

Romans 8 - 16

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Part 2 of Notes on the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Romans, with a new translation,

ROMANS 8

We have seen in Romans 7, first, the doctrine in the opening verses; then the discussion of the manner in which the law works in the soul that is born again but that does not realize the deliverance with which he began, not only conflict under law but the discovery of the two natures, and besides of one's own powerlessness though renewed — an experience which closes however not in the utter wretchedness which is its immediate result but in looking completely out of self to God's deliverance in and through Christ, though the two natures abide none the less for all that, each with its own unchanged characteristics.

The beginning of Romans 8 is in some respects (as indeed in a larger sense is the entire chapter) a summary and conclusion in relation to the previous reasoning. Still the argument and the revelation of the truth are also pushed on, though there is allusion to the points already cleared in the discussion from Romans 5: 12 to the close of Romans 7. Nothing can well be conceived more striking than the grandly explicit, and distinct, and comprehensive affirmation of verse 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus." It is the broad truth laid down with all clearness for all who are set in this new place of acceptance — "in Christ Jesus." For such he could not say more, he would not say less, as to the question before us; and what he says is said absolutely and peremptorily. There is purposely no loophole for modifying or enfeebling the deliverance.

Therefore I cannot at all agree with those who admit that the clause in the received text and ordinary translation is (i.e., thus the latter half in the Authorized Version)* immaterial. Believing it to be spurious on the best and ample authority, I am of opinion that it is of great importance to the force of the passage that the gloss added should be rejected. These words are of the greatest value in verse 4; they are an incubus, a dead weight, in verse 1. Here. they would necessarily tend to act as a qualifying clause and throw the soul on an examination of walk as the means of certifying that one is in Christ Jesus. Now the duty of self-judgment as to my heart and ways is freely admitted; but it is not the way to ascertain that I am in Christ. If I did gather from my walk and spirit the assurance of such a standing for my soul, it would be in the highest degree self-righteous and presumptuous. The man whose assurance was founded on the good estimate he had formed of his own inward and outward ways would be an

object not enviable but of the deepest pity. The true place of self-judgment for the Christian according to scripture is, while holding fast that by grace we are in Christ and hence possessors of the highest privileges, that we should detect our shortcomings and their causes in order to humble ourselves for practical inconsistencies of any kind measured by that exalted standard. If introduced here, it would dislocate all truth, impair all grace, and eventually destroy all the springs of power in walk.

*The great uncials , B, C, D, F, G, with some good cursives and ancient versions omit, while A, D (corr.), omit the last part. The English Version even so is incorrect; for, if genuine, the meaning would be "those in Christ Jesus who walk," or "those who in Christ Jesus walk," etc. (not "them which are in Christ Jesus who walk.")

The passage then in its true form denies all condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. It is not sins proved nor sins remitted in God's righteousness through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; nor is it even the love of God shown so much the more because the object of it is a sinner ungodly and without strength. All this is in view of the sinner as such, though supposed to believe in Jesus. But here the old man is seen to be crucified, and the believer dead with Christ and alive to God in virtue of Him risen from the dead. In a word, they are viewed as being in an altogether new place, in Christ Jesus; where condemnation is not, and cannot be. It is not a question of degree but an absolute fact, true of all real Christians. They are one as much as another in Christ Jesus and outside condemnation. To say that in proportion as he is imbued with the Spirit of Christ he is free from condemnation is to miss the truth here revealed, however momentous it surely is for the Christian to be thus imbued. But here I repeat it is a question of the place grace gives them in Christ and not of their measure of making it good in feeling and ways. "In Christ" rightly understood precludes all question of degree or doubt *quoad hoc*. Bring in the walk, and therein at once we find abundant grounds, I will not say for doubt (which is always unjustifiable and profitless), but for sorrow and humiliation, and the more so because we are "in Christ Jesus."

We have seen the precious principle of no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus re-asserted with yet greater strength and absoluteness than when first introduced in the latter half of Romans 5. Not only are such not condemned, but there is no condemnation for them. They are in Christ, and there no possible condemnation can reach. Undoubtedly they are justified; but what is said goes farther than justification by blood. Justifying of life is supposed; but there is more, as we shall see presently. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death."

Questions have been raised here as to "the law," used at the beginning and at the end of this sentence. There is no real difficulty nor ground for doubt. The apostle has already given us to see his use of the term for a given principle acting uniformly, as when he speaks of "law of faith" (Rom. 3: 27) in contrast with "law of works;" and later still "law in my members," or "of sin," there contradistinguished from the law of my mind."

The meaning then is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus acting constantly to a given end. Undoubtedly this is only since the gospel was preached, but it does not therefore mean the gospel. Nor does the apostle say life only, but "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." In the distressing conflict under law, described in the latter portion of Romans 7, there was life: else there would have been insensibility to sin; but not the power of the Spirit working in and with it: else there would have been liberty, and not the bondage that there was then.

John 20: 22 may illustrate the expression. The Spirit is not apart from quickening the soul; but here was more. It was life more abundantly, life in resurrection. Jesus risen breathed on the disciples, already quickened, and said "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." It was not mere conversion; still less was it

the appointment to an office or the conferring of a gift (χάρισμα). It was life according to the position of Jesus now risen from the dead and no longer under law, and with this the Spirit is distinctly associated. The fruit of this we see in the disciples thenceforward. It is not that they might not make mistakes in thought, or word, or deed; but we see after this a liberty, joy, and intelligence unknown before.

So here "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death." For the last time in this discussion the "me" is spoken of. If the distress was personal, so is the deliverance; if he had reasoned out the case of one bound under law, transferred in its application to himself, so to himself he transferred the application of the freedom enjoyed. Sin and death were no longer a governing principle, and this by the very fact of the life in Christ which he had by the Spirit. It is not, as Theodore of Mopsuestia (in loc. p. 67, ed. Fritzsche) thinks, and many since, that he is anticipating the resurrection or future state, but the actual condition of the Christian. The freedom was his by the Holy Ghost when he left off seeking victory over indwelling evil by efforts under law, was willing to yield himself up as powerless for the good he desired, and submitted to the righteousness of God. Then the Spirit working in the life given proved Himself to be not of weakness any more than of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Thus it is plain that the resurrection of Christ, which is the fountain of the life as we have it in Him, is the link between our justification and the practical holiness which God looks for and secures in the Christian. It is erroneous to treat this verse, or even the first, as a mere summary of justification. Calvin is nearer the mark than such as Haldane and Hodge who so limit it. Nevertheless, as I do not think the leader of Geneva warranted to speak as he does of the apostle's language, so it appears to me that he betrays his own defective acquaintance with the gospel in the same sentence. "By the law of the Spirit he improperly designates the Spirit of God, who sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ, not only to cleanse us from the stain of sin as regards guilt, but to sanctify us to true purity."* The mistake is exclusively in the commentator, who did not comprehend the profound and accurately expressed wisdom of the apostle. To have confessed his own ignorance, when he found himself out of his depth, would have been more modest, rather than to have adopted language hard to reconcile with a becoming sense of God's word. Does *He* call things improperly? Thus far Calvin's temerity, the more glaring because of the ignorance betrayed in what follows. For we have here to do, not with the blood of Christ sprinkling souls, but with the Spirit acting with the fixity of a law in the life which is ours in Christ — a life which is in resurrection power and hence has freed us from the power of sin and death: otherwise sin and death must have governed. It is no question of pardon here but freedom from the constant operation of sin and its wages. Our very life, now that the Spirit is given, declares and proves us freed.

* "Legem spiritus improprie vocat Dei Spiritum, qui animas nostras Christi sanguine aspergit, non tantum ut a peccati labe emundet quoad reatum; sed in veram puritatem sanctificet." — In loc. cit. ed. Tholuck.

"The law of sin and death" does not mean the law of God, as some of the divines strangely said through making "the law of the Spirit" to be the gospel; it simply means the uniform principle of the flesh in moral character and in result. Power is in the Spirit who has shown us our place in Christ and set us free as alive to God in Him. Thus the common place of no condemnation to those that are in Christ is shown to be inseparable from a new life in the power of the Spirit in Christ risen, which freed us from sin and death as a law; and this is made intensely personal. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death." The next two verses will explain how God in His grace has effected this, without enfeebling, yea, maintaining in no other way so well, His holy condemnation of evil — of our evil.

Evidently, then, the resurrection, the death and resurrection of Jesus, is the basis of all this doctrine. It was viewed as the seal of redemption at the close of Romans 4. For He was delivered up for our offences and raised for our justification. But there is much more in His resurrection. It is a spring of life, and this too in the manifestation of victory over all the consequences of sin and death. Such is the power of Christ's resurrection even now for the believer as far as concerns the soul. And herein lies the real and mighty link between justification and practical holiness. Not only has the Christian been justified by blood, but he has justifying of life in Christ; yea, the life of Him risen from the dead when all charge and judgment have had their course, sin been put away, and God glorified. Where this truth is not seen, a godly soul may well have fears, if not anxieties, as to the issue, and must naturally insist on the guards due to the grace of God in redemption; where it is simply and fully seen, there must be — there ought to be — confidence in the heart purified by faith. Not that there is not here below the need of habitual self-judgment; but, along with this, one is entitled, in looking to Christ dead and risen, to be as sure of the character of His life as of the efficacy of His blood. In both the believer finds his blessedness. But some, it must be spoken to their shame, are ignorant of the true character of God and of deliverance in and by Christ the Lord. Emancipation from the law of sin and death is the effect, as the apostle declares, of the law of the Spirit of life in the Saviour. The moral ground of this on God's part is shown in verse 3, the practical result on our part in verse 4.

The same uncertainty which obscures the force of verses 1, 2, prevails as to verses 3, 4. Some regard the question handled as exclusively justification; others as no less exclusively the extirpation of the dominion of sin. It appears to me certain, that, while the subject is sin rather than sins, the apostle is summing up, and hence not confining himself to a single point, and that each of the contending parties has missed not only truth held by their opponents, but much which both have failed to see. Imperfect views of redemption occasion, if they are not the same thing as, these defects. The new place of the believer is feebly seen on either side. With this the chapter opens, not Christ in the believer (though this is also true, and will be shown shortly in the chapter), but the believer in Christ, and hence "no condemnation" proclaimed. Next, it is shown that the very life given, being in the power of the Spirit, the life of Christ risen, is the witness of our deliverance. Neither sin nor death remains a law to us, as we see in the state described in Romans 7. But there is more. The powerlessness of the law is confronted with the efficacy of redemption, and this to the moral end of the believer's practical obedience. Such is the outline and connection of the four verses, as will appear more in detail presently.

"For what the law could not do, in that* it was weak through the flesh,† God having sent his own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit." (Ver. 3, 4.)

*The expression ἐν ᾧ seems to be used with a certain variety of application. It is either want of knowledge or strength of system which alone can account for the effort of some moderns to restrict it to the sense "wherein." Nevertheless it never, that I am aware of, passes the bounds of correct usage, so as to be used, as Grotius says, for ἐφ' ᾧ, which expresses the condition or occasion under which a thing is done or occurs; while ἐν ᾧ is the time, sphere, state, or power in question. Alford is singularly vacillating; for whilst on our text he says "because" (not 'wherein,' as in Romans 2: 1, but 'in that') and refers in his margin to Hebrews 2: 18; on the latter text he says, 4 'in that which,' and remarks, "The ordinary rendering is to take ἐν ᾧ as equivalent to 'forasmuch as,' 'in that,' English Version, and to justify it by the Hebrew. But it is doubtful whether ἐν ᾧ has ever this meaning absolutely. (!) It seems only to approach to it through 'quatenus,' 'in as far as,' which is an extension of its strict meaning, 'in that particular in which,' 'wherein.' (!!)" And this slightly extended meaning is preferable in all the places usually cited to justify the other: e.g., Rom. 8: 3; Heb. 6: 17." It is a little strong to send us to a

reference and then to nullify the meaning first, and add there a new reference (Heb. 6: 17), where he contradicts himself again and substantially confirms his first statement, for he there says, "in which behalf," nearly equivalent to "wherefore," which he expressly prefers to "in which."

†I reject the notion that διὰ τῆς σαρκὸς means "in having to act through the flesh," or "*through the medium* of the flesh." No doubt the construction is decisive against "on account of the flesh;" but διὰ with a genitive often means in a given state, though oftener still "by means of."

There is no need to supply anything, as the first clause, grammatically, is in apposition with what follows; doctrinally, in contradistinction. It was not within the power of the law to meet the case, for though law spiritually applied might detect sin, the characteristic sin of fallen human nature, it must condemn the person too in whom the sin was found. It was therefore wholly unavailing for the purposes of grace; it could curse, it could sentence, it could not save. It was essentially therefore for sinful man a ministry of condemnation and of death. "The flesh," or natural condition of the race, was a state that admitted of no alternative. *God* would and did take the matter in hand, not by Moses through whom the law was given, but by the mission of His own Son. "Grace and truth came — was — through Jesus Christ." Then, and by Him only, was this seen in the world. "The Word was made flesh." God sent Him in likeness of flesh of sin, in real flesh and blood; not like a man, but in truth a man; in likeness not of flesh, but of flesh of sin. Such was the flesh of His mother, and of her was He born as truly as any son of any mother; but without an earthly father as to His birth. What was begotten in Mary was of the Holy Ghost. *Wherefore* also the Holy Thing that was in due season born was called the Son of God — for this reason of His supernatural and holy generation; though for higher reasons also of divine and eternal glory, of which not Luke but John is the appointed herald.

God sent Him then in likeness of flesh of sin, not in sinful flesh, but in its likeness; and in Him, the Son, the Father was glorified in a world departed from God, of which Satan was the prince; tried as never man was tried, and found perfect in each and all, in word and deed, in thought and feeling, inwardly, outwardly, every way, perfect; as God the Father had never before found in anyone or anything. Yet blessed and refreshing as is such a sight in such a world, and in such a nature, fraught with infinite results for the divine glory, all had come to nought for the deliverance of any from sin's guilt or power, if God had done no more. Christ had glorified the Father as a holy, obedient, dependent man, who never did, never sought His own will, but God's. But man was wilful, wretched, guilty, lost. God sent His own Son therefore, not alone as the exhibition of human perfection, and divine grace and truth withal, but also "for sin," περὶ ἁμαρτίας. It is the very reverse of an indefinite statement, being the well-known technical expression for sin-offering (as in Heb. 10, and the LXX.), and therefore distinctly pointing to the death, as the previous clause to the life, of Christ.

Thus was solved the otherwise insoluble problem: God had done it in and by His own Son to His own glory, and thus holily and righteously for sinful man. Impossible without the death of the Son of God. But now in Him, a sacrifice for sin (not more acceptable in His life than a sin-bearer in death, when consequently God must and did forsake even Him), God executed sentence of condemnation, not on sinners but on sin, sin in the flesh, and this expiatorily; for He made Jesus, who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Not only has the Christian a new life in Christ risen by the Spirit, of which the law is liberation and liberty; but God laid the moral ground for such grace as this, in the utter condemnation of sin in the flesh, by *His* manifestation to take away our sins, in whom is no sin.

Thus was vindicated the free gift of God to us, eternal life, the righteous groundwork on which even now we possess in Christ that risen life with which no sin ever mingles, though we have still the

old and evil nature of our own to mortify day by day.

And if the Son of man was glorified, and God glorified in Him thus, was there no present moral result in those whose new life He was in the infinite grace of our God? This could not be; and the apostle adds in the next words the answer. God so wrought in Christ, in order that the requirement (the righteous claim, τὸ δικάϊωμα) of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not according to flesh, but according to Spirit. *This*, I cordially grant, applies not to justification, as so many of the divines erroneously teach. It is the practical consequence of justification, or rather of the infinite work of the Saviour, in those who receive Him; but this is no reason why we should overlook, with many other divines, the equally sure and yet more solemnly important basis for our holy walk in His atonement.

Another remark it is well to add on verse 4:- how admirably it falls in with Romans 6: 14! It is only when the Holy Ghost works in a soul quickened with the life of Christ risen from the dead, by virtue of redemption through His blood, that power follows against sin. When practically under law, i.e., labouring to correct and improve the flesh, as too many saints are (like the case described in the latter half of Rom. 7), there is no power; and, spite of a renewed mind, there is constant failure and grief of heart in consequence. Christ, not the law, Christ in grace and truth, Christ dead and risen, is the sole power of holiness by the working of the Holy Spirit in us; and the heart answers in love to God and man, so that what the law required of those under itself, but in vain, is really fulfilled in those who are not under law but under grace.

The apostle proceeds to contrast more at length those who walk according to flesh with those who are in Christ. He shows that in both cases there is a nature with its own objects. It is not a question here of some faithful and others failing; "for those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Each class has its own sphere, which engages its mind and feelings. Manner or measure is not before us; but flesh and Spirit, or rather those characterized by them, go out after their respective natures and love or hate accordingly. Duty has its place, and is invariably claimed and regulated by the relationship in which people stand; but here another topic is under discussion, not so much relative position and its responsibilities as the new principle and power of the Christian compared with all other men. He is characterized, not by flesh (i.e., human nature fallen, estranged from God, and as we shall see, enmity against Him) but the Spirit, and this identifying itself with the very being and state of the Christian, just as we see in the case of demoniacs that they were bound up with their evil possession, so that the man and the unclean spirit could only be severed by God's power. Further on we have the Holy Spirit treated as an indwelling person, who acts in and with the believer; but here it is a characteristic state predicated of the Christian, contrasted with that of all other men out of which he is brought by faith in Christ. For all were alike in the same state, "in flesh," as born of Adam; but those according to the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit, things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to consider, things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.

Here it may be profitable to observe that the Spirit is not once brought before us in the first great division of our Epistle (Rom. 1 - 5: 11) till redemption, the remission of sins, was fully established, cleared and done with. It is only in the conclusion (Rom. 5: 1-11) which winds up this part of the apostle's argument that he introduces (ver. 5) the earliest mention of the Holy Ghost. "And hope maketh not ashamed. because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." In the appendix of doctrine on the divine deliverance, not from sins, but from sin, the method of procedure is exactly similar; the Holy Spirit only reappears in Romans 8 which is the conclusion to this most momentous addition. Only here, as connected more with practical state and walk, we meet with a rich development and great variety of application, instead of the passing though

sweet allusion of Romans 5.

Nor will the thoughtful Christian find it hard to discern the wisdom of God in both. For even in the face of this remarkable omission of the Spirit in the discussion of man's unrighteousness, and then of God's righteousness in the gospel by faith of Christ, man is prone enough to drag in what God has left out; and believers continually doom themselves to a lack of peace with God by an inquisitive search in themselves after the effects of the Spirit which might satisfy them of their renewal and acceptance. Now it is not denied for a moment that none but the Spirit quickens by the word, revealing Christ to the soul; yet this truth, acknowledged on all sides, makes the absence of reference to the Holy Ghost given so much the more notable.

Till redemption is known, God would direct the eye to Christ: He alone who died for the sinner is entitled to give him comfort in respect and in spite of his sins. His blood alone cleanses from all sin. It may be, it is, wholesome to look within as well as without, and to learn more and more what a sinner I am; but God will have me to look outside myself to Christ exclusively for pardon. To look within for righteousness by the Spirit enabling me is illusive, nay ruinous. I must be content with, and rejoice in, the blessedness David describes of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. Like Abraham, I need not be discouraged by my own weakness, or the inability of all around to help; I ought like him to give glory to God; for it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification. And therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

After all this it is that God speaks to us of the gift of the Spirit, and the love that is shed abroad in our hearts by Him. We can bear this truth then, as then only indeed we are sealed by the Spirit. For though the Spirit can and does quicken one dead in trespasses and sins, He never seals a soul in such a state; He seals only where there is life and cleansing by the shed blood of the Saviour. Christ no doubt had the Holy Ghost descending and abiding on Him apart from blood; but He was the Holy One of God and came to redeem others, not to be redeemed. But none other was or could be sealed save as a consequence of His redemption. Hence we see in the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles that the Holy Spirit was given in His name, even the quickened not being thus sealed till they submitted themselves (which was not always an immediate sequence) to the righteousness of God.

But here the allusion is brief. There is no dwelling on the internal operations of the Spirit till we come to Romans 8. The reason seems manifest. It would not be meet in due season till the mighty result of Christ's death and resurrection was applied to our nature, to our conscious and intelligent deliverance (by faith of His work) from the sense and power of sin, as well as from guilt by our sins against God. Christendom affords solemn lessons, not only in the past but in the present, of the dangers those run who take a different route. For what is the necessary result of mixing up an inward search after the fruits and witness of the Spirit with the anxieties of the soul anxious, and it may be quickened? It can be none other than either to buoy him up with a joy founded on feelings more or less self-righteous, or to plunge him, if conscientious, into the depths of distress, endeavouring to extract a miserable comfort from the very fact that he is so harassed with a sense of sin while he clings to the barest hope that he may be a child of God.

When the apostle has set forth fully the work of redemption, when we know, as believers in Christ, not merely the sins effaced by His precious blood, but sin in the flesh condemned — both morally in Him who was absolutely free from it, yet withal in grace to us bearing its consequences judicially as a sacrifice for it that there might be no condemnation to those that are in Him — when this is learnt

solidly by divine teaching, we are in a position to profit by the fullest instructions in the ways of God by His Spirit in respect of us. Here accordingly there is neither silence nor stint.

But it cannot be too rigidly insisted on that God's condemnation of sin was on the cross in the sacrifice of Christ for it. Those who deny that the soul's deliverance can be till we actually die, are no less in error than others who affirm that it means the new and sanctifying power of the Spirit by Christ. Both have to be taught a great truth which they have overlooked. Undoubtedly there is more before us than justification from our sins. It is a question of how to be rid of the burden of sin, indwelling sin; and till we lay hold of the revealed answer in Christ, the Spirit convicts of sin, instead of delivering from it. The answer is that God condemned sin in Him who was sent in the likeness of flesh of sin; but as a sacrifice for sin. Therefore to faith sin is as completely annulled as our sins — both righteously, but in grace, both by Him who for both suffered at God's hand that we might be delivered and know our deliverance now by the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord. We must not confound the effect of this in victory over sin with the act of God who thus condemned sin in the flesh. Christ's own personal overthrow of Satan and manifestation of uniform and spotless holiness here below would have but riveted condemnation on us more hopelessly, had He not also suffered for us on the cross. His sinlessness is incontestable; but it is ignorance and false doctrine to say that the condemnation of sin in the flesh is owing to it, not to His sacrifice for sin. Multitudes of divines may crowd the valley of indecision, and so say or write; but it is in vain. May their error perish, but not themselves! The sacrifice of Christ is the ground of our emancipation by the Spirit of life from the law of sin and death, as it is in order to a holy walk. The law, holy as it is, could effect neither; it claimed but never received righteousness, as it condemned the sinner without ever reaching sin in the flesh. This God did in Christ's sacrifice for sin, with its infinite blessing for us in both standing and walk. The law dealt with the old nature, the flesh, exposing its sinful character, but weak through it. The Spirit strengthens the new nature; and thus the believer, feeding on the word, walks accordingly, loving God and his neighbour.

Then follows the explanation why those who are in Christ walk according to the Spirit. If they were after flesh, the mind and affection would be on the things of the flesh. Source, character, and conduct go together. Flesh is never sublimated into spirit; nor does spirit sink or change to flesh; for, as the Lord said, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Even Adam unfallen was not spirit. Hence there was no question of resurrection or of heaven till all of original state was lost by sin. The Last Adam brings in the "better thing." Flesh cannot rise above itself, though it may fall into the depths of Satan. Even in its best estate we may perhaps say, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I [Christ] shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

And as the essential character thus differs, as well as the range and objects of flesh and Spirit, so also the issues. "For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit life and peace." (Ver. 6.) The flesh has not one pulse of life Godward, however active in its pursuits and pleasures here. On the other hand, the mind of the Spirit, its exercise of thought and feeling, is life and peace. It was so in Christ; and so it is in the Christian. How a sinner is to find either life from God or peace with God is not the subject-matter in hand, but the moral bent and result of flesh and Spirit. Flesh satisfies itself, or at least its desires are set on things seen and felt apart from God or His word; the Spirit cannot rest short of the love and the glory of Christ. And as this only is the life of the Spirit, so it is peace of heart. In every sense God has called us in peace; whereas, there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. How could it be otherwise with fallen humanity? "Because the mind of the flesh [is] enmity against

God; for to the law of God it is not subject;" nor need one wonder, "for it is not possible. But they then that are in flesh cannot please God." (Ver. 7, 8.)

Awful conclusion for man as he is! Would that he laid it to heart as the truth, the sentence pronounced by the Judge of all the earth! No fruit for God grows on that tree for ever. There is and must be for the believer a new life in order to fruit-bearing. Not the things that are seen, the things of the flesh, but the revelation of the unseen, the word of God Himself, seen by faith in Christ, nourishes this life; for without faith, the same apostle tells us in another epistle, it is impossible to please God. Now the flesh never trusts God; its mind is enmity against Him. The law brings in His authority and interdicts to the flesh its own way, which is everything to it. Hence its independence proves to be enmity against God; for in virtue of seeking its own will it neither does nor can subject itself to His law. Obedience is essentially incompatible with the self-will, the ἀνομία, of the flesh, which would cease to be itself if it obeyed God. Hence the application of the principle to the unrenewed. "And they that are in flesh cannot please God," whose complacency is in the man that ever sought and did God's will, not His own, and thus ever practised the things agreeable to His Father.

To be in flesh then is hopeless ruin, its mind being at variance with God, and in utter insubjection to His law; and this is the sad condition of all the sons of fallen Adam. It is not however the standing of the Christian. As in the beginning of our chapter he is said to be in Christ and consequently outside every possible condemnation, so here it is said, "but ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwell in you."

Thus the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is the witness and proof that we are "in Spirit," and consequently not in flesh. But it would be a mistake to conclude that this condition was not reached and supposed in the preceding chapters. Indeed Romans 7: 5 unquestionably implies the contrary — "for *when we were* in the flesh," etc.; consequently we are not in the flesh now as Christians. So in Romans 6, the saints were bondmen of sin but now freed from it, bound therefore to reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, under grace and not under law. This cannot be without life and the Spirit. The man who is alive of that new life takes the place of death at the word of the Lord, and attests the end of the old man in his own person. But in Romans 8, for reasons already given, the apostle is free to develop the relation of the Spirit to the Christian, and His various operations in and with the soul as far as would be suitable to the epistle in hand. We are in Spirit, if at all events God's Spirit dwell in us. Now that it is evident that man is equally weak and ungodly, now that he has learnt that the way of God is not by victory over sin, but (owning his total powerlessness to recover or do well) by the work of Christ and death with Him, he can safely hear of the ways of the Spirit. He will not now seek by efforts to get free, for he has surrendered to the solemn and humbling fact of what he is as well as confessed his misdoings. God is wise and good in this as in all else: for if He strengthened the converted soul in its desire to gain the victory over indwelling evil by the work of the Spirit, it would make the work of Christ incomparably less prized and the soul satisfied with itself under pretence of trusting in the Spirit.

In truth scripture knows no such thing as trusting in the working of the Spirit in us as distinguished from trusting in ourselves or in our works. For what the Spirit enables us as God's children to do is ever counted as our own, and will be remembered and rewarded accordingly when God proves Himself not unrighteous to forget our work and the love shown to His name.

Deliverance is by death — the death of Christ, with whom we died. But we are alive to God in Him, and the Spirit dwells in us. We can then without presumption say that we are not in flesh. We are not viewed as mere men, characterized by the first Adam state and responsibilities; as it had been

already shown that we are not under law, like Israel, but under grace. Not, I must add, that we are not responsible, but that our responsibility is of a new character, founded on the new relationship which grace has given us when delivered from our old state of ruined men. "Ye are not in flesh." Nothing short of this is the due language of the Christian. It is the most general expression for nature, for man as he is; and, as Christians, such is not our condition. We are "in Spirit," not merely under the dominion of our own renewed mind; but that which was first set before us as being "in Christ" is here said to be "in Spirit," a condition formed by the action of the Holy Ghost who is glorifying Christ according to the will and mission of the Father.

Let us bear in mind that it is more than being born of the Spirit, which in fact embraces all saints, and is not more true of the Christian than of the Old Testament or of the millennial saint. But to be "in Spirit" goes farther, and is proved by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after Jesus died, rose, and went on high. "But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if at all events God's Spirit dwell in you." Christ risen is a life-giving Spirit, as we see in John 20; exalted, He sends down the Holy Spirit as power. (Acts 2.) If one really believes in Christ — i.e., the gospel, he receives the Spirit and so can be said to be "in Spirit." This is the sole recognized condition, though there may be a state short of it for a season. The case described or personated by the apostle in the central and latter part of Romans 7 is that of one born of the Spirit, but not yet "in Spirit," which is the proper christian state.

Observe that it is no question here of measure, or of moral disposition, but of new facts in the realm of grace. Certainly he of whom they are true is intended to realize their truth and to walk accordingly. Still it is important to see that God reveals to the Christian, not as a special privilege of a favoured soul here and there, but as a broad certain characteristic of those now called according to His purpose, that they are not in flesh but in Spirit. There is no mingling of the two states. We were in the one; we are now in the other. It is not a state, again, after our death physically, but after Christ's death, at least when it can also be said that we died with Him. It is therefore true of the Christian now in this world, absolutely true from the beginning of his career on earth as a Christian till its close. I speak of course of the true believer only.

Is there no partial state recognized here? No fluctuating, no uncertainty, no mixing up of the old Adam state and Christ? Not in the slightest degree. "Ye are not in flesh but in Spirit." Is the Christian then without the flesh? Clearly not; but the true state and statement of the case is, not that he is in flesh, but that flesh is in him. The old nature is there, and ready to break out into sin if there be not self-judgment, watchfulness against the enemy, and looking to Christ. The flesh is beyond doubt in the believer: only he is no longer in flesh, but in that new estate of which Christ is the display and the Holy Spirit is the power and character. The flesh is an evil thing, always to be hated and in nothing allowed. The Christian however is entitled to know that he is not in flesh, but that he is clean contrary to it as to his condition — in Spirit, always supposing that God's Spirit dwells in him. Anything anomalous or intermediate is not here taken into account. The apostle contrasts this previous natural state with the full christian position, not strictly speaking, with the new birth. Thus the Spirit's dwelling in the believer is used as the then public testimony on God's part. This must be modified in the present confusion of doctrine, as well as the absence of manifestations in power. Yet the great substantial truth abides unchanged.

"But if any one hath not Christ's Spirit, he is not his." This parenthetical statement is to be weighed without deducing, as is often done, what it was clearly not intended to convey. Thus some would draw from it that the Old Testament saints must have had Christ's Spirit in the sense here discussed, as others again would deny a condition of soul in which one may be quickened, as in the latter part of Romans, without being sealed, examples of which are so frequent in the Acts of the Apostles. But the fact is that

the apostle is now treating of one who is no Christian at all save in outward name, like Simon Magus, in contrast with those who have Christ's Spirit. And this seems to be confirmed by the use of ἀποῶ rather than ἀποῶ. Where the soul submits to divine righteousness in Christ, the Father seals with the Spirit. Here I suppose He is designated "Christ's," not as if it were another Spirit than God's, but as having displayed Himself there above all in the perfection of a life consecrated to God from first to last. Grace gives the Spirit to all that believe on Him now, not necessarily when the soul is first ploughed up, but assuredly on receiving the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. So sure is it, that if one has not His Spirit, one is not of Him.

It is evident that the apostle is here closing the answer to the question in the latter verses of Romans 7: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" In the answer there are three parts. The first is, that as Christians we start with a position of deliverance in Christ (Rom. 8: 1) and the possession of a life of liberty (ver. 2), in both its parts founded on and justified by the cross of Christ (ver. 3). There could be, and there ought to be, no deliverance, unless sin were righteously atoned for and blotted out before God. Ought a single sinner to be set free, if God's glory were enfeebled by it? But it is not so. On the contrary never was such glory brought to God as by the cross of the Lord Jesus; never such a display of righteousness as well as of love as in the cross; and more than this, there never can be such a display again. The one spot and hour and act and person that stands out from the whole of this world's history from eternity and to eternity, distinct from all that ever was or ever will be, is the cross of the Lord Jesus; and yet it was in consequence of this very cross that God could deal in such tender mercy before it came; and it is in consequence of it that God will never rest in His love till all sin is completely gone, all evil judged, and all His mercy has had its full result in the accomplishment of His purposes. No wonder therefore that the cross of the Lord Jesus has brought in a signal change even now. It would not have been worthy of God had He not given by it a present deliverance to him that believes in Christ.

