that God would confirm His statement that he had found grace in His sight, by showing Him His glory. At this time God put Moses in a cleft in the rock and made His goodness pass before him; but before He showed His glory He said that which Paul quotes in Rom. 9.¹⁵ (from Ex. 33.¹⁹).

In the first place, all Israel had sinned; so that none deserved to be considered. And be it noted, God does *not* say, "I will be gracious to those whom I know will repent." He counts on nothing in man. But all being reduced to the same position of meriting nothing but judgment, He comes in in electing grace. "I will be gracious *to whom I will* be gracious, and I will shew mercy *to whom I will* shew mercy."

Secondly, Moses, though he had not partaken in the idolatry, is made to feel the same utter dependence upon grace, by the way God deals with him. In ver. 20 He said, "Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live." Moses is thus put on the level of all men, a sinner. But God had a place by Him, where Moses could see part of His glory and live. That place is typical of the position which we have in Christ. And without going into further detail here as to the type, we see the purpose of Paul in quoting the words. In righteousness, no man has any claim upon God, but He shows mercy and compassion *as He wills*. And to this Paul adds, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Now in John 1.¹³ we have similar words, "born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Some, while objecting to the full force of election, would say of this, "Yes, *regeneration* is God's own work, to which man contributes nothing." But the comparison of the two passages helps because, whereas it is regeneration in John 1, it is not regeneration in Rom. 9. It is the purpose of God according to election, and His sovereign will as to whether this or that one is to be included.

So far we have had presented, God's election to grace as the prominent thought, and a reference also to Esau, whose case we have considered. Now we come, in ver. 17, to Pharaoh, and it is as well to note at once that in ver. 18 it is not mercy and compassion, as in ver. 15, but mercy in contrast to hardening. Israel were sinners, even in idolatry, when God visited them in Egypt (see Ezek. 20.⁵⁻⁹). They therefore deserved judgment, but He came to them in mercy. But what of Pharaoh? he, too, was an idolater, and when he came to

power he oppressed the people of Israel, and when God sent Moses to him to let the people go, he rebelled and said, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." God comes to the sinner in his sin and makes overtures to him. He calls upon him to be reconciled. The word goes forth, "Repent, and believe the Gospel." But man refuses. He sets his will against the will of God. If any do repent, it is because of this blessed fact of electing grace. The Holy Spirit comes in His sovereign power, a new life is implanted, and the repentance is brought about which otherwise would never have been.

But what of the others? They are hardened. We have noted before the comparison of the two passages concerning Israel. Isa. 6.¹⁰, "*make* the heart of this people fat, etc.," and in Matt. 13, "their eyes have *they* closed, etc." It is a solemn principle that we all need to take heed to, for Heb. 3.¹³ warns us against being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8.³⁴).

The hardening which comes as a judgment from God because of rejecting truth, is something like the laws of nature. Certain things and conditions produce certain effects. Neglect the use of a certain faculty and that faculty will diminish. Exercise a certain faculty and it will be developed. So also, neglect spiritual warnings and the conscience will lose sensitiveness. Reject truth, and the mind will accustom itself to view error as truth, and thus truth becomes the more strange. Even as in Isa. 5.²⁰, evil is acceptable as good first, then the good is regarded as evil, and so on through the passage; applicable to those who are wise in their own eyes, etc. This has its message to children of God as well as to the unsaved. The same law operates in both spheres. Let us be very careful to treat God's Word with all reverence, lest clinging to our own opinions we harden our minds and render ourselves incapable of sound judgment.

Thus in the passage before us God is not the author of the sin in Pharaoh's heart. But knowing what he was, He allowed the hardening process of sin to develop that He might show forth His power in redeeming those whom He had chosen in the furnace of affliction.

God raised up Pharaoh to his position of power that He might show His power in him, that is, in overcoming him. It is a solemn warning to any who oppose God, or His people. Other men have reached out after power without the recognition that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that "He putteth down one and setteth up another." In some cases such have never attained to that which they sought after; but in others they have attained, only to lay up for themselves a greater weight of judgment. In measure men can resist His will, but ultimately they can but contribute to it and bring Him glory. But that does not relieve them of their sin in resisting.

Again Paul puts the question forth on behalf of the objector, "Why

doth He yet find fault, for who hath resisted His will?" And in replying he first puts man in his right place by saying, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God. Shall the thing formed say unto Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?" Rom. 1 shows us that man is inexcusable as to his failure to recognise God and glorify Him. If man would take the humble position that belongs to him as the creature, he would learn the perfect wisdom and righteousness of God's ways.

Thereupon Paul takes the figure of the earthen vessel in the hands of the potter; and, mark the words, "of the same lump." The vessel unto honour is no different from the vessel unto dishonour. Again, everything is made to depend on the will of the Divine Potter. There is no deciding factor in the lump of clay.

But the other side of the matter, as to those who go to destruction, is set forth on the same principle that is seen above. Note the difference between verses 22 and 23. In ver. 23 we read of the "vessels of mercy, which *He* had *afore* prepared unto glory." It is God's doing beforehand. But in ver. 22 it does not say that "He" fitted them "beforehand" to destruction. Neither of those words is used: it simply says that God "endured" them "with much long-suffering." So that once more God's righteousness is vindicated, man brings destruction upon himself.

Then the application of the whole passage is made to "us" in ver. 24. We are the vessels of mercy whom He has prepared unto glory. Not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also. We are the objects of His electing grace. The quotations from the Prophets which follow, in verses 25-29, bear out the same testimony, those who were *not* God's people become His people; and where future judgment is in view (Isa. 10.²²⁻²³), God claims a remnant.

There is no doubt that these quotations really refer to the sparing of the elect remnant of Israel when the Lord comes again. But the same principle applies all through; in each dispensation God has a remnant according to the election of grace. In the present dispensation that remnant is in the Church, Jew and Gentile one in Christ.

In quoting the words of Isa. 10, Paul is inspired to give a fuller meaning to the passage than is apparent, in the English at least. The word "consumption," in Isa. 10.²³, does not suggest a *gradual* consuming, but a complete end. And Paul makes it the more clear by adding the words, "because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth."

Then again, the quotation from Isa. 1 shows that all Israel would have been cut off if it were not for God's own purpose to save a remnant. Sodom and Gomorrah were cut off entirely. Lot and his daughters were but sojourners there, even his sons-in-law scoffed at his warnings and remained, and were destroyed. And Israel would have been the same; there was no difference among them essentially,

they were all of the same lump. What difference there was manifest was the RESULT of God's election and not the cause of it. And these quotations are obviously made to show that the same principle applies to us. If God had not made the decision and choice, we too would have gone to eternal judgment. This is grace, pure grace. Oh, what utter debtors we are to grace.

READING, CHAPTER 9.³⁰—10.²¹

It is worthy of note that in coming to his conclusion on this matter of election, Paul says that the Gentiles which followed *not* after righteousness have attained to righteousness. Again shewing that we are all of the "same lump," there is nothing to choose between us. But the righteousness which we have attained to is that "of faith," not of our own works.

But what of Israel, who "followed after righteousness?" They have not attained to it. Is God unrighteous then in shutting them out? By no means. The whole of Israel's national economy, and the standing of each individual among them, was based upon sacrifice. The history of the fathers was continually preaching the same truth to them; as well as the Passover, by which they were delivered from Egypt.

The sacrifices, from Abel onwards, were essentially a testimony to justification by faith. And though the principle of law was, as in 10.⁵, "The man that doeth them shall live by them," the fact that the law prescribed a sacrifice for sin to be offered for the whole nation every year shewed that no one ever attained to the keeping of the whole law, and therefore could have no hope on that ground. His only hope is in God's mercy, acknowledged by the offering of the sacrifice.

Moreover, for individual sins they were required to bring a sacrifice at the time of transgression. But if the whole congregation needed a bullock (Lev. 4.^{13, 14}) at the time of transgression, and the yearly sacrifice for all the people on the day of atonement was only a goat, it is obvious that the real value of the atonement is not in the animal. The sacrifice was but an expression of the principle upon which God acted; mercy through a sacrifice, which in itself did not satisfy. Of course, in the light of Rom. 3.^{24, 25}, we can now see the righteous foundation upon which God was acting, in those individual cases where spiritual faith was in operation, that is, in the elect. But the whole of their economy witnessed to the principle. It is therefore clear that the attitude of seeking righteousness by their own works is without excuse. Ch. 2 has plainly shewn that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the sins of Israel, yet they boasted of God and still sought to be justified by their works. God's righteousness is seen throughout, men exclude themselves, but God's electing grace brings in those who would not otherwise have come. So Israel stumbled at that stumbling-stone. No wonder, seeing they had closed their eyes (Acts 28.²⁷).

But ch. 10 brings in another side of the matter. Paul does not reason that the elect must be saved and therefore we need not trouble. The flesh would reason so. But true spiritual love is concerned to know God's will and to do it; and is not simply actuated by emotions, or the knowledge of certain facts.

If God commands men to keep the law, it is evident that He *wants* them to keep it. And if He commands men to repent and believe the Gospel, He *wants* them to do it. Now this wish, or will, on the part of God, in no way conflicts with other aspects of His will or of His character. Righteousness is distinct from goodness (Rom. 5.7), and we should distinguish between them.

Take another case. God's will in creation was irresistible. He spake and it was done. But His will as expressed concerning the tree of knowledge was not. He spoke, but Adam and Eve disobeyed. So in the matter before us. Men have violated His will by disobedience, but His irresistible will in election has come into operation, that some shall be saved. Men have also resisted His will in their attitude to the Gospel, but His sovereign will according to election has caused some to believe.

This sovereign will has been treated of in ch. 9, but now in ch. 10 His expressed will, which may be frustrated, is treated of. That expressed will is, that men should repent. It was continually being preached to Israel all through their history; and it was no mere dramatism. God really yearned over them. He had no pleasure in the death of the wicked. And Paul has the same attitude of heart.

Many feel that if they accepted this teaching as to election, they could not preach the Gospel. True it would mean that some expressions would have to be modified, and some cut out. But the *Gospel* could still be preached. Preaching the Gospel is declaring God's provision in the death of His beloved Son, not striving to work up a "decision" in the human heart. If we are a saviour of death unto death in some, that is their responsibility. So long as we are faithful, we are a sweet saviour of Christ to God (2 Cor. 2.¹⁵, 17). Results are no criterion of faithfulness.

The Lord knew before He came what would happen to Him at Jerusalem, but shortly before He was offered, He wept over the city. And Paul, after stressing election, says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." We have noticed his earnestness too at the beginning of ch. 9, and we see another aspect of it in 1 Cor. 9.¹⁸, 22. And it is this earnestness which God uses to accomplish His sovereign will, for it is the expression of His own heart. It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1.²¹).

Perhaps it will be better to pursue the main theme of the chapter to the end, and then return and note some of the particular statements.

In ver. 13 he says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the

Lord shall be saved." And from this he goes on to show that God works through the preaching.

Then again, at the end of the chapter, he shows Israel's inexcusability. They knew, but they obeyed not. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

The longsuffering of God as expressed in the Prophets of the Old Testament is marvellous. We could not have wondered if God had sent the Messiah to another nation. But no, He came even to Israel, and they fulfilled the Scriptures in condemning Him. But even then God did not turn from them; not only at Jerusalem but also in the synagogues in Gentile cities, Christ crucified was preached as the one means of forgiveness of sins, and with urgent pleading that they might repent. But all this stretching forth of the hands availed nothing in itself. The heart that rejects God's commandments rejects His Son, and the heart that rejects His Son rejects the grace that is procured through His atoning death. Only where God's sovereign will according to election operates is there any response.

And what of us who have believed? "Children of wrath, even as others," and such we would have continued if the decision had been left with ourselves. The writer cannot remember a time in his life when he did not believe the testimony of God concerning His Son. But that did not deter him from *seeking* the company of others in early youth who helped him to fulfil the sinful desires of his heart. The deliverance from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, came through seeking also, seeking God and those who would help him out. But what caused the hatred of the sin and the seeking of the good? Nothing but the sovereign working of the Spirit of God according to His purpose in election.

Then we need not despair of the worst. Nor need have hope of the best, if we look to the individual. But if we get God's standpoint we can preach the Gospel to every creature and leave the issue with Him. Other lines of effort may be more encouraging outwardly, but there will be a separating later on, when the tares are gathered together to be burned. May God give us grace to occupy faithfully; then whatever the results here, we shall have His "well done" in that day.

READING, CHAPTER 10 SOME INDIVIDUAL VERSES CONSIDERED

Verse 4. In view of the misinterpretation given to this statement by some, it is necessary to point out that there is nothing said here to support the thought that "Christ fulfilled the law for us." The word "end" is the word which is commonly used to give that sense which we usually attach to it, for instance, "he that endureth to the end." "But the end is not yet." "The end of those things is death." Matt. 10.²²; 24.⁶; Rom. 6.²¹, and many other passages. The particular way in which Christ became the end of the law for us has been clearly

stated earlier (ch. 3.²⁰⁻²⁸), so there is no need for it to be explained in ch. 10, nor would it be here were it not for the erroneous meaning given to the verse. Eph. 2.¹⁵ and Col. 2.¹⁴ are clear enough as to the way in which Christ is the end of the law for us. Its penalty has been paid in our Substitute and it has no further claim upon us. We are not under the law but under grace (Rom. 6.¹⁴). The object of the passage as a whole, of course, is to stress the fact that righteousness is not by the work of the law, it is by faith.

Verses 6, 9. Here we have a quotation from Deut. 30.¹¹⁻¹⁴, but you will notice it is not an exact quotation. We must differentiate on the one hand between a prophecy being fulfilled and, on the other hand, a similar principle being brought from the Old Testament to illustrate one in the New. That the passage quoted here is not a prophecy is implied in the words "on this wise" in ver. 6, which indicates a comparison. And the words "that is" in verses 6, 7, 8 indicate that, *in the comparison*, the one corresponds to the other. So then, just as the law was made clear and plain and brought right to hand to the children of Israel, so is the Gospel to the people today.

With regard to the "confession" in ver. 9, we must be careful not to introduce an element of works as a basis of eternal salvation. James 2.¹⁴⁻²⁶ has been taken in this way by some, but it should be noted there that the "works" arise out of the faith. And a faith which does not produce works is "dead," and such a faith cannot save. James wants the true believer to triumph over a mere professor by producing the works that accompany a true salvation. So in Rom. 10, if one says, "Well, I can be saved if I believe, even if I don't confess the Lord," we may well doubt whether the faith is a living one.

It should also be noticed that Paul makes a distinction in ver. 10 between "righteousness" and "salvation." We have noticed in dealing with ch. 8.²⁴ that there are various aspects of salvation, and that the word seldom refers to our legal position before God, but rather to our deliverance from the power of sin. "Righteousness" obviously refers to imputed righteousness, which is the theme of the passage. That is assured to all who believe; it is by faith without works. But salvation from the power of sin is largely affected by our confession. Confessing the Lord Jesus is like "burning our bridges behind us." It cuts off retreat and compels us to go forward. Once the confession is made, we feel the obligation to live up to it. (Though, on the other hand, there are those who urge others to make a confession before they are prepared for it, and it leads to sad results.) We may well notice, too, in this connection, the omission of everything but belief in ver. 11.

