

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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A COMMENTARY

ON THE

New Testament Epistles

BY

DAVID LIPSCOMB

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES,

BY

J. W. SHEPHERD

VOLUME I

Second Edition—Revised and Enlarged

Romans

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PREFACE

David Lipscomb became editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, January 1, 1866, and continued his editorial work for almost a half century. His whole life was primarily devoted to a systematic study of the Bible, and his editorials were eminently scriptural. He expressed his conviction with such vigor as to gain for him a wide reputation and influence as an original thinker and aggressive editor.

That which more than anything else distinguished him was the complete and thorough agreement of his practice with his convictions. He never modified or yielded them out of deference to others. He was never guided by expediency in affirming or practicing whatever he believed right. What he believed, he practiced. His contention was that the greater the opposition to what he believed to be the truth, the greater the demand for defending it. He was absolutely no respecter of persons when what he regarded as God's will was at stake. He never counted the cost nor showed favor in defending it.

In maintaining these convictions, he taught that the church is the only and all-sufficient institution for the service of God, and that he who uses any other institution in any religious work or service goes outside the Bible for guidance; and, since God commands only what is taught in the Bible, he who serves in institutions other than it reveals dishonors God. The same principle led him to teach that Christians should take no active part in political and civil governments.

In addition to his editorial work, he was a frequent contributor to the daily press, wrote and published seven volumes of "Notes on the Sunday School Lessons," "A Commentary on Acts of Apostles," "Life of Jesse L. Sewell," and "Origin, Mission, and Destiny of Civil Government, and the Christian's Relation to It."

For many years there was a call for a commentary on the New Testament Epistles, and in response to that demand he spent every moment possible for many years in an effort to produce such a work. He succeeded in making a draft of

notes which he hoped to elaborate. These notes cover the twenty-one Epistles. He had a long spell of illness in 1909, and after his recovery it became apparent to him that, on account of his weakened condition and the infirmities of age, it was impossible for him to complete the work on which he had labored so long. He then placed in my hands his unfinished notes, with the request that I finish and publish them. It was with much hesitancy that I accepted the responsibility of such an important and arduous task; yet I accepted it with the encouraging thought that, however unimportant might be my contribution, the excellent work done by Mr. Lipscomb should be put in permanent form, that the instruction contained in it might live and be instrumental in removing difficulties and hindrances in the way of understanding and obeying the truth, and lead to a clearer comprehension and a more faithful performance of the will of God.

In elaborating and completing the work, I searched the files of the Gospel Advocate and culled from editorials his comments on passages in the Epistles and added them to his notes. This required much research and arduous labor.

The notes inclosed in brackets ([]) I have added. They neither are, nor pretend to be, original. For many years it has been my custom to make notes of thoughts and comments that have impressed me, whether gained from sermons, lectures, editorials, commentaries—in fact, from every source. These notes have been freely used, the object being to get the information before the reader.

The American Standard Revised Version is the text used. It is recognized as the best by men who are entitled to speak with authority—by leaders of the foremost universities, colleges, theological seminaries and Bible training schools. It embodies the knowlege of all scientific discoveries in Bible lands during the last three hundred years. It is recognized as the best version of the Scriptures in any language, because it brings the reader as well as the scholar into closer contact with the thought of the original writers than any other version.

The division of the Epistle into sections and paragraphs is practically the same that I learned while in college.

I hope to have the volume on the Epistles to the Corinthians ready for publication before the close of the year. Then, if life and strength and opportunity be granted me, will follow the volumes on the other Epistles.

J. W. SHEPHERD

Lincoln Park, Detroit, Mich., January 13, 1933.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

No student of the Bible will deny that Paul's Epistle to the church at Rome is hard to understand. The inspired apostle Peter said of the writings of "our beloved brother Paul" that in them "are some things hard to be understood." (2 Pet. 3: 15, 16.) The difficulty of the task, however, should deter no one from a faithful study of this great Epistle.

The most efficient human aid that one can receive in the study of this or of any other part of the Bible is a systematic outline of the book. Such an outline divides the book into its larger parts or sections, then into smaller parts or paragraphs, and finally into its thought elements, giving attention to each individual thought. Such an outline the editor has admirably arranged. It is superior to any other analysis of the book of Romans that I have ever seen. In itself it should commend the volume to any searcher after God's truth.

In this revised edition the patient J. W. Shepherd, having access to sources which were not available when he prepared the first edition, has added material worth many times the price of the book. To give just one example, I will say that the explanation of the expressions, "dead in sin" and "dead to sin," senses in which one is dead and alive at the same time is worth much to the earnest student of this book. A beautiful feature of this commentary is that it appeals not only to the intellect, but to the spiritual nature as well. There is not an assertion in a dogmatic spirit in the whole volume. All is stated in the spirit of Christ, as the author allows scripture to explain scripture.

Much of the material in this study consists of carefully gleaned excerpts from the writing over a period of many years

of the lamented David Lipscomb. Probably no man in the last century did more than he to hold the churches of Christ, especially in the South, to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Of him it may be said as it was of Abel: "He being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. 11: 4.) A most potent means of his speaking at this time is through his writings as preserved and presented by Brother Shepherd. Brother Lipscomb, as editor of the Gospel Advocate, wrote for many years on Bible subjects. A most profound scholar of the Bible, his writings on any book of the New Testament, if collected, would make a valuable contribution to our religious literature.

Brother Shepherd is better equipped than any other man living to edit the writings of Brother Lipscomb. He knew him intimately in life, serving for years as office editor of the Gospel Advocate. And he has come to know his writings more intimately through years of patient compilation and research. Brother Lipscomb considered him the one best suited for this very work, and presented him with all his unpublished notes and manuscripts. Few men would have taken the days, weeks, and months necessary to catalogue and collate all his writings. With this material culled from the honored editor, and with his own added comments, Brother Shepherd has produced a commentary which, I verily believe, will be as popular one hundred years from now as the day it leaves the press.

A study of this book will quicken your intellectual vigor, stimulating your highest thought, and throw light on the darkest passages. In addition it will deepen your spiritual insight, for it breathes the spirit of the Master. If this volume does not meet with a large demand, I shall be disappointed, and I am anticipating no disappointment in that direction. For the general reader or student of the Bible, I doubt if there exists in the English language a commentary on Romans superior to this revised edition. I invoke heaven's blessings upon this valuable volume and upon its godly, painstaking editor, and upon all those who read its pages.

T. Q. MARTIN

McMinnville, Tennessee
April 20, 1943

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INTRODUCTION

I. ORIGIN OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

Nothing whatever is said in the Scripture concerning the origin of the church at Rome, and we have no means of knowing at what precise time the gospel first gained a footing there. It would seem, however, to have been many years before the date of this Epistle, for Paul writes to the Christians there as if they had been long established in the truth of the gospel, for he says that their "faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world" (1: 8), and that their "obedience is come abroad unto all men" (16: 19), and he tells them that he had for many years been longing to come unto them (1: 13; 15: 23). These things point to a church of no recent origin.

It seems quite probable from the mention of "sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes" (Acts 2: 10), being in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, who evidently from their mention here joined with the multitude in the exclamation, "We hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2: 11)—that such, being "devout men," would speak when they returned to Rome of what they had seen and heard; and so a church would be formed there very soon after their return. This conclusion is confirmed by Tacitus in his account of Nero's persecution of the Christians. He says: "The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea. By that event the sect of which he was the founder received a blow which for a time checked the growth of a dangerous superstition; but it revived soon after, and spread with recruited vigor not only in Judea, the soil which gave it birth, but even in the city of Rome, the common sink into which everything infamous and abominable flows like a torrent from all quarters of the world." ("Annals," xv. 44.)

Rome being the center of the then known world and having intercourse with all Greece and the shores of the Mediterranean, many Greeks and inhabitants of Asia and Syria, who had become obedient to the gospel under the preaching of Paul, or those who had worked with him, seem to have made

a concerted movement to go to Rome and preach the gospel to this capital city of the world.

II. AUTHORSHIP

The title of the Epistle in the oldest manuscripts is simply, "To the Romans," but the first word in the Epistle itself names Paul as its author. Neither the Judaizing sects of old, who rejected the Pauline Epistles, nor the skeptical critics of modern times have doubted this. From the apostolic age to the present time it has been referred to and quoted by a regular series of authors, and recognized as his genuine production and of divine authority.

The passages in the early writers, in which the Epistle is alluded to or cited, are very numerous, and may be read in Lardner's "Credibility," Volume 2, page 3. The internal evidence is no less decisive in its favor. It is evidently the production of a Jew, familiar with the Hebrew text and the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, because the language and style are such as no one, not thus circumstanced, could adopt, and because the whole Epistle evinces such an intimate acquaintance with Jewish opinions and prejudices, and Paul certainly possessed this information.

III. OCCASION OF WRITING

The immediate occasion is clearly stated by Paul himself. He had heard of the faith of the Roman Christians everywhere spoken of (1: 8), and for many years had felt a longing desire to visit them (1: 11; 15: 23); he had definitely proposed to do so (1: 13), and had as often been hindered (15: 22). While at Ephesus, a year before, he had "purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome." (Acts 19: 21.) He had completed that portion of his journey which brought him nearest to Rome, and was now turning back from Corinth to Jerusalem, bound in spirit, and already foreseeing that danger awaited him there from the unbelieving Jews. (15: 31.) He still longs and hopes to see Rome (1: 10), but already he is looking beyond them to

Spain. Rome is to be, as he hopes, a resting place on his way to Spain. (15: 24, 28.)

The cause of this change of his plan is not stated, but it probably was caused from the great conflict of the preceding year against Jews and Judaizing Christians, the records of which are in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians. Hitherto he had preached the gospel everywhere to the Jews first, but their general rejection of it was not an established fact (9: 1-3; 10: 3), over which he mourned, but in which he saw an intimation of God's will that he should now devote himself more extensively to his own sphere of apostolic labor, and go far off unto the Gentiles (Acts 15; 26: 17).

His visit to Jerusalem with the offering of the Gentile Christians would consume considerable time, and other obstacles might arise which would further delay his arrival; so he writes this Epistle both to give in writing what he would have announced to them orally and to pave the way for those personal labors he hoped to put forth among them in the future.

IV. PLACE OF COMPOSITION

At the time the Epistle was written Paul was on the eve of journeying to Jerusalem with the offering made by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia for the poor saints. (15: 25-27.) His intention was to journey thence by way of Rome to Spain (15: 28; Acts 19: 21), which points to his last three months in Achaia (Acts 20: 3). His purpose was to cross over directly from Achaia in order to reach Jerusalem, but he was led, owing to Jewish plots, to go through Macedonia. (Acts 20: 3.) This change in the plan of his journey had not been made when he wrote this Epistle; otherwise he would not have failed to mention it.

Although Luke mentions no particular city as the scene of Paul's three months' residence at that time, still it is most likely that he spent the greater part of the time at Corinth; for at Corinth was the principal church of that region, and in his eyes pre-eminently important and precious on account of his earlier labors there. But our attention is also directed to Corinth by what is said in the Corinthian letters (1 Cor. 16:

1-7; 2 Cor. 9:4; 12:20 to 13:3), from which it is certain that he had chosen that city as the place of his sojourn when he wished to complete the business of the collection, and from which he would carry it to Jerusalem.

This conclusion is reached from the following facts: (1) The bearer of the letter was Phoebe, an active member of the church at Cenchrea, the seaport town of Corinth (16:1). (2) At the time of writing, Paul was a guest of Gaius (16:23), whom he had baptized at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). (3) He sends greetings also from "Erastus the treasurer of the city." (16:23). The way this is mentioned points to "the city" as of considerable importance. This would point to Corinth, and at Corinth we learn that Erastus was left behind on Paul's latest journey. (2 Tim. 4:20.)

V. TIME OF COMPOSITION

From the facts already enumerated it is quite certain that this Epistle was written during the time Paul spent at Corinth while on his third missionary journey, and in order to ascertain the date of writing it is necessary to know the date of that visit. As a starting point, we take A.D. 52, the date of the decree of Claudius Caesar, banishing the Jews from Rome. Aquila and Priscilla had already reached Corinth after that decree, and Paul dwelt with them a year and six months. (Acts 18:11.) He could not likely have left there before the spring of 54. Boarding a ship at Cenchrea, he sailed for Syria (Acts 18:18) by way of Ephesus and Cesarea. At Ephesus he made a short stop, and, leaving Aquila and Priscilla there, proceeded thence to Cesarea, and, landing, "he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch," and "spent some time there" (Acts 18:22, 23), before he started on his third tour.

It must have been in the spring of 55 when he started. Passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:23; 19:1-4), where he remained "two years," "three months," "a while" (19:8, 10, 21, 22). All these periods seem to be distinct and successive. He could not have left Ephesus earlier than the spring of 57. He spent the following summer

in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20: 1), and came into Greece, where he "spent three months" (Acts 20: 2, 3). His abode of three months there most likely began about the close of 57, and would consequently end in the early part of 58. When he left Corinth, the winter was past, for he proposed to go by sea (Acts 20: 3), but the spring could not have been far advanced, for he hoped "to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20: 16.) It was, therefore, in the winter or early spring of 58 that the Epistle was written.

VI. AN ESTIMATE OF PAUL'S CHARACTER AND WORK

The characteristics of Paul were a keen and quick conscientiousness that demanded first of all what is right, then a self-sacrificing devotion to the right that led him to do what he regarded as right, let it cost what it might in labor or suffering. These were his marked qualities before his conversion. They were broadened and strengthened by his faith in Christ until he seems to have been filled with an ambition to suffer like Christ for the salvation of the world. His life was one of labor, self-denial, and suffering. Of his detractors he said: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches." (2 Cor. 11: 23-28.)

He was not only more abundant in labors and sufferings in traveling and preaching the gospel, but he wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer. Fourteen Epistles—Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians,

Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews—are attributed to him. The Second Epistle to Timothy was written from Rome during his second imprisonment under a strong feeling that the time for his execution was nigh, and we are not left to conjecture the feelings with which he awaited this consummation, for he expresses them in this sublime strain of triumphant hope: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) Notwithstanding his life of labor and suffering and his approaching martyrdom, he felt that his life was one of triumphant glory, and that he would be rewarded with a crown of immortality.

[How little did men recognize his greatness! Here is one to whom no single man that has ever lived, before or since, can furnish a perfect parallel. If we look at him only as a writer, how immensely does he surpass, in his most casual Epistles, the greatest authors of all ages! If we look at the Christian world, the very greatest worker in each realm of Christian service does but present an inferior aspect of one phase only of Paul's many-sided pre-eminence. If we look at him as a moral reformer, we may compare him with the greatest one of them; but in his practical control of even the most thrilling impulses—in making the spirit of the prophet subject to the prophet—how grand an exemplar might he not have furnished to the most impassioned of them! But no other servant of God has ever attained the same heights in so many capacities, or borne in his mortal body such evident brand marks of the Lord. In his lifetime he was not behind the very chiefest of the apostles, and he towers above the very greatest of all the servants of God who have since striven to follow the example of his devotion to his Lord.]

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

1. INTRODUCTION

1: 1-17

1. APOSTOLIC GREETING

1: 1-7

1 Paul, a ¹servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto

¹Gr. *bondservant*.

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,—A true translation of the original, without the necessity of supplying the words, would be: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, an apostle, called, separated unto the gospel of God.”

Paul,—It was the custom of the ancients to place the name of the writer at the beginning of the letter instead of at the end, and Paul follows this style. “Paul” is the name by which the apostle was known throughout the most active part of his life. It was his proper name as an apostle. [It was not uncommon for the Jews in that age, especially such as associated much with foreigners, to be known among their own countrymen by their Hebrew name, and among the foreigners by a different name; and the fact that the apostle was born in a foreign city and inherited the rights of a Roman citizen (Acts 22: 28) makes it probable that both names belonged to him from early youth.]

a servant of Jesus Christ,—Paul sought no higher office or dignity than to be a servant of Christ, set apart to the preaching of the gospel. [The word “servant” properly means one bound, tied, or fettered. Anciently it was applied to persons to denote that they were slaves, or had not control over their own acts, but were continually subject to the will of others. Paul here evidently refers to a service which stands specially connected with the great responsibility resting upon him as an

apostle of Jesus Christ. Had he been a mere follower of Christ without this apostolic power and authority, he could not have written this and other Epistles. He would have been wholly unauthorized to lay the lofty and imperative instructions contained therein upon the hearts and consciences of his readers. It is, therefore, as an official servant, and of the highest rank, that he writes to the different churches and individuals.]

an apostle,—Literally, one sent forth or away with orders. The term is generally used in the New Testament as the descriptive appellation of a comparatively small class of men to whom Jesus Christ intrusted the organization of his church and the dissemination of his teaching among men. [The following qualifications were absolutely essential:

(1) That they should have seen the Lord after his resurrection, and been ear and eyewitnesses of what they testified. (Acts 1: 21, 22; John 15: 27.) Paul is no exception in this respect, for, speaking of those who saw Christ after he rose from the dead, he adds: "And last of all, . . . he appeared to me also." (1 Cor. 15: 8.) And in one of his apostolic qualifications he especially mentions this: "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" (1 Cor. 9: 1.) This was necessary to his being a witness of what he saw and heard. (Acts 22: 15.)

(2) They must have been immediately called and chosen to that office by Christ himself. (Luke 6: 13; Gal. 1: 1.)

(3) They must necessarily have been inspired to qualify them for their work. (John 14: 26; 16: 13; 1 Cor. 2: 10-15; Gal. 1: 11, 12.) They had not only to explain the true sense and spirit of the Old Testament (Luke 24: 47-49; Acts 17: 1-3; 26: 22, 23; 28: 23), which we hid from the most learned among the Jews, but also to give the revelation through Jesus Christ, which was to be the unalterable standard of faith and practice to the end of time (1 Pet. 1: 25; 1 John 4: 6.) It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that they should be secured against all error and mistake by the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Christ promised and actually bestowed on them the Holy Spirit to teach them all things, to

bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said to them (John 14: 26), to guide them into all the truth, and to show them things to come (John 16: 13). Their word, therefore, must be received "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2: 13), and that whereby we are to "know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4: 6).

(4) They must have had the power of miracles (Mark 16: 20; Acts 2: 43) such as speaking with divers tongues, making the lame walk, healing the sick, raising the dead, discerning of spirits, and conferring these gifts upon others (1 Cor. 12: 8-11.) These were the credentials of their divine mission. Paul says: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." (2 Cor. 12: 12.) Miracles were necessary to confirm their teaching at its first publication and to gain credit to it in the world as a revelation from God, and by these God bore them witness. (Heb. 2: 4.)

(5) Their mission must be universal. Their charge was not confined to any particular church, but, being the oracles of God to men, they had the care of all the churches. (2 Cor. 11: 28.) They had the power to settle their faith and order as a model to all future ages, to determine all controversies (Acts 15: 1-29; 16: 4), and to exercise the rod of discipline upon all offenders (1 Cor. 5: 3-6; 2 Cor. 10: 8; 13: 10.)

These qualifications made them apostles in a sense which left them without predecessors or successors. Their qualifications were supernatural, and their work, once performed, remains the infallible record of the New Testament for the conversion of the world and the edification of the church to the end of time. They are the only authorized teachers of God's will to man through Christ.]

called,—Paul was called to the apostleship in the full and proper sense, like the twelve whom Christ so called and named. (John 15: 16, 19; Matt. 10: 1; Luke 6: 13.) He did not arrive at it by his own choice or through accidental circumstances. [No human instrumentality intervened to throw

the ³gospel of God, 2 which he promised afore through his prophets in the

³Gr. *good tidings*: and so elsewhere. See marginal note on Mt. 4. 23.

the slightest doubt upon the reality of the communication between Christ himself and Paul.] The words spoken before Agrippa are a condensed statement of all that was revealed to him, both in his vision on the way to Damascus and afterwards by Ananias in the city: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 15-18.)

separated—He was called, and he obeyed, and the act of obedience separated him from the world and its pursuits. Even when working as a tentmaker, he did so in order thus the more effectually to preach the gospel. (1 Cor. 9: 12.)

unto the gospel of God,—[It was called "the gospel of God" because it is his appointment; it was originated by him and has his authority.]

2 which he promised afore—[The promise of the great Deliverer, running through the Old Testament, is one of the most wonderful of the phenomena of history. It was such that beyond all question it had brought the hope of Israel to an intense pitch just before and at the time of the birth and life of Jesus of Nazareth.]

through his prophets in the holy scriptures,—The gospel of Christ had been promised by his prophets in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. [They foretold the publication of the gospel: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2: 2, 3; Mic. 4: 3; see also Isa. 40: 1-10.) "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace,

holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 who was ³declared *to be* the Son of God ⁴with

³Gr. *determined*.

⁴Or, *in*

that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52: 7.) In one sense God proclaimed the good news to Abraham (Gal. 3: 8), but only as something far off and indistinct. To him and the prophets it was only a promise of good things in a far future.] Paul presents the close connection of the two covenants. One grows out of the other. The great central truth of the prophecies was a coming prophet and deliverer. The central truth of the New Testament is that the prophet has come. They are different parts of one whole, and the two stand together. Faith in Moses requires faith in Christ.

3 concerning his Son,—It had been promised that a Prince would be raised up to rule over the people of God forever. (Isa. 9: 6, 7.) Jesus is that Prince. He came in fulfillment of that promise.

who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,—[He was of the family of David in the direct line, as God had promised he should be, and it is evident that "according to the flesh" denotes the human nature in him as including all that connected him with David through his mother.]

4 who was declared to be the Son of God with power,—[That Christ is as to his spirit the Son of God could not be known by intuition, nor perhaps in any other way, save the one employed, and this was determined by power—the resurrection of the dead.]

according to the spirit of holiness,—[This is put in contrast with "according to the flesh," and denotes the divine element that was in Jesus, by which he is connected with the Father, and is thus called "the Son of God." The contrast is between his humanity and his divinity. The passage confirms the claim of Jesus to be more than the son of David, as set forth in his conversation with the Pharisees: "Now while the Phari-

power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection ⁴from the dead;

⁴Or, of the dead

sees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son? And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." (Matt. 22: 41-46.)]

by the resurrection from the dead;—God declared this truth with power by raising him from the dead. He had declared him in other ways and on other occasions to be his Son, but the truth was settled by the power that raised him from the dead. This was the sign of all signs to which Jesus pointed the Jews who asked for a sign. (Matt. 12: 38-40.) [Faith in Jesus as the Son of God was not a fixed, immovable principle till after he was raised from the dead. The strong and abiding faith of the apostles that was to constitute the leading and foundation principle of membership in the church of God rested on his resurrection. Peter says: "Who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1: 3.) They had no living and abiding hope of the incorruptible inheritance until he was raised from the dead; indeed, the apostles did not understand the spiritual nature of his kingdom on the day of his ascension, but looked for the restoration of the fleshly kingdom of Judaism. (See Acts 1: 6-8.) While the reference is to Christ's own resurrection, this can be rightly considered as assuring the general resurrection of all the dead, since the identity of the two is presupposed in 1 Cor. 15: 12-22. Christ's divine relation to the Father shines forth in the virtual accomplishment of the resurrection of all mankind through his own victory over death. Hence his sublime declaration to Martha: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me,

even Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we received grace and apostle-

though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." (John 11: 25, 26.)]

even Jesus Christ our Lord,—[The son of David and the Son of God is thus finally described by these well-known titles. "Jesus" was his personal name and identifies him as the crucified Savior, "Christ" as the promised Messiah, and "Lord" as the exalted King to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth.]

5 through whom we received grace—[The meaning of "grace" as here used is to be learned from its use in the following: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. 15: 10.) "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3: 7, 8.) "When they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles); and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." (Gal. 2: 7-9.) From these passages it is evident that Paul had in mind a special impartation of grace to individual men, for the purpose of fitting them for various offices and duties. In his own case it had been given in such measure and manner as to qualify him to be an apostle to the Gentiles, and to address and admonish Gentile churches.]

and apostleship,—Paul was called to the apostleship by Jesus Christ on his way to Damascus. (Acts 9: 15.) It is probable that Paul laid emphasis on his call by Jesus Christ,

ship, unto obedience ⁶of faith among all the ⁷nations, for his name's sake; 6 among whom are ye also, called *to be* Jesus Christ's: 7 to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁶Or, *to the faith*
⁷Or, *Gentiles*

because some called in question his authority as an apostle and claimed that he was inferior to the apostles because he had never seen the Lord.

unto obedience of faith—Obedience which springs out of faith as its moving cause. No act of obedience is acceptable to God which is not prompted by faith in him who performs it. This shows that there is something in faith to be obeyed. This obedience is rendered not simply by believing; for that is to exercise the faith, not to obey it. But faith in Jesus the Christ as the Son of the living God demands a course of life in accordance with that which is believed, and to follow this course is to obey the faith by yielding to its demands.

among all the nations,—He was called to preach among all the nations, in contrast with the other apostles, whose mission was to the people of Israel. His mission was to preach so that all would be brought to the obedience which is in God through Christ.

for his name's sake;—His work was one in which he was seeking to honor and to glorify Jesus. [To this end he toiled, encountered dangers, daily laid down his life, that his name might be on every lip and in every heart.]

6 among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's:—These brethren at Rome were among those who had become obedient to the faith, or through the gospel had been called of Jesus Christ, and were his servants.

7 to all that are in Rome, beloved of God,—This salutation is addressed to all the Christians in Rome, whether Romans, Jews, or Greeks, whom he calls "beloved of God." God's people are often, both in the Old Testament and the New, distinguished by the honorable appellation, "beloved of God." (Deut. 33: 12; Col. 3: 12.)

called to be saints:—Those who are sanctified or set apart to the service of God. The term is applied to all who claim to be Christians, regardless of their degree of consecration or perfection of character. There are degrees of sanctification, just as there are degrees of Christian knowledge and fidelity to Christ. The growth in sanctification and holiness is attained by the study of and obedience to the word of God. An increase in knowledge and fidelity is to be gained by a constant and persistent study of God's will and a daily effort to bring oneself into obedience to that will.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.—[“Grace” denotes all they had received in becoming Christians. In the true significance of the term, kindness is always present, with the special thought of entire and marked absence of obligation in the exercise of it. It is essentially unmerited and free. Peace is the state of mind resulting from the sense of that favor.]

2. PAUL'S DESIRES AND PURPOSES RESPECTING THE ROMAN BRETHREN

1: 8-15

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, ^athat your faith

^aOr, *because*

8 First, I thank my God—Paul's thought here, as in nearly all his Epistles, is gratitude. [The expression of thanks to God for his mercy to them was fitted to conciliate their feelings, and to prepare them for the truths which he was about to communicate to them. It showed the deep interest which he had in their welfare, and the happiness it gave him to do them good.]

through Jesus Christ for you all,—Since Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, which was inaugurated on the first Pentecost after his resurrection from the dead, all prayers and thanksgivings are to be offered to God through him; hence, Paul says: “Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do

is proclaimed throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention

all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3: 17.) "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." (Eph. 5: 20.)

that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.—Rome was the capital of the then known world. From it the government sent ambassadors and rulers to all parts of the world. There was constant communication between Rome and all parts of the empire, which brought all classes from all countries to the city. The activity and zeal of the church reached and converted many of these, and they in turn carried the gospel to their homes; and so their faith, perfected, came to be spoken of throughout the whole world. This good report was augmented by Christians who visited Rome and witnessed their great devotion to God. [For this the apostle thanked God, because the conversion of the Romans encouraged the inhabitants of other cities to forsake idolatry, and from that center the light of Divine truth could radiate to the remotest parts of the Roman Empire; just as "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19: 10), as a result of Paul's protracted stay in Ephesus, the metropolis of the province. Paul understood that the quickest way to evangelize the world was to establish Christianity in the centers of influence.]

9 For God is my witness,—He appeals to God as to his great interest in them [for there could be no other witness to his practice in his secret prayers].

whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son,—[The Savior said: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4: 23, 24.) These spiritual states and emotions originate in the inner man and find expression through the appointments of the gospel, in obedience to which the spirit proclaims its fealty to God.

of you, always in my prayers 10 making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered ⁹by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye

⁹Gr. *in*.

Only when men serve God thus can their service be true and acceptable.]

how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers—The prominent position occupied by this church and its opportunities to spread an influence for good or evil commended itself especially to the apostle as worthy and needful of mention in his prayers, that the influence that went out to all parts of the world might be a good and true one. It shows, too, what weight he attached to prayer.

10 making request,—He desired to visit them, but that desire was, as in all things, subject to the will of God. He recognized that God directed his way, and continually sought his guidance.

if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you.—[This shows the inward conflict of his feelings. The remembrance of his past hindrances is combined with the foresight of future difficulties, and the eagerness of the desire is tempered by his resignation to the will of God, who will bring all to a prosperous issue in his own way and at his own time.] God granted the journey, but from the account given in Acts (27: 7-44) it could from no human viewpoint be called a prosperous journey. Yet Paul gladly accepted it as it came, and made the journey as a prisoner through the storm that threatened the lives of all on board the ship. It was doubtless accomplished in the way that would do the most good, and this was Paul's highest wish.

11 For I long to see you,—[He did not merely desire or wish to see them, but he longed for that privilege. He uses the word by which he describes the longing of Epaphroditus to be back at Philippi (Phil. 2: 26), and again, of his own longing to see Timothy, his faithful son in the gospel (2 Tim. 1: 4.) Such is the influence of the gospel that its family affections throw the light of love upon those who are faithful in

may be established; 12 that is, that I with you may be comforted ¹⁰in you,

¹⁰Or, *among*

Christ. In the case before us the longing has a purpose most practical.] With many of those then dwelling there he had labored at different points. Priscilla and Aquila, with whom he had dwelled and worked at tentmaking, and whom he called "my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks" (16: 3), were there. The list saluted in chapter 16 shows that there were many at this time in Rome with whom he had been associated at other places in labors and sufferings.

that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift,—Such gifts as would naturally flow to one Christian from personal presence and warm sympathy of another; in Paul's case heightened in proportion to the wealth and elevation of his own spiritual consciousness and life. His heart was full to overflowing, and longed to impart some of these rich blessings to his Roman brethren. Inasmuch as he regarded all his own spiritual advancement and experience as the result of the Spirit working in him, he calls the fruit of his advancement and experience "some spiritual gift." All apostolic gifts were the gift of the Spirit.

to the end ye may be established;—The object of bestowing spiritual gifts was that they might be taught more thoroughly the will of God, might be strengthened in the faith and be firm and steadfast; and it was to this end that he desired to impart unto them some spiritual gifts that they might be more confirmed in the truth of God. [Paul had in his mind the kind of gifts—partly what we should call natural and partly transcending the ordinary workings of nature—described in 1 Cor. 12: 14; Rom. 12: 6-8. Some, probably most, of these gifts he possessed in an eminent degree himself (1 Cor. 14: 18, 19); and he was assured that when he came to Rome he would be able to give the Christians there the fullest benefit of them, for he says: "And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ" (15: 29). His was conspicuously a case which came under the description of

each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbar-

Jesus, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7: 38)—that is, the believer in Christ should himself become a center and abounding source of spiritual influence and blessings to others.]

12 that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.—Their faith and zeal would be a source of comfort to him, and his spiritual power would be a help and strength to them. Paul was careful to acknowledge whatever good was among his brethren and his obligations for any favors received, temporal or spiritual. This shows that inspiration did not raise the inspired above the depressing or discouraging influences around them.

13 And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I proposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles.—He assures them that he had long and often desired to come to them that he might have some fruit among them as among other Gentiles. Inasmuch as Paul was the especial apostle to the Gentiles, he had a laudable desire to teach and instruct them and to have some fruit of his labors in converts made and training given at Rome. The apostolic and spiritual gifts were given to instruct and guide the Christians until the will of God should be given and collected for their guidance. It is hardly possible that any apostle had been to Rome at this time. Their instruction must have been by the teachers gifted with the less degree of spiritual power than the apostles had. Paul naturally desired to give them the full benefit of his knowledge and to bestow all helpful spiritual gifts, but had hitherto been hindered in carrying out his purposes.

14 I am debtor—God had redeemed and saved Paul that he might preach to the Gentiles. He was, therefore, under obli-

ians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to ¹¹preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.

¹¹Gr. *bring good tidings*. Comp. ch. 10. 15 f.

gation, both to God who entrusted it and to those to whom it was entrusted, to proclaim it to all within his reach. He was a steward of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4: 1); therefore, his efforts to do them good are but the discharge of a duty to God and to them. He sees in his commission a debt that must be paid, for he says: "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel. For . . . I have a stewardship intrusted to me." (1 Cor. 9: 16, 17.)

both to Greeks and to Barbarians,—The Greeks were educated and called all who did not speak their language "Barbarians." The Romans afterwards did the same to those who did not speak the Latin.

both to the wise and to the foolish.—Paul was ready to preach to the philosophers of Greece, to the simple-minded among the Jews, and to those speaking the languages of the Barbarians.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome.—In accordance with the duty he owed to all nations, he was ready to preach to all classes among the Romans. His not having done so before was not due to any lack of interest on his part, but God had hindered him, and might do so again; but he gave them to understand that there was no lack of willingness or zeal on his part.

3. FUNDAMENTAL THESIS OF THE EPISTLE STATED

1: 16, 17

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel:—Although the gospel brought opprobrium, disgrace, persecution, and suffering upon him in this world, Paul was not ashamed of it; he gloried in it, and was ready to preach it even in Rome before the emperor, rulers, and all the wisdom and power of the empire.

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel of Christ was that he gave up the glories of heaven, came to earth, suffered for man's sins, rose from the dead for his justification, ascended to his Father's throne, and is "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7: 25.) Paul believed this, and, moved by the love of God thus manifested to man, had denied himself the comforts and blessings of life, had suffered hunger and want, had been buffeted and imprisoned, had borne stripes and bonds, and had made life a living death for the gospel's sake. Yet he was not ashamed of it, since it opened to him the highest honors and richer spiritual and eternal treasures at the right hand of God. Paul adheres to the right. His suffering all things for the sake of the truth seemed to deprive him of a name and a place among men. Yet his name has lived through nineteen centuries, and now lives as no other name of a human being lives. It will still go down the stream of time, gathering new luster as the centuries pass. It ought to teach all that fidelity to truth and suffering for right is the only way to lasting honor and true renown on earth and eternal glory in heaven.

for it is the power of God unto salvation—God in his wisdom saw no way to save man from sin as this mission of Christ to the earth. Through the provisions of the gospel he reaches the heart and turns man from sin, forgives, blots out, washes away his sins, brings him into Christ, accepts him as his child, and transforms him into fitness to live with him forever. The angel said concerning Mary: "She shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1: 21.) To save from sin is to save from the love and practice of sin. Then they are saved and purged from the guilt of sin—from all the results, effects, and penalties of sin. God has revealed no other provisions for the salvation of the world than through the gospel. Whoever turns from and rejects the gos-

17 For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it

pel of Jesus Christ turns from God and his provisions for salvation.

to every one that believeth;—Salvation through the gospel comes only to those who believe it. To those who do not believe it, it brings condemnation, for “he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” (Mark 16: 16.) He who would be saved by the gospel must not trust to faith only, for the divine order is, “obedience of faith.” (1:5; 16: 26.) Faith is the principle from which obedience springs. God’s arrangement is: first faith, then obedience. From this there must be no departure. One of the greatest errors into which many fall is to separate faith and obedience, and make so much depend on faith and so little on obedience. God had indissolubly bound the two together, and so they must stand as the inseparable conditions of salvation. To contend for their unity is to maintain the truth; to separate them is to make it void. [In order to salvation, everyone must believe with his whole heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The facts which underlie this great truth as proof and on which it rests are “that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.) No one can reject these facts and be saved.]

to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.—The gospel came first to the Jews, afterwards to the Gentiles. Whenever Paul went into a city in which the gospel had not been preached, he first preached to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. [At Antioch in Pisidia when the Jews were filled with jealousy and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, he said: “It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal

is written, ¹²But the righteous shall live ¹³by faith.

¹²Hab. ii. 4.

¹³Gr. *from*.

life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (Acts 13: 46.) The Jew was first in order by divine appointment and first in claim by divine promise, but with no other precedence or preminence.]

17 For therein is revealed—The thought as expressed in the Greek is that in the gospel God's plan of making men righteous, which is by faith, is revealed to produce faith. The whole plan grows out of faith as the leading principle, and is intended to produce faith in others.

a righteousness of God—This denotes a righteousness of which God is the author, and it is called his to distinguish it from the righteousness of the law. Paul describes the latter in these words: "For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby." (10: 5.) By this he means that he who has obeyed the whole law without any omission shall live by his deeds.

from faith unto faith:—The fact that God will justify the believer is stated in order to induce men to believe. The same is expressed in the following: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law." (Gal. 2: 16.) Since God has revealed to us that all who believe in Jesus Christ shall be justified, it becomes a strong motive to all who hear this gracious promise to believe. Thus the gospel righteousness, which is of God as its divine source, comes to us by faith as a condition and is revealed in order to faith.

as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.—This is given to prove that the gospel of God's grace had been pre-

dicted in the Old Testament, and consequently is no new thing. Since the righteous shall live by faith, without faith none shall live. Truth does not mold the character of a man unless it is practiced. To see a truth, to believe a truth, does not mold the character unless it changes the purpose and the life. Hence, "faith apart from works is barren." (James 2: 20.) And faith fits for the blessings of God by leading us to follow God in his ways, and so makes our character like God's character. Thus faith leads from one stage or degree of faith to another and higher one.

II. THE NEED OF SALVATION OFFERED THROUGH CHRIST EVINCED BY THE SINFULNESS OF THE GENTILE WORLD

1: 18 to 3: 20

1. THE SINFULNESS OF THE GENTILE WORLD

1: 18-32

18 for ¹⁴the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who ¹⁵hinder the truth in unrighteousness;

¹⁴Or, *a wrath*

¹⁵Or, *hold the truth*. Comp. 1 Cor. 7: 30 (Gr.).

18 For the wrath of God—The impossibility of God's justifying unrighteousness and tolerating it is manifested in his giving his only begotten Son to take away sin. Sin is the violation of the laws and principles that grow out of his own being that must pervade and control the whole universe. His will must prevail, and every being and all spirits and all matter in the universe must conform to his will and be imbued with his spirit. He forbears with those who are led into sin long and patiently that they may repent and conform to his will; but he must reign, and sooner or later all must conform to his will or be crushed into eternal ruin by the almighty power and rule of God.

is revealed from heaven—These sinners against God and against nature are described as realizing in their experience the terrific results of their gross infraction of the divine law. Paul is beginning, in their case, to show the universal need, on the part of mankind, to seek the remedy for sin which he has said was revealed in the gospel as "the righteousness of God by faith."

against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.—The impossibility of God's justifying unrighteousness and tolerating sin is manifested in his giving his only begotten Son to take away sin. He cannot tolerate sin. Sin is the violation of the laws and principles that grow out of his own being that must pervade and control the whole universe. His wrath is against every form of irreligiousness and immorality. The two words distinguishing sin with respect to God and the law

19 because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity; ¹⁶that they may be without excuse;

¹⁶Or, *so that they are*

of right he has established. God will reign throughout the universe. His will must prevail, and every being and all spirit and all matter in the universe must conform to his will and be imbued with his spirit. He forbears patiently that they may repent and conform to his will; but he must reign, and sooner or later all must render obedience to him or be crushed into eternal ruin by his almighty power.

who hinder the truth in unrighteousness;—To hinder or hold down the truth in unrighteousness is to know the truth, but live in unrighteousness. [All who do not live up to the knowledge they possess, who do worse than they know, hinder the truth in unrighteousness. They obstruct the truth rather than let it have free scope.]

19, 20 **because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse:**—The interpretation almost universally given to this passage is as follows: “Because that which may be known of God, is known among them; for God hath manifested it to them, by his works of creation. For his invisible attributes, even his eternal power and God had, though not discernible by the eye of the body, ever since the creation of the world, are clearly seen by the eye of men’s mind, being understood by the things which he hath made; so that they are inexcusable.” This is out of harmony with the scope and context of the passage. Paul is speaking of the gospel, its power to save, and what has been revealed through and manifested in it, and the way the Gentiles had been left without the knowledge of God’s will. This interpretation seems to say that they had had sufficient light concerning God to enable them to know and do his will and be saved. If so, why a revelation to them?

Paul says these Gentiles did not have the revealed will of God, and were “at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Eph. 2: 12.) Again: “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Cor. 1: 21.) This plainly says that it was God’s wisdom that man by his own wisdom should not know God, but that he should depend on the preaching of the gospel to believe and be saved. This does not harmonize with the idea that man could from the works of nature learn of the wisdom of God and his divinity and power so as to be without excuse in sin. Then Paul says: “So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (10: 17.) It does not seem possible that he could say that what might be known of God was manifested through the works of nature to those who had not heard of Jesus Christ without the preaching which God ordained as essential to save men. Then the reason why he gave them over seem improbable with this construction.

He says these Gentiles once knew God, but they did not like to retain the knowledge of him, so worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator. “Professing themselves to be wise (in walking by their own wisdom), they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man.” Therefore, God gave them up to uncleanness and degradation—that is, claiming wisdom to know God without the revealed will was the cause that led them to the sin that made God give them over to degradation and ruin. Certainly Paul was not teaching them that the means which he said wrought their ruin could make them wise unto salvation. On the other hand, it is in harmony with the various passages to say that the things hidden from the foundation of the world are revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ, as the following attest: “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

21 because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave

which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith." (16: 25, 26.) Again: "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel; . . . and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things." (Eph. 3: 3-9.) "The mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested," is certainly the same as "things" in the passage under consideration. So, then, to make this passage harmonize perfectly with the scope of the context of the whole passage, and with the other Scriptures just quoted, is to translate the word "poiema" by "done" instead of "made." All know that the word "poieo" means "make" or "do," according to the context. It would then read: "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are done."

21 because that, knowing God,—The reason they were without excuse in their ignorance of the knowledge of God is, God once revealed himself to Gentile and Jewish fathers alike. [But whence came the knowledge? From God to Adam, and through angels and inspired men in subsequent ages. Some had it, therefore, in the form of original revelation and others as tradition. But in whatever form, it was the only knowledge of God that the world possessed prior to the gospel. On it, and on traditions formed from it, and the many corruptions of it, the conscience of the Gentile was formed.]

thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and

they glorified him not as God,—When the Gentiles knew God, they did not glorify or honor him as God. [This is the true source of their abomination. To glorify him as God is to regard with proper reverence his perfections and laws, to venerate his name, his power, his holiness, and his presence by words and acts, and to worship him as the Maker and Governor of the universe. As they were not inclined to do this, they were given over to their vain and wicked desires. A willingness to honor God as God—reverence, love, and obey him—would effectually restrain men from sin.]

neither gave thanks;—They were not thankful for the blessings bestowed upon them. [We thank God for benefits and blessings received, and the feeling which prompts it is gratitude.]

but became vain in their reasonings,—They were puffed up with a conceit of their own wisdom.

and their senseless heart was darkened.—The heart is the most comprehensive term for human faculties. The different powers of thinking, reasoning, perceiving, loving, hating, purposing, desiring, rejoicing, sorrowing, believing, are attributed to the heart. It is used to represent the whole spiritual, or inner, man, and all the faculties and powers of the inner man are attributed to the heart. [The foolish reasonings and the guilty misuse of the understanding gradually usurped possession of the minds of the Gentiles, the truth faded from them, and the light went out.]

22 Professing themselves to be wise,—They imagined themselves wise enough to live without God. In speaking of the success of Nimrod in persuading the people of his generation to form a government of their own, Josephus says: “God also commanded them to send colonies abroad, for the thorough peopling of the earth—that they might not raise seditions among themselves, but might cultivate a great part of the earth, and enjoy its fruits after a plentiful manner; but they were so ill instructed that they did not obey God; for which reason

changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

they fell into calamities, and were made sensible by experience, of what sin they had been guilty; for when they flourished with a numerous youth, God admonished them again to send out colonies, but they, imagining the prosperity they enjoyed was not derived from the favor of God, but supposing that their own power was the proper cause of the plentiful condition they were in, did not obey him. Nay, they added to this their obedience to the divine will, the suspicion that they were therefore ordered to send out separate colonies, that, being divided asunder, they might the more easily be oppressed. Now, it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah—a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power.” (“Antiquities,” Book I, Chapter IV.) While this may be but tradition, it shows the spirit that disregards God.

they became fools,—Inspiration says that whenever men think they are able to live without the instruction of God, they are fools. [Their folly is in proportion to their boast of wisdom. Intelligence is no safeguard against folly. “Knowledge puffeth up.” (1 Cor. 8: 1.) It often engenders pride, and pride is punished by spiritual blindness, which is the mother of idolatry.]

23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.—In following the suggestions of their own wisdom they changed from the worship of the true and living God to the worshiping of the image of man, of beasts, and of creeping things. They likely started out with the idea of worshiping God through these images,

24 Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: 25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the

thinking that the image would help the mind to rise from the material before it to the invisible God whom it represented. But man, whose heart had been darkened, would not long draw these nice distinctions, and consequently he soon came to view it as God instead of an aid to devotion. [When man undertakes to invent aids the result is that the divine appointment is supplanted and the human invention takes its place.]

24 Wherefore God gave them up—Because they refused to worship God, but worshiped idols, God gave them up to the vile and unclean practices into which their own unrestrained lusts led them.

in the lusts of their hearts unto cleanness,—God did not cause their impurity, but he abandoned them to the natural consequences of the lusts already working in them. Unrestrained by reverence for and a sense of accountability to God, they had nothing to control them but their fleshly lusts. Unrestrained, they led to gross degradation and depravity; hence, the worship of idols leads to degrading lusts and vices.

that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves:—[By engaging in base and degrading lusts, by unlawful and impure connections with one another.]

25 for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie,—They gave up the truth of God and followed the deceptive reasonings of their own hearts, which Paul calls a “lie,” and worshiped and served the creature—man and beast created by God.

and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.—[It is evident that they worshiped the creature only and the Creator not at all. But Paul, by using the milder words “rather than,” makes their folly the more evident by comparing the objects chosen and refused.]

who is blessed for ever. Amen.—[A natural outburst of piety, called forth by the detestable contrast of the heathen

creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed ¹for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto ²vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in them-

¹Gr. *unto the ages.*

²Gr. *passions of dishonor.*

abomination. However much they may dishonor him, his glory is not impaired.]