This deliverance then consists of these two parts: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that we are placed in and as Christ before God. For Christ was not an individual solely, who simply came and did a great work for others, but apart from bearing our sins He is a public man in an infinitely better sense than any other could be. The queen, for instance, is a public person. As sovereign she gives expression to whatever is the law of the land; her sign-manual is supreme authority. Properly speaking there is no statute law without her. I use this merely as an illustration. But the Lord Jesus is a public person in an infinitely higher yet closer and nearer way, because no subject could be said to be in the sovereign as the Christian is in Christ. She may represent the people that she governs, but there could be nothing more intimate in their relation to her. The wonderful truth of redemption shows that the Lord Jesus is a public person so far as to give us a place in Himself above, and not only in identifying Himself with our guilt before God which He did once for all on the cross. In another sense He died for every man. Nothing can be more certain than that both are true, that He died for those that believe, and that He died for every man — with this difference, that the believer alone can say that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But it is the guilt of the natural man that, Christ having died for all, he nevertheless rejects Him. Yes, the deepest aggravation of unbelief is that, though Christ came for every creature, none would have Him. Not a living soul would have had Him unless by the special grace of God that opens a believer's eyes and inclines his heart to receive Him. This God does for the elect, though all be responsible.

But the Lord Jesus is more than a Saviour who died for us and our guilt. He is now the great pattern of One who, having been under the most intolerable judgment of sin, rose from the dead perfectly delivered and in the fullest sunshine of divine delight and peace and joy to show us where the

Christian is and how God looks upon him. Is not his place in Christ Jesus, risen from the dead? Is he not entitled to look up and say, There is where I am? I am not denying that here we are still walking in this poor wretched world; but God's word warrants us as Christians to receive what He has done in Christ and to say that we are thus in Him. As a man, I look back at Adam and see his sin, the power of his natural affections carrying him away. When he fell, did he remain the noble creature he was before he fell? Alas! he was deceitful, yet insolent, willing to throw the blame upon his wife or upon God in order to excuse himself. So every sinful man is apt to be not only bold against God but a coward with a bad conscience. And this is what we are in our natural state, some showing more of the insolence, others of the cowardice. There is not a bold man that is not sometimes a coward, and alas! there is no man so timid that he is not sometimes insolent. How complete the moral havoc before God and man!

God then has brought in this perfect deliverance now, but only for the soul in its standing in the first place. He that has received Christ has this wonderful boon, not only his sins forgiven, but his sin so judged that God can and does put him in Christ, and as Christ before Himself. He is entitled to repeat the language of faith and say, I am in Christ Jesus, and there is therefore no condemnation. How can there be condemnation for Christ? It is Christ that settles and determines the place that grace has given me as a believer. Consequently I may humbly say, as the word of God for my soul, There is no condemnation.

But there is more than this. He will not allow it to be merely vague, lest it might appear intangible general blessing, but as pointed and personal as can be. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." It is not merely the death of Christ Jesus. His death in itself never gives full christian liberty. It met my guilt, but I want more than this; I want a power of life that has won the victory. And this is what I have through grace. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death." No wonder therefore that people, when not aware of this, are always occupied with a miserable toil under the law, rather hoping than knowing their sins forgiven. But the blood of Jesus, His mighty work, in death, simply meets their guilt and puts away the iniquities of the old man. Do you not also need the power of a new and risen life? This is what follows. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death." Such is the second part of the deliverance. First, there is no condemnation in Christ; next, this power of life in Christ is mine; and both these things are vindicated by the cross of Christ which he mentions in the following verse. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The practical consequence follows: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Is there then no flesh? There is the old evil nature in the believer; but he is not in flesh, he is in Christ. You cannot be in sin and in Christ at the same time; you cannot be in Adam and in Christ together. You *were* in Adam as man, but *are* in Christ as a Christian. Hence the apostle goes so far as to declare that the Christian is not in flesh at all. Does this mean that we are perfect and nothing else? Not in the least. It does suppose that you are made perfect in Christ, but it admits the humiliating fact that flesh is in us: otherwise we should never do wrong at all, there would be no self, no vanity or pride in us. But if we are not in flesh, as has been often said, flesh is in us as a matter of fact. "Ye are not in flesh" is God's estimate of the deliverance already given us in Christ Jesus.

Verse 10 does not speak about our being in Christ, but rather the converse, which is sometimes forgotten by the children of God. Not only am I in Christ, but Christ is in me as a believer. The effect of knowing that I am in Christ is that there is no condemnation: not merely am I not condemned in this or that, but all condemnation is absolutely annulled. There could not be anything of the sort for the Christian. God must condemn His own Son if He condemned those that are in Him; and every Christian

is in Him. I grant you that people may make a bad use of this, but those who go on thus are not to be regarded as Christians at all, as indeed they never were. They were professors and nothing but professors; light-hearted men that would treat the Lord Jesus as they would one of their fellows, and the grace and truth of God as a common thing, making God the servant of their own lusts. Now He can be a Saviour from all evil, but never a servant to the will and passions of men. But what He loves is grace, where a poor sinner, miserable because of his sins, and hearing the announcement of His gift of Christ, comes to Him to be saved. Could God with Christ in His presence say No? Contrariwise, the measure of His salvation is that, first of all, as to our standing, we are put in Christ risen from the dead, who is his life in the power of the Spirit. Next, there is the active working of the Spirit of God in the believer. This is what is spoken of here: "If Christ be in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit life, because of righteousness." If I allow the body its own will, there is nothing but sin produced. How am I to get power against its dragging me into sin? Hold it for dead: this is the prescription. "If Christ be in you" — he is not speaking of unbelievers, but simply about Christians. To them the word is, If Christ be in you. Remember, this is what you are to do: count the body as a dead thing; do not pamper it, never yield to it. If there be the allowance of the active will therein, it is not merely the body, it becomes then simply "flesh." Where rein is given to the will, irrespective of course of God's, the body is but the instrument of sin, not of righteousness. Thus the way for the Christian to get power against the sin that is in him is to count the body dead. Is he that is dead to allow such and such an evil thing to work? When you cease to hold it for dead, there is sin; but if you do, the Spirit works in moral power. "The Spirit [is] life, because of righteousness."

It is only so far as you do not yield to your own will that sin is practically null and void, and the Spirit of God acts freely. The apostle is looking at the actual working of the Spirit of God in us. It is not life simply viewed as ours, but as in exercise, a matter of experience day by day. What is between these two points (i.e., the soul's deliverance as in verses 1, 2, and the resurrection of our bodies)? "If Christ be in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit life because of righteousness." Righteousness is not found simply by seeing that I am in Christ. This alone will not do. A man who merely talks about being in Christ and makes this his Christianity will turn out very bad indeed. He is merely making Christ a means for getting off eternal condemnation and present responsibility, but this will not do. As sure as you have got Christ and you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and if Christ is in you, take care you do not allow self to work. Where the body is not treated as dead but as alive, and is allowed to have its way, sin must be the result. If you treat it as dead, its career is cut short, its course is closed, and the Spirit of God deigns to become the sole spring of what you are seeking.

And let no one suppose that this is bondage. It is christian liberty. To do a thing because you must do it is never christian liberty. A slave thus works because he must; and we also, when in a low state, are apt to make a law of everything. When the affections are not flowing, we are only kept from what is openly evil, because there is a servile dread of doing what our consciences know is contrary to God. When this is the case, I am forgetting my ground of duty. What is it? Even now Christ is in me. If Christ be in me here, I am responsible to do His will. How is this to be done? I have got my body: if I allow it to have its own will and way, it will land me in sin. Treat it as dead; and let the one spring of what you desire be that which pleases the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit [is] life because of righteousness." There is no practical righteousness produced in the Christian, except by the power of the Spirit of God. If the body is allowed loose rein in what we desire, it is only sin. The Spirit, on the contrary, is life in the practical sense, and this is the only way of righteousness for our walk.

But then there is a third point of the deliverance, this is, that, "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you" (which we have been shown now to be the case, not only dwelling in

us but also life because of righteousness), "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [or rather because of] his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This is a rich and precious word. As sure as you now have the Spirit of God dwelling in you — the Spirit that raised up the humbled man Jesus, He that raised up the glorious One, who was made Lord and Christ, will raise up your mortal bodies. We have to mark the contrast of His personal name "Jesus" as compared with what follows. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies" and this "because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Deliverance is then complete.

I grant you there is no power intrinsically, there is mortality, working in our bodies; but "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you." What a sure hope and full portion is that of the Christian! For thus I am delivered in my soul; I am called to give my testimony practically by the Holy Ghost that I am delivered, instead of being a man under law or in the flesh; and, again, I shall be raised. Even this mortal body shall be quickened — not a new body created and given me, but this mortal body shall be changed. This is no mere fresh creation but the most glorious proof of God's love and grace towards us. The mortal body shall be raised because of His Spirit that dwelleth in us. The Holy One who now dwells in us will never let go His claim to the mortal body in which He now dwells. He dwells in us, because of the risen life of Christ that is in the redeemed. If redemption had not been accomplished, and the life of Christ had not been given to us, He could not dwell in us; but where these are, He as it were says, There I must be. The Holy Ghost cannot be separated from Christ in the believer. He acts as one who loves to be there to the glory of Christ; and thus He strengthens us, the active mighty spring of good and the watchful guard against evil. "The Spirit [is] life because of righteousness." But as sure as this is the case, "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 because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The practical conclusion of the apostle follows. "So, then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if by [the] Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Ver. 12, 13.) The deliverance of the Christian gives him the fullest title against the flesh; and he has the power of the Spirit that he should live according to Christ, not according to flesh. The structure of the phraseology is peculiar, but I believe admirably wise. The sentence looks unfinished and sounds as if another member were wanting to complete it. But God is always right; and no addition is needful or even admissible: if anything were added, it would but detract from the force of the truth as now stated. "We are debtors not to the flesh to live according to flesh." Used to the schools and forms of man, one waits for some such statement to be added as that we are debtors to the Spirit or to Christ the Lord. This the inspired writer avoids saying. He knows the tendency to legalism, and would cut off excuse first. He would maintain us in liberty, the full liberty with which Christ set us free. But there is no enfeebling of responsibility. On the one hand, "If ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" on the other hand. The former is a natural and necessary consequence; the latter is a gracious and assuring pledge from God.

"For as many as are led by God's Spirit, they are sons of God." (Ver. 14.) Here we begin to hear of our relationship in contrast with the place of servants or slaves, which Israel had under law. It also paves the way for the introduction of the Spirit as the personal agent, instead of being viewed simply as characterizing our new nature and status in contrast with flesh. But it is not correct to say that υἱὸς Θεοῦ differs from τέκνον Θεοῦ in implying the higher and more mature and conscious member of God's family. The true distinction is that the former is the less intimate of the two and does not necessarily suppose a proper birth-tie. It need not go beyond public position by adoption, without being really born

into the family, but in full contradistinction in every case to the place of a slave. Hence John, who treats of life, never speaks of us as "sons;" for the word is wrongly rendered so in John 1: 12 and in 1 John 3: 1, 2. It should be "children," as being truly born of God. Nor is this at all enfeebled by the fact on the other side that Jesus is never called τέκνον but υἱός. It would be derogatory to, and a denial of, His eternal glory to speak of Him as God's τέκνον (child). But He is Son (υἱός) in more senses than one. He is Son of God as born in time and viewed on earth in His predicted association with Israel as their Messiah and king. (Psalm 2.) He is determined as Son of God in power by resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1.) And what is more important than all, and the basis of all, He is Son of God, only-begotten Son in the Father's bosom, entirely apart from the time of His manifestation or the results of His work of redemption, Son of the Father in His own nature and personal relationship in that eternal subsistence which is essential to the Godhead and characteristic of it. For this last we have chiefly to consult the Gospel and Epistles of John. Nothing therefore can be more correct than the language of all the inspired writers; nothing more feeble than its appreciation by theological writers even with the facts and words before their eyes. But the source of their failure is quite intelligible: a sense of Christ's glory as inadequate as of the derived privileges of the Christian.

Thus we have seen the weighty and momentous fact that the Holy Spirit in distinct personal action associates Himself with the Christian. It is not only that He produces a new spiritual being and estate into which those who are Christ's are now brought: this we have had largely, but there is more insisted on here. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Not merely must one be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (John 3: 5); not merely did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit, as Spirit of life more abundantly, when the risen Jesus breathed on them (John 20: 22); but now the Holy Ghost, personally present, guided these richly favoured saints in the conscious dignity of God's sons. There is liberty where He is, not law; yet the moral result which law demanded grace produced; for if they in dependence look to the Lord Jesus, and to their God and Father, He on His part is no spirit of weakness or of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind, and by Him are they thus led.

"For ye received not a spirit of bondage again to [or for] fear; but ye received a spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Ver. 15.) Gentiles though they were (for there is no allusion here as in Romans 7 to such as know the law), they were not brought into the spiritual condition of the saints in Old Testament times, especially indeed of those under law, who through fear of death were subject to bondage during the whole of their life. Out of this the Jewish saints were brought by the gospel, which equally met the Gentile who had never experienced the legal discipline, but had lain here and there, seemingly overlooked in their wild course of lawlessness and idolatry. The one as much as the other received a spirit of adoption or sonship, as indeed it is said elsewhere: "because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The Holy Ghost could not but act in unison with the Son who had revealed the Father, and would give the sense of no relationship short of sons. The slaves had morally closed their history, not only by persistent rebellion, but by war to the death of the Son of God. From a lost world grace was saving, and placing those who believed in the Lord Jesus in the position of sons; and the Holy Ghost personally deigned to lead them, beside imparting a nature conformable to God and distinct from man though made good in man. It is in contrast then not merely with Gentile license and boldness, but with Jewish bondage and fear; and the Spirit gives us to cry, Abba, Father. So cried Jesus in Gethsemane, not on the cross. If we cry thus, it is the expression of dependence on and confidence in our Father, not of a suffering such as His, where His utter abandonment draws forth the still deeper and essentially distinct "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, heirs also; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with [him] that we may also be glorified with [him]." (Ver. 16, 17.)

Thus the Holy Spirit takes part in all. Does He content Himself only with imparting a new and divine nature? By no means. He has His appropriate internal witness; He Himself bears it with our spirit that we are of the very family of God, as indeed we are born of God. But now it is not alone the fact but the conscious joy of it. Christianity is not objective only, but just as remarkable for the gift by grace of inner power and comfort; the Son reveals the Father, and gives the Spirit. It is not merely the gospel believed, but a real inward witnessing of the Spirit with ours that we are God's children. There is far more no doubt; but this there is, and it is of consequence to recognize it. Some may have substituted it for the testimony to Christ and redemption; but we must avoid the error of denying it. He would not be absent from the joy of the saint. Have we not this consciousness of being God's children? Whence have we it? Is it a process of reasoning from the gospel? God forbid. Let us call realities by their right names. It is the Spirit itself witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God. How Calvinists or Arminians misuse it may be of importance in each case; but this is the truth of God, realized in every simple-minded Christian, whether opposing parties hear or forbear.

Here the reasoning, it will be remarked, is not to our being God's children, but from it. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God: the inference is, that if children, we are also heirs. Wondrous to say, we are "heirs of God;" more wonderful still, "joint-heirs with Christ." Israel were the lot of Jehovah's inheritance. Not such is our place; we are heirs of what God possesses; and this is both asserted in all its fulness as well as accounted for in our added title — "joint-heirs with Christ." We are to share all things with Him, for as all things are His by right of creation and redemption, so are they ours by His grace who has placed in the utmost possible nearness to Himself. There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His. It is not suffering *for* Him; for all Christians do not. But all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world, which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature. It will not be so in the millennial age; when, as the state of things will preclude suffering, so there will be no specific glorification with Him as the hope of such sufferers. Special trials and rewards will be no more, though there will still remain the reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever, But the reign with Him for a thousand years will be past, as also concurrently the place of suffering with Him.

Thus our association with Christ brings us into the new place which He has entered by death and resurrection, and into the relationship of sons. Yea, the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs — heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, the Heir of all things. But this supposes moral conformity with Him in this world, before we are conformed to His image in glory as in verses 29, 30, if we are suffering together that we may be also glorified together. This suffering flows from possessing life in Him whilst passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him; and the indwelling of the Spirit, instead of hindering this holy sorrow, is rather the spring of energy both in keen apprehension and deep feeling of every way in which Christ is dishonoured, and in meek endurance of all by which we may be tried according to the will of God. Hence, if this place of suffering in the world as it now is be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present season [are] of no account in comparison with the coming glory to be revealed in regard to us."* No Christian doubts that the apostle estimates according

to divine truth; and certainly if none had by God's sovereign will and power of the Spirit such a vivid foresight of the coming glory, none of those that followed Christ ever tasted as He of sorrows by the way. And this is made known to us that we may rest and rejoice in the reckoning. The divine excellency will then shine forth unhindered, and we shall have the fellowship of His delight everywhere.

*The phraseology seems to me choice and precise. It is not ἡμῶν, which after ἀποκαλυφθῆναι would be ambiguous and is already appropriated to the sense of receiving spiritual communication. It is not ἐν ἡμῶν, which makes or tends to make the glory concentrated and terminated in us. Εἰς ἡμᾶς leaves room for us to be reached by the glory but takes it in universally.

Far as the distance may seem between creation in general and those whom grace has now taken out of its ruin and associated in so intimate and complete a way with Christ as the Christian knows it, there is a link of the most direct and momentous sort. "For the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but on account of him who made [it] subject, in hope that† even the creation itself shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." Here, as it is a passage of very great interest and value, so ignorance of the truth conveyed has embarrassed most of those who have sought to expound it, whether orally or in formal commentaries. There is no real difficulty where the main drift of the apostle is caught. The perplexity, as is usually the case, is brought in with notions extraneous to his reasoning. Let us then consider briefly the truth conveyed, and that which has made it obscure to the mass of readers.

†Or, "in hope: because."

Both the present sufferings and the future glory in the apostle's mind touch on the creation, which he here personifies. It is represented first of all as on the stretch of outlook, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. Externally His sons do not differ in bodily appearance, power, or glory from the rest of mankind; they may be weak, they may suffer, as also they fall asleep or die while the Lord tarries on high. But after the resurrection or change, at His coming, they are to be manifested in glory with Christ when He is thus manifested also. Creation too awaits this blissful moment. Its deliverance from its actual misery hinges on them and their revelation.

Nor is there any ground of surprise at such a connection with men; for creation was made subject to vanity, not of course by its own will, but on his account who made it subject. Man was set by God as the head of the lower creation. When he fell, creation shared his ruin. When the sons of God are revealed at the appearing of Christ, there will be a proof that it was made dependent on them, and that the hope of emancipation is not in vain. If it was righteous that by the fall of its head creation should be subjected to vanity, how consistent and worthy of God that the redemption of His children and heirs should be followed by its glorious retrieval!

To explain this of the Gentile world, as is done by Whitby and others, is poor indeed; as also Doddridge's notion that it is merely the whole unevangelized world looking out eagerly for such a remedy and relief as the gospel brings, by which humanity would be secured from vanity and corruption, and inferior creatures from tyranny and abuse.

The apostle however is not speaking of the prevalency of the gospel of grace, but of the incoming and display of glory, and hence of the divine power which will free the creation, ruined by man, according to His own counsels. When the heirs are glorified around the great Firstborn and appear with Him in glory, then and thus is the inheritance to emerge from the thralldom under which it has long groaned, "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy

prophets since the world began." Compare Isa. 11, Isa. 12, Isa. 25, Isa. 32, Isa. 35-51, Isa. 60-65; Jer. 31-33; Ezek. 36-48; Dan. 2: 44, 45; Dan. 7: 14, 27; Dan. 12; Hosea 1: 11; Hosea 2; Hosea 3: 5; Joel 3; Amos 9; Obadiah 17, Obadiah 21; Jonah (typically); Micah 4, Micah 5, Micah 7; Nahum 1: 15; Hab. 3; Zeph. 3; Haggai 2: 6-9, 21-23; Zech. 2: 4-13, Zech. 6, Zech. 8-14; Mal. 3, Mal. 4. It is the regeneration of which our Lord spoke when His rights shall be made good in the full and duly ordered blessing of Israel on earth. (Matt. 19.) It is the administration of the fulness of times when God's will is to gather up together all things in Christ, the things which are in the heavens and the things which are on the earth, even in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance. (Eph. 1: 10, 11.) For the reconciliation is to take in all things, not merely the saints who are now reconciled. (Col. 1.) This will be the rest of God (Heb. 4); and then will be manifested the wide and various circles of blessedness and glory, fruit of pure grace, to which we are come before they come in fact for the earth (Heb. 12), the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, who shall reign unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 11), as is set forth in a crowd of other scriptures.

The creation was not made (as it now is) in decay, degradation, suffering, death. That God originally designed that it should be in such confusion and misery would be hard to digest; but the scriptures teach the contrary, as it shows that, whilst subjected to its present disorder on account of man's guilt and ruin, it longs not in vain for deliverance, but awaits in hope His revelation in glory. The very struggle of everything for life and against sickness witnesses that it is fallen to rise. Thus not only is the riddle of what now is solved by God's account of the past, but His word casts its own bright light on the future; for, though subjected to vanity, it was "in hope that even the creation itself shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." It is only by faith that any enter into the liberty of grace; and this is the portion even now of God's children under the gospel. Creation cannot of necessity know such liberty, being unintelligent even where it is animate; but even itself shall exchange the slavery of corruption by which it is now held down for the liberty of glory when the children of God are glorified. Thus all will be vindicated on God's part, and all in due order. There can be no communion between us and creation in grace; there will be in glory when the power of God deals with all creation in honour of Christ's death, whose blood has bought not the treasure only but the field, the world which contained it, yea, all things.

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth together and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only [so], but ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved; but a hope seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he also hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, we await with patience." (Ver. 22-25.) Here is the most decisive evidence, were more wanted, of the distinction between the creation* on the one hand and the Christian on the other. And observe that the contrast is drawn most sharply and exclusively; for "all the creation" is distinguished from "ourselves." Again, the mistake of embracing impenitent souls within "the creation" here intended is no less plain; for it is certain that, as *their* will is engaged, contrary to what is said of the subjection of the creation to vanity, so their earnest expectation awaits anything rather than the revelation of the sons of God, and they will be cast into hell instead of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of glory.

*Theodoret (in loc. ed. Sirmondi, tom. iii.) seems to err on the side of comprehending too much; for he includes not only the material universe, heaven, earth, sea, air, sun, moon, all the visible, but the invisible besides, angels, archangel(s?), powers, authorities, principalities. It is true that he is not consistent; for, in commenting on verse 20, he is obliged to restrain the subjection to vanity to all the visible creation by the decree of the Creator; yet in verse 22 he extends it even to the invisible on the

rather far-fetched plea that, if angels rejoice over a repentant sinner, they must needs be saddened at the sight of our delinquencies. The same writer, I may add, is quite wrong, like others since his day, in fancying that by the first-fruits of the Spirit, the apostle implies the gift to us of manifold more of the Spirit in the age to come. The reader will notice how commonly current errors are due to the fathers, or perhaps independently to the same corrupt root of unbelief which slights the teaching of the scriptures.

As Christians then we are not deceived by appearances and the mind and will of man who would fain hide the testimony to his own guilt and ruin in the wretchedness of creation dragged down by his fault. For we know that it is all in groans and throes till now: neither Christ's coming in grace and humiliation, nor the gospel preached in the power of the Spirit sent down from heaven set this aside, but called believers to glory above it, and to virtue in spite of it. Yet the groaning of creation was not only unintelligent but selfish, though in no way a matter of indifference to God, whatever it may be to dreamy or hard philosophy. And ourselves too, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, awaiting as sonship the redemption of our bodies. For the body of the believer has not yet experienced the power of Christ, and thus we have our link with the groaning creation. And the Spirit gives us so much the more to groan because we have access by faith into this favour in which we stand and we exult in hope of the glory of God. *Our* groaning therefore is not unintelligent, nor is it simply because of our personal suffering; but in fellowship with Christ, in horror of abounding evil, in love of good despised, in yearning after man and in desire for God's truth and majesty. The Spirit, though of power and love and discreetness, makes us so much the more long for the day, when we shall be changed and manifestly sons of God as sons of the resurrection. It is not the sorrow of ignorant unbelieving uncertainty, but of the inward mind and heart over what is far from God and unlike Him, because of knowing what He is in Christ and in full confidence that we shall be like Him in that day. For we have only salvation by hope, not yet seen or in present possession; we hope for it complete according to Christ risen, and with patience await. It is well worth while.

We have seen the function of the Spirit in bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, as we saw previously the new condition which He forms in contrast with the flesh, and in which we now find ourselves by grace — in Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in us. Then we had the apostle contrasting the creation as it now groans with the liberty of glory when the sons of God, the heirs, are manifested in glory at the appearing of Christ; and along with this, the groaning of the saints, whose bodies are not yet delivered, no longer because of selfish feelings but in the interests and sympathies of divine love.

Now we are told of the relation of the indwelling Spirit to this state of weakness and suffering.

"And likewise the Spirit also joineth help to our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedeth* with unutterable groanings, and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedeth for saints according to God."

*The received text inserts here ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν contrary to the best authorities. It seems to me implied, and needless to say, if not rather narrowing the thought. In the following verse we have ὑπὲρ ἁγίων expressed in its due place.

Thus the blessed Spirit of God will not be severed from our weakness, now that He deigns to take His abode in us because of Christ's redemption. Even he who could work signs and miracles did not differ from his brethren by exemption from infirmity. Rather was Paul, the greatest of apostles, more than any other sensible of it. Caught up to the third heaven (whether in the body or out of it, he could not tell), he gloried of such an one, not of himself save in his weaknesses. And when he prayed to the Lord for the removal of the thorn for the flesh given to him, what was the answer? Not its departure;

but "my grace sufficeth for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness." "Most gladly therefore," says he, "will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

It was not otherwise with the perfect pattern of all excellency in man here below. "Jesus wept." He was deeply pained, sighing sorely in His Spirit. He knew what to say and what to do, conscious that the Father always heard Him. But we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unutterable. It is not now simply Christ with us but the Spirit in us, condescending to give our groanings a character entirely above the mere feelings of human sorrow. We feel the evil of the misery; we do not know what to ask; but at least we groan. Wondrous grace! the Spirit associates Himself with our groaning; and the searcher of the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Instead of slighting the ignorance which cannot ask a suitable means of relief, He interprets us by His mind who dwells in us, and who intercedes for saints (for of them only is it a question) according to God. It is not merely "according to his will," as in the Authorized Version, but according to Himself. The inference of Macedonius from the passage is the working of the spirit of man wholly ignorant of God's mind which he altogether missed; nay, it is worse than this, it betrays the beguiling power of the serpent, for it evinces that enmity to God and man which not only loses all the comfort of the truth but turns the word to the dishonour of the Holy Spirit. For the unhappy man concluded from the text that the Spirit must be inferior to God and a creature, because He prays to God for us. He knew not grace, he appreciated not the moral glory of God which stoops to serve, as love must do, if it save sinners in an evil world. Man can understand power in God; but love, especially love active spite of evil, humbling itself, and sympathizing, he overlooks and denies even to the denial of God Himself in those of whom it is predicated. The believer knows it as his deepest joy, and never adores with so full a sense of what God is as when he sees the Father declared in the Son, and knows that even his groans come up before God clothed with a divine character because of the Holy Ghost who is in us by the grace of our God. Just as evil spirits identified the miserable man who was thus possessed with their demoniacal character, and an individual was called Legion because many demons were entered into him; so the Spirit of God not less but more in divine goodness and power identifies us with Himself spite of our weakness and our ignorance, not for a moment lowering His own dignity but meeting us in love as only God could, and as even God would only in virtue of redemption.

These verses are a transitional link from the work of the Spirit in us to the bold challenge in the conclusion of the chapter (ver. 31-39), grounded on the assurance that God is *for* us against all adversaries and spite of every weakness. That they may be rightly viewed thus is apparent. First, there is a distinct allusion, in the opening words, to the previous clause, which traced the value and comfort of the Spirit in helping our infirmity. For He, when we know not what to pray for as we ought, Himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings, yet according to God. Secondly, on the other hand, they are in bearing still more intimately a groundwork for what follows; for they set forth in a striking and connected manner the purpose of God as far as it is consistent with our epistle to treat of it.

We do not know what we should pray for as we ought; "but we do know that to those that love God all things work together for good, to those that are called according to purpose. Because those whom he foreknew he also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren. But whom he predestined, those he also called; and whom he called, those he also justified. but whom he justified, those he also glorified." (Ver. 28-30.) The chain is thus complete from His own purpose in eternity to their glorification for eternity. It is the activity, extent, and scope of the grace of God for its objects apart from all circumstances, and, as we shall see later, in spite of them, let them be what they may, because they are but creature causes or effects, whilst God is for us and supreme above all, not a mere *causa causata*, but the one *causa causans*.

Even Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12, did not know what to pray for as he ought; but the Lord was faithful and made the sufficiency of His grace known — an answer far better than the prayer. And yet not Paul only, but even we know that all things work together for good — not merely shall, but do now, and this for others as well as ourselves, for those that love God. Otherwise sorrows irritate. Here they are twice blessed, blessed to those exercised by them, blessed to other children of God; in short, to those that love Him and to those that are called according to purpose, for this is here carefully stated, lest the love of God on our part might enfeeble the thought of grace on His. Hence purpose and calling according to it are put forward.

It is important to observe that the apostle does not speak of a passive or naked foreknowledge (ver. 29) as if God only saw beforehand what some would be, and do, or believe. His foreknowledge is of persons, not of their state or conduct; it is not *what*, but "whom" He foreknew.

Further, *those* whom He foreknew, all of them and no others, He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. It is plain and well to note that we have the end bound up with the beginning; for the conformity here spoken of is not of that sort which is now produced in the soul practically by the Spirit through the word. The latter is most true, and often insisted on elsewhere, as in John 13, John 15; Rom. 12, Rom. 13; 1 Cor. 5, 1 Cor. 6; 2 Cor. 3: 18, 2 Cor. 7: 1, Gal. 5: 16, 25; Eph. 2: 10, Eph. 4, Eph. 5, etc. 1 John 3: 2, 3, combines both: "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him is he is." This is the conformity to the image of His Son of which the apostle here speaks; whereas the moral work in the heart of the believer is spoken of in the following verse: "And every man that hath this hope in him (i.e., founded on Christ) purifieth himself even as he (Christ) is pure." There is and can be no less a standard for the Christian, whatever may have been the rule by which the Jew was tried. The purifying goes on now within us, but answers rather to the central teaching of our chapter; the likeness to Christ in glory, which will be seen in us when Christ is manifested, is the conformity to His image which is here assured to us.

It seems harsh, however, with Augustine and others to drag in sins here among the "all things;" for though no doubt grace can turn everything to account, scripture is the more careful to guard against the least real appearance of dealing lightly with that which is morally offensive to God.

Thus God fore-ordained the objects of His foreknowledge to conformity with the image of His Son in resurrection glory. Then they will be as He, according to divine counsels, in the predestined condition of man, the first-born among many brethren. The corn of wheat which died, but sprang up again, will have borne much fruit, Himself alike the pattern and the power; for nothing short of this meets the purpose according to which we have been called. The saints shall be manifestly then sons of God being sons of the resurrection, when He will transform the body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory. For if God delights in His own Son as the risen man, such and nothing less is the destiny to which He has ordained us beforehand. Nevertheless, whatever the communion, rightly will our Lord have His due place in that bright family — the chief or "Firstborn among many brethren."

Verse 30 pursues the matter, connecting the ways of God in time with what is before and out of time. "But whom he predestinated, those he also called." It is not only the call of grace in a general way, but made effectual to such as He foreknew and foreordained. "And whom he called, those he also justified." Justification, like the call, is in time, and even subsequent to the call by the gospel. The Calvinists greatly err who teach that Christ rose because we were justified, a notion as subversive of sound doctrine as of holiness, and quite opposed to the scriptures which bind it up with faith.* But this is not the only danger here.