Verses 14, 15 give us the usual means that God employs in the salvation of a soul, just as in 1 Cor. 1.²¹, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"; but God has not bound Himself to any one method. He can quicken a soul without human agency, if He so pleases. The object of the passage as a whole should

be borne in mind. Paul has been discoursing on election, but he would not allow that to lead to carelessness on our part, but rather stir us up to fulfil our responsibility.

The quotation from Isa. 52 is another instance of comparison rather than fulfilment. There the prophecy concerns the people of Israel when the Lord shall come to reign in Mount Zion. Then how beautiful shall be the feet of those that go forth to proclaim the good news that Messiah has come—specially after all that the land has gone through during those dreadful years that will precede.

“How beautiful are the feet” is a Hebrewism that illustrates the use of metaphor in the Scriptures. It has nothing to do with the appearance of the feet, nor is it to be spiritualised to indicate that one who preaches the Gospel should have a holy walk of life—though that is so. It is just the picturesque mode of expression common to those parts. The fact that those feet are bringing the glad tidings that has been so long waited for makes them beautiful. Paul uses another expression which is similar, in Eph. 6.¹⁵, “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” indicating a “readiness” to go forth.

READING, CHAPTER 11.

The connection of the two chapters is marked by the words, “I say then.” That is to say, after what has been said about God stretching forth hands, has He cast away His people? Far be it! Paul uses the fact that he is one of them to demonstrate the truth that there is a remnant according to the election of grace. He emphasises his national, yea, his tribal position for the purpose; and then appeals to the Scriptures again to show the principle of election in the days of Elijah. At that time the nation of Israel had so turned to Baal worship that the prophet said, “I only am left.” But God’s reply is, “*I have reserved unto Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*” And that illustrates the position in the present dispensation.

A remnant according to the election of grace—not the election of merit. The grace of God causes the works which accompany saving faith. The works do not call forth the grace, if so, it would not be grace, as ver. 6 says. So election is not of those whom God knew would obey of their own wills, that would be works as a basis. It is the election of grace without mixture, and that grace is the root of every response from first to last. Verses 7-10 do not mean that they were elected to reject the Gospel, that was their sin, and the judgment of God is in perfect righteousness. This we have established earlier.

In ver. 11 we have an unusual use of the word “fall” which helps us to appreciate how words are used, at times, in Scripture. In such a case as this a contradiction is unthinkable from any standpoint; and there are cases where what appear to be contradictions are no more so than this. It is evident that the first use of the word “fall” is intended to mean irrecoverably; but the second only temporarily.

Israel have fallen from the place they had in the economy of God, as a nation; but they are not beyond hope, there will be a restoration with greater blessing than ever before. That Israel are to be nationally restored is fully set forth in their own prophets. (The tendency in some quarters to appropriate all the blessings in the Old Testament prophets to the Church and leave the curses to Israel, is to be deeply deplored.) Rom. 11.²⁶ is one of the many quotations which could be given of this fact, but one is sufficient.

The "fall" of Israel has been overruled by God to bring in an election from all nations into a position of blessing and grace, which surpasses anything that Israel could have known. A place assured in the new heavens and the new earth. And when the Lord returns and "all Israel" (that are then living), are brought into this same grace and gentile nations through them are also blessed, then will be seen the wonder of God's grace. It will be as Joseph said, in Gen. 50.²⁰, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive."

Israel's sin in rejecting their Messiah remains in all its seriousness. But the purpose of God according to election triumphs in that their very sin is turned to fulfil it, in providing a redemption which guarantees eternal blessing to some of all nations.

Concerning this matter of Israel's restoration. Paul calls it being "wise in your own conceits" to think that the Church has displaced that nation altogether, yet many of the page headings in Bibles give that view of the prophecies. One need hardly say that such headings are not inspired.

Verses 28, 29 show the immutability of God's promises to the "fathers," Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For their sakes the nation is still beloved, and God will not repent of His promises. The land was given to Abraham and his seed and they shall yet possess it. God showed in the law of Moses what He intended the people and the land to be. But the realisation of it failed because it was entrusted to men. God, however will not be defeated. What the law could not do through men in the flesh, God will accomplish in grace by His Holy Spirit. Well may we take up the words of the concluding verses — which bring us to the end of the doctrinal portion of the epistle—and rejoice and worship God for the depth of the riches of His wisdom and knowledge.

READING, CHAPTER 11.¹³⁻²⁷.

In considering this portion concerning the "olive tree," it is needful, as in all other Scripture study, to keep in mind the context. By so doing we see the purpose for which the figure is brought in, and thus are able to arrive at a right understanding of it.

There are some who believe that it is possible to be eternally lost after one has been born again of the Holy Spirit. But one would conclude that very few such would be found among serious students of

the word of God. But those who, by God's grace, have the blessed assurance that they "shall never perish," that they "have eternal life" as a present possession and that, being eternal, it can never cease; and knowing that their justification is by grace and not by works, that they did nothing to gain it and can do nothing to retain it, may find in this passage statements which seem to support the other view. It is hoped therefore that what is said here will help such to see the true meaning of those statements, and so to see the harmony that exists between all parts of God's word.

It may be as well at this point to refer to the figure of "the vine" in John 15, which is of the same nature, in respect to the cutting off of some of the branches, though it differs in other respects. Indeed it will be helpful to make several comparisons of the two figures as we proceed.

When the Lord used figures of speech, He did as any wise person would do. He used figures which were quite familiar to His hearers, so that they might understand the truth that He wished to convey.

Everyone in that part knew that the "purging," or pruning of the vine is a process that is continually going on, and is repeated every year. They also knew that branches were not grafted into the vine. And we notice that, in contrast to the olive tree, nothing is said in John 15 about grafting in. So that in this respect the two are contrasted, though as to cutting off they are the same.

Now it may be advisable to make another comparison. In the Pauline epistles we have references to "the body" as a figure of the Church's position "in Christ" (Rom. 12.^{4, 5}; Eph. 4.¹³⁻¹⁶; Col. 1.¹⁸; 2.¹⁹). In the use of this figure nothing is ever said to suggest that a member will be "cut off." On the contrary, in Eph. 4 we see that there is a continual growth till we come to "a perfect man, to the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ." This not only encourages us as to the "unity of the faith" before the Lord comes, but the view of "a perfect man" excludes any thought of one of the members being lacking. As 1 Cor. 12.²² says, "those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary."

This figure is intended, in its very nature, to set forth vital union. A position where our eternal security is guaranteed. But in John 15 it is not a matter of vital union, it is communion, which is a very different matter. Our union with Christ as members of His body is not dependent upon anything we do. We are a "new creation" in Christ, and the position is entirely by grace. But in John 15 it is the person's own responsibility to "abide" in the vine (verses 6, 9). And the particular theme of the whole is bearing fruit.

Moreover, in ver. 6 "*men* gather them and cast them into the fire." It is possible for a child of God to so grieve Him that He sees fit to "deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." "Men of the world" are

“God’s sword” (Psa. 17.¹³⁻¹⁵); and God may cast off His own and outwardly disown them, if they do not abide in Christ in this sense which we are considering. Compare also S. of S. 5.²⁻⁷; James 5.^{19, 20}; 1 John 5.¹⁶.

Having established these contrasted views from Scripture, we may now consider the olive tree, not with an attempt to make the wording fit the view of our eternal security, but with the consciousness that there is a position revealed in Scripture from which it is possible to be cut off and to which one may be restored. But we must have due respect for the context.

The passage is dealing with Israel primarily, the figure of the olive tree being introduced to illustrate the teaching of the whole chapter.

The olive tree carries with it a suggestion, peculiar to itself, just as the vine does. All the parables of the vine, S. of S. 8.¹¹⁻¹³; Isaiah 5.¹⁻⁷; Ezek. 15.¹⁻⁸; Matt. 21.³³⁻⁴³, show that fruit is the object in view, this being particularly manifest in the Isa. and Ezek. passages; the fruit of righteousness. But the olive is particularly associated with worship. This is seen in the oil for the light in the tabernacle, and for the anointing oil for the priesthood. Rom. 11 shows that the olive tree was originally Israel. And Rom. 9.⁴ says that “the service of God” belonged to them. The word “service” here, having specially the sense of religious worship publicly.

Now Israel always consisted of two classes, believers and unbelievers; but they were all included in the covenant at Sinai, all were obliged to keep the ordinances and feasts of the Lord, all being in the one nation with whom the covenant was made. Hence, though the Lord knew what was in Judas’ heart, He did not refuse to eat the passover with him. But he went out before the Lord’s supper was instituted (John 13.³⁰). So then Israel stood in this position, nationally, as the olive tree.

But there came a time when a change was brought about. “Because of unbelief” some of the branches were broken off (Rom. 11.²⁰). So at the end of the Lord’s public ministry we are told, in John 12.³⁷, that “though He had done so many miracles among them, yet they believed not on Him,” and reading on to the end of the chapter we see their doom is pronounced.

But Rom. 11 is showing that through Israel’s fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. Thus the wild olive branches are grafted in. The true believers in Israel became the disciples of Christ and were the beginning of the Church of the present time; but the Lord gave commandment to the apostles to make disciples of all the nations, and we, Gentiles, are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” The olive tree continued, but some of the branches were cut off, and others were grafted in.

But now comes the matter of the grafting in *again* of ver. 23. How can this be? Those who were cut off have died, it cannot apply to

them. But in all God's *national* dealings, punishment and blessing may be postponed for generations. The history of the Kings will show this; and judgment was reserved for the generation that rejected Christ (Matt. 23.³⁵). And in ver. 26 we read, "and so all Israel shall be saved." All Israel that ever lived? No. All Israel that are left in that day when the Deliverer comes, after God has thinned out the nation with His terrible judgments. The Prophets leave no doubt on this point. If the verses 23-27 are read consecutively it will be seen that that is the explanation of the grafting in again.

Now we may notice another contrast with the vine. Pruning is a continual practice with the vine; every year a number of the branches have to be thinned out. But not so the olive as to grafting. That is not a yearly practice. A grafted branch may require several years to develop. It is done once and remains.

But do not verses 20-22 show that it is possible for a grafted in branch to be cut off? Yes. Hence the exhortation, "Be not high-minded, but fear." And it depends, like the position in the vine, upon our continuing (the same thought as "abide" in John 15).

We have seen that a child of God can be cut off from the *fellowship* of God's Son to which we have been called, and it is obvious that in such a state he would be cut off from the public aspect of worship too. So fulfilling these words in the verses before us.

But there seems to be a further meaning in the passage. The present dispensation is called "the Kingdom of the Heavens." We have a "heavenly calling," not a national position. And in the kingdom of the heavens there are wheat and tares (Matt. 13). And in a number of passages this mixed condition is shown to continue to the end of the age. Corruption and false profession have come into the worship of God in the present age, and God deals with men according to their profession. They worship God, but they are not standing by faith. They have a faith which is merely that of the natural mind and is dead—it produces nothing (Jas. 2.¹⁷); and they are in a similar position to those in Israel who claimed God as their Father but had no true faith in His Son.

At the end of this age the harvest will take place, and the tares will be gathered out first. A definite period when a great change is made, comparable to the grafting of the olive, but distinct from the pruning of the vine. Just as at the end of the last age the unbelieving branches were cut off, so will it be at the end of this one. Then the worship will be restored again to its purity, as at Pentecost. Then the branches of Israel, "if they abide not still in unbelief," will be grafted in again. The Church in resurrection glory, having access to heaven and earth, will not lose its precious privilege of worship, it will be enhanced beyond our comprehension. And seeing that we are to reign on the earth with Christ (Rev. 5.¹⁰) and the apostles are to judge the tribes of Israel (Luke 22.^{29, 30}), we can see that both the heavenly

and earthly people of that day—the Church in resurrection and Israel restored—will unite in the pure and holy worship of God—that which He has been seeking all through the ages, and which is to continue on in the new heavens and the new earth.

Having traversed the main line of the theme of this chapter, let us now return to a side line in vers. 12-15, where the Holy Spirit incidentally refutes entirely the teaching of universal reconciliation and salvation of those who are cast into the lake of fire. This is supposed to take place in “an age” that is imagined to come in between Rev. chs. 20 and 21.

Paul’s statement is, that the fall of Israel at the present time has brought about the riches of the world. But Israel’s fulness, when they are grafted in again, will bring far greater riches; which will be in the Millennium.

Now as to the word “world” here, we know full well that every individual in the world is not enriched by the fall of Israel, but only those out of the world who have saving faith in Jesus Christ. Even the mere professors in Christendom are not enriched, they are still treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath. That proves that the word “world,” as also in 2 Cor. 5.¹⁹, does not mean every individual in the world.

In v. 15 the word is used again in the same way, but this time connected with “reconciling.” Israel are for the present “cast away,” but are to be “received” again.

During this present time the world is being reconciled to God. But obviously only a small percentage of the populace, just as there is a remnant from Israel, and the rest are blinded.

Universalists have tried to establish their doctrine in this chapter from v. 32, “that He might have mercy upon *all*.” But this is a reference to v. 26, the “all” that are left when God’s purging work has been done.

Really they are but a remnant (ch. 9.²⁷), but they will multiply for the 1,000 years, and will all be justified by the blood of Christ, and be eternally saved.

The words, “and to Him are *all* things” in v. 36 have also been misused to the same end. But the corruption is self evident, the “all things” referring to the ways and purpose of God as set out in the three chapters, 9-11.

If universal salvation were truth can we think that Paul would have so discoursed on the plan of God as he has here and never said a word about it?

Now let us return again to verses 25-26 to another side line. The fulness of the Gentiles in v. 25 coincides with the removal of the blindness of Israel which is upon all the nation except “the election” (v. 7). And the election of Israel are united with the Gentile believers to constitute the Body of Christ, which is composed of vastly more

Gentiles than Israelites (verses 11-13). Therefore, "the fulness of the Gentiles" is the completion of the Body of Christ; and when that comes to pass all Israel will be saved by the coming of the Deliverer to Zion. That is, by the coming of Christ to set up His earthly kingdom. Therefore there is no room for that other *imaginary* dispensation which is supposed by the pretribulationists to come in between the rapture and the Millennium.

CHAPTER 12

READING, VERSES 1-2

At this point we enter upon a fresh phase of the apostle's letter. While all doctrine has its practical value—and therefore all error will lead to corruption of ways—there is a difference between what may be called, for convenience sake, the doctrinal and the practical parts of this epistle. Indeed it is so in most of Paul's writings; the earlier part being taken up with such matters as redemption, justification, etc., and the latter with exhortation to godliness. At the same time we must recognise that this is not a hard and fast rule, the purpose of the epistle and the state of those to whom it is written largely decide its structure. However, it is undeniable that the doctrine of the grace of God in Jesus Christ is always, in Paul's mind, not only the basis, but the argument for holy living. And it is here at this point that it is particularly expressed.