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions:—Because they loved the lie rather than the truth of God and worshiped the idol rather than the Creator, God gave them up to vile and unnatural passions. The great object of the writer is to show the state of the heathen world and its need of the gospel. On this account it was necessary for him to describe its sins in detail. The sins mentioned are the most delicate, vile, and degrading that can be charged to man. To mention them is no fault of the apostle; for if they existed, it was necessary for him to charge them on the idolatrous world. Without doing this, his argument would have been incomplete. The shame is in the fact of their existence and not in specifying them. That such a condition existed, the pages of ancient writers afford decisive and sad proof.

for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature:—What was the special form of this unnatural perversions of woman's lusts was, we are not told; but Moses gives a law against perversion of the lusts of the women of Israel into which many of the heathen women had fallen. (See Lev. 18: 22, 23.)

27 and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness,—We have examples of this degrading perversion of the natural and proper gratification of the desires on the part of men in the case of the men of Sodom. (See Gen. 19: 4-8.)

and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.—When nations and peoples forget God, lose

selves that recompense of their error which was due.

28 And even as they ³refused to have God in *their* knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29

³Gr. *did not approve.*

their sense of responsibility to him, they follow the degrading lusts to depravity that is worse than brutal. Men are created with faculties which, if rightly used, will raise them above the brutes; but if perverted and used to drag them down instead of to lift them up, they will carry them as far below the brute as the right use would lift them above. [The apostle refers to the women first, probably as the most glaring proof of the general depravity, on the principle that the corruption of the best thing is the worst of all corruptions. The degrading vices are still so common among the heathen that modern missionaries have been accused by them of forging this account, and it has sometimes been difficult to convince them that so accurate a picture of their morals was painted so long ago. Hence, we see why the apostle refers so particularly to practices so disgusting—they were very common among the heathen; they were intimately connected with the rites of idolatry, especially with the worship of Venus; and they were particularly illustrative of the depth of degradation into which the human race had plunged.]

28 **And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge,**—Men given over to fleshly lusts not only find their faculties all taken up in their gratification, but they do not like to retain a knowledge of God. They do not like to think of him, since he condemns and reproves their course. The language indicates that their rejection was not an unconscious act, but a deliberate and disdainful one. We do not like to think of one superior to us who condemns us.

God gave them up unto a reprobate mind,—This is the third time the retributive abandonment by God is mentioned. In verse 24 it was “to uncleanness”; in verse 26, “unto vile passions”; and here, “unto a reprobate mind.” A “reprobate mind” is one lost to virtue, wholly given up to sin, abandoned

being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbit-

to error, lost to all sense of duty. When God saw that they did not like to retain the knowledge of him in their mind, he gave them over to sin without further effort to restrain them.

to do those things which are not fitting;—Such behavior as is abhorrent to every dictate of sound reason and inconsistent with all human duties. The sins charged are specified in the following verses.

29 being filled—This does not teach that every individual Gentile embodied in himself all the crimes enumerated, but that the state of heart from which they all spring was widespread.

with all unrighteousness,—All injustice or iniquity in general, the particular specifications of which follow.

wickedness,—This comprehends the whole volume of human crimes. It is the unrestrained indulgence in the commission of vice, or that state of mind which strives to produce injury to others. It is oppressive to its possessor and to its victims.

covetousness,—Covetousness is the unlawful desire for what belongs to another, or such an excessive desire for it as to lead to unlawful means to obtain it; an undue desire to own. This vice is common in all the world.

maliciousness;—This is the deep-seated hatred which takes pleasure in doing personal injury to others. When intensified, it seeks the opportunity to vent itself in bloodshed. It is ready for every type of crime and is radically and essentially vicious.

full of envy,—[Envy is selfish ill will toward another because of his excellence, endowments, possessions, or superior success; ill-natured grudging in view of what another has or enjoys. The envious man sickens at the sight of enjoyment; he is only easy at the sight of misery in others. Envy is the vilest affection and the most depraved.]

ers, 'hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, dis-

⁴Or, *haters of God*

murder,—This is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice and aforethought; the willful and malicious taking of human life.

strife,—Strife is angry contention, hostile struggling, fighting, conflict, the disposition to be quarrelsome and contentious, the feeling which seeks to irritate. It is not strife for truth and right, but simply for its own sake.

deceit,—An attempt or a disposition to deceive or lead into error; any declaration, artifice, or practice which misleads another, or causes him to believe what is false. Where it prevails, justice in dealing is unknown.

malignity;—The state of mind which leads its possessor to put the worst construction on every action; ascribing to the best deed the worst motives. The malignity of a design is estimated by the degree of mischief which was intended to be done.

whispers,—Those who secretly and in a sly manner, by hints and innuendoes, blacken the name and character of others, or excite suspicion concerning them.

30 backbiters,—Backbiters are those who openly and avowedly calumniate or speak ill of those who are absent.

hateful to God,—Because they are so polluted with sin. The detestableness of their character "is abhorred of Jehovah" (Prov. 22: 14), and "he put them to a perpetual reproach" (Psalm 78: 66).

insolent,—The insolent are contemptuously offensive and grossly disrespectful, and do what they like, without considering whether they trample under their feet the rights, the property, or the lives of others.

haughty,—The haughty have an inordinate self-esteem, an unreasonable conceit of the superiority of their own talents, beauty, wealth, and accomplishments. Being thus raised to such an eminence, they look down with contempt upon all beneath them and cannot regard any as on a level with themselves.

obedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without

boastful,—The boastful are vainglorious about themselves or that which they possess, and they are not slow about proclaiming their own merits to those around them. [They do not design, like the haughty, to crush by the force of their greatness, but make a lying show of it.]

inventors of evil things,—The word “evil” must be taken in its widest sense, as including every species of wickedness which could injure themselves or others. So intent were they on practicing evil, so resolved to gratify their passions, that the mind was excited to discover new modes of gratification. In cities of luxury and vice this has always been done. Vices change their form, men become satiated, and they are obliged to resort to some new form. [Those who invent evil things to acquire property, to satisfy ambition, or to gratify lusts are certainly included.]

disobedient to parents,—Apostasy from the affections due to parents is a fountain of great corruption. That this sin should be mentioned in this black list shows the light in which Jehovah regards it. This vice was exceedingly common among the heathen. Multitudes of them cast off their old and infirm parents to perish from starvation, cold, or by the violence of wild beasts. No other sin mentioned more clearly indicates the great depth to which they had sunk. [This sin is growing rapidly among the people of this country, and this refusal to yield to this primal, natural authority tends to a reckless resistance to all rightful government, whether human or divine.]

31 without understanding,—A dullness in perception of things to all moral and spiritual relations, induced by unwillingness to retain God’s truth in the mind, a knowledge of which renders the mind active and keen in perception. Thus understood, it has a natural connection with the preceding terms.

covenant-breakers,—Persons who, without scruples, violate the most solemn obligations imposed by covenants and con-

natural affection, unmerciful: 32 who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them.

tracts. When such conditions prevail, no confidence can be put in human pledges.

without natural affection,—This undoubtedly refers to the unfeeling custom of parents who leave their infants to die when from any cause they are unwilling to rear them, or of a husband who abandons his wife and helpless children. Such crimes, so abhorrent to all feelings of humanity, were common among the heathen. [It not only refers to the lack of tender feelings in the family circle; it calls to mind the population of the great cities flocking to the circus to behold the fights of gladiators, frantically applauding the effusion of human blood and gloating over the dying agonies of the vanquished combatant.]

unmerciful:—Those who through deep-rooted wickedness were incapable of showing mercy to the poor, the infirm, the helpless, or of showing mercy to an enemy when brought under their power. [The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only power that opens the heart to the appeals of want, and nothing else has expanded the hearts of men to make provisions for the poor, the sick, the blind, and the insane.] In these verses Paul enumerates the crimes and vices into which they naturally run when they lose sight of God's law and cut themselves off from a sense of responsibility to him. These sins were not peculiar to any nation or people. Idolatry deifies lusts and leads to degrading vice. Man deifies lust because lust rules his being.

32 who,—"Who" here most certainly refers to those just described, who did not choose to retain God in their knowledge, and whom God gave over to "a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting."

knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them.—He represents that

they, knowing that God condemns those things as worthy of death, not only do them, but honor those that run into degradation. From verse 18 to the close of this chapter Paul shows how and why God gave up the Gentiles and gave his law to the Jews, and how he was no respecter of persons, but that their own courses brought upon each class its condition.

A darker picture of human corruption would be difficult to conceive, but it not an overdrawn picture of man without God and his word. As man wandered from God, he degenerated spiritually, intellectually, and physically. Man's degeneracy—spiritual, moral, and physical—the world over, in all ages, has been measured by the distance he has wandered from God and by his loss of the knowledge of God. No truth in the world's history has been established by an induction from so large a number of facts, under so varied circumstances, with so universal and uniform a result, as that man, cut loose from God and his word, gropes in ignorance and grovels in degradation with a continually accelerating descent to still lower depths.

[For six thousand years, in every portion of the globe, among men of every color, tongue, race, and kindred of earth, the results have been the same, without a single exception. This disobedience to God separated man from God, caused him to forget God and to lose a knowledge of his will. This produced spiritual torpor, mental stupor, dried up the moral feelings, destroyed enterprise and energy, and caused physical degeneracy. Lust and passion reigned and ruled within his members, breeding disease, effeminacy, and a continually increasing bodily deformity, so that among the nations that have wandered farthest from God, and have for the longest time and most completely lost the knowledge of him and of his word, it is difficult to determine in the downward descent where the human ends and the brute begins. In this torpor of the soul, stupor of the mind, and feebleness of the body, with the reign of lust, diseases prey upon the body and plagues sweep the human family from the earth.]

In the eleventh chapter, which ought to be studied in connection with this, he shows that when the Jews lost faith in God, he broke them off from his favor; and when the Gentiles believed, he grafted them in. Yet he warns that if the Jews should turn and believe, he would accept them; and if the Gentiles should disbelieve, he would again reject them. In no age of the world has God been a respecter of persons, but at all times, as well as "in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." God had chosen Abraham while in idolatry, because he saw that he would give up idolatry and serve the living God, if separated from the evil associations of his youth, and would command his family after him.

2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE ALIKE TO JEWS
AND GENTILES, PREPARATORY TO THE SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE MORAL CONDITION
OF THE JEWS

2: 1-16

1 Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest ⁵another, thou condemnest thyself; for

⁵Gr. *the other*.

1 Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest:—Having shown that the Gentiles were themselves to blame for being without the law of God only because when they had it they would not observe and obey it, he then turns to the Jews and warns them, for they were guilty of rejecting and refusing to obey the law of God.

for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for those that judgest dost practise the same things.—In condemning the Gentiles they condemned themselves. This is not a charge that the Jews had run to the same excesses. It was the plant that bore these bitter fruits. In refusing to believe in and obey God they had chosen the course that led to the same degrading vices. When men cut loose from God, they all go the same course. Disobedience to God is the mother of all vices. Rejecting and refusing to obey God leaves the spirit weak and helpless and subjects man to the

thou that judgest dost practise the same things. 2 ⁶And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. 3 And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4

⁶Many ancient authorities read *For*.

sole rule of his fleshly lusts and passions. Lust rules, and man deifies that which gratifies lust. [To condemn another for his sin is to admit that the sin in question leads to and justifies condemnation as to all who commit it, even including the one who condemns. The one who condemns sins in others, yet commits them himself, is absolutely defenseless and without excuse.]

2 And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things.—God's judgment against those who commit these vices is according to justice and right, to all, both Jews and Gentiles. He will no more spare the Jews than the Gentiles. Justice and righteousness are the highest characteristics of God.

3 And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?—Because the judgment of God had not been executed upon the Jew as on the Gentile, and the law had not been formally withdrawn from him, he imagined that he was specially favored of God. [That he trusted in his relation to Abraham, to his circumcision, and to the fact of having the law, for salvation, is indisputable. On these grounds he clearly counted on God's partiality. Consequently although he knew himself to be guilty of the same sins which he condemned in the Gentiles, he yet evidently did not expect God to condemn him. He expected God to overlook in him, because a Jew, what he knew he would not overlook in the Gentile, and what even he himself did not overlook; but Paul here shows that sin is sin by whomsoever committed; that sin does not lose its essential character by being committed in the midst of religious privileges; and that those who profess to be the people of God have no peculiar license to sin. This false trust is rebuked by John the Baptist. (Matt. 3: 7-9.) The

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 but

same error exists today. Many expect to be saved because they are the children of wealth, culture, refinement, or because their parents are godly.]

4 Or despisest thou—Does the Jew imagine, without any pretense of reason, that he shall escape God's judgment? Or in case he does not have this conceit, does he base his hope of escape from future retribution on the forbearance of God in delaying the punishment as a sign that the judgment will never come? If so, this is a flagrant abuse of that forbearance, which is in effect despising it, looking upon it with a feeling of contempt under pretense of honoring it.

the riches of his goodness—The abundance and greatness of his kindness expressed in bestowing favors and withholding punishment.

and forbearance and longsuffering,—[The difference between "forbearance" and "longsuffering" is, the former denotes the disposition to bear long, while the latter denotes the outward manifestation of the disposition in patience.] God holds back his vengeance for a while. He suffers long. He who thinks he can continue to live in sin with impunity, because he has gone so long unpunished, may fancy that he is magnifying God's goodness; but in reality he is abusing his forbearance and despising his long-suffering by his contemptuous unconcern as to the righteous purpose of it.

not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?—An ignorance resulting either from willful disinclination to know or willful neglect of the means of knowing, possibly both. God's patiently bearing the ill use which the Jews made of the privileges they enjoyed as his people was designed to bring them to repentance. Jesus was long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Long-suffering is another name for patient forbearance. Jesus did not wink at or cease to condemn the wrong; he constantly in precept and in his life held up the

after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 who will render to every man according to his works: 7 to them that by ⁷patience in

⁷Or, *steadfastness*

truth, but gave them time and opportunity to learn and turn. He did not speedily execute the law on them for their errors of failures to learn the whole truth. This is the course we should pursue toward our fellow men, especially toward those trying to serve the Lord, yet failing to see the full truth. [The same thought is expressed by Peter: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long-suffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3: 9.)]

5 but after thy hardness and impenitent heart—Instead of being led to repentance by his goodness and forbearance they had hardened their hearts and used his forbearance to still further sin against him. [The word "hardness" is used to denote insensibility of mind. It literally means that which is insensible to the touch, or that on which no impression is made by contact, as granite or steel. Hence, it is applied to the mind to denote a state when there is no motive or impression, which is insensible to all appeals made to it. (Matt. 19: 8: 25: 24; Acts 19: 9.) Here it expresses a state of mind where the goodness and forbearance of God have no effect.]

treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath—They had pursued the course that treasured up a severer judgment and called down on them the deeper wrath of God. [They added day by day to their sins, and therefore to the anger of God, hidden now as in a treasure house, but in safe-keeping.]

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;—[While the judgment day will reveal God's wrath, it will also reveal to all, both good and bad, to all intelligences of the universe, that God is righteous; that not only in the last act of judgment, but in all his dealings and dispensations, he judges righteously.]

6 who will render to every man according to his works:—God will render to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, ac-

well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: 8 but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteous-

according to the works he did while in the body. He will execute judgment with an impartial hand. [This strips from the Jew all hope of partiality. In the great day of final accounts God will not know him as a Jew. His descent from Abraham will not be known, neither will his circumcision. He will only be a human being, and as such will stand before God. Thus will the Jew stand on a level with all other men.]

7 to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life:—Paul now divides mankind into two great classes—those who obey God and those who obey unrighteousness. To the first class God will render eternal life; to the second, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish.] Those who seek for glory and honor and incorruption, through faith in doing the will of God, shall receive eternal life. “Glory” denotes the highest happiness and distinction which the saved will attain; “honor,” the esteem in which they shall be held; and “incorruption” is the freedom from suffering and decay and absolute exemption from sin and impurity. God only has incorruption and immortality. Man is eternal in existence, but will be given immortality as the reward of his seeking it.

8 but unto them that are factious,—[Those who act in the spirit of a hireling, or in a spirit of factiousness and self-seeking. Such persons generally cause factions and intrigues. They spread evil principles, and maintain them by keen disputings. This is the vice of many now, who dispute themselves into unbelief of the plainest principle laid down in the Bible and viciously argue in support of the most impious things which atheists, infidels, skeptics, and agnostics propagate with a view to destroying the religion of Christ and to defend their own vicious principles and practices, as is boldly proclaimed by the Association for the Advancement of Atheism as follows: “It seeks to remove the cause of intolerance. Its main purpose is to wage war on religion itself. In accom-

ness, *shall be* wrath and indignation, 9 tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; 10 but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first,

plishing this purpose we shall begin by attacking theism, the taproot of the upas tree of religious superstition. There is no God, and our supreme effort will be to free mankind from the fear of a nonentity. The worshiping of a verbal idol must end. Our methods will be in keeping with our principles. No concessions will be made. . . . Christianity, as one of the worst forms of theism, must give way to the humanism of the enlightened pagans, wherein man, not God, is the measure of things. The decadent philosophy of the New Testament, with its unnatural ethics and insane sex ideas, debasing the race, fills the world with the unfit. . . . The morality lie will be refuted. Faith in the supernatural neither insures nor promotes good conduct.”]

and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness,—[They willfully refuse to do everything God requires of them, and they do everything God forbids them to do.]

shall be wrath and indignation,—[“Wrath” expresses permanent feeling and settled disposition. “The wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3: 36.) “Indignation” is the momentary impulse or actual outbreak of wrath on the day of judgment.]

9 tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil,—[Misery of all descriptions, without the possibility of escape, will this righteous Judge inflict upon every man that doeth evil. Of course, this takes for granted that the sinner has passed through life in sin, or has never repented and been forgiven.]

of the Jew first,—To the Jew first only because he had been favored above all others, and had fuller knowledge, and, therefore, deeper responsibility.

and also of the Greek;—This word, though usually denoting the Greek, includes the other Gentiles also. The two words, “Jew” and “Greek,” include the whole human family.

and also to the Greek: 11 for there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as ^ahave sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as many as ^ahave sinned under the law shall be judged by the law;

^aGr. *sinned*.

10 but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek:—To all who work good God will bring honor and peace. These blessings shall come first to the Jew, then to the Greek. [As in the matter of punishment the Jew outranks the Greek because of his failure to take advantage of his better opportunities, so in the matter of blessing the same unbiased justice gives him preeminence because of the better life.]

11 for there is no respect of persons with God.—God does not deal with men by partiality, for one against another; “but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10: 35.) [To respect a person is to be partial to him on account of his family relationship, wealth, learning, social or political standing. As God does not respect persons, the Jew stands before him on the same ground as the Greek; so that, without some new means of approach, he is lost. If he can be made to see the hopelessness of his trust in his being a son of Abraham, his circumcision, his legal religion, and the partiality of God, he will be prepared for the message of “justification through faith in Christ.” To this end the apostle steadily advances.]

12 For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law:—The Gentiles had been without law, yet sinned. They were without law because they were gross sinners and refused to honor the Lawgiver and obey the law. During all the ages of the Jewish nation any Gentile could come under and obey the law by becoming a Jew. Then so soon as Gentiles were willing to obey God they were blessed. If the Gentiles, who were without law, sin, God will punish without the law because they would not obey the law.

and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law;—But if the Jews under the law sin, they will be condemned by the law, and so perish. All who sin, whether within the law or without the law, perish. If any who are not

13 for not the hearers of the law are ⁹just before God, but the doers of the law shall be ¹⁰justified; 14 (for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto

⁹Or, *righteous*

¹⁰Or, *accounted righteous*: and so elsewhere.

under the law, the Gentiles, come to know the things that are in the law, and of their own choice do the things of the law, they become a law unto themselves, and doing the things contained in the law of their own free will, show that the works required by the law are written in their hearts. They obey the law not because they are under the law, but because in their hearts they love the things contained in the law, so they will be saved by the law. All persons out of Christ are in a lost condition, and can be saved only by the redemption that is found in Christ.

13 for not the hearers of the law just before God,—The Jew heard the law, but did not obey it. Hearing the law will not help a man unless he obeys it. For a man to hear the law and refuse to do it renders him less excusable and more worthy of stripes. “And that servant, who knew his lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” (Luke 12: 47.)

but the doers of the law shall be justified;—Only those who do the will will be justified by the law.

14 (for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves;—The reference here made is to the law of Moses. This does not imply that the Gentiles, who do not know the law, can obey the law which the Jews with the knowledge of God could not keep. But in vindication of the justice of this dealing with the Gentiles, he assumes that even though God did not give the law to them, yet when they did by nature, not by command, the things of the law, they became the law unto themselves, and were accepted. Many Gentiles, like Cornelius, living among the Jews, attracted by the superiority of the God of the Jews and the holiness of his law, while not formally coming under it, rendered homage to it without becoming Jews. In the days of Solomon there

themselves; 15 in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and ¹¹their ¹²thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing *them*); 16 in the day when God ¹³shall

¹¹Or, *their thoughts accusing or else excusing them one with another*

¹²Or, *reasonings* 2 Cor. 10. 5.

¹³Or *judgeth*

were one hundred fifty-three thousand six hundred such persons in Judah. (2 Chron. 2: 17.)

15 in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts,—Those who, while not under the law, yet keep it, show that it is written on their hearts. Their affections have taken hold of it, and they do it because they, from the heart, fear God and his law. This cannot mean that their hearts prompted them to do what was in the law while ignorant of it, but that the heart—the understanding, the will, the affections—would embrace the law, and then they would obey the law of the new covenant because they loved God. So this means that the Gentiles might know the law, and while it was not given to them, they might from love of it keep it, and in so doing become a law unto themselves.

their conscience bearing witness therewith,—Their conscience in such cases would bear witness to their love and obedience to the law, for conscience is a witness of what passes within the heart.

and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them);—[They reasoned among themselves on questions of right and wrong, as well as on acts of right or wrong. In these reasonings they criminated or defended one another according to the facts in the case. They thus showed their knowledge of duty, or of the things which the law required.] This passage is often quoted to prove that man can be saved without obeying the commands of God. No passage in the Bible is further from this. Even those not having the law must be saved through doing the things contained in the law. Compliance with the law is the essential prerequisite. Hence, conscience is not a law even unto those who have not God's law. The province assigned to conscience is that it bears witness as to whether the person did the service from the heart, with the thoughts accusing or excusing. A man, to render ac-

judge the secrets of men, according to my ¹⁴gospel, by Jesus Christ.

¹⁴See marginal note on ch. 1. 1.

ceptable service, must have a good conscience; but a promise of divine blessing is nowhere made to one who keeps his conscience pure. A good and understanding heart is needful to acceptable service; yet no blessing is promised to an understanding heart, even of the word of God. On the other hand, Paul says: "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13: 2.) These are conditions of acceptable service; but in themselves they do not secure acceptance, save as they lead on to the obedience of the gospel. Verses 25-27 confirm this conclusion.

16 in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men,— This verse connects with verse 12. The three verses between are parenthetical and explanatory. So the connection is: as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.

according to my gospel,—All secrets and hidden things of man will be laid open by God in the last day by Jesus Christ in the light of the truths preached by Paul. [Paul was entrusted with the gospel to make it known, and that one of the great prime articles was that God would judge the world. To make this known he was appointed, and it could be called his gospel only as being a part of the important message with which he was entrusted.]

by Jesus Christ.—[That Jesus is the appointed Judge of men is plainly and repeatedly affirmed in the Scriptures. (Matt. 25: 31-46; John 5: 22, 27; Acts 17: 31; 1 Cor. 4: 5; 2 Cor. 5: 10.)]

3. DIRECT REFERENCE TO THE JEWS EMBODYING EVIDENCE OF THEIR SINFULNESS

2: 17-29

17 But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and

17 **But if thou bearest the name of a Jew,—**He describes in

gloriest in God, 18 and knowest ¹⁵his will, and ¹⁶approvest the things that are

¹⁵Or, *the Will*

¹⁶Or, *dost distinguish the things that differ*

this and the following verses the self-confident and boastful condition of the Jews. They were now the representatives of the stock of Abraham. All the families of Jacob had been swallowed up in that of Judah. [In their estimation the name "Jew" carried with it a high and peculiar distinction. Paul, being himself a Jew, knew well the sense in which the Jew used it, and could, therefore, speak advisedly. It was the national name in which the greatest pride was felt, and the verbal badge which marked them better than others. How much they presumed upon this name we learn from Gal. 2: 15; Phil. 3: 5; Rev. 2: 9.)]

and restest upon the law,—They were content to rest upon the mere fact that they had the law. [A description of their condition is strikingly given in the following: "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us." (Mic. 3: 11.) The law to which reference was made is that given by Moses. In their estimation, its bare bestowment on them proved them to be the favored of God above all others. Confident of this favor, they had no fear. But the law was not a thing to be simply had; it was a thing to be obeyed. In this lay their safety.]

and gloriest in God,—They boasted that they were the favored of God after the flesh, as if he were their guardian. [To boast in God or in Christ is right (Gal. 6: 14), if it proceeds from a sense of weakness and unworthiness, and a corresponding sense of the goodness of God as our sure refuge and strength; but where the boast is only a boast arising from bigotry and conceit, it is a sham on which God frowns.]

18 and knowest his will,—They possessed the divine revelation and claimed to know God's will. [It is right and highly commendable to know God's will, and culpable not to know it when there is opportunity. The wrong, then, lies not in knowing his will, but in regarding the mere knowledge as a

excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, 20 ¹a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of

¹Or, *an instructor*

mark of superiority and ground of acceptance with God. It is not knowing that makes one better than another, but doing. The point made against it is that, although he knew God's will, he did not obey it. He did more; he even sunk to the level of the Gentile in vice.]

and approvest the things that are excellent,—They claimed that they understood and judged that which is best. [Their education the more highly qualified them to distinguish between the things that differ and approve correctly as to which is right or wrong.]

being instructed out of the law,—Having been instructed out of the law of Moses from childhood, they claimed superiority of judgment in these matters. [This they did by the aid of better light, but practiced the worse. This they did from a perverted nature and a corrupted heart. This is the charge made against them.]

19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind,—[There is no trait of the Jewish character more prominently exhibited than their self-confident superiority to all others.] They never doubted their knowledge of the truth and of their ability to guide and teach the Gentiles, whom they regarded as blind and in darkness and alienation from God. They thought they had greatly improved the law of God by the customs and traditions of the elders.

a light of them that are in darkness,—[The rabbis frequently called themselves "the light of the world," and every Jew who was versed in the law considered himself as a light to the Gentiles.]

20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes,—They felt confident that they were able to correct the foolish and teach the babes.

having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth;—They had the form, or letter, of knowledge and truth in the

knowledge and of the truth; 21 thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? 22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? 23 thou who

law, but did not perceive or drink of the true spirit of the law; did not take it into the heart so that it might become a power to mold their hearts and lives. [It was this that rendered their condemnation so sure.]

21 thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?—As a result of their holding the form of truth without drinking into the spirit of it, they did not practice what they professed. They did not practice what they taught others.

thou that preachest a law should not steal, dost thou steal?—While they taught the law, “Thou shalt not steal,” they themselves stole, cheated, defrauded, and misrepresented. [They were gross hypocrites. While preaching against sin, they themselves at the very time were committing it. We must not, however, suppose that every Jew was a thief. It is only necessary to suppose that the sin was very general. It is introduced to make the inconsistency of their conduct more apparent. We expect a man to set an example of what he means by his public instruction.]

22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?—There is no doubt that this was a very common practice among the Jews, showing itself in the corrupt practice of permitting divorce without reasonable or righteous cause. Moses, on account of the hardness of their hearts, had allowed them to put away their wives for any cause and to take others if they so desired. This was adultery in the sight of God. They had not taken the true spirit of the law into their hearts, which was to have one wife. The twain became one.

thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples?—They were horror-stricken at the very mention of idols, but they themselves in various ways committed sacrilege, profaned the law of God by setting it aside and substituting human tradi-

gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, ²even as it is written. 25 For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a

²Is. lii. 5.

tions for it. [Anything devoted to God and then used for some other purpose is sacrilege.] We rob God when we withhold from him the honor which is due him, and this is robbing him in a higher sense than to keep or misuse the gold or silver that was sanctified to him. To substitute anything else for God as the object of our devotion and affections is sacrilege in a spiritual sense. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matt. 4: 10.)

23 **thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God?**—He makes the direct charge that while they boasted of being the guardians of, and supporters of, the law, they dishonored God in breaking it, while professing obedience to it. One guilty of great and open sins is forbidden to accuse others, and none can make groundless and uncertain accusations against any. When an accusation is made, if denied or in any part doubted, a fair and just adjudication should be made of the matter. Christians have faults. The aim of the Christian religion is to correct these faults. They are to help each other. They are to do it as tenderly and kindly as one helps another that has some fleshly hurt, and the reproof that is given to help should be received with hearts as grateful as for help given to relieve a fleshly wound. Sometimes the help given to relieve a fleshly wound is painful at the time, but we feel and cherish no ill feeling toward one who hurts the flesh in helping us. We ought to be as kind in feeling for spiritual help that will save us from a spiritual death. "He who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James 5: 19.)

24 **For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,**—So that God's name was reproached and blasphemed among the Gentiles through the violation of the law by the Jews. Their course of sin was such that it caused the Gentiles to despise and blaspheme the name of God.

doer of the law: but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is

even as it is written.—[The allusion is to Isa. 52: 5; Ezek. 36: 18-24. The dishonor done to God arose from their greed of gain, their deceit, and their hypocrisy, which were fully known to the Gentiles, among whom they lived. Paul weaves the prophetic rebuke into the tissue of his own language, but by the “as it is written” he reminds his readers that he is adapting it from their own inspired Scriptures. Thus far Paul has shown that the Jew is a sinner like the Gentile. The next step will be to drive him from his refuge in the rite of circumcision. This was the outward mark which distinguished him from his heathen neighbor and showed him to be a descendant of Abraham.]

25 For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law:—Circumcision was the mark of the Jews, and was given to bind or consecrate them to the service of God. But it profited only when those circumcised kept the law which circumcision pledged them to do. [The statement just made in verses 23, 24, which summed up the charge against the sinful Jew, is now corroborated. This turn in thought is not abrupt, for the Jew would at once answer the indictment by adducing his privileges as one circumcised. On this he staked probably more than on any other fact of his history. That the value of circumcision was contingent on his keeping the law was certainly something new to him. It was disastrous to his hope. If the law is not kept, being a son of Abraham, having the law, and being circumcised are useless. Everything depends on keeping the law. The same general principle holds good under the gospel. One thing is void without another. Faith is worthless without repentance, and so is baptism without faith; and coming into Christ is useless unless it is followed by a life of devotion to God.]

but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision.—Circumcision was a seal and pledge of God’s blessings to those who kept the law. It was a seal of unfaithfulness to those who did not keep the law and assured the deeper condemnation.

become uncircumcision. 26 If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? 27 and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: 29 but he is a Jew who is one in-

26 **If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?**—If those who are not circumcised, the Gentiles, keep the law, then the righteousness they acquire in keeping the law is counted to them for circumcision—that is, makes them children of Abraham. The keeping of the righteousness set forth in the law was the thing aimed at; and if the Gentiles, who were uncircumcised, kept the law, then the ends of circumcision were accomplished better than with those who were circumcised, but kept not the law. [But there is a difference which must not be overlooked. For a Jew not to be circumcised was not the same as for a Gentile not to be circumcised. In that case the Jew broke God's covenant (Gen. 17: 9-14; Lev. 12: 3), but not so in case of the Gentile. But after the Jew became circumcised, then unless he kept the law his circumcision amounted to nothing.]

27 **and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature,**— [The persons in question uncircumcised in virtue of their Gentile birth.]

if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law?—If the uncircumcision, who were not under the law and to whom it was not given, with fewer advantages, keep it, they condemn the circumcision, who, with better advantages and with the seal of circumcision, fail to keep the law—just as the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with that generation because it refused to hear the One greater than Solomon. (Matt. 12: 42.) The interpretation given to verses 13-16 harmonizes with these verses.

28 **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly;**—The name "Jew" as here used means the true servant of God who kept the law and walked in the steps of Abraham. He is not one

wardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

who observed the outward form of the law, but failed from the heart to keep its precepts.

neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh:—The outward circumcision, without this circumcision of the heart, goes for nothing. Paul is here making an application of the truths presented unto those under the law of Christ.

29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter;—He is a true Jew approved of God who is one inwardly, and the circumcision is that of the heart. He alone who is such commends himself to God, who sees the secrets of the heart. The hidden man of the heart, and not the outward Jew, with his outward circumcision and mere letter, will meet with the approval of God. Hence, Paul says: “In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Col. 2: 11, 12.) And: “For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3: 3.) [In the word “inwardly” Paul lays his first cornerstone of the foundation of the edifice in Jesus Christ, and breaks the ground for the gospel. In this soil it is to take root and grow. Faith is within—“with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (10: 10)—and justification is by faith (5: 1). We have here the first note of preparation for “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (3: 24.) When men’s thoughts are turned from the without to the within, the primary work of salvation is fully begun.]

whose praise is not of men, but of God.—[The Jew, as we have seen, made his boasts and praised his privileges; but though the true Jew, such as Paul describes, shall be ill spoken of by men, he shall have the praise of God. The whole section shows that religious privileges, resulting from birth,

the revelation of God's will, ritual observances, and knowledge, increase the guilt of those whose morality does not correspond. The Jews, especially the Pharisees, were very eager for the praise of men; but the true Jew, the real child of Abraham by faith, will have what is infinitely better—the praise of God.]

4. COMPARISON OF THE JEWS WITH THE GENTILES, SHOWING THE FORMER TO BE SUPERIOR TO THE LATTER AS TO PRIVILEGES ENJOYED, YET NOT SUPERIOR AS TO THE MORAL CONDITION BEFORE THE LAW

3: 1-18

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. 3 For what if some were without faith? shall their want of

1 **What advantage then hath the Jew?**—If both the Gentiles and the Jews are in sin and under condemnation, what profit has it been to the Jews that God has called them and made them his favored people?

or what is the profit of circumcision?—And if the circumcision equally with the uncircumcision must keep the law to be of benefit, what profit is there in being circumcised?

2 **Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God.**—[The “oracles” denote the whole of the revelations to mankind, from the beginning of the world to the time of Moses, who, by the inspiration of God, committed them to writing, and what further revelations God was pleased to make to mankind during the days of the prophets, who recorded them in books; and the whole was entrusted to the Jews, to be kept for their own benefit and the benefit of the whole world. And next to Christ and the gospel we must regard the Old Testament as the greatest boon ever bestowed on the human family. The respects in which it has blessed the world are countless. This confidence was not misplaced, for no people ever guarded a sacred trust with more fidelity than the Jews did the sacred Scriptures.] Through these many of the Jews had been instructed in the will of God, and

faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? 4 ³God forbid; yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written,
 'That thou mightest be justified in thy words,
 And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment.

³Gr. *Be it not so*: and so elsewhere.

⁴Ps. li. 4.

had been saved thereby. Some had heard the will of God, and rejected it, and, despite the knowledge of his will, had fallen into sin and been lost.

3 **For what if some were without faith?**—But did the failure of some who were circumcised in the flesh to believe in God render the promise of God to Abraham and his seed null?

shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God?—Or did it prove that God's promises had failed and God had falsified?

4 **God forbid:**—[An indignant denial. Man may prove false, but God never.]

yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar;—The turning the Jews aside does not prove that God is a liar, for they failed in performing a covenant their fathers made for them that they would be faithful to God and keep his law. So they lied, while God was faithful. Let all understand that God is true to his covenant, though every Jew should break it and so prove himself a liar.

as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment.—[This is quoted to show that what Paul has just deduced from the character of God accords with the oracles of God, which the Jews so jealously guarded. Nathan had convicted David of his gross sin, and foretold his punishment. (2 Sam. 12: 1-15.) In this Psalm (51: 1-4) David sees that his sins was so heinous and directly against God that the sentence of condemnation pronounced against him was right, and he confessed that God might be seen and declared to be righteous, and in this sense be justified by those who heard the sentence upon him. His words are: "That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." The

5 But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? (I speak after the manner of men.) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the

meaning as expressed by David is that God is to be esteemed right and just in condemning men for their sins, and that a true penitence will see this, though it condemns himself. As used by Paul, it is to be held as a fixed, unwavering principle that God is right and true, whatever consequences it may involve, or whatever man may prove to be a liar.]

5 But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God,—The argument had been that man's sins had called out the manifestation of God's mercy and so commended his mercy to the world.

what shall we say?—Is he as the inflicter of the wrath unrighteous? Is it just of him to punish the sin that confirms the sole glory of his righteousness?

Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath?—But since sin is the occasion of God's mercy, is he unrighteous in punishing those who sin?

(I speak after the manner of men.)—[What he was saying was according to the foolish and unworthy thoughts of God entertained by man, not his own thoughts. It is quite likely that Paul, in dealing with the subtle, wily Jew, had frequently met those who contended that what he taught as God's promises, when they came to pass on Israel, will appear all the more gracious on account of the nation's unbelief. And if that is true, their obstinacy had turned out to the glory of God, why, then, should he punish them for that which had been the occasion of its manifestation?]

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?—By no means. Then, how could God judge and condemn the world, which by its sins gave occasion to God to manifest his mercy to man? [It is the first idea of God, as Governor of all intelligences, that he will judge those who are capable of being judged—as children of men, all of them assuredly ought to be; but if we hold that God cannot judge and punish evil-doers, because they ultimately commend his righteousness,

world? 7 ⁵But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just.

⁵Many ancient authorities read *For*.

then he can no longer act as Supreme Judge. His highest honor is taken away, for his righteousness depends upon his judging all men righteously.]

7 **But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?**—If the treason of Judas had been the occasion of Jesus Christ being manifested to the world and glorified, why is Judas regarded as a sinner? The reason is that Judas did not betray Jesus that God's love might be manifested and God's glory proclaimed, but to satisfy his own covetous soul. Man's lost and ruined condition is the occasion of calling out God's love. God's love would never have been manifested had not man sinned. A child's sickness or misfortune calls out the deep and strong love of the mother for it. So man's sin was the occasion of manifesting God's love to man. The showing of this love brought glory to God. God was in this way glorified through man's sin. To live in sin after Jesus died to deliver man from sin rendered him the more guilty and worthy of the deeper condemnation.

8 **and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come?**—Some so perverted his reasoning as to insist that since through man's sin God is glorified, there could be no wrong to sin, because it brought glory to God. So his enemies falsely charged that he taught that we should do evil that good may come. [In their condemnation they condemn themselves in the claim that God cannot punish sin, because it promotes his glory, for this claim is the very essence of the hateful sentiment. And thus he has come round in most skillful fashion to the assertion with which he began against the Jew: "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things."

9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; 10 as it is written,

*There is none righteous, no, not one;

*Ps. xiv. 1 ff.; liii. 1 ff.

(2: 1.) He joins with them in repudiating the godless maxim, but he does not go with them in holding it. They slanderously report him who say he does.]

9 What then?—[The whole course of thought from the discussion (1: 18) is looked at, as much as to say: How does the question about sin now stand?]

are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin;—Greater privileges and advantages had been bestowed upon the Jews on account of the possession of the oracles of God, given them on account of the faith of their fathers; but they had forfeited the privileges thereby granted on account of their sins, and were equally with the Gentiles under sin.

10 **as it is written,**—[Paul had just affirmed the guilt of the Jews from their living experiences; he now confirms this declaration in the strongest terms by an appeal to their own Scriptures to show that what he had affirmed was true; and since it was conceded that the Gentiles were gross sinners, it then follows, in regard to sin, that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles and that they were all equally dependent on the mercy of God. The passages quoted show that this characteristic of sin was not confined to any particular period of Jewish history, but pertained to them as a people; that it had characterized them throughout their existence as a nation.]

There is none righteous, no, not one;—In picturing the widespread wickedness, David said: "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God. They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psalm 14: 2, 3.) This language is used to show how things appeared to the observer, and that, in proportion to the whole, very few honored God,

- 11 There is none that understandeth,
 There is none that seeketh after God ;
 12 They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable ;
 There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one :
-

and no nation honored him. It would be difficult to settle upon a time when this was not literally true of the Jewish people. [In regard to sin, it follows that the Jews were no better than the Gentiles. This is the point to be settled. The word "righteous" as here used means to be wholly free from sin—free from it in the sense of never having committed it. In this acceptation the citation is strictly true. There is none absolutely righteous. Therefore, all are under sin. This is what Paul had charged, and what is shown by the language quoted to be absolutely true. His declaration the Jews might deny, but not their own Scripture. The Jews, then, do not excel the Gentiles.]

11 **There is none that understandeth,**—This and the following are quotations from David depicting the sinfulness of the Jewish people. [There are none who understand perfectly or have strictly a true knowledge of God's law and a just appreciation of his goodness, or have such a state of moral feeling as to dispose them to serve and obey God.]

There is none that seeketh after God;—[There is none whose thoughts and endeavors are directed toward God. (Heb. 11: 6.) A righteous man counts it his highest privilege and honor to know God and to understand his will. A man can indulge in wickedness only by forgetting God.]

12 **They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable;**—Their understanding has become dark, and consequently they have turned aside from the way that leads to God. The result of their ignorance is that they have become useless, corrupt, good for nothing. They are of no value in regard to the works of righteousness.]

There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one:—[There was universal corruption of morals as a consequence of apostasy from God. Their condition resembles a caravan which has strayed, and is moving in the direction opposite to

- 13 ⁷Their throat is an open sepulchre ;
 With their tongues they have used deceit :
⁸The poison of asps is under their lips :
 14 ⁹Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness :
 15 ¹⁰Their feet are swift to shed blood ;

⁷Ps. v. 9.

⁸Ps. cxl. 3.

⁹Ps. x. 7.

¹⁰Is. lix. 7 f.

the right one, and whose members can do nothing to help one another in their common misery.]

13 **Their throat is an open sepulchre;**—An open sepulchre emits foul odors, which depicts the evil that comes out of their mouth. [The deadly calumny by which the wicked destroy their fellow men is taken in the sense of gaping, as the grave, to denote their readiness to destroy them, as the grave seems ready for, and, as it were, expects, the dead, and cannot [be satisfied.]

With their tongues they have used deceit:—Their words are deceitful and misleading. [Back of a deceptive tongue lies a deceptive heart which studies to deceive, and the tongue uses words suited to that end.]

The poison of asps is under their lips:—The words of these evil persons strike with the poison that would destroy the purest character. [This intimates the extreme noxiousness of the slander by comparing it to the deadly poison of asps, designating that virulent slander which cankers the highest reputation and those biting speeches which sting even to death. (James 3: 8.)]

14 **Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:**—[They are full of blasphemies, malignities, and execrations against God and men. Thus the mouth, which God created to bless and honor him, is used to grieve him. By “bitterness” is meant those wounding, stinging words which the wicked utter.]

15 **Their feet are swift to shed blood;**—They frequently and without compunction commit murder and violence, and rush fiercely on their victims to gratify their malice or to satisfy their vengeance.

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways ;
 17 And the way of peace have they not known :
 18 ¹¹There is no fear of God before their eyes.

¹¹Ps. xxxvi. 1.

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;—They leave only desolation and misery behind them. [They cause the destruction or ruin of the reputation, happiness, and peace of others. But, worst of all, the ruin souls, and so plant in them endless misery.]

17 And the way of peace have they not known:—They are strangers to the way of peace. [They do not pursue that course which is productive of happiness. This clause, therefore, includes all the manifestations of an evil heart, which are seen in the numberless ways in which men injure their fellow creatures. What they will not have, they resolve others shall not.]

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.—They are not actuated by any regard to the will of displeasure of God. [Where God is not feared, nothing else is; and when this last barrier to vice is destroyed, sin comes in like a flood.] These last three verses are quotations from Isa. 59: 7, 8. Paul gathers these statements from their prophets to show they all recognized that the Jews were disobedient to God and would fall short of his favor.

5. DECISIVE RESULT OF THE FOREGOING DISCUSSION SETTING FORTH THE MORAL CONDITION OF ALL MEN BEFORE THE LAW

3: 19, 20

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law;—Inasmuch as the things to which reference is made are contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, they apply to the Jews, who were amendable to that law; but when men are amenable to and judged by the law of God, they all fall short in the obedience, for God's law is perfect, demands obedience, and will make

world may be brought under the judgment of God: 20 because ¹⁹by ¹⁸the works of the law shall no flesh be ¹justified in his sight; for ²through the law *cometh* the knowledge of sin.

¹²Gr. *out of.*

¹³Or, *works of law*

¹Or, *accounted righteous*

²Or, *through law*

the man who conforms to it perfect in his obedience. The law given by Moses was the divine standard of righteousness, and, if lived up to with perfect obedience, would make the man so doing perfect before God. But no man could give a faultless obedience to a perfect law.

that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God:—When a man fell short in his obedience to the divine law, he was condemned by the law as a sinner, and so every mouth was stopped from boasting before God, and the whole world—the Jew as well as the Gentile—was shown to be guilty before God and to fall under the condemnation of God, to be saved only by the grace of God revealed in the mission of Christ.

20 because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;—Since under the law of Moses all have fallen into this state of sin and iniquity and condemnation, it is evident that no flesh can be justified in the sight of God by the law.

for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin.—By the law sin is manifested and made known. The prohibition of the law is the occasion of man's showing his rebellious nature. The rebellious nature was in him, but it had nothing to call it out until the law put it under restraint. Paul says: "I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (7: 7.) It is argued by many that this is true of all law and not confined to the law of Moses. This is likely true of all law except the law of faith. The law of faith appeals to the heart and works through love, so does not stir up the rebellious spirit. The failure of the law of Moses was that it did not appeal to or begin with the heart. It gave rules to regulate the conduct without purifying the heart or exciting the

affections. This cannot be. [Since man is a sinner, with no help in himself and none in the law, what is left to him but to look to the mercy of God? The whole human family is not only lost, but condemned. His penalty is continuance in sin, not only while he sins, but because he has sinned. All the world is guilty before God. In a court of justice, it is only after every defense has failed and the law itself has been shown to be broken—it is only at this point that the appeal is made to the judge for his clemency. Paul has now brought us up to this point.]

Then the whole drift of Paul's argument is to cut man off from all services devised by man that allow boasting and that produce only human righteousness and ties him down as a lost and ruined sinner, dependent upon the works of God provided in the gospel and sealed by the blood of Christ Jesus for salvation. To these he must come by faith in Christ. He is not dissuading or discouraging men from doing in faith all that God has provided and commanded and sealed with the blood. He cuts him off from everything save these and leaves him to walk in "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" as his only hope. In this walk he comes to the blood-sealed appointments of God and is washed by the blood of the Son of God. Paul said: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8: 2.) He did not discourage them from walking in that law. By so doing he does the works of God. He did the works without which faith is dead and by which James says, "faith apart from works is barren." (2: 20.) The works of God, the works of faith, are included in the law of faith that makes faith perfect, excludes all boasting, and justifies man. Paul and James, so far from disagreeing, agree perfectly. Paul cuts off from everything except the works contained in the law of faith, and James warns that no faith can justify that is not made perfect by works, included in the law of faith, and to which faith leads.