*It is mere ignorance, and a superficial mind, to infer that $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ must mean the same thing in the two

clauses of Romans 4: 25 any more than "for" by which our translators render it. In the first it means "because of," in the second, "for the sake of;" or "on account of" in both cases, but with a force decidedly different, as Romans 5: 1 ought to prove to any fair mind. We cannot be justified apart from faith, but on that principle and by that only.

For on the other side the Arminians are in error who apply συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (conformed to the image of His Son) to holiness, as verse 30 abundantly confirms. For while foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification are set out in regular order, the series is suddenly closed by the words "but whom he justified, those he also glorified," without one word about that spiritual conformity which we all confess to be a necessary condition in the salvation of a soul.

Was this omission an oversight of man, or divine intention? The latter only, I am persuaded; and with a wisdom by no means hard to discern. We are here in presence of the apostle's unfolding of God's purpose in its application to us and our security in the face of all difficulties and dangers. Now it is clear that the inner work would draw off to questions of our state. However important this may be, it were out of place here, besides the fact that it had been already insisted on with care and fulness after the opening verses of this chapter. In its own place the Holy Spirit had pressed it strongly and with solemn warning for any and every soul bearing the Lord's name. But here God would give the believer the unmingled comfort of what *He* is *for us*; and this excludes what He does within us, wholesome and indispensable though it may be.

It will be observed too that (ἐδόξασεν) "glorified" is an aorist, no less than the other verbs in verse 30. This is due to a similar reason. All is looked at from God's side and purpose, not as if the call, justification, and glorification were already accomplished facts, but because the Spirit is emphatically asserting the whole from first to last, as assured in His eyes and by His word who does these things, known from eternity in His own everlasting now.

We now enter on the distinct portion which closes this division of the epistle, where the apostle interrogates and, I may say, challenges all adversaries in presence of the rich and varied provisions of redemption.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [shall be] against us? He who spared not his own Son but gave him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" (Ver. 31, 32.)

It is no longer that we are in Christ and Christ in us, nor is it the witness and work of the Spirit in us whether in joy or sorrow; but the deduction from all that God is for us, not only superior to all that would hurt us, but leading to the bold question, Who dare be against us? All is measured by God's gift of His own Son, not spared but delivered up for us all; a plain and irrefragable answer to every doubt both of the reality of His love and of its extent; and this for the entire family of God. There was one object above all dear and precious to God, His own Son; and it was His own Son whom for us He spared in no way, but for us all surrendered Him to all that is dreadful in our eyes, to His heart infinitely worse — who knew His Father's love and felt evil as none but He could. That God should in His grace secure all things to us after such a gift is what we cannot but feel to be easily understood and suitable to His love, if not even necessarily due to the glory of Christ. Nothing can be lacking by the way: in the end we shall share all things with Him who is the Heir of all things. He made all, has reconciled all and will take all under His glorious sway; but we shall reign with Him. He is head over all to the Church which is His body, says our apostle elsewhere. Here he does not pursue the counsels of God but affirms the principle of grace in righteousness as applied to our individual relationship. It was no sudden thought but a settled design which went right through to glory with Christ, after the full

trial and demonstration of the uniform and complete failure of the first man. It is now a question of the Second man and of those that are His; and thus it is as plain as it is sure that God is for them; and if so, who is against them? Our sins have been remitted, sin in the flesh condemned, ourselves believing in Jesus and His blood, yea dead with Him and alive in Him to God: who then is against us? God has proved Himself for us where we had most ground for dread, and dread of Him above all; for against Him had we sinned. But in nothing has He shown His grace so deep and conspicuous as in our hopelessly evil state; in nothing so exhibited the worth and efficacy of the redemption through His Son. We are entitled then in faith to ask: "If God [is] for us, who [shall be] against us?" We are entitled to count that He who spared not His own Son will along with Him lavish on us everything good for us now, everything glorious by and by.

If His Son is the measureless measure of His love to us, "who shall bring a charge against God's elect?" In this epistle the Spirit glories in connecting the objects He is handling with God. Not only is the righteousness, the grace, the glory, God's, but so also is the gospel at the very commencement, and so here are the elect. The enemy had better beware of meddling with *God's* elect. What did Satan make of it when it was only Joshua the type of One greater, only about Jerusalem that he dared to resist? Did not Jehovah then take up the matter for the encouragement of the guilty whom He meant to save in sovereign mercy? Did He not declare that *He* had chosen Jerusalem, a brand plucked out of the fire? Not more distant but nearer is His relationship with us; not darker but far more clear the revelation of His grace to us since the death and resurrection of His own Son. Just as God interposed for the high priest in Zechariah 3, so here (says the apostle), "[It is] God that justifieth: who [is] he that condemneth?" This I think is the true way of arranging as well as punctuating the clauses. The Authorized Version impairs the link between the end of verse 33 and the beginning of verse 34, as also between the rest of verse 34 and verse 35; while others seem to me to injure the force by putting a note of interrogation at the end of verses 33 and 34.

Remark here that God is represented as the Justifier. It is not only that we have been justified by faith, justified before God, but *He* justifies. How does He justify? Is it not with that absolute perfection in which He carries on His work and His ways? Is it less perfect where He justifies those He destines to be conformed to the image of His Son in virtue of His infinite work on the cross?

But if there be an analogy with one prophet, there is a clear allusion to another. Isaiah 1. introduces God's elect Servant, substituted for Israel who had rejected Him, and shows that He was not more certainly the obedient and suffering One than the Jehovah God of Israel who made heaven and earth. Hence whatever the indignities He endured, the issue is sure, and all through He reckons on the fullest vindication. He in the midst of His shame, though thinking it not robbery to be on equality with God, can say "the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." (Isaiah 50: 7-9.)

What Christ says in the prophecy the apostle does not hesitate to apply to the Christian. How blessed is this identification! It is the more striking too because immediately follow words descriptive neither of Himself nor of the Christian who now enjoys His righteous vindication along with Him, but of the godly remnant who have to walk in darkness, though trusting in the name of Jehovah while they obey the voice of His servant (ver. 10), and of the godless mass who with increasing unbelief turn to every refuge of lies to end all in sorrow, shame, and judgment. (Ver. 11) This brings out very definitely the peculiar blessedness of the Christian through known redemption, and the indwelling of the Spirit

who glorifies Christ in their behalf as cannot be with even the righteous remnant.

It was needful to point out our distinctive position before a psalm is quoted (ver. 36) where we are viewed in circumstances analogous to theirs. For both are true: we have much that is common to all saints till Christ comes; but we and they have respectively what is characteristic and peculiar. Compare Psalm 44: 22.

"[It is] God that justifieth: who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, but rather was raised, who is also at [the] right hand of God, who also intercedeth for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? even as it is written, 'For thy sake we are being put to death all the day; we were reckoned sheep for slaughter.' Nay but in all these things we more than conquer through him that loved us." (Ver. 32-37.)

Here not only have we Christ presented in the full extent of His work from His death on the cross through resurrection to His presence and activity of intercession for us at God's right hand, as the ground for the challenge, Who shall sever us from the love of Christ but the difficulties and perils and sufferings for us along the road are mustered and arrayed in all their strength in order to prove its fidelity and unfathomable depth. Certainly, if we now, as the godly of old and ere long in the latter day, taste somewhat the bitterness of the way and the obstacles the enemy puts before us, Christ drank that cup and more to the dregs. Not only did He drink what was and could be His alone; but which of our afflictions was He a stranger to? Deeper by far, and felt according to the competency of His person to estimate and suffer, they became only the demonstration of His perfect love to us, Himself all the while the faithful witness. Christ who is risen and on high has been in them all, having gone down incomparably lower than the lowest of us. None of these then shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Thus God has proved Himself for us, first, in the gift of His own Son and of all things with Him; secondly, in justifying us Himself according to His value for Christ and His work; thirdly, in the love of Christ who has borne witness of its strength here below in all possible trials that could separate us from any other as surely as He is exercising it for us before God in virtue of redemption. "In all these things we more than conquer through him that loved us."

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,* nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ver. 38, 39.) Here we have still deeper difficulties, not the visible, but the invisible, the spiritual; but after all (sum them all up as the apostle does in his climax), they are but the creature, and they are arrayed at their strongest in order to be blotted out as nothing in presence of the all-vanquishing love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*This is the true place of δυνάμεις according to ample authority of the highest order. The oldest Greek MSS. which give the place of "powers" as in the common text are two uncials of the ninth century, but they are supported by several very ancient versions which were (probably through inadvertence) swayed by Ephesians 1: 21, Ephesians 3: 10, Ephesians 6: 12; and Colossians 2: 15.

For here, as the suited winding up, let it be remarked that it is the love of God, rather than of Christ as in verse 35. Each is exactly in place; the love of Christ as evident in suffering to the utmost for us here, and animated with the self-same love in His intercession in heaven for us who suffer still where He suffered; the love of God none the less real if less in sight, His immense and unchanging love whose grace planned all, gave all, forgave all, justified all, sustains all, and will bring all to that fulness of love and joy and glory which can satisfy such a God and the redemption of such a Saviour. If "the love of Christ" is our boast for its tender fidelity in fathoming all depths and pleading our cause above all heights, the immutable strength of "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," before all

and through all and to all eternity, imparts the fullest rest and confidence to our hearts.

ROMANS 9

The apostle now enters on a new section of the epistle in Romans 9-11, the main object of which is to reconcile the indiscriminate call of Gentiles and Jews with the special promises made to Israel. In this task he overthrows the fleshly pretensions of those who rested on nothing but a line of natural descent from Abraham; he proves that special promise has from the first been the principle of God; he points to sovereign mercy as the only hope for a people such as even Israel had shown themselves to be; he annihilates the poor and selfish and proud reasoning which arraigns the rights and righteousness of God, when the fact is that man is utterly unrighteous before Him; he demonstrates that according to the Jewish prophets Israel would be rejected, Gentiles called, and only a remnant of the ancient people saved; he shows that their rejection was owing to their failure in meeting the law of righteousness which they had deliberately chosen instead of the righteousness which grace gives by faith, while the Gentiles received it gladly, Christ being the grand test for both; he insists that this did not hinder his love and prayer for Israel that they might be saved, but salvation could only be by accepting Christ the end of the law for righteousness to the believer according to the secret of grace intimated in Deuteronomy 30, supported and carried out by Isaiah 28: 16 and Joel 2: 32, which last opens the door of faith to more than Israel, even to those who, if they had not the law, might hear the glad tidings of good things (Isaiah 52), which God sends out. He points out that the very unbelief of this on the part of the Jews fulfils Isaiah 53; that the Psalms (Ps. 19) attest the wide-spread universal message of God, and that, while the law warned them of God's provoking them to jealousy by a no-people, the prophet (Isaiah 65) is bolder still and explicitly announces God found by those who sought Him not (Gentiles), while Israel are condemned as a disobedient and gainsaying people. But the apostle would not close the subject without the most distinct statement, as well as proof from the prophets themselves, that God had not finally cast off His people Israel: first, there is always a remnant according to the election of grace, of which the apostle himself was witness; secondly, their fall was expressly to provoke Israel to jealousy, and therefore not to reject them even for a time; and, thirdly, on the ruin of the Gentile by unbelief and slight of God's goodness as of Israel before, all Israel shall be saved according to the written word of God (Isaiah 59), all His ways of mercy and wisdom causing the apostle to burst forth into thanksgiving and adoration. Such is the general outline and argument, which maintains responsibility on the one side and the promises of God on the other, and reconciles the indiscriminate ways of God in the gospel now with the accomplishment of a special glory for Israel as well as the general blessing of Gentiles or the nations in the age to come on earth. Heavenly grace is not in question here. Hence it is the olive tree, not the one new man, of which we read.

The apostle then begins this most instructive episode, in which he explains the ways of God, with the solemn assurance of his fervent affection, and hence his distress for Israel in their present low estate and exposure to judgment.

"Truth I say in Christ; I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit, that I have great grief and unceasing pain in my heart, for I was wishing* — I myself — to be a curse from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh." (Ver. 1-3.) It is plain that he alludes there to the love Moses had proved so well, as God records it in the law; and he intimates that he loved them not a whit less. It was a wish that had passed through his soul. He does not refer to the days of his Pharisaism; for great as his zeal was, his love as a Christian and an apostle was far deeper as well as wholly unselfish. In his old unenlightened condition there was no question of such a feeling for them; as he had no right sense of their peril any more than of his own. On the other hand he does not lay it

down as the deliberate wish of his present mind; but as a passionate self-sacrificing desire which had been in his heart, impossible no doubt, but evincing the strength of his burning love for Israel, as well as his sense of their extreme peril and utter ruin.† Hence he dwells on his ties of relationship with them.

*There is no doubt that the imperfect will bear the idiomatic sense given in the Authorized Version: "I could wish." (Comp. Acts 25: 22; Gal. 4: 20.) The question is, whether the apostle does not go farther here and affirm that he had actually so wished, not soberly, but still as a fact, not that he did or could so wish as a fixed principle. So the Vulgate's "optabam," supported by the other ancient versions apparently, spite of the Latin of the Polyglott. Erasmus gives "optarem," and in the same sense E. Schmid, Schott, Naebe, etc.

† Jesus alone could have this as His distinctive suffering and boast in love. It was to endure all and be made a curse and sin, and this not only for His brethren according to flesh but for His worst enemies. And in this, at cost of all, He lets us know what God is in love to us, but in His righteousness withal.

This leads him to speak of their privileges. Those who hate others lose no opportunity of detracting from them and denying at any rate favours that seem peculiarly theirs from God. Love makes the most of what is possessed by its object. Judged by such a test, there could be no doubt of the love of the apostle who sets out the marks of God's goodness to Israel as none else had ever done before, not even Gamaliel, least of all his Sadducean enemies. Who could produce from tradition, yea, from the living oracles themselves such a bright roll as Paul here unfolds before those who ignorantly taxed him with making light of the blessings God had vouchsafed to his kinsmen according to flesh? "who are Israelites, whose [is] the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the lawgiving and the service and the promises; whose [are] the fathers, and of whom [is] Christ as to flesh, that is over all God blessed unto the ages. Amen." (Ver. 4, 5.)

Thus he gives them the divinely conferred name of victory with God and man, which they derived from their father Jacob; then he alludes to the name Jehovah deigned to call them by in His summons to Pharaoh — "my son, my firstborn." Next he directs attention to the shechinah or glory-cloud which led out the people from Egypt through the wilderness into Canaan. After this he speaks of those solemn covenants which God made first with the fathers, but assuredly at least including that which He will make in the latter day with the sons. Then he names the lawgiving, before which all the boasts of ancient or modern times are but the merest smoke compared with the blaze of Sinai or the marvellous condescension which deigned from the tabernacle to treat of their least as well as greatest matters. The religions services or ordinances of worship next follow; for they justly claim to be the only ritual with its priesthood which God ever instituted for a people on earth. This however would have been short indeed without "the promises;" as these naturally are followed by "the fathers," and all is crowned by the Messiah. And here beyond doubt the apostle does not hide His glory. Let the Jews say all they might of Him whom they expected, they can never rise above what Paul delights to tell of Messiah. Alas! they would fain lower Him to the measure of their own desires; and, worse still, modern unbelief in Christendom answers to the old darkness of Judaism. The apostle however does not more surely lay down His descent from the fathers as to flesh, than His proper Godhead in His other and divine nature, "He that is" (says he) "above all God blessed for ever. Amen." A more illustrious testimony there cannot be. But Satan for a while had blinded the eyes of Israel, so that they forsake their own mercies and deny a truth which, did they but see it, they would recognize as both their brightest jewel and the solid ground of all their hoped for blessing.

Very needless difficulty has been raised about the terms ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός. The Noetian

heretics of old drew from this and other scriptures that God the Father suffered. Others in opposing so flagrant an error were too anxious to restrict ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων to the Father, especially as He is unquestionably so qualified in Ephesians 4: 6. But there is no real difficulty; and it is only ignorance or heterodoxy which finds any; for scripture is plain in attributing not merely θειότητα but θεότητα to Christ. He is God, as is the Father, and also the Holy Ghost. They are each and all styled Jehovah, the name incommunicable to the creature, let it be ever so exalted. The Son did not deem it a matter of plunder to be on equality with God. He emptied Himself in taking a servant's shape; whereas even the archangel is at best but a servant and never can be other: it is Michael's blessedness and part to be serving God. Not so the Son: He humbled Himself to take the place of a servant, being in His own proper nature and dignity infinitely above it. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; He had only known what it was to command; but, taking that position in communion with the love and counsels of the Father, He was therein the perfect pattern of all lowly obedience. How base to take advantage of His grace to despise His glory!-to be so occupied with the humiliation to which He stooped to glorify God the Father, and show us both God and man in His own person and ways, and above all to accomplish redemption — to be so filled, I may say, with the circumstances of shame into which He went down in love as to forget who He is in Himself that for us descended so low! No; He that was the perfect man was very God, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost. All things were made not only *by* Him but *for* Him.

But is not this true of the Father? Assuredly: yet this in no way impeaches the title of the Son. Scripture is plain as to both. God as such in the true and full sense is and must be supreme. This attaches to the persons in the Godhead. Differences there may be and are; but not in this. To deny supremacy of the Son or of the Spirit is to fall into the Arian heresy or the Macedonian. No doubt, as in Ephesians 4: 5, Christ is contradistinguished as "one Lord" from the Father; and so similarly in 1 Corinthians 8: 6. This however, far from derogating from His intrinsic divine glory, only shows us another glory which He receives as the exalted man who is made Lord and Christ. He, and He distinctively, has the official place of lordship, though of course as a term of dignity it belongs alike to Father, Son, and Spirit; and so any one can see who will take the trouble of comparing the scriptures.

There is no discrepancy in the authorities here that affects the sense, as in 1 Timothy 3: 16. Manuscripts and versions proclaim the truth with an unwavering voice: Christ is over all, God blessed for ever. The notion that Θεός is wanting in the citation of the early ecclesiastical writers is a mistake. They all read as we do, unless we conceive that Chrysostom omitted ὁ before ὧν, as, the Augian and Boernerian MSS. did τό before κατὰ σάρκα, which was probably mere inadvertence. What the Pseudo-Ignatius (ep. Tars.) or the Constit. Apostol.* may say is of no moment. As to Athanasius, not only is it not true that he ever wrote περὶ δὲ τοῦ εἶναι ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸν τοῦ σταυρώθεντα φοβοῦμαι ("I fear to say that the crucified One is God over all"), but it was not even the Pseudo-Athanasius who is so represented, but the Pseudo-Arius in answering the citation of this passage. Wetstein therefore was wrong here and betrayed his Arian animus. (See Athanasii Opp. i. 125 B, ed. Col. 1686.) Erasmus is equally wrong in thinking that Cyprian and Hilary left out "Deus;" for it is only omitted by careless editors, and is found in all good copies. As to Origen, his wildness was such as to weaken the weight of his assertions; but what he does say, in answer to Celsus' charge that the Christians made Christ God the Father or greater still, is that, while some might be hasty enough to aver τὸν Σωτῆρα τὸν μέγιστον ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεόν· ἀλλ' οὐτι γὰρ ἡμεῖς τοιοῦτον οἱ πειθόμενοι αὐτῷ λέγοντι, κ.τ.λ. Now I do not admit that Origen (contra Cels. 7: 14) was justified in quoting the last clause of John 14: 28 (which he misquotes) where it was a question of the Son's *Deity*, while the text speaks of His place of earthly subjection. But even he does not go so far as to deny supreme Godhead to the Son; he does deny, as all taught of God must, the monstrous folly that the Son has power over God the Father. The doubtful

opinion of Eusebius may indeed be cited, who did restrict, it would seem, τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεόν to the Father;† but it is well known that he was feeble as to the great truth of Christ's Godhead if not an Arian. But these seem really all who have been exaggerated into "multi patres qui Christum τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεόν appellari posse negant" (Griesbach in loco), save indeed that by manifest fallacy it is assumed that to call the Father so is to deny it of the Son. But this is only the mistake handed down through Wetstein to the critic of Jena. The fact is that the fathers as a whole applied our text to the Lord Jesus without a suspicion of its incompatibility with Ephesians 4: 6. They are both equally true, is the Father and the Son are equally God. I grant that they speculated dangerously sometimes; and of their crude assertions controversy and heresy have availed themselves: the latter to cover its aberration from revealed truth; the former to make councils or the Pope the only securer of the truth, as against the earlier fathers and (what is worse) holy scripture. But from Irenaeus to Theophylact among Greeks, and from Tertullian to the middle ages among the Latins, it could be easily shown that the passage was accepted as we have it now in the Authorized Version and in the ordinary orthodox sense. Cyril of Alexandria is most express in contradicting from this text the Emperor Julian who was rash enough to say that Paul did not speak of Jesus as God. Nor is there a single name of sound reputation opposed to this.

*Even these spurious pieces seem to be only opposing the Patripassian or Sabellian notion (i.e., that the God and Father suffered), and affirming that He who did suffer was Jesus, not His God and Father who is over all.

†I am pained, but bound, to protest once more against such words as are allowed to continue from edition to edition in Dean Alford's work (in loco). "That our Lord (says he) is not in the strict exclusive sense, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός, every Christian will admit, that title being reserved for the Father." Every clause is a grievous blunder. Our Lord *is* in the strictest sense what He is said not to be, for ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ π. θ. is even stronger than ὁ ἐπὶ π. θ. Nor is it true that the Father is such in the "exclusive" sense, as he says; nor is it reserved for Him in a sense stricter than for the Son. He allows that Christ is ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός. Yet this, though true, is not what the apostle teaches, but a proposition about Christ still more stringent than his expositor essays to deny. I trust and am willing to believe that the Dean of Canterbury wished neither to lower our Lord nor to adhere to a most objectionable statement; and therefore would one beg the correction on so grave a matter of words which neither faith nor yet logic can justify. To reason from human order to the divine nature and relations is ground as unsafe as it is false. No doubt in the creature, being essentially limited, the highest place for one excludes another. But it is the direct road to the worst gulf of error so to think of the Godhead, as to which we have only to believe what is revealed from on high. This may be hard to the natural mind; but it is unambiguous, and too clear for faith to deny or explain away.

The ingenuity of criticism however, having neither various readings nor ancient versions to invoke, is not content with misrepresenting the testimony of the early christian writers and has strained itself in the most violent efforts to effect a diversion by the help of points; as it is well known that they are wanting in the most ancient copies. The Complutensian editors punctuate fairly. Erasmus, not in his earlier editions but later, suggested a period after σάρκα, as had been done before by the writers of two MSS. of the eleventh and twelfth centuries usually numbered 5 and 47 in the conventional list of Pauline copies. Lachmann and Tischendorf acted on this; and Vater clenched the rent quite as effectually by putting the cut-off clause or clauses within marks of parenthesis ended by a note of admiration. Now not only is this severance, however managed, in opposition to the mass of punctuated manuscripts, all ancient versions and citations, but, what is of more weight still, it is contrary to the invariable idiom employed to express such a blessing (or on the contrary a curse). The regular formula

is to open the sentence with εὐλογητός or some kindred word.* Here therefore to bear regularly the desired punctuation the words should have run: — Εὐλογητὸς ὁ ἐπὶ π. θ., the ὦν in this case being worse than useless. The only apparent exception produced is from the Septuagint of Psalm 67, (68) 19, κύριος ὁ θεὸς εὐλογητός. But judging by the old Latin quoted in Holmes' and Parsons' note, "Dominus Deus benedictus est," it is no exception, because it is an assertion about God, not an ejaculatory blessing. The latter follows immediately; and then the usual order appears. The former clause may indeed be an interpolation; as there is no Hebrew text to found it on.

*Even Socinus was clear-sighted enough to see this and honest enough to acknowledge it.

Further, the incongruity of such a doxology here, remembering the apostle's grief just expressed and the relation of the Jews to the Messiah, is also a decisive disproof; and, lastly, it would utterly mar the beautiful antithesis so characteristic of the apostle, even in the opening of this very epistle, in which he contrasts the human line of the Messiah with His divine dignity.

Another mode of punctuating, also suggested by Erasmus (who perhaps did not know that a Viennese MS. 71 of the twelfth century, represents it), and adopted by Locke, places the stop after πάντων with a shorter clause taken as the blessing, and is even more objectionable, as it is pressed by the additional difficulty that we ought in that case to have the article with Θεός. It should stand Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τ. αἰ. ἀμήν. But after all it would not effect what is desired, for it would connect ὁ ὦν ἐπὶ πάντων with the Christ; and it is impossible to have a stricter predication of supremacy. It is not merely, as Hippolytus and others thought, that the Father delivered all things to the Son, an important but different truth. Here we have what He *is*; and He is over all, being essentially divine.

Conjectural emendation of the text is another device of unbelievers to defraud the Lord of His glory; but this may be dismissed into its native obscurity. Even the Grotian expedient of dropping Θεός is contrary to all authority of MSS., and would be useless if conceded; for ὁ ὦν ἐπὶ πάντων is the strongest affirmation in itself of divine supremacy. Quite as futile was the effort to lower the sense of Θεός by reference to 2 Thess. 2: 4, and to translate the clause here, "who is as God," etc. For, first, the supposed analogy is cast out of that verse on the best authority; and secondly, it would tell, if genuine, in the opposite way; for certainly the man of sin will not claim to be God in an inferior sense. The absence of the article is a sign that character is meant to be conveyed, and has nothing to do with inferiority. Compare Romans 1: 21.

On the whole then the reader may rest assured of both the text and the sense of this most impressive testimony to Christ the importance of which may be in some measure inferred from the evident desire of so many since the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants, without reckoning Arians or Unitarians, who have done what they could to neutralize its force. Thanks be to God who vouchsafes the truth to be in us and to abide with us for ever.

Two things then the apostle had asserted with the utmost strength in the preceding verses of the chapter — his burning love for his brethren after the flesh and consequent grief at their low estate and danger; and his sense of their privileges far fuller and stronger than their own, demonstrated above all in his estimate of their Messiah's glory whom they depreciated and had even rejected to their own ruin. This last however is not openly said but unmistakably implied; for the apostle treats their difficulties with the utmost delicacy, caring for their souls with a love truly divine. Whether the expression of his grief then or of that glory of Christ which they refused in unbelief raised the question, which the free grace preached to the Gentiles indiscriminately with the Jews of itself put in the most direct form, whether such a proclamation of grace to every soul, Jew or Greek, be compatible with the special

promises to Abraham and to his seed? The Israelite instinctively resented the gospel as annulling his distinctive place of favour, and viewed the apostle's deep concern for their salvation through faith in Jesus as an impeachment of God's pledges to their nation as vouchsafed to their fathers. How could this plighted troth be sure, if the Messiah had come and been rejected by them? if the door was now as open to the Gentile as the Jew? Where the value of the promises in either case? Did not the apostle's teaching clash with the trustworthiness of the divine word to Israel? This is fully met now.

"Not however as though* the word of God hath failed; for not all those that [are] of Israel [are] Israel; nor because they are Abraham's seed, [are] they all children, but, In Isaac shall a seed be called to thee.† That is, [it is] not the children of the flesh that [are] children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned for seed; for this word [is] of promise, According to this season‡ I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only [so], but Rebecca also, having conceived by one,§ Isaac our father (for not yet having been born, nor having done anything good or bad, in order that the purpose of God according to election should abide, not of works but of him that calleth), it was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger, according as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (Ver. 6-13.)

*The version of Beza, E. Schmid, etc. (which Bucer adopted before them, and Macknight since), "It is not possible," errs, not so much in requiring τε as Calvin remarked (for it may dispense with this particle) as in the absence of the infinitive after it. Besides, even were it grammatically admissible, the other sense is better.

†Or, thy seed.

‡Or, time.

§There is no insuperable difficulty, I think, in ἐξ ἐνόου. There was in this case a single mother, also one father. Its object is to give emphasis to both, in contradistinction to the former case.

The reasoning is as conclusive as it is concise and clear, founded on proofs from Old Testament facts and words which a Jew certainly could not gainsay. Did he reason from the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? From this very history the apostle refutes their unbelieving abuse of all. The word of God therefore retains all its force. Man only, the Jew specially, is proved to be faulty. Their objection assumed that God was bound to bless the entire race in natural descent from Abraham. But this would open the promises to the Ishmaelites. Not so, cries the Jew: the promise is only in the line of Isaac. Then, might the apostle rejoin, the natural descent is an unsound principle; for this embraces the Arabs sprung from Abraham after the flesh no less than the Jews. They themselves therefore to exclude the Ishmaelites must fall back on the promise tied to the line of Isaac. Promise therefore, not flesh, decides. How the answer of the apostle exemplifies the truth of the Jew and circumcision that God praises, stated already in the end of Romans 2, needs no proof. Hence it is equally said of Israel and of Abraham's seed. It is universally true. Fleshly descent alone insures no inward blessing. The Israelite indeed in whom is no guile is more than one of Jacob's posterity: all of Israel are not Israel, nor are Abraham's seed all children. Compare John 8: 37, 39. God must be left free; and He is pleased to call Isaac, not Ishmael after the same sort. The call flows from grace and is inseparable, in the restrictive personal sense here intended, from choice. Far from disputing it, the Jew could not hear the case without falling under its irresistible force; for he wished not to take in the sons of Ishmael and must therefore agree to the necessity of God's call, not mere natural line, in order to constitute an adequately valid claim. And this is made more telling by the striking circumstance that Isaac was born in an exclusively natural way like Ishmael but according to a distinct word of promise on God's part.

The apostle follows up the argument by a still closer instance; for Ishmael was born of a slave, a concubine, Isaac of the wife. But what of Rebecca? She was in no sense a bondmaid, but bore to Isaac

twin sons. No case can be conceived therefore more in point. Yet without the children being yet born or having done anything good or ill which could determine between them, God revealed His purpose respecting the younger or lesser of the two, so that election might thus stand fixed and indisputable where His authority is owned.

Hence the apostle contrasts the call of God with works, rather than our faith, so as to cut off the poor semi-Pelagianism of such as Chrysostom of old or Tholuck of late, which would make election governed by the foreseen superiority of one to the other. Language cannot more precisely contradict this, the natural thought (not of natural men only but) of reasoning or imaginative saints. Esau had done no ill to disqualify him, Jacob no good to qualify him; but, before either of the twins was born, God in the exercise of His sovereign will chose that the greater should do service to the lesser. Such was His purpose. Their works had nothing to do with the matter and are excluded, so as to rest all on the caller, God Himself.

On the other hand, there is no ground favourable to that absolute reprobation which Calvin deduces from this place.* Not a syllable is hinted as to hating the unborn Esau in Genesis 25. Man hastily infers reprobation of the one from the choice of the other. This is unfounded. Out of two who have no claim to choose one to a superior place is to exercise will; but to show favour in one case is not therein to condemn the other. They were in themselves both born in sin, as they no doubt grow up in sins. This is to be obnoxious to condemnation, which turns on man's sins, not on God's purpose. It is not Jehovah's word to Rebecca, but by Malachi which speaks of hating Esau. It was at the very close of the Old Testament, after Esau had displayed his unrelenting enmity to Israel. The love to Jacob thus was free; the hatred had moral grounds in Esau.

*"Tamen ut discamus in nudo et simplici Dei beneplacito acquiescere, abhoc quoque intuitu nos tantisper Paulus subducit, donec hanc doctrinam stabilierit, Deum in suo arbitrio satis justam eligendi et reprobandi habere causam." Joh. Calvini in omnes Pauli Ap. Epp. i. 121, Halis Sax. 1831.

The assertion of divine sovereignty, though a necessary truth which springs out of the very nature of God, is repulsive to the natural mind. Yet no other thought consists with right, when the subject is duly weighed; and every scheme which man substitutes is unworthy of God and unbecoming to man. The doctrine which denies God His majesty is self-convicted of falsehood; equally so that which would represent Him as indifferent either to sin or misery. He is light; and light is incompatible with the allowance of the darkness which reigns in the heart and ways of man. He is love; and love is invariably free and holy. Doubtless He is almighty and He will judge the sin which despises or rebels against Him as well as the offences which the world seeks to deal with. And what is the universal state of mankind, which this Epistle had carefully proved not of the Gentile only, but yet more of the Jew who boasted of the living oracles which condemned his iniquity and transgression? It had stopped every mouth and brought in the whole world guilty before God.