Chapters six and eight have their exhortative force in a pronounced way, according to the nature of that part of the doctrine which is being treated of. But having traversed the whole course of his theme, beginning with the depravity of man, and passing right through to the restoration of Israel when the Lord returns, he reaches that outburst of praise at the end of chapter eleven with a final "Amen." Then in the next chapter he commences with the words, "I beseech you THEREFORE." Here is a reason stated. The following words, "by the mercies of God," give added clearness to the meaning, i.e., in view of all the mercies shown to us in this gospel of God's grace, it is only our "reasonable service" that we present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him.

Chosen, redeemed, called, quickened, justified, sanctified, united to Christ and assured of eternal glory when He returns, what should characterize the little while of our waiting for Him? But for this sovereign grace we would have been still on the way to eternal doom, if not already there, just as others, and without excuse. What greater argument could there be for a life devoted to Him Who paid redemption's price for us? "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price."

A holy life is not simply an abstinence from sins of the grosser kind, or even from worldly engagements which are not essentially sinful. Holiness is separation unto God. We read in Ex. 29.³⁷ "whatsoever touches the altar shall be holy." And in the passage before us it is "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."

Let us take each statement separately and consider it. A living sacrifice. In so offering ourselves we do not die, as the animals did; but by baptism we have identified ourselves with Christ in His death (ch. 6), and in this sense we died. But we rose from the water to walk in newness of life. Thus all our lives should be a positive of active obedience to God, "denying ourselves" as a whole, that Christ may be all in all. It should no longer be a matter of what I want, but what He wants, with a glad willingness to spend and *be spent*.

Having said so much, we have actually expressed the meaning of the word "holy." But it is evident that the word is not put in without a reason. It gives emphasis to the meaning of the sacrifice—devoted to God. But devotion to God is not merely devotion to a cause, and it is certainly very different from the devotion of those who addicted themselves to the service of the false gods. The true and living God is a God of purity, truth, righteousness and love; and that should be the characteristic of those who serve Him.

Such a presentation of our bodies is also to be "acceptable to God." The sacrifices were to be without spot. If there was a spot or blemish it was not accepted. This almost seems to bring us to a standstill. Who can attain to it? We look adoringly at the only One Who answered to it, Who gave Himself a sacrifice for us. But we have already seen ourselves in ch. 7 as Paul did, "Oh, wretched man that I am." But still we are to present our bodies in this way. Obviously a sinless perfection is not in view, but a condition of heart that hates sin and grieves over every appearance of it, even that which only appears to our own minds, and which seeks at once the cleansing which God has provided. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise (Psa. 51.¹⁷), and again, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57.¹⁵). God says, "I wound and I heal" (Deut. 32.³⁹). The truth which crushes us down to nothing lifts us up to heights unspeakable, that we may "rejoice with trembling" (Psa. 2.¹¹). This then is the condition in which we are to present our bodies.

Then let us notice that it is the "body." Our lives are not to be a dream. Meditation has its rightful place, indeed it is necessary; but the body is to be active. Moreover, the exhortation is not restricted to a certain few, but is to all who have experienced "the mercies of God." We hear the expression "whole time for the Lord," we appreciate what is meant, but not every one is called to be an evangelist or a pastor and teacher. But we *are* all called to this life of sacrificial devotion to God. We hear talk of "living by faith" too, applied in a special way, but those who live most by faith will say least about it. Paul set a very beautiful example of living by faith when he was working with his own hands. And who is the believer who is not called to live by faith? The fact is that the hours in the workshop or office,

scrubbing the floor or peeling potatoes, can be just as much a "living sacrifice" as prayer or preaching, and should be. The thing is, are we where the Lord wants us to be? Are we doing what He wants us to do? If what I am doing is not consistent with this presentation of my body, there is need for some adjustment, if not for a complete change.

Now the next thing is, what is the will of the Lord, and how can I know what He wants me to do? The next verse tells us. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Let us note this threefold description of the will of God. Does it not impress us with its magnitude? Yet we should know it, and not only know it but *prove* it. Definite assertions are right when they can be proved, but they should not be made without.

Now then, how are we to prove what is the will of the Lord? The means is twofold, negative and positive. First, be not conformed to this world. We are supposed to be crucified to the world and the world to us (Gal. 6.¹⁴). Shall the world then dictate to us as to how we conduct ourselves? There is no need to go into a lot of detail. Paul does not, he makes one general statement. The sensitive conscience will soon be affected by anything that displeases the Lord, providing there is attention given to the second part of the exhortation, the renewing of the mind. And where there is that sensitiveness it will not be necessary to urge one to give up this or that, or to compel one to see that a certain thing is wrong. Let the world be first put in its right place in our heart estimation, our affection set on things above, then the mind will be free to be instructed, being renewed by the revelation from above, contained in the words of the Holy Spirit. By the Scriptures, then, we shall prove what is the will of God.

We do not find specific instructions in Scripture for every practice; but we find instructions in the form of general principles which will cover everything. For instance, we do not find smoking mentioned in Scripture, but we are told not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. 13.¹⁴). So, we are taught not to do anything that will cause another to stumble (Rom. 14.²¹). We are told to provide things honestly in the sight of all men (Rom. 12.¹⁷; 2 Cor. 8.²¹). We are not to go against the authorities (Rom. 13; 1 Pet. 2.¹³⁻¹⁴); unless their edicts are contrary to the commandment of God, when we must obey God rather than men (Acts 4.¹⁹; 5.²⁹). We are to owe no man anything (Rom. 13.⁸). We are not to seek the riches of this world (1 Tim. 6.⁸⁻¹⁰). Our personal appearance and our homes should bear testimony to the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth; and our ways to the fact that our affections are set on things above.

Who among us will not feel his sad shortcoming in the light of all this? But let us not excuse failure, but exhort one another, and so much the more as we see that day approaching, that we may *prove* what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God.

READING, CHAPTER 12.³⁻⁹.

Verses 3-5: Here the apostle is not merely presenting the view of the body that we may appreciate the principles of relationship and co-operation; he uses the similitude to emphasise the quality of humility. It is the same in 1 Cor. 12. Though the gifts differ in some respects in the two passages, the lesson is the same.

In 1 Cor. 12.¹⁵⁻²⁶ it is obvious that Paul is concerned that there should be no pride on account of the possession of a "gift," nor any sense of independence among the members as a whole. And in Rom. 12.³ it is the same: that no man should "think (of himself) more highly than he ought to think."

The body is a most excellent figure of the principle he is urging upon the saints. Though the right hand is usually more capable than the left, it does not vaunt itself over the other; but simply comes forward to do the larger share of the work.

But the fact that the apostle is inspired to write these things in both these epistles is evidence of the danger that exists in this connection. A "gift" is not given for the glorification of the individual, but for the edification of the whole. And Paul not only taught the precept but set the example. He could say, "I thank God I speak with tongues more than ye all"; but he would rather speak five words with his understanding, that he might teach others, than ten thousand in an unknown tongue.

Beloved, let us think of the most vital of our organs—heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys. They are never seen, and for the most part we are not conscious of their existence. But they exist and function for the well-being of the whole.

Nor would we forget that the body is Christ; we are members of Him. He is our life. Without Him the body is nothing. Where is boasting then? What have we that we have not received? Whether as individuals or as companies, we are debtors. And He who is the Head may choose some one, "foolish," "weak," "base," or "despised," to show us that which is on the surface of Scripture, but which we have failed to see.

Then in verses 6-8 another principle is set forth. The Lord has "appointed to every man his work." And our first concern should be to know what that is. It may be something we do not naturally like, but whether it be so or not, it will certainly be something we are fitted for, if not naturally, by "the grace that is given to us." And though the utterance may be "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling," as with Paul himself at Corinth, if it is really a gift from the Lord it will be in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; in some way and in some measure. The Lord will set His seal to His own work.

In certain quarters prophecy has been made to mean "forthtelling,"

and not necessarily “foretelling.” The passage before us quite refutes this idea. Prophecy involves inspiration. The “mystery” was made known to the prophets (Eph. 3.⁵). So that in the early churches any one who had the gift of prophecy might give forth something of the mystery in the church. The instances of prophecy being used in the Scriptures always involve the utterance of things which could only be known by revelation—or inspiration. Such instances are never put into the category with preaching, teaching or ministering. Acts 11.²⁷⁻²⁸; 13.¹; 21.⁴⁻¹¹, are examples of this. Though the prophecy might, in some instances, come in the course of ministering. In 1 Cor. 12.⁸⁻¹⁰ “ministering” is not mentioned. But that does not warrant us saying that ministering and prophesying are the same. The passage is dealing with gifts of a miraculous kind. And that is just the distinguishing feature of prophecy. It is miraculous: ministry is not. And consistently with this, we find no mention of “prophets” (except false ones) in any of the passages which refer to the last days. No miraculous gifts are mentioned as existing after the disunity of 2 Tim. 1.¹⁵—except that it remained with the apostles themselves while they lived, as in the case of the “Revelation” given to John.

So then in Rom. 12 we see that each gift is distinguished. Prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation or preaching, each is distinct from the rest. Preaching, however, is not mentioned here; but it is distinguished by usage in other places. There are two words used for this, one to “evangelize,” the other to “proclaim.” This was used to those “without,” with a view to bringing them in: and this would be sufficient reason for it being omitted in Rom. 12, as the view presented is the edifying of the body.

Prophecy was to be “according to the proportion of faith.” The inspired message had to be received by faith; and in proportion to the faith of the prophet, so the message or messages were given by the Holy Spirit.

But ministry is not so characterised. The exhortation seems rather that each one is to occupy “in” his own gift. This would involve what is expressed in the words (in italics) “let us wait on.” Whatever our gift, it will require attention. The Scriptures must needs be studied and food found that will meet the needs of those who are ministered to. Nor is this word “ministry” to be limited to the ministry of the word. The thought is “serving,” and that expresses a very wide range.

It is also needful to distinguish between knowledge and teaching. One may have a wide and exact knowledge, but may not be able to teach. The ability to impart to others is the gift—teaching.

Moreover, exhortation is not teaching. We need to “exhort one another daily.” The same things, well known to all, are to be continually presented to us, lest we become slack and our hands hang down and our knees weaken. Worldliness steals in and the fine gold becomes

dim. "Suffer the word of exhortation" is an exhortation in itself. Most people like to gather knowledge, but to be exhorted as to practical matters of separation from the world, with its ever-increasing ungodliness is not nearly so much welcomed. Yet, in view of what we were considering in verse 2, how can we really learn if we are conformed to this world? We may think we are learning, but be like those of whom Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 3.⁷, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

"The 'gift of giving' too is a precious, though not too popular gift. Our 'gifts' are from the Lord, and must redound to Him. 'Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things.' Why is one given a gift? Not for his own aggrandisement. But that the body may be edified. Thus it redounds to the Giver. And our giving is the same. Our material things are a stewardship: and if we are faithful with them, it is just as precious in the sight of the Lord as ministering the Word.

Moreover, if other gifts are not for our aggrandisement, so neither is the gift of giving. The word "simplicity" is the opposite of "duplicity." We are to have one motive—the glory of God, whether in giving to the poor or to His work. The Lord denounced those who made a parade of giving. They sought honour of men, and they had their reward. But they had no reward in heaven.

"He that ruleth with diligence." Not with despotism. The word "ruleth" signifies one who is "set before" the others, and thus is an example to the others; he is not set "over" them. But there is to be diligence.

"He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." The word used here signifies something more than joy. If we use the word "hilarity," we shall miss the truth, because the word has degenerated in its meaning. But that is the word, and it implies a real stirring of the feelings—a gaiety at the opportunity of showing mercy. No grudging forgiveness; no lurking feelings that rankle under the surface, ready to express themselves at the first occasion.

"Let love be without hypocrisy." That is the word used. God says, "I try the reins and the heart." What does our handshake between Christians mean? Love is not mere tolerance. And the word used here for love is not the one that signifies friendship love. That kind depends on something in the other. The love here is that which is spoken of in John 3.¹⁶. Love regardless of anything in the other.

"Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Yes, detest the evil, but 'stick,' like glue, to the good.

God is emphatic. He hates lukewarmness. He hates mixtures. He hates compromise. He expects us to be like Himself. He was expressed in His dear Son, and it is our high privilege to be like Him.

'Let us exhort one another. "And so much the more as we see the

day approaching." The "wife" hath not made herself ready yet; we are far from it. And it is high time to awake out of sleep.

READING, CHAPTER 12.¹⁰⁻²¹.

Verse 10: This exhortation to brotherly love with tenderness or kindly affection is by no means unnecessary. In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul says, "as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4.⁹); but in the next verse we see he beseeches them as to this very thing "to increase more and more." It is an illustration of the need of "exhortation" among the saints. It is true that "every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5.¹); yet the same epistle abounds in exhortations to love one another. The very fact that we are born of the same Spirit necessitates that this love spontaneously rises in our hearts; but, alas, it can be dulled and wane, and frequently does, because the enemy is busy and takes every opportunity of putting into our hearts thoughts that will, directly or indirectly, militate against it. By this means he knows that he will obtain a victory in a number of ways, for when love is lacking, feelings and thoughts will come in that are disastrous to the unity that God has appointed. Hence, as the love that is instilled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit can be stultified, so, on the other hand, by diligent watchfulness and effort, it can be developed; and therefore the exhortation.

The words "in honour preferring one another" are the complement of the exhortation. That is how we are to love one another, according to this present exhortation. Not in a patronising and condescending air with gentleness of manner which at the same time exalts oneself. But with that genuine esteem which delights to see the other exalted, provided it is the right kind of exaltation, of course.

Verse 11: The first clause here does not necessarily mean commercial business. The word "business" (obviously from the word "busy") was used in old English for "matters" of all kinds, even more than it is today. The word used here rather means "earnestness." And the two things are placed in opposition to one another, "earnestness, not shrinking or unready." And this couples on to the next clause, "fervent in spirit, serving (as a slave) the Lord."

Verse 12: Such service to the Lord will make the servant a target for the Devil's attacks. There will be much to cause sorrow, but we can be "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6.¹⁰). Tribulation will come, but the tribulation will work patience (ch. 5.³). And there will be the more urgent need for "continuing instant in prayer." Thus we see not so much a collection of sundry isolated exhortations, but a sequence of thought expressed in statements where just one word is placed in apposition to another. "Hope—rejoicing." "Tribulation—patient." "Prayer—persevering." And so right from verse 6 to the

end of the chapter, with the break in 19, 20, where Paul enlarges on the matter of vengeance.

Verse 13: "To the needs of the saints—having fellowship." "To the love of strangers—pursuing (or devoting oneself)." A practical manifestation of the love of the brethren; for "strangers" in such contexts simply means those in the faith from other parts.

Verse 14: "Bless the persecutors"—"Bless and not curse."

Verse 15: "Rejoice with the rejoicers"—"Weep with the weepers."