III. GOD'S POWER FOR SALVATION AS MANIFESTED IN JUSTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST

3: 21 to 5: 11

1. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH APART FROM LEGAL JUSTIFICATION THE ONLY HOPE POSSIBLE TO MAN

3: 21-31

21 But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith ²in Jesus Christ unto all ⁴them that believe; for

²Or, *of*

⁴Some ancient authorities add *and upon all*.

21 **But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested**,—God's plan of justifying man or making him righteous, apart or aside from the law of Moses, is revealed in Christ.

being witnessed by the law and the prophets;—The law of Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament foretold the coming of Jesus Christ and the salvation that should be brought to light through him. [The ceremonies and prophecies of the Old Testament could not give life; they did not develop the Christ; but in springing "out of Judah," in his being "made under the law," and that he "died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4), they become a powerful and ever-living witness to him. How the ceremonies of the law pointed to Christ is elaborately unfolded in the book of Hebrews. The tabernacle, the priesthood, the lavings, and the sacrifices, all pointed to Christ. The prophets bore direct testimony to the Messiah that he would come just as he did come.]

22 **even the righteousness of God**—The righteousness that God has ordained for making man righteous.

through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe;—The leading feature of this justification of man is through faith in Jesus Christ. [Faith in Christ is the condition, not

there is no distinction; 23 for all ⁵have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in

⁵Gr. *sinned*.

the sole one except as implying others; not a condition of merit, but of mercy.]

for there is no distinction;—There is no difference, on the score of guilt, between the Jews and Gentiles; all must believe in Christ.

23 for all have sinned,—For all, Jews and Gentiles, have sinned against the law, hence cannot be justified by it.

and fall short of the glory of God;—[This glory of God not only manifests, but communicates, itself, being reflected in such of his creatures as are capable of knowing and loving and growing like him. Paul, therefore, calls man “the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11: 7), because he is capable of receiving and reflecting God’s glory. The complete manifestation of divine perfection is “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4: 6.) The glory of God in Christ shining forth in the gospel upon the believer’s heart transforms him into the “light in the Lord” (Eph. 5: 8); and so “we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3: 18). The transformation begins here, but man’s full participation in “the glory of God” is the hope of our high calling reserved for us in heaven.]

24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:—God created the world and all that pertains to it for his glory and honor. He then created man to rule the world under God’s directions, in harmony with his laws, and for his glory and the exaltation of his authority. But man betrayed the trust committed to him, and turned from God as his Counselor and Ruler and chose to follow and obey the devil instead of God. In doing so he transferred the allegiance and rule of the world from God to the evil one and chose the devil to be his ruler instead of God. As a result, sin, sorrow, sickness, care, desolation, ruin, and death

Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth **to be* a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing, *I say*, of this

**Or, to be propitiatory*

enveloped the world in a pall of darkness. To rescue man from this reign of death, Jesus interposed his blood, gave his life for the life of man, and secured to him the right to live as the servant of God.

25 whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood,—In the work of rescuing man, the offended majesty of heaven must be propitiated, made favorable; the universe must see and know that God's laws cannot be trifled with; and in bringing man back into union and harmony with the laws of the universe and with God, that he may be saved, the sanctity and majesty of divine authority must not be compromised. God's laws must be satisfied, his honor vindicated, ere man can be received of God. This work of satisfying the divine law, of propitiating the offended majesty of heaven, and of securing divine favor that man as a servant of God might be saved, was accomplished by the blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through him are believers in God." (1 Pet. 1: 19-21.) This shows why the sentence was not literally executed at once.

to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God;—During the patriarchal and the Jewish dispensations sins were not finally forgiven. The typical blood of those covenants was necessary to the partial and temporary cleansing from sin. It did not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience, and there was a remembrance of sin every year, to be finally and fully purged away from the soul only when the blood of Christ, which sealed the everlasting covenant, was shed. "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of

righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be ⁷just, and the ⁷justifier of him that ⁸hath faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of

⁷See ch. 2. 13, marg.

⁸Gr. *is of faith.*

Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 13, 14.) This shows plainly that when life was forfeited it could be redeemed only by life. It, furthermore, teaches that the blood of bulls and goats under the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations possessed efficacy only in pointing to and connected with the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin, and that the partial and temporary forgiveness or passing over of sins, requiring a sacrificial remembrance every year, became final and complete only when Christ came as "the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Heb. 9: 15.) Those called under the Old Testament came into full possession of the promise of eternal life when the blood of Christ, through the eternal Spirit, was offered; for only then was the full and final forgiveness of sins secured.

26 for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season:—To declare at this time God's plan of justifying man which so provided that God might be just, act with justice, while justifying those who believe in Christ.

that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.—The redemption that was provided in Jesus was only for those who believe in Christ. No provision is made to justify any out of Christ, or one who refuses to believe on him. God must respect his sense of justice before he can show mercy. Then the example of punishment is needed by the universe.

27 Where then is the glorying?—It is a well-established law of God that salvation can allow no glorying on the part of man.

faith. 28 We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from ¹the works of the law. 29 Or is God *the* God of Jews only? is he not *the* God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also; 30 if so be that God is one, and

¹Many ancient authorities read *For we reckon.*

¹⁰Or, *works of law*

It is excluded.—All glorying must be excluded.

By what manner of law? of works?—Not by the Jewish law nor by any law of works invented by man, for all such works allow glorying.

Nay: but by a law of faith.—But by the law of which faith in Jesus Christ is the leading principle. This shows that there is a law of faith in contrast with the law of works. The things ordained by Jesus Christ, of which faith is the leading principle, constitute the law of faith in Christ. The requirements of Jesus allow no glorying, and by these man can be saved. All the requirements of the law of faith humiliate men and turn them from self to trust in God. Faith leads from self to God and his ways, to repentance, to be buried out of self and raised in Christ Jesus. Every act of the law is a repudiation of self—a turning away from self in heart, soul, and body into Christ. There is nothing in these acts of turning away from self to encourage or even allow glorying or to cultivate a feeling of self-righteousness; but every act of soul, mind, and body is one that cultivates and declares distrust of self, confidence, and reliance on God through Jesus Christ.

28 We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.—From the foregoing facts he concludes that a man is justified by the law of faith and not by the law of Moses or of any works or inventions of men that allow glorying.

29 Or is God the God of Jews only? is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also:—As assurance that he will save by the law of faith addressed to all men, he says that he is the God of all other people as well as of the Jews. He accepted the Jews because their fathers trusted and obeyed him. He now accepts all who trust and obey him.

he shall justify the circumcision ¹¹by faith, and the uncircumcision ¹²through faith.

31 Do we then make ¹³the law of none effect ¹²through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish ¹³the law.

¹¹Gr. *out of*. Gal. 3. 8.

¹²Or, *through the faith*. Gal. 2. 16.

¹³Or *law*

30 if so be that God is one, and he shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.—The one and the same God will justify both Jews and Gentiles by the same rule of faith in Christ Jesus. [A righteous judge could not render contradictory decisions when all are alike guilty, and certainly he could not decide in such a way that his judgment to save some would necessarily exclude others. The unity of God makes salvation by faith exclusive of every other means. “By faith” and “through faith” are practically the same. (Comp. 1: 17; 3: 20.)]

31 Do we then make the law of none effect through faith? God forbid:—The end or purpose of the law could never be accomplished without bringing in faith, the gospel, the reign of Christ, to prepare for which the law was given.

nay, we establish the law.—The law of Moses was established in the sense of being fulfilled, completed, and taken out of the way. The law was intended from the beginning to complete its work when it brought the world to Christ. “What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. . . . So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.” (Gal. 3: 19-25.) The law of Moses was never intended to continue in force longer than to the coming of Christ. For the law to fail to bring in the gospel, faith, the promised seed, was for the law to fail. For it to bring in these was to cause it to fulfill its mission and to establish it as of God. To fulfill the law and take it out of the way was to establish it in the fulfillment of its end. So in coming to faith in Christ we establish the law.

2. EVIDENCE FROM THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES THAT MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH APART FROM THE WORKS OF THE LAW

4: 1-8

1 What then shall we say ¹⁴that Abraham, ¹⁵our forefather, hath found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture?

¹⁴Some ancient authorities read of *Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?*

¹⁵Or, *our forefather according to the flesh hath found?*

1 **What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found according to the flesh?**—The question whether man is saved by the law of faith or the law of works is kept up. The conditions of salvation given through Jesus Christ, our Lord, constitute the law of faith. The law of Moses, with its ceremonies and observances, constitutes the law of works. The law of faith requires the service of the heart, the inner man, because with the heart man believes. The law of works might be performed without faith. When observed without faith, it secured only temporal blessings. Faith, or the service of the heart, transforms the character so as to make it like God and fit it for eternal blessings. With these laws, what did Abraham after the flesh find, and with which law—that of works or of faith? The context requires this.

2 **For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God.**—Abraham was justified, but by which law? That of faith or by the works of the law? If he was saved by works, or the law of works, he might have whereof to glory; but if he was saved by faith, there was no room for glorying, save in God's blessing. Abraham was justified by faith before he was circumcised. Faith led Abraham away from self, away from home and friends, to follow God, who led him to offer his son of promise. Faith leads man to do the things that he in whom he believes commands. Faith in another leads man to distrust self and to trust and follow the one in whom his faith is centered.

3 **For what saith the scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.**—When God said unto Abraham: "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said

¹⁶And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that

¹⁶Gen. xv. 6.

unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15: 5, 6.) This was the same faith that led him to trust God and to leave the home of his childhood, and proved itself by many acts of obedience. Now he staggers not at the promise of God, although he and Sarah, his wife, were both past age, but acts as moved by a living faith, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.—If one relies on his own works to merit salvation, the reward is reckoned not as a favor from God, but as payment of debt for works. This is contrary to the whole principle of justification by grace. Man is a lost and helpless sinner, saved by the grace of God; but he must accept that favor by complying with the conditions God has enjoined for his enjoying it. The principles of salvation are that no flesh shall glory before God. Life is the gift of God.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly,—To him that does not seek to merit salvation by works of his own, but walks in the law of faith, given by him who justifies the ungodly, his faith leads him to obey the law of faith; and the faith that thus leads him to do what God commands him, that faith will be reckoned unto him for righteousness. It is a faith perfected by obedience—a faith that works through love. The things embraced in the law of faith are conditions to be complied with that show that we are in a state of heart that fits and prepares us for salvation. God requires us to do nothing that can possibly claim merit, or for which man could claim favor. There is nothing in believing in God, in repenting toward God, in being baptized out of self into Christ, that would have even the appearance of merit. [On the other hand, the spiritual value of faith itself, be this whatever it may, attaches of necessity to all action springing from faith. The stream is, in quality, as the foun-

justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. 6 Even as

tain whence it issues; the branches, leaves, and fruit, as the tree on which they grow. Paul was never so unwise as to suppose any incompatibility between faith and what he called "obedience of faith." (1: 5; 16: 26.) For in every act produced by faith in Christ, the believer is really looking to him and reposing upon him as the ground of all hope and the source of all life. It is in this and this only that either faith or obedience of faith has any real worth, as constantly fixing the eye of the soul upon Jesus.]

Baptism is sometimes called a work of the person baptized, and it is sometimes claimed that if a man is pardoned in baptism it would be salvation through works; but baptism has fewer of the qualities of works of the person baptized than either faith or repentance. Faith is an act of the heart, the soul, the inner man—something the man does. It is a work; man does the work, but it is God's work. It is ordained by God and terminates in and honors God. Jesus said: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6: 29.) So of repentance. "Believe" and repent" are both active—both done by the subject. The person baptized gives himself up into the hands of the administrator, and is buried out of self, to be raised up in Christ, and, as a servant of God, to "walk in the light, as he is in the light." (1 John 1: 7.) When a man dies and his friends take his body and bury it, no one could call it a work of the man buried. This is the true type of him who is baptized. And there is no more propriety in calling baptism the work of the man baptized than there is in calling a burial the work of the person buried. Baptism is a work of God performed upon the man baptized through his servant to bring him, dead in trespasses and sins, into the state of life with God. The life is imparted through faith; it turns from sin in repentance and puts off the body of sin in baptism.

his faith is reckoned for righteousness.—The faith that leads a man thus to walk in the works of God and so perfects that faith, God will reckon it to him for righteousness.

David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, **7 saying,**

¹⁷Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,

And whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

¹⁷Ps. xxxii. 1 f.

6 Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works,—David shows that the same reason which caused God to reckon Abraham's faith to him for righteousness will cause God to reckon any one's faith to him for righteousness. (Psalm 32: 1, 2.)

7 saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,—Those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works are those whose sins have been forgiven.

and whose sins are covered.—[The fact of the preceding statement expressed in different words. To "cover sins" is the same as to "forgive iniquities."]

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.—To the man thus submissive to God, God will not reckon sin.

3. UNIVERSALITY OF THESE BLESSINGS OF GRACE AS CONDITIONED ON OBEDIENT FAITH, WHICH IS POSSIBLE ALIKE TO JEW AND GENTILE

4: 9-25

9 Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righ-

9 Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision, or upon the uncircumcision also?—Does this faith that proves and perfects itself in obedience so that God will not reckon sins to him pertain to the Jews only, or may not the Gentiles so believe in God as to attain this condition of blessedness also?

for we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness.—Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?—But was Abraham circumcised or

teousness. 10 How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision: 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith

uncircumcised when his faith secured that state of blessedness?

Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision:—[The word “then” shows that the question arises out of the preceding argument, and is to be answered in accordance with it; this is further shown in the words “for we say.” Abraham became partaker of the blessing when he was justified by faith. He was so justified while yet in uncircumcision; therefore, the blessing is not upon the circumcision only, but upon the uncircumcision also. The conclusion, though drawn from the one case of Abraham, is assumed to be general, and rightly so, because that case is not merely an example of the rest, but the origin and cause of all, as is more fully shown in the following verse. The history of Abraham is conclusive on this point. “And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.” (Gen. 15: 6.) After this, Ishmael was born; and when thirteen years old (Gen. 17: 25), he and Abraham were circumcised on the same day. This was a fearful blow to those who claimed that there could be no salvation (Acts 15: 1) without circumcision, for the father of the Israelites was justified thirteen or more years before he was circumcised.]

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision:—Abraham attained this state of blessedness while he was uncircumcised as a sign and seal of the faith he possessed before he was circumcised. If Abraham could attain this perfected faith in uncircumcision, so may the Gentiles.

that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision,—So Abraham became not only the father of the circumcision, but of the uncircumcision who believe in Christ Jesus.

that righteousness might be reckoned unto them;—And when their faith has been thus perfected by obedience, that

which he had while he was in uncircumcision: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them; 12 and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision. 13 For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect:

faith will be reckoned to them for righteousness, aside from the works of the Jewish law, or of human merit.

12 and the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision,—All who would become the children of Abraham by faith must walk in the same steps which faith led Abraham to take. His faith led him to so trust God as to deny himself all that was dear to him and go forth not knowing whither he went, and to dwell as a pilgrim and a sojourner in a strange land before it was reckoned to him for righteousness.

but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision.—When men perfect their faith by walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham, then God will reckon that faith for righteousness.

13 For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world,—Abraham was never under the Mosaic law. That law was not given in the days of Abraham. He walked by faith as God's children now must walk. On account of the transgression of Abraham's children, the law was added as a tutor to train them for receiving Christ by faith; and when he came, the law was taken out of the way. (See Gal. 3: 19-25.)

but through the righteousness of faith.—The promise that his seed should inherit, or be heir of, the world was made to him while uncircumcised, but the promise came to him because he had, through faith, led the righteous life before God. Then the fulfillment of the promise is to those who believe, though not circumcised.

14 For if they that are of the law are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect:—If they who were of the law were heirs because they are under the law,

15 for the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression. 16 For this cause *it is* of faith, that *it may be* according to

faith is made of none effect, and the promise through Abraham's faith is of none effect. The promise was made to him through faith.

15 for the law worketh wrath;—The law forbids man's doing what he desires, so calls out or shows the spirit of disobedience in him. If a parent never interferes with the will of a child, the spirit of obedience is not tested in him; but when the parent forbids his doing what he desires, the spirit of obedience is tested and shown. The disobedience brings the penalties of the law. So the law that restrains brings wrath upon man.

but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.—This clearly sets forth that where no law is given, there is no stepping outside of, going beyond, or setting aside the law. If God never had given to man a law, he could not transgress it; but as God had given him law, he did transgress the law, and the transgression brought wrath upon him.

This passage is often misapplied. It is interpreted to mean that where God has not given a specific command prohibiting a thing, that thing may be done in religious service; that man is authorized to do anything in the service of God not specially prohibited in the Scriptures. This principle directly contradicts the whole teaching of the Bible. Moses said: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." (Deut. 12: 8, 9.) At this time the law was not in force. They were left to do whatsoever seemed right in their own eyes. Some general truths had been taught them, and they were left to show their love to God in their own way. But when the law was given, he said: "What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. 12: 32.) They were now no longer left to do what was right in their own eyes, but must conform to the will of God. To go outside of

grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, ¹⁸A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who giveth life

¹⁸Gen. xvii. 5.

it was to sin and call down God's wrath upon them. God now has a law of service given through Jesus Christ, and whosoever oversteps, sets aside, adds to, or takes from that law transgresses the law and incurs the wrath of God. If the principle be true now that man is at liberty to add whatever is not specifically condemned, then man devises the way of salvation, not God. The principles destroys the authority of the Bible and makes man's own wishes his supreme law. It de-thrones God and enthrones man.

16 For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grade;—As the law of works apart from faith develops the spirit of disobedience in man and calls down upon him the wrath of God, it cannot save. But salvation comes through the law of faith and not of works. Faith changes the heart, and the law growing out of faith does not excite rebellion, but makes the heart desirous of performing the law.

to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed;—The "seed" are those who believe in God. [If the inheritance depended on law, it would be sure to fail all; but as it is a matter of grace and dependent on the condition of faith, all may attain it who will.]

not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all—Then the promise came through the law of faith that it might be to all the seed (the believers)—not to the Jews only who are of the law, but to those who walk in the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all—Jews and Gentiles—who believe.

17 (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee)—This making him the father of all who have his faith from every nation fulfills in a new sense the Scripture which says: "The father of a multitude of nations have I made thee." (Gen. 17: 5.) This was true after the flesh, for he was the father of the Israelites, Edomites, Ishmaelites, Midianites, and

to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. 18 Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father

many smaller nations. It is true in a spiritual sense, since he is the father of all who believe in God in every nation under the heavens.

before him whom he believed,—Abraham is father of all who believe before God in whom he believed.

even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were.—God revives from the dead, or calls into existence as though they already existed. [Abraham became the father of many nations by believing in God as one “who giveth life to the dead.” He not only believed in God’s existence and that he could bless, but he believed that blessing could only come from God as now active in nature for spiritual ends—a spiritual Creator, just as once he was a Creator of nature. Faith gets its character in which it accepts God. Abraham looked on him as one who, in spite of nature, is making alive the dead. This is the leading thought in this section. God “calleth the things that are not”—not in the possibility of nature—“as though they were”; he calls them into existence. Natural nations come in the course of nature; but when God said to Abraham, “Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be” (Gen. 15: 5), did he mean natural seed and natural nations? Isaac was not a child of nature, but a child of faith, and Abraham’s seed are not children of nature. The promise was that he should have a son by Sarah, whose womb was dead, and he also was “now as good as dead.” The two verses (17, 24) constitute an analogy so that we have a type and its antitype. As Isaac was born of parents who were virtually dead, so Christ was raised “from the dead.” As Abraham believed God who quickened him and Sarah so that “she had strength to conceive seed,” so we must believe on him who quickened the dead Christ. The quickening of Abraham and Sarah was typical of bringing Christ out of death. We must have the “faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all . . . before him whom he be-

of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, ¹So shall thy seed be. 19 And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body ²now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's ³womb; 20 yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to

¹Gen. xv. 5.

²Many ancient authorities omit *now*.

³Or, *womb; yea, &c.*

lied, even God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were" (17), and must "believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."]

18 **Who in hope believed against hope,**—Abraham, after he had grown old and all hope of a son according to the flesh had passed, still hoped in the promise of God.

to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be.—His faith enabled him to become the father of many nations, according to the promise. [This was not only the divinely appointed end of Abraham's faith, but also what Abraham himself looked to as the end of his faith. He believed with the full intention of becoming, what God promised, the father of many nations.]

19 **And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb;**—Abraham's strong faith enabled him to believe God and hope for the seed despite the fact that both his own body and Sarah's womb were dead, so far as childbearing was concerned; and through faith both were strengthened to beget and bear the child. (See Heb. 11: 11, 12.) [He considered the difficulties, but still believed. He estimated the hindrances at their full weight, but his faith in the promise of God was not thereby shaken.]

20 **yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith,**—He did not doubt the fulfillment of God's promise through disbelieving him.

God, 21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him;

giving glory to God,—To glorify God is to exalt and honor him as one worthy of the highest praise and most faithful service, and this service he rendered.

21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.—On the other hand, he had full confidence that God could and would perform his promise. [At so great a height did his faith sustain him that he honored God in all he did, especially in being fully convinced that all he had promised, however improbable, he would certainly perform.]

22 Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.—Because Abraham thus believed God despite the difficulties of fleshly nature that seemed to forbid it, God reckoned this faith to him for righteousness. But this faith and trust in God had been cultivated and perfected through thirty years by acts of obedience, and was not a mere sentiment of faith apart from obedience. [Faith, to be reckoned, must, as in the case of Abraham, have proper internal effects and lead to proper outward results. In itself it must amount to a full conviction that all God says is true and that all he promises will be done. It must then strengthen the inner man of him who has it and induce him to do whatever God commands. Faith is perfected by its accompaniments; and when this is done, it is reckoned, and not before.]

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him;—[This carries us back to the time it was written and to the vision of the writer.] It was certainly written for Abraham's sake, but not for his honor alone. [It also looked forward to the coming of Christ and to those who should be redeemed through him. He had them in mind as he wrote, and as he related how Abraham believed and that it was reckoned to him, in like manner it would be reckoned unto us—thus showing that justification by faith is attested by the prophets.]

24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,—To encourage us to exercise and perfect our faith by walking in the steps of our father Abraham, and so making our faith perfect by works, as his faith was made perfect by works. (See James 2: 21, 22.) If we thus believe in Jesus Christ and perfect our faith in obedience to him, God will reckon our faith to us for righteousness. The things we are required to do by the law of faith are not such as merit salvation, but are conditions by which we show our fitness and willingness to receive the offered blessings.

25 who was delivered up for our trespasses,—[This verse is a comprehensive statement of the gospel. Christ was delivered unto death for our sins. (Isa. 53: 5, 6; Heb. 9: 28; 1 Pet. 2: 21.) The delivering of Christ is ascribed to God (Rom. 8: 32); to Christ himself (Gal. 1: 4; Tit. 2: 14); and to wicked men (Luke 24: 20; Acts 2: 23; 5: 30). It was by the divine purpose and counsel that he suffered for the sins of the world, and he gave himself willingly. (Isa. 53: 7, 8.)]

and was raised for our justification.—[The resurrection of Christ was necessary for our justification—that is, in order to complete the provisions for it and effect it. Had he not risen, we should yet be under condemnation. (1 Cor. 15: 17.) But God raised him up to consummate the offering for sin. As it was necessary on the day of atonement that the high priest should not only slay the offering at the altar, but enter into the holy place and sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat, so our High Priest, having suffered in the outer court, has passed into the heavens with his own blood, there to appear for our justification. This offering was accepted and the reconciliation was completed.] That our faith may be reckoned to us for righteousness, it is necessary for us to believe in him who was raised for our justification.

4. THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AS DUE TO THE WORK OF CHRIST

5: 1-11

1. Being therefore justified ⁴by faith, ⁵we have peace with God through our

⁴Gr. *out of*.

⁵Many ancient authorities read *let us have*.

1 **Being therefore justified by faith**,—One is justified when he is freed from sin so as to stand acquitted before God. To be justified by faith is to be purified by doing the things contained in the law of which faith is the leading principle and to which we are led by faith. No one could be justified by the deeds of the law of Moses. No one could keep that law without sin, so could not be justified by the law. Having once sinned, obedience to the law could not blot out that sin. Christ came to provide forgiveness of sin. Paul declares that the gospel he preached “is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith.” (16: 26.) The end of preaching the gospel is to bring all men to the obedience to which faith leads. Faith that does not lead to obedience utterly fails in the purpose for which Christ died and the gospel was proclaimed. The end is to bring man into obedience to God. Man is justified by faith when he is led by faith to trust and obey God as his Lord and Master. No one who believes the Bible doubts that a man is justified by faith. The question at issue is, whether he is justified by faith before it leads to obedience or whether by a faith that manifests itself in obedience. Paul tells us exactly how faith does make children of God: “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) Faith, then, saves one by leading him to accept salvation from sin in God’s appointed institutions, leading him to the obedience of faith; he becomes the child of God by being led by faith to be baptized into Christ, so putting on Christ, and in Christ he is saved. To be saved “through faith in Christ Jesus,” and to be “baptized unto the remission of sins,” and to be “baptized into Christ,” and to “put on Christ” mean exactly the same thing.

Lord Jesus Christ; 2 through whom also we have had our access ⁶by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and ⁷we ⁸rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but ⁹we also ⁸rejoice in our tribulations: knowing

⁶Some ancient authorities omit *by faith*.

⁷Or, *let us rejoice*

⁸Gr. *glory*. Ver. 11; Heb. 3. 6.

⁹Or, *let us also rejoice*

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;— God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. So as God is in Christ, when we enter into union with Christ we have peace with God. [A state of sin is, on our part, a state of enmity toward God, the enmity existing in us, not in him. Consequently its direction is from us toward him, not from him toward us. But sin being canceled, the enmity ceases and peace ensues. The peace, like the enmity, is toward God; it is peace on our part with him. This peace we have or enjoy through Christ, because through him we obtain justification which induces it. But it is not peace in the sense of exemption from troubles of the world; it is peace of conscience, peace of soul.]

2 through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand;—Through Christ and by the provisions he has made for our entrance into him we have access into this favor of God in which all true Christians stand. We enter into this state of peace with God through faith in Christ.

and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Standing in this state of favor with God into which we have entered by faith and having peace with him, we enjoy present blessings as sons of God and hope for greater blessings in the future. In this hope we rejoice. Peter gives this assurance: "Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1: 4.) When we partake of his divine nature, we will conform to his life and share his glories and honors.

3 And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations:—Christ rejoiced that he could suffer to redeem man. He looked beyond the suffering to the redemption for man, and in

that tribulation worketh stedfastness; 4 and stedfastness, approvedness; and

that rejoiced. True faith in Christ imparts the same spirit to man. As we partake of this spirit, we rejoice that we can endure affliction, suffering, persecution, and self-denial to honor God and help man. When the apostles had been imprisoned and then beaten, they “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.” (Acts 5: 18, 40, 41.) In Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten unmercifully, thrust into prison, their feet fastened in stocks; but at midnight, notwithstanding their bodily tortures, they prayed and sang praises to God. (Acts 16: 25.) This was the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. The promise is made to the Christians: “For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him.” (2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.) Christ bestows a partnership in his sufferings as the guarantee of partnership in his joys and honors. Therefore, we can rejoice in suffering with and for him. The tribulations we endure exercise and develop steadfastness within us.

knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness;—[Steadfastness is that iron trait of character which enables us to bear with patience all the ills of life. Afflictions, if rightly used, and this is here assumed, have the effect to form this trait. They fortify the temper and will against the day of need, and so secure us against a diminution of peace and joy. When we remember how constantly these afflictions recur, the necessity for steadfastness becomes apparent. No character can truly be formed without the opportunity of endurance; we must learn to withstand. It is by suffering that we learn how to suffer.]

4 and stedfastness, approvedness;—[“Approvedness,” as applied to the Christian life, denotes that it has been put to the test by affliction, has successfully endured the ordeal, and now stands purified and approved of God.] Or, as James says: “Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1: 3.) And patience in its perfect work will complete the character and fit it for association with God.

approvedness, hope: 5 and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been ¹⁰shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us. 6 For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died

¹⁰Gr. *poured out*.

and approvedness, hope:—Approvedness causes us to trust God, and to trust his promises causes us to hope for the blessings embraced in the promises. Hope of future good gives strength to bear present ills.

5 and hope putteth not to shame;—Buoyed by bright hopes of future good enables us to bear with fortitude present sufferings. Hope reaches forward, pierces the veil of the future, takes hold of the blessings reserved in heaven, and serves as an anchor to hold the soul firm and steadfast in union with God. This hope enables us to bear shame, to despise sufferings, and to be bold for God and his truth.

because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.—God gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles in the beginning to impart to them his mind. Paul says: “But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. 2: 12.) The same principle pertains to the Holy Spirit as received by all God’s children. In imparting to us the knowledge of God, he also imparts the same mind, the same feelings and disposition that God possesses and cherishes. It does not say that the Holy Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts a love for God; but the Spirit, coming from God into our hearts, imparts the same kind of love to our hearts that dwells in the heart of God. He causes us to love just as God loves—to love the same objects that God loves, and to love them in the same way that God loves them. The Holy Spirit in our heart sheds abroad the same mind, temper, and disposition that dwells in the heart of God.

6 For while we were yet weak,—While we were yet sinners, weak, and destitute of resources to save ourselves, either by atonement for the past or by future obedience.

for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. 8 But God

in due season—There was a due season for Christ to come. There was a long providential preparation, a remarkable concurrence of many conditions, before the “fullness of time” for God to send forth his Son had come. A select nation must be prepared by centuries of discipline. Time must be allowed for the human race to grow into the historic age so that the proofs of the facts connected with the advent of the Son of God could be adequately established. A language more copious and precise than any earlier one must be developed; a world government, wider and stronger than the world had before seen, must be consolidated, to favor unwittingly, even while it wickedly opposed, the dissemination of the gospel. And then, when this wonderful preparation was completed, in due season Christ died. Christ is, therefore, the turning point and center of history, the end of the old and the beginning of the new humanity.

Christ died for the ungodly.—The character and strength of the love God had for man is shown in his giving Christ to die for the ungodly. The same love shed abroad in our hearts will cause us to love and suffer to save lost and helpless men as Jesus did.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:—A righteous man is one who only does what justice or rule of right requires at his hand. A man may be righteous in this sense and only selfishly just. For one who only does to others what justice demands, one would scarcely risk his life or die, for justice excites no gratitude.

for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die.—A good man will not only do what justice or right demands, but will go beyond this and do what love, mercy, and kindness suggest. For such a character as this someone might be found who, moved by love and gratitude, would dare to die. This is the highest manifestation of love the best of men would make. [Thus while the possibility implied in the former clause is more distinctly conceded, it is at

commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified ¹¹by his blood,

¹¹Gr. *in*.

the same time limited to rare examples of love inspired by the most attractive form of virtue which alone calls forth such love; the stronger is the contrast to the ungodliness and enmity of those for whom Christ died, and it is precisely this contrast which sets God's love above all human love.]

8 But God commendeth his own love towards us,—God goes far beyond all that man would do or conceive and commends his love to us as deeper, stronger, and purer than human hearts can know.

in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Jesus Christ died on the cross for man while man was returning evil for good. This showed a love that is so infinitely superior to all human love that they are placed in contrast. We must cultivate the same spirit or feeling that will cause us to help those in need—to support, to lift those who are enemies of God and of us. We are, like God, to bless our enemies, to do good to them that revile and persecute us, and pray for them that despitefully use and abuse us. The same thought is expressed in the following words: “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashioned as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2: 5-11.) Christ had the mind to humiliate himself, to take the human body and its infirmities, that he might lift man up to save his spiritual and immortal state and to partake

shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. 10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much

of his glory. This was the mind that was in Christ Jesus, this was the kind of love that God possessed. The Holy Spirit came to shed the same love, the same spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice in the heart of man. This is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The man who has the Spirit of God in his heart will find pleasure and joy in sacrificing all temporal favors and fleshly blessings to benefit and save man as God through Christ did.

9 **Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him.**—If, while we were enemies and rebels against God, Jesus Christ died for us, much more now, being reconciled to God, justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from the wrath to come. God is more willing to save those who have accepted the redemption offered through Christ than he was to save while they were yet enemies. When Christ died, he invested, as it were, his lifeblood in those who accept him. The redeemed by this becomes so much the dearer to God. And we shall be saved by living the life Jesus lived. We are able to live this life by the Spirit he has given us.

10 **For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God**—Man must be reconciled to God, not God to man. Man must be conformed to the life of God, not God to man and his sins. If God's love shown in the death of Christ was such as to overcome us when we were at enmity with him, how much more ready, now being reconciled, we should be to be saved by his life! We are reconciled to God by bringing our character into harmony with his character and will. This is reconciliation.

through the death of his Son,—It is offered through the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ at once enabled God to be just while justifying him that believes in Christ, and enabled God to make the terms easy; and the death of Christ showed to man his own lost condition—"because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor. 5: 14)

more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; 11 and not only so, ¹²but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

¹²Gr. *but also glorying.* Comp. ver. 2.

—and pointed him to the love and mercy of God and his great anxiety to save all who would come to him through Christ.

much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life;—We are saved by entering into Christ and living his life, reproducing the life of Christ in our lives. The salvation promised to man is a salvation from sin. When saved from sin, we are united to God and inherit his glories. No blessing or favor is provided out of Christ. All blessings are in and through him. Into him we must enter, and in him live his life, if we would be blessed.

11 and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,—Not only are we thus saved by his life, but through the privileges we have in Christ Jesus are enabled to rejoice in God [as our Father, who, having forgiven all our sins, has filled us with the hope of eternal life.]

through whom we have now received the reconciliation.—God offered salvation through the blood of Christ, and the offer must be accepted by complying with the prescribed conditions before the reconciliation is completed. [Hence, to receive the reconciliation is to receive Christ's death as a sacrifice for sins. To accept this great fact is to receive the reconciliation, the practical effect of which is to become reconciled. So soon as we accept the fact and become obedient from the heart to that form of teaching delivered unto us, we are made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness. The Holy Spirit is now given. Nothing now remains but to perfect holiness in the fear of God, or to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.]

JUSTIFICATION

By works of the law	versus	By faith in Christ
is		is
Meritorious	versus	Gratuitous
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Rom. 3: 24)
As of the sinless	versus	As of the sinful
(Rom. 3: 10)		(Rom. 4: 5)

HENCE IS

1. Without pardon	versus	1. Through pardon
(Rom. 3: 30)		(Rom. 4: 6-8)
2. Without grace	versus	2. By grace
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Rom. 3: 24)
3. Without Christ	versus	3. Through Christ
(Gal. 2: 21)		(Rom. 3: 24)
4. Without faith	versus	4. By faith
(Rom. 4: 14)		(Rom. 3: 28)
5. Without obedience	versus	5. Through the obedi-
of faith		ence of faith
(Rom. 4: 14)		(Rom. 4: 12)

RESULTING IN

1. Occasion of boasting	versus	Exclusion of boasting
(Rom. 4: 2)		(Rom. 3: 27)
and		and
2. Reward as a debt	versus	Reward as a gift
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Eph. 2: 8)

IV. GOD'S POWER FOR SALVATION AS MANIFESTED IN THE COMPLETE DELIVERANCE THROUGH CHRIST FROM SIN AND DEATH, CULMINATING IN ULTIMATE GLORIFICATION

5: 12 to 8: 39

1. THE PROVISION FOR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST CO-EXTENSIVE IN APPLICATION WITH THE RUIN WROUGHT THROUGH ADAM

5: 12-21

12 Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—13 for

12 **Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world,**—This “one man” was Adam. [He was the first to violate God’s law, and this violation was the first sin. “And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, . . . Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.” (Gen. 2: 16, 17.) This was God’s law in the case. Transgression was the act in which sin had its origin in the world. To this three parties stood, each peculiarly related. God was the author of the law, Adam broke it, Satan tempted to the act, and in the act sin began.]

and death through sin;—Death entered into the world through sin—by one sin. [Had Adam never committed another sin, still the death of the whole human family would have followed.]

and so death passed unto all men,—And death extended to all men. [God had directed beforehand that if Adam sinned, both he and his posterity should die. All were thus bound up in the same decree to the same doom. Accordingly, when Adam sinned, the decree took effect, and all died.]

for that all sinned:—[The sin which induced the sin of all was Adam’s sin. This, then, must have been the sin that all committed. But there is only one admissible sense in which all could have committed that sin—to wit, representatively. Adam, in committing the first sin, stood for and represented the whole of his posterity. If this be not the sense in which all sinned, then that sense is not discernible. Nor should this

until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no

solution be rejected on the ground of being strange. It is by all admitted that death is the result of the one sin of Adam. There is no more difficulty in understanding how we could all commit that sin than in seeing how we could be justly required to die for it. Indeed, it is much easier to understand how, by representation, we could and did commit it, than to see how, without representation or participation in some sense, we all can be subject to death for it. When it is said, "For as in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15: 22), it certainly means that all die in consequence of the sin which he committed, or die by his act. Now, if death resulted from sin on the sole ground of implication in it, then implication by representation must be admitted. We are certainly not on the ground of actual personal sin. Representation, then, is the only alternative. In Heb. 7: 9, 10 we have a parallel case. It is there said that Levi before he was born and while "he was yet in the loins of his father," "paid tithes" to Melchizedek. Now, if Levi, while in the loins of Abraham, could and did pay tithes, with equal certainty could the whole posterity of Adam, while still in him, sin. And what they could thus do they did, and from the deed came death. But here a distinction should be made. Sin by representation does not imply guilt, as actual personal sin does. It may both justify and demand the appointment of a penalty, as in the case in hand, but no more. Hence, no one of his posterity will ever, after death, be held responsible for Adam's sin. As to them, his sin will never, after death, be brought into account. In their case, therefore, death is not the consequence of personal guilt, but connection with a guilty ancestor. Accordingly, though we die for Adam's sin, no one of us ever will be judged for it. For our own sins only will we be judged. These alone involve personal responsibility, and, hence, imply guilt. For them alone we shall have to account.]

13 for until the law sin was in the world;—Throughout the period from Adam to Moses there was no law given, and God seems to have dealt with man as he has during no other pe-

law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a

riod. He treated him as a father treats his children, incapable of understanding the force of a general law or rule. But when he found one here and one there disposed to honor him, he gave him personal attention and schooled him to respect the authority of Jehovah. The family of Abraham was thus tutored and schooled for successive generations until they were capable of appreciating its force and effects. Then through Moses law was given to this family and advanced in the school of divine teaching.

but sin is not imputed when there is no law.—Sin is not counted for death when there is no law making death the penalty for breaking it.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses,—Adam's transgression was setting aside a positive law. From Adam to Moses, even those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Adam's transgression was setting aside a positive law. From Adam to Moses there was no code of laws, so they did not sin as Adam did. Yet they were wicked beyond measure; so God destroyed them. The sin of transgressing law was not imputed, but the sin and wickedness prevented God giving law, and they perished without law. (See Gen. 6: 11-13.)

even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression,—There are several respects in which the sins of Adam's posterity are not like his transgression: He sinned the first time tempted, with surroundings most favorable, with specific warning of God that he should die if he sinned. He breathed the atmosphere of innocence and purity, in every breath of which the Spirit of God floated, and which was impregnated with the aroma of divine goodness and heavenly love. By virtue of his transgression the dominion of the world passed under the evil one. The world was sin-defiled. The spirit of the evil one was infused into the whole atmosphere of earth, and poisoned it with the virus of sin and death. No individual down through the ages could sin under

figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did

similar circumstances. Not one has been at liberty to choose life or death, as Adam had the privilege of doing. All must suffer death. We have no choice as to this.

who is a figure of him that was to come.—Adam, through whom sin and death came, is a figure of Jesus Christ. [The resemblance between Adam and Christ was their acts and the consequences of their acts. The one act of Adam affected the whole human family; that of Christ did likewise. That of Adam brought death to all men; the obedience of Christ brings all out of the grave alive (John 5: 28, 29; Acts 24: 15; 1 Cor. 15: 22)—that is, whatever evils Adam's sin brought upon the world without our agency are all counteracted and remedied by the one act of Christ without our agency.]

15 But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift.—[The comparison between Adam and Christ is at the same time a contrast. They are alike in that they both stand at the head of the human race, and so extend the influence of their acts to all, unlike in the nature of those acts and the consequences that flow from them.] In the one case, sin came through the one to the death of many; in the other, the favor of God, which came by Jesus Christ, abounds unto many.

For if by the trespass of the one the many died,—[The "one" here is Adam, and the "trespass" was his first trespass. That all died physically when Adam sinned is conceded—not died actually and physically at the very moment, for then would the race have been exterminated; but sentence was then pronounced, provision was then completed, and only a brief respite stayed the end. So sure were all to die that the event is spoken of as if it had already taken place. It is certain that Adam, so soon as he sinned, was both bodily and spiritually cut off from vital union with God, and that had it not been for the redemption which is in Christ (Rev. 13: 8; 1 Pet. 1: 19, 20), he would have then died and been forever lost. But what shall we say of his posterity? For it is conceded by all that in his sin he was standing for all. All his posterity

the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ,

have died or will die. But Adam's sin did not affect the spirit of his posterity. His sin cleaves to all up to the point where the body and spirit separate; beyond this point the spirit is free from its influence, as though the sin never had been committed. Therefore, all that appears necessary in their case is that the redemption of Christ should bring them out of the grave and restore them to life again. This it does, and, in the case of the saved, far more. It brings the saved out of the grave to a spiritual body and restores them to a far better life than even Adam's was, and far better circumstances. But the moment one commits a personal sin, his spirit becomes involved, and he stands where Adam stood when he first sinned. This sin, and this only, corrupts his soul; and for this sin, and this only, he will certainly be lost, unless, in this life, it be forgiven. Adam's sin has corrupted our bodies; our own sins corrupt our spirits. For them alone we can be lost. And here comes the provision for personal salvation through the blood of Christ. Through the merits of that blood God can be just while forgiving the sinner. We believe in Christ and obey him, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and we await in hope the glorious resurrection.]

much more did the grace of God,—Whether the sin be the sin of Adam or the many sins we have committed, the death of Jesus provides for them all, and much more. [The "much more" includes a better body than Adam ever had, a better life than he ever lived, a better world than he ever lived in—a world where Satan and sin and death can never come.]

and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.—By the sin of Adam all die and go to the grave. The grace and gift of God must bring them out of the grave and restore them to life, so that all that was lost in Adam may be regained in Christ; but this is not a matter of debt, but of grace. But here this important question arises: In what sense did the grace and gift of God abound much more than the effects of sin? Do they actually invest all with any more than the restoration of life? Certainly not. All

abound unto the many. 16 And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment *came* of one unto condemnation, but the free gift *came* of many trespasses unto ¹³justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abun-

¹³Gr. *an act of righteousness.* Rev. 15. 4; 19. 8.

they do beyond this consists in provisions for the salvation of all men from personal sins, but they do not bring salvation to any except those who obey the Lord. (Heb. 5: 9.) So far as the wicked are concerned, it is not known that a single benefit will be bestowed on them. They will be simply raised from the dead. (John 5: 29.) To the obedient in Christ the gift and grace abound unto immortality and eternal life.

[Here it is timely to add a few words about those who die in infancy. They die in Adam, and in Christ shall be made alive. What they lost unconditionally in Adam they gain unconditionally in Christ. In this respect the saved, infants, and the wicked are all treated alike. But as infants have no personal sins for which they must account, they are on an equality with those whose personal sins are forgiven. They will be raised from the dead in spiritual bodies and share the blessedness of the saved.]

16 And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation,—Through one that sinned death came, and condemnation to all. One death brought both physical decay and spiritual ruin, or, rather, both spiritual ruin and physical decay are results from one cause.

but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.—The free gift is for the justification of many offenses that the offender may live.

17 For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one;—[Here there is in view the whole period over which death had reigned from its entrance into the world.] Life and death were used originally in a sense different from their present use. Life meant freedom from corruption or suffering, both spiritual and material. Death was the opposite of life—subjection to corruption, to suffering, to decay. “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” was literally

dance of grace and ¹⁴of the gift of righteousness reign in the life through the one, *even Jesus Christ*. So then as through one trespass *the judgment came*

¹⁴Some ancient authorities omit *of the gift*.

fulfilled in the sense in which the word "die" was used. It is frequently used in the same sense in the Bible. Paul says: "I die daily." (1 Cor. 15: 31.) Our existence here is but a continued death—a continued suffering and decay. What we call "death" is but the end of continued death. In this sense the separation from God is death. The effect of the death upon man's material being is suffering, disease, decay, ending in the return of dust to dust; the effect of that death on the spiritual man is anguish, sorrow, fear, spiritual woe, ending in eternal sorrow unless redeemed from this destiny by Christ, the Savior. It is one death, but one bearing fruit in the material and spiritual world.

much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace—[This indicates the absolute certainly that those who accept the grace given through Christ shall enjoy his righteousness.]

and of the gift of righteousness—"The gift of righteousness" is the remission of sins. Viewed from the divine side, it is a gratuitous act; from the human side, it is the thing received, for which we make no return—it is a gift.

reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.—[This covers the whole mediation of Jesus Christ in reference to man. It is through his death that the believing penitent, on rendering obedience to the gospel, enters into the state of righteousness, and through the union with him which follows that his whole being is visualized and transfigured through time into eternity.]

18 So then—After saying in verse 12, "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned," Paul proceeds to state the case of the one man; also that of his sin, and how this brought universal death. The subject is profound and involves principles of justice and right to which it is difficult to reconcile the human mind, which he saw and appreciated, and felt called upon to introduce at once

unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness *the*

the counterpart to the difficult view he had just stated—to Adam, to his sin, and to death—in other words, to introduce the ample remedy which God had provided in Christ, not only for all the evils that had befallen the human race in Adam, but also for our own personal sins. These topics are discussed in verses 12-17, in a closely connected chain of thought, every link of which is important and stands in its proper place. These matters crowded themselves upon his mind until a proper disposition had been made of them. Here we have the second member of the comparison begun in verse 12, repeated in the changed terms demanded by the intervening statements, and then the words “even so” introduce what virtually completes the comparison there begun, the precise terms being changed to conform to the statement of the first member of the comparison in this verse.

as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation;—[That this is the judgment passed on Adam for his first sin cannot be questioned. It is the judgment that was provoked by “one trespass,” and the “one trespass” which brought death. Now, in the same words which God pronounced this judgment upon Adam, and for the same sin, he pronounced judgment upon his posterity. Adam’s posterity do not die because his sin was imputed to them, but because, being in him, in so far as they are human, they were acted for in his act. The doctrine of imputed sin, like that of imputed righteousness, has no sanction in reason or in revelation. No one has a right to impute to me another’s sin and deal with me for it as though it were mine. But it is according to the constitution of nature, and a thing which often occurs, that we are represented in and by others for good or evil, and why not in Adam? The condemnation on Adam was death. For one sin, God in condemning Adam condemned in him the whole of his posterity to death. It had no reference to any effect beyond the grave.]

even so through one act of righteousness—The one act of Christ’s dying on the cross.

free gift came unto all men to justification of life. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. 20 And ¹the law

¹Or, *law*

the free gift came unto all men to justification of life.—[The gift of justification is the counterpart of the judgment unto condemnation, and the meaning of the latter determines the former. The judgment to condemnation means, as we have already seen, a sentence in which Adam and his posterity were condemned to temporal death. Now, justification means release from that sentence, and no more. It has no reference whatever to the remission of personal sins; but it means release from a sentence, and no more. It is release from immediate death and, as such, amounts to a respite. In virtue of it Adam lived on after the sentence; and in virtue of it we all live the life we are now living. It signifies the universal resurrection of the dead. The phrase is “justification of life”—justification so far as to be permitted to live and so far as to be restored to life after death.]