When a sinner is awakened by the Holy Spirit to his own guilt and state before God, he owns this frankly, and justifies God in condemning himself, though crying for mercy which to his adoring wonder he finds already proclaimed to him in the gospel.

But man as such, ignorant of himself and of the true God, disputes the fact of his own utter and inexcusable evil and looks not to God, but rather writhes under His word and cavils at His ways. This, as it is the feeling of natural men in general, so particularly found expression in the probable objection which a Jew might feel. This the apostle confronts. "What then shall we say? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? Far be it. For to Moses he saith, I will show mercy on whomsoever I show mercy, and will compassionate whomsoever I compassionate." (Ver. 14, 15.) That is, it is mere mercy and compassion

on God's part wherever shown, not only without desert but in full view of the most grievous and destructive demerits. No one who feels his own real wrongs against God ever raises a question of righteousness with Him. Confounded at the sight of his guilty insubjection and disobedience and in short ungodliness, he is struck dumb before the concurrent and continual proof of the astonishing goodness and patience of God, were it only in dealing with Israel. So to the Jew (and of course for the profit of ourselves and all the world) the apostle alleges the solemn and most gracious words of Jehovah to His servant in Exodus 33. So apt a testimony, among almost countless passages applicable in principle, there is not in the Bible.

Consider the circumstances, and the conclusiveness of his answer will be apparent, though at first sight it might seem singular to meet such a question with such a citation. And can anything be more characteristic of divine revelation than this? Haste pronounces that irrelevant and unreasonable which, when fairly and fully searched, proves alone right and true, alone suited to meet man as he is, alone consistent with the character and glory of God.

The national history was scarce begun before all was morally ended by their idolatrous apostasy from Jehovah at the foot of Sinai, where the people with Aaron at their head danced naked before the golden calf. Unrighteousness with God! There was assuredly the grossest unrighteousness in Israel; and what could righteousness with God do but call aloud for their irrevocable condemnation? On that ground the objecting Jew, like the unbelieving Gentile, only shuts himself up to sure and unsparing judgment; for there can be no doubt of man's guilt, and justice on God's side has but to pronounce and execute the sentence of perdition.

Is God then bound to this and nothing else? He must be, on the blindly suicidal principle of man self-righteous yet unrighteous, who in his hurry to blame God forgets that it would be to his own helpless ruin. But God, though He can justly answer a fool according to his folly, may not in His grace. He has resources in Himself on which to fall back.

So in the passage before us the people disowned that Jehovah had delivered them from the house of bondage in their cry, "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." (Ex. 32: 1) Thereon Jehovah not only plagued the people for their idolatry (ver. 35), but told Moses to go up thence, "thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt into the land which I swear," etc. Forthwith Moses pitches the tabernacle without the camp, so that every one who sought Jehovah might go out there. But he does more; he there intercedes for the people, insists that they are Jehovah's people, and would turn the assurance of going with himself into one of going with him *and* them. "For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." Then, when Moses beseeches Him to manifest His glory to him, He says "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah upon thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Thus the bearing of the declaration is as evident as it is appropriate and unanswerable. For a people in such a case to harbour the thought of unrighteousness with God is a monstrous forgetfulness not only of their actual state in relation to Him but of their only hope in His sovereign mercy. Once before they took the ground of righteousness in accepting the law; but before the tables of stone were brought down, they had forfeited every thing by their infraction of the most fundamental precept of the law. Hence hope there could not be, unless in His compassion. They had shown out what they were, and the sooner because of their self-confidence. Now it remained to learn what God is; and this is His word

even in presence of the foul dishonour they had done Him: "I will show mercy on whomsoever I show mercy, and I will compassionate whomsoever I compassionate."

Things were no better in the apostle's day. For the people had meanwhile so gone on in idolatrous rebellion that God at length swept them away, first Israel by the Assyrian, then Judah by the Babylonian. And now the returned remnant were under Roman bondage, and had been guilty of rejecting their Messiah, as well as of quarrelling with God's grace to the Gentiles. It is plain then that man is apt to be most self-righteous when he has least reason for it. "Not this man but Barabbas" cried they all. "We have no king but Caesar" answered the chief priests. Their moral degradation was complete; their faith was null and void. Ill would it have become such a people at such a time to ask "Is there unrighteousness with God?" It is just there, however, that the human spirit is most ready to dispute with God.

But the word is exceedingly broad and deep: where does it put any man? where the sinner? We Christians should surely know that only grace saved or could save us, as it called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. When a soul is truly broken down and judges itself with integrity and a spiritually enlightened conscience, how sweet is the feeling that there is righteousness nowhere fully, truly, and intrinsically but with God, confessing its own manifold and utter unrighteousness, and welcoming His own expression of sovereign mercy! It is only hard self-righteousness which holds out and disputes. Faith bows before the God of mercy and blesses Him. If only low and bad enough in my own eyes, I shall be but too thankful for the mercy that was sovereign enough to come down and find out me; if I can rest on the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, for such a sinner as myself, shall I pare down or narrow the indiscriminate riches of His grace to any other? "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." There may be an allusion to the frustration of Isaac's notorious wish, and of Esau's efforts to gain through the chase, and of Jacob faulty enough to lose all by his trickery but for sovereign mercy which secured to him the promise. It is certainly the conclusion of grace against man's vain confidence in his own will and exertion.

But the greater the grace, the greater the sin of resisting God in it. Hence the other side needs to be presented. For the God who shows mercy is the judge of all, and will prove what it is to set at nought all that He is. So Pharaoh did of old; and what was the consequence? "For the scripture saith to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Ver. 17.)

The king of Egypt was a thoroughly selfish, cruel, and profane man when God first sent him a message by Moses and Aaron. The effect of the summons on such a spirit was to bring out his blasphemy against Jehovah and more savage oppression of Israel. And as sign and his miracle told on his conscience, but evil desires and counsels prevailed, Pharaoh became incomparably worse till the obduracy of the king shocked his servants, and even after the concession was wrung out, false hopes of vengeance on Israel lured him and them to find a grave within the opened waters of the Red Sea. God thus made a most striking example of Pharaoh, not a mere exposure of his malice, but of His own power on that background, so that His name might be thus told abroad in all the earth. Never does God make a man bad; but the bad man Pharaoh, made yet worse by his resistance of the most striking divine appeals, He made manifest, raised up as he was from among men to such a height, that his downfall might tell on consciences far and wide throughout the world. Hard at first, God sealed him up at length in a judicial hardening. Such He warned the Jews by Isaiah should be the case with their impenitent hearts, and so He executed it when they rejected Christ (John 12) and the Holy Ghost's appeal in the gospel. (Acts 28: 25-28.) "So then to whom he will he sheweth mercy, and whom he will he

hardeneth." In both cases the unrighteousness is solely with man, who is, as far as he is concerned, irremediably evil and ruined; before God acts either in grace or in judgment for the display of His own great name to the wide, rich, and endless blessing of all who heed His word. He is always holy but always free. On the other hand fallen man is always evil and deserves condemnation. God freely acts in grace here, freely acts in judgment there, that any soul may beware of provoking His indignation and learning what He is in his own destruction, and that the guiltiest of sinners may know that no man is too far gone to be beyond reach of His mercy. I speak of man as such, not of such as have believed through grace.

These verses present a fresh objection, and the apostle's answer worthy of all attention not only in itself but as an inspired specimen of the best method of meeting a cavil, first with a moral remonstrance and then more directly.

"Thou wilt say then to me, Why then doth he yet find fault? For who withstandeth his purpose? Nay but thou, O man, who art thou that answerest again to God?" (Vers. 19, 20.)

The objection seems founded on the absoluteness with which the mercy of God as well as His hardening had been asserted by the apostle just before. The unbroken will of man avails itself of this to resolve all question of good and evil into the divine purpose. But this is a mere human deduction which loses sight of the moral glory of God as well as the responsibility of the creature. It offends therefore against first principles, and would destroy all truth, holiness, and righteous judgment.

Undoubtedly the purpose of God does stand, and there is no creature which does not in the end subserve His will: yet Satan, little as he intends it, only clenches it most when he seems most to succeed by his lies and destructive power in thwarting and persecuting those who are precious in the Lord's eyes. Take the cross itself as the plainest and most unanswerable example. But should this enfeeble our moral judgment of creature wickedness? Does it deny the fact that Satan and man are responsible for all they do against Him, or that both must be punished for it? Hence Peter taxes the men of Israel with the guilt of crucifying the Messiah: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by hands of lawless men have crucified and slain." How different is the holy and perfect word of God! Everything is in its place, not one side only but both. God has His determinate counsel and foreknowledge. The Jews played their evil part, the Gentiles theirs. They together, however at variance in thoughts and feelings, manifested their characters and their guilt; but in the very same fact they fulfilled the prophets and gave occasion to the display of the holiest judgment of God and the accomplishment of the work of His grace.

Hence the ground of reasoning is wholly fallacious. The probation of man discovered his evil state, the fruit of his first departure from God who was dishonoured by him when all was very good, and whose every fresh trial only served to demonstrate with increasing evidence the depth and extent of sin and the irremediableness of the flesh. The wisdom of God is such that He can and does turn all that man pursues in his heartless folly to the account of His purposes; but this is altogether independent of man's will which is always and inexcusably evil. Not only therefore is God free to censure man, but He will judge him for all by the Lord Jesus at the last day.

If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate.

In truth it is but the expression of the heart anxious to gather an excuse for its own wilful evil and a plea against judgment from the irresistible will of God. Yet better is known in the heart of hearts all the

while. It is never said in scripture that sin was God's purpose; but man fallen under sin is the platform where He does display His ways, counsels, and even Himself. God did not make any man to be evil; but from all (being evil already) He does choose according to His sovereign will and show mercy to some, not all, though all be no more guilty than the some may have been. It would be perfectly just to destroy all. But if pleased to spare whom he will, who shall say to Him, nay? It would be to set up a claim of superiority over God, and is really an attempt to judge Him. Now whenever a sinner is converted, he feels and owns the just judgment of God, even though such a recognition sanctions the execution of the divine sentence against one's self, yet withal never quits in despair, but looks and cries, feebly at first perhaps but with increasing earnestness, for mercy.

Cavils of the sort always presuppose the conscience not yet searched and the will not bent and broken before God. Neither insinuations of unrighteousness with God, nor the plea of the necessity of man's sinning as a part of God's purpose, could satisfy, or emanate from, a repentant soul. So the apostle first of all answers with a rebuke: "Nay but thou, O man, who art thou that answerest against God? Shall the thing moulded say to him that moulded, Why didst thou make me thus?" Is it possible a man so speaks? It is equally irreverent and unholy. As this challenge why God (whose purpose is so firm, inflexible, and sure of fulfilment) should any longer find fault, blots out moral government and denies the difference of good and evil, so the audacity which disputes against God and practically defies His right to condemn wrong, proceeds on the assumption that He is bound to save every one alike, or at least to punish none; that is, bound to be worse than the basest of those who despise and rebel against Him, bound to a moral indifference which they would not tolerate in their wives or children, in their family connections, in their servants or their tradesmen! Such is the worth of human reason when it does not surrender to the word of God. The fall is ignored, and its ruinous consequences. God did not form man as he is, but good and upright; and He warned him of his danger and of the inevitable issue of disobedience. In every point of view therefore the ground of unbelief is as false as it is also a forgetfulness of the majesty of God and of the due attitude of the creature toward Him.

The apostle takes occasion to affirm the sovereign title of God in the most unqualified way. "Hath not the potter authority over the clay out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" Whatever the holy boldness of this language, however it is singularly free from swerving to the right hand or the left, it would be easy to prove by countless witnesses how prone the best and wisest of uninspired men have been to err, even with this divine chart before their eyes to guide them. But it is easy to slip on either side: the hard thing is to hold only to the truth of scripture, and not to speak where it is silent. The apostle does not say that God has exercised the right which He beyond just question possesses; but the divine title is maintained in its integrity. We shall see in the next two verses how the right is used; but it was due to God and wholesome for man that His absolute right should be owned. How seldom those who talk of rights seem to think that God has any! They are absorbed in themselves, in man: God is in none of their thoughts. Yet surely if any rights are to be respected, His ought to be the foremost whose sovereign will gave us being and all things. If we count ourselves entitled to do what we will with our own, what can we say of Him to whom belong ourselves and all that we have?

His right then over man as over every other creature is incontestable: a right which unbelief disputes only because it has never seriously thought of the matter, or it yields to a spirit of manifestly outrageous presumption and rebelliousness. There are no rights if the Creator has none: if they exist at all, His must be absolute over us as creatures. He can form as He pleases and assign to us a position high or low in the scale of creation as it seems fitting in His eyes. In the verses which follow there is

the further consideration that we are not only creatures but sinners, which necessarily must bear its bitter fruit and judgment from God. But His sovereign title it was important to affirm in itself before the introduction of the actual state or the doom of man.

The absolute authority of God over the creature has been so laid down that none can fairly dispute it. But this is far from being the whole case: His power is unlimited, His title incontestable. "And if God, wishing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy which he before prepared for glory, us whom he also called not from among Jews only but from Gentiles?" (Ver. 22-24.)

The mind of God was to display His wrath in this evil world and to make known His power where men easily and willingly forget Himself. But the way adopted was admirable and worthy of His nature. Arbitrariness there was none, but "much long-suffering." So He bore long with the corruption and violence of guilty man. Could man then justly tax God either with lack of compassion for himself or with haste to mark his iniquities? Impossible that a holy God could have fellowship with evil or be indifferent to it! But instead of promptly blotting out of this life the rebellious creatures who make of the world a field for incessant warfare against what they know of God, or who at least live negligent of His will though He has revealed it fully, the history of the world since nations began is the fullest proof of endurance on God's part. He never made them as they are; but the sin of man now fallen He endured spite of countless and constant provocation. They sinned, they transgressed, they despised His mercy, they braved His wrath; but He endured with much long-suffering.

Sinful men thus living in enmity against God are here styled "vessels of wrath," on the one hand; as those who believe are designated "vessels of mercy" on the other. They are objects respectively of wrath and of mercy, and are figuratively supposed to contain each that quality which will issue in destruction or in glory.

But there is a shade of difference as distinct as it is refined and profoundly true which no reader should overlook. The vessels of wrath are said to be "fitted for destruction." But it is neither said nor implied here, or anywhere else, that God fitted them for it. They were fitted by their sins, and most of all by their unbelief and rebelliousness against God. But when we hear of the faithful, the phrase is altogether different, "vessels of mercy which he before prepared for glory." The evil is man's, and in no case is it of God; the good is His and not our own. Not the saints, but God prepared the vessels of mercy for glory. More strictly He prepared them beforehand with a view to glory. That is, it was not their preparation while on earth, His only when the glory arrives. The apostle affirms here that God prepared them before unto glory. It was His doing. None doubts that they became by grace obedient, holy, and thus morally conformed to His nature; but it seemed good to the Holy Spirit to dwell here only on God's preparation of the vessels of mercy beforehand for glory. Thus the riches of His glory are made known upon the vessels of mercy, for so they are called, not vessels filled with these or those spiritual qualities, however true this might be, but vessels of mercy.

But in this passage as elsewhere there is no sufficient reason to depart from the ordinary meaning of "glory" or to give the word the sense of God's mercy. Nor does Ephesians 1: 12 sanction this, where glory maintains strictly its own distinctive place, as will appear to him who thoughtfully weighs verses 6, 7, 12. The word grace is undoubtedly and most properly left out of the last, where grace is not intended to be expressed any more than in verse 14 where it could not be. The Spirit looks onward to the day when the purpose of God shall be accomplished.

Such is the inheritance when the excellence of what God has given and made us shall be displayed.

But the relationships to Himself which His infinite love has brought us into, and in which He has revealed Himself are far deeper. Hence the word in verse 6 is "to the praise of the glory of his grace," the fulness of the revelation of Himself, as in verse 7 the abundant resources of His goodness, in view of our misery and guilt as once sinners. In all this then I see exact discrimination, not the confusion of different thoughts or words. No doubt then the wrath of God, long impending but long kept back, while He is sending forth the message of the mercy He delights in, will at length burst on those who have despised His warnings, but who will then prove what it is to be vessels of wrath. And the vessels of mercy will then be displayed in those scenes of divine excellence which no evil or failure shall ever sully.

Thus lost man will in the end be compelled to justify God and to take the entire blame on his own shoulders, who preferred to trust Satan as his friend and adviser rather than God; while the saved, however dwelling in bliss, will know and make known all as the riches of His glory, themselves debtors to His mere but unfailing and unfathomable mercy.

But the moment mercy is thus fully before the apostle's mind, he by the Spirit turns to the magnificent proof and exhibition God gave of it in calling — not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. The law distinguished and separated the people which was under it from all other nations which were not. Grace, as it supposes the total worthlessness not of the Gentiles only but also of the Jews, so it goes out and calls in not from Jews only but from Gentiles. Distinctions may be in place where there is still hope of man and the trial proceeds. Not so when the probation of the most favoured has ended in irremediable guilt and helpless total ruin. Then the door opens for mercy; and if God is pleased to exercise it, can the Jew pretend that the Gentile is not at least as good an occasion for mercy as himself? The greater the need, the misery, the darkness, the greater is the room for God to prove the depth and extent of His grace. On the footing therefore of His own mercy has God called (for it is a question of calling, not of governing a people already subsisting before Him under His law) even "us not from Jews only but also from among Gentiles." (Ver. 24.) He calls in grace, freely to all, shut up to none, from Jews certainly but from Gentiles too.

The quotations taken from Hosea are worthy of all consideration, both in themselves and in the comparison of the references here and in 1 Peter 2: 10. Some feel the difficulty; others, who do not seem to see anything particularly to be noted, prove how little they enter into the deep wisdom of God here displayed.

The call from among Gentiles is not the question with Peter, who accordingly does not cite Hosea 1: 10. He contents himself with using Hosea 2: 23, which he does not hesitate to apply even then to such of the Jews as came to the one foundation stone and became thus themselves living stones. Writing to the strangers of the dispersion throughout a part of Asia Minor, he had only the believing Jews directly before him. Hence there is remarkable force in telling them that they were a chosen generation and a royal priesthood. This their fathers attempted to make their own at Sinai on condition of their own obedience; and, as we know, broke down immediately as well as unceasingly ever afterwards, till the final sentence was pronounced and God by Hosea pronounced the Jew Lo-ammi (not my people). The apostle now, addressing those who had received the rejected Messiah, not only predicates unconditionally of them under the gospel what was only offered to their fathers under a condition which utterly failed, but shows that they do not need to wait for the glorious kingdom of the Messiah to be revealed before they can be assured of the gracious reversal of the old sentence: "which in time past (says he) were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." The shining of grace from Christ risen on those that are His assures even now, not yet indeed of the setting aside of the power of evil in the world, but of the bringing the

believing Israelites addressed into distinct, present, and known relationship with God. If the many still persevered in their unbelief and its bitter consequences, this did not hinder God from cheering the godly remnant by the apostle's employment of the prophet.

Our apostle cites the same scripture as Peter uses, and more fully too; but he also cites Hosea 1: 10 almost precisely as it stands in the Alexandrian copy of the LXX. Is it then certain that he quotes these two passages from Hosea as applicable to the Gentiles being called to be the people of God? This is generally assumed* as manifest from the words themselves, and from the transition to Israel in verse 27, though many who say so confess that in the prophecy they are spoken of Israel, which, after being rejected and put away, was to be again received into favour by God.

*"The meaning (says Calvin in loc.) is evident: but there is some difficulty in the application of this testimony; for no one can deny but that the prophet in that passage speaks of the Israelites. For the Lord, having been offended with their wickedness, declared that they should be no longer His people: He afterwards subjoined a consolation, and said, that of those who were not beloved He would make some (?) beloved, and from (?) those who were not a people He would make a people. But Paul applies to the Gentiles what was expressly spoken to the Israelites!" Again, a very different mind writes thus in our day on Hosea 1: 10, "Both St. Peter (?) and St. Paul tell us that this prophecy is already, in Christ, fulfilled in those of Israel, who were the true Israel, or of the Gentiles to whom the promise was made, *In thy seed shall all nations be blessed*, and who, whether Jews or Gentiles, believed in Him. The Gentiles were adopted into the Church, which, at the day of Pentecost was formed of the Jews, and in which Jews and Gentiles became one in Christ And so St. Peter (?) says that this scripture [expressly commenting on the latter part, which Paul only applies to the Gentiles now called] was fulfilled in them, while still *scattered abroad through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*." (Dr. Pusey's Minor Prophets.) On Hosea 2: 23 the latter is still bolder: "This which was true of Israel in its dispersion was much more true of the Gentiles. These too, the descendants of righteous Noah, God had cast off for the time, that they should be no more His people [not so; the Gentiles never had been as such in relationship with God as called nations, nor was Israel itself or any other people yet chosen], when He chose Israel out of them in reversing His sentence, He embraces in the arms of His mercy all who were not His people, and says of them all that they should be *My people and beloved* Israel was not multiplied by itself, but through the bringing in of the Gentiles." It will have been noticed from the queries, or without them by the careful reader, that both are obliged to depart, by their system of thought, from the language of the text.

But it is always well for the believer to search narrowly an assumption of the kind, more especially when an apparent discrepancy is thereby insinuated between the Old Testament and the New. It is wise to try our own hypothesis over and over again, for we may rest assured that the One divine author cannot slight a word He has written. "Scripture cannot be broken." Is the assumption itself well grounded? We need not then dwell on the answers which are attempted to the difficulty which appears to me made by those who seek to answer it — answers with which those who give them seem themselves by no means satisfied, and no wonder. The question is as to the precise aim of the Spirit. For myself I cannot doubt that He contemplated the Jews and the Gentiles in the two citations from Hosea; for if He meant only the Gentiles in both, why quote them in so peculiar an order? Why place the fragment of Hosea 1: 10 after that of 2: 23? If on the other hand He means to illustrate the call of grace under the gospel first to the Jews, spite of their having lost their distinctive name of relationship, nothing can be more natural and appropriate than his use of Hosea 2: 23 *before* 1: 10 is quoted; and thus the apostles Paul and Peter are seen to be not only in perfect harmony with each other, but in their application exact to the evident bearing of the prophet. The common error sets all three in opposition.

The very order too agrees precisely with the verse before (24) in Romans 9 which is followed up by the citations.

But if this be so with the employment of Hosea 2: 23 by the two apostles, if they both expressly apply to converted Jews that which the prophet expressly wrote of them and of them only, what of Romans 1: 10? This, it is freely granted, may not be so obvious, but in my judgment it is on mature consideration no less sure. Yet why should the latter part of the verse refer to the sons of Israel because the former does? Let it be observed that there is a striking break or at least offshoot in the middle of the verse, which might most naturally prepare the way for another disclosure of God's purposes of grace. I allow that it is somewhat veiled; but this was proper and intended. The turning aside to call in Gentiles was intentionally concealed till the time came; but when it did come, enough was found, expressed hundreds of years before by the prophets, to prove that all was ordered and left room for and justified in passages here and there, which could scarcely have prepared any beforehand for so momentous a change but fell in with it expressly when it was a fact. So there is to my mind a similarly rapid transition in Isaiah 65: 1, 2, of which the apostle makes use somewhat later in this very argument, and gives us divine certainty that, as verse 1 applies to the call of Gentiles, so verse 2 goes even farther than the early half of Hosea 1: 10, for it intimates the rejection of Israel. The apostle guided by the Spirit was tender to his brethren after the flesh and would not yet set before them so unpalatable a truth. All he is proving here from Hosea is that, as the ruin of Israel does not preclude but rather gives occasion for the call of grace in the gospel to the Jews spite of their dreadful estate, so the same prophet very remarkably leaves room for Gentiles to come in on a ground which shall yet bless Israel beyond measure and number. "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, not my people, there it shall be said unto them, The sons of the living God." I see no more reason to doubt that Gentiles were not by accommodation but directly and primarily meant in this striking portion than in the first verse of Isaiah 65. The same apostle who warrants the application of two verses of Isaiah in Romans 10 warrants the application of two verses of Hosea in Romans 9. The call of Jews and Gentiles he attests in the latter; the coming in of Gentiles and the rebellion of Israel he proves from the former.

Thus there is no ground whatever for the idea that the inspired Paul does violence to the prophet by applying to Gentiles what was written about Jews; or that the principle on which he quotes is merely that of analogy, instead of direct divine authority. Still less is it true that God makes so light of the ground on which He set Israel as to allow the theory that the nations had ever been in any similar position before the call of Israel, or that Israel has lost it irrevocably to let the Gentiles in, and thus merge all for the future on one common level. Not so: the Gentiles have not stood by faith, but become highminded and will surely, because of unbelief, be broken off the olive-tree, whereon they are now grafted; and as surely the Jews, not continuing in unbelief but truly repentant and blessing Him who is coming in the name of Jehovah, will be once more in sovereign mercy grafted into their own olive-tree. This will not be under the gospel. For as concerning the gospel they are enemies for our sakes, jealous that we should meanwhile receive the truth and hating the grace which saves the vilest through Him whom they cast out. "But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," as will be demonstrated in that day, when it will be no longer the call of indiscriminate goodness as now, which ignores all earthly distinctions and unites to Christ in heaven, but the fulfilment of the magnificent purposes of God for the world, according to which the Israel of that day, converted and restored to their land, will be the most intimate and honoured and important instrument here below for the universal blessedness of the race and the earth. As the election of Israel was before the gospel was sent out, so it will be after the gospel shall have finished its heavenly work. Then the purposes of God for Israel, which came to naught under the first covenant, will be made effectual and stand for ever under Messiah and the new covenant.

Meanwhile, if any from Israel are blessed, it is on the principle of God's having called them, spite of the people being Lo-ammi, and giving them to obtain mercy anticipatively now, as the remnant will another day at the end of this age. But mercy now, as we of all men should know best, is not confined to them, but has called from among Gentiles also. Thus the two citations of Hosea were each equally required; and only the latter of the two used by Paul as the apostle of Gentiles, and in fact writing to saints at Rome, who were even more numerously Gentile than Jewish. Hence the reason and beautiful propriety of our finding the latter part of Hosea 1: 10 not in Peter's Epistle but in Paul's.

But there is another feature, not palpable to the careless eye, but most real and in the highest degree confirmatory of a Gentile reference as originally intended of God in the close of Hosea 1: 10. Thus the Holy Spirit does not say merely (as Dean Alford for instance like others ancient* or modern) "as a general assertion, that in every place where they were called 'not His people,' there they shall be called 'His people'." If Gentiles were not His people, like the Jews now for a time, those who receive the gospel are called, not "His people" merely as the Jews shall be, but "sons of the living God." It is the special well-known title which grace now confers on all who hear the rejected One who speaks from heaven; and the emphasis is brought out the more powerfully, because it is said so expressly of Gentiles who never enjoyed the title of the people of God, if scripture is to rule our thoughts. There is thus a propriety in the new title which suits the actual state of things, rather than the millennial day and the relationship of restored Israel; and this too pre-eminently fitting in with the call of Gentiles, who, if by the Holy Spirit made willing to take the place of dogs, find "the crumbs" richer fare than those ever tasted who once were free of the Master's table.

*It may be instructive to show by the following extract from Theodoret's comment that the errors of theology were introduced or at least sanctioned by the ablest of the early fathers. ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Θεὸς οὐ περὶ τῶν ἔθνῶν, ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν εἶρηκε τῶν Ἰουδαίων. τῷ γὰρ Ὡσηε κελεύσας λαβεῖν γυναῖκα πόρνην, καὶ μέντοι καὶ μοιχαλίδα, οὕτω τὰ γεννηθέντα παιδιά προσαγορευθῆναι ἐκέλευσε, τὸν μὲν οὐ λαόν, τὴν δὲ οὐκ ἡγαπημένην, τὰ συμβησόμενα, Ἰουδαίοις προλέγων, ἀλλ' ὅμως πάλιν ὑπέσχετο αὐτοῖς χρηστά, ὅτι καὶ οὐ λαὸς κληθήσεται λαός, καὶ ἡ οὐκ ἡγαπημένη, ἡγαπημένη. σκοπήσατε τοίνυν, φησὶν, ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς οὐκ αἰὲ τῶν αὐτῶν ἀπελάυσσατε· ἀλλὰ ποτὲ μὲν λαός, ποτὲ δὲ οὐ λαός, καὶ πάλιν μὲν ἐχρηματίσατε καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἡγαπημένη, εἶτα οὐκ ἡγαπημένη, καὶ πάλιν ἡγαπημένη. οὐδὲν τοίνυν ἀπεικὸς οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος γεγένηται. συνήθως γὰρ ἀπεβλήθητε· ἀλλὰ καὶ πάλιν θελήσητε. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἔθνη οὐ λαὸς ὄντες, νῦν λαὸς χρηματίζει. (Opera, ed. Schulze, tom. iii. p. 108.) Chrysostom is to the same effect.

The apostle now goes a step farther. He had shown from Hosea the grace which will reverse the solemn sentence of displeasure pronounced on the Jew in view of the captivity in Babylon, as well as the rich mercy for the Gentile to which the gospel lends so bright a light. He cites Isaiah 10 for God's ways with His people in view of the Assyrian. "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for [he is] completing [the] matter and cutting short in righteousness, because a matter cut short will [the] Lord make on the earth." The prophet looks onward to the close of the sorrowful history of the chosen people, when the Assyrian, whom God first employed as the rod of His anger, will no longer be a just object of dread, and those who used to stay themselves on a staff which smote them, or even on that broken reed, Egypt, shall stay themselves on Jehovah the Holy One of Israel in truth. It is the great crisis of prophecy, the end of the Lord with His people who prove Him to be very pitiful and of tender mercy, whatever the rough roads and stormy skies meanwhile. Israel may have been ever so numerous; yet not the mass but the remnant shall be saved. For He is finishing and cutting short the matter in righteousness. It will be no question then of patient mercy, but a matter cut short will the Lord make on

the earth or land. And this is not the only testimony of the kind: from the beginning we read to the same effect. "And as Esaias hath said before, Unless [the] Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like as Gomorrhah." Because He was dealing in righteousness with Israel, they should be cut down to the uttermost; because He was faithful to the mercy promised, His gracious power would hinder such a total extermination as befell the guilty cities of the plain. The remnant should be saved, a seed for sowing the earth afresh, when they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which Jehovah their God has given them. Great then shall be the day of Jezreel, when Jehovah will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. Ere it comes judgment must take its course; but in the end mercy glories over judgment, and the remnant, saved by grace, by grace is made a strong nation.

Plainly however, as the prophets lacked not the assurance of mercy to the Gentiles, so they still more abounded in warnings of judgment on Israel. This then was not the new testimony of grace which the Jews so keenly resented as interfering with their ancient privileges. Let them beware of fighting against God who had taught both these truths in the living oracles specially entrusted to themselves, and their boast, though certainly but little understood. If they therefore quarrelled with such a sentence, it was evidently not so much with Paul as with Isaiah and the Holy Spirit who had inspired him.

What a witness on the other hand of divine truth, of indiscriminate grace, that the gospel, in itself unprecedented and wholly distinct both from what was seen under the law and what will be when the kingdom appears in power and glory, does nevertheless find its justification from words both of mercy and of judgment uttered hundreds of years before by the various servants God sent to declare His message to His people! But as they blindly despised them and rejected His word then for idols, so now they fulfilled them yet more in the rejection of Christ and hatred of the grace which, refused by them, sought and was received by Gentiles, and thus yet more proved the word divine to the confusion of the unbelief which is as blind as it is proud and selfish.

Thus the case on both sides has been set out with the clearest testimonies of the prophets. It only remains to draw the conclusions so far.