Verse 16: "Likeminded to one another." Explained in the following clauses, "not highminded—but led away together with the humble." The very literal rendering, "led away together with," gives a more graphic idea of what is intended than simply "condescend." And the "humble" may mean in rank or spirituality: the humble in spirit or the lowly in station. What a contrast to the class distinction so prevalent among those who profess the name of Christ. I remember in this connection in one gathering, those with whom I used to have the true fellowship, outside the meetings, were a man who was "lookout" for the platelayers on the line—he had one arm—and a carpenter who had one eye. There were those who took the lead who had good positions in this world, but my intercourse with them amounted to little more than a handshake and greeting on entering or leaving the meeting; and some I never had occasion or opportunity to speak to. Beloved, our Lord and Master has set us an example. Let us endeavour to walk in His steps.

"Be not wise in your own conceits." The word here for "wise" is "understanding," "in one's right mind or senses." That is something desirable in itself, but it is coupled with the words "with yourselves," and that spoils it. If we can only compare our thoughts with our own thoughts, and have no room or time to consider those of another, we are in a poor state. We need the help of one another, and God has chosen the weak and foolish of this world to accomplish His purpose (1 Cor. 1.²⁷⁻²⁹). The message of the verse is one whole, an exhortation to true humility.

Verse 17: "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Let there be nothing of spite, retaliation or malice. "Provide things honest (or good) in the sight of all men." Evil flourishes in the dark. If we do nothing that we are ashamed to be seen doing, it will be well.

Verse 18: "If possible, as much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all men." We know that we are not to be at strife and fighting with men, even if it is not possible to be at peace. Peace is something more than a cessation of hostilities. We may even do good to our enemies and yet not be at peace with them, because that involves a relationship to one another which they will not allow.

Verse 19: If others will not be peaceable, even if they harm us, we are not to avenge ourselves, but rather give place to their wrath. We are not to resist it, but to turn the other cheek. "For it is written,

Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." This is a quotation from Deut. 32.³⁵, where the subsequent verses show that because it is God's prerogative to take vengeance, surely the sinners will be punished. And it is the same in Heb. 10.³⁰. But in Rom. 12 the force is, that because it is *God's* prerogative, *we* are not to take vengeance: we are to leave it to Him.

Verse 20: This has presented a difficulty to some. And I suggest that the kindly actions of giving food and drink are not in themselves the coals of fire. Nor that the coals of fire of our love will melt our enemies' hearts and bring them to repentance. But in Prov. 25.²², from whence the quotation is made, the coals of fire seem to be the opposite of the "reward" to the one that does the good. In other words, the coals of fire are the judgment of God. Are we then to give the enemy food and drink with the object of increasing his weight of judgment? No; the passage is quoted as an argument against *our* taking vengeance. We are to give food and drink, or whatever else he may need, with a pure heart, desiring only his good. But if he continues to be an enemy, he will unavoidably receive a greater weight of judgment, because when he received the good he still remained an enemy. This can only cause us sorrow, if our hearts are right, but God's righteousness demands it. And this is the argument against our taking vengeance. An ever-present consciousness of what the wicked are treasuring up for themselves will certainly be a powerful check upon any tendency to take vengeance for ourselves.

Verse 20: But our desire should certainly be that the good we do will have an effect. We are not to allow the evil to "overcome" us, and cause us to respond in a like manner; but to do good in the hope that that will overcome the evil, and cause the enemy to be humbled (ver. 21).

We may be inclined to say as we reflect on the contents of this chapter, "This is a high standard, who can attain to it?" But let us remember that Paul said he counted not himself to have attained. But he pressed towards the mark for the prize. Let us, however, return to the beginning of our chapter. Are not these things the expression in detail of "that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God" spoken of in ver. 2? And were we not told there that we ought to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service? And were we not told that it is by not being conformed to this world, but by being renewed in the spirit of our mind we may know the will of God? Yes. Then shall we not continue to exhort one another in view of the approaching day? Lifting up the hands that hang down, and strengthening the feeble knees, and making straight paths for our feet. Let us not be discouraged with past failure, saying it is impossible. God has set us the standard, may we count all things loss that we may apprehend more of the power of the resurrection of our glorious Lord, the Captain of our salvation.

CHAPTER 13

READING, VERSES 1-10

THIS chapter has afforded relief of conscience, as well as deliverance from a burden, to many a child of God. The words of ver. 1, "There is no power but of God," are a source of comfort when the powers that be make regulations which go contrary to our wishes. If we take such words to heart they will prove a sure remedy for all murmuring and complaining. "All things *are* working together for good to them that love God." Our loving Father has permitted it, whatever it be, and we can be restfully "subject." And to resist the authority is to resist the ordinance of God. And those who resist will receive judgment.

But we need to discriminate and compare the various passages that instruct us in these things. In ch. 9 we see that God "raised up" Pharaoh. There is no power but of God. But if Pharaoh abuses the authority that God gives him and misuses the "sword" which God has put in his hand, he fails as the "minister of God," and must therefore come under judgment. And such cases are the ones that present difficulty to the child of God.

In our present chapter, however, we see that such cases are not being considered. Here we find the view of the authority as not being a terror to good works, but to the evil. That is the purpose for which the sword is given him. But in ver. 5 we are told that we are not to be subject for wrath's sake only, but for conscience sake. Conscience toward God, and His appointment.

In Titus 3.¹ we have a similar exhortation, and Peter gives the same in his 1st epistle, ch. 2.¹³⁻¹⁸, with the additional exhortation in 19. 20 as to suffering wrongfully. Human jurisdiction may fail, even when right laws are made. And while there is nothing to forbid us making an appeal, we must preserve our position of subjection and not resist.

But while Rom. 13 presents the view of the authority fulfilling his ministry, there are passages which present a different view. For instance, the authorities in Israel condemned and crucified the Lord of glory. Then afterwards they killed some and persecuted others of His disciples. In no instance do we read of any resistance either by the Lord or His disciples, except of Peter in the Garden, when he used the sword, and then the Lord rebuked him and healed the damage he had done. On the other hand, in Acts 5.²⁰, the angel commanded the apostles to do the very thing which the authorities had forbidden in ch. 4.¹⁷⁻¹⁸. The command from the angel is therefore a confirmation of the attitude taken by the apostles in 4.¹⁹⁻²⁰, which we see is maintained in ch. 5.²⁹. Beating and imprisonment neither turned them from their purpose to fulfil their Lord's commission, nor provoked any resistance.

It is necessary to take a balanced view of the whole testimony of Scripture. When suffering is involved it is easy to say, "We must obey the powers that be." For instance, with regard to military

service. One wonders how much conscientiousness there is in accepting work of "national importance" which really is directly a part of the war effort, instead of standing quite apart and enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The Lord made clear what our position is in John 18.³⁶; apart from other principles found in Scripture. But to avoid the actual fighting, with its sufferings and risks, on the one hand; and to accept employment which avoids possible ill-treatment or imprisonment on the other, by being in the war effort, do not call for much conscientiousness, nor show the like character to the apostles.

When the Man of Sin is revealed the position will allow of no compromise. One will either have to accept his mark, with the certainty of eternal judgment (Rev. 14.⁹⁻¹¹), or risk not being able to buy or sell, or even death (Rev. 13.¹⁵⁻¹⁷).

But consistent with the view presented in Rom. 13, we are told in ver. 6 that "*for this cause* pay ye tribute, for they are God's ministers," etc. In other words, for the maintenance of order among men. God has appointed these authorities; and they must needs be upheld. And the fact that we are not *of* this world does not relieve us of paying tribute, seeing that we are *in* the world. An alien pays taxes in the land where he sojourns, because he partakes of the benefits. Therefore we are to render "to *all* their dues." The fact that we are not of this world shuts us out from a voice in the politics of it. We are but strangers and pilgrims here. We therefore pay what they require and leave them to use it. Whether they use it rightly or wrongly is their responsibility to God. In so arranging God has relieved us of an impossible position. Those who mix with the politics and governments of this world, if children of God, must of necessity violate their heavenly calling. And when we look on the world, and note the manifestations of the condition of the human heart: and then look into the Scriptures and see what will be the consummation of man's civilisation, surely we can thank God that He has put us outside the pale of all earthly jurisdiction.

Verse 8 we see is primarily connected with this paying of dues. But it certainly is intended to go further, for He has already said, "render therefore to *all* their dues." We are therefore to "*owe no man anything*." The connection with the paying of taxes, however, helps. We are not to withhold what is due to anyone. By prompt payment of business accounts we are to avoid trading on other people's money. We are not to order what we have not the means to pay for. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." If we have not the means, let us regard it that our heavenly Father does not intend us to have it.

Some firms prefer a monthly settlement to cash transactions. There is no objection to this providing that the above principles are maintained.

If one happens not to have sufficient money on him for his fare, or to buy something he needs, but has it at home, there is no violation

of this principle if he borrows from a Christian friend. That is part of our love to one another. But to lend to a fellow Christian when he has not the means is to encourage him to violate this commandment. And here comes the test of love. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." Ch. 12.¹³ says, "Distributing to the necessity of saints." Where there is a real need it is our privilege to give, not to lend. These principles, if put into operation, will call forth other aspects of love. A frankness of dealing with one another, together with, it may be, a loving refusal when other principles would be broken. But always let us keep in mind what Paul is leading up to in ver. 9, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Seventh Day Adventists assert that believers are subject to the Ten Commandments, by God's appointment, and therefore should keep the Sabbath Day—the seventh day of the week. But this reference to the law should not be taken to imply that. This Sabbath keeping doctrine requires the perversion of Scripture both for its maintenance, and for the resistance of the truth which refutes it. Its adherents say that the "Sabbath Days" spoken of in Col. 2.¹⁶ are the yearly Sabbaths which were appointed for Israel in some of their feasts (Lev. 23). But apart from the fact of inspiration, Paul was an educated man, and he would know better than to mention the holy days, which *included* the yearly Sabbaths, and then after mentioning the new moons, to return to the yearly Sabbaths again. The order is clear, yearly, monthly and weekly.

Rom. 13 is dealing with our subjection to earthly Powers, and not our relationship to God. So, from the exhortations of ver. 7 Paul passes on to the great debt that all men owe to each other—love: and shows that if we fulfil the commandment—to love our neighbour, we fulfil the law and so have a clear conscience, as well as keep ourselves from the wrath of the earthly judge (ver. 5).

But we have a higher law than to love our neighbour, we are to love our enemies. That is not the law of Moses, it is the law of Christ (Matt. 5.^{43, 44}).

We have also seen that "the law" refers to the Ten Commandments by the reference to "Thou shalt not covet." And that we have died to that law, and it is dead to us, in Rom. 7.¹⁻⁶. The term "the law" *usually* means the Ten Commandments (Rom. 2.^{17, 12, 13}; 3.²⁰): from which we are delivered by death; from which, being delivered, we are justified (Acts 13.³⁹); from which we are brought into a new covenant (2 Cor. 3.¹⁻¹¹); and from the curse of which we are redeemed (Gal. 3.¹⁰⁻¹³). And being thus brought into a living union with Christ, we bring forth fruit unto God. So then, we are not under the law in any sense, except under law to Christ.

READING, CHAPTER 13.¹¹⁻¹⁴

This chapter consists of three distinct portions. Verses 1-8 deal with our relation and attitude toward the authorities. Then out of

ver. 8 is developed the subject of love to our neighbour, with the concluding statement that such love is "the fulfilling of the law." If then, the powers are for "the praise of them that do well," and by love we fulfil the "royal law," as James calls it, we put ourselves in a relation to them which calls for their support and ministry, for the one in authority is "the minister of God to thee for good." Thus we see that this great commandment to "love thy neighbour as thyself" is the root of the whole matter.

Ver. 11 then introduces another matter, namely, it is "time to awake." But if the other two matters are so closely linked, can we not see that this last is also linked with the other two. Yes. There is a connection. If there is a genuine love for one's neighbour, it will forbid sleepy indulgence when we know that he is in danger. Love seeks the good of another. How then, can we be indifferent to the state of those about us, whether they be saved or unsaved, in view of the approach of that day, which will mean so much to everyone when it suddenly breaks in? 1 Thess. 5.¹⁻¹⁰ is a most fitting passage for comparison with the one before us. We see then, that love to our neighbour leads to watchfulness.

At the same time one would not suggest that that is the only reason for it. The coming of the day involves the coming of the Lord; and that is always a ground for watching.

Now having taken the more comprehensive view, let us look at the detail. Ver. 11 says, "And that, knowing the time, that it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. Even when Paul lived it was "high time" to awake. This could be taken as a general exhortation, to those who had in those days believed on the Lord Jesus, to be a contrast to those who were still in darkness. But in the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25, we see that they *all* slumbered and slept just before the bridegroom came, the wise as well as the foolish. A humbling anticipation of these days when many profess to have gone forth to meet the bridegroom. Surely then, the exhortation applies to-day to all God's children, it is *high time* to awake; with a definite implication that there has been slothfulness. May we all take it to heart.

Then we come to the reason, "for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." There are some who contend that we shall not be "saved" till the Lord comes and the resurrection takes place. And doubtless such a passage as this would be used to support that thought. But one Scripture does not contradict another. Paul says in 2 Tim. 1.⁹, "Who *hath saved us*." That cannot possibly be future, it is a present experience. The explanation is that there are various aspects of salvation. Usually salvation is connected with our believing, i.e., "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The moment we believe we are justified, and the work of regeneration by the Spirit of God begins to take effect in saving us from the power of

sin. Thus we can say, God "hath saved" us. But Rom. 5.⁹ says we "*shall be saved from wrath.*" That is obviously when the time of wrath comes; and is a different matter.

Then in Rom. 8.²³ "redemption" is viewed as something future. That is redemption by *power*, when the Lord comes and our bodies are changed. But already we have been redeemed with the precious *blood* of Christ; which gives Him the legal right for the exercise of His power. So, with regard to the salvation we are considering: it is the final and complete aspect which will be accomplished at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour. Saved from the guilt of sin now (Rom. 4.⁸). Saved from the power of sin now (Rom. 6.¹⁴). Saved from the presence of sin in that day, as well as from the trials and strain of our present warfare (Rom. 13.¹¹).

Ver. 12 indicates that the salvation to come is when "the day" arrives. The expression, "the day" without any further description, such as "the day of the Lord" or "the day of Christ," is used here because the object is to contrast day to night. From this statement it is clear that, in spite of all men's claims to enlightenment, from God's standpoint it is night. The world has rejected the "true Light," and it therefore remains in darkness.

But we may also note that Paul says the night is *far spent*, the day is *at hand*. Yet nearly nineteen hundred years have elapsed and the day has not come. For one thing, we must remember that the night did not *commence* with the rejection of Christ. Darkness came in the fall of Adam. And the whole history of man has been characterized by it. So it is true that the night was far spent then. And this age, spoken of as "these last days" in some places, i.e., Acts 2.¹⁷ and Heb. 1.², is a lengthened period of grace and longsuffering on God's part, since the radical change in His economy at the death of Christ, with a view to the gathering together of His elect out of all nations.