19 For as through the one man's disobedience—The “one man” was Adam, and the “disobedience” was the first sin.

the many were made sinners,—Adam's disobedience did not make them sinners, for the same one who made them sinners made them righteous. This certainly excludes Adam. [We should note carefully that the many were not sinners within themselves or by any act they performed. They were made sinners. If one is a sinner by his own act, he is so independently of anyone making him such. God did not make the many sinners because of, or through, any act of their own. He made them sinners through the disobedience of Adam. Before Adam's transgression they were not made sinners; after it they were. It is not said of Adam that he was made a sinner. He was actually one, and could not be made one. But up to the moment of being made sinners his posterity were not sinners as he was. They had committed no sin, except as through his sinning for them; and for that reason God made them sinners.]

came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: 21, that as sin reigned in death, even so

even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.—[The reference in “obedience” is to the death of “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” (1 Tim. 2: 6.) “He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2: 8.) “The many” includes the whole posterity of Adam. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15: 22.) The whole human family will be raised from the dead. Through the death of Christ the whole human family are to be constituted righteous to the extent, and for the sole purpose, of being raised from the dead. They are made righteous to this end. By the sin of Adam the many were made sinners so far as to be subjected to death; by the obedience of Christ the many were made righteous so far as to be raised from the dead. The object is to show that just so far as the whole posterity of Adam have been made sinners through Adam’s transgression, so far as they all made righteous through the death of Christ; and since Adam’s disobedience brings death, so Christ’s obedience brings the resurrection—and all this without any reference whatever to personal merits or demerits of those affected. In other words, what was unconditionally lost in Adam is unconditionally gained in Christ.]

20 And the law came in besides,—[Besides sin and death, the law also entered in. Three things entered into the world—sin, death, and the law.] The law of Moses, or the law of works, was added because of transgression. “So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.” (Gal. 3: 24, 25.)

that the trespass might abound;—The rebellious spirit was in man; the law came to call it out and make it manifest itself.

but where sin abounded,—Sin was the breaking out of the disease within. When it broke out into sin, men could realize that it was sin, and there was a need of a cure.

might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

grace did abound more exceedingly:—When sin showed itself, grace through our Lord Jesus Christ abounded to take it away; or when it abounded, then the provisions for justification in Jesus Christ did more abound to take it away.

21 that, as sin reigned in death,—[Sin is here personified and represented as reigning like a king. The reign is mighty, and the results are fearful. Previous to Paul's day it was reigning, it was reigning then, it is reigning now, and will continue till death is swallowed up of life. Death is here represented as a ubiquitous tyrant, whose sway embraces all.]

even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Grace is here personified as a benignant king who reigns through leading men into the righteousness of God and unto eternal life through Jesus Christ.

2. THE REIGN OF GRACE AFFORDS NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO SIN

6: 1-14

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live

1 What shall we say then?—What inference are we to draw from the doctrine of sin and grace set forth in the preceding chapter?

Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?—[The doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law was commonly misrepresented as encouragement to do evil that good might come; and, aside from such calumny, there was some real danger that the doctrine might be abused. (Gal. 5: 13.) Paul here meets and exposes the wickedness of such perversion. There are people in this country who say, and who are encouraged by their teachers in saying: "If I believe I can no longer sin, sin is not in me, since Christ died for me and I believe in him."]

2 God forbid.—By no means.

therein? 3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ

We who died to sin,—A death in sin is to be given over to sin and to be dead to God by serving sin. A death to sin is to turn from sin to the service of God. “We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6: 2.) This shows that to die to sin is to cease to live in sin. “And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sin, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world.” (Eph. 2: 1, 2.) Before they were quickened to life, while they were yet in the course of the world, they were dead in sins.

how shall we any longer live therein?—A man dies to the love and practice of sin through faith in Christ the Lord and repentance toward God. He is buried to sin and puts off the body of sin in baptism. “In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands in the putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through the faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Col. 2: 11, 12.) Here is a dead body of sin, or a body dead to sin in love and practice, and that body of sins of the flesh is put off in baptism. The person is dead to sin, is dead and buried and raised out of and free from sin.

3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus—[All whom Paul addresses were distinctly and perfectly conscious of having been baptized. It was not possible for them to doubt it. To be “baptized into” is a transition into some one or into some thing. The words would be entirely devoid of meaning if deprived of this conception. Accordingly, to be “baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12: 13) is to pass from without it into it, and, becoming thereby inserted into it, to form a constituent member with its members. To be “baptized unto Moses” (1 Cor. 10: 2) is to pass from without the circle of his authority into it, and coming thereby under his undisputed control over their movements. To be “baptized unto repentance” (Matt. 3: 11) is to pass by means of baptism from a life of impenitence into the state of him

who had ceased from sin. In like manner, to be "baptized into Christ" is to pass from the world, where he is not believed and obeyed, into a state of freedom from sin and a complete subjection to his will.]

Faith, repentance, and baptism are all connected with entrance into Christ by the same word ("eis"). It shows that all these acts are joined together, stand on the same side of remission of sins, entrance into Christ, and stand similarly related to these. Faith leads to repentance and to baptism. Repentance and baptism are fruits—the outgrowth, the embodiment—of faith. Faith, ruling the heart, produces repentance; controlling the body, it leads to baptism. Repentance and baptism are successive steps of faith, are parts of faith, and, hence, must stand related to remission of sins, to entrance into Christ, and to salvation as faith is. The relation of these acts to each other and the connection of each of them to the remission of sins, entrance into Christ, and salvation by the same word, settle beyond dispute that they are for the same end or thing. Man must believe in Christ, but his believing carries him through repentance and baptism before he is in Christ. Faith that stops short of repentance and baptism does not carry the believer into Christ.

There are commands of God that seem to be arbitrary. We call them positive laws. The fitness of them to the end proposed we fail to see. We fail to discern that there is in the requirement to mold the life and the character into the likeness of God. Take as an example baptism. We call it a positive ordinance. There is nothing in it, so far as human wisdom can see, that has a molding influence on character. This may be a mistake. It is true that it tests our willingness to conform to the will of God. And whatever tests, tries, proves our willingness to follow God greatly aids in conforming the will and strengthening the purpose to follow him. But the acts which we call positive are just such as give striking expression to the spirit we are required to possess is one of self-distrust, self-renunciation, a rejecting, putting off of self as the ruler and guide, and the taking upon ourselves the rule,

Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him

authority, and life of God revealed in Christ Jesus. What could more fully express this death to self and the new life in Christ that we are to live than the burial out of self as dead to self and the new life in Christ that we are to live as dead to self and the new life in God? A burial out of self and resurrection in Jesus Christ. A baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is positive law, a test of acceptance of the new life in Christ. But it is the expression of the spirit that must dwell in and rule us. Let us remember that in doing his will it is "God that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." And that law is but the expression of God's manner of working—that God is the supreme and ever-present factor in guiding all the affairs of the universe and that he leads, supports, and blesses us.

were baptized into his death?—We were baptized into his death to sin, became partakers of his death, and so died to sin as he did, and, as members of the body of Christ, we cannot live in sin. [The union with Christ, into which we enter by baptism, is thus more closely defined as union with his death. This is clearly stated in the following words: "The death that he died to sin once." (6: 10.) His death is here viewed as the final and complete deliverance from a life, in which, for our sakes, he had been subject to conditions imposed by our sins, and this sense exactly corresponds with the thought which led to the mention of Christ's death. By being "baptized into Christ" we become, as it were, one with him; so whatever he did, we do. Consequently, when he died, we died with him. We are, then, dead to our former state.] Burial always signifies existing death, as only the dead are literally buried. When people yield themselves to obey the gospel of Christ, they die to sin—cease to love and practice sin, and, hence are dead to sin when buried with Christ in baptism. Christ died for our sins and when dead was buried in the grave. So we are buried in baptism just as Christ was buried in the grave. Thus in figure we are buried with Christ into a fixed state of death to sin and at the same time into a state of

through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead

life in relation to Christ. So the death spoken of is death to sin, a state of relationship in which we are dead to our former lives of sin, as Christ was forever dead to his former life of suffering from the moment he died on the cross. As Christ arose to a new life, never more to die, so Christians, when raised from a watery grave, should shun lives of sin. Hence, he says: "Even so reckon ye your selves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." (Verse 11.) And while Christians are to continue in a state of death to sin, they must also continue in a state of life to Christ.

4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death:—[No doubt the expression, "were buried," was suggested by the momentary burial in water of the person baptized. It declares our union with Christ in death and our entire separation from our former life in which sin reigned.] All the facts and circumstances connected with baptism and all the figures used to illustrate it point unmistakably to the idea of the immersion, the overwhelming, and the burial of the person baptized. On this verse Dr. Philip Schaff says: "All commentators of note (except Stuart and Hodge) expressly admit or take it for granted that in this verse the ancient prevailing mode of baptism by immersion and emersion is implied, as giving additional force to the idea of the going down of the old and the rising of the new man." Albert Barnes: "It is altogether probable that the apostle in this place had allusion to the custom of baptizing by immersion." John Wesley: "'We were buried with him'—alluding to the manner of baptizing by immersion." Adam Clarke: "It is probable that the apostle here alludes to the mode of administering baptism by immersion, the whole body being put under the water, which seemed to say: the man is drowned, is dead; and when he came up out of the water, he seemed to have a resurrection to life; the man is risen again; he is alive." Conybeare and Howson: "This passage cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion."

through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become ²united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall

²Or, *united with the likeness . . . with the likeness*

William Sanday: "Baptism has a double function. (1) It brings the Christian into personal contact with Christ, so close that it may be fitly described as union with him. (2) It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ. Immersion = Death. Submersion = Burial (the ratification of Death). Emergence = Resurrection. All these the Christian has to undergo in a moral and spiritual sense, and by means of his union with Christ. As Christ by his death on the cross ceased from all contact with sin, so the Christian, united with Christ in his baptism, has done once for all with sin and lives henceforth a reformed life dedicated to God." (Similar testimonies and admissions might easily be greatly multiplied, but there is no need; these among the more recent will suffice.)

that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,—As Christ was raised from the dead through the glorious strength of God to a new life, we were raised to walk no more in the sins that have been put off in baptism, but were raised [from the watery burial with death between us and the old life of sin] to walk in the new life in Christ. He is still showing why we cannot sin that grace may abound.

so we also might walk in newness of life.—[Newness of the element of life, of the living, animating principle; not the life that is lived day by day, but the life that liveth in us. (Gal. 3: 20; Col. 3: 3, 4.) We ought to exhibit the conduct proper to that life into which we were born through faith at our baptism. The conduct of life is here expressed by the figure of walking, as in the similar passage in Gal. 5: 25. Compare also "walk in love" (Eph. 5: 2) and "walk in wisdom" (Col. 4: 5). The life in Christ is now, and this quality is made permanent by the substantial form, "newness of life."]

5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection;—For if we have become members of the body of Christ by

be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection; 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; 7 for he that hath died is ³justified

³Or, *released*. Comp. Ecclus. 26. 29 (Gr.); ch. 7. 1.

conformity to his death, by following him in the likeness of his burial in baptism, we should also by our resurrection from our burial in baptism live in the likeness of his resurrection, free from sin. [If we have become vitally united to Christ in the likeness of his death, as our baptism imports, we are one with him by a life like his after his resurrection. After he was raised, he no longer lived the life he lived before his death. So with us. When raised in baptism, we are not to live the life we lived before; we are to live a new life, and, hence, cannot continue to sin.]

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him,—The old man that followed sin was crucified through faith in Jesus and repentance toward God, with a burial to sin. The old man is our former self—the self that sinned before we died to sin. In contrasting his former with his present state, Paul says: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2: 20.) He feels like another being, and has undergone a change as complete as that of death. His former self has passed away; he lives as a new man in Christ and Christ in him. The old man is thus seen to be our former self in the old corrupt and sinful condition.]

that the body of sin might be done away,—[The body of sin is to be rendered as thoroughly inert, motionless, and dead in relation to sin as it is by actual crucifixion in relation to an earthly master. This is done by keeping the body under and stubbornly resisting temptation, by the Spirit within helping our infirmities, and by the help of God, who is present in every time of need.]

that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;—That by this means we should no longer be in bondage to serve sin.

7 for he that hath died is justified from sin.—As the slave when dead is set free from his master, so he that has died with Christ is freed from sin and can no longer live in sin.

from sin. 8 But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; 9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. 10 For ⁴the death that he died, he died unto sin ⁵once: but ⁴the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Even

⁴Or, *in that*

⁵Gr. *once for all*. Heb. 7. 27.

8 But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him;—Now, if we died with Christ to sin, we believe that we shall live with him the life he lives, not a life of service to sin.

9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more;—Our hope that we shall live with Christ rests on our knowledge of the fact that he is alive forevermore. We could have no assurance that we shall live with him unless we knew that he can never die again. Therefore, Paul repeats the same important truth still more emphatically.

death no more hath dominion over him.—[Others who had been raised from the dead returned to that common life of men in which death still had dominion over them, but with Christ it was not so.] Being raised from the dead, dieth no more, he is free forever from the dominion of death.

10 For the death that he died, he died unto sin once:—He died a death to sin, so that he no longer felt the impulse to sin. [Christ was subjected for our sake to the power of sin, in so far as he endured all the evils that sin could inflict on one “who did no sin.” (1 Pet. 2: 22.) This tyranny of sin—not his own, but ours—was permitted, through the counsel of God and Christ’s willing obedience, to compass his death. “He humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2: 8.) But there sin’s power over him ceased, because the purpose for which it was permitted was accomplished. The sin of man now, that it cost his life, can have no more power over him. He died once “unto sin”—that is, his previous relation to sin came utterly to an end. He was withdrawn forever from the power of sin, and, therefore, from the power of death. There are thus three points to be observed in Christ’s relation to sin: (1) His life, as a conflict with sin and a triumph over it, making him as man personally exempt from death; (2) his voluntary surrender, for

so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the

the sin of the world, of a life not forfeited by sins of his own; and (3) the effect of his voluntary submission to the chastisement of our sins—viz., his final separation from sin and death. (See Heb. 7: 27; 9: 25-28.)]

but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God.—But Christ now lives, and the life he lives is in absolute harmony and union with God. [To live “unto God” is to live solely to manifest and serve him, without being any more subject to the usurped tyranny of sin and death—he “dieth no more.” The glorified Savior lives and acts to manifest in the heart of man the life of God, which is his life—life eternal; and when we remember that he died that we may share his separation from sin, we cannot doubt that he died that we may also share his life of devotion to God.]

11 Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin,—Since the believer entered into Christ by being baptized into him and died with him to sin, he is now to consider himself dead unto the dominion of sin forever.

but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.—The death of Christ was to deliver all who believe in him from sin and the effects of sin. Therefore, the believer’s new life belongs wholly to God, and must, like Christ, whose life he shares, be devoted entirely to his service. These verses are to show how man cannot continue in sin that grace may abound, after he believes in Christ.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,—Since they had been brought into Christ to free and keep them from sin, they were not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies—to have dominion over them. [Sin is personified as a tyrant whose sphere of influence is the human body. This tyrant reigns in or rules over the body, but only as the desires of the body have control of it and lead it into sin.]

that ye should obey the lusts thereof:—We are not to allow these desires to become so excited as to impel us to obey them.

lusts thereof: 13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as 'instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.

*Or, *weapons*. Comp. 2 Cor. 10. 4.

13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness;—To present our members unto sin is to tender them to be used in its service of unrighteousness. [Sin fights for the mastery; it calls an army of lusts, and seeks to use every faculty and power of the human body to reestablish its rule of unrighteousness.]

but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead,—The word "dead" here includes all the dead. The Roman Christians had been among the dead and had come out from them. They had been baptized into Christ, and in the act had been buried with him. This took them down among the dead. In being raised in baptism they had been raised with Christ. "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised from the dead." (Col. 2: 12.) Hence, having come out from the dead, though still dead to sin, they were alive; and now, as being alive, they were to present themselves to God. According to this, we are not to present ourselves to God till risen with Christ alive from the dead. At this point the service of God begins; here the life devoted to him sets in.

and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.—Present the different members of your body as instruments to be used under the direction of God for doing righteousness. Nothing is to be reserved.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you:—For if you are servants of God, sin shall not have dominion over you to rule you or use your members in the service of sin. [Sin will tempt and harass and ensnare; it will be a powerful, dangerous, and too often victorious enemy; but it shall have no authority over you; it shall not be your lord and master, disposing of you at will, and, as it were, of right.]

for ye are not under law, but under grace.—The law did not touch the heart, but under penalties prohibited wrong and ex-

cited the rebellious spirit. You are not under this law of works, but under the grace that touches the heart, excites love, and leads to obedience to the law of faith without exciting the rebellious spirit—a faith that works through love.

3. BELIEVERS, THOUGH NOT UNDER A LEGAL DISPENSATION, ARE, NEVERTHELESS, UNDER THE OBLIGATION OF OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE LAW

6: 15-23

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as ⁷servants unto obedience, his ⁷servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin

⁷Gr. *bondservants*.

15 **What then?**—He has just concluded his argument, in which he shows that a man who has died with Christ cannot live in sin. He now returns to the question in verse 1 put in different form:

shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid.—This would defeat the rule of grace to deliver from sin and the consequences of sin, death, and ruin. [Because we are not under the law some have concluded that they are without restraint, but nothing could be farther from the truth; for although we are not under the law, we can sin, which clearly implies that we are under law in some sense. The truth is that we are under law while under grace, for to be under grace is to be under “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (8: 2), which is the gospel. Hence, to be under grace does not exclude law. It is to be without it in one sense, but to be under it in another. The full force of the question, therefore, is: May we sin because we are not under the law, which condemns sin and makes no provision for pardoning it; but under grace, which, though we sin, provides for remitting it?]

16 **Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey;**—Sin is obedience to the evil one. If, then, we lend our members to sin, we obey the evil one and become his servants, and the end

unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, ^athat, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to

^aOr, *that ye were . . . but ye became*

is death. (See 6: 23.) [This states the universal law that a man becomes the subject of what he does. If he yields to sin, that sin gets a grip upon him; if he lies once, not only is he likely to lie again, but that lie has him in its power. It has soiled his conscience and dimmed the light in his heart. This is also the teaching in Matt. 6: 24; John 8: 34; 2 Pet. 2: 19.)]

whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?—Without doubt, obedience is the steppingstone to righteousness; disobedience, to unrighteousness. To obey Jesus Christ, the Lord, is to be his servants. If we obey him, by the obedience to him we come to the state of righteousness into life. [The two words, “whether” and “or,” show that life has but two ways open, one or the other of which every man must choose; there is no middle course.]

17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin,—[As it is the apostle’s object to show that believers cannot live in sin, inasmuch as they have become the servants of another master, he applies the general truth stated in the preceding verses more directly to his immediate readers, and gives thanks to God that they, being emancipated from their former bondage, are now bound to a master whose service is perfect liberty.]

ye became obedient from the heart—The heart is the inner, spiritual man, embracing the will, the intellect, and the affections. The obedience from the heart requires that the mind, the will, and the affections should all enter into the service. The mind must be enlightened, the will guided, and the affections enlisted before the form of teaching can be obeyed. A peculiarity of the dispensation of Christ is that the service must be from the heart—that is, an outward performance without the desire of the heart to obey God is not acceptable. All service, then, must spring from the desire to obey God. It is the leading motive of all service. Honor and obedience to God from the heart are much the same. God said: “Them

that ^oform of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; 18 and being made free

^oOr, *pattern*

that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. 2: 30.) We become servants of righteousness and servants of God by obeying him. The desire to obey God, then, underlies all service, all ends, desires, motive; the desire to obey God underlies even the desire to enter into Christ. We wish to enter into Christ that we may obey him. Then the desire to obey God must be present in, and lead to, all service to God. Nothing we do is acceptable to God unless it is done that we may obey and know him. It is the leading motive that underlies all motives. Other motives may be absent without invalidating service, but no service is acceptable where this desire to obey God is absent. When we rightly understand God, the desire of salvation is the desire to obey him. Peter says: "Seeing ye have purified yours souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently." (1 Pet. 1: 22.) The one leading motive and desire that is essential to all service that we render to God is the desire to obey him as Lord of heaven and earth. We can desire to obey him only as we believe and trust him. Then obedience to the gospel means doing the things that bring us into Christ and commit and obligate us to do the whole will of God. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, and burial out of self puts us in Christ, and binds us to a life of service to him, and are the obedience of the gospel.

to that form of teaching—The teaching was that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and raised again for our justification. The form of teaching includes the dying to sin as well as the burial and resurrection to life. We die to sin and are quickened by faith; we are buried through baptism, and rise in Christ Jesus to walk in the newness of life imparted through faith, just as the principle of life is imparted by begettal, but it can enjoy no distinct and personal life until it is delivered into the new state suited to the development of life. Obedience to the form of teaching includes the quickening

from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. 20 For when ye were 'servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness.

through faith, the death to sin, the burial and resurrection through baptism into a new life in Christ. This binds to an obedience to all the laws and regulations of the Christian religion that fit us for enjoying the blessings of heaven.

whereunto ye were delivered;—[The imagery here used is taken from the custom of delivering slaves from one master to another. Sin is before Paul's mind as a master to whom the disciples had been slaves, and he conceives of them now as delivered from this master to the form of teaching to become henceforth obedient to it.]

18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.—And being made free from sin and the rule of sin, by the form of teaching into which they were cast, by being buried with Christ in baptism and raised again in newness of life, they had become the servants of righteousness. They were by their burial out of self into death with Christ, and their resurrection to walk in a newness of life, freed from sin and the rule of sin, and became obligated to the life of righteousness in Christ.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh:—He illustrated the truths he taught by examples familiar to man on account of the weakness of the flesh.

for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification.—Because as in the days past, before they believed, as they presented their members as servants to sin to work uncleanness and from one stage or degree of iniquity to another, in the same way they were to present their members as servants to righteousness to work out their sanctification.

20 For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness.—When they were unbelievers and serving sin, they felt no obligation to do righteousness. [To be free

21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift

as to righteousness is to be free in the sense only in which a servant, while bound to one master, is free from another.]

21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed?—[The fact that when they looked back over their past lives they felt ashamed of the sins in which they had formerly delighted shows the deep change that had taken place in their minds, and implies how sincere and thorough their repentance had been. Moreover, if they had derived no benefit from their past sins, but, on the contrary, felt ashamed of them, they could certainly have no reason for returning to them; and this is what Paul is seeking to guard them against. The issue he is making with them is that they are not to sin because under grace.]

for the end of those things is death.—The end of the fruit we bear out of Christ is death. But even in Christ, at least of those who have entered Christ, some bear evil fruit, some good. To bear evil fruit, or to fail to bear good fruit in Christ, is to be separated from Christ and the end of this is to be burned up.

22 But now being made free from sin and become servants of God,—But having now been freed from sin by being buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life, they were obligated to serve God. [To be freed from sin is to be forgiven. The bondage to sin is the most terrible bondage to which one can be subjected.]

ye have your fruit unto sanctification,—The sanctified are set apart to the service of God. All who have entered into Christ have obligated themselves to serve him. The growth unto sanctification is attained by a constant and persistent study of God's word and a daily effort to bring oneself into obedient fruit bearing.

and the end eternal life.—[Not only is this service the most elevated and blessed in its own nature, but its certain consum-

of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

mation is eternal life. They could not, then, because they were under grace, afford to abandon this and turn again to the service of sin. The act would be without reason; it would wreck their hope and entail on them eternal death.]

23 For the wages of sin is death;—All death comes as the result of sin. Death and suffering of the body come as the result of sin; but the death spoken of here means the spiritual and eternal death in the future. He who sins will receive the wages of sin—eternal death.

but the free gift of God is eternal life—The gift which God in his abundant mercy bestows is eternal life. It is the gift of God. None can give it, none can earn it; he gives it to those who accept it on the condition he prescribes. Those conditions are such as show, and still more cultivate, the trust in God that fits the character for eternal life—for a life with God in his home forever. To fit and prepare mortals for this home is the end of all the teachings and requirements that God has given man. He does not require of us service because he needs it, but because we need the schooling and training that service will give us.

in Christ Jesus our Lord.—[Christ Jesus and his gospel, then, instead of being the ministers of sin, as their opposers so confidently asserted, effectually secure what the law never could accomplish, in obedience, consisting in sanctification and resulting in eternal life.]

4. NEED OF OUR BEING UNDER GRACE AND NOT UNDER LAW 7: 1-6

1 Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know ¹⁰the law),

¹⁰Or, law

1 Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law),—[They knew the law, for it was constantly read and expounded in their hearing; and the practice of appealing to the Jewish Scripture made even Gentile believers familiar with them.] Having shown in the preceding chapter

that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? 2 For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband.

that the recipients of divine grace were forbidden to sin "that grace may abound," they were bound to serve God. He now shows that the law of Moses had been taken out of the way, and that they were no longer under it, having been committed to the service of Christ.

that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth?—There is a difficulty in this verse as translated by both the King James Version and the American Revised Version. They make it say that the man is in subjection to the law so long as the man lives. But the context shows that when the law ceases to be in force, the man is released from obligation to that law. Greenfield, in his "Notes on the Greek New Testament," translates it: "The law hath dominion over a man so long as it is in force, and no longer." There is nothing in the Greek that forbids this translation, and the sense requires it. The law has been taken out of the way by Jesus in his death on the cross. He had fulfilled the law, and it was in his person nailed to the cross.

2 For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth;—[She is united to him and is under his authority as the head of the household. To him is particularly committed the headship of the family, and she is subject to his authority.] The Jews and their obligations to the law are compared to the woman married to a husband.

but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of her husband.—[If the husband dies, the wife is released; if the wife dies, the husband is released. Death is common to both parties. When the husband dies, the wife dies so far as the legal relation is concerned. The husband is represented as the party who dies, because the figure of a second marriage is to be introduced, with its application to believers. (Verse 4.) As the woman is not dead, but in respect to her relationship to marriage is situated as dead by the natural death of her husband, so believers have not died a natural death, but are made dead to the law, since they are crucified to the law with

3 So then if, while the husband liveth, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of

Christ.] So the Jews were bound to the law of Moses, under which they had lived, so long as the law had lived or was in force; but since the law was taken out of the way, they were released from their obligation to it and were free to become united to Christ.

3 So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress:—[To be joined to another man during the lifetime of her husband would make her an adulteress, which would subject her to the severest punishment of the law—stoning. (Lev. 21: 10; John 8: 5.)] So if, while the law of Moses was in force, the Jews served according to another law, they would be guilty of spiritual adultery.

but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man.—[The same law which renders the wife inseparable from the husband as long as he lives sets her free from this subjection as soon as he dies. The conjugal bond being broken by the husband's death, the wife dies also as a wife. She is dead (to the conjugal bond) in her dead husband.] If the law be dead, or taken out of the way, then they would not be guilty of spiritual adultery, though they served according to another law.

4 Wherefore, my brethren,—[“Wherefore” introduces a consequence of the general principle of law which has just been exemplified in verses 1-3.]

ye also were made dead to the law—This refers to the crucifixion of the “old man” with Christ (6: 6), for thereby the believer himself died to the law. “For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal. 2: 19, 20.)

through the body of Christ;—These strong words remind us of the violent death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Into that

Christ; that ye should be joined to another, *even* to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the ¹sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we have been

¹Gr. *passions of sins.*

death we are baptized. This participation in Christ's death had been fully established and its significance explained in chapter 6. Here, as there, the union in death becomes the source of union in the new life of the risen Christ. This is confirmed by the following: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15.)

that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead,—[This is the completion of the illustration in verses 2 and 3. As the woman is freed from the law of the husband by his death, and when married again comes under the authority of another, so we, when we are made free from the law and its curse by the death of Christ, are brought under a new law of fidelity and obedience to him with whom we are thus joined.]

that we might bring forth fruit unto God.—The fruit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) It is to God's honor and glory that we should be fruitful in "good works." (Tit. 3: 8.)

5 For when we were in the flesh,—Those who are controlled by corrupt propensities, evil inclinations, and desires of the flesh are said to be in the flesh. Hence, it refers to our condition before we became obedient to the gospel of Christ.

the sinful passions,—The gratification of sinful desires.

which were through the law,—This does not mean that the law produces the sinful passions, but that it reveals and manifests them. Paul says: "I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Verse 7.) "For through the

discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

law cometh the knowledge of sin." (3: 20.) Now, if Paul had to learn from the law what sin itself is, most certainly he had to learn from it what desires are sinful.

wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.—When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions in our members were so excited as to bring forth fruit unto death. How vain, then, to look to the law for life or help when it only threatens a curse and works only for and unto death! [Not only did these sinful desires work in our members when we were under the flesh, but to an extent they work in them still, for otherwise we should be without sin. The difference between our former state and the present is that these desires then ruled us; now we rule them. It is true that we do not now suffer the flesh to control us, but still we are in it; and so long as this is the case, we shall be more or less influenced by it.]

6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held;—[We were held in the law, as in the power of a master, and were so held till we died in the person of Christ when he died on the cross. By that death we were released from the law, and so passed under grace, where we now stand.]

so that we serve in newness of the spirit,—That we may in the new spiritual state, or in union with Christ, serve God. This service is the new service of those living new lives. It is a spiritual service. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." (John 4: 23.)

and not in oldness of the letter.—The "oldness of the letter" was after the flesh, complying with the letter, not in spirit. The obedience to the Jewish law did not necessarily require the service of the spirit, or from the heart. Under Christ all service must be from the heart. The weakness of the law was that it condemned sin, but did not enlist and purify the heart.

5. THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO SIN

7: 7-12

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through ²the law: for I had not known ³coveting, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not ⁴covet: 8 but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of ³coveting: for apart

²Or, *law*³Or, *lust*⁴Ex. xx. 17; Dt. v. 21.

7 **What shall we say then?**—Inasmuch as he had said that the law excited sin by its prohibitions, without manifestations of mercy and love to conquer them, what judgment shall we pass, or what objection make?

Is the law sin?—Is the law the cause of sin?

God forbid.—No, assuredly. To unveil sin is really, in some respects, the opposite of producing it.

Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law:—The law commanded holiness, yet he would not have known sin as sin except by the law which forbade it. [Had God kept silent in regard to sin and never communicated unto man upon it in the form of law defining what things are sins, the conception of sin would never have been in the human mind.]

for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet:—Although there was coveting in the heart, he would not have known it as sin if the law had not said, "Thou shalt not covet." [Paul and all the Pharisees knew and were ever ready to admit that certain outward actions were wrong; but that God took cognizance of the heart and of its most secret workings, and even of its habits of dispositions, they were less disposed to imagine, and were, therefore, deplorably ignorant of the extent and turpitude of their sinful condition in his sight.]

8 **but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting:**—The moment the command came to him, sin took the command as an occasion to stir up within him all manner of coveting. He longed for them now that they were forbidden. [The law, then, is not sin; nor does it cause those evil desires which induce it, but sin itself causes them. This is shown in the following verses,

from the law sin is dead. 9 And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; 10 and the command-

where similar expressions are used: "For sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." (Verse 11.) "But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good." (Verse 13.) These passages teach that the effects of sin working through the law arouse evil passions and lead to the desire of the very things which the law forbids.] That is, when the heart was not purified from the love of sin, the effort to control it by penalties excited the more rebellious spirit.

for apart from the law sin is dead.—For without law to bring it out, sin lies dead—inert and passive. [It is dead as regards the conscience. Sin did not fill the conscience with remorse until the law revealed what was sin.]

9 And I was alive apart from the law once:—As the sinful feeling lay dormant apart from the law, he felt as if he were alive. He had no sense of sin or of its condemnation. [He was alive in all the freedom of an untroubled conscience. Possibly he refers to the undisturbed feeling of legal righteousness, as in the rich young ruler, who, when brought face to face with the commandment, could say: "All these things have I observed: what lack I yet?" (Matt. 19: 20.) This seems to have been the case with Paul, who says that he was, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." (Phil. 3: 6.) In this sense he had kept the law, as every pious Pharisee did.]

but when the commandment came, sin revived,—The lusts reigned and ruled in his members, but the sense of sin as connected with them and the consciousness of condemnation revived. [In this state—"apart from the law," the specific commandment already mentioned, "Thou shalt not covet" (verse 7)—he had not till this moment realized that it required a heart service as well as an outward service. Suddenly sin came to life, resuming the active power which properly belongs to it.]

ment, which *was* unto life, this I found *to be* unto death: 11 for sin, finding

and I died;—He felt he was dead in sin. [This evidently points to some definite period in his experience full of painful recollections. Just when or how Paul first began to feel the power of the law is not revealed, but in a man so strong and earnest as he was we may discern the intense, but unavailing, effort to satisfy by outward observance the demands of a holy and heart-searching law. When he became “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim. 1: 13), a misguided zeal for God must have goaded him into fury by the sting of an uneasy conscience and the terrors of the law. Some such desperate struggle certainly is suggested by the words of the Lord when he said to him on that ever-memorable day, as he was approaching Damascus, bent on the persecution of the saints: “It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.” (Acts 26: 14.) While the outward strife and inward fury were both raging with unabated fury, the sudden “light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about” (Acts 26: 13) him, and the accusing voice, flashed conviction upon his soul and subdued his strong, proud will. That was the decisive moment of the struggle upon which he now reflected, and came to realize that instead of serving God he was obnoxious to him, so that for “three days he was without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.” At length, Ananias, sent by the Lord, came to him with “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” and commanded him to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (Acts 22: 16.) Up to this time he was, in the Jewish sense, under the law, but really “apart from” it. It had not yet come to his heart and understanding. The activities of his soul were in full exercise without restraint. But when the heart-searching law broken in upon his apprehension, he not only saw that he had broken it, but the sin which he had not felt before arose in active rebellion against that law, and he died.]

10 and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death:—So the law that was given to promote life

occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me.
12 So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and

excited sin and brought a sense of guilt and condemnation to death.

11 for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me,—Sin, finding occasion through the commandment, beguiled me and excited me to violate the law. [Sin's deceit consists in presenting the object of desire as a good, though when obtained it at once proved to be an evil. In the case of Adam and Eve the commandment afforded the advantage. God said: "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Satan now had the advantage and, using it, he said to the woman: "Ye shall not surely die." This deceived her. It was the precept that was the occasion, and the lie did the deceiving. And so in the case of Paul. The sinner, by breaking the law, does not really obtain what he expects; the fancied pleasure or gain seems worse than worthless by reason of the loss and suffering it brings back upon him. In this sense a breaker of the law is always beguiled or deceived.]

and through it slew me.—Violating the law brought death. [The law, which was ordained to give life and had the promise of life attached to it (10: 5; Lev. 18: 5), he found to be to him, because of his sinfulness, only a means of death; for sin, finding in the law an opportunity to accomplish his ruin, deceived him into breaking the law, and, by thus bringing down upon him the curse of the violated law, slew him.]

12 So that—[The conclusion from the foregoing representation of the effect of the law is that it is not to be blamed for the evil which it incidentally produces.]

the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.—The law God gave Moses is the divine standard of holiness, righteousness, and goodness. [The law is that which *says*, and the commandment is *that which is said*. The law is the *abstract*, the commandment the *concrete*.]

6. TO BE UNDER GRACE AND NOT UNDER LAW IS ESSENTIAL
TO THE CONTINUED LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

7: 13-25

good. 13 Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;—that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal,

13 Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid.—By no means. [The commandment is that which is meant by “that which is good.” Paul had just said: “The commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death” (verse 10); and, “Sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me” (verse 11). Without doubt the question here asked is based on these two statements. The commandment was found to end in death, because those who broke it incurred its penalty. It was sin and not the law that beguiled and did the slaying. As the law was designed to prevent sin, it certainly did not incite it.]

But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;—Sin used the law which was good as the occasion for exciting in the heart the rebellious and sinful feelings that brought death.

that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.—The law gave the perfect standard of holiness. It demanded that man should live up to it without the heart being purified. Sin excited the heart more and more, aroused the spirit of rebelliousness, and made the heart more exceedingly sinful. Jesus Christ sought to bring man up to the same standard of holiness by first purifying the heart, casting out the love of sin, and instilling in the heart the love of holiness, and the service would be from the heart and not from fleshly fear. [As heinous as sin is within itself, its power for evil increases as the means through which it operates grow better; and thus it exhibits itself in all its hatefulness in perverting that which is good into evil.]

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.—Man was carnal and could not receive and

sold under sin. 15 For that which I ^{do} I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. 16 But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me, that is,

^{Gr. work.}

cherish in his carnal heart the abiding Spirit. The mind perceived the truth, but his heart, unchanged and dominated by the flesh, did not cherish or obey it, and while in that condition could not be freed from sin.

15 For that which I do I know not:—This is the picture of the struggle that goes on between the flesh and the spirit to rule the life of the man who is attempting under the Mosaic law to serve God without the purification of the heart. The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. They are contrary the one to the other.

for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do.—The things that he does his mind disapproves, and what he recognizes as hurtful, that he does. He explains this in these words: “But I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.” (Verse 23.) That is, the law which his mind approves is not able to overcome the law of sin ruling in his members. He says that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed him from the law of sin, and death dwelled in his members. For what the law of Moses could not do, in that it was weak through the law of sin dwelling in the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned, or enabled, man to overcome sin in the flesh. (See chapter 8: 2, 3.) He is here showing that the law of Moses could not overcome the law of sin in the flesh.

16 But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good.—If the mind approved what the flesh refused to do, he consented to the law that it was good.

17 So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.—So it was not his inner self that did the evil, but sin that dwelt in his members. And unless he was delivered from

in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is *not*. 19 For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. 20 But if what I would not,

the sin that controlled him, it would defile his spirit and drag him down to ruin.

18 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing:—The flesh seeks after its own gratification, and never after anything that demands the abasement, or crucifixion of the flesh. The inner man must be educated, trained, and brought under the elevating and purifying of the word of God to such an extent as to control and keep down all excessive demands of the flesh. God does not propose to take away or to destroy the desires and appetities of the flesh. He only proposes to so educate and train the man so as to mortify, crucify, and control the impulses of the flesh. This is the great work of the Christian's life: to keep down fleshly desires and impulses and to keep them in harmony with the word of the Lord.

for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.—His will was present to do good, but with the flesh in the mastery he found no way to accomplish it. [The "good" which he could not attain is the absolute good—the morally perfect, the perfection required by the law. Jesus so uses the term: "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good." (Matt. 19: 17.) "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God." (Mark 10: 18.) The law requires absolute good. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3: 10.) There is a relative goodness predicated of man, but no man is absolutely perfect; neither can he, in the flesh, attain this perfection.]

19 For the good which I would do I do not:—The flesh in control hindered his doing the good things in the law that his mind approved.

but the evil which I would not, that I practise.—The evil things that his mind condemned, the flesh led him to do.

that I do, it is no more I that ⁴do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. 21 I find then ⁶the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present. 22 For I delight ⁷in the law of God after the inward man: 23 but I see a different law

⁴Or, *in regard of the law.* Comp. ver. 12, 14.

⁷Gr. *with.*

20 But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it,—If he did the things that his mind desired not to do, it was not his inner self doing it.

but sin which dwelleth in me.—But if sin that dwelled in him ruled, it would defile his heart and carry him down to ruin.

21 I find then the law, that, to me who would do good,—There are two laws here—the law of sin and death, ruling in his members, and the law of Moses, striving to overcome this law of sin and death, but is not able to do so because of the flesh. Then in the next chapter the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees from this law of sin and death in his members that the law of Moses could not overcome. The apostle is showing that what the law of Moses could not do, God sent Jesus Christ and through him gave the law of the Spirit of life, which changed the heart, the affections of man, and so through Christ overcame the flesh.

evil is present.—This law of sin in the flesh was present, so that when he desired to do good it prevented him.

22 For I delight in the law of God—He not only approved the law, but he delighted in it, being “instructed out of” it. (2: 18.)

after the inward man:—[This delight was not in that which was outward in doing it, but in the “inward man”—in his “wish,” in his “consent,” in his “hate” of what the law condemns. He proved his delight in the law by his persistent effort to keep it notwithstanding his constant failure.] The “inward man” is the “mind” (verses 23, 25), the “spirit” of man (1 Cor. 2: 11), as contrasted with the “outward man”—the body, or flesh. This “hidden man of the heart” (1 Pet. 3: 4), without which man would not be man, is the spiritual, willing, reasoning being.

in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity ^aunder the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man

^aGr. *in*. Many ancient authorities read *to*.

23 but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,—While he approved this law of God with his inward man, there was another law in his members—the outward man—warring against this law approved by the inward man.

and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.—[This law of sin does not fight a battle merely, but carries on a successful campaign against the “law of the mind”—the law of God. This campaign is successful against him because it leaves him in captivity to the law of sin in his members. His suffering is not in the path of wickedness which he pursues, but in the chain that drags him along that destructive way—a chain that he cannot break. His sin is not an act; it is a helpless subjection to the law of sin in his members. This is a legal experience, written to show that, whatever else the law can do, it can deliver no man from the flesh.]

24 Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?—This subjection of the spirit to the law of sin in the flesh brought the whole man to ruin. [Throughout this paragraph the deliverer has been kept out of view, that his presence, as absolutely indispensable to the life and happiness of the believer, may be realized. The need of being in Christ and under grace, in contrast with being under a purely legal system, has been shown in the development of the argument in these words: “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.” (Verses 5, 6.) Here “the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,” which answers to “captivity” and “wretched,” called “the body of this death.” Under grace is a state in which we are

that I am! who shall deliver me out of ^{the} body of this death? 25 ^I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind,

^{Or. this body of death}

^{Many ancient authorities read But thanks be to God. Comp. ch. 6. 17.}

“discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.” Think, then, of one as being left with all his imperfections under the law, without grace, yearning to do good, but learning finally that the good is beyond his reach. There would be wrung from him the cry for deliverance from his wretchedness. This is the point to which Paul has been leading the argument. Experience shows that the law leaves man, no matter how earnest to keep it, in a state of miserable slavery and wretchedness.]

25 **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**—[The language is abrupt, and the sense is incompletely expressed, no direct answer being given to the question, “Who shall deliver me?” This abruptness is, however, proof of genuineness, answering as it does most naturally to the outburst of anguish and the sudden revulsion of feeling when Paul turns to view his actual state in contrast with his former misery. The cause of thankfulness is not expressed, which is quite after the manner of lively emotion; but a thanksgiving offered to God through Jesus Christ implies that he is the author of the redemption so earnestly desired. The victory was the subjugation of the flesh to the spirit, so that he could say: “I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage.” (1 Cor. 9: 27.)]

So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God;—With the mind he approved the law of God. [This is a summary conclusion drawn from what is said in this paragraph. Paul is here speaking of himself as a Christian, and it follows that what he says is true of every Christian. The law of God comprehends the full volume of his expressed will in so far as it is applicable to Christians. To serve God “with the mind” is the same as to “worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4: 24.) The service takes its rise in the mind and consists in obedience to the divine will.]

Then no man can live up to his convictions of right without

indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

faith in Christ to help him hold in check the evil dwelling in his members that enslave him, soul and body, to the body of death. The law of Moses gave the standard of morality, but all fell short of it. The flesh overcame them, and they, under the lusts of the flesh, the greed of gain and power and the pleasures of life, fell short of the ability they taught. Solomon, with all his wisdom and the goodness of his youth, is a striking example of the weakness of the flesh. Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh to overcome sin in the flesh that he might enable men to attain to the righteousness of the law through faith.

but with the flesh the law of sin.—The flesh was stronger than the spirit and served the flesh and he could not be freed from sin under the law. [To serve the law of sin with the flesh is to commit sin under the influence of the flesh. Certainly no one can serve both the law of God with the mind and the law of sin with the flesh at the same time. These two principles war against each other, and without external help the flesh overrides the spirit and brings it into subjection to the rule of the lusts and passions of the flesh. Hence, the struggle, the captivity, the cry for deliverance.]

7. ADVANTAGES AND BLESSINGS OF THOSE WHO, IN CHRIST, ARE MADE FREE FROM SIN AND DEATH

8: 1-17

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.—The provision of the gospel for those who are in Christ Jesus are so complete that there remains no reason why they should be condemned. But there is a general impression that God demanded a more rigid obedience to his law under the Jewish dispensation than under the Christian. It is imagined that through the death of Christ in some way an indulgence from God was secured by which man might be allowed greater license in neglecting the law of God and in going his own way. This is a fatal mistake.

Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.—“The law of the Spirit” is the law given by the Spirit through which life comes. It is placed in contrast with the law of sin and death that reigns in our flesh, and its superiority over the law of Moses is shown in that it made free from the law of sin and death, which that law could not do. The Spirit dwells in and works through his law, and he who takes the law into his heart and nourishes it as the seed of the kingdom has life. That law of the Spirit, if man could be from birth kept under it, would preserve him from sin and death. As it is impossible to so bring man under that law from infancy until he is brought into Christ, inasmuch as the law works and can be conformed to only in Christ, so it makes provision for freeing him for sins committed and for bringing him into Christ, in whom he may find deliverance through the law from sins committed. But remember that the law is God’s direction into the channel in which he works. It defines the conditions on which God blesses or refuses to bless. The law is a guide to man to lead him into the channel in which God exerts his power for good in which his blessings are bestowed. It reveals to man that by placing himself within these channels in which God works he may be the recipient of the fruits of the divine working. And in harmonizing himself with these operations, being guided by them, and exerting his powers under these directions of God, he becomes a coworker with God in securing the joyful results of God’s works to others. Man is the channel in which God works, and in harmony with the forces of divine life is molded into a likeness with God and borne forward by the working of God into an everlasting union and companionship with God. So that God’s destiny becomes his destiny and God’s home his eternal home.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,—The law of Moses was weak in seeking to

the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the law could not do, ¹¹in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of

¹¹Or, *wherein*

control the flesh instead of the heart. [If it were not for the flesh, we could be perfect. The weakness is in the flesh, not in the law. The law will not justify us unless we are perfect, and our weakness through the flesh prevents our reaching perfection.]