"What then shall we say? That Gentiles that pursued not righteousness attained righteousness, yea, righteousness that is of faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, arrived not at a law of righteousness." (Ver. 30, 31.) Such precisely had been the bearing of the living oracles to which the Jews justly pointed as their peculiar treasure from God; yet these oracles declared unequivocally what was borne out by the actual facts. The Jews were completely broken as a nation. They had enjoyed the most singular favours: how was it now? Why their disruption? Why the carrying away to Babylon? why their subjection without so much as the shadow of a king of their own to the iron dominion of Rome? I speak not, it was useless to speak to them, of still worse impending. If they neglected the words of Isaiah, if they sought not into the visions of Daniel, it was vain to expect that they would heed the warnings of the Lord Jesus. But their own prophets amply sufficed to interpret the actual state around them and to prove that Jewish rebelliousness to God was as certainly revealed beforehand as Gentile acceptance of His mercy; and these are precisely the great and invariable characteristics of the time that now is, which Christianity supposes and Judaism denies. In the Gentiles grace is displayed and triumphs; by the Jews it is for the present refused and calumniated. Yet does all this only accomplish the prophecies every Jew owns as divine. That Gentiles, spite of their dark ignorance, their utter indifference to God, should be brought to the right way, not of law indeed (the Jews need not be jealous of that) but righteousness on the principle of faith, righteousness outside themselves, by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, so that it might be through faith; that Israel, zealously in quest of a law of righteousness, had not reached it, was not more patent, if the gospel be

true, than if the ancient prophets be accomplished.

The moral ground also is as plain as the word of God. For the pretension of man to take his stand before God on his own obedience of law is refuted; as on the other hand grace avowedly goes out to the basest and most careless, giving and forming what is good, as well as putting away the evil to the praise of divine mercy, but withal righteously; yet it is no righteousness of law, but rather of faith, so as to be open to those who knew not the law, as well as to such of Israel as were broken down as to self and taught of God to receive only of His grace in Christ. Thus God has glorified Himself as truly as He has convicted the first man of entire hollowness and constant failure.

Israel then has not come to a law of righteousness. "Wherefore?" As it was through no lack of privileges from God, so it was from no want of their own efforts in pursuing after it. But they pursued wrongly. They overlooked, as unbelief ever does, both God and themselves; alike what is due to His majesty, what necessarily flows from His nature; and again, what sin has wrought in the moral ruin and incapacity as well as guilt of man: in short, "because [it was] not of faith but as of works.* They stumbled at the stone of stumbling, even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; and† he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Ver. 32, 33.)

*There is excellent evidence to show that νόμου and πᾶς have been inserted by the copyists to add force, clearness, or symmetry to the apostle's citations from Isaiah. But there is nothing so good as the divine word as He gave it.

†Copyists probably added πᾶς from Romans 10: 11.

Sinful man understands duty to obey with a commensurate reward annexed to success; and he is ever slow to conceive his own failure and inability to meet the just requirements of God. The last thing he likes to do is to take all the blame of his evil on himself, unless it be to accredit the God he has wronged with real and perfect goodness toward himself in spite of his wrong against Him. But of all men the Jews were the least disposed to it and the most obstinate in their own thoughts. For why, reasoned they, should we have the law of God if it be not to attain acceptance with God by our faithful observance of its precepts? Where else is its value and its use? Error fatal to the ancient people, how much more in Christendom, where the gospel tells the wreck of Israel on this very rock of offence, that men who hear and bear the name of the Lord should not repeat it to their own yet surer destruction!

Unbelief of grace, self-righteousness, is far more inexcusable now than of old. For Christ the Son of God is come and has accomplished redemption; and the glad tidings God sends forth on the express ground of universal ruin in man that he may thankfully receive another, even Jesus, and rest on His work before God with peace and joy in believing. But men, baptized men, stumble still, as Israel stumbled, at the stone of stumbling, the Lord Jesus. If they felt their own real state, how would they not bless God for such a Saviour! But they were proud, and blind withal. They were satisfied with their own obedience, at any rate with their own efforts. They stumbled at the stumbling-stone; but the same Christ delivers the believer from hurt, from shame, from confusion. He was set, as Simeon said to Mary, for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed: no otherwise said Isaiah. (Isa. 28: 16.)

ROMANS 10.

The connection of the opening verses of Romans 10 with Romans 9 is full of instruction for the soul. To many a mind it may seem illogical; but this is only the narrowness and infirmity of man who is apt to reason from himself, not from the truth. God's revelation affords the only sure basis; for He alone

sees all sides of every object, He alone imparts the suitable affection and enables one to form the sound judgment.

So here the apostle had refuted Jewish assumption of inalienable privilege necessarily bound up with every member of the Abrahamic family, and proved, on the contrary, their ruin and indebtedness to the sovereign mercy of God. Again, he had opened out with irresistible force and clearness the Old Testament scriptures, which declare that God would call Gentiles in His grace, yea, that the mass of Israel should perish for their rebellious unbelief and a remnant only be saved, namely, whoever believed on Christ the stumbling-stone, who therefore is in principle as free to the Gentile as to the Jew. But this amazingly comprehensive and connected sketch of the revealed ways and certain counsels of God as to man on the earth did not at all interfere with his ardent love for Israel. Men often pervert a scanty portion of such knowledge to shut up their bowels of compassion from those who are to blame and under God's peculiar chastening. But it was not so with the apostle: "Brethren, the delight* of my heart and the supplication toward God for them [is] for salvation." The substitution of "them" for "Israel," required by the more ancient and better authorities, appears to me really stronger as being more expressive of affection than the common text. It was needless to define more clearly for whose blessing he was so earnestly interested, and this the more because of their great danger. The threatenings in the prophecies verified in Israel's deepening unbelief drew out his strong crying to God on their behalf, and this for salvation. For what short of it could satisfy a heart that loved them? To say that "internal as well as external evidence is against" αὐτῶν and for τοῦ Ἰσραήλ proves nothing but the unfitness of him who could so speak to judge of questions which demand not learning only but critical acumen and spiritual discrimination.

*The word εὐδοκία means benevolent wish, or good will, where it goes beyond complacency and good pleasure. Compare the usage of the verb εὐδοκέω. It is more than ἐπιθυμία or ἐπιπόθησις.

"For I bear them witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." "Zeal of God" is an objectionable rendering, like "faith of the Son of God" in Galatians 2: 20. The Greek genitive is far more comprehensive than the English possessive case, and admits of an objective force as readily as a subjective. "The love of God" in that tongue equally means God's love to us or ours to Him: the context alone decides. Here there can be no question of the intended force. The Jews were zealous for God but not according to right or true knowledge (κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν). This filled the apostle's heart with so much the more affectionate care; for their zeal carried them the farther in the wrong direction, as ever must be in divine things where faith does not regulate according to the revealed mind of God.

"For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness have not been subjected [or submitted themselves] to the righteousness of God." No doubt, these self-righteous Jews were not justified before God. But the apostle goes farther, as indeed the principle goes deeper. They ignored the righteousness of God, not merely the doctrine of justification, though this of course follows. But they were ignorant of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel. Man's merits composed the basis of their hopes, eked out by divine promises, by priesthood, rites, and observances. Messiah Himself was regarded as the crown and complement of their privileges, not as a suffering substitute and a Saviour in the power of His resurrection after having borne their judgment on the tree. Hence they could only see an arbitrary choice backed up by their own confidence in their superior claims and deserts, but no ground of righteousness on God's part such as the Christian knows there is by virtue of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; no thought of God as through atonement just and justifying him that believes in Jesus. The grace of the Saviour by His work enables God to act righteously in accounting just us who believe, while it humbles us who own the truth of our

utter sinfulness instead of leaving us to gratify self by setting up a righteousness of our own and hence keeping us from submitting to His righteousness in Christ as the sole ground of justification before Him.

Verse 4 has given rise to very various opinions. One which has prevailed from ancient times and perhaps still more among moderns, is that Christ is the accomplishment of the law. But there seems no ground whatever to confound τέλος with πλήρωμα. Others again take it in the sense of "object" or "aim." But the simplest meaning as decided by the context appears to be "termination," though we know it is also used for "issue" or "result." And in this meaning the representatives of the most various systems coincide: Augustine and Luther on the one hand; Meyer, De Wette, etc., on the other. "Christ is [the] end of law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The Christ of God is made unto us righteousness. "By law is knowledge of sin." Righteousness cannot be had thus; only the believer is justified. Yet so sure is this result, that it belongs to every believer.

The apostle then contrasts the two systems and this by citations from the law itself. "For Moses describeth the righteousness that is of the law, that the man that has done the things shall live in virtue of them. But the righteousness that is by faith thus speaks, Say not in thy heart, Who shall go up to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who shall go down into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from among dead (men). But what saith it? Near thee is the word, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from among dead (men), thou shalt be saved." (Vers. 5-9.) Faith applies when all is lost under law and its righteousness is impossible.

First then is quoted Leviticus 18: 5, which is indeed a general recognized principle of the law, as the spirit is embodied in many passages. The ground of the other side is found in Deuteronomy 30. I do not agree with those who conceive that the apostle has put the smallest strain upon the latter citation. As in the former he speaks of life or living, not of eternal life which is God's free gift and only in Christ; so in the latter his use of Deuteronomy is most profound. Moses is setting before Israel, not only the consequences of their unfaithfulness, but the divine mercy which meets them in their ruin when their heart turns to Him spite of the broken law. Now Christ really lies under the law however veiled. "The Lord is that spirit," where those who read only the letter see nothing of Him and abide in death. But He is ever before the Holy Ghost. Hence the righteousness of faith did not cast the repentant Jew upon his own efforts, let them be ever so great.

"Say not in thy heart Who shall ascend to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from among dead (men)." Man could do neither. Had it been possible, neither would have suited the glory of God. He in grace meets man. It was the Father who sent His Son into the world. It was by the glory of the Father that He was raised from the dead. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;" and God raised Him from the dead. On both truths the scriptures of the New Testament are most explicit. But what says Moses in this very passage here cited? "Near thee is the word, in thy mouth and in thy heart." The blessing is at the doors. Christ is given and preached. It is for man to name Him with his mouth and to believe with his heart. There is no question of heights to be scaled or depths to be sounded, which would put honour upon human earnestness and ability. Christ is proclaimed for the simplest to confess Him, and to believe on His name. "That is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from among dead (men), thou shalt be saved." The outward expression is put first, not of course as most important, but as that which first comes into notice to the praise of Jesus: nevertheless it is of no value for the soul save as the embodiment of faith. "In thy heart" does not seem to be meant as a measure of affection, however truly there ought to be

love for Him who first loved us. It does suppose however that the heart is interested in the truth, and that it is brought to desire what it hears to be true, instead of any longer fighting against it — brought to rejoice in the conviction that it is the truth of God.

Hence, believing in thy heart as well as confessing with thy mouth, the blessing is thine. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved. It will be observed that there is here no mention of death, but of resurrection. Death does not of itself imply resurrection; but resurrection does necessarily involve death. Jesus then is confessed to be Lord: why fear, why be anxious, if He who has undertaken to save is above all? You believe in your heart that God raised Him from among the dead. It is not only then that love came down to meet you and suffer for you, but power has entered, where Jesus was crucified in weakness. God entered the grave of Jesus in power and waked Him up — has raised Him and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be, not in Christ only, but in God. He is for thee. He has proved it in raising up Jesus from among the dead. "Thou shalt be saved," — not forgiven only — but "saved." "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Thus we see in Deuteronomy, when the legislator has closed all the precepts and rites of the law, and shown Israel rebellious and ruined under that order of things, he does not fail to hint at the resources of grace. He supposes the Jew cast out of the land because of his infidelity to the legal covenant and of course to God Himself. Nevertheless though he could not draw near after that manner, the word was nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart. This is the word, says the apostle, which we preach. It is Christ, end of law to every one that believes. So it will be at the close of the age for the godly Israelite, who from his land of exile turns to God in the sense and acknowledgment of the people's ruin. If unbelievers were hopeless because they could not go up to Jerusalem, or cross the deep, for tithes or feasts or sacrifices, faith accepted the word which met their need in grace where they were. Christ ended law, yet was righteousness for the believer, and for every believer. It is too late to speak of living when the law is broken and you are banished in consequence under the sentence of death. Christ then is the one spring of confidence; but if for righteousness, He also closes law to every believer. The word of faith speaks a wholly different language from that of the law. Confessing Jesus as Lord (or the Lord Jesus) and believing that God raised Him from the dead is the word of faith; and it is not received only but preached. God is energetic in His grace and sends out the message far and wide.

Thus there is the very reverse of looseness or a merely imaginative ingenuity in the apostle's employment of the Pentateuch. The gospel anticipates indeed but is on the same principle of grace towards all which Deuteronomy 30: 11-14 holds out to the outcast Jew. For, according to the outward letter and man, their case will be seen to be hopeless. But with God all things are possible; and faith rests on God, who brings out in due time what was then among the secret things that belong to Him, in contradistinction to His revealed ways in the law. In Christ now revealed all is plain; and the Christian does not wait for a future day. To him it is indeed always the time of the end; and he looks for Jesus day by day, knowing that He is ready to judge the quick and the dead, and that God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. The repentant Jew in the latter day will by and by be awakened to recognize the reality of His grace towards him; and he will find the word very nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart, ashamed alike of his sins and of his self-righteousness, broken in spirit and looking to God and to the resources of His mercy. So does the soul that receives the apostolic preaching now.

He had used the order of mouth and heart as in the original words of Moses. And so in fact it is that the gospel goes forth and exhorts men. We hear the confession of the mouth and trust the belief of the heart accordingly. But it is plain that the inner reception of the word must precede and accompany the outer expression of it in order to a true and full work in a man. The apostle knew this better than any of us, and lets us hear it in his next words: "for with [the] heart faith is exercised* unto righteousness, and with [the] mouth confession is made unto salvation." Thus the whole case is accurately stated, every objection anticipated and met. Without believing there can be no righteousness. We are justified by faith and in no other way. But if there be no confession of Christ the Lord with the mouth, we cannot speak of salvation; as our Lord said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [baptized even though he might have been] shall be damned."

*Literally, the verse runs, "it is believed. . . and it is confessed. . ."

"For the scripture saith, No one believing on him shall be ashamed." (Ver. 11.) Assuredly he whom God justifies can have no reason to be ashamed, but rather to be always confident and to rejoice in the Lord always. And here the apostle triumphs in the indiscriminate favour of the gospel. As before in Romans 3: 23 he had insisted that there is no difference, for all sinned and do come short of the glory of God; so now there is none, "for the same Lord of all [is] rich toward all that call upon him." And this he fortifies by a citation from Joel 2: 32; "for every one soever who shall call on the name of [the] Lord shall be saved." There he stops. On the great future day all Israel shall be saved; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah has said, and in the remnant whom Jehovah shall call. Meanwhile the Spirit avails Himself of His own comprehensive promises preceding the clause which specifies that localized blessing and gives all possible breadth to the "whosoever" so dear to the large heart of the apostle of the Gentiles; He had indeed foreseen and provided for all. And it is as beautiful to hear the apostle using the part which falls in with his broad argument as it is to know what comfort the special promise in the entire verse will bring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the day that is coming.

But this predicted opening the door so widely to all that call on the name of the Lord gives rise to a new development of the argument. As the Gentiles did not call on the name of Jehovah, a fresh instrumentality begins to appear with a view to awakening them from the dust of death and furnishing such a testimony as should draw out their hearts toward Him. It will be needed by the Israelites scattered up and down the earth among the Gentiles when their hour of national restoration draws nigh; but the Spirit applies it here, as He doubtless intended it, with admirable foresight to the Gentiles meanwhile. They must be called by the gospel in order to call on the name of the Lord for salvation. Preaching is thus eminently characteristic of the ways of God not under law, but since redemption. For "how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without one preaching? and how shall they preach unless they shall have been sent? According as it is written, How beautiful the feet of those that announce glad tidings of peace, that announce glad tidings of good things!"

The law did not call any one. It regulated the ways of the people to whom it was given; and hence with it was bound up a priesthood which transacted their spiritual business with God, drawing near to Him in the sanctuary and representing the people there, with both gifts and sacrifices for sins. But the gospel supposes a wholly different state of things, in which the grace of God acts energetically, giving and producing what is according to Himself, on the proved ruin not merely of the Gentiles but of the Jews in the rejection of their own Messiah. Hence it goes out freely toward all, not merely to the Jews but to the Gentiles; and if these were the more necessitous, to them the more emphatically. Was the guilt, was the ruin, indiscriminate? So is His mercy; and the gospel is the witness which calls souls, not

to do their duty as the tenure of life, but to believe in the Lord Jesus whom God raised from the dead, to believe for righteousness and to confess for salvation. Thus it becomes a question not of the law; for on this score a Jew was himself condemned and the Gentiles knew nothing of it, and, if they did, could find in it no better hope than the Jews. For salvation is what a lost sinner wants; and as God's word demonstrates such a condition to be that of His own people, and salvation therefore to be their true want, so not even a Jew could deny the Gentiles to be lost sinners in the fullest sense. Would they then deny the Lord to be the Lord of any or of all? Would they affirm that He was poor, that He was not rich enough to meet the most deplorable need of all who should call upon Him? They might spare themselves the trouble of solving a question perhaps too knotty for Rabbis: God had decided it Himself long ago as Israel was sliding faster and deeper into the fulness of revolt from Jehovah. He had associated deliverance with calling upon His name; not with observance of law, which in fact those who had it had broken; and He had proclaimed it in terms so large as to encourage and warrant any one whatever. Consequently then the dealings of grace imply a testimony to be heard and believed by all that call upon His name; and this again, one to preach or proclaim it duly sent of God.

The cheering announcement of Isaiah 52: 7 is the authority here cited; but here again we may observe the wisdom of the citation. The apostle does not quote the latter clause of the verse "that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" For in truth, according to the just sense of prophecy, the very reverse appears from that day to this. The days of vengeance were at hand for that Christ-rejecting generation, not of salvation for the holy city. And Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. But assuredly the joyful tidings must come, for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it; and then how beautiful, yea, on the mountains (which the apostle did not cite) the feet of him that publishes glad tidings of peace, that tells glad tidings of good things, that publishes salvation, saying to Zion, Thy God reigneth! No dust will make their very feet otherwise than beautiful because of the good news they bear. It is not as in Nahum the fall of Nineveh, nor yet of Babylon, for Babylon, as punisher or punished, is heard of no more after Isaiah 48. We have from Isaiah 49-57 entered the still more solemn charge which the prophet lays in Jehovah's name against His people, not for idol worship but for the rejection of the Messiah. Yet here we have the glad tidings of His pardoning and delivering mercy after reaching the lowest depths of rebellion. The apostle shows that in this as in so many other respects the gospel anticipates what repentant and restored Israel will receive from God in the latter day, (and may we not add?) in if possible a deeper form of the truth. For grace, as we know it in Christ (even beyond earthly glory itself, let it be ever so pure as in that day), gives the deepest motives to the earnest spread of the good news: and who so fit to apply the prophecy thus as that indefatigable minister of the gospel, through whom mainly the gospel was even then present in all the world, and bearing fruit and making growth, as we learn in Colossians 1?

No; the watchmen of Jerusalem cannot yet raise their voice nor sing together; for Jerusalem is still in the hands of the cruel foe, and the hearts of the Jews are still under a tyrant more deadly still; but eye to eye shall they see when Jehovah restores Zion, and the waste places of Jerusalem shall burst out and sing together after ages of desolation; for Jehovah will at length have comforted His people and redeemed Jerusalem when He makes bare His holy arm before all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of their God. But the grace of God is not idle nor inefficient. Zion remains in the hands of the stranger because Zion's sons received not their divine King, but slew Him on the tree by the hands of lawless heathens who could be swayed by them and join them in that fatal deed, out of which God has caused to shine the richest mercy for both, if they but heed His message. Hence He is sending out His gospel (as this epistle styles it), as Paul also had received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations in behalf of Christ's name.

We see clearly too in this how the ministering of the preacher is tied to the gospel itself. How debasing as well as groundless to foist in man here as if he must be the sender, where the whole scope is to make nothing of him and to glorify God in all things by Jesus Christ our Lord! In no part of scripture is man said to send out the preacher: God keeps this prerogative in His own hands. Hence, said our Lord here below to the disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, etc. These twelve Jesus sent out." He was man, and could pray and bid His disciples pray; but He was God, Emmanuel, Jehovah, Messiah; and so as Lord of the harvest He could and did answer the prayer by constituting the twelve His apostles and sending them forth on their mission. And if once dead, He is risen and alive again for evermore, and still He from on high has given gifts to men. Believe not the enemy's lie that, because He is unseen, He has abdicated His headship or abandoned for one moment His loving care in supplying all that is needful for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Others who intrude into His place of sending out ministers of the gospel are but usurpers; and those who submit to be so sent are consenting parties (and for what?) to their Lord's dishonour. His will, His word, is plain enough: all that is wanted is an eye in us single to Christ. We shall then see clearly how deeply all this concerns His name, even if it cost us everything in this world. Doubtless the gospel comes through men, however truly sent from above men: only it is not for a man, or for any number of men, to arrogate the Lord's rights, who entrusts to His own servants His goods, to one five talents (to another two, to another one, to each according to his several ability); and who on His coming will reckon with those servants. Such is the doctrine of the divine word as set out dogmatically in the epistles and maintained even in the parables of the Saviour. How false is the practice of Christendom; and how hollow the evasions or apologies (they cannot be fairly called interpretations) of theologians! Why sell themselves to do this evil? Are they blind to results plain before all other eyes? Do they heed not the warnings in the unerring word of God of still worse ills at hand?

Thus prophecy speaks, not of a law to be done or of ordinances to be kept, but of a testimony in which God has complacency as being of His own grace, and so a matter of faith. Even the Jew who had the law could only be blessed by the good news. The law had wrought ruin and condemnation and death for no fault of its own, but of Israel who had broken it and fallen under its curse. Good can only come by grace through a testimony sent them from God. But the prophet adds more in the following chapter, the solemn witness of unbelief even among the Jews. "But they did not all obey the glad tidings. For Esaias saith, Lord, who believed our report? So then faith [is] of report, and the report through God's word."* (Ver. 16, 17.) Israel too, it is here shown, was to be in part at least unbelieving, if the prophet is to be credited; for the apostle abounds in testimonies from the Old Testament to make good his solemn charge against the rebellious people of God, and vindicate hence the going forth of the good news to the Gentiles. It was not merely Paul but their most illustrious prophet long ago who gave this appalling picture of Jewish unbelief. But being a question of a testimony sent out to be heard and believed, the way was open to reach the Gentiles who had not the law.

* B C D E, with some cursives, versions, and fathers, read Χριστοῦ "Christ's" for "God's;" F G, etc. omit either.

"But I say, Did they not hear? Yes indeed, Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (οἰκουμένης, the habitable earth). The apostle quotes from Psalm 19 a striking and most apt illustration of the universality of God's testimony. For we readily see that the psalm divides into two parts, the works of God and the law of Jehovah alike testifying, one outward

and universal, the other dealing with those who possessed it. The heavens belonged to no land in particular, nor do the sun and stars shine for Israel alone. They are for man in the earth at large according to the beneficence of Him whose rain falls on just and unjust, and whose sun is made to rise on evil men and on good. Just so, whatever the circumscribed sphere of the law, the gospel goes forth in the grace of God without restriction. God is not indifferent, if the Jews were, to the Gentiles; He pities and has given a testimony to them in their dark ignorance. Compare Acts 14: 17; Romans 1: 20. This however is general, though enough to assert and exemplify the principle.

The good tidings then came by a testimony sent of God through those who preached, not by the law which could only show the Jew his duty and convict him of sin because of his failure under it. The only hope of good therefore for a sinner is from the gospel; but, if so, it goes out not to some only but to all mankind. And as Isaiah proved that the message would be slighted by the Jews (they that preached having to complain to the Lord, "Who hath believed our report?"), so the Psalms bear witness to a universal testimony of God in creation as illustrative of the principle that He thinks of and cares for, and would be known by, the Gentiles. Granted that the law dealt with Israel, has God nothing but the law? And what had the law done for them? or rather what had they done under it? "By the law is the knowledge of sin." This is wholesome no doubt, and should be humbling; but what a sinner evidently wants is far more than this, even salvation, and to this the law does not pretend, but the contrary. It can kill, not quicken; it can condemn, not justify. Grace alone can pardon, reconcile, bless, and this righteously through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But this is the voice of the gospel, not of the law, and goes out, as being grace, to sinners indiscriminately, be they Gentiles or Jews matters little or nothing. They are needy, guilty, lost; and God is saving such by the faith of Jesus proclaimed in the gospel, which goes out accordingly to all the world, being in no way tied to the land of Palestine or any other.

It was in vain again for the Jews to allege that this was a dealing without warning on God's part. He had not kept it so absolutely a secret that they should not have been apprised by His word in their hands. "But I say, Did Israel not know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy through [that which is] not a nation, through a nation without understanding I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found by those that sought me not; I became manifest to those that inquired not after me. But to Israel he saith, All the day long I spread out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." Thus not only is the general principle illustrated from the psalms, but the lawgiver is himself summoned to give his ancient testimony to the future intention of God in provoking the Jews to jealousy on the occasion of His ways with those who were not a nation, or a foolish nation — an evident allusion to His mercy to the Gentiles, not abandoning His people, but provoking them to jealousy, and in fact drawing out their irritation. Still more explicit is the greatest of the prophets, who says outright that God should be found by those who were not seeking Him, and make Himself manifest to those who did not ask after Him — a description certainly anticipative of His call of the Gentiles; the more suitable because in the same context He says to Israel that He spread out His hands all the day long to a people disobedient and contradicting.

A Jew would not deny the law, the psalms, and the prophets; no honest mind could dispute the interpretation. The application is incontestable. From the beginning, in their greatest prosperity, and when their ruin was predicted formally and fully, such was the uniform declaration of the Holy Spirit. They should not have been ignorant. God had taken care to testify the unbelieving obduracy of Israel and the calling in of Gentiles. These find God under that gospel against which the Jews more than ever rage and rebel.

ROMANS 11.

It was the prophet Isaiah then, after Moses, not Paul, who had distinctly pronounced Israel a rebellious people, spite of God's daily pleading with them, and the call of the Gentiles who had not sought it. It was in vain to quarrel with the gospel on this score. The question is raised consequently whether Israel was wholly to lose their position in God's favour according to promise. The apostle proves the contrary in this chapter.

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? Far be it! For I also am an Israelite, of Abraham's seed, of Benjamin's tribe. God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. Know ye not what the scripture saith in [the section of] Elias, how he pleadeth with God against Israel? 'Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have dug down thine altars; and I only am left, and they seek my life?' But what saith the divine answer to him? 'I have left to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.'* Thus then in the present time also there hath been a remnant according to election of grace; but if by grace, no longer of works, otherwise grace becomes no longer grace [; but if of works, it is no longer grace, otherwise work is no longer work†]. What then? That which Israel seeketh for he did not obtain, but the election obtained, and the rest were hardened; even as it is written, 'God gave them a spirit of stupefaction, eyes not to see and ears not to hear unto this day.' And David saith, 'Let their table be for a snare, and for a trap, and for a stumbling-block, and for a recompense to them; let their eyes be darkened not to see, and bow down their back alway.'" (Ver. 1-10.)

*In the LXX, as the text at present stands, the masculine article is prefixed, not as here the feminine; but it may originally have been otherwise as elsewhere. (Judges 2: 13; Hosea 2: 8; Zeph. 1: 4.) The quotation is the sense, not the precise transcript of either the Heb. or the LXX. Abarbanel speaks of a male image for men, a female for women; but this scarcely accounts for the case before us. Others (as Authorized Version) suppose an ellipse of εἰκόνη.

†The Vatican, which is the best support of this doubtful clause, reads χάρις, grace.

This is the first answer to the question of Israel's total and final rejection. God foreknew* His people when He chose and called them; and, knowing all their evil beforehand, He certainly will not cast them off. He has not done so, as Paul's own case proved; for he was no bad instance — he who had shared in the nation's guiltiest prejudices and bitterest unbelief and rejection of Jesus; yet had God called him. His love lingered over His poor unworthy people even now, as Paul was also a pattern for them who should hereafter believe on Christ Jesus to eternal life. On him first was the Lord showing the whole of His longsuffering: yet was he also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, the one recalling the ancient promises, the other subsequent sin, himself withal present electing mercy, a pledge of the future grace which would save the people fully. Were the exclusion absolute, Paul certainly could not have been brought into His favour. But there is further proof still. "Know ye not what the scripture saith" in the account of Elijah? The disheartened prophet saw himself alone faithful in that dark page of Israel's history — himself therefore the object of hatred unto death as far as king and people could. But the divine admonition let him know of a complete remnant, "seven thousand, such as bowed not the knee to Baal." Thus then in the present time also there has been a remnant "according to election of grace." It was electing grace now as then. The general state was at that time undeniably apostate: what was it in Paul's day?

* It is a mistake to call this an election before the world's foundation which is only said of Christians, of the church. Israel were chosen in time.

This gives the apostle the occasion, never let slip by the Holy Spirit, of asserting grace in its

exclusion of works — in their mutual exclusion, if we accept the received reading. But I do not see that the bracketed clause adds to the precision of the truth; whereas it was natural enough to tack it on, especially as the form in the Vatican copy seems in evident error (χάρις instead of ἔργον in the end of the disputed clause).

How then stands the case? "What Israel seeketh, this it obtained not, but the election obtained; and the rest were hardened." It will be noticed that those we call ordinarily the remnant or righteous portion of Israel are designated "the election," while the mass are called the rest or remnant. "Hardened" also is the right sense, rather than blinded (though this is also taught elsewhere). It may be that ἐπωρώθησαν was confounded in thought and sense with ἐπηρώθησαν, as another has pointed out to be the fact in the Vatican text of Job 17: 7 in the LXX.

This leads the apostle to adduce the testimony of scripture, in the words (apparently mingled) of Isaiah 29: 10 and Deuteronomy 29: 4, followed up by the still more tremendous imprecation of David in Psalm 69: 22, 23, all speaking of the ungodly in Israel. Here again the law, the psalms, and the prophets gave their joint overwhelming evidence in terms so vehement that the apostle had rather to bring in "strong consolation" from the unfailing faithfulness of God for at least a remnant as we have seen, before he established every word by these "two or three witnesses" for the general condition of Israel. What more apt to clench the question? What wiser course possible for the apostle?

But let me refer to Calvin's comment on these quotations; for, able as he was, pious too and grave in general, his narrow system exposed him here to adventure remarks on the apostle no less unworthy than presumptuous. "Quae adducit testimonia, quanquam ex variis potius scripturae locis collecta, quam ex uno loco desumpta sunt, omnia tamen videntur aliena esse ab ejus proposito, si ex circumstantiis suis ea propius expendas. Ubique enim videas excaecationem et indurationem commemorari, tanquam Dei flagella, quibus jam admissa ab impiis flagitia ulciscitur: Paulus autem probare hic contendit, excaecari non eos, qui sua malitia jam id meriti sint, sed qui ante mundi creationem reprobati sunt a Deo. (?) Hunc nodum ita breviter solvas, Quod origo impietatis, quae ita in se provocat Dei furorem, est perversitas naturae a Deo derelictae. Quare non abs re Paulus de aeterna reprobatione (?) haec citavit, quae ex ea prodeunt ut fructus ex arbore, et rivus a scaturigine. Impii quidem propter sua scelera justo Dei judicio caecitate puniuntur: sed si fontem exitii eorum quaerimus, eo deveniendum erit, quod a Deo maledicti, nihil omnibus factis, dictis, consiliis suis, quam maledictionem accersere et accumulare possunt. Imo aeternae reprobationis ita abscondita est causa, ut nihil aliud nobis supersit, quam admirari incomprehensibile Dei consilium sicuti tandem ex clausula patebit. Stulte autem faciunt, qui simulac verbum factum est de propinquis causis, earum praetextu hanc primam, quae sensum nostrum latet, obtegere tentant: acsi Deus non libere ante Adae lapsum statuisset de toto humano genere quod visum est, quia damnat vitiosum ac pravum ejus semen: deinde quia peculiariter singulis quam meriti sunt scelerum mercedem rependit."* (Calv. in loc. i. 149, ed. Tholuck, Halae, 1831.)