But at the same time we see a certain indefiniteness on the part of Paul in thus expressing it. How near he did not know. He never suggests it might be "at any moment," as many think. He plainly taught that the man of sin must come first (2 Thess. 2.³). But what the Lord said to the disciples (Acts 1.⁷), "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power," shows that at the beginning there was much detail that had yet to be revealed. Later, when John wrote the Revelation, much more of that detail was revealed.

But the length of this dispensation was never revealed, because God saw the need of withholding the knowledge. All date fixing, therefore, for the coming of the Lord is out of place; but we are to live as those that look for the morning.

Ver. 13, however, tells us that we are to walk honestly *as in the day*. 1 Thess. 5.⁵ tells us that we are "all children of light, and children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness." And 1 John

2.⁸ says, "the darkness is past and the true light now shineth." Obviously the light is within, in the hearts and minds of those who believe. And thus equipped we can walk *as* in the day.

By comparing again with 1 Thess. 5, we see that these things which we are to put off are usually done in the night. As the Lord also said, He that doeth evil cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. And if we walk "as in the day," all will be open, all will bear inspection, and we shall be careful to see that there is nothing for which we need to be ashamed.

The "armour of light." Does this mean that the light is itself the armour, as faith is the shield in Eph. 6? Or does it mean that we are to put on the armour which is associated with light? We may accept both as true. In any case, ver. 14 tells us that we are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." And although the primary thought there is the manifestation of His virtues in contrast to the works of darkness, yet it would be impossible to put on Christ without having the power of His protection. An armour we certainly shall need.

May it not be that many answers to prayer are not experienced because *we* do not deal with the source of the trouble. How can we expect to be delivered from besetting sins if we still make provision for them? No. We must cut at the root. We are told in one place to resist the Devil and he will flee from us. But with regard to things associated with the lusts of the flesh, we are told to *flee from them*. 1 Cor. 6.¹⁸, "Flee fornication." 1 Tim. 6.¹¹, "Flee these things," relating to the love of money. 2 Tim. 2.²², "Flee also youthful lusts." 1 Cor. 10.¹⁴, "Flee from idolatry." The word "lust" does not necessarily mean those base things which are usually associated with the world in these days. It simply means anything that the desire is *set upon*. And such things can easily become idols. May our Lord give us grace to set our affections upon things above where He is seated. This will be a holy antidote for *making provision* for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

READING, CHAPTERS 14.¹—15.⁷

The subject of this chapter continues to the seventh verse of the next: and the whole passage should be considered as one if we are to get the mind of the Spirit from it. The need for so doing is made the more urgent because it is so much misused by those who are not prepared to be corrected in their practices.

Some years ago I read an article in a Christian periodical on smoking. The practice was made a matter of the "individual conscience" by the writer; and to support his view he quoted the words of ver. 14, "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean," in such a way as to reverse the sense of the statement, and made it mean that though a thing is really sinful, yet if one does not regard it as sin, to him it is not sin. Only a moment's thought is sufficient to recognise the lengths to which such a doctrine leads.

The true teaching of the passage is that we should be willing to give up certain things which we may rightly do, rather than cause one who is not so free—because “weak in the faith”—to stumble. And ver. 14 makes it very plain that, as to meats, nothing is unclean, and therefore, Jew or Gentile in Christ, is free to eat. But if one has not that knowledge, and esteems something to be unclean, *to him*, it is unclean and therefore if he eats he is condemned of his own conscience.

But the next verse and those that follow show that if one, as Paul, is fully persuaded of the Lord that he may eat all meats, yet is he to consider the conscience of another, who does not see that part of truth, and refrain from eating, lest he causes the other to stumble, either by eating against his conscience, or by judging the one who is free in his conscience.

Paul teaches the same thing in 1 Cor. 8, concluding with the words, “if meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” With a similar thought in the next chapter, ver. 22: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” All these passages show that Paul was willing to *restrict* himself even where he knew before the Lord that he had liberty. But, alas, “all things to all men” is misused to-day to justify taking further liberties in worldliness than the principles of Scripture allow.

So with Rom. 14. If one urges certain believers to a narrower walk or to closer attention to the commandments of the Lord, they call it “doubtful disputations.” And if one points out that the first day of the week is “the Lord’s Day,” and urges a closer observance of it (though acknowledging that it is not a sabbath), ver. 6 is cited to take further liberty. The very opposite of the intention of the passage. The whole chapter is urging that the one who has the liberty, the right liberty, is the one who should give way to the weaker one, who is not so fully instructed; thus narrowing himself down for the sake of the other. So the exhortation is given in 15.¹: “We then that are *strong* ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, *and not to please ourselves.*” But instead, we find that those who take the position of being “strong,” that is, they are confident that they are well founded in the Scriptures, are the ones who object to our restricting; even when it is a matter which is plainly appointed by Scripture.

Examples of this are: Baptism by immersion, the only baptism taught in Scripture. The unleavened symbols appointed by the Lord Himself for the supper in His remembrance, by the words, “*This* is My body,” “*This* is My blood.” The covering of the head for women in prayer, when *not* in church, as plainly taught in 1 Cor. 11. The heathen origin of Christmas, and the Christless celebration of the day. When these matters are presented, then this chapter is quoted by those who want more “liberty,” or who are so “strong” in their positions that they cannot be taught any more, to justify a continuance in opposition to the Word of God.

And what an outcry there is against "judging" too, when these and other matters are brought to the test of God's Word. But if we look at the verses here that tell us not to judge, we find that the one who is weak is not to judge the one who has the Lord's authority for what he is doing. In like manner the Lord's words are quoted from Matt. 7.¹: "Judge not that ye be not judged." But the context plainly shows that it is hypocritical judgment that is forbidden. In John 7.²⁴, the Lord said, "judge righteous judgment." And in 1 Cor. 2.¹⁵ we are told that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." And in ch. 6 the Corinthians were reprov'd because they were not judging their own affairs between themselves. And how can we "wash one another's feet" if we do not judge?

Another misuse of the chapter is to use it as an argument for looseness as to "receiving." Specially 15.⁷. But the receiving that is urged here is of the one who is "weak in the faith." One who *restricts* himself more than is really necessary. Whereas those who misuse it are those who object to being restricted by the Scriptures. They want liberty to do as they like, or to continue to do something because they have done it for many years and are unwilling to alter. The very opposite of what a true disciple is. They will ask, "How did Christ receive us?" Implying the answer, "When we were in our sins." But it is quite certain that the Lord never received one—in the sense of acknowledging him as a disciple—while he refused to be instructed.

Are we to receive into fellowship those who assert their faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and yet are holding serious doctrinal errors, or are unwilling to obey the plain commands of the Lord? In speaking like this we are not pleading for believers to pass an examination in the knowledge of Scripture before they can be received; but we do expect to see the humble response to the commandments of the Lord, which is the true expression of discipleship.

In this connection it is also important to note that when Paul wrote to the Romans there were no denominational distinctions among the saints. The one who was "received" could not go round to the next street and have fellowship with those who were ignoring the apostolic teaching. But that is what is being done to-day, and this chapter is being used to justify it.

Is it not "high time to awake out of sleep," as the previous chapter says?

These remarks are not born of supposition, but of sad experience over a number of years. Younger believers are being definitely hindered from obedience to the truth by older ones who are unwilling to change. If this testimony is only as "a voice crying in the wilderness," the writer will be satisfied, so long as it is true to the word of the living God. The issues are with Him. Love to our Lord, and to His people calls for plain speaking.

There is one solemn portion in the middle of this passage which, if taken to heart, would make a great difference. I refer to verses 10-12. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." 1 Cor. 3 speaks of this judgment for reward or loss as to our building, but this passage has rather a more solemn aspect. Let some who cry out against "judging" consider themselves as to whether they are not judging *un*-righteous judgment. The Lord said, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

What folly for anyone to think that he has attained to a position where he has nothing more to be taught; or where there is no possibility of him being wrong in any matter, and needing to alter! And what folly to cling to a thing that cannot be substantiated by fair usage of Scripture! What is the chaff to the wheat? Many seem to attach more value to a "Creed" or to the "Westminster Confession" than they do to the Scriptures. Many will quote a commentator or a theologian when they cannot find Scripture to support their views. What folly! And such folly is sin.

READING, CHAPTER 15.⁸⁻³³

Verses 8-12 of this chapter afford us a study of an unusual kind. We have in them a succession of quotations from the Old Testament which Paul uses to substantiate his statement that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the *Gentiles* might glorify God for His mercy." But when we examine these passages in the Old Testament, we find that the first, Psalm 18.⁴⁹, refers to David personally. This had its fulfilment in his life when, after God had delivered him from all his enemies, he was exalted among the Gentiles and their kings sent presents to him (2 Sam. 8.^{2, 6}). And if the others are examined, it will be seen that they are in contexts which are of a millennial character.

Now, apart from the fact of inspiration, we cannot think that Paul would fail so glaringly in rightly dividing the word as to make those passages prophetic of the present dispensation. He quotes them in order to establish the simple fact that God has had a purpose of blessing for Gentiles—regardless of dispensations.

But these Scriptures alone would not be sufficient for his purpose in writing to the Romans in the present dispensation. He therefore couples with them his own apostolic office. In other words, he first shows that it is no strange thing for God to grant blessing to the Gentiles, and then asserts his own authority as a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (ver. 16). By so doing he lays a strong foundation for their confidence, both in the grace of God to them, and also in himself as one who is able to instruct and exhort them in the heavenly calling.

This is borne out by verses 13-15. In ver. 13 he expresses his heart's desire for their joy and peace and hope. In ver. 14 his confidence in

their spiritual growth and ability. In ver. 15 the “nevertheless” of his own exhortation and instruction of them.

But before we proceed further, let us notice two things. First, the fact that he quotes millennial Scriptures in this way does not warrant us in applying such to the present dispensation for their fulfilment. Indeed, he does not use the word “fulfil” in connection with them. The words of ver. 8, “Now I say,” are on the basis of that authority which he asserts in ver. 16. And he would have them to be conscious of that before he went to them. This is not pride, but a “boldness” inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, the fact that the ministry of Jesus Christ was with a view to the Gentiles of the present dispensation, as the Lord Himself said in Matt. 28.²⁰, “teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*”

Then proceeding from ver. 17 to 21 we have his further emphasis on what Christ had wrought by him. They were not the outworkings of his own intellect and ability, but the grace that was given to him of God (ver. 16). Hence he could “glory” in the right sense.

The Jews of Thessalonica said of Paul and his companions, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” This was no mean testimony; and we think of what is embraced in his own words, “from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” All the chief cities of Asia Minor as well as Antioch and Damascus, and then the chief cities of Macedonia and Greece, and across to the shore of the Adriatic. Mighty works of grace had been accomplished and large churches of God had been established in the centres of learning of the Greeks. And when at Illyricum, we can well understand how he would look across in the direction of Italy and think of the great centre of the Roman kingdom, and then beyond to Spain, another country famous for its learning in those times. And now, in writing to the Romans, he sees the desire of his heart for many years about to be fulfilled.

It is interesting, too, to note in connection with ver. 20, that though Tyre and Sidon were important cities, they are not mentioned as having been visited by Paul in gospel witness. Others had taken the gospel there: and we only read of them in Paul’s journeys as places of call, where he had fellowship with the saints (Acts 21.^{3, 7}; 27.³).

And these things had hindered him from going to Rome before. Doubtless the believers there were much on his heart; being a large company and, it seems, without apostolic oversight directly.

Then it is worthy to note that, in speaking of coming to them, he does not say, “If I come,” but “when I come” and “I will come.” This is one of a number of instances in which Paul speaks of future arrangements and never once says, “If the Lord tarry,” or in any

way suggests that the Lord might come before. Never do we find any suggestion that He might come "at any moment."

There is one "if" in connection with this plan. It is in connection with his being helped on his way to Spain by them *if* they were in the right spiritual condition. Thus their responsibility for the service of the Lord is emphasised upon them, in preparation, using the example of those of Macedonia and Achaia to exhort them. The simplicity of the financial arrangements for missionary effort—with simplicity of speech too—which characterised those times is very beautiful in its homeliness.

In ver. 29 Paul speaks of "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." From his expressed desire in ch. 1.¹¹⁻¹⁵ it is evident that he was not thinking of preaching the Gospel to the unsaved. It was to *them* that he hoped to minister. This leads us to see that the "gospel of Christ" is something far more than that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It embraces all that is contained in this epistle from chs. 1 to 11. And Paul was concerned that they should "be established" in this glorious Gospel in all its fulness. Would that the same desire were more manifest to-day.

Verses 30-32 indicate that he realised that His coming to them depended on other things than the financial support of the saints. He was conscious of the Devil's agents, "unreasonable and wicked men" (2 Thess. 3.²), whom he knew would always be ready to hinder the Lord's work, even to the taking of His life. He therefore "beseeches" them "to strive together with him" in prayer for him. What the servants of God had to face in those times may well put most of us to shame. But if the sufferings of Christ abounded, the consolation also abounded (2 Cor. 1.⁵) and therefore he would come to them "with joy."

If we read the later chapters of the book of Acts we see how literally all this was fulfilled. His going to Jerusalem, his being bound and eventually brought to Rome as a prisoner; and then the meeting of the brethren at Appii Forum and The Three Taverns. The purpose of God and the promise of Jesus Christ Himself (Acts 23.¹¹) could not be frustrated.

The salutation in ver. 33 brings the epistle, as such, to its close: the following chapter being a list of salutations to individuals, commendations of certain ones and a few general exhortations. These, however, we shall see, are full of instruction for the present day.

CHAPTER 16

THIS chapter is an outstanding example of how the Holy Spirit has overruled the writing of commonplace matters, which applied directly to those of that time, to give abiding instruction to His children for the whole dispensation, by statements that come in incidentally. Reading casually, one might pass lightly over the list of salutations

and not see anything to be learned from it. But there are a number of these incidental references to practices among the saints, which if compared with other passages of Scripture, will give us a view of the ways of the early saints which were approved of the Lord and from which there should have been no departure.

One of the most forceful ways of asserting a thing is to use it as a basis for an argument. And another is to refer to it in a way that shows that it is commonly acknowledged to be right. And this latter is what we have in this chapter: certain things being mentioned in such a way that shows that they were the accepted practice at that time, with the approval of the apostle and therefore of the Lord Himself.

Moreover, as servants, it behoves us to wait for our Lord's indications before we act. Not necessarily in the form of a commandment, but nevertheless an indication. Reverence requires a recognition of the fact that He foreknew all the circumstances that would arise in the course of years, and a good deal has been told about the last days; and if He has not indicated that we should change from the practice of the early Church, we ought not to take it upon ourselves to do so. In view of this the chapter before us becomes of great value to those who want to keep to what they are sure has the Lord's approval, and not risk a departure on to a line which is not suggested anywhere in Scripture.

As to the salutations themselves, these reveal the large-heartedness of the apostle, and the fact that these are made to so many individuals by name shows his affectionate remembrance of them. Something we do well to emulate.

Phebe (ver. 1) is commended as a servant (deaconess) of the church at Cenchrea. To her was entrusted the conveyance of this epistle. Ver. 2 shows that she was one who had shown herself worthy, and Paul had confidence that he could commend her to them to be assisted in "whatever business" she had a need.