God, sending his own Son—Jesus Christ came to fulfill, to do the whole will of God. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will, and to do not his own work, but the work his Father sent him to do. He came not only to do this himself, but to inspire everyone who believes on him with the same spirit—with the same anxious desire to fulfill all righteousness, to do the whole will of God. One cannot believe in Christ Jesus will all the heart, without imbibing this spirit of the Master, without being filled with the desire to fulfill all righteousness, with the desire of doing not his own will but the will of the Father who is in heaven. Jesus Christ came as the living and perfect embodiment of obedience to the law of God, and with the purpose of inspiring others with the same spirit and leading all who trust in him to the same obedience from the heart to the law of God. His object was to call them away from their own wisdom, their own reason, away from and out of themselves, to the law of God as given by him, and exemplified in his own life as the only life rule of right to guide and bless man.

in the likeness of sinful flesh—Jesus came and took on himself our nature, was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. [This describes man's animal nature as having become the seat of sin. But of that nature of itself sin is no part nor property, only its fault and corruption. Hence, the Son of God could take of the human flesh of Mary, his mother, without the quality of sinfulness which sin has acquired in Adam's posterity. In his case the flesh did not lead to sin, because he kept it in perfect subjection. He controlled it absolutely, and

¹²sinful flesh ¹³and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 that the ¹⁴ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

¹²Gr. *flesh of sin.*

¹³Or, *and as an offering for sin.* Lev. 7. 37 &c. Heb. 10: 6 &c.

¹⁴Or, *requirement*

thus kept it from leading to sin, and in doing so made it sinless.]

and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:—God, sending his own Son in the flesh, tempted with sin as we are, and as an offering to deliver from sin, overcame sin that dwelled in the flesh. [God condemned sin in the flesh by exhibiting in the person of Jesus Christ the same flesh in substance, but free from sin; he proved that sin was in the flesh only as an unnatural and usurping tyrant. And, again, he condemned sin practically and effectually by destroying its power and casting it out. The law could condemn sin only in word, and could not make its condemnation effectual. Christ, coming “for sin,” not only died for sin, but, uniting man to himself “in newness of life” (4: 6), gave actual effect to the condemnation of sin by destroying its dominion in the flesh.]

4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us,—Jesus came and overcame the law of sin, dwelling in the flesh, that through his help we might attain the righteousness set forth in the law. [In “the likeness of sinful flesh,” in which he came, he paid the penalty fixed by the law and condemned sin. “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5: 21.) We live unto righteousness only in Christ. All the human race is included in him, and he represents the whole human family; therefore, he can take away our guilt. This great fundamental truth that “Christ died for all” was prophetically announced by John the Baptist when he said: “Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1: 29.) God finds no fault in his Son; and if we are in his Son, he will find no fault with us. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniqui-

Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind of the

ties; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. 53: 4-6.)]

who walk not after the flesh,—[To walk after the flesh is to obey the dictates of the flesh, to allow the appetites and passions of the flesh to mark out our path. To do this is to obey sin, which dwells in the flesh.]

but after the Spirit.—The Spirit dwells in the law of Christ revealed through inspired men, and to hear and obey their words is to walk after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh;—Those who are governed by the law of the flesh care for, or seek, the things that pertain to the flesh. [They are either engrossed with the gratification of worldly lusts or their one object in living is to hoard up wealth or to squander it in worldly amusements. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, or their one thought is how to get in society, or to distinguish themselves. They seek to be popular or to take the lead. They have men's persons in admiration because of advantage to themselves. Paul enumerates the works of the flesh: "Fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." (Gal. 5: 19-21.) As indicated by "and such like," there are many similar evil dispositions, vices, and vanity which destroy spiritual life.]

but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.—They that follow the law of the Spirit seek to restrain the fleshly desires and follow the teachings and desires of the Spirit. [They make a serious business of reading the word of God, meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving. They provide for such things, no matter how full of business is their everyday life, and into it they bring their religion.]

flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: 7 because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: 8 and they that are in the flesh cannot please

6 For the mind of the flesh is death;—To follow the law of the flesh is to bring the mind and spirit into subjection to the law of sin that dwells in the flesh and brings death. [This state of mind, this desire and pursuit of carnal things, is, in its own nature, destructive. It leads to all the Scriptures mean by death, alienation from God, unholiness, and misery.]

but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace:—To follow the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is to foster the spirit that brings us to life with God. This is the only way to fit the soul for companionship with God and the spirits of the heavenly land. We can gain the heavenly home only by being fitted to breathe its atmosphere, to find fellowship with the spirits that dwell there, and to add joy and happiness to its peaceful realms. The church is a training school to fit man for that eternal home; and the teachings of Christ is a discipline, a schooling, to prepare us for that blessed companionship.

7 because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God;—Paul said: “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” (7: 18.) Then the flesh in its desires is at enmity with God. [“Enmity against God” is expressive of an ill feeling toward him. It characterizes a course of conduct. “Mind of the flesh” is a life, and as such is contrary to God’s law. It is, therefore, called “enmity.”]

for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.—They who are ruled by the flesh cannot be obedient to the law of God. The law of God and the evil tendency of the flesh are two antagonistic things; hence, they must turn away from the rule of the flesh before they can be brought into harmony with God.

8 and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.—The reason why they cannot please God is because they are constantly sinning against him. The flesh must be brought into subjection to the Spirit before they can be brought into har-

God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that

mony with God. The human spirit cannot gain the mastery over the flesh until it is strengthened by the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus.

9 But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.—If we are in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God dwells in us; and if the Spirit dwells within, it makes us free from the law of sin that dwells in the flesh. [To be in the flesh is to live the life of the sinner; to be in the Spirit is to live the life of the Christian. The flesh governs the one; the Spirit, the other.]

But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—Unless the law of the Spirit dwells in us and so controls us, we are none of his. If the law of the flesh rules, the law of the Spirit does not dwell within us. They are antagonistic. [The possession of the Holy Spirit is declared to be absolutely necessary to our being acceptable to God. To be destitute of the Spirit, therefore, is to be destitute of everything well-pleasing in the sight of God.]

10 And if Christ is in you,—[In verses 9, 10 are three phrases meaning the same thing—"the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," and "Christ." He comes from God, the Father: (John 14: 16, 26; Acts 1: 4); he is given in Christ, the Son (8: 2); and does not "speak from himself" (John 16: 13), but manifests "Christ" (John 14: 21). The threefold mention shows the work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the salvation of the believer in Christ.]

the body is dead because of sin;—The body, or the flesh, as the ruling power, is dead through Christ to sins to which it would lead.

but the spirit is life because of righteousness.—The spirit is life toward him; it leads to the righteousness in Christ. The practice of righteousness comes from life in God, and that righteousness grows stronger by the exercise.

raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the

¹Many ancient authorities read *because of*.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you,—The Holy Spirit actually dwells in every obedient believer. (Acts 2: 38; 5: 32.)

he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.—God will by that Spirit give life to our dead bodies and raise them to immortal life. [Two things may be included in this part of the verse—(1) that the possession of the Spirit, which is the source of life, is a pledge and security that our bodies shall rise again, because it would be unseemly that bodies thus honored by the Spirit should remain under the dominion of death; and (2) that the resurrection of the saints is evinced by the rising of Jesus; for he is risen not only as their Lord and Judge, but as their head, to which they are united as members of his body, for “he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1: 18), as “the first-fruits,” by which all the lump is sanctified and accepted (Lev. 23: 9-14); so “now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep” (1 Cor. 15: 20.) The children of God are endued with the Holy Spirit, and thereby their bodies become “the temple of the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor. 6: 19.) Now, as the promise of the Holy Spirit was upon the resurrection of Christ, so the gift and possession of the Spirit is an assurance of the resurrection of all those who are in Christ.]

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh:—Since all good comes to us by living after the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and the law of sin dwelling in the flesh brings evil and death, we are under no obligation to live after the flesh, but are under obligations to God, who has redeemed us, and to ourselves, to live after the Spirit. In following the Spirit we mortify and restrain the deeds of the flesh.

flesh: 13 for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the ²deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For ye received not the spirit

²Gr. *doings*.

13 for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die;—This is so because Christians lose spiritual life in proportion as they indulge the appetites and desires of the flesh that are contrary to the teachings of the Lord. If, for example, a Christian indulges in anger, or malice, or any of these passions that the Lord condemns, he is not only violating the word of the Lord, but he is destroying the spiritual man, and weakening it every day, and giving the flesh greater power over the Spirit; and so the flesh will dominate and control the whole man, while the spiritual man languishes and dies.

but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—If through following the law given by the Spirit of life we restrain and control the desires of the flesh, we shall live with Christ.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.—Those thus led are already in Christ, and in them the Holy Spirit dwells. The leading is both internal and external. To whatever extent the Holy Spirit by its indwelling strengthens the human spirit to enable it to control the flesh, to that extent the leading is internal; to whatever extent the motives of “the law of the Spirit,” when brought to bear on the heart in the New Testament, enlighten and strengthen, and so enable it to keep the body in subjection, to that extent the leading is external. The leading, then, consists of the whole of the influences of every kind exercised by the Holy Spirit on the human spirit, enabling it to keep the body under. Hence, the exhortation is given: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.” (Phil. 2: 12, 13.)]

15 For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear;—[This points to the time when they believed, were baptized, entered into the kingdom, and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38), by whom they were led (verse 14). The bond-

of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit,

age which throughout this Epistle is contrasted with the liberty of the children of God is the bondage of sin (6: 6, 16, 17, 20; 7: 25), and of the corruption of death as the consequence of sin (verse 21). They had all been once under this bondage, which tends unto the fear of death. (Heb. 2: 14, 15.)]

but ye received the spirit of adoption,—In coming into Christ they received not, as under the law, the spirit of bondage, in which they were moved by fear. They had now been adopted as children into the family of God and received the spirit of children. [The reference here is a Roman legal process by which one man took another's to be his own son. The adopted son took the name and rank of the one adopting him and stood in exactly the same legal relation to him as a born son.]

whereby we cry, Abba, Father.—Having been adopted as a child into the family of God, they could cry, "Father." "Abba" is the Chaldee word for "father." Whenever it occurs (Mark 14: 36; Gal. 4: 6; and here), it has the Greek interpretation subjoined to it. This is apparently to be explained by the fact that the Chaldee, though frequent in prayer, gradually acquired the nature of a most sacred proper name, to which the Greek-speaking Jews added the appellation from their own tongue. Under Christ the heart is touched with love, and we come to love God because he first loved us; but under Moses they served from fear; under Christ, from love.

16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God:—The Spirit gives directions through the word of truth how to become children of God. Our spirits bear witness as to whether from the heart we have complied with these conditions, and so they jointly bear testimony that we are children of God. When it is established that we have become God's children, there must be the conjoint testimony of the two witnesses that we continue in the faith. The Holy Spirit gives directions as to the kind of life we are to live, and our own spirit bears testimony as to whether we conform our life to these instructions. But the Holy Spirit, through this

that we are children of God: 17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with *him*.

testimony or witness, molds the human spirit into his own likeness, dwells with our spirit, directs our spirit; so that the same spirit that was in Christ Jesus dwells in us. We are led by the Spirit, and through us the Spirit of God acts and works, because our spirit is imbued with the purposes, thoughts, temper, and being of the divine Spirit. So, then, if we faithfully bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22, 23), there is a happy and harmonious union of the Spirit with our spirit that brings confidence and assurance to our heart that enables us to cry: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are." (1 John 3: 1.)

17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;—If the Spirit of God and our spirit give assurance that we have been adopted as children of God, we know that we become heirs of his inheritance and joint heirs with Jesus, the only begotten Son of God.

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.—As children we must share the sufferings of Jesus here that we may be glorified with him in the future state. "For if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him." (2 Tim. 2: 11, 12.) "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is." (1 John 3: 2.) We are heirs with him of all his glory.

8. THE HOPE OF ULTIMATE GLORY AS SECURED THROUGH CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT TO SUSTAIN THE REDEEMED THROUGH ALL TRIALS

8: 18-30

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time—
[This is not merely a supposition or opinion, but the conclu-

be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of

sion drawn from comparing things present and things to come, that the former are of no weight or worth in comparison.]

are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.—Paul suffered much as a follower of Christ, but he says it was too insignificant to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us-ward. “For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4: 17.) In that eternal state all who have been adopted into the family of God will share with Christ his eternal glory.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.—The “creation” here means the world, embracing all animated nature below man. The sin of man brought a curse upon the earth, and mortality and death came upon all creatures, and they are represented as earnestly waiting for the appearance of the sons of God from the grave, when the world will be delivered from the curse under which it labors on account of the sins of man, its ruler. [Paul personifies the world, just as the prophets do when they make the floods and trees clap their hands. (Psalm 98: 8; Isa. 55: 12.) It is one of the frequent figures of speech thus to make nature sympathize with man. When the Assyrians were overthrown, Jehovah said: “I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him.” (Ezek. 31: 15.) In the passage before us, human feelings are ascribed to inanimate things without reason. Under this figure is presented the truth revealed in the Old Testament that the whole world of nature placed under man’s dominion has a real concern in the past history and future destiny of man. When God said to Adam, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life” (Gen. 3: 17); when he punished man’s wickedness by bringing the flood, in which “every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth”

God. 20 For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, ^{in hope} 21 that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of

^{Or, in hope; because the creation &c.}

(Gen. 7: 23); and when "the earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh" (Isa. 24: 5-7). In all such passages the same truth is expressed that "the creation was subjected to vanity."]

20 For the creation was subjected to vanity,—As a result of Adam's sin, the whole creation was cursed and fell away from its original design and became subject to the reign of death. [The word is, therefore, appropriately used of the disappointing character of present existence, which nowhere reaches the perfection of which it is capable.]

not of its own will,—Not of its own fault or action, but through the sin of man, which brought mortality and death upon the creation.

but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope—[This, in accordance with the history, can be no other than God. He who first placed the creation under man's dominion also subjected it to the effects of man's sin (Gen. 3: 17-19; 5: 29), and will make it partaker of the blessing of his restoration.]

21 that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.—The hope is entertained that when the deliverance comes to the children of God, when they are delivered from the bondage of corruption and from the prison house of the grave, then the whole creation will share this deliverance and be freed from the corruption and mortality to which it has been subjected by the sin of man. It shared the corruption and mortality of man's sin, and will share his deliverance from it.

the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within

**Or, with us*

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.—The whole creation suffered from the effects of man's sin. It is represented as suffering and groaning in its mortality and together travailing in pain. Animated nature suffers, vegetable nature struggles against, but succumbs to, death and decay, and the laws of all nature are disturbed and in commotion on account of man's sin. [These pangs of a world in travail cannot be unmeaning. They point to a coming time of delivery, when, "according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3: 13.)]

23 And not only so, but ourselves also,—Not only does the whole creation thus groan, but even Christians, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan and suffer within themselves.

who have the first-fruits of the Spirit,—[The first fruits were that portion of the productions of the earth which were offered to God. (Ex. 23: 19; 34: 26; Lev. 23: 10-12.) From the nature of the case, they contained the evidence and assurance of the whole harvest being secured. The idea, therefore, of an earnest or pledge is included in the phrase, as well as that of priority. This is the general, if not the constant, use of the word in the New Testament. Thus Christ is called "the firstfruits of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15: 20), not merely because he rose first, but also because his resurrection was a pledge of the resurrection of those who "are Christ's at his coming." In the following passages—Rom. 11: 16; 16: 5; 1 Cor. 16: 15; James 1: 18—both ideas may be, and possibly ought to be, retained. In the passages before us what is called "the first-fruits of the Spirit" is elsewhere (2 Cor. 1: 22; 5: 5; Eph. 1: 14) called "the earnest of the Spirit." The phrases, "the first-fruits of the Spirit" and "the earnest of the Spirit," are, therefore, synonymous. The expression, therefore, is descriptive of all Christians and not of any particular class of them.]

ourselves, waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For ⁵in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: ⁶for who

⁵Or, *by*

⁶Many ancient authorities read *for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.—[The word “adoption” is applied to two very different events in the life of the redeemed. It is applied to their entrance into the kingdom of God at their conversion. They, therefore, enter it by being “born of water and the Spirit.” (John 3: 5.) Into the everlasting kingdom they shall enter by being born from the grave. From a grave in the water they emerge into the kingdom of God here on earth; from a grave in the earth, into the everlasting kingdom. Hence, though the two events denoted by adoption stand wide apart and are entirely distinct, yet they resemble each other very closely—so much so, indeed, that the same word is used to express them both.] Christians are waiting for the redemption of their bodies from mortality and suffering. Their redemption in Christ will not be completed until their bodies are raised from the dead and glorified and are become like Jesus in his glorified and immortal state. Paul has in these verses presented to us the far-reaching and appalling results of sin, and has given to us a picture of the future glorious state that shall come to man and earth when the deliverance from sin is completed. The earth will rejoice and be glad as well as man.

24 For in hope were we saved:—[This verse and the following seem to depend upon the mention of “waiting” in verse 23. Now, this waiting is the very substance and essence of hope. When we believed in Christ, we believed in one who will return again and receive us to himself.] When we were baptized into Christ, we were baptized into one who died and rose again, in the assured hope that if we have been planted in the likeness of his death and been made partakers of it, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection and be made at last fully partakers of it. But as regards the adoption and redemption of our bodies, it is future, and so is an object of hope; and so faith, so far as the renewal and spiritualizing of

hopeth for that which he seeth? 25 But if we hope for that which we see not, *then* do we with ^apatience wait for it.

26 And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; 27 and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, ^bbecause he maketh interces-

¹Some ancient authorities read *awaiteth*.

^aOr, *steadfastness*

^bOr, *that*

the body is concerned (1 Cor. 15: 44), "is assurance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11: 1). The assurance of the last six verses gives us hope of the immortal state to come; and by this hope we are strengthened to continue to labor and suffer for the promised blessings.

but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth?—The things that are present, that we now enjoy, are not objects of hope; for who hopes for that which he now possesses? Hope looks to the future blessings.

25 But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.—But if we hope for treasures now out of reach, that we expect thereafter to gain, then we bear with patience present labors and delays needful to gain them.

26 And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity:—Not only does hope buoy us up and strengthen us, but the Spirit of God that dwells within us helpeth our weaknesses.

for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;—Although we have no definite conception of what we desire, and cannot state in fit language in our prayer, but only disclose it by inarticulate groanings, yet God receives these groanings as acceptable prayers, inasmuch as they come from a soul full of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of the child of God often desires blessings that he cannot express in language. It is God's Spirit that dwells in him that leads to do this and secures blessings for which he does not know how to ask.

27 and he that searcheth the hearts—[This is a common paraphrase for God, and here most appropriate.]

knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,—As no man knoweth the thoughts of a man save the spirit of man that dwells

sion for the saints according to *the will of God*. 28 And we know that to them that love God ¹⁰all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his purpose*. 29 For whom he foreknew, he also fore-

¹⁰Some ancient authorities read *God worketh all things with them for good*.

in him, to read those unexpressed emotions of the soul is the prerogative of that Being to those eyes all things are naked and opened. "I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17: 10.)

because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.—The Spirit dwells in and intercedes for the saint only as he brings himself in life and heart into conformity with the will of God. So the Spirit dwells in his heart and molds the desires and groanings of his own spirit, and through directing his spirit in prayer the Holy Spirit makes intercession.

28 And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good,—The purpose of God is to call the worthy and true souls of humanity into his church and to discipline and educate them so as to fit them to dwell with him in his eternal home; and to those who love him and are called in harmony with his purpose, all things work together for good. When he says "all things," he means even things that are painful; for even if affliction, poverty, imprisonment, hunger, death, or any other thing, come upon them, God is able to turn all things to their good and fit them for his eternal home. If they are not able to bear the trials and afflictions that come upon them and accept them as means of discipline from the hand of the Father, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. If they fail to do his requirements, they deprive themselves of the education that will fit them for service in the eternal kingdom.

even to them that are called—These have been called by the gospel, and accepted it. Many others are called, Jews and Gentiles; but only those who hear and obey are God's chosen ones. (Matt. 22: 14.)

according to his purpose.—God determined that man should be called by the gospel; hence, to be called according to God's

ordained *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren: 30 and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

purpose is to called by the gospel. In speaking of this call, Paul said: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14.)

29 For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren:—Here he proves the assertion of the preceding verse by the blessing conferred upon those who were faithful to him in past ages. Of them it is said: "And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11: 39, 40.) They were not perfected until the provision was made through Christ. The promise was not fulfilled while they were still living under the old dispensation. "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Heb. 9: 15.) The transgressions of the first covenant were not removed till Christ died. God ordained that these ancient worthies should be conformed to the image or likeness of his Son, that he might be the first born from the grave among many brethren. He came forth from the grave. "And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many." (Matt. 27: 52, 53.)

30 and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.—These ancient worthies whom he

had thus ordained to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ he called from their tombs, justified them, and glorified them with Jesus at the throne of God. It is probable that they ascended with Jesus in his triumphal train, as predicted by David: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory will come in. Who is the King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory will come in. Who is this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of glory." (Psalm 24: 7-10.) The risen and glorified Christ was the first to enter. "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, . . . entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9: 11, 12.) This is given in explanation of how all things work together for good to them that love God, and is an assurance that those who are faithful children of God shall share his immortal glories in the world to come.

9. THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPHANT ASSURANCE FOUNDED ON THE GREATNESS AND CONSISTENCY OF DIVINE LOVE

8: 31-39

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us

31 **What then shall we say to these things?**—From all that has been said, what comfort may we derive from it? We are persecuted and despised, it is true; but as God has called us to love him, and all things work together for good to them that love him, and if we continue to possess that faith that works by love, it will bring us, both body and soul, to his eternal glory. Seeing therefore, that all these things are so, what comfort in our tribulation shall we derive from them?

If God is for us, who is against us?—No being is, and none can be. God is for us, and as long as that is true we have nothing to fear.

32 **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,**—If God so loved us that he did not spare his own Son,

all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? ¹¹It is God that justifieth; 34 who

¹¹Or, *Shall God that justifieth?*

but delivered him up to suffer for us, will he not with him freely give us all things needed to gain the salvation Jesus died to gain for us?

how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?—Inasmuch as God has done the greater in giving the most precious Being in his sight, he will with him give all less costly gifts that are needed to perfect our salvation. May I not ask, if God has so freely made such provisions for man's salvation, can we believe that he will permit a single soul willing to accept the gospel and be saved through it to die without the knowledge of it? The Spirit declared through Peter: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10: 35.) He declared this on the occasion that God sent the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile, because he saw that he was desirous of knowing and doing the will of God. If God is no respecter of persons and he chose Abraham while he was an idolater, Paul while a persecutor, Cornelius and Lydia in the midst of idolatry, because he saw they were anxious to know and do the truth and had courage and perseverance to be true to it to the end, we may rest assured that he has never permitted, nor will he ever permit, a single soul with the same willingness and ability to know and continue in the truth to perish without the knowledge of the same.

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?—Who shall lay anything to the charge of those whom God has selected and purified.

It is God that justifieth;—When he justifies through his own Son, who can condemn? This is to show the fullness and sufficiency of God's care and his blessings for us. God and his Son and all his servants are for us; who, save the enemy of all, is against us? Who can effect anything to our heart?

is he that condemneth? ¹³It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love ¹⁴of Christ?

¹³Or, *Shall Christ Jesus that died, . . . us?*

¹⁴Some ancient authorities read *of God*.

34 who is he that condemneth?—No human tribunal, no earthly judge can condemn. All judgment has been committed to the Son, who is our Advocate with the Father. (1 John 2: 1.) [In support of this assertion the four great facts about Christ Jesus are here presented.]

It is Christ Jesus that died,—[All ground of condemnation is removed by his death for our sins.]

yea rather, that was raised from the dead,—His resurrection as the evidence of the validity of all his claims is a much more decisive proof of the security of all who trust in him than his death could be, for by it he was proven to be the Son of God. In his speech before the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers at Athens. Paul said: "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17: 30, 31.) Another inspired man says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1: 3.)

who is at the right hand of God,—[This solemn investiture with power "in heaven and on earth" is with express reference to the salvation of his people. (Matt. 28: 18-20; John 17: 2; (Eph. 1: 20-23.)]

who also maketh intercession for us.—He stands at the throne of God ready to plead our cause. He has already propitiated the favor of God to the whole world through the sacrifice of himself in its behalf. If he found joy in enduring the cross and despising the shame for us when we were sinners, how much more ready must he be to offer petitions in behalf of his erring disciples! (1 John 2: 1.)

shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Even as it is written,

1 For thy sake we are killed all the day long ;

We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that

¹Ps. xliv. 22.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—If God is for us, justifies us, and Jesus is our Advocate at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us and intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, who shall separate us from love that so guards us?

shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—Shall we let the things brought upon us to school and fit us for the enjoyment of the eternal honors God has for us in heaven, discourage, dishearten, and turn us back and cause us to forfeit those honors and glories purchased for us by the blood of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer?

36 Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.—The whole Psalm refers to the suffering of God's people, and this verse is typical of what the followers of Christ would suffer for his name. This was all trial and suffering to discipline them for eternal honors. It was a part of the present suffering that we would work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors—Instead of drawing back from suffering for Jesus' sake, or forsaking him because of tribulation through these, we are to be crowned more than conquerors. [But who can be "more" than a conqueror? Certainly he that cannot be conquered. These sufferings are a mighty battle, but we come through them more than victors. We gloriously triumph.]

through him that loved us.—[This cry of triumph is not selfish, for the abounding cry is: through Jesus, our Lord, who loved us and died for us.] His dying for us is the manifestation of love for us that begets the heroism in man that leads him to rejoice in sufferings for the sake of Jesus and the good of man.

loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,² 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other ²creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

²Or, *creation*

38, 39 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.—To persuade is to win to a purpose or course where there are difficulties, of which the testimony commingled with the earnest desire convinces that it can be accomplished. Earnest, self-sacrificing for the accomplishment of the desired end gains acceptance for the prayer and secures the blessing. Without this earnestness of heart that makes us willing to sacrifice to God, our prayers will not reach the throne of God and will not prevail. It may not be necessary to sacrifice all for what we pray before God will hear and answer the prayer, but it is necessary that we in heart by willing to labor and sacrifice to gain the end before God will hear and answer the prayer. With this truth understood we need not be surprised that so few of our prayers are heard or answered. Jesus Christ himself is the great and perfect example in all these things to the child of God. The thing needed to gain acceptance and favor for our prayers is earnest self-sacrificing labor and devotion on our part to gain that for which we pray. Then God will hear and grant our prayers even before we ask. The great trouble with us is we are not in earnest in our service, it is not rendered from the heart, and our prayers are vain, talking without corresponding deeds of devotion. What is needed for our own good and the good of the world is to realize that our religious lives should be more earnest and devoted. We can make our prayers prevailing if we will, but we cannot do this without self-sacrifice like that made by those who did prevail with God and whose examples are given for our encouragement and imitation.

V. THE PRINCIPLES NOW ESTABLISHED JUSTIFY
GOD'S DEALINGS BOTH WITH JEWS AND
GENTILES, AND ACCOUNT FOR THE RE-
JECTION OF THE FORMER AND THE
ACCEPTANCE OF THE LATTER

9: 1 to 11: 36

1. THE APOSTLE'S DEEP SYMPATHY WITH THE JEWS

9: 1-5

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit,—Paul having shown that the works of the Jewish law could not save sinners, but that they must be saved by the obedience of faith, by walking in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, and that the Jews and Gentiles alike stand condemned without faith in Christ Jesus, lest the Jews might think Paul had been estranged from them, he calls Christ and the Holy Spirit to witness the truth of the assurance of his love for them. [Some claim that this is a solemn oath, but this interpretation is not supported by the best exegetes, as is attested by the following: Moses E. Lard says: "The expression is no oath, but merely a strong form of asseverating truth. The meaning is: "I speak the truth as in Christ and accountable to him. As much as to say: those who are in Christ are under the most solemn obligations, whenever they speak at all, to speak the truth; and now I speak under a full sense of this obligation.'" Philip Schaff: "The asseveration of the apostle is threefold, and is introduced abruptly, without a conjunction, in accordance with the feeling which prompts it. 'In Christ' is not an adjuration (the form of an oath in Greek would be entirely different), but means in fellowship with Christ, the element in which he lives. Such fellowship with him who is the truth implies the sincerity of one who enjoys it." H. A. W. Meyer: "The explanation adopted by most of the older commentaries of 'en' in the sense of adjuration is a perfectly arbitrary departure from the manner of the apostle, who never swears by Christ, and also from Greek usage."

me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. 3 For I could ³wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 who are Israelites;

³Or, *pray*

Charles Hodge: "These words are not to be taken as an oath."]

2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart.
—The cause of Paul's sorrow and anguish of heart for the Jews was because they rejected Christ and were not in a saved state. [How noble Paul appears here, with his hearty love for those who from the day of his conversion had persecuted him with relentless hatred!]

3 For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ
—It is not possible that Paul really desired to be accursed from God to save the Jewish people, had it been possible for this to save them. The mother sometimes in anguish for the loss of a child says: "O, I could die to save my child!" She does not mean that she really desires to do this; but if she were led only by her feeling of love for her child, she would give her life for it. But there are other considerations that hinder her willingness to do this. There are other children and dear ones to live for. The obligations she is under to her friends and to God and to herself hinder the doing what the love for the child alone made her feel she would do. So, were Paul to act from his intense love for his Jewish brethren alone, it would prompt him to give up Christ himself, if thereby he could save them. But there are other considerations that would hinder his acting on these, even if that would save them (which it would not). Paul was expressing the intensity of his love for them.

for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
—[Notice the tender way in which the apostle characterizes the Jews. His sorrow for them had its basis in the fact that apart from Christ they were exposed to the wrath of God and on the road to eternal death. It was this grief at the loss of men, this intense yearning for their salvation, that made Paul the preacher that he was.]

whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of

4 who are Israelites;—They were the children of Israel and heirs of the promises made to him. The name “Israelite” was for the Jew his especial badge and title of honor. To be descendants of Abraham, this honor they must share with the Ishmaelites (Gen. 16: 15); of Abraham and Isaac, with the Edomites (Gen. 25: 26); but none except themselves were the seed of Jacob, such as in this name of Israelite they were declared to be. Nor was this all, but, more gloriously still, their descent was herein traced up to him, not as he was Jacob, but as he was Israel, who, as a Prince, had power with God and with men, and prevailed (Gen. 32: 28.) That this title was accounted the noblest we have ample proof. When Paul uses this name, he reminds his readers that it is just those for whose salvation above all the Messiah was to come, who, when he has come, are apparently cut off from all share in the privileges of his kingdom.

whose is the adoption,—They had been adopted as children of God. [Out of all nations God chose Israel to stand in a special relation to him as his children. Of this adoption the deliverance from Egypt was the immediate result. Jehovah said to Moses: “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus said Jehovah, Israel is my son, my firstborn: and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me.” (Ex. 4: 22, 23.) Sonship with an Israelite was purely national, not individual, and, therefore, no guarantee of salvation. Its mark was in the flesh, not in the spirit; and though a peculiar distinction within itself, and implying much, it is entitled to no honor under Christ. To his hereditary sonship an Israelite had still to add sonship in Christ, as really as the humblest Gentile; otherwise he was lost.]

and the glory,—[The supernatural brightness in which God manifested his presence on Sinai. (Ex. 24: 16, 17.) This glory appeared to Moses, and communicated itself, in a measure, to him; so that when he came down from the mountain his face shone (Ex. 34: 29-35), and at times on the tent of

the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; 5 whose are the fathers,

meeting (Ex. 29: 43; 40: 34, 35), and on the mercy seat of the ark (Lev. 16: 2). These were peculiar to the Israelites.]

and the covenants,—The covenants which God made with Abraham (Gen. 15: 18; 17: 2, 4, 7-11) and afterwards renewed to Isaac (Gen. 26: 24), to Jacob (Gen. 28: 13, 15), and to the whole people of Israel (Ex. 24: 7, 8). [These gracious covenants, expressing God's purposes and plans, were renewed upon each successive occasion, with growing fullness and definiteness.]

and the giving of the law,—The law of Moses was given to them. [The reference here, no doubt, alludes not only to the contents of the law, but to the manner in which God gave it. Never before was the Supreme Being manifested with such outward signs of terror and majesty. "Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" (Deut. 4: 33.)]

and the service of God,—[It was an especial honor that God had bestowed upon them that he prescribed their service in the tabernacle and temple even to the minutest particulars. He showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle, and he raised up men specially endowed by his Spirit with wisdom to carry out his direction. (Ex. 35: 30-35.) He ordained the priests and the ministry, the sacrifices, the altar, and all the vessels of the service.]

and the promises;—They were the heirs of the promises made through Abraham for the salvation of the world. [The promise of the Messiah was a possession of Israel in the sense that it was to be fulfilled exclusively through, though not exclusively for, Israel.]

5 whose are the fathers,—The reference is probably especially to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God delighted to honor and whose names have been preserved for all ages. [To have sprung from such forefathers was one of the most cherished thoughts of an Israelite. (2 Cor. 11: 22.) These sacred persons are now mentioned, after the previous sacred things, so as to usher in the mention of the Christ himself.]

and of whom is Christ as concerning the 'flesh, who is over all, God blessed

Or, flesh; he who is over all, God, be blessed for ever.

and of whom is Christ—[This is placed as the crowning and most exalted privilege: that their nation had given birth to the long-expected Messiah, the hope of the world.]

as concerning the flesh,—[This implies, of course, that he had another nature besides his human, or that while he was a man, he was also something else; that there was a nature in him which was not descended from "the fathers." That this is the meaning will still further appear by noticing the important distinctions so carefully expressed by Paul's words and even by their exact order—"of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh." Christ is not in the same sense as the patriarchs the peculiar property of the Israelites, "whose are the fathers." He springs, indeed, from their race, but he "is over all"; and not only is his Israelitish origin thus contrasted with his universal supremacy, but it is expressly limited by his human nature. The closing emphasis of the clause falls upon the words, "as concerning the flesh," which points onward to their natural contrast in the aspect of his person, who is "God blessed forever."]

who is over all,—In this view of the passage, as a testimony to the supreme divinity of Christ, the whole revelation of God attests, as the following clearly shows: God, the Father, is the basis of all life (1 Cor. 8: 6); and "as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man." (John 5: 26, 27.) The "image of the invisible God." (Col. 1: 15; 2 Cor. 4: 4.) Still, even as the image of God, the Son is perfectly expressive of the divine being. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9.) He is "in the form of God" and "on an equality with God." (Phil. 2: 6.) He is expressly called "God our Saviour" (Tit. 1: 3) and "the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2: 13). Accordingly, the Son is also the object of adoration to angels and men. (Phil. 2: 10.) These Scriptures, with many others, declare that Jesus Christ was

⁵for ever. Amen.

⁵Gr. *unto the ages.*

with the Father, in the bosom of the Godhead, before the worlds were created; that he was the counselor of the Godhead; that he was God, as divine and necessarily of the same nature and being as God, the Father. All power and might that pertain to the Godhead were delivered to the Son. He was clothed with all authority "in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28: 18.) All the power of the Father is concentrated in him.

God blessed for ever. Amen.—[An ascription of praise to Christ is here especially suitable, in view of his being set at naught by the Israelites, and is exactly in line with Paul's method, as indicated in chapter 1: 25, where, in contrast with the dishonor heaped upon God by the Gentiles, the affirmation is made that he "is blessed for ever." A doxology to God would not fit in with the anguish at Israel's rejection, to which Paul gives utterance in this paragraph; on the other hand, the words, referred to Christ, whom the Israelites rejected in spite of his dignity, give a reason for his anguish.]

2. FALSE CLAIMS REFUTED AND THE DIVINE PROMISE VINDICATED IN JUSTIFICATION OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE ISRAELITES

9: 6-13

6 But *it is* not as though the word of God hath come to nought. For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: 7 neither, because they are Abraham's

6 **But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought.**—The Israelites, having received the word of God and these privileges and honors, then having rejected Jesus Christ, does not prove that the word of God had taken no effect. [The word of God here must be taken comprehensively of all the promises to Abraham and to his seed.]

For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel:—All those who were of the family of Abraham after the flesh did not belong to his true family, and were not the children of the promises.

seed, are they all children: but ⁶in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed. 9 For this is a word of promise,

⁶Gen. xxi. 12.

7 neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children:—Neither does their being of his family make them all the true children according to the promise. [Paul's object is to show that the promises made to the children of Abraham were not made to his natural descendants as such.]

but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.—The promise was to the seed of Isaac, not to the children of Ishmael or to the sons of Keturah. Abraham had many descendants of these families to whom the promise was not made. Only to the children of Isaac were the promises.

8 That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God;—All the children of Abraham after the flesh were not children of God. [This explains the principle on which God acted in making Isaac, but not Ishmael, the heir of Abraham's promise. The children merely of the flesh were not in the past accepted of God as his children. On the contrary, they were cast out, as was the case with Ishmael.]

but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.—Only those who came through Isaac are counted as seed. [All other children of Abraham were children of the flesh. Their only relation to him was outward and according to natural laws. Physical connection with him was not in itself a ground of inheriting the promise.]

9 For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.—The promise as made to Abraham was made to the son of Sarah, born at the time appointed. [In verse 6 the unbelieving Israelites are supposed to claim the blessings of the covenant, on the ground that these blessings were promised to Abraham's children, and to say if they are excluded from the kingdom of God, the word of God will fall to the ground. This claim rests on the assumption that all Abraham's descendants have a right to the covenant; but Paul proves that this right was not admitted by

⁷According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac—11 for *the children* being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not

⁷Gen. xviii. 10.

God in the case of Abraham's children. Therefore, the claim made based upon it by the Israelites is invalid. Nay, more, the claim of the unbelieving Israelites is precisely the same as that of Ishmael; but believers have a position similar to that of Isaac. The gospel being true, God is only acting in reference to Israel's son as he acted of old in reference to the sons of Abraham; for the gospel announces that only believers are heirs of the promise, for "they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3: 7); "and if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3: 29.)]

10 And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac—The promise was not only restricted to the son of Sarah, but when Rebecca had conceived by Isaac, there was still further restriction of the promise to Jacob and not to Esau, as set forth in the next verse. [This case is more significant than the former. We are now in the pure line of Abraham by Isaac, the ancestor from whom is the promised seed; and yet his wife sees the divine selection which had been exercised to the sons of Abraham reproduced as between her own children. The expression "by one," is occasioned by the contrast here to the case of Isaac and Ishmael. Then there were two mothers, which might justify the preference accorded to Isaac. Here, where the children were of the same mother, the only possible difference would have been on the father's side. But as the case was one of twins, the commonness of origin was complete. No external motive of preference could, therefore, influence the divine choice.]

11 for the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,—Before the twins were born God said that the older should serve the younger. The natural and usual order was reversed.

of works, but of him that calleth, 12 it was said unto her, ⁹The elder shall serve the younger. 13 Even as it is written, ⁹Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

⁹Gen. xxv. 23.

⁹Mal. i. 2 f.

God saw the characters of the two children, and chose the younger to become the head of the chosen race because he would trust God rather than the other. It was not on account of the works of their own that either might do, but Jacob would trust God and obey him. Those who do this, God always selects as his beloved. But the restriction of the promise to the family of Jacob is here the point.

12 it was said unto her, **The elder shall serve the younger.**—[There is no account of Esau's ever having personally served Jacob. The reference, then, must be to their respective posterities, and with this agree the facts of history. It is said of David that he put garrisons throughout Edom, and that "all the Edomites became servants of David." (1 Chron. 18: 13.) Under Joram they revolted (2 Kings 8: 20), but were defeated by Amaziah (2 Kings 14: 7), and Elath was taken from them by Azariah (2 Kings 14: 22). Indeed, the Edomites were long subject to the kings of Israel, the latter often slaying them in great numbers. They seem to have taken special delight in cultivating Esau's hatred of Jacob, and they never let pass an opportunity to display it. From the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Edomites, as a separate people, disappear from the pages of history.]

13 **Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**—Many think this was written before the children were born, but this is not correct. Yet it is true that God foretold that Esau, the older, should serve Jacob, the younger, before they were born. This was, no doubt, made because God, seeing the end from the beginning, saw that Jacob would trust and serve him and that Esau would not. To "love" and "hate" as God uses the terms means to approve or disapprove, to bless or curse.

3. VINDICATION OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE ISRAELITES ON ACCOUNT OF THE ABSOLUTE FREENESS OF HIS MERCIES

9: 14-18

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, ¹⁰"I will have mercy on whom I have

¹⁰Ex. xxxiii. 19.

14 **What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.**—Because God chose Jacob before he was born, shall we say that he is unrighteous? Did he deal by partiality or favoritism and not by the rule of right which he revealed through Peter when he said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him"? (Acts 10: 34, 35.) [Paul now shows that the Scriptures approve this liberty, and these Scriptures, revered by the Israelitish objector to whom he is writing, would not assign injustice to God. The argument is wholly scriptural.]

15 **For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.**—This language was spoken to Moses (Ex. 33: 19), and is quoted to prove that selection is not after the flesh nor according to the inventions and works of men, but according to the will of God; and God wills to elect those who trust and follow him, not those who trust their fleshly relations nor their own wise works. When the people trusted and obeyed God, he had mercy on them; when they refused to trust and follow him, he refused to have mercy upon them. This was so universally understood to be the law of God that Solomon put it in a proverb: "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. 28: 13.) The whole dealings of God with man under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations illustrate and enforce this truth. When God says, "I will have mercy on whom I will," he means that he will have mercy on those who confess and turn from their sins and transgressions, and nothing that others may do will turn him from it.

mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, "For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. 18 So then he hath mercy on

"Ex. ix. 16.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy.—He illustrates what he means by the case of Jacob and Esau. Isaac willed that Esau should inherit the blessing, and Esau ran with haste to obtain the venison for his father that he might have the blessing; but neither Isaac's will nor Esau's running could defeat the purpose of God to bless Jacob. If Esau had possessed the character approved by God, God would have willed to bless him; but as he did not possess the character approved by God, his father's anxiety for him to have the blessing could not secure it.

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power,—God never raised up nor caused Pharaoh to do what he did, or any wickedness, in the sense of making him wicked. "But in very deed for this cause have I made thee to stand, to show thee my power." (Ex. 9: 16.) This does not say that God raised him up that Pharaoh should do anything, but that God might show his power in destroying one so wicked as was Pharaoh, and in destroying him he might give clear evidence that he will destroy every one who so sins against him, and in punishing in so clear and unmistakable a manner one so powerful for his sins against God's humble people. After Pharaoh of his own will had done evil, been wicked, committed high crimes against God and God's people, God made a public example of him, punished him in a public way, and raised him up before the world, so that the whole world could see the punishment was inflicted by God and for Pharaoh's wickedness. So he raised the wicked Pharaoh up before the world to show that all the power of all the Egyptian throne could not defeat his purpose.

and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth.—Thus did God cause his name to be declared through-

whom he will, and whom he will be hardeneth.

out the whole earth as the avenger of his own people. [The judgment of God on the Egyptians consisted in the plagues, whereby the nation was well-nigh destroyed; and the fame of these plagues, and the safe passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptians therein, struck terror to the nations around, as is indicated by the many references to them. The words sung after the passage of the Red Sea: "The peoples have heard, they tremble: pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away." (Ex. 15: 14, 15.) Also the words of Rahab to the spies sent by Joshua: "The fear of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came out of Egypt. . . . For Jehovah your God, he is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath." (Josh. 2: 9-11.) So also the words of the Gibeonites: "From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of Jehovah thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt." (Josh. 9: 9.) Thus it was that the catastrophe which distinguished the going out of Egypt, provoked by Pharaoh's blind resistance, paved the way for the conquest of Canaan. And even to the present day, wherever throughout the world Exodus is read, the divine intention is realized: "To show my power, and make known my name throughout all the earth."]

18 So then he hath mercy on whom he will,—God has mercy on those who trust him that they may be saved.

and whom he will be hardeneth.—Pharaoh is an example of those that are hardened that they may be destroyed. [From this example is deduced the principle that no man can say: "I am, whatever I may do, safe from the judgment of God, or such another, whatever he may do, is unworthy of the divine favor." The Israelites thought that in no case could they be abandoned by God, and in no case could the Gentiles be re-

ceived by him. Paul here shows that they are grievously mistaken. The history of the hardening of Pharaoh, was, no doubt, well fixed in the minds of all the Israelites. God, in raising him up, foresaw his proud resistance, and has in reserve to chastise it afterwards by a complete blindness which was to be the means of reaching the desired result. To harden is to take from a man the sense of the true, the just, and even the useful, so that he is no longer open to the wise admonitions and significant circumstances which should turn him aside from the evil way on which he has entered. The word "harden" cannot signify, in the account (Ex. 4: 1 to 14: 9), anything else as God's act than it signifies as the act of Pharaoh when it is said he hardened himself. But what must not be forgotten, and what appears distinctly from the whole narrative, is that Pharaoh's hardening was at first his own act. Five times it is said of him that he himself hardened his heart (Ex. 7: 13, 14, 22; 8: 15, 32; 9: 7), before the time when at last it is said that God hardened his heart (Ex. 9: 12); and even after that, as if a remnant of liberty still remained to him, it is said for the last time that he hardened himself (Ex. 9: 34, 35). Then at length, as if by way of a terrible retribution, God hardened him five times. (Ex. 10: 1, 20, 27; 11: 10; 14: 8). Thus he at first closed his heart obstinately against the influence exercised on him by the summonses of Moses and the first chastisements which overtook him—that was his sin; and thereafter, but still within limits, God rendered him deaf not merely to the voice of justice, but that of sound sense and simple prudence—that was his punishment. Far, then, from its having been God who urged to evil, God punished him with the most terrible chastisements for the evils to which he voluntarily gave himself up.