* "The quotations which he adduces, collected from various parts of scripture, and not taken from one passage, do seem, all of them, to be foreign to his purpose, when you closely examine them according to their contexts; for you will find that in every passage, blindness and hardening are mentioned as scourges, by which God punished crimes already committed by the ungodly; but Paul labours to prove here, that not those were blinded who so deserved by their wickedness, but who were rejected by God before the foundation of the world." [Paul really does nothing less.]

"You may thus briefly untie this knot — that the origin of the impiety which provokes God's displeasure is the perversity of nature when forsaken by God. Paul therefore, while speaking of eternal

reprobation, has not without reason referred to those things which proceed from it, as fruit from the tree or river from the fountain. The ungodly are indeed for their sins visited by God's judgment with the blindness; but if we seek for the source of their ruin, we must come to this, — that being accursed by God they cannot by all their deeds, sayings, and purposes, get and obtain anything but a curse. Yet the cause of eternal reprobation is so hidden from us, that nothing remains for us but to wonder at the incomprehensible purpose of God, as we shall at length see by the conclusion. But they reason absurdly who, whenever a word is said of the proximate causes, strive, by bringing forward these, to cover the first, which is hid from our view; as though God had not, before the fall of Adam, freely determined to do what seemed good to him with respect to the whole human race on this account, — because he condemns his corrupt and depraved seed, and also because he repays to individuals the reward which their sins have deserved." I purposely cite from the Calvin Transl. series, Comm. on Rom., p. 417. Edinb. 1849.

One could understand a believer perhaps saying that the citations of an apostle seemed foreign to his purpose when not examined with their context; but is it too much if we denounce as irreverent no less than unintelligent the man who could venture so to speak, for no better reason than a blind love of his own scheme? It is excellent and right that scripture should declare hardening to be an infliction of God after men have already proved their ungodliness. It is false and bad to say that Paul labours to prove here that the blinding was not because it was deserved but in consequence of eternal reprobation. In fact scripture teaches no such doctrine. Nowhere are any said to be rejected before the foundation of the world. Nor this only: they are punished at the world's end for their wickedness, not because of a divine decree. Indeed a judgment in this case would be nugatory. But they are judged each according to their works, and the lake of fire is their sentence; though scripture takes care after this to append the divine side, adding that, if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. So in a previous chapter of this epistle Paul had carefully shown how God, willing to show His wrath and make His power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy which He had before prepared for glory. To me I confess it looks like the blinding influence of falsehood when men overlook the difference of vessels of wrath fitted on the one hand to destruction, and of vessels of mercy which He on the other hand before made ready for glory. It is guilty man who is the agent in sin and misery; God only who is the source of all the good, though His longsuffering be conspicuous most of all if possible in bearing with the evil who at last come into judgment.

In short then not only not Paul but no other inspired writer ever speaks of "eternal reprobation;" it is merely a dream of a certain school. So the curse of God follows, instead of causing, the impious ways of men. Arminianism is wholly astray no doubt in reducing God's election to a mere foresight of good in some creatures; but Calvinism is no less erroneous in imputing the evil lot of the first Adam race to God's decree. They both spring from analogous roots of unbelief: Calvinism reasoning, contrary to scripture, from the truth of election to the error of eternal reprobation; Arminianism rightly rejecting that reprobation but wrongly reasoning against election. Like other systems they are in part true and in part false — true in what they believe of scripture, false in yielding to human thoughts outside scripture: happy those, who are content as Christians with the truth of God and refuse to be partisans on either side of men! Our wisdom is to have our minds open to all scripture, refusing to go a hair-breadth farther.

The next position of the apostle is, in great part, decided by the question: "I say then, Did they stumble in order that they should fall? Far be it: but by their trespass salvation [is come] to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy. But if their trespass be [the] world's riches and their loss [the] Gentiles'

riches, how much more their fulness? Now* I speak to you, the Gentiles; inasmuch therefore as I am apostle of Gentiles I glorify my ministry, if by any means I shall provoke to jealousy my flesh and save some of them. For if their rejection [be the] world's reconciliation, what the reception but life from [the] dead?" (Ver. 11-15.)

* δέ "but," "now," is the reading of A B and other good authorities, instead of the more common and easy γάρ, "for." The difference in sense seems slight.

Thus the very slip of Israel from its place of witness and depository of promise, turned as it is through divine mercy into present favour towards the Gentile world, becomes an argument in the hands of grace to assure their future restoration. The apostle alludes to the words of Deuteronomy 32, the bearing of which on the question is as evident as to the Jew their authority is indisputable. It was not Paul but Moses who declared that the Jew provoked Jehovah to jealousy, that he was unmindful of the Rock who begat him, the glory of God that formed him. It was Moses who testified that Jehovah said, "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be; for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with [that which is] not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with [those which are] not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Undoubtedly it is the sure and solemn threat of God's displeasure in turning from Israel to the Gentiles, as certainly as Israel used to turn from Jehovah to false gods. But the threat, now accomplishing after the utmost patience, and only accomplished when they added to their old idolatry the still graver sin of rejecting the Messiah and disdaining the gospel that offered them the pardon of these and all other sins by His blood, — the threat itself contains the no less sure intimation of restoring mercy in the end. For certainly He who acts with a view to provoke them to jealousy through blessing the Gentiles does not mean to cast them off eventually; rather the very reverse. One sees by such admirable reasoning and such profoundly accurate employment of the Old Testament scripture how truly it is the same Spirit who wrote of old by Moses working now by Paul.

Apart from any particular allusion, the state of things whether now or by and by accords perfectly both with the facts of Christianity and with the general prospects for the world according to the prophets. For it is just when the Jews lose all their place and nation no less than distinctive rank as a witnessing and worshipping people in their land that we see the Gentiles gradually renouncing their idols, and the true God and His word incomparably better known than even of old in Israel. Revealed truth, having its centre and display in Christ, alone accounts for the eclipse on the one side and the possession of a brighter light on the other. Did not the Jews reject the true light which now shines on nations so long benighted in idolatry? Again, while owning the mercy of God, which has thus wondrously turned aside to visit the Gentile with the gospel during the continued unbelief and consequently dark and wretched nothingness of the Jew, who can overlook the rich and full stream of Old Testament scripture which depicts the joy and blessedness of the whole earth only when God causes His face to shine on Israel? "God shall bless us" (says the inspired Jewish psalmist); "and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." It is right to preach, a privilege to look for souls to be blessed; but it is vain, because unscriptural, to expect universality of blessing and delivering power over the world as a whole till Zion's light is come and the glory of Jehovah is risen on her. Then and not before shall the Gentiles come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising; then the nation and kingdom that will not serve Zion shall perish — a state of things in evident contrast with the grace that goes out now to Jew and Gentile indiscriminately, and gathers believing souls by the Spirit for heavenly and eternal glory, instead of being a display of the righteous government of Jehovah-Messiah in Israel and over all the earth.

Hence it is obvious with what strict truth the apostle could affirm that the salvation to the Gentiles, by the slip or trespass of the Jews, is but to provoke them to jealousy instead of being a sign of being abandoned for ever as a people by God. Nay further he could reason, in harmony with the prophets, that if their trespass is the world's wealth, and their loss and diminution the Gentiles' wealth, how much more their fulness? The apostle here accounts, or, if one will, apologizes, for his bringing in the Gentiles when discussing the destiny of Israel. He was speaking to the saints at Rome, "to you the Gentiles." Further, "inasmuch therefore as I am apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry:" how or why should *he* forget the divine mercy to such hinging on God's ways with Israel that now occupied him? Especially too as he was thereby seeking to further that provocation to jealousy for which he had the authority of Him who alone is good and of whose compassion toward Israel he was no less assured than of His righteous displeasure at their sins. "If by any means I may provoke to jealousy [those who are] my flesh and may save some of them." (Ver. 14.) "For if their rejection [be the] world's reconciliation, what their reception but life from among [the] dead?" Such we have seen is the uniform impression left by the Psalms and the Prophets, as every candid and intelligent Jew must feel. Then only will be "the regeneration" when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory with His glorified assessors, and all the nations as well as the twelve tribes of Israel shall know what it is to have a king reigning in righteousness and princes ruling in judgment. It is the mistake of Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodoret, of Meyer, Fritzsche, Tholuck, etc., to bring in the resurrection literally as meant here, though I doubt not that the first resurrection will have then taken place as proved by the most positive evidence of scripture. Nor is there just ground for Dean Alford's singular indecision who objects both to the true and to the erroneous view. Whatever the divine mercy in the "world's reconciling" which we now know while the gospel goes forth to every creature, a wholly different blessedness awaits the whole earth as "life from the dead," when all Israel received back and saved, far from their old envy and churlish scorn, shall bid all the lands to sing joyfully to Jehovah and come before His presence with triumphal song. If His house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, in that day also is His name to be great among the nations, and in every place incense is to be burnt and a pure offering offered to His name. How far beyond the present, and how different, though the present may be an earnest and pledge! Will it not be for all on earth "life from the dead?"

It seems to my mind that Calvin is far from having a simple, clear, or strong view of the argument, though I do in no wise deny his generally grave and pious sentiments. But he says that you will be greatly hampered in understanding this discussion, except you take notice that the apostle speaks, sometimes of the whole nation of the Jews, sometimes of single individuals. The truth is that the question is exclusively about the nation as God's witness on earth and inheriting the line of promise from Abraham. There was no doubt about individuals. But Paul, we have seen, beautifully uses the faith of himself and others as a proof that even during the judicial hardening there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and that the call of Gentiles meanwhile is but a provocation to jealousy, instead of implying that God cast away His people, and that they have fallen never more to be received as Israel. And here I cannot but deplore the presumption, as well as ignorance, with which even so godly a person as the Genevese chief speaks, especially on verse 12.* The apostle should have been humbly listened to, not corrected. Need I add that the rudeness of speech belongs exclusively to the critic, and that the inspiration is thoroughly exact, not the too confident commentator? A human antithesis, which Calvin ventured to say would have been more proper, is in force, beauty, and truth far short of that which the Spirit has given. A rising or raising up of Israel conveys no such import of necessary blessedness as their "reception" after their stumble, loss, and rejection. Even if we did not see and could not prove this, every believer is bound to resent such want of respect to scripture.

* "Magis autem proprie locutus fuisset, si lapsui opposuisset suscitationem. Quod ideo admoneo,

nequis dicendi ornatum hic requirat, aut offendatur ista dicendi ruditate. Pectus enim, non linguam, ut formarent, haec scripta sunt." In loc. p. 151.

Here the apostle adds some observations which not only confirm but explain much: these the reader should the more sedulously weigh because they are in general ill understood. "But if the first-fruit* [be] holy, the lump also; and if the root [be] holy, the branches also. But if some of the branches were broken off, and *thou*, being a wild olive, wast graft in among them and wast made fellow-partaker of the root and** of the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches: but if thou boastest, not *thou* bearest the root but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, Branches† were broken off in order that *I* might be graft in. Well; through unbelief they were broken off, and *thou* standest by faith. Be not highminded but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, it may be he will not spare even thee." (Ver. 16-21.) From principles familiar to the Jew in the Old Testament the reasoning is drawn, and the ways of God in government are vindicated with singular force. The Jew, springing from Abraham, the one first chosen and called out to have promises in his line (though for all others in their effects), had been the natural trunk or branches of the olive tree. The Gentile grew wild outside. But God must have branches in keeping with the root, and, because the Jews were not, judgment proceeded against them. It was evident then, first, that boasting least became the Gentiles, who had no necessary or natural connection with the root, the father of the faithful, like the Jews; secondly, that they had most reason to fear, for if God had dealt with the failure of the seed of Abraham, it was not to be conceived that He would tolerate Gentile iniquity. It belonged to the plan of God to graft the Gentile into the line of promise on earth, in place of Jewish branches broken off through their unbelief. By faith the Gentile stands: let him not be highminded but fear. Otherwise God will not spare.

* There is not the least ground for the strange notion of Chalmers after Mede that by the first-fruit the apostle meant the earliest Jewish converts to Christianity, though no one denies that James 1: 18 applies the term to the Christian believers out of Israel, as Jeremiah 2: 3 had already done to Israel originally as such. It is demonstrable from the context that by the figures of the first-fruit with the lump (compare Num. 15: 19-21) and the root with the branches the apostle is setting forth the relation and responsibility of those who followed him to whom the promises were given, as the stock of divine testimony on earth after men at large had fallen into idolatry. Theodoret, like Origen, indulges in the odd conceit that Christ is "the first-fruit," while rightly regarding Abraham as "the root." Both illustrations really point to the same.

The rendering here is as certain as the sense resulting from it is clear and good. With plurals or collectives ἐν regularly means "among," as in the Authorized Version, or "inter illos" as Grotius correctly translates The Vulgate ("in illis") is obscure; Calvin and Beza, not without predecessors among the fathers and followers in modern Germany, including even Olshausen and Meyer, give "*pro illis*" which is unequivocally without warrant. Erasmus is far more right in his comment than Beza who cavils at it and adopts the sense which the former justly censures. But there is no need of resorting to the influence of the Hebrew preposition *in* however largely true elsewhere in the New Testament. What we find here is as common in classical as in Hellenistic Greek; but ἐν = in loco (or locum) is the usage nowhere that I know, and in my judgment impossible to reconcile with the genius of the language.

** The καί "and" is doubtful; * B C, with the Coptic, and Damasus, reject it, probably others also; and we can readily see why some might bring it in to soften a phrase seemingly rugged without it.

† A B C Dc F G L P and many cursives and fathers omit οἱ, which may readily have crept in from the context.

"Behold then God's goodness and severity: upon them that fell severity, but upon thee God's

goodness if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise *thou* also shalt be cut off. And they too, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graft in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if *thou* wast cut off from the olive tree wild by nature, and contrary to nature wast graft into a good olive tree, how much more shall these who are according to nature be graft into their own olive tree?" (Ver. 22-24.)

* Θεοῦ is attested by A B C D* beside many ancient versions.

It is of the greatest moment to avoid confounding the continuous line of the inheritance of the promise on earth, the olive tree, with the mystery of Christ and the church where all is new and above nature. There is no breaking off members from the body, nor is the Jew a natural limb any more than the Gentile. All is heavenly grace and entirely distinct from the system of administered promises which began with Abraham, the first-fruit. No doubt those who compose the church, Christ's body, come in as branches standing through faith in the room of the broken off Jewish ones; but others do also who are mere professors of Christ, and do not appreciate God's goodness but forsake it for forms or scepticism or open evil, and will thus fall under His just severity when the moment arrives to cut off the faithless Gentile graft, as before the unbelieving natural boughs of Israel. It is no question of saving grace here but of earthly responsibility according to the respective testimony, first of Israel, next of Christendom. A man of exercised conscience, or even of ordinary knowledge of the New Testament, cannot look on the Gentile profession of Christ east, west, north, south, and affirm seriously that they have continued in God's goodness; if not, the sentence is excision for the Gentile, as of old for the Jew. Will the tree then be cut down? In nowise more in the future than in the past. Contrariwise the judgment of the Gentile branches makes way for the grafting in of the Jews, for they will then no longer abide in unbelief, and God is able to graft them in again. It is indeed "their own olive tree," which God never forgets, nor should the Gentile.

Thus we all may and should clearly see the distinctness of the responsibility of the creature, whether in Israel or in Christendom, from the security of the elect who are saved by grace. Salvation is of Him who is rich in mercy, possible only, though given fully and freely, to the believer in virtue of redemption. But this does not hinder the trial of now, as of Israel in the past. The revealed result is the apostasy; but grace will translate the saints risen or changed to meet the Lord at His coming, as His day will fall with unsparing judgments on His enemies and most severely on those who abuse in the worst way the best and brightest privileges. The cutting off of the apostate Gentile profession will make way for the reception of Israel.

The apostle had reasoned against the notion that God had cast away His people; first, from the remnant according to the election of grace, of whom he was himself a sample; and next, from God's revealed object in calling Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy, which brought in the beautiful and instructive episode of their own olive tree, still pointing in a similar direction; but now we come to a ground more definite and conclusive. The word of God has given express testimony to His purpose of recalling Israel in sovereign mercy after and spite of all their sins, giving them in the latter thorough repentance and turning their heart toward their Messiah so long rejected.

"For I do not wish you, brethren, to be ignorant of this mystery, in order that ye be not wise in your own conceits, that hardness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in; and so all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant on my part to them when I shall have taken away their sins." (Ver. 25-27.) If the apostle used the Septuagint Version of two passages in Isaiah (Isa. 59: 20, Isa. 27: 9; compare also Jer. 31), in the Greek text as it now stands the phrase is neither "to" Zion, as in the Hebrew, nor "out of" Zion as in the epistle, but ἔνεκεν ("for the

sake of"), save in two copies referred to by Holmes and Parsons in their great edition of the LXX, one of which is certainly a correction, the other probably so. That Origen, Chrysostom, and Theodoret cite according to the New Testament decides nothing against the common text of the Seventy. And this is confirmed by the plain fact that Origen, who had quoted the prophet when interpreting Psalm 14 according to the apostle's form of citation, gives in his Hexapla the text of the LXX. just as it now stands, while we see Aquila and Symmachus adhering precisely to the Hebrew. It is evident to me that the last verses of Psalm 16 and Psalm 52 fully and literally justify the apostle, who was directed by the Holy Spirit to use the Old Testament in such a way as looks lax to the hasty, careless, or unbelieving, too disposed to regard an inspired man as like themselves, but really with the most comprehensive wisdom and the nicest exactitude, so as to convey the mind of God as contained in His word, not in one text only but out of many interwoven into one. The Deliverer will come to Zion, out of which He will subsequently send the rod of His power for the full deliverance of His people, in the day that He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob and place him for ever under the new covenant.

Thus if the hardening of Israel (though, we may bless God, only in part) was then true and still goes on, long before announced, the same prophet and, we may add, the rest of the prophets anticipate the bright day for the earth when all Israel, as such, shall be saved. The πλήρωμα, fulness or full complement of the Gentiles, who now believe, will have come in; and so the long guilty, long chastened, people of Jehovah will turn to the Lord and own Him in the crucified Nazarene, their Lord and their God; even as Thomas who in this represents them, seeing Him and believing.

There is no comment in the New Testament more important for determining the just meaning of Old Testament prophecy. The allegorical school of ancients from Origen down to the moderns of our own day are in this far from the truth of God. Indeed it is as a system mere trifling and its root unbelief, as its dogmatic effect is to shake confidence in the plain written word, and its practical result is not only to deprive the ancient people of God of their hope, but to lower and obscure our own by substituting the earthly position of Israel (confused and spoiled by a so-called spiritualism) for separation to and union with Christ in heaven, the true place of the Christian and of the church. It will astonish some of my readers to learn that Origen, undoubtedly one of the ablest and most learned of the early Greek fathers, speaks of Zion as representing the Father in this very connection! Others may be more sober; but they understood the truth no better than he, if they did not commit themselves to such wild flights of fancy. If some might have hoped better things of Theodoret, like Chrysostom, I am forced to prove how precarious is the teaching which, after saying truly that the Jews will believe, on the conclusion of the work spoken of among the Gentiles, tells us that "all Israel" means those who believe whether of Jews or of Gentiles. Even this meagre expectation of blessing at the end for Israel is boldly denied by Jerome (Comm. Esai. xi.), who will have all to be understood of the first advent!

Nor did the reformers clear themselves from the ignorance and prejudice of the fathers, partly through their dread of Anabaptist violence and fanaticism in their dreams of a fifth kingdom, dreams which after all are far more akin to the theories of Rome and the fathers than to the holy and heavenly hopes given in the written word. For it will be observed that such visionaries look for a Zion of their own on earth, just as in a modified sense their adversaries interpret the prophets of the church. All were at fault, though in different directions; so must all be who do not see the church's portion to be a heavenly one with Christ at His coming, who will restore His people to the enjoyment of every promised blessing and glory on the earth, the nations being then only blessed as a whole though subordinately. But the risen saints will reign with Christ over the earth. We are blessed in heavenly places in Him.

Hence we can understand the vacillation of Luther. But Calvin was always wrong, as an instance

of which may suffice his interpretation of this place where he makes "all Israel" to mean the whole of those saved, the Jews having only the superior place as the firstborn.*

*"Multi accipiunt de populo Judaico, acsi Paulus diceret instaurandum adhuc in eo religionem ut prius; sed ego Israelis nomen ad totum Dei populum extendo, hoc sensu: Quum Gentes ingressae fuerint, simul et Judaei ex defectione se ad fidei obedientiam recipient: atque ita complebitur salus totius Israelis Dei, quem ex utrisque colligi oportet: sic tamen ut priorem locum Judaei obtineant, ceu in familia Dei primogeniti." (Comm. in loc.) Nor is his reason sounder than his conclusion; for he considers the mystic sense to suit better because Paul wished to point out here the consummation of Christ's kingdom, "quae in Judaeis minime terminatur sed totum orbem comprehendit." The argument really goes to confirm what is denied; for the church is essentially an election out of Jews and Gentiles, and never can embrace the whole world; whereas the salvation of Israel at Christ's coming to reign inaugurates and characterizes His kingdom over all the earth. Compare Zechariah 12, 14.

Much more correctly have Beza on the Protestant side, and Estius on the Catholic expounded the verse and shown the opposition of πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ in the future hardening ἀπὸ μέρους, which strictly means "in part," not a mere qualifying of a severe declaration, "until" also specifying the point of time at which the great change takes place. To say with Calvin that "until" (ἄχρις οὗ) does not mark this but only equivalent to "that" shows the strong prejudice of a good man whose knowledge of the language was imperfect and who missed to a great extent the point of the chapter before him, through that wisdom in one's own conceit against which the apostle is warning the Gentiles. That "the fulness of the Gentiles" *cannot* mean the general conversion of the world to Christ, is perfectly certain if it were only from the previous reasoning of the apostle in the central portion of the chapter, where he asks if the slips of the Jews were the world's riches, how much more their fulness? and shows how he was provoking them to jealousy to save some; for if their rejection be the world's reconciling, what their reception but life from among the dead? And this, as already shown, harmonizes with the constant testimony of the Law, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, which invariably make the blessing of Israel as a creation the condition and under God the means of the blessing of all the earth — a new state of things, not the gospel or the church as now known, both of which are inconsistent with it, but the kingdom in its manifestation of glory when in the broadest sense all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Here the commentators are, I must say, painfully defective. The effort of some ancients, and of moderns like Grotius and Hammond, to find the accomplishment in the apostolic times is of all schemes the grossest absurdity, and the most directly opposed to the text commented on.

It may be added that, though Dean Alford took the term Israel in its proper sense, he like the rest spoils much of the force of the truth by winding up with the assertion that the matter here treated is *their reception into the church of God*. Not so. The question of the olive tree stands wholly distinct from the church, though no doubt there are branches now in the olive tree since Pentecost which are also members of Christ's body, the assembly of God. But the olive tree is another idea altogether and embraces the dealings of God on the footing of promise since Abraham through Israel of old, the Gentile profession now, and Israel again in the millennial age, not believers only but responsibility according to the privileges given, with judgment executed on the faithless Jewish branches of the tree to let in the Gentiles, as it will be executed on the disobedient Gentiles when God will give repentance to Israel and remission of sins at the appearing of Christ and His kingdom.

Hence the apostle goes on to affirm what is wholly different from the gospel and church state. "According to the gospel, [they are] enemies on your account; but according to the election, beloved on account of the fathers.* For the gifts and the calling of God [are] irrevocable." (Ver. 28, 29.) The meaning is that, after the Jews proved their hostility to the gospel instead of being saved by it, which

God turns, as we have seen, to His gracious call of the Gentiles meanwhile, election love will still prove faithful in the latter day to the sons for the sake of the fathers. This is not the principle on which souls are blessed now whether from Gentiles or from Jews. There is no difference. All are alike guilty and lost through their sins; all alike forgiven and saved through faith. But after the actual unbelief of the Jews, sovereign mercy will interpose at the end of the age. For the gifts and the calling of God admit of no regret on His part. He may repent of creation (Gen. 6), never of what grace gave in promise to Abraham and to his seed, never of His call which was first illustrated publicly in the father of the faithful. According to that "election" He will yet break their stony heart and put a new spirit within them.

*"Incredulos fuisse redditos misericordia Gentibus exhibita, paulo asperius est; nihil tamen continet absurdi, quia Paulus excaecationis causam non assignat, sed tantum significat, quod ad Gentes transtulit Deus Judaeis fuisse ademptum." Comm. in loc. ed. Tholuck, p. 158.

"For as ye were once disobedient to God but now have become objects of mercy through their disobedience, so have they also now become disobedient to the mercy shown to you, in order that they also may become objects of mercy. For God shut up together all in disobedience in order that he might show mercy to all." (Verses 30-32.)

Wiclif, Tyndale, and Cranmer, with the Vulgate, the Peshito and the Philoxenian Syriac, the Arabic, are here more correct than the Geneva Version, Beza, and the Authorized. Calvin seems nearer to the truth, but has not quite hit the mark. "That they became unbelievers through the mercy shown to the Gentiles" is indeed somewhat harsh; nor is there any need of his explanation for clearing up a difficulty created by his own mistake. The Jews rebelled against the mercy shown to the Gentiles as we learn from the Acts, 1 Thess. 2, etc., and as experience shows in fact to this day.

There appears to my mind not only an absence of any just sense in the modern view but positive error at issue with the chapter, the context, and scripture in general. With the chapter it clashes, because the previous argument treats the restoration of the Jews as life from the dead to the world, not the fulness of the Gentiles the means of their restoration; with the context, because the express point is to crush all conceit from both Jew and Gentile, and especially from the Gentile as now enjoying light whilst the Jew knows a dark and cold eclipse; with scripture at large, because nowhere is the mercy shown to the Gentiles hinted at as the (or a) means of Israel's recovery. No doctrine can be conceived more foreign to the Bible than that it is by the instrumentality of believing Gentiles that Israel as a nation shall at length look to Christ and so obtain mercy. As the Gentiles were warned that they must be cut off if they continued not in God's goodness (and none but the most unspiritual, not to say hardened, can affirm that they have so continued), the sentence is excision, not the honour of bringing Israel into the faith. No doubt the believing Gentiles will be translated to higher blessedness, as the believing Jews were when the faithless Jews were cut off. Thus the prime object is to extinguish all self-confidence and boasting. As mercy alone accounted for bringing in the Gentiles on Israel's rebellion against God, so the Jews when grafted into their own olive tree will feel that nothing but mercy could have done it or explain it, somewhat in unison of spirit with the apostle of the circumcision when at the council of Jerusalem he uttered the memorable words, so worthy of the occasion, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they" (the Gentiles), *not* they, even as we (the Jews).

Thus they were all sinners; and the dealings of God in holiness and love and truth only brought out the stubborn insubjection of both Jew and Gentile, on the one hand, and the incomparable mercy of God, on the other: man's claims, righteousness, privileges, all ending in unbelief and rebellion, but God

never more truly shining as God than in His mercy enduring for ever.

Can one wonder that the large and fervent heart of the apostle, animated and filled yet guarded by the inspiring Spirit, breaks forth in an outburst of praise as he looks back on the grace and ways of God in Christ? "O depth of God's riches* and wisdom and knowledge: how unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways! For who hath known Jehovah's mind? or who became his counsellor? or who first gave to him and it shall be repaid to him? Because of him and through him and to him [are] all things: to him the glory unto the ages. Amen." (Ver. 33-36.) He is the source, means, and end of all He has counselled, accomplished, or purposes still to effect for His own glory.

*Or "both of God's wisdom" etc. as in the Authorized Version.

The appropriateness of the doxology to the epistle is not only remarkable in itself but exactly in place where it stands. Indeed it is not alone; for, as we have a very brief one in the first chapter, we have another very notable in the last. Here it is the admiration of his soul as he looks back on the triumphs of divine mercy — the last thing of which man would think in discussing the dispensations of God. Yet to the spiritual mind subject to the written word and confiding in the known characters of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, such is the bright and blessed and adoring conclusion. The depth of His wealth, wisdom, and knowledge is to be seen, felt, proved, but unfathomable; His decisions beyond scrutiny, His ways not to be traced out, yet all open to our learning of Him with ever swelling praise. For who knew Jehovah's mind? or who became His counsellor? Yet has not the apostle touched on other and heavenly purposes for the glory of Christ in the church, of which he speaks to the Ephesian saints in due season. Here he had only been given to develop the righteousness of God in the face of man's unrighteousness, known from the beginning and revealed all along, and the methods by which God humbles the pride of each and gives the fullest scope to His mercy, causing evil itself to set forth good with the utmost lustre. Who then has given to God and made Him debtor to repay? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to Him be the glory for ever. The gospel is His, the righteousness His, the grace His, and so is the glory. To Him then with the apostle our hearts join in ascribing the display of perfect excellency without end.

ROMANS 12

The apostle had set forth the doctrine of grace in atonement and salvation; he had shown in the resurrection of Christ the living link that binds together the justification of the believer with life, and hence with holiness of walk and heart — a link too often forgotten in the teaching, if not in the practice, of the children of God. He had reconciled the indiscriminate grace of God in the gospel with the ways of God and the special promises to Israel, and shown by the past, present, and future course of dispensations on earth that, as man's part has been unfaithfulness through unbelief, and all its train of miserable consequences, so God's has been and will be the triumph of His goodness for the Gentiles now, for the Jew shortly, all concluded in unbelief that He might have mercy on all. Now he begins formally to exhort the saints by the compassions of God thus displayed in redemption, and even in His dispensations.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." (Ver. 1.) It is the detailed application of the principle laid down in Romans 6, where we first hear of the Christian reckoning himself dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus, under grace, not under law. From this there is no receding to law now, as the tone of the exhortation itself testifies. But the compassions of God are morally to form the believer within and without. Just as in Romans 10 the apostle had taught the value of confession with the mouth

as well as of believing with the heart, so here the brethren are entreated to yield their bodies as a sacrifice to God. Many then as now would have been disposed to have professed an inward devotedness with license for the outward man. The possibility of this self-deception is here precluded, the more strikingly as the exhortation is made not to Jews with their system of external observances, but to Christians who know that without faith it is impossible to please God. Thus is secured the service of the man as a whole; just as the apostle says elsewhere in his desires for the Thessalonian saints, "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, the word "to present," or yield, is so put as to convey the idea of a completed act summed up in its conclusion. It is not mere effort as under law, but a thing done once for all, though of course stamped on the entire christian walk up to the last according to that beginning. The Spirit of God contemplates nothing less for every soul called of God out of this world, reconciled by the death of His Son and to be saved by His life. How could He lower the standard of Christ?

But the mention of "bodies" in God's wisdom associates itself with the thought of a sacrifice so familiar then to every mind even among the Gentiles. Only in Christianity it is an incomparably more intimate and personal question than in Judaism. Animals devoted to death and sacrifice do not suffice or suit, but our own "bodies," and this of course as a living sacrifice contrasted with those of dead beasts, which of themselves left self unjudged and untouched. With the Christian's self-sacrifice God is well pleased. It only is holy now, what was once legally so being in truth proved profane, now that the true light shines; it is acceptable to Him as the expression of giving God His true place, and of man, the believer, taking his. Without this the show of doing good and communicating is vain; with it such sacrifices are indeed well pleasing to God. Further, this is "our intelligent service." Worldly elements are condemned, carnal ordinances passed away, formal worship at an end. God will only be served now intelligently. It is no question of reason judging for itself without the word, but of the Spirit guiding the mind by divine revelation understood growingly.

"And be not conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that ye may prove what [is] the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Ver. 2.)

Here it is not the man personally devoted to God but a negative guard from external influence, and the direct contrary positively carried on by the renewing of the mind, the end being the thorough discernment of God's will. Thus, in order to prove practically that good and acceptable and perfect will, there is need on the one hand of being continually on the watch against the course of this age, the spirits and habits of men where opinion rules, and on the other hand of being transformed; yet this not after a mere outward sort but by the renewing of the mind. It is by practical exercise that one grows in learning His will, and proves that it and it only is good and well pleasing and perfect. Here again we see contrast with the Gentiles on the one hand who knew not God and therefore not His will, on the other with the Jewish people subjected to known definite requirements independent of spirituality. The whole course of men outside Christianity, even if it profess to recognize God in outward acts, is wholly ignorant of relationship with Him, and, having no faith, regards it as the presumptuous assumption of believers. Now the Spirit, in calling us to a path of separation from the ways of men, lays down no lines of outward difference but what follows the mind renewed, and this in steps of enlarging obedience. So Jesus learnt obedience (for as the eternal Son He had only known to command) — learnt it in a path of suffering unequalled. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and God's will He did and suffered at all cost, as we know now to everlasting joy.