It is an example of God's use of holy women. But this should not be abused to justify women taking positions which are forbidden to them in other parts of Scripture (1 Cor. 14.³⁴; 1 Tim. 2.^{11, 12}). And even if they were not forbidden, it would be becoming to withhold unless there were some positive guidance given. In general, the woman is given the private or home sphere, not the public one, or the prominent one in a gathering.

In Matt. 28.¹⁰ the Lord entrusted to the women a message to the disciples, but even this might have been given to the men had they been present. The women's heart devotion outweighed all misgivings over the empty tomb, and the Lord rewarded them. But it was a private message, not a commission to go forth and preach.

Priscilla and Aquila, in ver. 3, instructed (jointly) Apollos in their own home, which is in agreement with the other Scriptures (Acts 18.²⁶).

Usually Paul sent one or more of the brethren with such letters, and usually such as were competent to bring him a sound report as to the spiritual condition of those to whom they were sent, and to exhort them: as seen in 2 Cor. 7.¹³; Eph. 6.^{21, 22}; Col. 4.^{7, 8}; 1 Thess. 3.¹⁻⁸). But we do not find such responsibilities given to women.

The will of the Lord will be seen on these points as we compare other passages and get the light of the whole testimony of Scripture.

"The Church at Cenchrea" also calls for attention, inasmuch as there is a diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a church. The expression does not mean that section of the (universal) Church which is at Cenchrea: but all the saints at Cenchrea constituted the (local) church in that place. Scripture never speaks of more than one church in one city, nor of the church of a country; but of one church in one city. Thus the churches of Galatia, which was a province, and the seven churches of Asia, another province.

Cenchrea was a city or town, in the province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the chief city. 1 Cor. 1.² reads, "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, . . . with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord." And 2 Cor. 1.¹ reads, "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." Thus, "every place" (not "everywhere") means every place in Achaia where there was a gathering of the saints, not grown to the dimensions of a church, and therefore under the care of the church at Corinth. But at the time of writing to the Romans, which was later, Cenchrea was spoken of as a church.

Some children of God regard any company of believers who work in fellowship as a church, though usually the word "assembly" is used instead of "church." But if the whole testimony of the Epistles and Acts is considered, it will be seen that in every case where a company is called a church, and any indication is given as to the number that constituted it, the number is not a small one. In every case such words as "many" or "multitude" are used to describe it. The church at Ephesus is somewhat an exception, but only at its beginning. It is the last church of which we have any record as to its formation; and may well be used as suitable guidance for these days of departure from God's principles.

The word "church" means a "called out" company. And in Acts 19.⁹ we read that Paul separated the disciples from the synagogue. If this be taken as the commencement of the "church" position, together with the fact recorded in ver. 7 that "all the males were about twelve," we would have ground for regarding a company of twelve males as a church, providing that there was proper oversight for shepherding, for we must remember that Paul, an apostle, was present and did not leave them until the number had greatly increased.

This number "about twelve" is the lowest ever recorded in Scripture of a church, and compares with the eleven who broke bread when the Lord instituted the Supper.

A helpful comparison with the church at Corinth and the gatherings associated with it is found in Col. 4.¹⁶. The three towns, Colosse, Hierapolis and Laodicea were close together, the area being much less than that of Achaia, but Laodicea is called a church. And the same principle is found in Rev., ch. 2 and 3, where seven churches are named as being in Asia in an area no greater than that of Achaia. There, the principle of oversight is also to be seen, in that in each church there was an "angel" (messenger) who was also under the oversight of John, an apostle. Here we notice too that separate epistles were written to the several churches, whereas in Achaia the one epistle to Corinth covered the whole. And though one letter was written to cover the whole of the churches in Galatia, yet they were called churches. Possibly Paul's physical strain at that time may account for only one letter being sent (Gal. 6.¹⁷).

So then, "the church which is at Cenchrea" has a certain significance and Phebe was a deaconess there.

Then the case of Priscilla and Aquila bears its useful testimony. In ver. 5 we read of "the church that is in their house." Rome was no exception to the rule of one church in one city, and an examination of the chapter will bear this out. Ver. 5 does not mean "that part of the church which met in their house"; nor that any *part* of the Christian company at Rome which met in a certain house was a church. It is to be observed that though verses 10, 11, 14, 15 speak of companies, these are not called "churches." While in ver. 23 Paul speaks of "Gaius mine host and of the whole church," though the church at Corinth was a large one. These details all combine to establish the position set forth in Scripture. If, as at Corinth, one house could accommodate the whole company, that was used. But if, as at Rome, lack of accommodation, or distance, or any other physical hindrances warranted it, the saints met in several houses, but they were one church, the bulk of which met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, and the other smaller groups would be under the care of, indeed be part of, that church.

Referring again to ver. 3, we may well pause to consider Priscilla and Aquila, in whose house the church at Rome met. In Acts 18.² we find them at Corinth, expelled from Rome, welcoming Paul. In ver. 18 we find them willing to leave Corinth with Paul, and to be left at Ephesus, where they meet Apollos and help him in the faith: 1 Cor. 16.¹⁹ showing that the church met in their house. Then, by the time Paul wrote to the Romans, they were back in Rome with the church in their house there. The changes from place to place evidently being because they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth for Christ's sake, as Paul shows in Rom. 16.⁴. To such was the responsibility of a church in the house given.

The responsibility of having the church meet in one's house is no light thing. It cuts at the root of that practice of being one thing in

the assembly and another thing at home. And whereas we should all exhort one another daily by word and example, we can easily appreciate that the home where the saints met should be a standing example of the heavenly calling.

This practice in the early church shows the wisdom of God in more ways than one. It kept the homes more in touch with one another, not from the afternoon cup of tea standpoint, with conversation on furniture, dress and everything that is earthly; but from the standpoint of a pilgrim people looking for the coming of their Lord. And for the saints to meet in one's house meant a continual test, and possibly a strain, too, in keeping out the things of this world.

The absence of any suggestion in Scripture of the saints meeting in a special building is a further emphasis on the pilgrim aspect of our calling. "Chapels" and "Halls" being just as foreign to the revelation of the Holy Spirit as "Cathedrals" and "Churches." Some have argued that circumstances are different, and particularly stress the larger numbers in these days. But when we recall some of the large numbers in the Acts, such as at Jerusalem, Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus, we must conclude that if they could find accommodation in the houses, it could be done to-day, too. And seeing that the Lord has revealed much as to the conditions of the last days, it is strange that He has left us without guidance if these special buildings are really necessary. No, the buildings are part of the general decline and departure from God's ways. There are no circumstances that require anything different from the pattern shown in the Scriptures. What is needed is a general revival in the spiritual condition of us all. Shall we not humbly seek it, with confession of past and present failure? Are we willing to have the roof broken up for the Lord's sake? (Luke 5.¹⁹).

There are a few other passages which call for a little attention before we leave the matter of "houses."

At Jerusalem, we find in Acts 1.¹³ that the eleven apostles were all together in the one house, but there were about one hundred and twenty disciples altogether. This, compared with ch. 15, shows that the church acted as one, from one centre; the apostles and elders all acting in harmony, even when the number of the males was over five thousand. But no matter how the numbers increased, the houses of the saints were the only meeting places. Acts 8.³ shows Saul's attacks upon such houses, and ch. 12.¹² is another case of saints meeting in that way.

The expression "from house to house" in ch. 2.⁴⁶ and 20.²⁰ is hardly correct. Literally it is "according to (a) house." It might be rendered "housewise," or "per house." The slightly different wording in ch. 8.³ "according to *the* houses" (see marg. ch. 2.⁴⁶) seems to mark out the houses that were known to be frequented by the saints. Not that Saul went to every house along a street.

Ch. 2.⁴⁶ has been used to support the use of houses for the breaking of the bread at the Lord's Supper. But while the practice is right, i.e. in the houses, *that* Scripture does not refer to it. The context shows that it refers to ordinary food, daily, and is an expression of the joyful condition of the saints who were housing those who remained at Jerusalem after Pentecost, and of those who were being housed.

Ch. 20.²⁰ shows a like position to that at Jerusalem. In the early chapters we find the apostles witnessing the gospel in the temple and the saints meeting in the homes. In chs. 19 and 20, at Ephesus, we find Paul disputing in the school of one Tyrannus and the saints meeting in the homes (ch. 18.²⁶; 19.⁹ and 20.²⁰ and 1 Cor. 16.¹⁹).

A return to these original conditions would revolutionize those of the present day among God's children. But Eph. 4.¹¹⁻¹⁴ and Rev. 19.⁷ still give their testimony. The matter of "houses" is only one of a great many which have to be dealt with before it can possibly be said that we have "come into the unity of the faith," and that "His wife hath made herself ready." But that must come to pass before the Lord returns, and the sooner we all set ourselves to bring it about the better. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Not if there be first a willing mind.

A word might be said too with regard to "households." Though the word itself does not occur in verses 10, 11, it is implied by the wording. To the Philippian jailor the promise was given, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." But the *promise* does not apply to everyone. The Lord foretold that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." But there were in the early church households that were united in the faith as it is in Christ Jesus. And their homes were centres for God's work. At Corinth there was the household of Stephanus, of which Epænetus was a member (Rom. 16.⁵; 1 Cor. 16.¹⁵). At Colosse there was the household of Philemon (Phile. 1.^{1, 2}; Col. 4.¹⁷). And though we cannot say that every member in these families was saved, do not these encourage us to expect God to work on similar lines if we are prepared for the price of a Scriptural walk. Paul himself had "kinsmen," including his mother, who were also "in Christ" (verses 7, 11, 13).

The mention of Gaius and Erastus in ver. 23 indicate that the epistle was written from Corinth.

Ver. 7 mentions those "who are of note among the apostles." This calls for consideration in view of the fact that some claim to be apostles today. According to Rev. 21.¹⁴, there are only twelve "apostles of the Lamb," and their names are given in Matt. 10.², except that one had to take the place of Judas Iscariot. In view of Paul's position as an apostle, we can hardly exclude him from the twelve in Rev. 21. But what of Matthias in Acts 1? The word "apostle" means one who is "sent away." And the apostles of the Lamb would of necessity be sent by the Lamb. This Paul could claim according to Acts 9.¹⁵; 22.²¹;

23.¹¹ and 1 Cor. 9.¹. But although Matthias had “seen the Lord,” there is no evidence that he was sent forth by Him. The other apostles chose two and then asked the Lord to show which of these two He had chosen; but there is no evidence that He had chosen either. The *lot fell* upon Matthias, and he was numbered (by the apostles) with them. But his name is never again mentioned.

There are then “*The* twelve apostles of the Lamb,” or of Christ, sent by Him. But there is mention in 2 Cor. 8.²³ of “apostles of churches” (as it is literally) and the same word occurs again in Phil. 2.²⁵, “your apostle,” where the context shows that Epaphroditus was “sent” by the church at Philippi to succour Paul at Rome. In Acts 14.¹⁴ we have Barnabas, as well as Paul, called an apostle, and we see that he was first “sent away” by the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11.²²) and then “separated” by the word of the Holy Spirit in ch. 13.². On this basis we can see that there are “the twelve apostles of the Lamb”, while there may have been many “apostles of churches.” But who the present day “apostles” claim to be sent by needs to be answered. In view of 2 Cor. 11.¹³ and Rev. 2.², we need to beware.

Regarding the salutations, just a few words on the word itself: “salute” and “greet” are the same word, and it means to embrace in the arms. But in ver. 21 we see that those who were hundreds of miles away saluted the saints at Rome. Obviously they did not “embrace” them. This use of the word helps us with regard to the other word associated with it, the “kiss.” This word contains nothing to suggest the lips. It is the word “philema,” which is from the word “phileo,” to love as a friend, and simply means an expression of loving friendship. In those times the kiss was used among men in various forms. Sometimes the head, the face, the hand, the beard, the feet; all used in accord with relationship or station. In these times the shake of the hand would correspond to the kiss of those days without any breach of a literal obedience to the word, “an expression of loving friendship.”

Ver. 17, coming at an end of an epistle such as this, is of great importance. From the wording of ch. 1, as well as this chapter, it is clear that the Roman believers were standing in the apostles’ doctrine (ver. 25). So when Paul speaks of “offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned,” he means the sound doctrine of Christ. Such words cannot apply to the varied denominational teachings of the present day. And when he speaks of those who *cause* the “divisions and offences,” it is obvious that he refers to those who teach things contrary to the sound doctrine of Christ which they had learned. Such were to be “*avoided*.”

There are many today who cling to a certain sect because they were brought up in it. Others because they were saved through its testimony. Others because they left other sects to join it because of more Scriptural teaching. While many don’t like to break from the circle of friends to

which they have become attached; and many don't like to admit, when confronted with fresh truth, that their own position is not really Scriptural, as they thought, after all.

Now any or all of these reasons count for nothing against the plain exhortation of this verse; which is that we are to "avoid" those who teach things contrary to the doctrine of the apostles. These are the ones who cause divisions and offences. Often when one brings forward certain aspects of obedience to the will of God, or emphasizes some part of the doctrine of Christ against popular theology, he is accused of "causing division." But those who resist the truth and cling to their errors are the ones who cause the division. Scripture gives no warrant for any fellowship except "fellowship in the truth." It is impossible to have the "unity of the Spirit" apart from the unity of the faith. Therefore, no matter how numerous or long established the sect may be, and no matter how much blessing has been accomplished through it, if it resists the teaching of the apostles it is causing division and is an "offence" (stumbling-block) and must be avoided.

READING, CHAPTER 16.^{17, 18.}

These two verses call for special consideration inasmuch as the prophesied times of departure from the faith have come. If it was a matter for the apostle to urge upon the saints at that time, how much more in these days, when the doctrine of Christ has been attacked from every angle. Let us examine each part of these important statements and allow their application to the present time in a way that is consistent with all other parts of Scripture that deal with the same matter.

The first thing is "I beseech," or "I exhort." This shows the importance of the matter.

The next is "mark." There is a need to look carefully and note these cases of departure from sound doctrine. Alas, with the majority of God's children today doctrine is the matter of *least* concern. They will readily transfer their fellowship on account of a personal grievance or to sit under a more fluent preacher; but so long as there are bright meetings and a circle of pleasant social friends, errors of doctrine count for little or nothing. But we are exhorted to MARK these errorists.

Then, those who are to be "marked" are those who "*cause* divisions and offences." Who are the ones who cause the divisions and offences (occasions of stumbling)? The one who protests against the error, or the one who teaches the error? Alas, in these days, if a leader or a sect teaches certain error, and one amongst them has his eyes opened to it, and protests against it, the usual procedure is that the leader is at once defended by the majority without any fair investigation of the matter. Or the sect is regarded as an authority in itself, so that what it teaches is not to be questioned, and the true authority—the Scriptures—are disregarded, and the one who stands for the truth is regarded as causing divisions.

But the complete description is “them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.” They had learned the sound doctrine of the apostles, and that was to be the criterion. Ver. 19 and ch. 1.⁷⁻⁹ make it clear that though they needed further help they were standing in the truth, not in error. And from this standpoint they were to “avoid” those who taught anything different.