In this expression, "hardening," we find the same idea as in "God gave them up," by which the apostle expressed God's judgment on the Gentiles, "because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God." (Rom. 1: 21.) When man has willfully quenched the light he has received and the first rebukes of divine mercy, and when he persists in giving himself up to his evil course, there comes a time when God withdraws

from him the beneficent action of his grace. The man becomes insensible even to the counsels of prudence. He has rejected salvation for himself; he was free to do so; but he cannot prevent God from now making use of him and of his ruin to advance the salvation of others. From being the end he is degraded to the rank of means. Such was the lot of Pharaoh. All Egypt saw clearly whither his mad resistance tended. His magicians told him: "This is the finger of God." (Ex. 8: 19.) His servants said to him: "How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go." (Ex. 10: 7.) He himself, after every plague, felt his heart relent. He even went the length of exclaiming: "I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." (Ex. 9: 27.) Now was the decisive instant; for the last time after this moment of softening he hardened himself. (Ex. 9: 34.) Then the righteousness of God took hold of him. He had refused to glorify God actively; he must glorify him passively. The Israelites of Paul's day did not disapprove of this conduct on God's part as long as it concerned only Pharaoh or the Gentiles; but what they affirmed, in virtue of their having been chosen to be God's peculiar people, was that never, and on no condition, could they themselves be the objects of such a judgment. They restricted the liberty of divine judgment on themselves, as they restricted the liberty of grace toward the Gentiles. In the verse before us he reestablishes both liberties, vindicating God's sole right to judge whether this or that man possesses the conditions on which he will think fit to show him favor, or those which will make it suitable for him to punish by hardening him.]

4. VINDICATION OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE ISRAELITES
ON THE GROUND OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY
ACCOMPANIED WITH MUCH
LONG-SUFFERING

9: 19-29

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he still find fault? For who

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he still find fault?—Then some will say: "If all are hardened or forgiven

withstandeth his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus? 21 Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

according to the will of God, why does God find fault with any?"

For who withstandeth his will?—[God does not make men just what they are and then find fault with them for being what he makes them. Morally, men make themselves what they are, which at the first is generally what they should not be. For this only God finds fault with them. It is true that God sometimes makes choice, as in the case of Jacob and Esau; but he finds fault with no one for being what his choice makes him. God sometimes hardens men, as in the case of Pharaoh; but he finds no fault with them for being hard when he hardens them. He found fault with Pharaoh for hardening his heart and wickedly resisting his will.]

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?—This is a sharp reproof of the captious complaint against the Creator. Man, with a just understanding of his own weakness and shortsightedness, and God's wisdom and goodness, would say, "God knows all things, God is good, and the Judge of all the earth will do right"; so recognize that God understands, while man does not, and trust God even when he does not see the way. Indeed, this is the only frame of true faith.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why didst thou make me thus?—[The intent in this is to stop the mouth of the objector who leaves an implication of wrong on the part of God in bestowing favors on some which he withholds from others.]

21 Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?—This refers to the parable of the potter, and is so significant that I quote it in full: "The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was

making a work on the wheels. And when the vessel that he made of the clay was marred in the hand of the potter, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." (Jer. 18: 1-4.) In this it is clearly seen that the potter proposed to make of the clay a vessel unto honor, and it was only when the clay marred in his hand and showed its unfitness to be so made "that he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." As the clay marred in his hands, it was unfit for a vessel of honor; so he made a common vessel unto dishonor.

Now, bear in mind the point to be illustrated in the figure, and you will find that the way of God's dealing with Israel was conditional: "Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? said Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if they do that which is evil in my sight, that they obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." (Jer. 18: 5-10.)

All this is explanatory of the expression: "As the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." It is clear that it does not mean that as the clay is passive in the hands of the potter, so Israel is destitute of all power in the hands of Jehovah; but that as the clay is subject to the power of the potter, who will make of it a vessel of honor or dishonor, according to the fitness of the material, so will the God of Israel deal with his people according to the proper use or the sinful abuse of their free agency, in either doing good or evil in his sight.

22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of

22 What if God, ¹²willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction: 23

¹²Or, *although willing*

wrath fitted unto destruction:—Why should it be thought strange if God, in order to show his hatred of sin and his determination to punish it, should endure for a long time those Israelites, who, like Pharaoh, fitted themselves as vessels of wrath for destruction, and then visited ruin upon them, so that the whole world should see it? This he applies to the Israelites, who, under the dealing of God, had so marred their characters as to fit themselves for destruction? Concerning God's exercising long-suffering unto these same vessels of wrath Paul says: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (2: 4, 5.) Here we see that these persons became vessels of wrath in spite of God's effort to save them through the exercise of his goodness and long-suffering, which was intended to lead them to repentance.

To make this still clearer, let us read the comment of Peter on Paul's understanding of the purpose of God in the exercise of long-suffering: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3: 9.) In this he gives his own inspired interpretation of God's purpose in the exercise of longsuffering. He refers to Paul's use of the term as identical with the way in which he himself explains it; hence, he adds: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of

¹²and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, **24** *even us*, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? **25** As he saith also in

¹²Some ancient authorities omit *and*.

these things." (2 Pet. 3: 14-16.) Unquestionably, then, we see that, according to Peter's inspired exposition of Paul's teaching of God's longsuffering, God was striving to save these vessels of wrath by leading them to repentance, while they on their part were treasuring up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath by despising "the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering." Accordingly, when Paul's opponent is supposed to ask, "Why doth he still find fault? For who withstandeth his will?" it is clear that the argument in the passage before us is intended to show that the captious question of the opponent is founded on a false assumption—that the actual ground of his objection is the very fact that he persists in withstanding the will of God. The apostle forcibly illustrates the long-suffering of God and the perverse resistance on the part of Israel when he says: "All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." (10: 21.)

23 and that he might make known the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory,— Is it strange that he, while rejecting these vessels of wrath, should show the riches of his glory to the vessels fitted to receive his mercy? He had prepared them for glory when, in consequence of their obedience to the gospel, he forgave their sins.

24 even us, whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles?—Both Jews and Gentiles, whom he called through the gospel, are the vessels of mercy, fitted to receive the riches of the grace in Jesus Christ. [This was a direct and primary purpose of God's long-suffering toward vessels of wrath. "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4: 22); and, therefore, the chosen race, notwithstanding all its transgressions, was preserved in order that the promise might embrace in its accomplishment both the remnant of the Jews and

Hosea,

¹⁴I will call that my people, which was not my people ;

And her beloved, that was not beloved.

26 ¹⁵And it shall be, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people,

There shall they be called sons of the living God.

¹⁴Hos. ii. 23.

¹⁵Hos. i. 10.

the fullness of the Gentiles. The destruction of the Jews predicted by Jesus (Matt. 24: 15-28) was delayed in mercy until the thousands of Israelites and Gentiles accepted Christ. The whole passage shows that God suffered the sins of the Jewish race without cutting them off, because its existence was essential in his plans for saving the world.]

25 **As he saith also in Hosea, I will call that my people, which was not my people; and her beloved, that was not beloved.**—He quotes from Hosea to show that it had been the purpose of God from the beginning to call the Gentiles, who at that time were not the children of God and were not beloved for their trust in God; they would become faithful, and so be called the beloved.

26 **And it shall be, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called sons of the living God.**—This he quotes to show that God had from the beginning purposed to bring the Gentiles into Christ. [Paul quotes these words, which refer primarily to the ten tribes, in proof that God, when he called men from the midst of the Gentiles to be vessels of mercy, acted on the principles announced by Hosea. The Gentiles could not be more completely aliens than those whom God declared to be neither his people nor objects of his mercy. But he foretold that in days to come he would speak again to the outcasts and call them his children. In the gospel this prophecy is fulfilled, and the fulfillment, though wider than the promise, exactly accords with its spirit. The passage quoted was probably chosen because it is a clear promise, not only of the blessings of the gospel, but of the actual announcement (1: 2) of the good tidings. What in the days of Hosea God promised to say in days then future, he actually said (8: 14) in the gospel. To be

27 And Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, ¹If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved: 28 for the Lord will execute *his* word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short. 29 And, as Isaiah hath said before,

²Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed,
We had become as Sodom, and had been made like unto Gomorrah.

¹Is. x. 22 f.

²Is. i. 9.

called the sons of God is a most honorable and distinguished appellation. No higher favor can be conferred on mortals than to be the sons of the living God, members of his family, entitled to his protection, and secure of his watch and care. The reception of the Gentiles being now established by Hosea, Paul proceeds to prove from Isaiah that only a remnant of Israel will be saved.]

27 **And Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved:**—He quotes Isaiah (10: 22, 23) to show that the children of Israel, though “as the sand of the sea,” went into captivity, only a remnant of them were faithful to God and returned. This was quoted as a prophetic illustration of their rejection of Christ. Of the multitude, only a remnant would receive him and be preserved from destruction and dispersion that awaited them. All would not be cast aside; a remnant would be saved, now as then.

28 **for the Lord will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short.**—God, after long forbearance, will finish the work of dealing with the Jews, and in righteousness and fidelity he will speedily punish them as their sins demand.

29 **And, as Isaiah hath said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become as Sodom, and had been made like unto Gomorrah.**—And as Isaiah had said of their former captivity, unless the Lord of hosts had spared a few as a seed, they would have been utterly destroyed, as had been the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God had proposed to save Sodom, if only a few righteous persons could be found. The remnant in Israel saved it from the utter destruction that came upon Sodom.

5. THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE REJECTION OF THE ISRAELITES AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE GENTILES

9: 30-33

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: 31 but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Wherefore? ³Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works.* They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; 33 even as it is

³Or, *Because, doing it not by faith, but as it were by works, they stumbled*

30 **What shall we say then?**—[What conclusion shall we draw from the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah, and from the previous train of remarks thereon? To what conclusion have we come concerning the Israelites and Gentiles?]

That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:—The Gentiles, who formerly refused to follow God and to seek the righteousness required in the law of Moses, have now attained to that righteousness through faith in Christ Jesus. This brings out the reason why the Jews have rejected the gospel and the Gentiles have accepted it. The Jews sought righteousness by an outward observance without purification of their hearts by faith; the Gentiles sought it by faith, which purifies the heart and works by love.

31 **but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.**—Israel, who, confiding in their own merit and good works, betook themselves for righteousness to their own supposed complete obedience to the law of Moses, have not found or attained to such a law of righteousness.

32 **Wherefore?**—Why is it that the Israelites who sought it failed to attain it?

Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works.—Because they sought it not through believing with the heart and so purifying the heart by faith, but only regulated the outward actions.

They stumbled at the stone of stumbling;—They were not led by faith, else they would not have stumbled at Jesus Christ. The law of Moses regulated the outward actions and failed to reach the heart. The prophet foretold that God

written,

**'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence :
And he that believeth on ^ohim shall not be put to shame.**

⁴Is. xxviii. 16.

⁵Or, *it*

would make a new covenant with the house of Israel: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." (Jer. 31: 31-34.)

33 even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence:—It had been foretold that God would lay in Zion a stone of stumbling. That stone of stumbling is the Lord Jesus Christ. [There was never a prophecy more literally fulfilled. When he spoke plainly, they were offended; and when he spoke in parables, they were displeased. When he healed, they took offense; when he did not heal and refused to give a sign, they were dissatisfied. If he came to the feast, they sought his life; if he did not come, they busied themselves searching for him. Nothing that he did or failed to do pleased. His whole earthly life developed an ever-increasing dislike for him and bitter animosity for his claims.]

and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.—Whosoever believes on him shall not be brought to shame at the judgment seat of Christ. [The man who believes in Jesus Christ with his whole heart shall not be agitated or thrown into commotion by fear or want of success, shall not be disap-

pointed in his hope, and shall never be ashamed that he consecrated his life to God through Jesus Christ. They who do not believe in Jesus Christ shall be agitated, fall, and sink into eternal shame and contempt. (Dan. 12: 2.)]

6. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN UNATTAINABLE LEGAL
 RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH
 AS OFFERING SALVATION ON FEASIBLE TERMS

10: 1-13

1 Brethren, my heart's ^edesire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For being ignorant of God's righ-

^eGr. *good pleasure*.

1 **Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.**—In the beginning of the preceding chapter Paul avers his strong love for his brethren in the flesh, and here he repeats it as the desire of his heart that they might be saved.

2 **For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God**—He testifies in their behalf that they have a zeal for God. The Jews at this time had not gone into idolatry as they had done in the days of the kings. They were zealously and devotedly religious toward God, and their religious zeal hindered their obedience to the divine law. A religion that shuts out or obstructs the knowledge of God's will and hinders obedience to the law of God stands between that man and God and hinders his salvation. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21.) To do the will of God is the only road to union with him.

but not according to knowledge.—[This means knowing what God has taught on the subject of justification. Had they read the law of Moses and the prophets correctly, they would at once have recognized in Jesus their long-expected Messiah and would have hailed him with great joy. Their lack of knowledge, being due to their own stubborn refusal to either see or hear, was inexcusable.]

3 **For being ignorant of God's righteousness,**—"Righteousness" is here used for the plan of making men righteous. The

teousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law unto righ-

Jews were not ignorant that God was a righteous and holy being, but in the blindness of their hearts they were ignorant of the provisions that God had made for justifying men, or making them righteous through Jesus Christ.

and seeking to establish their own,—[They sought a righteousness of their own, of works, secured by keeping the law and obeying the traditions of men. (Matt. 15: 3-8; Mark 7: 7, 8.) Their theory they not only sought to make good, but they shut their eyes and ears against every fact having in any measure the effect to prove them wrong. They assumed their theory to be infallible, and, as a consequence, grew impenetrable to argument against it.]

they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.—In depending upon and following their own ways of making men righteous, they had rejected God and been rejected of him. It has always been a popular idea in the world that so a man worshiped according to his convictions of right, his worship would be acceptable to God. But these Jews were exceedingly zealous of God; but in ignorance of God's way of making men righteous, they were rejected of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.—Since Christ is the end to which the law brings every one that believeth for righteousness, if one is not brought by the law to accept Christ, it shows that he has mistaken the end and purpose of the law. The same thought is expressed in these words: "So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor." (Gal. 3: 24, 25.) Those who claim to follow the law, yet reject Christ, are ignorant of the end and teaching of the law. Christ in his life fulfilled perfectly the righteousness required by the law. [Had the Jews only used the law instead of abusing it, it would have been their best preparation for the Savior's advent; for by reason of man's weakness it was powerless to justify. It was intended to impart to man a knowl-

teousness to every one that believeth. 5 For Moses writeth that ⁷the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, ⁸Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down :) 7 or, Who shall de-

⁷Lev. xviii. 5.

⁸Dt. xxx. 12 f.

edge of his sinfulness and awaken in his heart earnest longings for some powerful deliverer. Thus used, it would have insured the reception of the Messiah by the Jews. Striving to attain to real holiness, and increasingly conscious of the impossibility of attaining it by the imperfect obedience to the law's requirements, they would gladly have recognized Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness.]

5 For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law—"The righteousness of the law," as Moses defined it, was, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them" (Lev. 18: 5)—that is, so there was outward compliance they could live and be blessed temporarily.

shall live thereby.—It is the clear doctrine of the Scriptures that the obedience to the law, to secure justification, must be perfect, for it is said: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them" (Deut. 27: 26; Gal. 3: 10); and, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (James 2: 10). The legal system, then, which demands obedience, requires perfect obedience. [But in this world it has never been rendered, except in the case of our Lord. There is, therefore, no law which simply as law can give life, and no such thing as a "righteousness which is of the law."]

6, 7 But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus,— [Paul here personifies the righteousness by faith, and in that character is represented as doing what the living teacher of righteousness by faith does. Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, and in so doing shows it to be impossible.]

Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down :) or, Who shall descend into the

scend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? ⁹The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: 9 ¹⁰because if thou shalt ¹¹confess

⁹Dt. xxx. 14.

¹⁰(Or, *that*

¹¹Some ancient authorities read *confess the word with thy mouth, that Jesus is Lord.*

abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.)—Do not demand ocular demonstration of Christ's coming down from heaven or coming up from the grave. These things are not to be seen, save by those who were his chosen witnesses, who have borne their testimony in such manner that all can hear and believe. Nothing wonderful or difficult is required. [The Jews expected a Savior, reigning upon the earth, a visible king of an earthly kingdom; hence, they said: "Bring Christ down from heaven, where you say he is, and we will believe on him." Another thing that caused the Jews to stumble was the death and burial of Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, they held it to be positive proof that he was not the Christ. They still demanded that they should see the risen Christ with their own eyes, or that he should be brought up from the dead.]

8 **But what saith it?**—But what saith the righteousness that comes of faith?

The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart:—The word of God which comes to faith is nigh thee; it commends itself to the heart and finds a home in the heart, so that by the word the heart is changed, and the service that springs from faith is not a formal conformity to the law, but a hearty, loving service rendered to God because we love and honor him.

that is, the word of faith, which we preach:—This word of faith received into the heart was preached by the apostles and must be received through their preaching. See the following verse.

9 **because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord,**—The words preached by the apostles caused those who heard to believe with the heart that Jesus is the Christ, and that God raised him from the dead and had taken him up into heaven. This implies and embodies a belief of all that is told

concerning him after his ascension. His resurrection and ascension stand as the conclusion and crowning testimony of his claims as the Son of God. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. (1: 4.) The confession with the mouth is the declaration to the world of faith in the heart. It is needful that a man should have courage to declare his faith in Christ Jesus to the world. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 10: 32, 33.)

I do not understand this as referring to a formal confession of faith before baptism, for the following reasons: In the commission, in its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, and in the examples of conversion recorded in Acts of Apostles, there is no example of a formal confession being required as a precedent to baptism, unless the case of the eunuch be regarded as such. In reference to this, it is claimed by the textuary critics generally that the confession there recorded is an interpolation. The context and circumstances would indicate that such a confession was made. It is also clear that Philip was not seeking a formal confession, but evidence of faith. Whatever confession was made came in response to this seeking. The natural evidence of faith in the heart is the confession with the mouth. When Philip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest," the natural response would be: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." But it was made to manifest the presence of faith, not to make a formal confession. But if this does not require the confession, the singular fact is presented that in the Scriptures a condition of salvation is left out of all the precepts and examples concerning remission, and is to be found only in a reference in a letter to Christians as to what had been required. Then it is necessary that at every step of the religious life, even after one has grown old in the service of the Lord, with the mouth confession must be made unto salvation, and with the heart he must believe unto righteousness. He must live by and walk through faith unto the end. It is just as necessary that confession of Christ

with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: 10 for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, ¹⁸Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to

¹⁸Is. xxviii. 16.

should be made at all times or Christ will not own us. But that any formal confession was required before baptism, more than at any other step of his religious life, is not clear. Confession of Christ in our words is necessary. It is necessary in coming to Christ and in all the Christian life. I am sure that the questions and obedience on the day of Pentecost were an acceptable confession. So at the house of Cornelius and in all other instances.

and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved:—The confession here precedes the belief in the heart, but this is no indication of the order of development of these in the Christian character. The next verse shows that the belief in the heart must precede the confession with the mouth and is essential to the life that leads to salvation.

10 for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;—Righteousness cannot exist unless it has its root in the heart. It must begin with and first change the heart. Then the faith that is in the heart leads on to the righteousness of the life in Christ Jesus. If faith in the heart does not find growth in the life, it will die. "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." (James 2: 17.) A living faith will produce works. If the works are not good, the faith is faulty.

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—The open confession of Jesus as the Son of God leads on to the life of devotion to Christ Jesus that fits for salvation before God. Faith in God and courage to confess Christ is just as essential to salvation at every step through life down to death itself as they are at the beginning.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame.—This brings up the question as to whether it was a living, working, active faith, or simply believing without completing itself. Paul's own explanation

shame. 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him: 13 for, ¹²Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How

¹²Joel ii. 32.

should settle this. In the preceding verse he shows that he meant a belief that led to obedience. There he explains that the confession with the mouth must accompany the belief in the heart. Then in verse 16 he says, "They did not all hearken to the glad tidings," showing plainly that the belief spoken of embraced the obedience to the gospel. Faith in the heart gives courage to speak and act up to the faith. Consequently, being uncondemned, he will have no cause for shame.

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek:— [As the Jews were for several centuries under the dominion of the Greeks, and as the cultured of the Romans, their later masters, also spoke Greek, the term "Greek" became to them a synonym for "Gentile," for they had more dealings with the Greeks than with any other people.] The conclusion of the argument is that there is no difference in the sight of God between the Jew and the Greek. All have sinned, and all will now be accepted on the same terms.

for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him:—The same Lord is over all, whether Jews or Greeks, and he is rich toward all that seek him. [Now, as there is but one Lord, the Jews and Greeks were compelled to receive blessings from the same Lord; and as all stood in equal need of salvation, the Lord offers the same salvation to each upon the same conditions. (Eph. 2: 11-22.) Thus God showed the riches of his grace to all, and so rich is he in his mercy and provisions of salvation that no multitude can exhaust them; therefore, the Jew has no reason to envy the Gentiles their call, since it in no way impoverishes him.]

13 for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.—This does not mean a formal calling upon the Lord, but a committing of themselves unto him as their Lord and Master. [The calling here is of the kind enjoined upon Saul by Ananias: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy

sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.) From the moment we believe on him we are thenceforward never to ignore his name. He is to be recognized in every act and his guidance and blessing constantly invoked.]

**7. THE GOSPEL AS FREELY OFFERING SALVATION TO ALL,
HAVING BEEN ANNOUNCED TO ALL, THE DISOBEDIENT,
WHETHER JEW OR GENTILE, IS LEFT WITHOUT
EXCUSE**

10: 14-21

then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?—Since it is needful that they should thus commit themselves to the rule of God in order to salvation, how can they call on him to be their God unless they have believed in him? No service can be acceptable to him unless it comes from the heart. The heart can render homage to God only as it is led by faith in him.

and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?—They cannot. [The preaching of Christ's messengers is identical with the preaching of Christ himself. (Eph. 2: 17; 4: 21.)]

and how shall they hear without a preacher?—Paul is here showing the absolute necessity of preaching to the Gentiles, who had not known God as the means of salvation.

15 and how shall they preach, except they be sent?—Here he shows the necessity of him who went forth to preach being sent of God. He must have the credentials from God. This refers, of course, to the original proclamation of the gospel. Before and in anticipation of leaving them, Jesus told his apostles, chosen to bear witness of what he should speak to the world, that he would send them the Holy Spirit, who would call to their remembrance all things he had commanded them and would guide them into all the truth. (John 16: 13, 14.) After his death and resurrection, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and just before his ascension to his Father's throne, he gave to them the commis-

as it is written, ¹⁴How beautiful are the feet of them that bring ¹ glad tidings of good things!

¹⁴Is. lii. 7.

¹⁵Or, a gospel

sion. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 45-49.) He then ascended, and the apostles tarried in Jerusalem; the Holy Spirit came upon them, "and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 4.) On that day the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, made known the conditions of remission of sins and entrance into the church of God. This glad message was preached by them throughout the world. And the Lord Jesus appeared unto Saul when on his way to Damascus to make him "a minister and a witness" (Acts 26: 16), and Paul said of the gospel which he preached: "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1: 12).

No one preaches now in the same sense that those who went forth as heralds to proclaim a new revelation from God; those since repeat it. One is a preacher in the true sense of the word; the other, a teacher of what has been preached or proclaimed by the heralds sent forth from God, endowed with the Holy Spirit, to guide them into all the truth.

This passage is sometimes used to prove that the churches ought to send forth preachers to preach now. Such an application of it is a perversion of it, and destroys the force of the grand truth that those who proclaimed the gospel in the apostolic period were supernaturally endowed and sent of God to make known the terms of salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.

even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!—Isaiah (52: 7) declares the preciousness of the message, and that the gladness of the joy it gave to those who received it would invest the feet of those who brought the glad tidings of good things with a halo of beauty. It is right for churches and individual Christians to help those who go forth to teach the word of truth, but these original teachers were sent of God.

16 But they did not all hearken to the ¹⁶glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, ¹⁷Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 so belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18 But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily,

¹⁸Their sound went out into all the earth,
And their words unto the ends of ¹⁹the world.

¹⁶Or, *gospel*

¹⁷Is. liii. 1.

¹⁸Ps. xix. 4.

¹⁹Gr. *the inhabited earth.*

16 But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings,—Those who heard the gospel had not believed and obeyed it.

For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?—It was in Paul's time as it had been in the days of Isaiah, who, after preaching and prophesying much, viewing the meager results, asks: "Lord, who hath believed our report," or preaching? He felt that his work had been in vain.

17 So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.—Notwithstanding this failure of man to believe, he affirms that belief comes of hearing the word of Christ. "The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8: 11.) There is no belief or knowledge of God, or Christ, or of the Holy Spirit, save as it comes through the word of God and is received in faith. From the word of God as the seed first appears the bud, or blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, these being degrees of growth, or development of faith—faith through successive stages. From the first assent of the mind to the probable truth of a historic proposition, to a fully developed confidence or trust in God through Jesus Christ as his Son. [The faith thus produced is belief that leads to all acceptable obedience, and consequently to remission of sins. Hence, the need of preaching. If God by a direct operation of the Spirit wrought faith in the heart, he could dispense with the preacher. But the divine arrangement is that it should result from hearing the word of God preached.]

18 But I say, Did they not hear?—If faith comes by hearing, the responsibility to some extent rested on those who had the word to proclaim—that is, on those sent of God to preach.

Yea, verily, their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.—On the day of Pente-

19 But I say, Did Israel not know? First Moses saith,
 *I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation,
 With a nation void of understanding will I anger you.

*Dt. xxxi. 21.

cost there were in Jerusalem men out of every nation under heaven. They lived in the provinces of Asia, Africa, and Europe—all the known world—and the gospel was soon preached among all nations. Yet they had not believed in Christ. This seems to apply to the Jews especially, scattered among all nations.

19 **But I say, Did Israel not know?**—To what does this question refer? The answer seems to indicate: Did they not know that the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles? If they did not, it was because they had closed their eyes and refused to see the plain teaching of the Jewish Scriptures.

First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy with that which is no nation, with a nation void of understanding will I anger you.—[If any Israelite had carefully and in a believing spirit considered the words of Moses thus quoted, he would have assuredly gathered from them that God would withdraw his favor from those who had hitherto been his people, on account of their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and give it to those who had hitherto been not his people. Now, this exactly described the state of things then existing. The fulfillment of this prophecy is thus described by Luke: "And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said. It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. . . . And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God." (Acts 13: 44-48.) So that the Jews had then before their eyes the fulfillment of one of their most ancient prophecies—the Jews shutting their ears to the message of salvation; the Gentiles, till then no people, listening and believing; and

20 And Isaiah is very bold, and saith,

^aI was found of them that sought me not ;

I became manifest unto them that asked not of me.

21 But as to Israel he saith, 'All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

^aIs. lxxv. 1.

¹Is. lxxv. 2.

the Jews, full of envy and jealousy, enraged at the reception on the Gentiles' part of the very gospel which they rejected.]

20 **And Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I became manifest unto them that asked not of me.**—After the manner of prophecy, Isaiah speaks of things future as though they had already taken place. [The idolatrous Gentiles, who being wholly occupied with the worship of their idols, never once thought of inquiring after or worshiping the true God. Nevertheless, to them, while in this state, God, by the preaching of the gospel, made himself known and offered himself as the object of their worship, and they gladly responded. They broke their idols, burned their books, surrendered to the authority of Christ, and began to walk in newness of life.]

21 **But as to Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.**—While these prophecies of the Gentiles accepting Christ had been made, he says of the Jews: "All the day long [all the days of the existence of the Jewish people] did I spread out my hands" to call, to warn, and entreat a disobedient and fault-finding people. This was in the face of the repeated covenants they had made to obey him and be his people. Thus he shows that they had warning that the Gentiles would come in, while they, despite all their advantages, would be rejected through unbelief.

8. ISRAEL NOT WHOLLY CAST OFF, A REMNANT BEING
SAVED THROUGH GRACE AND THE REST BEING RE-
JECTED ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR BLINDNESS

11: 1-10

1 I say then, Did God cast off his people? God forbid. For I also am an

1 I say then, Did God cast off his people?—Paul, having shown that the Jews had rejected Christ and that God re-

Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not cast off his people which he foreknew. Or know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel: 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars; and I am left

²1 K. xix. 10.

³Or, in Comp. Mk. 12. 26.

jected them, sees the conclusion liable to be reached by them—that God had cast off the Israelites as a nation; so he asks the question and responds to it.

God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.—Paul was of the purest blood of the Israelites. Had God cast them off because they were Israelites, Paul would not have been his servant. They broke themselves off because they rejected the long-expected Messiah.

2 God did not cast off his people which he foreknew.—God has not wholly cast off his people whom he formally chose, but that he has rejected them as a nation is indisputable. [Prior to the coming of Christ, Israel were the people of God by virtue of their descent from Abraham; but so soon as Christ sent forth his apostles with a world-wide commission, the ground of acceptance changed. Descent was not the ground of acceptance. Faith in Christ alone secured favor. Without rendering obedience to him, the most devout Jew was rejected; with it, none was.]

Or know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel:—Elijah charged the Israelites with crime against God, and pleaded with him for their rejection.

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life.—His complaint against them was that they had killed the prophets, destroyed the altars of God, supplanted them with altars of idols, and he was left alone of the prophets, and they were seeking his life. He was fleeing for his life, discouraged, and thought all Israel had forsaken God. (1 Kings 19: 10-14) [Elijah, in that state of deep discouragement into which the foregoing events had plunged him, no longer saw in Israel

alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what 'saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 But if it is by grace it is no more of

⁴1 K. xix. 18.

any other than idolaters, or believers too cowardly to deserve the name.]

4 **But what saith the answer of God unto him?**—God answered him that it was not so bad as it appeared to him.

I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.—He had reserved seven thousand true in their worship to him, who had not gone into the idol worship of Baal. [Baal was the principal deity of the Phenicians, and represented the sun. Jezebel, the queen of Ahab, was a Phenician, and sought to supplant the worship of Jehovah with the worship of Baal. (1 Kings 16: 31-33.)

5 **Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant**—Paul assured them that it was not so bad as outward appearances indicated. At the time he was writing there was a remnant of Israel left that had accepted the grace of God offered in Christ Jesus and were chosen of him.

according to the election of grace.—God proffered mercy and pardon through Jesus Christ, and whosoever believed in him was chosen and approved of God. Jesus is called "the grace of God." (Tit. 2: 11.) In Christ and his teachings are embraced the gracious provisions of God for salvation. [The election was a choice proceeding from grace. The grace resided in God, and the act of choosing was his; but his grace prompted the act. Although the grace prompted the election, the grace was not the reason for it. The reason existed in those chosen, not in him who chose; and it lay in their obedience to Christ. The nation of Israel, God rejected because of disobedience to Christ; the individual, he retained in his favor because of obedience to him. Election in the case of the redeemed does not precede obedience, and, therefore, is neither the cause of it nor the reason for it. On the contrary, obedience precedes election, and is both the condition of it and the reason for it. Obedience is man's own free act, to which he is

works: otherwise grace is no more grace. 7 What then? That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened: 8 according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stu-

never moved by any prior election of God. Choosing, on the other hand, is God's free act, prompted by grace, and conditioned on obedience. This obedience he seeks to elicit by his love manifested in Jesus Christ (John 3: 16); but to this he is led solely by his love for man and never by previous choice. True scriptural election, therefore, is a simple, intelligible thing.]

6 But if it is by grace, it is no more works:—If they were saved by the provisions of grace in Christ, it was not by the works of the Jewish law, or by any works that allowed boasting. The Holy Spirit says: “By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2: 8-10.) God, moved by love, has presented in Christ gracious terms of mercy that man can appropriate through faith. The salvation did not come of works that would allow boasting, but was given by God to those who through faith accepted it and walked in God's ways.

otherwise grace is no more grace.—If salvation under Christ is by works, then grace and works have lost their distinguishing features.

7 What then?—[What conclusion by way of result shall we draw from what has just been stated?]

That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not;—Israel by the works of the law did not attain to the righteousness which he sought, and was not accepted of God.

but the election obtained it,—But those who by faith accepted the grace of God offered through Jesus Christ, and so were chosen of God, have attained it.

and the rest were hardened:—Hardened by refusing to believe in Jesus Christ.

8 according as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should

por, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this very day. 9 And David saith,

“Let their table be made a snare, and a trap,

And a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them :

10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,

And bow thou down their back always.

^aIs. xxix. 10; Dt. xxix. 4.

^bPs. lxix. 22 f.

not hear, unto this very day.—Paul shows that this blindness had been foretold by their prophets. Isaiah foretold that God would send blindness upon them, because they were obdurate in their rebellion. “And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them.” (Isa. 29: 13.) Their heart was not near God; so they feared him not from the teachings of God, but from the precepts of men. When people look to the wisdom and precepts of men instead of God for instruction, God says their heart is far removed from him; and when they persist in this course, he gives them over to blindness that they should bring ruin on themselves.

9 **And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them:**—Let that which was intended for their good become a snare to entrap them, a stumbling block over which they may fall, and a recompense to requite them their iniquity. This shows God’s dealings with men. He proposes to bless them if they will trust him; but if they are determined in their rebellion, then the things to bless them will be a curse, will lead them into greater sin and bring the deeper ruin.

10 **Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow thou down their back always.**—Let the spiritual eyes of those of Israel who reject the Messiah become darkened; let their perception become blunt and their understanding dull that they may remain ignorant. They willfully refuse to see in Christ their own long-promised Messiah. When men persistently refuse to do right, God’s policy is to leave them to

the effect of their own folly. David, their boasted king, had thus seen how hopeless they had grown in their rebellion.

9. STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT REGULATE THE ELECTION OF GRACE

11: 11-24

11 I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid: but by their ⁷fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy.

⁷Or, *trespass* Comp. ch. 5. 15 ff.

11 I say then, Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid:—Have they stumbled that they should finally fall away and never return to God again?

but by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,—It is difficult to see how the falling away from God of the Jews would facilitate the bringing in of the Gentiles; yet that seems to be the meaning. The Jews were forbidden association with the Gentiles, not to cut them off from the knowledge of God, but to protect the Jews from the corrupting influences of idolatry among the Gentiles. God knew that in the then condition of Jews and Gentiles—of the slight hold that he had on the Jews, and the strong tendency to be led into idolatry, with its cultivation of lascivious feelings and gratification of the lusts—the association would lead the Jews into idolatry to a much greater extent than it would lead the Gentiles to God; so he prohibited the association. But in violation of God's command, the Jews did affiliate with the Gentiles until they were so corrupted that God sent them into captivity among the Gentiles, with whom they had formed alliance. This was the culmination of the falling away; but the Gentiles by a long course of suffering had become ready to accept God. The captivity of the Jews carried some faithful Jews into the Gentile lands as well as the unfaithful ones. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; Ezra and Nehemiah—all faithful and true to God—were not only carried into captivity, but were brought into immediate association with the kings and their household. They were made servants in the households of the kings, and by virtue of their superior wisdom, knowl-

12 Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of

edge, and goodness became the tutors of the young princes and counsellors and advisers of the kings. They taught them the knowledge of the true God and prepared the Gentiles to receive Christ, as they would not have been prepared had the Jews maintained their exclusiveness.

As an example, Cyrus, king of Persia, gave orders to the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem. God put it in their heart to do this. How did he do it? Daniel and his fellow servants in the king's house taught him of the true God, and of the Jewish history. Through this influence God led Cyrus to make the decree for the return of the Jews and for them to rebuild Jerusalem and restore the temple of God. Many of the more faithful Jews, like Daniel and the Hebrew children, did not return to Jerusalem, but remained with many Jews, teaching the knowledge of the true God, and so getting the Gentiles ready to receive Christ when he came.

Much of the dealing of God with the Jews and much of the teaching of the prophets was intended to affect the Gentiles fully as much as the Jews. Pharaoh was raised up that God might show to the Egyptians and other nations the power of God. David, the shepherd lad, slew Goliath, a skilled giant, "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." (1 Sam. 17: 46.)

to provoke them to jealousy.—The refusal of the Jews to accept Christ was the occasion of their destruction and dispersion as a nation, and removal of an obstacle to the Gentiles' coming to Christ. Then the coming of the Gentiles, their reception of the gifts of the Spirit, and the general prosperity which the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ brings to nations, would provoke the Jews to jealousy and make them anxious to secure again the favor of God.

12 Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles;—The dispersion of the Jews among the Gentiles greatly helped the spread of Christianity when Christ came. "Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2: 5), on

the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? 13 But I speak to you that are

the day of Pentecost, who, on the return to their respective homes, spread the news among the nations. But this dispersion was the result of their falling away from God and prepared them for the coming of the Christ.

Sometimes nations and men, in descent from a higher to a lower position, meet others ascending from the lower to a higher and impart to them truths they have learned in the higher condition that help the other in the upward movement.

The question may arise: If the Jews had been true to God, would the Gentiles have been in worse condition than they were by the sins of the Jews? By no means. Had the Jews all been true to God, they would have been so blessed that they would have attracted the Gentiles to God by their prosperity and happiness; but God, who sees the end from the beginning, overrules so as to bless those willing to receive the blessing in the conditions that arise.

Then, again, the uplifting of people must be gradual. Because the children of Israel sinned, the law was added as a tutor to train them to receive the Messiah—that is, they were not capable of receiving his teaching in the low, fleshly state into which they had fallen; so God trained them until they were prepared to receive him. Was not this true of families and nations then, and is it not true of them now? Is it not true that there are nations of peoples now not qualified to receive the truth as it is in its purity, but first need to be trained and uplifted and gradually prepared by less pure forms of truth that they may be schooled thereby to receive the higher and purer truths of God?

how much more their fulness?—Now, if the fall of the Jews was the means of opening the riches of God's blessings to the world by bringing them into the favor of God, and diminished their own importance, helped the Gentiles to enjoy more of the favor of God, how much rather will their return to God bless the world? If they return, it will not be as the exclusive people of God. When they return, they will recognize all as

Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *them that are my flesh*, and may save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what *shall the receiving of them be*, but life from the dead? 16 And if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is

enjoying the favor of God in Christ Jesus. They will come as sinners trusting in God for salvation.

13 But I speak to you that are Gentiles.—The effort is to excite their gratitude and to warn them against abusing God's mercies so graciously vouchsafed to them.

Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry;—He magnified and gloried in his work. He did this by showing that the conversion of the Gentiles had been foretold in prophecy and what a wonderful influence it would have on the world.

14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh,—[Paul honored his ministry by his untiring zeal and energy to convert just as many Gentiles as possible, hoping that the more of them he brought to Christ, the more he would stir to Jews to emulation. In a very limited way did he attain his purpose.]

and may save some of them.—[Those who are instruments of salvation are said to save. (1 Cor. 7: 16; 9: 22; 1 Tim. 4: 16.) Only by speaking thus can we realize the grandeur of the work of those who turn sinners from the error of their way.] It may mean that he might provoke them to fidelity to God that they might be saved.

15 For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?—For if the casting them off as the exclusive people of God opened the way for other nations to accept Christ, what shall their return to the favor of God be but receiving them as from the dead? They were dead and in condemnation from God while rejecting him. Their return to God will give them life with God.

16 And if the first fruit is holy, so is the lump:—This refers to the requirement to offer the first fruits to God before the

harvest could be eaten by men: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb without blemish a year old for a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. And the meal-offering thereof shall be two tenths parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah for a sweet savor; and the drink-offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched grain, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings." (Lev. 23: 10-14.) The grain was unclean to be eaten by the people until the first fruits of it has been offered to the Lord. So as the first fruits of the gospel were from the Jews on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and since they were then taken and accepted of God, so will all Israel be accepted if they turn to God. [They are not irrevocably rejected, but will be accepted if they accept Jesus Christ and become obedient unto the faith.]

and if the root is holy,—This evidently has reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in whom God chose the Jewish race and for whose sake they were accepted and loved. Now, is it possible for those two things, so far apart, to coalesce? Yes. They coalesce in Jesus Christ. [No Christian can so much as think of the Jewish "remnant" without thinking of Him who called the apostles his "brethren." (Matt. 28: 10; John 20: 17.) So far as his human nature was concerned, he was the first of the Jewish system. His mother, his education, his worship, were Jewish, "of whom is Christ concerning the flesh" (9: 5), and he is equally the root. If he was the root and offspring of David (Isa. 11: 10; Rom. 15: 12; Rev. 22: 16), so was he of Abraham. From him came the call, "the election of grace," and the promises; and yet not in an exclu-

holy, so are the branches. 17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree; 18 glory not

^aMany ancient authorities read *of the root and of the fatness*.

sive sense, for he was the first fruits of Israel, but also the first fruits of humanity. He was the root of Abraham, but also of all human nature. "He is before all things, and in him all things consist." (Col. 1: 17.)]

so are the branches.—As the root was acceptable to God, so will the branches be if they believe on him. "Holy" here means acceptable in the service of God. If God has accepted the first converts from the Jews, it gives assurance that he will not refuse the service of the later members of the family, if they will believe and serve God through Jesus Christ. It was the assurance that the Jews were not finally rejected by God.

17 **But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root of the fatness of the olive tree;**—The point before the apostle was: How and why was the one broken off and the other grafted in where life is received? The branches of the tame olive received life from the root. While receiving life from the root, they lost faith; so they bore no fruit, or evil fruit. If Paul intended to say that the branch must bear fruit like the root, whence it had received life, he could not represent that it ceased to bear good fruit while yet connected with the good root as he has done. Then when the branch of the wild olive is grafted into the root, he makes no reference to fruit bearing. The point is: When this olive branch, changed by faith so as to bear good fruit, is grafted into the root, it receives its life from the root, not the root from the branch. But the wild olive branch grafted in among these of the tame that still stand through faith, "with them" partakes "of the root and fatness of the olive tree." The question Paul had before him was: How and why were the branches of the tame olive tree broken off?

over the branches: but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root,

How and why are the branches of the wild olive tree grafted in to receive its life from the root, and how can it stand? He says it received its life from the root and fatness of the stock into which it is grafted.

All the facts of horticulture agree precisely with Paul. He says nothing directly about the fruit produced by this ingrafting into the stock. The fruit produced is implied in the standing and continuing in the goodness of God. I apprehend had he followed up the figure to illustrate the conditions more specially of fruit bearing, he would have said: "In as much as the branches of the tame olive tree by unbelief had so changed their nature as to bear evil fruit, and in as much as the branch of the wild olive through faith is fitted to bear good fruit, take heed lest through unbelief you be broken off." He did say, "Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off," and perish. The root in no part of the figure is represented as giving the quality of the fruit. The character of the branch attained through faith, or the lack of faith, determined the quality of the fruit it bears, and this quality determines whether the branches shall be cut off and die or be grafted in and stand. The parable in all its teachings and implications is in perfect accord with the facts and processes of nature.

These facts show two truths: (1) truth is not to be perpetuated through church organizations perpetuated from age to age; (2) men must follow the law of God if they go alone. We need not think the growth or popularity of parties please God or indicate the success of truth or indicates the favor of God. God blesses those who give up all to follow him, and he is the strength and power of his servants who are faithful and true.

18 glory not over the branches:—This is an exhortation to those among the Gentiles who had been grafted into the tame olive not to boast against the natural branches, the Jews, which had been broken off. Their whole duty was to learn what God tells them to do, and in the spirit of confiding trust in him do it in the way he directs, being careful to go no far-

but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 for if God

ther and leave the results with him. When they did this, it was God working in and through them. It should be the highest ambition of every child of God to let God so use him that his success is God's success. God only fails when man refuses to let God work through him. (2 Chron. 16: 9.)

but if thou gloriest, it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root thee.—If they boasted, they were to remember that the Jews had long been in the favor of God, and, as the root, bore the branches of the wild olive that had been grafted into the root. [We do not do justice to this place if we narrow it to the reception of the Gentiles among the spiritual seed of Abraham; it seems rather to mean that the whole scheme of redemption had its foundation in the Jewish economy. Not only was Abraham the spiritual father of all the faithful; not only was the Redeemer a Jew and all the apostles and first teachers of the gospel of Christ Jews, but all the books of the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, were written by Jews.]

19 Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.—This was spoken as a warning against a feeling of boastful pride they were liable to have against the Jews. It is possible that they would say to the Jews: "You have shown yourselves unworthy, so we cast off, while we have shown ourselves worthy and have been grafted into the favor of God."

20 Well; by their unbelief they were broken off,—The sole cause of the breaking off of the Jews was their disbelief in Christ.

and thou standest by thy faith.—The only ground of acceptance of the Gentiles was their faith in Christ. Nothing stronger can be said of anyone's faith than that he stands by it; he stands justified. "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace

spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. 22 Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief,

wherein we stand." (5: 1, 2.) "For in faith ye stand fast." (2 Cor. 1: 24.)

Be not highminded, but fear:—Be not lifted up with a feeling of superiority, but fear lest you fall. [Paul exhorts very solemnly: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2: 12.) And yet this fear is in no way inconsistent with rejoicing in the Lord nor with the highest comfort in his service, for the primitive church "had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." (Acts 9: 31.)]

21 for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee.—If God did not spare the children of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, whom he loved, take care as to your fidelity, lest he spare not you. He will no more tolerate unbelief and self-sufficiency in the Gentile than he did in the Jew.

22 Behold then the goodness and severity of God:—God is noted for two qualities apparently contradictory. One is goodness, mercy, pity; the other is severity, wrath, vengeance.

toward them that fell, severity;—On the Jews, who, despite his goodness and mercy to them, the wonders and deliverances he had shown them through a long series of years, turns from him and refused to trust and obey him, he visited severity and wrath. He brought them to destruction as a people.

but toward thee, God's goodness,—On the Gentiles, who through their fathers were without God, and without hope in the world, had believed in Christ, and God had bestowed on them his goodness and mercy.

if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.—If they would continue in the channel of faithfulness in which his mercy flowed; otherwise they should be cut off, and then his wrath would fall upon them. [These verses are marked by repeated and emphatic warnings to Gentile believers against falling away from a state of favor with God, as

shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

the Jews had fallen, after the same example of unbelief. And the warning is equally appropriate and as needful to believers at the present time.]

23 And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in:—While he warns the Gentiles that if they did not continue in his goodness they would be cut off, he holds out the assurance to the Jews that if they will turn from their unbelief which broke them off, then God would graft them in again.

for God is able to graft them in again.—[They have not so sinned but that God can consistently with his moral attributes restore them.]

24 For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?—If the Gentiles were cut out of the wild olive tree (the disobedient nations) and were grafted into the good olive tree, how much rather shall these natural branches be grafted back into their own tree? [If the Jews should change their attitude toward God and toward Christ, God can, consistently with the principles of his administration, change his attitude toward them and can graft them into his favor again. He wills not that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ and be saved. To this end he grafted the wild olive into the good olive.]