In the age to come there will be no such discordance enjoined nor right nor even possible; for the world will be under the direct and displayed government of God in Christ the Son of David and the Son

of man, the power of evil being publicly put down and expelled. But now it is otherwise in this present evil age, when divine life has to swim against the stream. Proportionate is the blessing of fidelity to the name of the Lord when His throne is unknown save to faith and disregarded by men as such. It is therefore a way of obedience hard to nature but pleasant to the new man directed of the Spirit that glorifies Christ, who is the way, and the only way, through the wilderness of the earth to the Father. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Self-will is detected and detested; the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is more and more discerned. This cannot be where the spirit of this age governs.

"For by the grace given me I tell every one that is among you, not to have high thoughts above what he ought to think, but to think so as to have sober thoughts, as God hath dealt to each a measure of faith. For just as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of each other. And having gifts differing according to the grace given us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; or service, [let us occupy ourselves] in service; or he that teacheth, in teaching; or he that exhorteth, in exhortation; he that bestoweth, in simplicity; he that taketh the lead, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." (Ver. 3-8.)

From the more general principles of Christ's devotedness and obedience we descend to the reason the apostle gives. High-mindedness is incompatible with either; it is the very reverse both of the love which animated Him in giving Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour, and of the obedience which He closed in the death of the cross. High-mindedness hinders both the doing our own duty and others in theirs. So Paul speaks to every one among the saints at Rome. This was no pretentiousness on his part but the lowly discharge of the task assigned him by the Lord Jesus, and not the less decided because it was in lowly obedience. And as each did his own proper work according to the measure of faith dealt out by God, each would act with humility but with firmness, knowing it was God's will and his own service. Unbelief seeks great things and overlooks the one thing of moment — our own duty assigned of God without going beyond its measure or outside its nature. Let us remember however that there is a false modesty that fails to act, as well as the want of modesty that goes too far.

For it is in this after the pattern of the body with its many members, the doctrine so fully unfolded in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. Here the apostle but touches on it in a practical point of view, to illustrate the importance of various members in one body mutually helpful; many as they may be, one body in Christ and severally members one of another.

Besides let us never forget that, whatever the differences, all are gifts; and the grace which has given has made one to differ from another but also each necessary to the others, as all in the one body. Whatever we have from the Lord, let us use all in subjection to Him, and for the object He had in view: if prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith. Such an exhortation is the more weighty, because we see that even the highest of the gifts of edification comes within the scope of such a caution. He that prophesied had to beware of overstepping what God had given. The reality of gift did and does not supersede the need of regulation by the word. None put the hearer's soul more directly in contact with God than prophesying; yet must it be conformable to the faith. And if a man's gift lay in ministering to the saints, not in the way of speaking but serving them otherwise in love, his wisdom would be to occupy himself in this, as also the teacher and the exhorter in their own work, not in a service for which they had no divinely given fitness. It is plain that each of these gifts is distinct, though of course God might give more than one sometimes to the same man. but commonly each would have his proper gift.

Another remark it will be well to make, that God guards us here from so sharp a distinction as would favour the ruinous distinction, into which the early church too soon slipped, of clergy and laity. Even the more moderate of those who would apologize for it seek to extract the transition from public to private gifts out of the omission of εἴτε ("whether" or "or"). But this is wholly fanciful; for the Holy Spirit has taken care to render such a scheme untenable by placing the most public gift possible, the ruler or leader (ὁ προϊστάμενος) between "him that bestoweth" and "him that sheweth mercy," all three being found after the omission supposed to mark the private gifts, The desire to avoid the force of this has led men into arbitrary meanings of ὁ πρ. as merely presiding over one's own household, which really demands that sphere to be defined as in 1 Timothy 3: 4, 5, 12; or a patron of strangers as in Romans 16: 2, which however is a different word. But 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 (not to speak of 1 Timothy 5: 17) clearly shows the true meaning where it occurs absolutely.

Again, we may notice that, as he that bestows has to take heed that he yield to no evasive pretexts, but to cultivate liberality (which with money is "simplicity"), so the leader or ruler is exhorted to diligence, and he that shows mercy to show it with cheerfulness, not as if he grudged the consolation. Some take ὁ μεταδιδούς as the official distributor of the public charities of the assembly, rather than as dispensing from his own property; but διαδιδούς in that case would probably have been the word chosen.

The apostle now goes out into broader ground and enjoins on the saints every sort of christian duty, not in outward conduct only, but perhaps even more as to the tone, temper, and spirit in which the Lord would have all done by them. "Showing mercy" or compassion naturally serves as a link of transition, and prepares the way for the more general exhortation to love, lowliness, and patient grace.

"[Let] love [be] unfeigned." (Ver. 9.) Love is of God. Therefore it is of the deepest moment that it should ever be genuine and incorrupt: for the higher its source, nature, and character, the more dangerous where that which is spurious usurps its place and name, misleading others and oneself under a fair but false pretension. It is not the same as the brotherly kindness of verse 10; and the reality of the distinction reappears in 2 Peter 1: 7. On the other hand it is far from being that kindness to all men, the perfection of which we know in the Saviour God as witnessed in Christ the Lord. Love is the activity of the divine nature in goodness, and hence is inseparable from that nature as reproduced in the children of God. Nevertheless this does not absolve them from the need of self-judgment that it be sincere and undefiled, seeking others' good according to God's will unselfishly. The letting in of hopes, fears, or objects of our own falsifies it.

Hence in the same verse the connected injunction, "abhorring evil; cleaving to good." It is a word the more needful in our own day especially, because we live in Laodicean times of sickly sentiment where latitudinarian charity abounds, the essence of which is a spirit of indifferentism toward evil, in particular evil against Christ And the danger as well as the sin is the more extreme, because it is and has long been that "last hour" of which John warns so solemnly, the hour not of Christianity prevailing but of many antichrists, though not yet of the Antichrist. But where love is real, there is and must be the detestation of evil, no less decidedly than the close attachment to good. If the latter attracts, the former offends and is often ill received in the world as it is. But the Christian must cherish the instincts of the new nature and be subject to God's word who has called him out to be a witness of Christ here below where evil meets him at every step and turn. The amiability which would shirk difficulties and apologize for sin is thus proved to lack the salt of the covenant of God, and will soon be seen to be honey and to end in leaven, instead of being the flour and oil which God looks for in such offerings.

"In brotherly kindness affectionately kind one toward another; in honour anticipating each other; in

diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;* in hope rejoicing; in tribulation enduring; in prayer persevering; distributing to the necessities of the saints, studious of hospitality." (Ver. 10-13.) Here we begin with the call to tender interest among brethren mutually; and so also not exactly to prefer or esteem others better than ourselves, as in Philippians 2: 3, important as such lowliness of mind is, the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It is here a question of not merely repaying the courtesy of others, but of taking the lead in treating them with honour and thus by example leading them on in these comely ways. Then, instead of allowing slothfulness, the apostle insists on zealous diligence. Lest this however should be only outside work, he immediately adds "in spirit fervent," and these with a blessed motive to both, "serving the Lord." It is well known that Griesbach, following a few MSS, versions, and fathers, joined with Erasmus in reading κερω for Κυρίω, contrary to the mass of authorities and almost all other editors. It was, we may boldly say, infirmity in judgment; especially as the internal evidence is at least no less adverse than the external. Serving the time (rather "season" or "opportunity") seems at least somewhat unworthy, is little suited to the context in itself, and easily susceptible of the worst abuse. It is no fair instance of a more difficult and therefore preferable reading. The two words may have been confounded by an ignorant scribe, who took the abbreviated form of κῶ meaning κερω instead of Κυρίω. Possibly it may have been wilfully altered, but we should be slow to suspect this when we can otherwise account for a change.

*I see no good reason here for taking the dative as a mere case of relation like so many others in the context, and for rendering it with M. Stuart, "as to the Lord, obedient or engaged in His service." The common construction as the complement of the participle seems to me more exact and simple.

Further, the mention of the Lord and of His service appears to me the link in the mind of the Spirit with the bright future ("in hope rejoicing"), as this again very simply connects itself with present suffering ("in tribulation enduring"), and with the grand support of the soul, come what may meanwhile, "in prayer persevering." This portion concludes with the remembrance of the poor saints, which stands in a similar relation here, as the third clause to the two former in the preceding, verse, in which (we know from his own touching account in Galatians 2) the apostle was ever diligent, as well as the pursuit of hospitality, which the conventionalities of modern life should not enfeeble if we would be wise in the Lord.

In verse 14 practical grace to enemies in power (or at least having the means of harassing the saints) is urged with emphasis. "Bless those that persecute you; bless and curse not." So did Jesus.

Sympathy in joy and sorrow next finds its place (ver. 15). "Rejoice with [any] rejoicing, and weep with [any] weeping; having the same mind one towards another, not minding high things, but going along* with the lowly." (Ver. 15, 16.) Spite of the antithesis tempting one to take the last word in the same gender as in the clause before, which is grammatically easy, I think that the differing form is both more in keeping with the fulness of the apostle's style and better in this passage, though "lowly things" may yield a sense not to be despised.† What a contrast with the self-exalting and disdainful spirit of the world! How blessed to see it exemplified in the human path of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, and enjoined by a servant of His whose qualities of mind and heart have found few if any equals among men! Nowhere perhaps, where they let out their thoughts and feelings, can one find the very opposite so painfully as among the Rabbis. Their scorn for the unlettered poor is unbounded. But indeed it is too natural to man as such. Here we have exhortations to Christians. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked

*It may seem more literal to take this as "led away," i.e. to the judgment seat of rulers, *with* the despised Christians when thus oppressed, as Schleusner, etc., or by them in the sense of conforming to

them, as Grotius, etc. But the meaning given in the text seems far better.

†So far it seems to me that the text of the Authorized Version is preferable to the marginal alternative. But the phrase as a whole is otherwise given very unhappily. In no way does it mean "*condescend* to men of low estate," but rather to associate with them. Condescension is quite contrary to the spirit the apostle would have us cultivate: for it supposes the maintenance of worldly superiority in our own hearts, because it means showing kindness to the lowly in a patronizing tone. The Lord guards the disciples against similar feelings and ways in Luke 22: 25-27.

Following up this the apostle says, "Be not wise in your own eyes; recompensing to none evil for evil; providing things good before all men. If possible, as far as concerneth you, being at peace with all men: not avenging yourselves, beloved, but give place to wrath, for it is written, To me [belongeth] vengeance: I will recompense, saith [the] Lord. If therefore thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Ver. 16-21.)

Self-confidence is another and kindred danger, which in such a world as this would soon ensnare the saint in retaliation. In every way contrariwise we are called to be witnesses, not of the first man, nor of the law, but of Christ, and hence to be above suspicion before all men in providing things good or comely (for such is the true sense here, rather than benevolent); and this too in a spirit of peace with all as far as depends on us. It is a solemn thought that wrath and vengeance belong to God. It becomes us, instead of avenging ourselves, to bend before the blast, looking to God; nay, to render service to an enemy in need and distress. This will bring him to a point with God or with you: if he melt, so much the better for all; if he harden himself, so much the worse for him. For the Christian it is exercise in the divine nature, that is in faith and patience and love. For the christian rule is Christ, not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome it with good. So God, in our own case as with all who love Him, overcame our evil with His good in Christ our Lord; and now also He gives us to be imitators of Him in grace, which wins the victory in His sight and to our own consciousness, even when we may seem most downtrodden before the world. For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith — of course faith working through love.

ROMANS 13

The apostle next enters on the relation to worldly authority of the saints, after treating of their attitude toward all men as the witnesses of the good they had learnt in Christ, where God overcame all evil with His good, and privileges us as partakers of it both to be active in it and to suffer for it.

"Let every soul be subject to authorities in power. For there is no authority save from God, and those that exist are ordered by God: so that he that setteth himself against the authority resisteth the ordinance of God, and those that resist shall receive judgment for themselves. For rulers are not a fear for the good work but for the evil.* Dost thou wish then not to be afraid of the authority? Do good, and thou shalt have praise from it; for it is God's servant to thee for good; but if thou do evil, fear; for not in vain doth it wear the sword; for it is God's servant, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore [it is] needful to be subject not only on account of wrath but also on account of conscience. For on this account ye pay tribute also; for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing." (Ver. 1-6.)

*So it is in A B D F G P, and other authorities, instead of the common τῶν ἀγ. ἔπ. ἄ. τ. κ.

The holy wisdom of the exhortation is as worthy of God, as the suitability of all that is taught is

apparent for those who, though not of the world, yet have relative duties in it, as they wait for the Lord and are called to do the will of God meanwhile. By a gradual transition we are brought from not avenging ourselves, and overcoming evil with good, as becomes the children of God, to our relation to the authorities in the world whose office it is to avenge evil, punishing evil-doers, and praising those that do well. It was pre-eminently in place from the apostle writing to the saints in the great metropolis of the Gentile world, imperial Rome. No otherwise had the apostle of the circumcision exhorted the christian Jews scattered over the East. The falsehood, the folly, the impurity, the abominations of the Gentiles would naturally expose those who mingled their idolatries with the civil power to find the latter jeopardized when souls discerned and rejected the former in the light of Christ. Hence the exceeding moment of pressing the place which worldly authority should have in the conscience of the saints from among either Jews or Gentiles as of God, spite of the heathenism of those who were in possession of it. "Let every soul" is more comprehensive (and I cannot doubt so intended of the Spirit) than every saint. No position exempts. The household too ought to feel it, children or other dependent relations and servants, as well as believers. It is laid down purposely in the broadest terms: compare Romans 2: 9. If the verb be regarded as in the middle voice, it would express the willingness of the subjection so much the more strongly: just as the other side, "he that sets himself against," is seen in verse 3.

Again, "authorities in power" (ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις) is an expression that embraces every form of governing power, monarchical, aristocratic, or republican. All cavil on this score is therefore foreclosed. The Spirit insists not merely on the divine right of kings but that "there is no authority except from God." Nor is there an excuse on this plea for change; yet if a revolution should overthrow one form and set up another, the Christian's duty is plain: "those that exist are ordained by God." His interests are elsewhere, are heavenly, are in Christ; his responsibility is to acknowledge what is in power as a fact, trusting God as to the consequences and in no case behaving as a partisan. Never is he warranted in setting himself up against the authority as such; for this were to resist the ordinances of God, and those that resist shall receive judgment for themselves. For it is by no means "damnation," but "sentence," or the charge for which he is condemned. Scripture is ever sober, as the apostle said he was, for our sakes: if he were ecstatic, it was for God, as it might well be. Other scriptures show that, where the authority demands that which is offensive to Him, as for instance that an apostle should speak no more of Jesus or that a Christian should sacrifice to an idol or an emperor, we must obey God rather than man, but suffering, not resisting, if we cannot quietly leave the scene of persecution. For it is evident that it is impossible to plead God's authority for obeying a command which dishonours and denies Him. Every relation has its limits in conduct which virtually nullifies it; and that is a requirement which undermines its own authority by antagonism to Him who set it up. But Calvin seems to speak unwarrantably when he goes so far as to say that tyrannies are not an ordained government;* and those who listened to him or shared his thoughts have proved that they did not count it beneath Christians to take an active part in overthrowing what they considered tyrannical.

* Nam etsi tyrannides ac dominationes inustae, quum plenae sint ἀταξίας, non sunt ex ordinata gubernatione: ipsum tamen ius imperii in humani generis salutem a Deo ordinatum est. Itaque quum et bella arcere et caeteris noxiis remedia quaerere liceat, Apostolus magistratum ius et imperium tanquam humano generi utile, sponte et libenter a nobis suspici et coli iubet. Quas enim Deus infligit poenas hominum peccatis, non proprie ordinationes vocabimus, sed quae consulto media statuit ad legitimum ordinem servandum." (Comment. in loco, i. 173.)

It is a wholly inadequate apprehension to regard the magistrate on the side of man only. Not that he may not be chosen in ever so various a form by man, but that he is God's servant, as here repeatedly

said. He is His servant for good, not for evil. but if you practise evil, what then? Fear; for not in vain does he wear the sword; for he is God's servant, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil. To see God in the magistrate brings in conscience. Wherefore one must need be subject not only on account of wrath (this would be merely a question of consequences from man), but also on account of conscience. "For on this account also ye pay tribute." This is connected with the foregoing exhortation as to magistrates, and prepares the way for more general relationships in the world. "For they are God's ministers [or officers], attending diligently unto this very thing,." Thus they are designated God's δῆκονοι and also His λειτουργοί, the one as doing the work prescribed to them in keeping the order of the world in obedience to the laws, the other as public functionaries or officially appointed to it. The payment of φόρος was for the administration of government, a tribute or tax on persons or property or both, as τέλος was on merchandize and therefore fairly translated "custom." Hence the apostle (ver. 7) exhorts, "Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." The greater and the lesser are thus taken in, each in its just measure; which the Christian can heartily say, inasmuch as he is entitled to acknowledge God in all without seeking anything for himself. For we are here occupied with what is of God in the repression of evil, and hence external to the proper sphere of christian life, save as honouring God in every respect,

But next we enlarge yet more. "Owe no one anything except to love one another; for he that loveth the brother [i.e. his neighbour] hath fulfilled law. For Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if [there be] any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to the neighbour: love therefore [is] law's fulfilment." (Ver. 8-10.) Thus the debt of love is the only one which is legitimate and in honour, good among men and acceptable to the Lord; the debt we should ever be paying, but never can pay off. Grace alone gives the power, but law is fulfilled thereby and indeed only thus. Law had continually claimed but never found it. Those under the law were under obligation but were wholly unable to make it good. Grace revealing Christ not only shows us His perfection and fulness but forms the heart accordingly. The commandments manwards are comprehended in loving one's neighbour; so are those Godward in loving God. Thus, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteous demand of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8: 3, 4.)

There is another powerful motive for the believer, the nearness of that day when all that is not of Christ must be detected and pass away. "And this, knowing the meet time, that already [it is] time for you to be aroused out of sleep; for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the day is drawn nigh.* Let us cast away therefore the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. As in daylight let us walk becomingly, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and lasciviousness, not in strife and envy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and take no forethought for the flesh for lusts." (Ver. 11-14.) For the earth the Sun of righteousness is not yet risen; for it the believer, though he has Christ the true light for himself, knows that it is night still. Yet daylight has dawned and the morning star arisen in his heart. Hence he sleeps not as do others; or, if he should, judges it as sin, for he is in the secret of the Lord and is charged with the gravest mission of love and holiness in the witnessing of His name as he passes through the world. Man slumbers heedless of danger, spite of solemn and reiterated warning. His evil conscience forbids his crediting the grace which is in God; his self-complacency blinds him to the moral beauty of the dependent and obedient Man, as well as to his own need of such a Saviour and such a salvation as God urges on him; and so he sleeps on till he perishes, waking up too late to the truth he has rejected and the grace he has slighted irreparably then. The believer with his soul saved already looks for a salvation worthy of Christ and of

His redemption at His coming; and, though the interval may seem long sometimes, he knows that it is ever growing nearer. The works of darkness are therefore wholly incongruous and must be cast away. In such alas! the Gentiles used to walk when they lived in them; even as the Jews under the law occupied themselves with dead works. But now, dead to them, Christians would put on the armour of light; and though the day be not yet, they as children of it would walk comelily as in its light. What have such to do with revels and drinking bouts, with ways of lewdness and lasciviousness, with strife and envy? Are they not the blessed saints of God in full view of the speedy coming and day of the Lord? How suitable the call to put on the Lord Jesus Christ! As we have Him inwardly our life, may we wear Him outwardly, cherishing Him as our all, and make no provision for the flesh with a view to lusts. This were to revive the old man already crucified, to have believed and to hope in vain.

*Calvin (in loco) understands by "night" ignorance of God, in which lie the unbelieving, insensible to His truth and will; by "light" the revelation of divine truth by which Christ rises like the sun on us "Porro quoniam hic allegorica est, notare operae pretium est quid singulae partes significant. *Noctem* vocat ignorationem Dei, qua quicumque detinentur, veluti in nocte errant ac dormiunt. Duobus enim istis malis laborant infideles, quia caeci sunt ac stupidi stuporem vero istum paulo post per somnum designat qui est (ut ille dicit) imago mortis. *Lucem* nominat divinas veritatis revelationem, per quam sol iustitiae Christus nobis exoritur:" but the context proves that "night" here means the dark condition of the world while Christ is absent, "day" when He shall appear the second time for salvation. For the believer it is no longer night in the sense of ignorance of God, for him the light of day already shines: so it is seen in the sense of realizing the heavenly hope. 2 Peter 1: 19.

ROMANS 14

The apostle now proceeds to treat of a question exceedingly delicate and critical, especially in days and places where the saints consisted of any considerable mixture of converts, brought out of systems so opposed as those of Jews and Gentiles. What to the strong in faith is an indifferent matter may trouble the conscience of those who are weak, as the apostle here distinguishes them. The weak were such Christians as were still shackled in conscience by their old Jewish observances, as to days, meats, etc., by distinctions not moral but ceremonial; the strong were those who saw in their death with Christ the end to all such bondage and enjoyed liberty in the Spirit. Carefully must we guard against the offensive misinterpretation that the weak mean those who tampered with evil. Contrariwise so fearful were they of sin that they were needlessly burdened and thus cherished a conscience not tender only, which is of the utmost moment for all, but scrupulous. But they were in no way lax, which is an evil of the greatest magnitude and only exaggerated, not diminished, by increase of knowledge. The weak were really ignorant of the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and hence apt to burden themselves continually where they might have found rest for their souls. They knew not that His yoke is easy and His burden light.

The practice to which brethren are called in such matters is mutual forbearance (Rom. 14, Rom. 15: 7), all agreeing in doing what they do to the Lord, spite of difference in judgment of what should be done. Room is thus left for growth in knowledge as the word of God opens to our faith, while conscience meanwhile is respected. "Now him that is weak in faith receive, not to decisions of reasonings. One believeth that he may eat all things,* while he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; but he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand. One esteemeth† day above day, while another esteemeth† every day. Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day to [the] Lord regardeth [it], [and he that regardeth not the day to the Lord regardeth [it] not.]‡ And he

that eateth to [the] Lord eateth, for he thanketh God; and he that eateth not to [the] Lord eateth not and thanketh God. For none of us liveth to himself, and none to himself dieth; for both if we live, to the Lord we live, and if we die, to the Lord we die. Therefore, both whether we live and whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this [end] Christ died and lived,†† that he should rule over both dead and living. And why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou too despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. For it is written, [As] I live, saith [the] Lord, to me shall bend every knee, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each of us shall give account about himself to God." (Ver. 1-12.)

*Calvin's criticism on the clause clearly demonstrates his own incompetence for questions of this sort. "In diversa lectione quid sequitur fuerit Erasmus, non video. Mutilam enim sententiam reddidit, quum plena sit in verbis Pauli; et pro articulo relativo improprie posuit: Alius quidem credit. Nec illud asperum aut coactum videri debet, quod infinitivum pro imperativo accipio; quoniam ista loquendi formula Paulo usitatissima est." There is no difference of reading here; and Erasmus is as right as Calvin is wrong. "Qui credit vescatur quibusvis" is a version so unfaithful that even Beza must needs agree substantially with Erasmus against his leader. The Vulgate ("credit se manducare") is an instance that what seems most literal may be erroneous and absurd.

†Literally, "judgeth." The word means originally to pick or choose, hence to decide, sentence, prefer, or even condemn.

‡The bracketed clause does not appear in A B C D E F G, besides cursives, Vulg., Cop., Aeth., with various Greek and Latin fathers,

††The common reading has no serious support of manuscripts. There is much discrepancy in the copies; but the best text is what I have here translated.

It is obvious that the Gentiles, as having been outside the law, would be least affected by such scruples. But the apostle puts the difference on a ground far deeper and holier than any such accidental and circumstantial distinction after the flesh. A believer whether a Jew or a Greek might freely realize his deliverance from questions of meats or days. Not a few Gentiles in those days knew the law and could not but feel the immeasurable superiority of its institutions as compared with the abominations of the heathen. So we might have difficulty in understanding that those regulations given by the true God through Moses to His people could vanish away, null and void for the Christian. Hence therefore we hear of him that is weak in the faith, as the next chapter opens with the conduct which becomes us who are strong in bearing the infirmities of the weak, the apostle identifying himself of course with such as see earthly restrictions at an end. But while grace alone produces strength in the faith, there is far more behind in the grace which produces it, and what savours more characteristically of Christ. The knowledge of faith is good; the love that is of God, of which Christ was the perfect expression, is still better; and he who has that knowledge is above all called to walk in this love, as indeed every one who is born of God must be. The question of eating and days may concern the least things, but it can only be rightly solved by the deepest truth and the richest grace. Both come through Jesus Christ, and are the portion really of the Christian. But how little Christians appreciated Christianity then, how much less now!

Undoubtedly then he who believed that he may eat all things is far more right in thought than he who makes a point of eating herbs. Still there was no ground in such prejudices or in their absence for making little of the weak and for judging the strong; for there was a double danger of fault — to him who knew his liberty, of despising the scrupulous; to him who was scrupulous, of judging censoriously the free. But such weakness is no more folly than such strength is laxity; even as divine love is always

holy while always free. God has received the believer; and this is said emphatically of him who was judged licentious by the weak; as the brethren on the other hand are called to accept, but not to the determination of controversial questions, him that is weak in the faith. How much ignorance the Lord bears with in the most intelligent! "Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." He beautifully adds (in answer doubtless to many a bitter anticipation of what would be the end of their liberty) "and he shall be made to stand; for the Lord is able to make him stand." For the strong have no strength of their own, but grace will hold them up. Would we wish it otherwise, if it could be? Do we not delight that all is of Him?

In speaking next of a day regarded above a day the apostle enlarges. Giving up idols the Gentiles saw nothing in one day more than another. The Jew was naturally disposed to cling to old religions associations. But in this the Lord's day is in no way included; for it rests on the highest sanction of the risen Lord (John 20: 19, 20), confirmed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (Acts 20: 7; Cor. 16: 2; Rev. 1: 10), and is no open matter as to which each is to be fully assured in his own mind. For a Christian not to regard the Lord's day would be a direct dishonour put on His own special meeting with His disciples on that day, an open slight to that witness of grace and of the new creation (as the sabbath was of the old creation and of law). Only we must bear in mind that, while some lower the ground on which the Lord's day is observed by reducing it to the mere practice or authority of the church, others unwittingly foist into Christianity what properly belongs to man and Israel. But the Christian is not a mere son of Adam or Israel. He is called out from both into an incomparably higher relationship. He is dead and risen with Christ; and to this change the Lord's day is not the least striking testimony. On it the Lord proclaimed His brethren set in the same place with His God and Father as Himself risen from the dead. To confound the Lord's day with the sabbath is to confound the gospel with the law, the Christian with the Jew, Christ with Adam. The very absence of a formal enactment in its case is admirably consistent with its nature as contrasted with that day which sanctified from the beginning, entered so prominently into God's dealings with Israel as to be a sign between Him and them.

Were the Lord in view then, it would be seen that the eater eats to Him, for he gives God thanks, and the abstainer abstains to Him and gives God thanks. The truth is that we belong to Him, not to ourselves, either in life or in death. Living or dying, it is to Him: whether one or the other therefore, we are His and this grounded on His dying and living (i.e. in resurrection), the grand doctrine of this epistle and the basis of Christianity. Thus is He Lord of all, dead and living. Hence one must be aware of meddling with His rights. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou too despise thy brother?" We are forgetting our place and His, in thus turning either to the right or to the left.

"For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God." To this end is cited Isaiah 45: 24: every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us concerning himself shall give account to God." How incongruous for one to judge, for another to despise! We shall each give an account, and this about ourselves and none else. To bring in Christ truly is the due settlement of every question. To Him all bow that believe, as all unbelievers must bow in that day when He shall judge the quick and dead. The believer comes not into judgment, but shall be manifested there and give account. When those who believe not give account, it is judgment for them, and hence necessarily condemnation; for as they confess no Saviour, so they can no longer hide their sins. What David deprecated by the Spirit (Psalm 143: 2), we are assured by our Lord Jesus, will not be our lot. (John 5: 24.) Nor does the believer need judgment to vindicate Jesus; the unbeliever does because he refuses His grace. Thus admirably perfect are the ways of God with both, in everyone and in everything glorifying Himself by Jesus Christ our Lord.

From the account we shall render to God each concerning himself, the apostle draws the

conclusion, "Let us not then judge one another any more, but judge this rather, not to put a stumbling-block or an occasion of fall before one's brother" (ver. 13): a principle as true for the strong as for the weak; for though the weak were the more prone to judge, the strong to despise, both are called to make this their determination, if they would not be an occasion of stumbling or offence, whether in act or thought.

Not but that the apostle had a judgment as to these questions. He was clear as to the Lord's mind, but he would not insist upon this at first, being more careful that the affections should be right, than merely to lay down an accurate judgment; and in truth it is thus only that soundness in determining all questions can be arrived at. Wrong feelings falsify the judgment, as on the other hand, if the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. When Christ is the object, the path will be unmistakably clear. Hence we need One to guard our hearts, and One only can, and He has called us to liberty, but we need to watch that this liberty be never perverted to license for ourselves any more than to slight others. Love is the bond of perfectness. Here the apostle says, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing [is] unclean of itself; except to him that reckoneth anything to be unclean, to him [it is] unclean." It is no question now of meats, in which they who walked were not profited. It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. The Lord Jesus is also the truth, and has put everything in the light of God. But conscience must be heeded, and the strong must be careful not to weaken or wound another's conscience, whatever be his own conviction. "For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer according to love." But love is the energy of the divine nature in which the Spirit guides, not in self-will. "Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." The Holy Spirit speaks according to the tendency of our conduct. Anything that would stumble another tends to destroy. What a misjudgment to insist upon liberty as to meat so as to nullify the value of Christ's death as far as we can! Grace may, and no doubt does, deliver, but our misuse of liberty remains no less guilty in the sight of God. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of, for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This is a weighty practical truth, and we need, especially if we have knowledge, to guard against pressing anything beyond those who are but ill-instructed. It was not so that Christ walked and that God dealt with our own souls. And now that Christ has revealed God, it is of the deepest consequence that we insist only on what is grace and what makes for edification.

The reader will observe how "the kingdom of God" is used here, not so much dispensationally as morally. Indeed it is so where the phrase occurs in Matthew, who alone also uses the well-known formula "the kingdom of heaven." Only the latter phrase invariably occurs in a dispensational sense, and means that state of things where the heavens rule now that Jesus is cast out from the earth; first, while He is hid in God; secondly, when He comes again in the clouds of heaven with power and glory. But the kingdom of God might be said to be already there, already come upon them, when He, by the Spirit of God, cast out demons. The kingdom of heaven, contrariwise, could not be said to have come till He went on high. Thus the kingdom of God might be used where the kingdom of heaven occurs but also as here where it could not be. The apostle insists that the kingdom of God cannot be lowered to that which perishes with the using; it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the inward spirit and practical power of the Christian. "For he that in this serves Christ [is] acceptable to God and approved of men." It is walking in the Spirit, in short, the true guard against fulfilling any lust of the flesh. "Against righteousness and peace and joy there is no law." "Let us therefore pursue the things of peace and the things of mutual edification." God Himself is the God of peace, and the Lord is Himself the Lord of peace who gives us peace continually in every way. Knowledge puffs up, love alone builds up. And as He builds His church infallibly upon the rock, the confession of His own name, so we, by the godly use of His name, are called to build up one another. We can understand therefore how

impressively the apostle again urges, "Do not for the sake of meat undo the work of God." "All things indeed [are] clean." This is freely allowed to the strong, but "it is evil to the man that eateth with stumbling." This is the danger for the weak, and love would lead the strong to consider the weak, assuredly not to help the enemy against them. "[It is] right not to eat meat nor to drink wine [nor anything] in which thy brother stumbleth or is offended or is weak." (Ver. 21.) There might be various degrees of danger; but the only thing that becomes the saint in this is to seek his brother's good. "Hast thou faith? have [it] to thyself before God: blessed he that judgeth not himself in what he alloweth." To be strong in faith then is right: only it should be conjoined with the energy of love for those who are weak, guarding against all boast also in that which is received by grace from God. "But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because [it is] not of faith; but whatever [is] not of faith is sin:" a maxim often strained in ancient and modern times to pronounce upon unbelievers and the worthlessness of every act in their lives. But this is clearly not in question here; rather is it a matter between Christians, some of whom saw their liberty, others being still in bondage. It is a great favour to enjoy the liberty of Christ in the smallest matters of every-day life; but he who has entered into this is so much the more bound to consider the believer who is still hampered with doubts as to this or that. To imitate liberty without believing its ground would be to endanger the work of God. Grace respects the conscience of him that doubts, and instead of trifling with scruples would rather seek to lead into the due application of Christ to the case by faith: without it all is vain or worse. "Whatever is not of faith is sin."