Moreover, we need to remember that in those times the churches were established in the truth by the apostles, and the errorists would always draw away the unwary from that position: but in these days the position is reversed. The gatherings of God’s people are as a whole departed from the truth, and the individual who has his eyes opened must therefore avoid the whole company if they persist in the error.

This aspect of the case is shown in 2 Tim. 2. Timothy was stationed at Ephesus by Paul to take responsibility for the church while Paul was a prisoner at Rome. There were churches in a number of cities in Asia, and Ephesus was the chief. But the enemy had gained an advantage, and all that were in Asia had turned away from Paul (ch. 1.¹⁵). Here is the parallel with the present times. And concerning these errorists Timothy was exhorted to purge (thoroughly cleanse) himself (literally, “to cleanse himself out from”) these. So that, even though the church had been founded by an apostle, he was to separate from it, and “follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Implying that those who held to the error were not calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Truth and error are of such a nature that if one calls on the Lord out of a pure heart he must be led into the truth. The Lord has pledged Himself that the Spirit of Truth will lead into all truth. And if one does not come to the truth the hindrance must be in himself: it cannot be in the Holy Spirit. One may pray and read and still remain in the error, but if so, it is because there is a prejudice, or unwillingness for the narrow path, or some other hindrance, so that the Holy Spirit cannot lead as He would. For we must recognise that leading implies a readiness to follow. And it is vain for one to say that He is seeking the Lord’s will, and yet refuses to separate when these Scriptures so clearly say what one is to do. We are to cleanse ourselves out from them and mark and avoid them.

Returning to Rom. 16, verse 18 says, “they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly.” Those who wish to defend themselves in remaining in fellowship with known error will say of this passage it does not apply to true believers. How easy it is to find something in Scripture to justify our own ways and actions!

Again let us compare the times. Then, the churches were surrounded by the religions of the Gentiles, which not only allowed but encouraged the standpoint of their leaders flourishing and getting fat at the expense of the disciples; and the converts to Christ themselves had been in

this condition of things. But Satan does not always assume the same guise; he may come as a "roaring lion," but he may come as "an angel of light." And "his ministers may be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11.^{14, 15}). And furthermore, it is not the serving of their own belly that is made the *ground* for avoiding them here, but the error of doctrine. That is the deciding factor.

Then again, the serving of their own belly may not mean gluttony necessarily. If a man is considering his own "living," he is serving his belly. And if he is considering his own reputation or prestige, or anything for himself, it is just as bad. It is the contrast with serving our Lord Jesus Christ, both according to the Lord's own teaching as to denying oneself, and the example of the apostles. And these things are found among God's children. It was even so with Peter, and Paul rebuked him for it. In Gal. 2.¹² we see that it was fear of what they who were in the circumcision would say that caused him to err.

So that, even if those to whom Paul referred in Rom. 16.¹⁸ were unbelievers—false professors—we are not to justify the error, or those who teach it, nor are we to remain with them because they are "godly" in other respects. In 2 Tim. 2 it is clear that those who erred in doctrine were true believers, but were "taken *alive*" in the snare (ver. 26 marg.). We must remember that these are the people that Paul wrote to in his epistle to the Ephesians, but Timothy was to purge himself out from them.

But some will urge the gravity of the error in 2 Tim. 2, the teaching that the resurrection was past, as an argument for not separating. But that error is not nearly so serious as the imputation of Adam's sin to his seed. That makes God Himself to be unrighteous. It is a direct attack upon Him. And although it may not be so apparent on the surface, the doctrine of the imputation of the obedience of Christ to us is altogether unrighteous too. But where in Scripture are we taught to thus discriminate between errors. Truth is one, and though an error may seem to be trivial, on examination it will usually be found to involve other things.

We honour the reformers who separated on the ground of "justification by faith," but faith is the means by which it is conveyed to us. Which is greater, the faith by which we receive it, or the work of Christ which procured it? Our joy and comfort in the knowledge of being justified, or the honour of God and of Christ in the work of atonement? And if the martyrs were willing to die for "justification by faith without works," ought not we to be willing to suffer a little for "justification by His blood and not by the imputation of His merits?"

It is possible for one to be justified by faith without being clear as to the doctrine, if they believe in God. But it is not possible for anyone to be justified on any other ground than the blood of Christ. The foundation of the Gospel is not our faith or our knowledge, but the atonement made in the blood of our Lord Jesus. Therefore, to

argue that such errors are not sufficient ground for separation is only to reveal a biased mind and an unwilling heart for the more painful path. In the majority of sects the attitude is that it is right to "separate," even on very slender grounds, to come TO us, but nothing is sufficient to justify separation FROM us.

The false professors are not the only ones who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Men who are earnest in many respects in serving Christ, alas fail sadly when in a difficulty as to defending their teaching or practice. Many will come to the conclusion that "the contention is not profitable spiritually" when they themselves have no further contention to advance. And will warn others that it is better for them to leave the matter alone, and that "what we need is more love."

Dear friends, it is high time to awake out of sleep, the day of the Lord is approaching. It is for us to "make ourselves ready" as the Lamb's wife. The Lord will not come until the unity of the faith is restored (Eph. 4.¹¹⁻¹⁴). Compromise only perpetuates the confusion. We are called upon to forsake human organisations and to "go forth unto HIM without the camp" (Heb. 13.¹³).

The quantity or the magnitude of the error is not to be the deciding factor. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonitions, reject (Titus 3.¹⁰). A heretic is simply one who clings to his own opinion; therefore, if one, after being admonished as to his error, clings to it, he is to be rejected. It is the attitude toward the error or truth that decides. Let those who see the truth stand for it and refuse to be identified with those who resist it, and we shall soon find a movement towards a unity which God will approve and which will cause others to be exercised.

APPENDIX

SOME SCRIPTURES THAT HAVE BEEN MIS-USED

to support the teaching that Adam's sin is imputed to all his seed and that the obedience of Christ is imputed to all His people.

Gen. 3.²¹. These coats of skin are taken to be typical of the righteousness of Christ put upon those who believe in Him.

Some who thus use it are very definite in other matters that we must not build our doctrine on a type: but if the Holy Spirit interprets a type for us in Scripture, we do not build on the type but on the Holy Spirit's interpretation.

Far from interpreting this incident as they do, the Holy Spirit never refers to it anywhere in Scripture. There is no allusion to it that can give any warrant for so using it. On the other hand there is no mention of sacrifice in the passage, and the fact that they were driven out of the garden after being clothed is a very unfitting sequel from the standpoint of typology. Can one be driven out from God's presence after being clothed in righteousness?

Gen. 9.²⁵. This is taken to shew the principle of the imputation of a parent's sin to a son; Canaan being the son of Ham.

To this can be added quite a list of other Scriptures which are so used. For instance, Exod. 20.⁵: Ezra 9.⁷: Neh. 9.²: Dan. 9.²⁰: and others. But the longer the list becomes the more it condemns the teaching attached to it. For we must remember that in the teaching that Adam's sin is imputed to His seed, ETERNAL issues are involved. Those who teach it assert this, and that only those who believe in Christ are freed from it. If then the sin of Ham is imputed to Canaan and the sins of the people of Israel are imputed to their children, where shall we draw the line? For Canaan is not only an individual but a nation. So that all the Canaanites have the sin of Ham and the sin of Adam imputed to them; and Noah is just as much a "federal head" as Ham, so his sin should be imputed. Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel confessed the sins of their fathers, so they must be added to the sin of Adam. And all this "with eternal consequences"! It is a truism that "*That which proves too much disproves itself*".

That the sins of the fathers are "visited" upon the children, is quite true, but that has nothing to do with eternal issues. We may be suffer-

ing many things as a result of our fathers' sins, not only Adam's; but they only affect this life and many of these results may be blessings in disguise. God's righteousness is in no way affected by this principle for He has bestowed benefits upon every one of Adam's race, far beyond what they deserve. But once let this principle be carried into the eternal issues of life, and immediately God is involved in unrighteousness.

The "literal meanings" of two Hebrew terms, the "burnt offering" and the "sweet savour" have been stressed and woven into the fabric of this teaching to support the thought that the obedience of Christ was offered for us.

It is nowhere taught in Scripture. The word for the "burnt offering" comes from the root to "ascend" and it is therefore called by some the "ascending offering"; but where the word is used in the New Testament the Holy Spirit has translated it into the Greek by the word "whole burnt offering", never using the expression "ascending offering".

The same applies to the "sweet savour". The word "sweet" comes from the root "to rest": and it is therefore called a "savour of rest". But where the word is translated into the Greek the Holy Spirit has always used the word "sweet" savour.

Lev. 7.⁸. To make this fit the teaching that Christ's righteousness is given to us who believe, this verse has been quoted as "the priest shall have the skin *to give*".

To support this, verses 9 and 14 were quoted because similar language is used; but other passages shew that in those cases the things were shared by Aaron's family. No Scripture can be found to shew that a priest ever gave away the skin of a burnt offering; and there is also a difference between the construction of words in ver. 8 from that in verses 9 and 14. It is very slight, but it is sufficient to make a difference, which our translators have recognized.

The matter hinges on the fact of certain words being repeated, a common practice in the wording of law. Ver. 8 reads, "And the *priest* that offers a man's burnt offering, the skin of the burnt offering which he shall offer to the *priest*, to him, it shall become". Notice the repetition of the word "priest" because of the words which come in between. Ver. 9 reads, "And every meat offering . . . to the priest that offereth it, to him, it shall become". Here the words "that offereth it" call for the repetition, "to him", on the same principle. But in ver. 8 there are no words between "to the priest" and "to him", therefore it must have the sense "to the priest, to himself". Ver. 14 follows the same rule as ver. 9.

It is evident that in Lev. 7.⁸ the Holy Spirit intends to give us a type of what is presented in Phil. 2.⁵⁻¹¹. The Lord Jesus offered up Himself, He was both priest and offering. And in resurrection He has

the reward of His own perfect obedience. In Phil. 2 the absence of anything accruing to us as a result of the Lord's obedience is most marked. It is Himself alone that is exalted on account of it.

Numb. 35.³³ was advanced to prove that blood alone did not provide a righteousness: the one whose blood is shed must have a righteousness to offer—so it is argued.

But the verse says "the land cannot be cleansed (judicially cleansed) of the blood that is shed therein *but* by the blood of him that shed it." The murder upset the balance of righteousness for the nation. But when the murderer was put to death the balance of righteousness was restored. Thus the blood of the murderer, an unrighteous man, did provide a righteousness for the nation.

Deut. 6.²⁵. This has been advanced as an argument that we need a righteousness provided by someone Who has kept the law in our stead.

The righteousness that it imputed to us carries no merit for reward. It is not a matter of works of the law (Rom. 3.²¹⁻²⁸) it consists in the judicial removal of our *unrighteousness* by atonement (Rom. 4.¹⁻⁹). Righteousness is "reckoned" to us because the blood of Christ has removed our unrighteousness.

Psa. 22.³¹. This has been made to mean that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us—but the reader can judge for himself.

Psa. 24.⁵ has been coupled with Psa. 133.³ and interpreted to refer to Christ. That He received from God the righteousness of His life which He had presented, so that He might give the "blessing" (righteousness and life) to us.

But if Psa. 24 is considered it will be seen that it is not prophetic of Christ but of the godly of Israel who will go up to the temple in the future when they are restored. Verse 6 "*This is the generation*". This principle of receiving righteousness from God is set out in Psa. 18.¹⁶⁻³⁰, where David glorifies God for His dealing with him. In these passages righteousness is not intended to have the absolute sense, but that which contrasts with the *unrighteous*. See Luke 1.⁶: 23.⁵⁰: and 1 John 3.⁷⁻⁹.

Psa. 51.⁵. This has been made to imply that David was held by God to be *guilty* of the sinful nature with which he was born.

But Rom. 7.⁹ teaches just the opposite. If we examine the construction of the Psalm we can see that David passes alternately from the guilt of his own sin to the fact of his depraved nature. He wants forgiveness of the former and deliverance from the latter. This is repeated several times from verses 1-17.

Prov. 6.¹: 11.¹⁵: 17.¹⁸: 20.¹⁶: 22.²⁶: 27.¹³. These passages of Scripture all speak of suretiship, and not one of them approves of it. Yet some of them have been picked out and applied, or rather misapplied to our Lord Jesus, to support the teaching that He was surety for us, to render to God the righteousness which we had failed to render.

This is a common error and is the more readily accepted because He is spoken of as our Surety in Heb. 7.²². But if the context in Heb. 7 be examined it will be seen that the suretiship there pertains to His resurrection life alone. Not to His offering Himself on our behalf. We will consider this more fully later.

One can allow for mistakes in doctrine and in Bible study of all kinds. We have all made mistakes and have all had to unlearn something, most of us a good deal. But when one goes to extremes that are illogical and involve the corruption of God's word to support error, rather than admit it, it is to be stoutly condemned. This was my experience in dealing with one on this point. The suretiship of Christ if referred to His suffering for us would not be so harmful if it were not involved in the doctrine of substitutionary law-keeping, and the imputation of His merits to us. Many children of God copy expressions from others without the least realization of what they involve.

I objected to the use of these passages as prophetic of Christ on the above ground pointing out that none of them approved it. To this I was told that the only one that forbade it (22.²⁶) is in the plural, and that the Lord Jesus acted alone. Only a mind that is looking for something to justify itself could reason like this, for the sense of the statement is obviously not a partnership in the surety, but forbidding the individual to become one of such a class of persons. The idiom of the Hebrew is clear as to this, which I shewed from the next chapter, 23.²⁰. The Hebrew arrangement of words in these two passages is exactly the same. "Become not thou among strikers of hands, among sureties for debts". "Become not thou among winebibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh". If then one may become a surety, providing he does it alone; one may also become a winebibber, providing he does it alone!

In reply to this all I received was a remark that Jer. 30.²¹ had impressed my opponent's heart, because the word "engaged" there is the word to "become surety".

Now in this passage there is no suggestion of paying debts, but it speaks of one who engaged (pledged as surety) his heart to *approach* unto God. This exactly corresponds with the resurrection position of our Lord, already referred to in Heb. 7.²². And if this is a prophecy of Him, it simply shows that as He ever lives to make intercession for us now, so He will do for Israel in the future—when the fountain for sin and uncleanness is opened to them (Zech. 13.¹). But I have heard no more on the matter.

The position set out in the book of Proverbs is that God disapproves of suretiship among men and forbids it. If they despise His word on the matter, they may expect to 'smart for it', or suffer loss in some way.

The well-known hymn, "God will not payment twice demand. First at my suffering Surety's hand, And then again at mine" is sound in principle, but it misses the distinction which the Holy Spirit makes in Scripture—that Christ "became a Surety of a better covenant" in his resurrection.

Ch. 11.¹⁵: 20.¹⁶: 22.^{26, 27}: 27.¹³: are all made to apply to Christ—that He as our Surety gave up everything to pay for us, and "smarted" in our stead. His "garment" is supposed to refer to His robe of righteousness being given to us. But what about ch. 17.¹⁸? This is referring to one acting alone. Moreover, the smarting, the loss of the garment or the bed, only come in when the surety *fails to render* what is due. In which case it would imply that our blessed Lord *failed* as our Surety. Such is the havoc that is made by persisting in error.

As to the true suretyship, Heb. 7 shews that this is associated with the Melchisedec priesthood which began with our Lord's entrance into the heavenlies (Heb. 6.²⁰, "becoming when He entered, a High Priest"). The whole of the record in Gen. 14 presents a resurrection view, in type. Nothing is *said* about a sacrifice, but the fact that Melchisedec was a priest implies that he had offered; and "bread and wine" are memorials of the sacrifice offered once for all. Psa. 110 also is a resurrection view entirely. And Heb. 7 presents the Lord as Surety of the better covenant in the power of an *endless* life. He has engaged Himself to save us to the uttermost. The case of Jacob's sons presents a beautiful illustration. In Gen. 42.³⁷ Reuben said (of Benjamin), "Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee". But that would have been unrighteous. It was rejected. But in ch. 43.⁹, Judah says, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: If I bring him not to thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever". To this Jacob consented. The parallel with our Lord's resurrection position is clear. Judah did not become surety for Benjamin's debts or pledge himself to make good any of his deficiencies. He pledged himself to present him again to his father. And this is exactly what our glorious Lord has pledged Himself to do. As the "Captain of our Salvation" He has undertaken to preserve us from all the attacks of enemies during our journey here and "bring us to glory" (Heb. 2.¹⁰). If He were to fail to present us to His Father, He would indeed "bear the blame for ever". But, praise His name, there is no question about it being done.

We can thank God that the investigation of error helps to bring out the true glory of our Lord, and to reveal the beautiful harmony of the whole of God's word.

Isa. 53.¹¹, by an improper play upon literal Hebrew, has been made to teach that Christ by His own obedience made a righteousness for us.

The word "for", beginning the last sentence, has been translated "and", so making the bearing of iniquities to be a distinct thing from the making of the righteousness. (The word "justify" has been translated "make a righteousness".) Both these translations can be said to be literally correct. But the Hebrew language is such that context, and doctrine taught elsewhere, must in many cases decide what is the intended meaning. The word "and" can have quite a lot of other meanings, such as "then", "though", "yet", "but", "for": and must have such in order to give sense, in many cases.

If, in the verse before us, we keep to the word "and", we make our justification an accomplished thing without the death of Christ bearing our iniquities. But Rom. 5.⁹ plainly contradicts such a thought, for it says we are justified by His blood. Moreover, the words "justify many" can just as literally be rendered "cause righteousness to the many", as, "make a righteousness for the many". So that when the whole passage is rightly considered, the words as they stand in the Authorized Version are quite satisfactory; giving the sense that our justification is the result of the Lord Jesus bearing our iniquities.

This will also be found to agree with the whole of the chapter. For if each statement is taken individually, it will be seen that nothing of His obedience as a servant, or His suffering at the hands of men, is said to procure anything for us. But that which He endured at the hand of God has procured our blessing. Note particularly ver. 5, where the word "stripes" is, in the Hebrew, "stripe."

Isa. 61.¹⁰ has been "interpreted" to mean that the robe of Christ's personal obedience has been put upon us.

But there is nothing said about His obedience in the verse, or the context.

Jer. 23.⁶ and 33.¹⁶ are commonly used to support the same teaching.

But the error only hinders one from seeing the true force of the passage as a whole. If the context is considered, it will be seen that nothing of imputed righteousness is mentioned; but that instead of the unrighteous government that characterized Jerusalem in the past, there will, in the future, be the righteous government of Christ. And thus He will be "The Lord our (Israel's) Righteousness". Both passages have the same meaning.

Zech. 3. The change of garments here is commonly "interpreted" to mean that the robe of Christ's righteousness is put upon us.

But we need to distinguish between things that differ. The robe and the garments are always distinguished in Scripture. Nor is there anything in the passage to suggest that *Christ's* robe is intended. As in all other cases, it is assumed.

If we have regard to the circumstances of the incident we get the view and the interpretation that God intends. In Ezra 4.²⁴ the work of building the temple ceased. Then in ch. 5 the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stood up and exhorted the people. Then if we turn to Haggai 1 we see the state into which the people lapsed in the interval, and God's complaint against them; and that Joshua the high priest needed his spirit "stirred up" just as the others. Ch. 2 goes on to shew that this selfish neglect of God's house was uncleanness in His sight. Hence the rebuke in Zech. 3.

Joshua then is not typical of a sinner needing salvation, but of a servant of God needing reviving. And the passage compares with Rev. 3.^{17, 18}, garments can be changed, but we do not read of the "robe" being changed. Imputed righteousness (never said to be *Christ's* robe) is once and for all time, or rather eternity.

Matt. 3.¹⁵. "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". These words have been given the meaning that in the act of baptism the Lord was fulfilling His own righteousness (baptism being one act of the whole life's obedience) in order to impart it to us.

That this should ever be advanced to support such teaching seems amazing; for *we* are not mentioned at all in the matter.

But the word "thus" does not mean "in this", but "after this manner". Baptism was a metaphorical act. It stood as a symbol of death (Luke 12.⁵⁰). And viewing it in that way, as the word "thus" requires, the question is raised, to whom does the word "us" refer? It could not refer to the Lord and John, for John had no part in His death. But the death of Christ was a legal transaction between the Father and Himself; in which the Father, as "God the judge of all" demanded payment for the broken law, and Christ, as the perfect Substitute for men, gave Himself to meet that demand.

In this way the words "to fulfil *all* righteousness" have their full value. The death of Christ, not His life, met *all* God's claims for us. The epistle to the Romans, ch. 3, was written expressly for the purpose of propounding this doctrine. In verses 21-28 redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ is shewn to be all sufficient for our justification. Then in ver. 31 Paul asks "Do we then make void the law through faith?" Because he has asserted that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. But far from suggesting that Christ fulfilled the law for us, he simply says "Yea, we establish the law." That is to say that the death of Christ to meet law's demands was all sufficient.

Luke 15.²². It is assumed here that the "best robe" is typical of the righteousness of Christ.

To support this it has been asserted that there is an allusion here to the coats of skin that God provided for Adam and Eve. This is based upon the Greek word used here for "best" which is said to be literally, "first." It is true that the word does mean "first"; but not

necessarily first in order of time, it often means first in importance, and therefore “chief” or “best.”

It would be a strange thing for the father to say to the servants “bring forth the first robe.” And in the interpretation of the parable, to say that the first robe, Adam’s coat, is put upon us is strange. Why do we want one type to refer to another, even if Adam’s coat were a type?

All this illustrates the way in which fanciful ideas with a misuse of Greek are brought in to support what cannot be found in actual statement in Scripture.

John 19.^{23, 24}. Here again is a type misused. The Roman soldiers we are told had the robe, typical of us receiving the righteousness of Christ.

But the principal feature of the robe in this passage is that it was not to be rent. Therefore they cast lots, and by that means *only one* of the soldiers had it. It suggests the question, If Christ’s righteousness is given to His people, do we each have all of it, or do we share it, each having a part?

The act of the soldiers was unrighteous: for the whole of the circumstances of His death, from man’s standpoint were unrighteous. Their act was typical. It typified that by unjust judgment, they had “taken away the righteousness of the righteous from Him” (Isa. 5.²³). But God overruled that the coat was preserved. And this exactly fits with the type in Lev. 7.⁸, “the priest that offereth any man’s burnt offering, even the priest shall have the skin of the burnt offering for himself”. From God’s standpoint the righteousness of His Elect in whom His soul delighted was not lost; it is the Lord’s, and His reward is with His God (Isa. 49.⁴).

Acts 13.³⁹. The literality of this passage has been wrongly stressed (“*in Him* all that believe”) to teach that we are justified in Christ’s justifying of Himself by keeping the law. Gal. 2.¹⁷ has been treated the same (“justified *in Christ*”).

But the word “in” in the Greek is used commonly with the meaning “by”, “with” or “through”, and the translators have given it this meaning here. Forced literality is again in this instance brought in to support what cannot be found in any doctrinal passage that expounds the work of justification.

Rom. 3.²⁵. The word used for “propitiation” in this verse does not imply the propitiatory *victim*, as in 1 John 2.², the word being slightly different. It is the same as is used in Heb. 9.⁵, the “mercy seat”, or *place* of propitiation. From this it has been argued that the mercy seat, in Ex. 25.²¹, rested on top of the ark, and therefore, we must include the thought of the ark in Rom. 3.²⁵.

The ark is typical of Christ with the law of God in His heart, for the tables of stone inscribed with the law were kept in the ark. The mercy seat is typical of Christ in resurrection and the cherubim typify the Church "joined" to Him. In the levitical arrangements we never read of the sacrificial blood being sprinkled on or before the ark, but always on or before the mercy seat. And God never said that He would meet with them at the ark, but always from above the mercy seat. Therefore what God has definitely avoided we have no right to introduce.

The ark, representing Christ's earthly life under law, no man could dare to scrutinize. Not even the High Priest was allowed to open it. Those who did were smitten of God immediately (1 Sam. 6.¹⁹). And Christ's earthly life also speaks judgment to us, for He has set an example of righteousness which we ought also to do, but have not. There are those who profess to take Him as their Example but deny the need of His atonement. Woe to them.

In Rev. 11.¹⁹ we see that as soon as the ark is revealed in heaven judgment takes place. Thus the distinction is preserved throughout; the ark always speaking of judgment and the mercy seat of acceptance by redemption. And we should not confuse the two. The typology confirms the sound doctrine of Christ, that His obedience under law is not part of His atoning work. He has the reward of that for Himself (Phil. 2.⁹).

Rom. 3.¹² has been given the meaning "together they became unprofitable in Adam." And 3.²³ and 5.¹² have been rendered "all sinned in Adam."

This addition of the words "in Adam" is with the object of making the words mean that we are held legally guilty of Adam's own sin (until we are justified by faith). Such glaring alteration of the word of the living God hardly needs further comment.

Rom. 6.⁷ has been made to mean that *Christ* justified Himself from sin and we are justified in His justification.

A consideration of the context shows that the believer (who has died, by profession, in baptism) is made righteous from sin (ver. 6).

Rom. 8.⁴. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" has been made to mean "that the righteousness of the law, fulfilled by Christ, has been *imputed* to us." Again, let the reader judge.

The whole of Rom. 5.¹²⁻²¹ has been misused to support both the imputation of Adam's sin and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

But the word "impute" so frequently used in the 3rd and 4th chapters is not used at all in this passage. (In ver. 13 it is a slightly different word.) In ver. 16 the condemnation is not said to be to us. And if we see that Adam's one sin was sufficient to condemn himself, but our many offences have to be dealt with for our justification, the intended contrast, implied in the words "and not," is quite clear.

Rom. 10.⁴. This has been made to mean that Christ fulfilled the law for us.

But the earlier chapters shew that by His death He delivered us from the law's penalty and we are by virtue of that brought to a new position in living union with Him, not under law but under grace.

1 Cor. 1.³⁰. This is commonly quoted to support the thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us.

But where is the logic of it? Few would go so far as to say that the wisdom, sanctification and redemption are imputed; that is unless they have no appreciation of what imputed means. In the power of His resurrection we receive, in actual experience, all four of these things. His wisdom in contrast to the world's wisdom, as the context shews; His righteousness in contrast to the unrighteousness of Jew and Gentile; His sanctification or holiness, as set apart to God; and His redemption (by power) from the powers of evil that beset us. If the first four chapters of the epistle are read straight through the meaning is on the surface.

2 Cor. 2.¹⁵. This has been made to mean that we are a "sweet savour" of Christ to God, because His merits have been imputed to us.

But the context shews that we are a sweet savour of Christ IF we do not "corrupt the word of God" (ver. 17).

2 Cor. 5.²¹. The words here "made the righteousness of God in Him", are taken to mean "by having His righteousness imputed to us."

But, in the first place, it does not say, or imply, "the righteousness of *Christ*."

In the second place, the word is really "become" the righteousness of God. "Made sin," earlier, is right. The word "made" is used for imputation in 1 John 1.¹⁰ and 5.¹⁰; but the word "become" is not, it implies actual experience, like Rom. 8.⁴.

Eph. 2.⁶. Ignoring the time indicated in ver. 5, i.e., when we were quickened, this has been explained as meaning that we were raised in God's view, WHEN Christ was raised.

This idea lends itself to the thought of Christ's merits being imputed to us, by a sequence of reasoning.

Eph. 2.¹⁰. "Created in Christ Jesus 'upon' good works", here, has been made to mean that we are a new creation upon the good works which Christ did in His earthly life.

Like some other Greek words, this word "upon" has other meanings and there is no reason why it should not mean "unto" in this place. It seems to be the only meaning which gives sense in Gal. 5.¹³ "called *unto* liberty", 1 Thess. 4.⁷ "not *unto* uncleanness", 2 Tim. 2.¹⁴ "*to* the

subverting.” The other meaning given in Eph. 2.¹⁰ certainly calls for a large stretch of imagination.

Eph. 5.². This has been made to mean that Christ offered Himself “as a sweet savour”; in order to make out that His merits were offered for us.

The actual word is “*for* (or, with a view to) a sweet savour” and perfectly agrees with Numb. 15.³, “to make a sweet savour”, by burning.

Phil. 2.⁸ has been used to prove that the obedience in Rom. 5.¹⁹ is the whole life of obedience.

The two passages are dealing with two distinct subjects. In Philip-pians there is no mention of anything for us as a result of the obedience; the whole passage is Christ as our example. In Rom. 5 the obedience refers to the command which He received to lay down His life for us (John 10.¹⁸). This procured our justification.

Col. 2.¹⁰ has been made to mean that Christ’s completeness has been imputed to us.

Whereas the context shews it to be a matter of practical experience.

Heb. 10.¹⁰ has been made to mean that we are justified by Christ’s doing of the will of God in our stead, referring to the law.

This ignores the contextual explanation that we are sanctified (not justified) through Christ doing the will of God in the offering of His body. His blood has purchased us and separated us to God.

2 Pet. 1.¹ has been advanced to prove that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us.

The verse says we obtain “faith” not righteousness.

1 John 4.¹⁷. “Because, as He is, so are we in this world” has been made to mean that Christ’s merits are imputed to us. The context from verses 16-21 is not speaking of Christ—the Son of God, but of the Father—God. The principle that applies to “righteousness” in 2.²⁹ and 3.⁷, applies in 4.¹⁷ to “love.” See also Matt. 5.^{44, 45}.

Such perversion of God’s word is sufficient to condemn the doctrines that call for it. And if men will do such things to maintain their teaching in this matter, can they be trusted to handle the word faithfully in other things? The words of Prov. 19.²⁷ may well be applied here, “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth thee to err from the words of knowledge.”

Literature on other important subjects in Scripture will gladly be sent to any who are interested. All is free, from H. G. Hobbs, 54 St. Catherine’s Road, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk, England.