ROMANS 15.*

*It is well known that between Romans 14 and 15 certain old editors inserted (according to the testimony of many copies, versions, and fathers) the doxology of Romans. 16: 25-27. It was not surprising that Matthaei, etc., keeping close to Constantinopolitan manuscripts, adhered to them in this. But there is no sufficient reason to disregard the weightiest witnesses of the ancient text, confirmed as it is by the internal evidence. The Sinai, the Vatican (1209), the Parisian palimpsest, the Clermont, and the St. Germain Greco-Latin Uncials, with several good cursives (16. 80. 137. 176.), the Vulgate, Peschito Svriac, Coptic, etc., give the passage at the close of the epistle. The Alexandrian and the Porphyrian with some other authorities have it in both positions, a corrector of the Clermont MS in neither; while Boerner's Uncial, now in Dresden, leaves a vacant space at the end of Romans 14 — the Augian of Cambridge has a similar vacancy at the end of Romans 16; as opposed to Passionei's Cod. Angel. (L, now belonging to the Augustinian monks at Rome), backed up by about two hundred cursives, etc. The insertion here is resisted by the connection of the chapters; it is perfectly suitable at the end. The first seven verses of our chapter conclude the subject under discussion, with five transitional verses following which prepare the way for the notices of his ministry among the Gentiles to the end of the chapter.

The apostle identifies himself with the strong, as indeed might have been gathered from the latter part of Romans 14: 14-23. He had no difficulty himself as to any creature of God; nevertheless he maintains the claims of conscience inviolable in the weakest of the saints, and, as we have seen, is anxious to settle, not so much questions, as souls. He puts them all in direct responsibility to Christ as Lord and in view of the judgment-seat. Nevertheless the judgment he had received by grace he does not withhold. Having stated it however, he returns to the exercise of love. It would be wretched and a mere triumph for the enemy to make things in themselves indifferent an occasion of stumbling and of sin. "But we the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves." (Ver. 1.) To press our own convictions is neither the divine nor the human way to convince: not the human, because will only provokes will, and defers the end we most desire; not the divine, because it is not the way of

faith either on our part or on theirs whom we hurry. How much better to walk in faith and leave God room to act! He can and will give efficacy to His own grace and truth. "Let each of us please his neighbour for good unto edification." (Ver. 2.) Love is better than knowledge, seeking not its own things but those of others. "For the Christ also pleased not himself, but even as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me." (Ver. 3.) Such was the perfection of devoted love in Christ. He identified Himself with God even as He was God. The zeal of His Father's house ate Him up, and as the image of the invisible God He bore the brunt of all that touched God. How wondrous that we should now stand in a similar place! Yet it is most consistent with the grace which has made Him our life and given us the family interests in all respects.

Thus, if we are called to be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love even as Christ loved us, so also to bear the world's enmity against God, as feeling for Him and with Him in the midst of a gainsaying generation. By grace we are one with Christ In practice too we are to cherish His portion here below; and thus, what the Old Testament says of Christ, the New says of the Christian. Hence all scripture is not confounded but interwoven, and every scripture becomes of the deepest interest and profit, to us above all who are brought into such an identity of place with Christ. "For as many things as were written before were written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." (Ver. 4.) How gracious is God and how rich His provision! We might have been unprepared and disheartened otherwise. We are here shown that the path of love is the path of Christ, and that patience as well as comfort are meant to be the pathway in which we have our hope. Christ was the perfect pattern of all patience. Near but how far off, yet comparatively nearest to Him, come the apostles, notably Paul himself. May we seek this. It is the proof of power, and in the most excellent way. In the world as it is, it is ever called for, in heaven no longer needed. "May the God of endurance and comfort," says he, "give you to be of the same mind one toward another according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ver. 5, 6.) If Christ Jesus engages the thoughts and mind of each, there will be the same mind, and the God who made Him the channel, as He was the only full expression of endurance and comfort in a world full of misery, can give us to glorify Him thus. Oneness of mind or feeling is an illusion otherwise. Such unanimity glorifies the creature, the first man, not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want no other motive, no object but Christ. This alone glorifies God. "Wherefore receive one another, even as the Christ also received you unto [the] glory of God." Certainly Christ did not receive souls for settling points of difference. He who died and rose for us is above the controversies and the scruples and the self-importance of men. Our best wisdom is to worship and serve Him, who glorified God here below and is now glorified by Him on high. But His glory is a safeguard no less than a motive: for, if it blot out by its brightness the questions which are apt to vex Christians in the inverse ratio of their intrinsic importance, it displays the true significance of what is involved in that which otherwise might seem of no moment. Who without it could have conceived that the truth of the gospel was compromised by Peter's no longer eating with Gentile believers, after certain came to Antioch from James? Who would have written so peremptorily to the elect lady and her children if one sought to visit them who brought not the doctrine of Christ? To receive such would have been to God's dishonour as distinctly as saints are to be received to His glory. Christ, not this question or that, abides the only unerring test. To receive one in His name is to God's glory, as surely as to reject those who plead that they are Christians so as to deny the Christ of God.

"For* I say that Christ became a minister of circumcision for [the] truth of God to confirm the promises of the fathers, and that the Gentiles should glorify God for mercy, according as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among [the] Gentiles, and will sing praises to thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, Gentiles, with His people; and again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and land him,

all ye peoples. And again Esaias saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and one that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles: on him shall [the] Gentiles hope." (Ver. 8-12.) It is plain here that we approach the same twofold line as we have seen from the beginning, where Jesus is viewed as Son of David according to flesh, Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. He had been made a minister of circumcision for God's truth in order to confirm the promises made to the fathers; but also that the Gentiles should glorify God for mercy. For the one there were definite covenant grounds on which God entered with Israel: not so with the others, who were dealt with in pure grace. To some the latter may seem vague and insecure as compared with the former; but this only because God is feebly known. In fact His grace flows without limit when the people who had the promises rejected Him in whom alone they can be made good; and as there is no limit to the mercy of God, so there is no question of claim, competency, or desert in our own. Thus, while it did not become the Gentile believers to slight the Lord's connection in flesh with Israel, it was of great moment for the Jewish believers to note that the ancient oracles testified of that further outgoing in mercy when the truth was overlooked by, and unbearable to, self-complacent unbelief. The Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets bore concurrent witness to that mercy toward Gentiles which the Jew found it so hard to allow, save on conditions exalting to the first man instead of to the praise of the Second. None goes so far as to teach the one body of Christ in which all distinctions should disappear. This was the mystery kept hid from the ages and ages. But prophecy did declare mercy to Gentiles, and joy with Israel, and Messiah their object of hope as well as Governor. The first citation is general; the second joins them in gladness with Israel; the third asserts the universality of the nations' praise; the fourth speaks distinctly of Messiah's ruling Gentiles and of their hope founded on Him. The apostle makes no comment: the suggestion was plain, the bearing on the actual state at Rome full of instruction to such as had ears to hear, clenching his previous exhortation. He was led only to add the prayer, "And may the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by [the] power of [the] Holy Spirit." (Ver. 13.) Thus He who saves the believers already justified to have peace with Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ is entreated as "the God of peace" to fill them with all joy and peace in believing. Settling points of conscience however wisely could effect no such result; whereas, when hearts are thus filled with divinely-given happiness, not only do questions disappear without controversy, but the power of the Holy Spirit vouchsafes abounding hope, instead of a fleshly contest between the past prestige of the Jew and the present privileges of Gentile saints. He who goes forward with the revealed future in view will desire that whatever he does now, even in such matters as eating or drinking, may be to God's glory, not occupying those who are to share it with debates, but diffusing the joy and peace which fill himself in believing.

*Much the weightiest authorities give γάρ, not δέ like the received text, which breaks or alters the connection.

The application we have seen of the Old Testament to the actual call of Gentiles as well as Jews is the transition to a delicate, dignified, and withal affectionate apology, if such it may be called, which the apostle gives next. He explains why he had thus written to the Christians in Rome, and why he had not yet visited them, intimates what was in his heart as regards his work in relation to them, and asks their prayers, adding his own.

"But I am persuaded, my brethren, even I myself, concerning you, that yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. But I have written more boldly to you [brethren] in part, as putting you in mind because of the grace given to me by God that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, carrying on sacrificially the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by [the] Holy Spirit. I have then my glorying

in Christ Jesus in the things that pertain to God." (Ver. 14-17.)

Thus the apostle lets these saints know, though a stranger to them as a company, his own personal assurance, spite of his strong expostulation and earnest caution throughout the epistle, of that which grace had already wrought among them in goodness and knowledge as well as in ability to admonish one another. As the apostle John tells the babes in his first epistle, he had written, not because they did not know the truth, but because they did. Yet he wrote the more boldly in part as reminding them, because grace had given him to be an official servant of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. They therefore came within his domain; but what tender consideration of others, what confidence in the precious fruits of grace and truth, and what a contrast with that haughty assumption which was most of all to go forth from that very city when at a later day she should sit as a harlot queen and make men drunk with the wine of her fornication!

It will be observed that there are energetic figures employed here, as where the apostle describes himself as λειτουργὸν Χ. Ἰ., and yet more, ἰεουργοῦντα τὸ εὐ. τ. Θ., and again, ἵνα γ. ἡ προσφορὰ τ. ἐθ. We can easily understand how ritualism catches at such phrases to eke out the semblance of a sacerdotal character for a servant of the Lord Jesus. But it is vain. Far more distinctly and with less ambiguity does the Spirit assert a priestly place for every Christian as such, as we may see not only in words but in the standing and functions to which all are called expressly; as in Hebrews 10: 19-22, 1 Peter 2: 5-9, Revelation 1: 6. The apostle once more magnifies his office; and if the Roman saints felt his weighty words, they must think of him as a public servant of Christ Jesus, occupied with presenting the Gentiles, that it might be an offering acceptable to God; as Aaron of old offered the Levites before Jehovah for an offering of the sons of Israel, the Christians being sanctified by the Holy Spirit as the Levites were by birth and ceremonial rites. The truth is that in this context the apostle uses λειτουργῆσαι of the Gentile believers serving the Jewish saints in carnal things, as he has λειτουργία in speaking of the service of the Corinthian and Philippian saints. (2 Cor. 9: 12, Phil. 2: 17, 25, 30.) Hence there is not the smallest ground for confounding ministry with priesthood, or for the notion that scripture admits of a sacerdotal caste between the Christian and God. On the other hand no intelligent believer will weaken either the perpetuity of christian ministry, or the extraordinary place of apostles, above all of him who was apostle not from men, nor through man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. Paul then had his ground of boasting in Christ Jesus in the things regarding God.

"For I will not dare to speak of any of these things which Christ did not effect by me for obedience of Gentiles by word and deed, in [the] power of signs and wonders, in [the] power of [the] Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about Illyricum I have fully set forth the gospel of Christ; and so zealously aiming to preach the gospel, not where Christ hath been named that I might not build upon another's foundation, but according as it is written, To whom it hath not been told concerning him, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand." (Ver. 18-21.)

Here he comes to matters of fact and how far the mighty offering of the Gentiles had been waved before the Lord. In a few pithy words and with the most genuine modesty he sums up his life of labour in the gospel. Truly it was Christ who effected it by Paul in the power of the Spirit. His principle was to preach Christ where His name was unknown, according to the word of Jehovah in Isaiah 52: 15. The Roman saints then could understand why he had been labouring elsewhere rather than in the great city where from the beginning of the gospel some seeds of the risen corn of the land had taken root and borne fruit. Labouring in the vast field where none had been borne he adds, "wherefore also I have been often hindered from coming unto you; but now having no longer place in these regions and having a longing to come unto you for many years whenever I go unto Spain; for I hope when I go through to

see you and by you to be sent forward thither if first I be in part filled with you [i.e., your company]. But now I go unto Jerusalem ministering to the saints; for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a certain contribution for the poor of the saints that [are] in Jerusalem. For they have been pleased, and they are their debtors; for if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they ought also in fleshly things to minister to them. Having finished this then and sealed to them this fruit, I will go away by you unto Spain; and I know that on coming unto you I shall come in fulness of Christ's blessing."

There is a time for all and a place for each, of which the Lord only is absolute judge; but He does not fail to give the sense of it to His servants: according to the measure of their spirituality they will gather it. The object which the Master had in view through the apostle being now achieved, he had no longer place in the East; and the old longing to visit the saints at Rome, often hindered, came up again when he proposed to go onward to Spain. For, it will be observed, Spain, not Rome, was the point sought, doubtless according to the measure of the rule which God apportioned him. His eye was on the regions beyond, but he hoped by the way to see the Roman saints and by them to be sent forward thither "if first I be in part filled with your company," for he will not allow that any time could exhaust his love for them or enjoyment of converse with them: hence he says, if I be in part "filled with you." Meanwhile he was engaged in an errand of compassion for the poor of the saints at Jerusalem. The saints of Macedonia and Achaia (at that time the two provinces into which the Romans long before separated Greece politically) had raised means to help their brethren; and this the apostle treats rather as a debt of love than its simple outflow. If the Gentiles were partakers in the spiritual privileges of the Jews, ought they not to remember their poor saints in fleshly things? They were pleased, he repeats, but they are their debtors. Grace pleads powerfully, for it sees with single eye and desires the reciprocation of love which exercises and unites the heart in all that are of God. The least things as well as the greatest afford the materials; and he who does not think a deacon's service beneath an apostle was inspired to write of all for our edification, assured of a fulness of Christ's blessing for saints at Rome when he came. Whether he attained his desire to visit Spain may be a question, as many have doubted it, though one may not be prepared to affirm it. Much depends on the point so much contested of a second imprisonment in Rome and that which filled up the interval of the apostle's free labours after the first. Certain it is that he came to Rome, when he did, differently from his expectations, a prisoner of Jesus Christ; but was it with less blessing?

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed." (Ver. 30-32.)

It is sweet to find the earnest desire of the great apostle for the prayers of the saints, even of those he had never visited. But the knowledge of Christ, whilst it fills the soul with happiness, knits us up with all that are His, and enhances in our eyes the value of their prayers, always effectual on the part of godly men of all ages. Again, the Spirit, as He comes the witness and power of divine love in its perfection, so produces unselfish working of affection Godward as well as toward man. He sought their striving together with him in prayers to God for him: first, that he might be saved from those that believe not in Judea, ever implacable toward him who was once a leader of their unbelief, now a champion of the grace they hated; secondly, that his ministry for Jerusalem might be acceptable to the saints, for alas! the unbelief of believers, especially the Jewish ones, wrought deeply against the apostle, and none the less because he loved them so well and laboured for the relief of their need, in which this ministry of his consisted (Gal. 2); and both these, in order that he might come in joy to the

saints at Rome by the will of God, "that I may be refreshed with you" (not merely you by me) added and most truly felt. How forcibly he closes this with "May the God of peace [be] with you all. Amen." (Ver. 33.) To seek the peaceful blessing of others is the happy pathway where the God of peace is with us. May we and all saints have Him thus!

ROMANS 16

Apostolic salutations follow. Not that the apostle had been to Rome, still less had he wrought there, but this the more illustrates the principle. There are such links of labour, and a special tie with the saints to which one is blessed of God. But the divine bond of love is both deeper and larger than that which is ordinarily recognized by christian men. Love is of God and goes out to all who are of God, yea, beyond them, in the overflowing of divine grace that seeks to save the lost. Besides, the apostle fully realizes his relationship as to the letting out of his heart among Gentiles, and so, as writing to the Christians in this city, the metropolis of the world, the wisdom of God had taken care that, boastful as it was, and far more boastful as it was going to be when the church utterly sunk into the world's ways and desires and ignorance of God, they should not truly boast of an apostolic foundation. The message of grace in redemption was carried to Rome, but it would seem rather by indirect means than by the express visit of any among the more known labourers of the Lord, still less by an apostle. That it was founded or governed by Peter is a mere fable, resting on no evidence save of fathers, whose statement as to facts in those early days is egregiously unreliable, and openly at variance with the inspired record. Peter was apostle of the circumcision, whether in Palestine or out of it, and where we do hear of his work outside, it is with the believers from among the Jews, according to the arrangement agreed on (doubtless by the Spirit of God) with the apostle Paul who had the apostolate of the uncircumcision; and this very epistle gives unquestionable evidence that Paul had not as yet visited Rome, though he fully recognizes the saints already there. It is possible those who first carried the gospel thither may have been the Romans sojourning in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2: 10.) Certainly there were then dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, pious men, from every nation of those under heaven, and one cannot doubt that their visits or return or even communications to their own lands would help to spread the gospel far and wide.

However this may be, the apostle goes into remarkable detail in his salutations to those at Rome. "Now I commend to you Phoebe our sister, being minister* of the assembly that is in Cenchreae, that ye may receive her in [the] Lord, worthily of the saints, and assist her in whatever matter she hath need of you; for she also hath been a helper of many and of myself." (Ver. 1, 2.) We know from elsewhere that elderly females, especially widows, held a position official or quasi-official in which they rendered service to the assembly where they lived. A deaconess such as Phoebe was distinct from these widows; but the one illustrates the other: the value of this would be specially felt of old before Christianity had vindicated the place of women, and this too, particularly in the east as well as in dissolute Greece. Indeed at all times and in all places there are functions to be discharged from time to time more fittingly by a godly female rather than by any man, however pure-minded or elderly. Phoebe was one of these in the assembly of the port of Corinth — Cenchreae. As she had thus been honoured of the Lord and recognized by His chief servants in the ordinary circle of her christian duty, so the apostle now introduces her thus to the saints at Rome that they might receive her in a becoming sort, and this, not merely in spiritual things but in whatever business she might need their help, for she too, as be affectionately adds, had been a helper of many and of himself.

*It may be interesting to some to hear that Pliny, in his letter to the emperor Trajan, speaks of two maids who were ministers of the church, using the Latin term exactly corresponding to the Greek of the apostle.

"Salute Prisca* and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus (which [οὔτινες†] for my life staked their own neck, to whom [οἷς†] not, I only give thanks, but also all the assemblies of the Gentiles), and the assembly at their house." (Ver. 3-5.) Here the apostle stamps them as his fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, the more carefully because Aquila and he had wrought in the same trade of tent-makers; but the natural occupation disappears, however rightly noticed in its own place. Grace acknowledges this converted godly Jew and his wife, not only as workers in Christ Jesus, but as fellow-workers with the apostle. Nor this alone: they had for his life risked their own neck, and thus earned the thankfulness not of himself only, but of all the assemblies of the Gentiles too. Further, he salutes the assembly also in their house. The trade of tent-maker, if pursued at Rome, would naturally furnish him with a large room, where not a few might assemble. We know that for a considerable time after this Christians were in the habit of so meeting, as is shown for example in the answer of Justin M. to the prefect Rusticus.

*Such seems the best reading here, 1 Corinthians 16: 19, and in 2 Timothy 4: 19. In Acts 18: 2, 18, 26, it is rather Priscilla, the diminutive form, but the same name.

†The reader will notice, as has been often done, the difference of character and fact in verse 4, and also 7.

"Salute Epaenetus, my beloved, who is [the] firstfruits of Asia for Christ." Achaia in the received text is wrong. The household of Stephanus were the first-fruits there, as we know from 1 Corinthians 16: 16. The apostle could not say that Epaenetus devoted himself in an orderly way to the service of the saints like the Achaian household; but at any rate he is not without honour in the Lord nor without the apostle's special affection.

"Salute Maria" (or Mary; the reading differs), "who laboured much for you." (Ver. 6.) It seems a question whether it be not *us*. Much as the apostle might value this, his loving heart delighted in her abundant labour for them.

"Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and fellow captives which [οὔτινες] are of note among the apostles, who [οἷ] also were before me in Christ." (Ver. 7.) We see how the apostle delights in noticing every distinctive form of service, relation, or fellowship.

"Salute Amplias,* my beloved in [the] Lord. Salute Urban, our fellow-workman in Christ; and Stachys, my beloved." (Ver. 8, 9.) The reader will notice the shades of difference which love marks; for being unselfish it can see clearly, and promotes love and honour among the saints, being above the unworthy pettiness which disparages what we may not have ourselves or like not others to have.

*The Sinaitic, Alexandrian, Vatican and others read Ἀμπλιᾶτον. A similar remark applies to this probably as to Prisca and Priscilla.

"Salute Apelles,† the approved in Christ. Salute those that belong to Aristobulus. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute those belonging to Narcissus that are in [the] Lord." (Ver. 10, 11.) Still do we find love, but it is discriminating no less than unfeigned. He who had stood trial for Christ is mentioned with honour; but the kinsman of Paul is not forgotten. He would conciliate his brethren after the flesh by thus naming one who was a Christian. Nor are certain great names without witnesses for Christ, even if Narcissus be not the famous freedman of Claudius executed some few years before the epistle was written. (Suet. Claud. 28; Tac. Ann. xiii. 1.)

† Origen suggests, without the smallest reason save the similarity of the name and the distinction attached to it, that this may have been Apollos! I think it right to name such facts that the reader may know the guesswork of these ecclesiastical writers even as early as the third century.

"Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, that laboured in [the] Lord, Salute Persis the beloved, which (ἤτις) laboured much in [the] Lord. Salute Rufus, the elect in [the] Lord, and his mother and mine." (Ver. 12, 13.) Those christian sisters are here graciously named, but with due meed, those as labouring, this as having laboured much in the Lord: the two former as at present in the work; the latter for her past and great service. Christ opens the heart and mouth in the fullest recognition of work for His name; but He purges our dim eyes also. Nor had He forgotten Simon the passing Cyrenian, who, as he came from the field, was compelled to carry the cross by the mob of soldiers and others as they led Jesus out to His crucifixion. The Lord repaid with interest the burden of that day. Compare Mark 15: 21. Rufus is here before us "the elect in [the] Lord," and his mother who had been as such to the apostle. Salvation came to that house.

"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them." (Ver. 14, 15.) The names of these Christians follow without specific notice, and among them one to whom many have attributed the allegory of the "Shepherd," read in the assemblies of the third and fourth centuries. But Origen and Eusebius err in their identification; for Hermas the author wrote about a century after the Epistle to the Romans was written, his brother Pius being then bishop of Rome.

"Salute one another with an holy kiss; all the assemblies of Christ greet you." (Ver. 16.) The Roman saints were enjoined to manifest mutual love in the Lord; and the apostle sends greeting from all* the assemblies of Christ. Who knew their minds and hearts better? He who wrought and wrote by Paul; He would keep the saints in the interchange of true and warm but holy affection in His grace.

*Copyists seem to have regarded the apostle's word as overstrong; and have tried to soften by omitting πάντα "all." But he could speak from a large sphere without hesitation.

It is not all, however, the joy of love in these concluding messages of the apostle. The largeness of his heart had delighted to take note of whatsoever things were true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there was any virtue, if there was any praise, he thought on these things in writing to the saints at Rome, and inscribed a memorial of Christ on each name which came before his spirit. But there were other things very different, men of a temper and state diverse from those and wholly opposed to Christ. It needed, however, the power of the Spirit to detect these in their beginnings, and to descry both the character and the end of all such ways. For I cannot accept the notion of Olshausen, that the persons, against whom the apostle warns the saints in Rome, had not yet made their appearance there. The circumstance that it is only at the end of the epistle that we find a short admonition against divisions couched in general language, so far from being decisive, is no evidence at all that the persons in question did not actually exist at Rome. Such is not the way of the Spirit of God. He may speak prophetically, but He starts from an actual ground-work of hostility to the Lord and of danger to the saints. Naturally the evil would develop itself worse and worse, but in the epistles especially, as in scripture generally, there was moral mischief before His eyes at that time, which awakened His care for the saints, as to which He gives them admonition.

"But I beseech you, brethren, to consider those that make the* divisions and the* stumbling-blocks contrary to the doctrine which ye have learnt, and turn away from them; for such serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly, and by their plausibility and fair-speaking deceive the hearts of the guileless. For your obedience has reached unto all: as regards you therefore I rejoice, but I wish you to be wise unto the good and simple unto the evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you." (Ver. 17-20.)

*The actuality of the mischief at work in Rome would seem to be confirmed by the article in this

place. Had it been merely characteristic tendency or a possible contingency not yet arrived, I think that the construction would have been anarthrous.

Insubjection of spirit is a dangerous thing among those who teach in public or in private, and quite as much in private only as in public. It is truth severed from Christ and that consciousness of divine authority and of dependence on grace which we all need to keep us right, most of all perhaps those who teach. Few men are in such danger of mental activity in divine things; and this not merely because of self-importance on their own part, but from the desire to satisfy the craving for what is new among the saints themselves. The excitement of novelty is apt to carry away the natural mind, especially among the weak, to the hurt of all, both teachers and taught. Divine revelation, not human thoughts about it, alone secures the glory of Christ and the well-being of souls. As the Holy Spirit wrote it to this end, so He alone can make it good in practice. Mental activity gathers round its own source and forms a school; truth wielded by the Spirit judges the flesh in its most specious form, nourishes the new man, and builds up the body of Christ to God's glory.

The brethren then are besought to beware of such as made these divisions and stumbling-blocks. What they had already learnt would serve as a test for these piquant statements which pampered nature under the show of utterly condemning it. Even asceticism is not the denial of self, still less is it Christ. The seemingly opposite snare of doing good in the world on a grand scale by the truth is yet more evidently apart from the cross and contrary to it. Whatever be the shape of contrariety to the doctrine we have been taught, the duty of saints is to turn away; for they that are such are slaves not to our Lord Christ, but to their own belly: so contemptuously does the Holy Spirit characterize their work, let it be ever so refined in appearance, let it ever so loudly boast of its own superior spirituality. But not he who commendeth himself, but whom the Lord commendeth. Still the hearts of the guileless are in danger of being deceived by the plausibility and fair-speaking of these makers of parties, and are warned accordingly. For the spirit of obedience which those teachers lacked exposed them with the taught if not accompanied with vigilance; I say not suspiciousness, for this is an unmitigated evil and the fruit of a corrupt heart, not the holy action of faith, jealous for the glory of the Lord and the good of saints.

If therefore those at Rome were conspicuous for their obedience, it was only a reason for the apostle not to weaken that which was truly of God, but to guard it by what is equally so. "As regards (or, over) you I rejoice; but I wish you to be wise as to the good and simple as to the evil." Such is the divine remedy, even as our Lord Himself put it figuratively in Matthew 10: 16; combining the prudence of the serpent with the harmlessness (or simplicity, it is the same word) of the dove. Human wisdom seeks to guard itself by a thorough knowledge of the world and of all evil ways. This is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, but earthly, natural, devilish. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and good fruits, uncontentious and unfeigned. It needs not to cultivate acquaintance with evil; it knows good in Christ, it is satisfied and adores. It hears and loves the shepherd's voice; a stranger's voice it knows not, and will not follow. And this, as it suits the simplest soul brought to the knowledge of God, it may be today, so it alone becomes the wisest, because it alone glorifies the Lord, as indeed it is the only path of safety for us, being such as we are and in such a world. For in it evil as yet has the upper hand, though the believer has the secret of victory over it, already vanquished in the cross of Christ. Still nothing as yet appears of that victory as a whole, whatever be the testimony of faith, at that time too not without external signs to unbelief; but in the midst of the conflict the heart is comforted and cheered, for the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. The first revelation of grace may to our impatience seem to linger, but faith can rest upon the word "shortly." Faithful is He who hath called us, and spoken it, who also will do it. This draws out afresh the prayer of the apostle, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you:" they

needed it, and so do we.

The apostle then sends the salutations of others around him.

"There saluteth you Timothy my work-fellow, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater my kinsmen." (Ver. 21.) Faith wrought at all times the first link with God for a soul outside of this fallen world, and this is brought into greater simplicity and strength than ever by the gospel. But the gospel produces a fellowship of heart, little if at all known before it. Hence the place and moment of these mutual salutations.

"I Tertius, who wrote the epistle, salute you in [the] Lord." (Ver. 22.) The epistle to the Romans was not, like that to the Galatians, written by the apostle's own hand, but dictated to an amanuensis, as indeed was the ordinary practice of Paul. (Cf. 2 Thess. 3: 17.) Love however gave him who wrote it down a place for christian greeting.

"There saluteth you Gaius, the host of me and the whole church. There saluteth you Erastus the steward of the city, and Quartus the brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all. Amen." In Gaius we see how Christ becomes the spring of large and holy hospitality. Erastus is the witness that conscience is not forced or hurried; not only was he the steward of the city, but he is expressly so described in scripture. Such a position in heathen times especially would expose him who held it to difficulties and dangers. But christian conduct should ever flow from the intelligent sense of our relationship to God and of the claims of His truth and grace. In order to this, room must be left for growth and the exercise of right and godly feeling. Quartus has his place in scripture as "the brother," traditionally, of course, one of the seventy, as most of the unknown names here are fabled to have been, and afterwards bishop of Berytus. These salutations too the apostle seals with the same benediction and, if possible, more fervently, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Even so he cannot close this most comprehensive epistle without a burst of adoration, which serves the important purpose of linking on this unfolding of the gospel in its simplest elements, its practical results, its connection with the dispensations of God, and the duties consequent upon its reception, with the revelation of the mystery given in some of his later epistles, especially to the Ephesians and Colossians.

"Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to [the] revelation of [the] mystery kept in silence in times of the ages but now manifested and by prophetic scriptures according to commandment of the everlasting God made known for obedience of faith unto all the Gentiles, to God only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages (or, for ever), Amen." (Ver. 25-27.)

To the Roman saints the apostle does not develop the mystery. The gospel of the glory of Christ he proclaims to others. (2 Cor. 4.) Each aspect has its appropriate application. The heavenly side is not for all the most wholesome. Here they had a more primary and fundamental need, and this he has here supplied by unfolding to their souls the bearing of Christ's death and resurrection on their wants, first as sinners, then as saints. But the heavenly privileges of the Church are only alluded to, not set out. There is a season for everything, and the highest truth is not always the most important for the exigencies of souls. To the Ephesians he could disclose all the heavenly privileges of the body of Christ. To the Colossians, just because they were in danger of turning aside for philosophy and earthly ordinances of a religious character (for both snares were laid for their feet), he could and did bring out the glory of Christ as the head of the church, and indeed His divine fulness in all respects, but it was meat in due season to feed the Roman saints rather on Christ dead and risen. However, here at the close, he alludes to a mystery as to which silence had been kept in the course of ages, but now manifested and by means

of prophetic scriptures made known unto all the Gentiles in order to obedience of faith. Carefully remark that the true word and thought is "prophetic scriptures," that is, not "the scriptures of the prophets" or Old Testament, but those of the New Testament, for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Paul's writings, for instance, are prophetic scriptures, and in some of these the mystery of Christ and the church is fully made known, not merely touched on as in Romans 12: 5. This is according to commandment of the everlasting God; for the mystery, if the last in revelation, is first in purpose. Between them lay the times of the ages during which creature responsibility was fully tested and proved wanting; then, grounded upon the cross of Christ, exalted to heaven, is revealed the mystery, and this is during the days, not of the law given by Moses, but of gospel mission to all the Gentiles for obedience of faith, wherein God proves Himself alone wise, no less than good, through Christ Jesus, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

The temporal ways of God were bound up with Israel and the earth. The mystery attaches to heaven and eternity, though the message of it is sent out to all the nations.