10. THE RESTORATION OF THE ISRAELITES TO THE DIVINE FAVOR FORETOLD

11 : 25-36

25 For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be

25 For I would not brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery,—A mystery was not something that could not be ex-

wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; 26 and so all Israel shall be saved:

plained or understood, but something unrevealed and unknown. It is no longer a mystery after it had been explained by an inspired man. It was a mystery, or secret, that the hardness had come upon a part of the Jews until the gospel had been fully preached to the Gentiles.

lest ye be wise in your own conceits,—If they did not understand this, they might be wise in their own conceit to think that they had so commended themselves to God as to supplant the Jews in their favor.

that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in;—As to when “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” is a difficult question to answer. So it receives different answers from different people. I think all agree that “the Gentiles” means that the gospel should be preached to all Gentiles, and that they would have opportunities equal to those the Jews had enjoyed. Whether they will have rejected these opportunities and privileges as the Jews had done is a question concerning which students differ. For a time I thought they would accept the truth, and that “the fulness” meant when they all came to accept Christ. I now think it probable that they will reject Christ as the Jews did. I have very little confidence in human interpretations of unfulfilled prophecy, because when I look at the fulfillment as given by God, it differs so from what I would have said it meant that I have no confidence in my own interpretations or those of others of what is unfulfilled.

26 and so all Israel shall be saved:—It cannot be true that “all Israel” here means the whole Jewish people. “Israel” seems here in the conclusion of the argument to be used in the restricted sense—to apply to those who believe in Jesus and walk in the footsteps of Abraham—for he had already said: “For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children” (9: 6, 7.) “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who

even as it is written,

¹There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer ;

He shall turn away ²ungodliness from Jacob :

27 ³And this is ⁴my covenant unto them,

When I shall take away their sins.

28 As touching the ⁵gospel, they are enemies for your sake : but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake. 29 For the gifts and the

¹Is. lix. 20 f.

²Gr. *ungodliness*.

³Is. xxvii. 9.

⁴Gr. *the covenant from me*.

⁵See ch. 10. 15. 16, and marginal note on ch. 1. 1.

is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (2 : 28, 29.) "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham." (Gal. 3 : 7.) So "all Israel" here means all who believe in Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, as a nation, were taken out of the way to open the way for the Gentiles to come in among the faithful branches of the Israelites ; and so all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, which constitute the true Israel of God, will be saved. The unbelievers ceased to be counted as Israel.

even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer ; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :—"Jacob" cannot here mean the fleshly house of Israel, but the true Israel of God that believe in Christ. From these Jesus Christ, the deliverer, will turn away ungodliness.

27 and their is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins.—This result, that all who would accept Christ should be delivered from sin, is the covenant that God made with them, and this covenant is completed with them when he takes away their sins.

28 As touching the gospel, they are enemies for your sake :—"They" here and in the following verses seems to refer to the Jewish nation. They are enemies to the gospel that the Gentiles might be brought in.

but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sake.—It was in the persons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the divine election of Israel was originally realized and through them that they are beloved. They stand in favor as the chosen people of God through whom Christ came. [This

calling of God are not repented of. 30 For as ye in time past were disobedient to God, but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience, 31 even so have these also now been disobedient, that by the mercy shown to you they also may now obtain mercy. 32 For God hath shut up all unto disobedience,

sentiment might well have been expressed in the words of Moses: "Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as at this day." (Deut. 10: 15.)]

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of.—God having called the family of Abraham and bestowed upon them the honor of producing the Messiah, never repented of such a calling so as to take it from them, notwithstanding their frequent sins and rebellions against him. This is said in explanation of his statement that they were beloved for the fathers' sake. [This verse does not contradict such passages as Gen. 6: 6; Jer. 18: 10; for, though God cannot change, many of his gifts are conditional on man's conduct; therefore, change in man is followed by a corresponding change in God's treatment of him. This change in God's action is practically the same to us as though God changed his purpose, and, therefore, is sometimes so described. The apparent contradiction arises from the imperfection of human thought and language. God's character is pledged to fulfill his promises; but each man's share in the fulfillment depends on his faith.]

30 For as ye in time past were disobedient to God,—This refers to the former idolatrous and unbelieving state of the Gentiles, and that the gospel was preached to them, and that they became obedient to it.

but now have obtained mercy by their disobedience,—Their reception of the gospel, and thus obtaining mercy, was in consequence of the Jews' having rejected it.

31 even so have these also now been disobedient,—[The Jews were disobedient to God in not believing on his Son. Formerly they were obedient to God, and the Gentiles were disobedient; but now the case is reversed.]

that by the mercy shown to you they also may now obtain mercy.—[As the rejection of the gospel by the Jews proved a

that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth ⁶of the riches ⁷both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34

⁶Or, of the riches and the wisdom &c.

⁷Or, both of wisdom &c.

blessing to the Gentiles, so, in turn, its reception by the Gentiles is to prove a blessing to the Jews and induce them to obey it. At first the gospel came from the Jews to the Gentiles; now it must go from the Gentiles to the Jews. Thus the Jews are to obtain mercy through the mercy shown to the Gentiles.]

32 **For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.**—God has shut up all unto disobedience in unbelief, that he might extend the terms of mercy unto all. [All alike are dependent on God's mercy. Paul says (Gal. 3: 22) that those who are thus shut up unto disobedience and under sin will never experience the benefit of God's mercy, and, consequently, ever remain in bondage to sin unless they become believers in Christ. Consequently, whether the mercy will ever be actually realized or not depends on faith in Christ. With this, all can realize it; without it, none can.]

33 **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!**—Inexpressibly wise and deep is the wisdom that could so arrange that the punishment of the Jews for their unbelief would open the way for the Gentiles to believe in Christ, and that the reception of the Gentiles would be the means of bringing Israel back to God. [Thus they were to be mutual aids until all their interests should be blended and the human race should be united in the love of the same gospel and the service of the same God and Savior. When, therefore, this profound and wonderful plan is contemplated and its history traced from the commencement to the end, no wonder that the apostle was fixed in admiration at the amazing wisdom of Him who devised it and who has made all events subservient to its establishment and spread among men.] Such wisdom is beyond searching out by human

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him *be* the glory [^]for ever. Amen.

[^]Gr. *unto the ages.*

beings, but it is an outburst of wonder and delight in contemplating a glorious revelation of wisdom and goodness surpassing all that the heart of man could have conceived.

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord?—Who of his own wisdom hath known the mind of the Lord? [God's designs are impenetrable until he reveals them himself to his apostles and prophets and by them to his people. As to those whom God enlightened on the subject of his designs, Paul himself says: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2: 16.)]

or who hath been his counsellor?—With whom has God in reaching his conclusions deigned to take counsel? [None can say that God's gifts to him are a return for gifts received. These words put aside all human merit. The action rewarded and the reward are alike gifts of God. Therefore, every good work makes us a debtor to God, not God to us. (Eph. 2: 10.)]

35 or who hath first given to him, and it should be recompensed unto him again?—All that Jew or Gentile receives from God is of God's grace, not to repay the deserts or favors of man.

36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things.—All things that we are or have are of and from and are bestowed by God that we may bring to him service and honor.

To him be the glory for ever. Amen.—He is worthy of glory now and forever.

VI. EXHORTATIONS AND PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOUNDED ON THE FOREGOING DOCTRINAL EXPOSITIONS

12: 1 to 15: 13

1. HORTATORY ENFORCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN DUTIES OF A GENERAL AND OFFICIAL CHARACTER

12: 1-8

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy ⁹acceptable to God, *which* is your ¹⁰spiritual

⁹Gr. *well-pleasing*.

¹⁰Gr. *belonging to the reason*.

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren,—The word “therefore” connects the exhortation to consecration to God with the entire discussion of the foregoing chapters, culminating in the declaration of God’s all-embracing mercy in 11: 32.

by the mercies of God,—The mercy so often spoken of in chapter 11, as embracing both Jews and Gentiles in a common salvation, is here described by a very strong word, expressing tenderest compassion.

to present your bodies—They were to restrain and hold in abeyance all the sensual appetites and lusts, and consecrate all their faculties and ability to the service of God. [It means ceasing to hold. (Acts 20: 24.) Let God have full possession, not only of your spirit and soul, but of your physical body. Yield every member up to him. Again, it means ceasing to struggle, to cast all upon Him who is able to keep you from falling. This is, indeed, a life of self-denial. This gives a dim view of what it is to be not one’s own—a heart-rending lesson, a long and bitter lesson. But this is a hard thing to learn: that in everything, from this moment forever, we are not only not to get our own will, but we are to desire not to get it—to will and be controlled by another wholly and unceasingly. This is, indeed, dying to this world.]

a living sacrifice,—[The sanctified body might be called a “living sacrifice,” because its natural life is not consumed like an ordinary sacrifice, but is presented to God “alive from the dead.” There is in every sacrifice a death, and in this sacrifice

¹¹service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this ¹²world: but be ye trans-

¹¹Or, *worship*

¹²Or, *age*

a death unto sin, out of which arises a new life of righteousness unto God. Thus the "living sacrifice" is that in which, though the natural life is not lost, a new life of holiness is gained. (6: 13.)

holy,—Under the Mosaic law animals free from blemish were presented and devoted to God, under the new dispensation a nobler and more spiritual service is to be rendered; not the oblation of animals, but the consecration of ourselves. "Ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Cor. 6: 20.)

acceptable to God,—Those services will be acceptable to God, and those only, which he appoints. (See Col. 2: 20-23.) When our bodies are full of life as a fact; when they are kept free from sin and actively employed in doing God's will, then as offerings they are acceptable to him. [To please him should be our highest aim; the fact that we do please him is our highest reward.]

which is your spiritual service.—The marginal reading is, "belonging to the reason"—that is, since they had been redeemed from death by the blood of Jesus Christ, it was reasonable that they should give their lives to rendering such service.

2 And be not fashioned according to this world:—To be conformed to the world is to seek worldly good, to follow worldly ends, guided by the wisdom of the world. [By "this world" is meant the whole world of the ungodly as contrasted with the followers of Christ; the temporary order of things in which sin predominates. It is false, impure, and turbulent, mighty heaving confusion of fallen spirits, wrestling with each other and with God. As such, this world is in eternal opposition to him. Besides the grosser kinds of sensual and spiritual evil, this world has a multitude of refined and subtle powers of enmity against the divine will. There is, besides the lusts of the flesh, also the lusts of the eyes, the vainglory of life, pomp, ease, luxury, and self-pleasing; and there is,

formed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is ^{1a}the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is

^{1a}Or, *the will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect*

moreover, the stately self-worship, the fastidious self-contemplation of intellectual or secular men. And with this comes also a throng of less elevated sins—levity, love of pleasure, a thirst for money, a hunger for popularity and its debasing successes. These things steal away the heart and make men false to the Master. To be fashioned to the world is to be like un-renewed men in temper and in life.]

but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,—To be “transformed” is to be changed from the pursuit of worldly ends by renewing the mind, directing it by gospel motives into new channels for spiritual ends. [In other words, the mind, instead of being fashioned after this world, is to be so changed in belief, desire, and purpose as to lead to a life unlike the world in the particulars meant. The old, unrenewed mind fashions the life after the world; the renewed mind refuses because of the antagonism between it and the world. The renewed mind induces a new life.]

that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Test by experience what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God will do toward making happy and bringing good. Before they obeyed the gospel they had in their daily life sought enjoyment in gratifying their lascivious appetites and passions. The entreaty now is that they should no longer practice these licentious habits, but prove the good of the will of God by practicing its precepts. [The mind must be renewed in order to judge correctly of God’s will. The things that enter into and make the Christian life are the things to be judged, and not of his will at large. It is his will respecting what, in Christian conduct, is in itself good, what is well-pleasing because right, what is perfect, or without flaw or defect. In regard to these things God has an expressed will, and to judge of it correctly the mind must be renewed.]

3 For I say, through the grace that was given me,—The

among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a

grace given to Paul of which he speaks is the knowledge bestowed upon him by the Spirit, which enabled him to do the work of an apostle.

to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;—By the knowledge and wisdom bestowed on him he warned that no one should place too high an estimate upon the spiritual gift bestowed upon him or his own natural ability. By so doing he would injure himself, the cause of Christ, and the world. Christ warned against the same thing when he cautioned his disciples not to take the chief seats when bidden to a feast, but the lowest, and declared that “every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 14: 11.) If a man is modest and humble in his deportment, others will honor him. The humblest members of society are more needful to the comfort and well-being of society than the most wealthy and learned. The welfare and well-being of a community are more dependent upon the cook, butcher, and day laborer than upon the most learned and eloquent man or the most fashionable and refined woman in society.

but so to think as to think soberly,—[To “think soberly” is to form and manifest a right estimate of ourselves and of our gifts and the reality of the gifts of others. A right estimate can never be other than a very humble one, since whatever there is of good in us is not of ourselves, but of God.]

according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.—This cannot mean the faith produced by hearing the word of God (10: 17), in the exercise of which one becomes a son of God (Gal. 3: 26, 27); but it means the faith in each one qualifying him for receiving and using aright the gifts which God gave for the instruction, the rule, the confirmation, the direction, and the extension of the church in the apostolic age. This faith was given in different measures or proportions, according to the wise determination of God. This is the faith to

measure of faith. 4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. 6 And having gifts differ-

which Jesus alluded when he said: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matt. 17: 20.) And Paul alludes to it when he said: "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13: 2.) [But what Paul here calls attention to is not the nature and strength of this faith, but that, in all its degrees, it is a gift of God; and being a divine gift, no one can boast of it, as if it were one of the faculties of his own mind.]

4 For even as we have many members in one body.—The church is here compared to the human body, with its different members all united in one spiritual body. Those in the spiritual body of Christ should have the same care for the others that the earthly members of our bodies have for each other. We are members one of another, as we are members of the one body of Christ our Lord. So as we realize our spiritual relationship in Christ, we will see the good of each other. To those who have grown slowly and are immature in character Paul wrote: "I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (1 Cor. 3: 2, 3.)

and all the members have not the same office:—Each member performs a different work and fills a different office from the others. Paul says: "Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness." (1 Cor. 12: 22, 23.)

5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.—[The members of the human body, and the function of each member is peculiar to itself;

ing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of our faith; 7 or ministry, *let us give*

and as all are essential, no one can claim superiority over the others.] So the church, composed of many members, constitutes the spiritual body in Christ. In this each member has its appropriate office and work to do, and by virtue of all being members of the one body they are members one of another, each dependent upon the life and fidelity of the others for his own spiritual activity and life. Hence, each should constantly look to the good of all the others.

6 And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us,—Natural abilities and opportunities are gifts from God bestowed upon and possessed by each person. Naturally, men differ in their capacities and opportunities. One by capacity and taste is fitted for one kind of work, another for a different kind. When God bestowed a spiritual gift, it was never to implant a new faculty or taste, but to guide and enlighten and use those he already had. So the same natural tastes and abilities are found in inspired men that they possessed by nature, guided and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. God bestowed these gifts according to his grace. They were distributed by the same Spirit-working gifts in each, “dividing to each one severally even as he will.” (1 Cor. 12: 11.) But each gift was given to each person for the good of all. According to the strength of his faith he was to work, using his gift as his faith furnished him ability.

whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith;—The gift of prophecy is usually understood to be a miraculous ability to foretell the future. As these were teachers of the word, it came to apply in the New Testament to the teachers. Even among the inspired the knowledge given by the Spirit was in proportion to the faith. So also among the uninspired the strength of the faith is the measure of the ability to teach and to serve. Paul admonishes them not to go beyond the gift bestowed upon them—not to seek to tell more than was revealed. This applies equally to uninspired teachers, and warns them not to go beyond what is taught in

ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; 8 or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, *let him do it with* ¹⁴liberality; he

¹⁴Gr. *singleness*.

the Scriptures and teach what their own wisdom may suggest as true. In teaching they must confine themselves to what is revealed in the word of God. Of this, Macknight says: "The apostle's meaning, therefore, is that such as enjoyed the prophetic inspiration were not to imagine that because some things were revealed to them they might speak of everything, but that, in prophesying, they were to confine themselves to what was revealed to them. The same rule we have laid down in Eph. 4: 7." To this agree the instructions and admonitions here given by the apostle. Each was to confine himself to the line of work which the gifts enabled him to do.

7 or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry;—The "ministry" here was the work of the deacons, or he who serves in distributing the fellowship of the saints to the poor. This is an admonition that each must be faithful and diligent in the business for which he is fitted. It does not mean that a man in helping the needy is not to use his opportunities for teaching the gospel or speaking a word of comfort and encouragement. Paul says: "For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 3: 13.) That is, the work of the deacon faithfully performed develops a high degree of spiritual power and great boldness in the faith. They are not to be dissatisfied with the work to which they are adapted and seek one they consider more honorable or efficient.

or he that teacheth, to his teaching;—There were specially gifted teachers in the church. They were a lower order than the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and they are admonished to diligently work according to their gift. They were to teach the gospel revealed by the apostles to the unconverted, and the lessons of truth to members of the body of Christ. One might be gifted in one special line, yet need instruction in others. (See 1 Cor. 14: 29-31.) One who served faithfully in a

that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

lower gift might be entrusted with a higher. Paul, chosen to be an apostle from the beginning, served a time as a teacher (Acts 13: 1), and afterwards had bestowed upon him a full apostolic measure of the Holy Spirit. By using faithfully the lower gifts he fitted himself to use the higher.

8 or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting:—Exhortation was a power of persuading and encouraging others to work, and of counseling, comforting, and consoling them when in distress. This is a peculiar and useful talent. It is natural to some. Barnabas was a “son of exhortation,” or one gifted with this talent. (Acts 4: 36.) He had a talent of that kind and a gift corresponding to the talent. It was not so high a talent as some others, but those gifted were to use it for the honor of God and the good of man.

he that giveth, let him do it with liberality;—[The word here translated “liberality” is elsewhere rendered “singleness of heart.” (Eph. 6: 5; Col. 3: 22.) The meaning here evidently is: openness of heart, manifesting itself by liberality and benefactions, free from pretense and self-seeking.] It must not be done in an ostentatious, pretentious manner, to be seen of men. Jesus says: “When therefore you doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.” (Matt. 6: 2.)

he that ruleth, with diligence;—He that rules—directs in the affairs of the church—should do it with diligence, promptness, and earnestness. [In a still more general sense the word is applied to ruling one’s own house and children. (1 Tim. 3: 3-5, 12.)]

he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.—He that showeth mercy, let him do it not complainingly or grudgingly, but with gladness and cheerfulness, showing that the service is willingly and gladly rendered. [Cheerfulness in dispensing merciful assistance seems to double its value, and certainly tends to a far more ready reception of spiritual counsel and advice on the part of the succored one.]

2. EXHORTATIONS TO LOVE AND TO THE VARIOUS DUTIES BY WHICH IT IS EXEMPLIFIED

12: 9-21

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to

9 **Let love be without hypocrisy.**—Let all demonstrations and professions of love be sincere and without pretense or hypocrisy. Feigned love is hate disguised. Love was so prevalent and so strongly characterized the early church that he who had it not was tempted to simulate it.

Abhor that which is evil;—View with horror and dread and shrink from every evil deed as from a deadly poison. Wrongdoing is the poison of the soul. It unfits for heaven and educates for eternal ruin. A man cannot love and honor the good from the heart without detesting the evil. He must come to abhor it in himself as in others. If it is wrong that he must abhor, he will abhor it in himself more than in others. David says: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." (Psalm 119: 104.) To abhor the wrong does not carry with it the hating of the wrongdoer. He will try to deliver him from the wrongdoing. So a man who loves himself and hates wrong will seek to deliver himself from wrongdoing. A Christian has no right to be neutral between right and wrong. He is under the same obligation to oppose the wrong that he is to maintain the right. But he must do it in the proper manner.

cleave to that which is good.—Follow that which is good, for it is health for the soul and fits for enjoying eternal blessings and glories.

10 **In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another;**—Christians must cultivate the feelings of kindly affection one to another in a true spirit of brotherly love. The admonition to brotherly love is frequently repeated by the apostles. "Let love of the brethren continue." (Heb. 13: 1.) "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently." (1 Pet. 1: 22.) [The duty is one which the Savior intended should be regarded as the badge of

another; in honor preferring one another: 11 in diligence not slothful; fervent in spirit; serving ¹⁵the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribula-

¹⁵Some ancient authorities read *the opportunity*.

discipleship. He said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13: 35.) Such is the love that the disciples are commanded to cultivate one for another. This love embraces the universal brotherhood of the redeemed.]

in honor preferring one another;—Seek not the highest honor for yourself, but in matters small and great seek to confer honor on your brother rather than take it to yourself. [Instead of waiting for others to honor us, we should lead them in the manifestation of esteem and respect.]

11 in diligence not slothful;—In all business the Christian should be diligent in performing it well and quickly. Indolence, slothfulness, laziness, and idleness are condemned both in the Old and New Testaments. Solomon says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccles. 9: 10.) All should work that they may have lack of nothing, live honestly, pay what they owe to others, and have to give to those who are in need. Idleness is a disorderly walk. (2 Thess. 3: 7.)

fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;—Throw your soul into your work so that it will be done both quickly and well. Diligence is especially needed in the service of the Lord. [This clause is opposed to mere excitement in our diligence; the spirit itself must be stirred. In whatever we find to do, we are not only to be active, but to have a spiritual enthusiasm, which is prompted by the knowledge that all our doing, however humble, is to be consecrated to God, to be made subservient to the cause of Christ.]

12 rejoicing in hope;—To the Christian is given a high and exalted hope of eternal glory with God. This so transcends in importance all earthly trials, troubles, disappointments, and afflictions that in the darkest hours he may find ground for rejoicing. "Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy

tion; continuing stedfastly in prayer; 13 communicating to the necessities of

unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1: 8.) We are exhorted to look beyond the present trials and afflictions and, despite them all, "rejoice in the Lord always." (Phil. 4: 4.) A despondent, complaining, disheartened spirit that always sees evil is not in accord with the divine will.

patient in tribulation;—When trials and afflictions come on us, we must learn to patiently bear them, for the inspired teacher says: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1: 2, 3.) A complaining, faultfinding spirit is not in harmony with the spirit of Christ. The Christian can afford to be patient under such trials, knowing that by patiently bearing them the character is completed, perfected, and fitted to dwell with God.

continuing stedfastly in prayer;—In our sufferings and trials, as well as in the hours of peace and prosperity, nothing so pleases God as constant, earnest, trusting, and faithful prayer. The following are given under various forms and frequently repeated in the Scriptures: "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5: 17.) "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." (1 Tim. 2: 8.)

13 communicating to the necessities of the saints;—The Christian must be ready and glad to render assistance to his needy brother. As God has blessed him, he must use his blessing to help his needy brother. He is God's steward; and if he does not use the blessings bestowed on him, it will be changed into a curse to him. He is to make their needs his needs to the full extent of his ability to relieve them. We are told that "he that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah" (Prov. 19: 17); and, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me"; and those who refuse to do this shall hear the sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into

the saints; ¹⁶given to hospitality. 14 Bless them that persecute you; bless,

¹⁶Gr. *pursuing*.

the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25: 41, 45.)

given to hospitality.—Be careful to entertain strangers, for some in so doing have unawares entertained angels. (Heb. 13: 2.) Paul, giving the qualifications that entitled a widow to be taken into the number to be supported by the church, says: "If she hath used hospitality to strangers." (1 Tim. 5: 10.) To entertain the lowliest disciple of Jesus is to entertain Jesus. (Matt. 25: 40.) [The Christians of the apostolic day considered one principal part of their duty to consist in showing hospitality to strangers. They were, in fact, so ready in discharging this duty that the very heathen admired them for it.]

14 Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not.—The spirit of Christ is to return good for evil. "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 44, 45.) The Christian must do good for evil—render blessing for cursing. To do him good is to do what will benefit him—help him become a better man. It is not always what will please or gratify him, but what will help him. The Christian should always seek to do good to all. It means that we should deal with man in love and with justice. Tell him in a kind but firm spirit his wrongs, and seek to lead him into the right. This is not difficult to do when we bring ourselves under the true spirit of Christ. God and Jesus, in dealing with men, are our perfect models in these things. [It is the duty of the Christian so to teach and so to live as to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor. 4: 2), and thus compel the inward respect of even the wicked for his sincerity and consistency; but a decided, earnest, Christian spirit and life will always evoke some form of opposition from the ungodly world. The radical antagonism of the world to Christ is as real and deep now as when men cried, "Crucify

and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but ¹⁷condescend to ¹⁸things that are lowly. Be not wise in your

¹⁷Gr. *be carried away with.*

¹⁸Or, *them*

him; crucify him!" although it may not always and everywhere find the same form of expression.]

15 Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.—A kindly, brotherly sympathy with others, both in their joys and sorrows, a desire for their good, to deliver them from sin and evil, should rule in our hearts. If so, we will rejoice in the well-being and happiness of others. Sometimes we envy those who succeed and prosper, and we despise those who fail and are in want; sometimes we sympathize with the needy, but envy the prosperous. All this is wrong. A spirit of brotherly kindness to all that will make us rejoice with the successful and sorrow with the unfortunate is the spirit of Christ. This is what Paul meant by becoming all things to all men. He would place himself in such full and complete sympathy with them that he felt their difficulties and rejoiced when they had occasions for joy. He could feel a brother's sigh and with him bear a part. Christ felt for and pitied man in his lost, helpless, sinful state, and felt for his woes.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another.—Be of the same kind, sympathizing spirit toward all, rich and poor, is the true spirit of Christ. [Be united in feeling, interests, and object; let there be no discord or disagreement.]

Set not your mind on high things,—Do not seek after exalted stations in life. [The human regard worth having is given for what one is rather than where he is.]

but condescend to things that are lowly.—Condescend to regard with favor and associate with men of low estate.

Be not wise in your own conceits.—Do not be puffed up with a sense of your own wisdom. Let every man think soberly of his own abilities. It is good to distrust self. Overconfidence in self leads to presumption, which is offensive to God and man. When men conceive the idea that they are wise, then they are unwilling to look to God for wisdom.

own conceits. 17 Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as in you

They follow their own conceits. Hence, the Spirit said: "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (1 Cor. 1: 26.) These classes all feel their earthly wisdom and greatness, and hence do not feel and realize the necessity of looking to and leaning upon the wisdom of God for guidance and help. This feeling not only hinders man from becoming a Christian, but if he should become one, it would hinder his trusting God after becoming one. The failure to trust God leads one to rely on the provisions of his own wisdom. Most of the failures in religion and in business come from too high an estimate of one's self. [This forbids that which would destroy unanimity and love. Selfish ambition in the church is fatal to perfect mutual consideration, especially if one acts as if he ought to be at the head of every business, and that nothing could be done if he was not consulted or employed about it.]

17 Render to no man evil for evil.—Jesus Christ, both by example and precept, taught that none should recompense evil for evil to his neighbor. If one has wronged you, bear it patiently and return good for evil. Jesus prayed his Father to forgive those who crucified him.

Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men.—Consider to do things in a way that shall be regarded honorable by all men. This is to let not your good be evil spoken of. [Here is a precept of loyal jealousy from the heavenly Master's honor. His servant is to be nobly indifferent to the world's thought and word where he is sure that God and the world antagonize. But he is to be sensitively attentive to the world's observation where the world, acquainted with the word of the Lord and conscious of its truth and right, is watching, maliciously, or it may be wistfully, to see if it governs the practice of his professed followers. In view of this, the Christian will never be content even with the satisfaction of his own conscience. He will set himself not only to do

lieth, be at peace with all men. 19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto ¹⁹the wrath of God: for it is written, ²⁰Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. 20 But ²¹if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of

¹⁹Or, *wrath*

²⁰Dt. xxxii. 35.

²¹(Prov. xxv. 21 f.)

right, but to be seen to do it. He will not only be true to a momentary trust, for example; he will take care that the proofs of his fidelity shall be open. He will not only mean well toward others; he will take care that his manner and bearing, his dealings and intercourse, shall unmistakably breathe the Christian air.]

18 If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.—Use all means in your power to live peaceably with all men; for the sake of peace, sacrifice everything, save truth and right. [That this is sometimes impossible Paul's life shows (Acts 13: 45; 14: 19; 16: 19; 17: 5, 13; 18: 6, 12; 19: 23), for his whole life was an active and ardent contention against sin and error. But our responsibility extends as far as our ability to keep the peace.]

19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God:—They were enduring much suffering from their enemies, and he very tenderly exhorts them to suffer with patience the wrath thus inflicted upon them.

for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.—God, in his overruling here, will use the wicked to avenge the wrongs heaped upon his children; but especially at the judgment day will he requite the evildoers for all the wrongs inflicted on them. Leave it in the hands of God to punish the wrongdoers. Paul thus practiced. He, on several occasions, claimed the rights of a Roman citizen to shield him from unlawful punishment; but he never prosecuted his persecutors for wrongs they inflicted on him.

20 But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink:—If your enemy suffers or is in need, do him a kindness; relieve his wants in a kind, unostentatious manner.

fire upon his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.—In so doing you will make him feel and regret in his own heart the wrong he has done you, will melt his enmity and change him into a friend. The most excruciating punishment to a man is to make him feel that he has done wrong to one who loves him, and leave it to his own conscience and to God to punish for the wrong.

21 Be not overcome of evil,—Do not let evil done you so overcome you as to lead you to do evil in return. If you suffer yourself to be provoked to revenge, you will be yielding to the enemy—overcome by that which is evil.

but overcome evil with good.—[When you meet evil with good, but have at least overcome evil in yourself, if not in your enemy.]

3. DUTY OF SUBJECTION AND OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITY

13: 1-7

1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no

1 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers:—Many hold that this passage refers to church authorities, but this application involves difficulties to my mind inexplicable. So I believe that “higher powers” here refers to civil government. To be in subjection is to come under the will of another, to subject oneself, to obey. The same relation is expressed in the following: “Put them in mind to be in subjection to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready unto every good work” (Tit. 3: 1); and, “Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well” (1 Pet. 2: 13, 14.) The term bears no idea of participation or rule, but of subjection to another’s power. The extent of this submission to human governments is clearly defined by Jesus and the apostles. When there was contention as to who should be

power but of God; and the *powers* that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore

greatest, he said unto them: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so." (Luke 22: 25, 26.) His disciples certainly could not serve in the earthly kingdom, where the principles of service were in direct antagonism to the principles that must govern his servants in his kingdom. He places in contrast to the earthly kingdom this kingdom he appoints to them as his Father had appointed to him. This kingdom would be governed by the principles he proclaimed. When the apostles had been imprisoned in Jerusalem for preaching the gospel and were brought before the council charged with disobedience to the command not to preach in the name of Jesus, "Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5: 29): and as the two governments were in conflict, they chose to obey God and suffer the consequences.

for there is no power but of God;—All power is by the will of God. He permits it. An example of this is given in 1 Sam. 8: 1-22. The Israelites demanded a king. God testified that in demanding it they rejected him. Yet he ordained that they should have their desire. This he did to punish them for their rebellion against him.

and the powers that be are ordained of God.—When men refuse to be governed by God, they must be governed by some power, and God ordains other governments to punish them for refusing his. So all power, even this Roman government, was of God. "The power that be," including this idolatrous government persecuting the church of Christ, were ordained of God. They were ordained to punish evildoers and to take vengeance on those who wronged his people. This did not imply that the Christians should participate in the management of them. Indeed, Paul had just said (12: 19) that Christians must not take vengeance on evildoers, that God will avenge their wrongs. The higher powers are immediately introduced to execute wrath on evildoers—that is, the civil officer is God's appointed agent to do what he says the Christian can-

he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3 For rulers are not a

not do. God's order is to use persons to do work who in character are suited to it. He uses the wicked to inflict punishment upon the wicked. He uses the devil to punish the obdurately wicked in the world to come, and so orders affairs that in punishing others he, as the chiefest sinner, will be the recipient of the severest punishment. The fact that God ordains human government is no evidence that it is good for Christians to participate in its administration; but it does indicate that it is good for the purpose for which he ordained it, and is to be submitted to by Christians.

2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God:—To seek to resist or overthrow civil government as the institution of God for the punishment of evildoers would be to resist the ordinance of God.

and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment.—The government at Rome was used to persecute Christians, and God so overruled that the persecution did not go beyond what was for their good. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee." (Psalm 76: 10.) God overrules wickedness, rebellion, and animosity against him and his children, and the wrath that goes beyond this he will restrain. Then it is wrong for Christians to resist or seek to overthrow or destroy the power ordained of God, and they who resist will fall under the condemnation of this power and of God himself.

3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil.—All the persecutions that came upon Christians, even in the days of Nero, were needed by them to promote their true and eternal welfare. All the afflictions that came upon them were for their good. They were for their good in the courses they pursued—in the positions in which they placed themselves. In the different courses they would not have been needed for their good. One chief good was to wean them from the kingdoms of the world. How can this wicked ruler be a terror to evil works and not to good? Because God per-

terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for 'he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is

¹Or, *it*

mits only so much affliction to come upon his children as will promote their true good. All the evil that comes upon them is intended by God to restrain and deter them from sin and to encourage them to do good.

And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same:—The essentials to all quiet, stable government are such as to make even wicked men in authority prefer goodness, forbearance, and industry—the qualities inculcated by the Christian religion—to the turbulent, disorderly, and rebellious spirit—the concomitant of sin and godlessness. And it is only when there is animosity toward good men on account of their fidelity to principle, or to parties that are offensive, and are persecuted for their principles, that even the tyrannical rulers would not encourage and reward the orderly, quiet spirit in preference to the disorderly and wicked. All government, then, is a terror to evildoers and not to the good.

4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good,—Whatever is, is ordained of God, and is good for the thing for which it was ordained of God to punish sin, and those he uses to afflict them that are ministers of God to execute wrath. Hell is an ordinance of God to punish in the future state those who persist in sin and rebellion on earth, and is good for the purpose for which God ordained it; and it is not good for any other purpose. The devil is God's minister to rule in hell, to punish the stubbornly rebellious, and sinful. Hell and the devil are as much an institution and minister of God as heaven and Jesus Christ are. They are not equally good for the same thing, but each is good for that which God ordained it or him. It would be extreme folly for one to conclude that since hell is an ordinance of God, that it is a good place to enter, or that because the devil is a minister of God he is a good being to follow. The devil is a minister of wrath through whom God

evil, be afraid; for ¹he beareth not the sword in vain: for ¹he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must

¹Or, it

punishes evildoers. He does good to the Christian by deterring from the path that leads to ruin. Jesus is a minister and heaven an ordinance of God to encourage virtue and holiness.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil.—As God ordains ministers for wrath as well as for mercy, he ordains institutions of wrath as well as institutions of mercy—his church—and asks the world to enter, do mercy, and receive mercy. Those who accept the invitation act and live in it; it is ordained for them. But for those who refuse to enter and become ministers of mercy he ordains institutions fitted for their rebellious character, in which they work, while rejecting God's institution of mercy for his children. These institutions of wrath God ordains for wrath. They will be destroyed after serving their purpose here. People build them up unconscious that God is ordaining them for the destruction of the builders—of those refusing his government of mercy. God ordains for people just such institutions as they deserve. If they refuse to obey God's government, he ordains that they shall be governed by the oppressive rule of man's own government, of which the devil is the great head. Hence, God ordains these governments of wrath for the children of wrath. The idea, is then, that the powers referred to are civil powers. They are ordained of God as instruments of wrath for the children of wrath, to be conducted and operated by the ministers of wrath; that God's children must submit to them as such, not strive by violence to destroy them. When, in the providence of God, they are no longer needed, he will destroy them—cause them to destroy and eat up one another. No Christian, then, can become a partaker or partisan of them, lest he partake of their woes. Quiet, passive submission that involves no violation of the laws of the spiritual kingdom is the measure and limit of their connection with them.

needs to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake.—Since the civil powers are ordained of God, the Christian is to be subject, not only from fear of punishment, but as a duty he owes to God, that he may keep a good conscience toward God. A conscience void of offense toward God is kept by doing all God commands to be done, so far as they do not command disobedience to God.

6 For for this cause ye pay tribute also;—Since God commands it, and to keep a good conscience toward God, pay tribute, or taxes.

for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing.—They are the appointed ministers of God, attending continually upon the work of punishing evildoers and preserving order among the lawless. Human government is ordained of God to rule and punish those who are not subject to God. It is to be used and operated by them.

7 Render to all their dues:—Give unto all what is due them in the position they occupy.

tribute to whom tribute is due;—Pay taxes to the rulers. This is what Christ did, although in doing so he classed himself as a stranger and not a child of human government—the same government concerning which Paul now writes to the Christians at Rome.

custom to whom custom;—“Custom” then, as now, referred to duties imposed upon articles of trade and traffic brought from other countries. There has always been a disposition with men to avoid this tax, but Paul instructs that Christians must pay it as a duty to God. They can neither smuggle goods in so as to avoid his eye, nor can they induce him to wink at a bribe, as is often done with men.

fear to whom fear;—They are to show a proper fear of vio-

lating the law and proper respect to those to whom fear is due.

honor to whom honor.—The rulers of the land, though wicked men, are entitled to respect and honor. The Christian must set the example of honoring them.

4. MORTALITY SECURED AND THE LAW FULFILLED BY LOVE 13: 8-10

8 Owe no man anything, save to one one another: for he that loveth ^hhis

^hGr. *the other*. Comp. 1 Cor. 6. 1; 10. 24; Gal. 6. 4.

8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another:—This is an extension of the precept to pay taxes and customs and give honor to whom honor is due. He instructs them to pay all debts and obligations, private as well as public, and that they should owe no man anything—should incur no obligations to any one save those which love imposes. This certainly prohibits going in debt and being under pecuniary obligations to our fellow men. The obligations that love to our fellow men incurs are lasting.

for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.—Love holds man under obligations to do what the law imposes upon him. Love to God requires him to do what the law requires him to do toward God. Love to his fellow man requires him to do to his fellow man just what the law of God requires him to do. James says: “If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.” (James 2: 8.) “The royal law,” as given by Christ, is, “Whatsoever ye would that man should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them” (Matt. 7: 12); and to love enemies is to bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.

Love, then, beyond all doubt, is doing good to a person. When we do him good, we love him, it matters not whether the good we do pleases or displeases him. Do to him what the divine law commands, and we do him good. It frequently will offend him. Be it so, love demands that we should help him, even if he persecutes us for it. That was the love of

neighbor hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, ⁹Thou 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 neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

⁹Ex. xx. 13 ff; Dt. v. 17 ff.

Christ to man. He loved him, although his love excited the wrath and enmity of man. Love is doing a man good, and the divine law tells us that it is the only way in which we can do him good; hence, love "is the fulfillment of the law."

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet,—The law given to Moses requires the things to be done that bring no evil, but good, to others. It forbids all wrong to his neighbor.

and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—All the duties and obligations man owes to his fellow man are summed up by Jesus in the statement: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." You are to be as careful to do no wrong to your neighbor as you are to do none to yourself. Observance of these laws of God prevents man from doing evil to his neighbor. Obeying a command of God never brought evil to any man.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.—The perfection of love is to fulfill the law of God in all things toward God, toward our fellow men, and toward ourselves. To fulfill, or come up to, the law of God in all things is to love—is the highest possible good to every being in the universe and is eternal in its nature. Love may exist independent of emotions or the fleshly. One sees it his duty to do good to his enemy; to return good for evil, blessing for cursing. All his fleshly emotions and feelings may demand that he should return evil for evil, cursing for cursing. With a resolute will he restrains these feelings and does him good, a kindly deed; he prays for him; blesses him. It may be mechanical and outward as we call it; that is, fleshly feelings do not enter into it. Yet it is love, love of the highest type; love that springs wholly from the purpose and will of the

spirit—the inner man. This is the battle between the flesh and the spirit within man. The flesh demands the railing and cursing for cursing; the spirit good for evil.

5. EXHORTATION TO HOLINESS OF LIFE BASED ON NEARNESS TO ETERNITY

13: 11-14

11 And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is 'salvation nearer to us than when we *first* believed.

**Or, our salvation nearer than when &c.*

11 **And this, knowing the season,**—This refers to the duties already enjoined, and urges on them to live a holy and exemplary life.

that already it is time for you to awaken out of sleep:— [Since a glorious day had dawned upon them in their reception of the gospel, there is brought among them the grave responsibility of strenuous effort and activity in the service of God. The image of awakening out of sleep is often used in order to designate the rousing up from a state of comparative inaction to one of strenuous effort. (See 1 Cor. 15: 34; Eph. 5: 14; 1 Thess. 5: 6.)]

for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed.—[The salvation is not from sin, which the Romans already had (6: 3, 4, 17), but the completion of it in the glorification awaiting them when the Lord should come (1 Pet. 1: 4, 5). The constant expectation of the Lord is the very attitude of mind which Christ himself enjoined in his repeated warnings. That expectation had from the first been modified by the caution: "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven." (Matt. 24: 36.) In Paul's mind the expectation was vivid (1 Cor. 15: 52; 1 Thess. 4: 17), but the caution was not forgotten (1 Thess. 5: 1, 2; 2 Thess. 2: 1). We should be prepared for the light of eternal day, just as one might say death is always near and live in the power of such a sentiment, though the death is long postponed. The language here, as elsewhere on this topic, is adapted to every generation of believers who, not knowing the time, can at least say **salvation is nearer.**]

12 The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put ye on the Lord

12 The night is far spent, and the day is at hand:—The day of deliverance draws near.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.—Let us, therefore, cast off, or cease to follow, the works that pertain to a life of darkness and idolatry, and let us clothe ourselves with the works that pertain today.

13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day;—To live a life of purity and holiness rather than what is usually called “fleshly” is what is meant here. [Avoid every word or action even remotely tending to evil; do our best to commend our faith to others by remembering such words as: “Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5: 16); “Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5: 22); or, “Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5: 15, 16).]

not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy.—That life that becomes the day of the gospel life is here contrasted with the licentiousness, drunkenness, and degrading lusts, strife, and envyings that pertained to the life of idolatrous darkness. Only a life of responsibility toward God can deliver man from the degrading rule of fleshly lusts and passions.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,—They put him on in desire, in purpose, in profession, and in covenant obligation, in their baptism. “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.” (Gal. 3: 26, 27.) But they put him on actually in their subsequent life. So we are made one with Christ in conversion, in sentiment, in feeling, in principle, as well as in covenant interest; but even these are as yet in the germ, and the convert is but “a babe” in Christ. (Heb.

Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

5: 13.) “My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you.” (Gal. 4: 19.) “For I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11: 2.) But the growth into full fellowship with Christ is the result of patient culture. “As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught abounding in thanksgiving.” (Col. 2: 6, 7.) There is genuine spiritual life in the true convert, but it is in “newness of life”—the life of infancy. It must be fed, nourished, and trained until full manhood is attained, for we put him on in life and character by living the life he lived.

and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—[The word “flesh” is here used to denote the corrupt propensities of the body which he had specified in the preceding verse. It is the seat of all the sins mentioned, and is a bundle of lusts. The gratification of the flesh was the main object among the Romans. Living in luxury and licentiousness, they made it the great object of study to multiply and prolong the means of licentious indulgence. But they that are Christ’s do not take forethought for their gratification, for they “have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.” (Gal. 5: 24.) They that are his have daily needs for which God has made bountiful provision. (Phil. 4: 19; Matt. 6: 8, 33; Luke 12: 30, 31.) The real wants are few, and with a heart disposed to be pure and under the control of Christ, the necessary wants of life are easily satisfied.]

6. INCULCATION OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND FRATERNAL TOLERANCE AS TO MATTERS OF OPINION

14: 1-12

1 But him that is weak in faith receive, ye, yet not ⁴for decision of scruples. 2

⁴Or, to doubtful disputations

1 **But him that is weak in faith receive ye,**—A man’s faith is weak when it is troubled over untaught and doubtful ques-

One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. 3
Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him

tions. He whose faith is not fixed and firm is to be accepted with the hope that his faith will grow strong and steadfast by using.

yet not for decision of scruples.—It was the duty of Christians to receive these persons of weak and morbid consciences, but not to the discussion of doubtful questions. It is sinful to disturb the peace and harmony of Christians over these untaught questions. The continual discussion of questions of this character will destroy the harmony and zeal of any congregation, and Paul instructs the church not to permit it. The character of these questions is given in the following verses. They are questions concerning which God has given no teaching and which have no bearing on the character of man.

2 One man hath faith to eat all things:—His faith will let him eat flesh as well as vegetables. He has no scruples about either. [His grasp and hold of the teachings of Christ is so strong that he recognizes how indifferent all such matters in themselves really are.]

but he that is weak eateth herbs.—Another has doubts about eating flesh. It is a weak and morbid conscience, growing out of a weak faith, that troubles over this question. In all ages some persons have persuaded themselves from one cause or another that it is wrong to eat flesh. Their faith does not allow them to eat it, so is called a “weak” faith. But nothing is found in the Bible showing that God is displeased with his children’s eating flesh.

3 Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not;—God has given clear evidence that there is no sin against him who eats flesh. Yet he does not require it, but he permits any man, who sees fit, to live without it. So he who eats flesh may not set at nought or refuse fellowship for a man that refuses it.

and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth:—

that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest the ⁶servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. 6 He that

⁶Gr. household-servant.

Neither can he who eats not reject him as a Christian who eats flesh.

for God hath received him.—God has given no law to govern men on this subject; so every man is left to follow his own judgment or preference in the matter. If any one wishes to eat, none should hinder him; if any does not want to eat, none should require him to eat. Let each be persuaded in his own mind on these untaught questions. Where God has given no law or rule that condemns a man, no one can condemn him.

4 Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?—When the master has given no rule to govern his servant, no one else can.

to his own lord he standeth or falleth.—He is accountable only to his own master.

Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand.—If he is faithful in obedience to the laws God has given, God will own and sustain him regardless of his peculiarities on questions concerning which God has given no law.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike.—Another doubtful or untaught question is the observance of other days not set apart for worship by God. The observance of the first day of the week, the Lord's day, set apart of God, is not a doubtful or indifferent question. Where God has decided, there can be no doubt. But many thought it well to observe other days, such as the new moon and other days that had been sacred under the law of Moses. Those who desire to observe these days can do so, if they will spend them in true worship to the Lord, but they

regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the

have no right to require that others observe them. If a man wishes to devote Saturday to the worship of God, he may do so; but he must not let it interfere with the worship God has directed on the Lord's day, neither must he impose it on others.

Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.—The rule in these matters is, in things not commanded by God, but that are permissible, let each be persuaded or satisfied in his own mind and act for himself. But he may not require others to do things God has not commanded, to the disturbance of the church. To do this is sin, and the man is not to be received if he creates disturbance by insisting on others' doing things not required by God.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks:—He that observes the day spends it in the worship of God. This is pleasing to God.

and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.—Another fails to observe the day, or fails to eat meat not required by God; yet in failing to observe it he serves and honors God, gives thanks, and God accepts him, no matter how he acts on questions indifferent.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself.—We all live or die to God, if we serve him, not to ourselves alone. This is sometimes interpreted to mean that what we do affects others as well as ourselves. This is true, but this passage teaches that whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. We cannot be without the Lord whether living or dying. [No Christian considers himself as his own master, or at liberty to regulate his conduct according to his own will, or to his own ends. He is the servant of Christ, and, therefore, endeavors to live according to his will and for his glory.]

Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived *again*, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;—In living according to the will of God, we live to the Lord, in his service and to his honor and to promote his glory.

or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—In dying, we die to him; so, living or dying, we are the Lord's. [Our whole earthly existence, our life and our death even, is a service for our Lord and Master. Neither life nor death can make us cease to be his. And how comforting the thought that, while we cannot do many things or any great things for God, we can serve him in little things, in all our daily acts! When we toil with our minds or toil with our hands and earn our bread with the sweat of our brow—yea, we can do all to the glory of God. If we live or if we die, we belong to Christ and serve him.]

9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.—Christ lived and died, then rose and lived again, that he might show he is Lord, or Ruler, of both the living and the dead. Men do not pass from under his dominion when they die, nor when they are raised. So, whether they live or die, they are the servants of the Lord. Jesus lived and showed his power over all that lived. He, indeed, went into the grave, showed his power over death, was raised, ascended to his Father's throne, and was crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He is Lord of all. We live to him, we die to him.

10 But thou, who dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother?—He has been speaking of things indifferent. We should not condemn one another in these. God will judge him, and to his own Master he stands or falls. So on these questions of doubtful disputation, as to whether it is good to eat meat or live on vegetable food, whether we shall set apart days for worship that God has not set apart, or other untaught or indifferent questions, why do we reject our brother who differs from us?

brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

11 For it is written,

⁷As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow,
And every tongue shall ⁸confess to God.

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

⁷Is. xiv. 23.

⁸Or, *give praise*

for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.—We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, who will judge each man according to his law.

11 **For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God.**—The connection shows that this was to happen in connection with, or as a result of, all standing before the judgment seat of God. The promise that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess is dependent upon their standings before the judgment seat of God. So, I take it, the effect of the judgment will be that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord and Christ. A confession not made until then will be too late to save. All who truly confess his name while in this life will be saved.

12 **So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**—This is the general conclusion from what has just been said. He impresses the thought that every man shall give account of himself. The revealed will of God will be the standard of judgment. They were, therefore, not to interfere with and annoy one another in matters indifferent, or untaught by God.

On matters indifferent God gave no instruction. When God by precept or example has given instruction in reference to a matter, this shows it is not a matter of indifference, but of divine appointment. For example, God has appointed the first day of the week for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The observance of the Supper on that day is fixed. On no other day can the Supper be observed. But if one wishes to devote another day to the service of God in other ways—reading the word of God, praying, fasting—he is at liberty to

do so; no one has a right to object. God has given no direction as to this. So God has ordained his church as the medium of doing his service and of spreading the gospel. This takes that away from matters indifferent and places it under divine enactment. Eating or not eating meat is placed among things indifferent.

7. THE LAW OF BROTHERLY LOVE BROADER THAN PERSONAL FEELING

14: 13-23

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more:—When God gives a law to regulate actions or conduct, he judges, not we. When we erect rules where God has ordained none, we judge, not God. We are here admonished not to judge or condemn one another in things indifferent.

but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling.—This had special reference to eating meat offered to an idol. Those who are strong, who know that an idol is nothing, who can eat the meat without any reference to the idol, might do it without injury to themselves; but if by eating, a weak brother, whose conscience is yet tender toward the idol, who has not lost all reverence for the idol, should see him freely eat things to the idol, he might thereby be emboldened to eat in a spirit of worship to the idol and be led back into idolatry. A man who by his example leads another into sin, sins against his weak brother and against Christ, who died for him. This principle has a wide application. A man could possibly take a drink of ardent spirits and so control his own appetite as not to be led into excess; but if his drinking it would lead a weak brother, who could not govern his appetite, to partake and fall, then he would put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. "And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ." (1 Cor. 8: 12.) To wound here does not mean to hurt

of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou

their feelings, but to weaken their conscience as to right and make them tolerate the wrong. On this point we must judge ourselves, and cannot be too careful.

14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself:—Everything created by God is for a good purpose and will bring good to man if used as God intended it should be.

save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.—A man must act according to his best judgment. To do this is to be conscientious, or to keep a clean conscience. Conscience does not determine things to be right or wrong. The judgment determines this, and the conscience is the feeling or principle within that demands that a man shall act according to it and bears witness if he does or does not. A man who esteems a thing unclean, and yet uses it, goes contrary to his own judgment. His conscience bears witness to the fact, and he is untrue to himself. A man untrue to himself cannot be true to any being in the universe. God demands that a man shall be true to himself, live in all good conscience as Paul did, then with a good conscience he shall serve him. God will not accept service from a defiled or debauched conscience, and to know the right and follow the wrong defiles it.

Those most offensive to God are those who compromise the truth and defile their consciences. The man who worships with an organ, believing it to be wrong, to be sin against God, is a much worse man than he who worships with it, believing it to be right. Then, a man ought to do nothing he believes wrong. Then, if a man believes an organ wrong, he debauches his own conscience in approving it by word or act and renders himself unfit for the service of God. Men that are true to their consciences are what the world needs and God delights in. A man who believes it right to meet on the Lord's day, and fails to do it, does violence to his conscience

walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the

and is in great danger of destroying his own soul. We ought not to countenance the wrong; we ought to practice the right.

15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love.—This is usually interpreted: if it hurts the feelings of another or offends his sense of right. It is wrong to needlessly grieve a brother or do violence to his sense of right, but this is wholly a different matter. It means: If you so act, so eat meat as to lead your brother into sin, so that he falls or stumbles and his eternal well-being is endangered, you do not walk in love toward him.

Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.—Do not use your privileges, especially of fleshly enjoyment, so also to lead your brother to destruction. Do not go into associations and partake of enjoyments that would lead him into temptations that he is not able to withstand. To do this would be to counteract the death of Christ and defeat the ends of his death for the sake of eating meat. You must be willing to deny yourself these fleshly gratifications rather than to nullify the sufferings of Christ for him.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:—Do not use your privileges and rights to bring evil to others, or that may give occasion to speak evil of what you do. This is a much-needed caution. Men sometimes do good in such a manner that it makes a bad impression, is misrepresented, is evil spoken of, and produces evil results. [As strong Christians in faith, we may have liberty to do many things which the weak may think wrong; but if by doing those things we subject our liberty to unfriendly criticism, we must refrain. It is better to seem not free than that our freedom should lead to mischief.]

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,—The kingdom of God is not to provide meat and drink, nor is it to gratify our taste in these things, nor will the kingdom of God be promoted by eating one kind of food or another. We

Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then ¹let us follow after things which make for

¹Many ancient authorities read *we follow*.

should not, therefore, for the sake of eating and drinking, act in such a manner as to counteract and defeat the ends of Christ's death.

but righteousness—Right doing and right living, encouraging active work in the way of righteousness. This is placed in contrast with doing things not taught.

and peace—Follow after or practice the things that promote peace, in contrast with disputations of untaught questions.

and joy in the Holy Spirit.—Rejoicing in following the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which bestows the joy that the Spirit in its mission brings to every man faithful and true to the law of God. [These are weighty matters of the kingdom, and, therefore, the matters of chief concern to us, and not the indifferent and trivial questions of eating and drinking. But as it was in the kingdom in those days, so it is still. There is a large class of professed Christians who are never through with scruples of conscience on untaught questions, but who can never know anything or never will care anything about righteousness, peace, and joy. They, of course, are always righteous themselves, and their peace and joy must ever be consulted; but as for others, they are not concerned.]

18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men.—He that serves God in following after righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, that led Christ, or that follows his example in denying self to save man from sin, is well-pleasing to God, and is approved of good men, or does that which uplifts and benefits men.

19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace,—Inasmuch as these things are true, let us not follow after untaught questions which gender strife, but let us seek that which brings true and lasting peace and harmony by helping and benefiting all. Let us not look to selfish gratification, but to the well-being of all.

peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to

and things whereby we may edify one another.—The original meaning was to build up. It came to refer to teaching, as this is the usual way of building up intellectually, morally, and spiritually. But it comes from the idea of building them up and making them strong by teaching the things taught by God as distinguished from the untaught speculations of men.

20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God.—Even if you with your superior knowledge could eat more offered to an idol without injury to yourself, do not eat it; forego your right rather than destroy the work of God in your weak brother. The same lesson is taught in the instructions given to the Corinthians: "If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake." (1 Cor. 10: 27, 28.) In this he shows that a man may eat things offered to an idol; but if one say it is offered to an idol, he must refrain from it for the sake of those who sit by. In some cases it is right for one man to regulate his conduct by the conscience of another—that is, for the conscience of the weak brother or the unbeliever who sits at meat with you. Do not eat, lest he be encouraged to eat in worship to an idol. He then adds: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved." (1 Cor. 10: 31-33.)

All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.—All things are pure to eat in themselves, but it is a sin for anyone so to eat as to lead others into sin, or cause them to stumble.

drink wine, nor *to do anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth.² 22 The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he ²approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is

²Many ancient authorities add *or is offended, or is weak.*

³Or, *putteth to the test*

21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.—From the cases presented, this general practical truth is drawn. He emphasizes the principle that it is good for a Christian neither to flesh nor to drink wine, which leads the weak to ruin, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is led to sin, or is made weak. This is a principle the Holy Spirit lays down to guide the children of God. It teaches that Christ denied himself to save us; that he gave up heaven, with all its joys and glories, to help us. We must be willing to forego our privileges of a temporal and fleshly character to help our weak brother. Much is said in the Bible on the subject of the use of wine and intoxicants. The Holy Spirit, knowing fully all that was taught on the subject, gives this as the final deliverance of God to guide men for all time. In it is safety to ourselves and to our fellow man and honor to God. Even if a man thinks he could drink in moderation of intoxicants without injury to himself, he is under obligation to refrain from it, lest by his example a weak brother be led to drink. In leading him to do what leads to his ruin he sins against Christ. He destroys the work of God. I knew a young Christian who became a slave to intoxicants. He was very fond of the preacher, went with him from place to place. He was offered whisky. He refused several times. He refused to touch it. One night he and the preacher lodged with an elder of the church. On the following morning the elder offered him liquor. He refused to drink. The preacher drank. It was again offered the young man. This time he drank. Within a few days he was wallowing in the mire. The preacher and the elder sinned against him, destroyed the work of God, and led him for whom Christ died down to ruin. So in all the paths that lead to sin.

22 The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God.—If you have faith that would enable you to eat the meat

condemned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.⁴

⁴Many authorities, some ancient, insert here ch. 16. 25-27.

offered to an idol, keep the faith to yourself for your brother's sake. Do not so use it as to lead others into sin and so condemn yourself.

Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth.—The man is happy who does not condemn himself in what he practices.

23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith;—He who eats the meat offered to an idol, or does anything else that he doubts whether it be of God, is condemned in so doing. The convictions of our hearts must be respected, must be honored. God accepts nothing as worship that is not done heartily with full faith. One who habitually violates his convictions of right soon loses all sense of right, hardens his heart, and makes his reformation impossible. When we do things not commanded by God as service to him, we act on our own human wisdom, or from human tradition, and substitute this for the will of God. This is sin. He who has a doubt about any service being required of God must refrain from it. He must keep on the safe side. To substitute the will and appointments of man for the will of God is the unpardonable sin.

and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.—Whatever we do religiously that is based on opinion and not on faith is sin. No man can perform any service or introduce any order into the service of God by faith unless it is ordained of God. To introduce anything is to act on human wisdom and opinion and not on faith in God; hence, it is sinful. The idea that man can act on his opinion in the service of God is the root of all erroneous practices in the religious world. Man is required to act on faith in religion, not on opinion.

8. CONCLUSION OF THE EXHORTATION TO MUTUAL LOVE AND FORBEARANCE ENFORCED BY CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

15: 1-13

1 Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that

1 Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.—This is a continuation of the same subject from the last chapter. He there pointed out the danger to the weak who were liable to be led into idolatry by seeing the “strong” eating meat offered in sacrifice to an idol. He now speaks of those that are strong, who “know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one.” (1 Cor. 8: 4.) We who have this knowledge could eat without conscience of the idol. “Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.” (1 Cor. 8: 7.) These are the weak, and those who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak by refraining from eating meat that would lead them into idolatry. “For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?” (1 Cor. 8: 10.) Thus they are led into idolatry. To bear their infirmities is to refrain from eating on account of their weakness, as though we ourselves were weak. It is to put ourselves in their places, feel their weaknesses, and to act so as to lead them away from temptation. This is an example of becoming all things to all men that we may save some (1 Cor. 9: 22), and not to do the things that gratify ourselves.

2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying.—The pleasing here is placed in contrast with grieving him. (14: 15.) That meant led into sin that would cause grief to him; so this refers more to doing what will help him, and so please him by edifying and instructing him in the truth of God. When he learns the truth and practices it, it will bring strength and joy to him. [This wish to please our neighbor is a praiseworthy feeling, but we are to indulge it according to these two rules: (1) In ways which are

which is good, unto edifying. 3 For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me. 4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,

⁶Ps. lxxix. 9.

right in the sight of God, and (2) which tend to our neighbor's edification—his building up in righteousness and Christian character. We should note that there is a wrong way of pleasing our neighbor as well as a right one. (Gal. 1: 10; 1 Thess. 2: 4.) We must strive to please him only as it will be for his good—only, too, in obedience to the divine will.]

3 For Christ also pleased not himself;—Jesus is presented as an example which Christians should always follow. Jesus did not seek to please himself by doing what was pleasant to the flesh, but bore the infirmities of others. [The good of others was the great characteristic of his life.]

but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.—He took on himself the reproaches of all who accept him. He bore the stripes that we deserved. He left heaven and suffered to help us. He became weak after the flesh that we might become strong spiritually. He became mortal that we might become immortal. So we must forego fleshly and temporal pleasures that we may bring spiritual and eternal joys to others. [This passage is cited to bring the example of Christ to bear upon us. So far from pleasing himself, Christ did all things and endured all things for God's sake, even so far as to receive on himself, in his own person, the reproaches aimed at God. But when and how did Christ thus receive the reproaches aimed at God? Because the hatred with which the unbelieving Jews pursued Christ was caused by their deep-seated alienation from God, as he says: "He that hateth me hateth my Father also." It was because he exhibited, as no one ever before had done, the holy character of God, that he could say: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (See John 15: 23, 24.)]

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.—The Old Testament is full of examples showing that through self-denial and patient suffering for the

that through ^opatience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: 6 that with one accord

^oOr, *steadfastness*

honor of God and the good of man, blessings and happiness come to the servants of God. They are recorded to teach us how God deals with men—how he applies his own laws. No man can have a clear knowledge of how God will apply his laws without studying the lessons he has given in the Old Testament. The examples of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon are given to teach us how God deals with men under his laws. All his dealings with men are instructive to us and helpful in learning our duty and how God will regard our actions under his laws. God's dealings with the unfaithful are just as much for our good as his dealings with the righteous. His condemnation of Cain is as instructive to us as his blessing upon Abel. That is given as a warning against serving God in a way not commanded by him; this, as encouragement to serve God as he directs. Man needs both warning against the evil and encouragement to the good. With both, it has been impossible to keep him long in the strait and narrow path. [The Old Testament is rich indeed in commands to preserve and be of good courage, and in examples of men who were made brave and patient by the power of God in them as they took him at his word.]

that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.—This assurance gives us hope that enables us with joy to bear present trials.

5 Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus:—Now may God, who is patient and forbears long, and who gives patience and consolation in trials and self-denials, enable you to have the same mind to suffer for and help one another that Jesus Christ had to help man in sin and ruin. [Let each be so conformed to Christ that all may be of one mind among yourselves. For such, harmony, patience, and comfort are needed. Only the God of patience and comfort can produce these, but he produces them through the Scriptures. No com-

ye may with one mouth glorify ⁷the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **7** Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received ⁸you, to the glory of God. **8** For I say that Christ hath been made a minis-

⁷Or, *God and the Father*. So 2 Cor. 1. 3; 11. 31; Eph. 1. 3; 1 Pet. 1. 3.

⁸Some ancient authorities read *us*.

ment here is equal to Paul's own words: "Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 2-5), when he humbled himself for us.]

6 that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—That, being thus united in sympathy and love for one another, the strong helping to bear the infirmities of the weak, the weak rejoicing in the help of the strong, you may all, as one man, with one voice and one mouth, glorify God.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God.—Notwithstanding the difference concerning things indifferent, receive ye one another, the weak, the strong, each helping the infirmities of the other, as Jesus received us despite our weaknesses and helps us in our infirmities to promote the glory of God. The succeeding verses indicate that this exhortation might apply to the oneness and sympathy between Jew and Gentile Christians, as the preceding verses show it applies to the weak and strong. [The compassionate welcome which Christ gives to all who become obedient to the gospel individually ought to be perpetually reproduced in the welcome of good will and tenderness which they give one to another in all the relations of life. And if there are some concessions to make, some antipathy to surmount, some injury to forgive, one thing ought to lift us above all these annoyances—the thought that we are thereby laboring for the glory of God, who received us through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mutual love ought to reign supremely among the Lord's people.]

ter of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises *given* unto the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written,

⁹Therefore will I ¹⁰give unto thee among the ¹¹Gentiles,
And sing unto thy name.

⁹Ps. xviii. 49 (or 2 S. xxii. 50).

¹⁰Or, *confess*

¹¹Gr. *nations*. Comp. Mt. 4. 15.

8 For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,—Christ came of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [He must fulfill the covenant of circumcision both in his person and in his work; he must be “born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4: 4, 5.)]

that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers,—[The promises to the fathers all lay within the limits of the covenant of circumcision (Gen. 17: 14-21), and Christ came to confirm them.] He fulfilled all the promises God made of a Prince and a Savior to redeem and a King to reign over his people forever.

9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy;—The Roman church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles. He sets forth that he came in fulfillment of promises made to the Jewish fathers, but these promises extended mercy to the Gentiles. From the beginning the prophecies of the coming Messiah told that he would come also to the Gentiles (Gen. 12: 3), bringing mercy and salvation to them. It is a sad commentary on the selfishness of humanity that the Jews, with all these promises in their Scriptures of blessing to the Gentiles, should fail to see it, and should have been so obstinate when the door was open to the Gentiles as to refuse to admit them to the privileges of the kingdom of God.

as it is written, Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.—Paul felt it necessary to quote these promises and prophecies to reconcile the Jews to the reception of the Gentiles. He quotes Psalm 18: 49 and applies it to Christ. David, personating Christ, says: “I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah, among the na-

- 10 And again he saith,
¹²Rejoice, ye ¹¹Gentiles, with his people.
- 11 And again,
¹³Praise the Lord, all ye ¹¹Gentiles;
 And let all the peoples praise him.
- 12 And again, Isaiah saith,
¹⁴There shall be the root of Jesse.
 And he that ariseth to rule over the ¹¹Gentiles;
 On him shall the ¹¹Gentiles hope.

¹²Dt. xxxii. 43.

¹³Ps. cxvii. 1.

¹⁴Is. xi. 10.

tions, and will sing praises unto thy name. Jesus, in the person of his servants among the Gentiles, would praise and honor God. [When David represents himself as among the Gentiles, as confessing to God and singing with them, he foreshadows that the time was coming when Jews and Gentiles would mutually accept each other, and that they would be so completely one as to recognize the same God and sing the same songs.]

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.—This is from the prophecy of Moses (Deut. 32: 43), showing that he in his last song foretold that the Gentiles should join in praise and rejoice with his people, the Jews.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and let all the peoples praise him.—From the Psalms (117: 1) he quotes that it was foretold that the Gentiles, in common with all his people, would be brought to praise him. [This is conclusive proof that not the Jews alone, but also all nations, were to share in the redemption of the Messiah.]

12 And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope.—From Isaiah (12: 10) there is a more specific promise—from the root of Jesse should come forth a Prince to rule over the Gentiles, and that in him they would put their trust and hope. All of which was quoted to prove that the Gentiles equally with the Jews were to be heirs of salvation through Christ, and that Jew and Gentile should be one in Christ.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope,—Paul, having referred to the Gentiles' hoping in Christ, with one of his characteristic divergencies, prays that God would fill all, both Jews and Gentiles, with hope and peace through their faith in God, that they may have the joy that abundant hope gives. [The Greek word for "filled" is a very strong and graphic word, originally applied to the feeding and fattening of animals in a stall, used also of the multitudes fed with the loaves and fishes. (Matt. 14: 20.) It expresses complete satisfaction.]

in the power of the Holy Spirit.—Through the Holy Spirit which God had given as an earnest to strengthen their faith and enable them to have hope in Jesus.

VII. CONCLUSION OF THE EPISTLE WITH PERSONAL ALLUSIONS AND CHRISTIAN SALUTATIONS

15: 14 to 16: 27

1. PERSONAL REFERENCES TO THE APOSTLE HIMSELF, GIVING SOME ACCOUNT OF LABORS AND DESIGNS

15: 14-33

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, by brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure, as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God, 16 that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, ¹⁵ministering the ¹⁶gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might

¹⁵Gr. *ministering in sacrifice.*

¹⁶See marginal note on ch. 1. 1.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness,—He assures them of his confidence in their goodness and knowledge and ability to instruct and admonish one another.

filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.—The various spiritual gifts bestowed upon those among them the ability to give this knowledge and instruction. Doubtless many gifted persons had gone to Rome to assist in converting the people.

15 But I write the more boldly unto you in some measure as putting you again in remembrance, because of the grace that was given me of God,—Notwithstanding their knowledge and goodness, he, by virtue of his being an apostle, feels at liberty and obligated to write them and remind them of these truths. They had the lower order of gifts that revealed the truth to them, but, like Timothy, needed to be reminded to stir up the gift that was in them, lest it rust out and they lose it. Spiritual gifts grow if used, but weakened and were lost if not used.

16 that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles,—The grace given him, which made him bold to write them, was that he was endowed as the apostle to the Gentiles.

ministering the gospel of God,—That he should preach the gospel to the Gentiles and so prepare them that they might be

be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any ¹things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the ²Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of ³the Holy Spirit; so that from Jerusalem, and

¹Gr. of those things which Christ wrought not through me.

²Gr. nations. Comp. Mt. 4. 15.

³Many ancient authorities read *the Spirit of God. One reads the Spirit.*

an offering acceptable to God, approved, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit bestowed upon them.

that the offering up of the Gentiles might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.—They offered themselves to God through believing in Christ. [Paul proclaimed the gospel unto men, and to those who obeyed it God gave the Holy Spirit (Acts 5: 32), and thereby they became a fit offering to God.]

17 I have therefore my glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God.—As an apostle to the Gentiles through the work Jesus Christ had enabled him to accomplish among them in the things pertaining to their conversion to God, he had somewhat in which he might glory in Christ Jesus.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any things save those which Christ wrought through me, for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed,—Before showing the work for which he glories in Christ Jesus he says he will not speak of the things that God hath not wrought by him both through word and deed to make the Gentiles obedient to God. The others of whose work he would not boast are thought to be his converts, who had gone out and done much work in which he might have claimed a part, but he would not. [He confined himself strictly to his own work.]

19 in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit;—Through the power bestowed upon him by the Holy Spirit which he exerted upon the souls of men by performing signs and wonders he proved the cause he was pleading was from God. [By the three terms—“powers,” “signs,” and “wonders”—Paul does not mean three classes of actions, but they are used to describe the same phenomena. The mir-

round about even unto Illyricum, I have ⁴fully preached the ⁵gospel of Christ; 20 ye, ⁶making it my aim so to ⁷preach the gospel, not where Christ

⁴Gr. *fulfilled*. Comp. Col. 1. 25.

⁵See marginal note on ch. 1. 1.

⁶Gr. *being ambitious*. 2 Cor. 5. 9; 1 Thess. 4. 11.

⁷See marginal note on ch. 1. 15.

acles which he wrought were mighty powers, because wrought by the immediate power of God; signs, because they signified God's approval of what Paul did in connection with them; and wonders, because they excited wonder in those who witnessed them.]

so that from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum,—[Jerusalem is especially mentioned from its being the center, according to the Lord's directions (Luke 24: 47), where the apostles began their work and where Paul himself was first received into their fellowship (Acts 9: 26, 27). Illyricum is a district lying along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea.

There is no mention in Acts of Paul's preaching in that country; but in describing the circuit of Paul's labors in Macedonia, Luke employs the comprehensive expression, "when he had gone through those parts." (Acts 20: 1, 2.) We may conclude, therefore, that one of the "parts" was Illyricum, which was adjacent to Macedonia—and so much the more because the chronology of this portion of Paul's life allows us to assign the ample time of three or four months to just these labors in that part before he proceeded to Corinth. Thus the apostle and the history, so incomplete and obscure apart from each other, form a perfect whole when brought together, and that by a combination of circumstances of which Paul and Luke could have had no thought when they wrote their different accounts.]

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ;—He had preached the gospel in all its fullness of truth wherever he had gone. In reporting his work, Luke says: "Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the

was *already* named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; 21 but, as it is written,

^aThey shall see, to whom no tidings of him came,
And they who have not heard shall understand.

^aIs. lii. 15.

Christ." (Acts 17: 2, 3.) To the elders at Ephesus he said: "I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20: 20-27.) That is what it is to fully preach the gospel.

20 yea, making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named,—He had endeavored to preach the gospel in places where it had not gone. Paul evinced the spirit that the greater the destitution, the stronger the call for him to preach the gospel. In verse 23 he states that all the places around him at Corinth had heard the gospel was the reason why he desired to leave there and go into fields that had not heard it. Paul's spirit is the one that should be emulated by all who know the gospel now. The greater the destitution where the people are willing to hear, the stronger the obligation to go. Unlike this, most modern preachers seek the strongest churches and the places that have been most fully converted.

that I might not build upon another man's foundation;—Where Christ's name was unknown was the place that had the strongest claim upon Paul. He was like Christ in this. If all preachers had that spirit, the church would have peace and the whole world would soon have the gospel.

21 but, as it is written, They shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand.—Isaiah (52: 15) foretold that the spirit of the gospel would be to go to those in the darkness that they might have the truth, and Paul's course was in harmony with the will of God.

22 Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you: 23 but now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, 24 whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)—25 but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints.

22 **Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming to you:**—This determination on his part to preach to those ignorant of the truth had called him to so many benighted fields that he had been hindered from going to Rome, as he had often proposed to do.

23 **But now, having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you,**—But the gospel having been proclaimed in all the regions around Corinth by Paul and his fellow laborers, he was now ready to visit them at Rome, as he had for many years desired to do.

24 **whensoever I go unto Spain**—It was the purpose of Paul to make a tour into Spain as a new mission field. [It was quite natural that this Roman province, where many Jews lived and whither, perhaps, no teacher but himself was likely to go, should claim his attention.]

(**for I hope to see you in my journey,**—On his way thither he hoped to pass through Rome to see them.

and to be brought on my way thitherward by you,—This may mean that he expected them to assist him in the expenses of the journey, and perhaps be accompanied on the way by members of the Roman church. (See Acts 15: 3; 20: 38; 21: 5; 1 Cor. 16: 6, 11; 2 Cor. 1: 16; Tit. 3: 13; 2 John 6.)

if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)—He anticipated being spiritually refreshed by their companionship [but in the words “some measure” he intimates that he may not be able to stay long enough to be fully satisfied with such delightful fellowship]. We have no evidence that Paul ever made this journey to Spain. This, with his visit to Rome as a prisoner instead as he now anticipated, shows that the Spirit did not reveal these matters concerning his personal labors to him.

25 **but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints.**—He was not in Corinth on his way to Jerusalem with

26 For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. 27 Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have accompanied this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you

alms sent to the poor saints. (See Acts 19: 21; 24: 17.) [This very journey to Jerusalem was in fact, in God's purpose, his way to Rome.]

26 For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem.—The churches in Achaia and Macedonia had contributed means for the poor of the saints in Judea. Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19: 22) had been sent to urge the collection of this fund. The facts are presented more fully in 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 8: 1; 9: 2-15. The churches of Galatia and Asia also engaged in this work; and when Paul and his companions reached these points on their journey to Jerusalem, they were joined by those sent of the churches with their contributions who accompanied them to Jerusalem. Some of these remained with him in his imprisonment and accompanied him to Rome. (Acts 21: 29; comp. Acts 19: 29.)

27 Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are.—The Gentile churches were glad to help their Jewish brethren in their need. It was due them, because through the instrumentality of the Jews the Gentiles had first received the gospel.

For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things.—The giving unto them the knowledge of the gospel was a far greater benefit than temporal help, no matter how pressing the need.

28 When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit,—This gift carried to the churches in Judea was the fruit of the Christian religion. This spirit of helpfulness is a peculiarity of the religion of Jesus Christ. No general teaching of sacrificing for the good of others is found

unto Spain. **29 And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.**

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of thy Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

elsewhere than among the people under the influence of the teaching of Jesus Christ. He calls it the seal of the fruit—the proof of the love of the Gentile Christians for their Jewish brethren and for God.

I will go on by you unto Spain.—Paul's purpose was, when he completed this work of delivering to the churches in Judea the offering of the Gentiles in their behalf, to go thence to Spain, and would pass through Rome on the way.

29 And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.—This was intended both as a compliment to their spiritual condition as well as a promise of a higher degree of spiritual power. He was ready to bestow a higher degree of the Spirit upon them than they had received, but in order to its bestowal they must be fitted for it. He had said to them: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established. . . . Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles." (1: 11-13.)

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;—In this Paul expresses his confidence in the efficacy of the prayers of the brethren. He continually, in labors and dangers in which he was exposed, felt the need of and asked the prayers of his brethren in his behalf. He besought them, as they loved the Lord Jesus Christ and his cause and were moved by the love the Spirit inspired in their hearts, to pray for him. The Spirit aroused love in their hearts by teaching the love Jesus had shown them. If Paul, the inspired apostle, felt the need of the prayers of the brethren in his behalf and for the furtherance of his work, how much more should Christians feel the need of receiving and offering prayers one for another!

31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judæa, and *that* my ministration which I *have* for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the

31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judæa,—The first point on which he desired their prayers was that he might be delivered from them that did not believe in Judea. He was on his way with the offerings of the Gentile Christians in behalf of their Jewish brethren; and while the long, fearful trials which he was called upon to endure were not opened to him, still he apprehended that the unbelieving would persecute him bitterly when he reached Judea. Hence, he asked the prayers of the brethren in Rome that he might be delivered from their fury.

and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints;—He was fearful that the strong Jewish feeling existing among the Christians of Judea might lead them to reject the offering of the Gentile Christians that he and his companions brought. This would have been disappointing, as he was anxious to perfect the bond of fraternal brotherhood between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. The cheerful sending of this offering (2 Cor. 8: 1-34) was the seal of the brotherly love on the part of the Gentiles. The acceptance of it would be the seal of the bond of brotherhood on the part of the Jews. Paul was exceedingly anxious that it might be accepted. He asked the prayers of the Christians at Rome in the attainment of this end. The gift was accepted gladly. (Acts 21: 17-20.)

[If Paul called thus earnestly for the prayers of the church in Rome, how much more must he have enlisted those of the churches in Achaia and Macedonia, who were immediate participants in the ministering to the saints in Judea! We have the spectacle of a man who was regarded with suspicion by a large portion of his brethren, securing from others, who were involved with him the same reproach, a self-denying contribution for the temporal wants of the disaffected party; and then, fearing lest their disaffection was so great as to cause them to reject the gift, he calls upon all the donors to unite in persistent prayer that it might not be rejected. No nobler example

saints; 32 that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God, and together with you find rest. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

of disinterested benevolence can be found in the history of men. The prosecution of the enterprise was in keeping with the magnanimity of its inception.]

32 that I may come unto you in joy through the will of God,—Paul intimates that the failure of the Jewish brethren to receive in a Christian spirit the offering of the Gentile brethren would hinder his joy and destroy the blessing he anticipated. It would so distress him that he could not heartily enjoy his visit to the church in Rome, composed of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. The making and receiving of this offering would be the seal of the unity in Christ of Jew and Gentile.

and together with you find rest.—[He evidently looked forward to his interview with the Christians at Rome as a season of relief from conflict and labor. In Jerusalem he was beset by unbelieving Jews and harassed by Judaizing Christians; in most other places he was burdened with the care of the churches but at Rome, which he looked upon as a resting place rather than a field of labor, he hoped to gather strength for the prosecution of his apostolic labors in still more distant lands.]

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.—He prays that God, who dwells in peace and bestows his peace upon his servants, might be with them.

2. COMMENDATION OF PHŒBE

16: 1, 2

1 I recommend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a ¹servant of the church

¹Or, *deaconess*

1 I commend unto you Phoebe our sister,—Tradition says this letter was carried by Phœbe from Corinth to the church in Rome. This commendation would agree well with the idea that she carried the letter, and that it introduced and commended her to the Christians at Rome. Cenchreæ was a short distance southeast of Corinth.

that is at Cenchreæ; 2 that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you: for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self.

who is a servant of the church that is at Cenchreæ:—Some think she was a publicly recognized deaconness, but we find no recognition in the Scriptures of any such class. Many women did, however, voluntarily devote themselves in a womanly way to teaching and helping those who preached, waiting on the sick and doing whatever work presented itself for them to do. Phœbe was one of this class. Paul commended her as a Christian to the brethren at Rome.

2 that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints,—Receive her as servants of God should receive a worthy sister in a foreign land.

and that ye assist her in whatsoever matter she may have need of you:—She had gone on some business, and a woman in a strange city might need help; and he asks them to give it, for she is worthy.

for she herself also hath been a helper of many, and of mine own self.—She had succored Paul when he was in need, and many others. This indicates the character of service she gave to the church.

3. SALUTATIONS ADDRESSED TO BELIEVERS IN ROME

16: 3-16

3 Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who for

3 Salute Prisca and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus,—Paul first met this couple at Corinth, shortly after they had come from Rome in consequence of an order of Claudius commanding all Jews to leave Rome. “And he came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers.” (Acts 18: 2, 3.) On the departure of Paul from Corinth, eighteen months later, Prisca and Aquila accompanied him to Ephesus on his way to Syria. There they remained; and when Apollos came to Ephesus, “knowing only

my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles: 5 and *salute* the church that is in their house. Salute Epænetus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.

the baptism of John," "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18: 24-26.) At what time they became Christians is uncertain. At the time of the writing of the First Epistle to the Corinthians they were still in Ephesus, and had a church in their house. (1 Cor. 16: 19.) Now they are in Rome again.

4 who for my life laid down their own necks;—At some time they had imperiled their lives for the sake of Paul. Christ died for them; they were ready to die that his servant might live.

unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles:—Paul gives thanks to them. Their services in building all the churches among the Gentiles had been such that all the churches of the Gentiles felt grateful to them. The frequent mention of Prisca's name first has suggested the idea to some that she was the more earnest and intelligent of the two.

5 and salute the church that is in their house.—In the beginnings of the gospel the disciples of the Lord assembled in private houses, and this worthy and laborious couple, themselves intelligent Christians and teachers, furnished in their own house room for the assembling of the saints for worship. So Paul sent salutations to those who met in their house. It is possible that there were other Christians and teachers belonging to their household that constituted the nucleus of a church wherever they went. Paul may have met with some of these at other places.

Salute Epænetus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ.—Epænetus was likely one of these, as he says he was the first in Asia to become a Christian. Paul had been instrumental in converting him at Ephesus when he first went there to preach. Nothing further is known of Epænetus than what is stated here.

6 Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you. 7 Salute Andronicus and ¹⁰Junias, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also have been in Christ before me. 8 Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. 10 Salute Apelles the approved in Christ. Salute them that are of the *household* of Aristobulus. 11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute them of the *household* of Narcissus, that are in the Lord. 12 Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute Peris the beloved,

¹⁰Or, *Junia*

6 Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you.—We know nothing of this Mary save what is here said of her. She had rendered herself particularly useful in the Roman church.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junias, my kinsman,—It is most likely that they were his actual kinsmen, members of his family, not merely that they were Jews.

and my fellow-prisoners,—On some occasion they had been imprisoned with him. [This is not at all improbable, for twice (2 Cor. 6: 5; 9: 23) he speaks of imprisonments as if they were common with him.]

who are of note among the apostles,—They were well and favorably known by the apostles, and regarded as worthy of their affection and confidence.

who also have been in Christ before me.—They preceded him in their obedience to the gospel.

8-12 Salute Ampliatus my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbanus our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles the approved in Christ. Salute them that are of the household of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Salute them of the household of Narcissus, that are in the Lord. Salute Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute Persis the beloved, who labored much in the Lord.—Of the persons mentioned in these verses we know nothing, save what is here revealed. They were all his former fellow laborers in the gospel in the fields of labor. He compliments each as he thinks they deserve. They were men and women who had given up all for Christ and had gone to Rome to spread the gospel in that great capital city of the world.

who labored much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren that are with them. 15 Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints that are with them. 16 Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ

13 Salute Rufus the chosen in the Lord,—As “chosen in the Lord” might be appropriately said of every faithful Christian, the special application of it to Rufus implies peculiar excellence.

and his mother and mine.—She had shown him on some occasion all the care of a mother, and, therefore, he felt for her all the affection of a son.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas,—Nothing whatever is known of any of these persons.

and the brethren that are with them.—This indicates that the Christians in Rome were separated into different bands, probably laboring in different points of the city to build up the Lord’s work.

15 Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas,—Nothing is known of any of these Christians except their names.

and all the saints that are with them.—Possibly these, with others named in this verse, met together and worshiped. The number here mentioned that he had known in other places, with the fewness of the disciples in Rome when he reached the city, indicates that there had been a preconcerted movement among the Christians in Achaia, Macedonia, and Asia Minor for a large number of devoted men and women to go to Rome for the purpose of making a united effort to teach the people there the gospel. Paul would go by way of Jerusalem, thence to Rome and into Spain. Others went directly to Rome to engage in the work. [It is highly probable that some of these beloved brethren formed a part of the two bands who, some three years later, went out on the Appian Way—the one thirty miles to The Three Taverns, and the other forty miles to The Market of Appius—to meet the beloved apostle, now coming to them as Christ’s “ambassador in chains.” It was natural that when he saw the little throng of

salute you.

Christians he should thank God and take courage from this proof of their affection and devotion, and that here at length his soul was filled with joy and his tired spirit found rest.]

16 Salute one another with a holy kiss.—This is regarded by some as a command to greet one another in meeting with a kiss. But no ordinance of God is so treated. All the commands and ordinances of God are commanded by Jesus Christ, repeated by the apostles, and then embodied in the main teachings of the Holy Spirit, not left simply to the salutations and greetings at the close of the letters to the churches. We have no example of the apostles practicing it. It is nowhere mentioned in the body of the letters, but is given at the close, among the incidentals and the salutations to the individuals. Kissing was the salutation of the East, and the apostle cautioned that it should be a pure and holy kiss. He did not ordain kissing as a mode of salutation. He found it, and cautioned that it should be pure and holy among Christians.

All the churches of Christ salute you.—[Paul was in communication with most of the churches; all such would feel interested in the believers at Rome; and if, as is probable, his intention of going there was known, how natural that these churches should ask to be remembered to the brethren there! As he knew so well the believers at Rome, which he had not visited, how well qualified he was to speak for the many churches of Christ which he himself had planted!]

4. A WARNING AGAINST ALL WHO CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES

16: 17-20

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the ¹doctrine which ye learned: and

¹Or, *teaching*

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned:—No greater evil, according to the

turn away from them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the

Scriptures, could befall the churches than the divisions arising from the introduction of teachings and practices not required by God. The fundamental truth of the Bible is that God alone has the right to direct and guide the faith and service of his children. Everything added to the work or worship of God by man is a usurpation in the sight of God, and ought to be resisted. Things that enter into the worship of God ought to be distinguished from the things indifferent and from mere expedients used to help men in performing the service of God that render them comfortable while doing the worship. These constitute no part of the service, but are helps to man while doing that service, not additions to it. All additions to the service of God are sinful and cause divisions. God has forbidden anything to be added to what he has required. There cannot be a doubt but that the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attractive accompaniment, is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord. It destroys the difference between the holy and the unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. It has not been authorized by God or sanctified with the blood of the Son.

and turn away from them.—Every one who adds to the appointments of God causes divisions contrary to the word of God. Paul commands these brethren at Rome to mark, take note of, such, and avoid them—avoid them by refusing to recognize and associate with them as brethren. This requirement is imperative and necessary to preserve the harmony and unity of the churches of Christ.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ,—Things not taught in the Scriptures cannot be taught in the worship or work of the church as service to Jesus Christ. To bring things not taught into the service is to place them with

hearts of the innocent. 19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoyce therefore over you: but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil. 20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

theirs authors on a par with the commandments of God and with God himself.

but their own belly;—Those who bring things not commanded by God into the services of God must do it to make themselves popular or to build up a strong wordly church. This is to serve their fleshly desires.

and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.—[These makers of divisions and offenses, however fair and fine their pretensions and speeches might be, were not sincerely serving Christ, but rather serving their own sensual and selfish ends, and the aim of all their kind and plausible words is only to deceive those innocent ones who are slow to suspect it in others.]

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.—The report of the obedience of the Christians in Rome had spread abroad through all portions of the Roman Empire.

I rejoyce therefore over you:—He rejoiced because they had attained such a splendid reputation.

but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil.—He cautions that he would have them wise and skilled in that which is good, while he would have them ignorant and unskilled in the evil. Sin is of such hideous mien that it is not good to be too familiar with it. [Be deep in the wisdom of humble faith; be contented to be unacquainted with a wisdom which at its root is evil; for a man need not be evil, and needs no personal experience in the practice of it, to be wise about it. The pure life, begotten of a pure faith, knows best what sin is. Darkness cannot reveal darkness.]

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.—If you do as directed in avoiding those who cause divisions, and will avoid those skilled in the evil, be wise and skilled in the good, then God will speedily bruise Satan under your feet. I do not understand this as referring to any special

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

time of triumph, but to a general truth that if a congregation of Christians would avoid the teachers that are not faithful to God and will be wise and faithful to his service, then God will quickly enable them to triumph over the evil one.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.—He prays that the favor that pertained to Jesus Christ should abide with them.

5. SALUTATIONS FROM PAUL'S FELLOW LABORERS

16: 21-23

21 Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you; and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. 22 I Tertius, ²who write the epistle, salute you in the

²Or, *who write the epistle in the Lord, salute you*

21 **Timothy my fellow-worker saluteth you;**—Timothy was the well-known companion of Paul, who accompanied him in his journeys and shared with him all his dangers; hence, he styles him his “fellow-worker.”

and Lucius—Lucius of Cyrene is mentioned (Acts 13: 1) as one of the prophets and teachers at Antioch who were called upon to separate Paul and Barnabas for the work among the Gentiles. This is probably the same.

and Jason—This is probably the same person who was the host of Paul and Silas at Thessalonica, and who, on that account, was accused to the magistrates as harboring seditious persons.

and Sosipater, my kinsmen.—This is supposed to be the same as Sopater of Berea, mentioned in Acts 20: 4.

22 **I Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord.**—Tertius seems to have been Paul's amanuensis. He seldom wrote his epistles with his own hand. He refers to his having written the letter to the Galatians as something unusual: “See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand.” (Gal. 6: 11.) At the close of his letters, in order to authenticate them, he usually wrote with his own hand the salutation: “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand” (1 Cor. 16:

Lord. 23 Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you, and Quartus the brother.³

³Some ancient authorities insert here ver. 24 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*, and omit the like words in ver. 20.

21); "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write" (2 Thess. 3: 17).

23 Gaius my host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.—Gaius is mentioned as one baptized at Corinth by his own hands. (1 Cor. 1: 14.) With him Paul was abiding when the letter was written. It is probable that he entertained Christian travelers who came to Corinth.

Erastus the treasurer of the city saluteth you,—While this might mean the treasurer of the city government, it may also mean the steward of the church in the city. The whole context is so directly concerning church matters that this would seem more reasonable, and, as we shall find by further consideration, more in harmony with what else we know of Erastus and of the relation of the government to the church. This letter was written while the government was persecuting the church, and it is unreasonable to contend that the government, while seeking to annihilate the church, should, in so prominent and influential city as was Corinth, having communication with all parts of the empire, tolerate such an active and earnest Christian as the history shows Erastus was in so important office as treasurer of the city. Besides this, Erastus is introduced to us at the time Paul "sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while." (Acts 19: 22.) From this it is evident that Erastus, with Timothy, was traveling with Paul on his missionary tours. We know not how long they remained on the Macedonian mission, but doubtless some time, as their trip seems to have been to supplement an intended visit of Paul, which was for the time delayed. After dispatching them, he remained in Asia for a season, doubtless through the winter and until the next season for navigation. After his escape from the mob at Ephesus, "he departed to go into Macedonia" (Acts 20: 1), where he doubtless was joined by Timothy and Erastus. Thence he proceeded to Greece, of

which Corinth is the chief city. Erastus most likely accompanied him to Corinth and was with him during his three months' sojourn (Acts 20: 3), at which time this letter was written, in which he is called "the treasurer of the city." Is anyone so credulous as to believe that, after a two years' absence on a tour preaching the gospel, within three months after his arrival in this heathen city he would have been made its treasurer? Some years after this Paul said: "Erastus remained at Corinth." (2 Tim. 4: 20.) This would not likely have been said if Corinth had been his home, but it indicates that after traveling as a minister of the gospel he made his final stopping place at Corinth. If the expression really means the treasurer of the city organization, it must have been in consequence of his having held that position prior to his conversion, as we call a judge by his title after the expiration of his term of office. But I think it simply means that he was the steward of the church in the city of Corinth.

and Quartus the brother.—Quartus is not mentioned elsewhere. He may have been known to the brethren in Rome.

6. CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY.

16: 25-27

25 'Now to him that is able to establish you according to my ^b gospel and

^aSome ancient authorities omit ver. 25-27. Comp. the end of ch. 14.

^bSee marginal note on ch. 1. 1.

25 Now to him that is able to establish you—He commends them to God, who has power to render them steadfast, unmovable from Christ and from the truth as it is in him. [This is the end to which Paul wished to impart unto them some spiritual gift. (1: 11, 12.)]

according to my gospel—When the Romans became finally fixed and settled in their faith, Paul hoped to see that faith in exact parallel with his gospel. He had already called the gospel a "form," or "mold." (6: 17.) God is able through it to put his stamp upon their thinking, feeling, and living, so that in all these there will never be any divergence from it. A church is established when it reverently believes and says of everything—God, Christ, sin and Satan, salvation, death and

the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, 26 but now is mani-

life—just what the gospel reveals. [The heart is unstable, there is so much false teaching, and Satan is so persistently seeking to undermine that God alone is of power to establish so that there is no swerving. (1: 16; 1 Pet. 1: 5; Jude 24, 25.)]

and the preaching of Jesus Christ,—[Not the preaching which Christ did, but the preaching which respects him, or has him for its object—“Christ Jesus, and him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2: 2.)]

according to the revelation of the mystery—The preaching of Jesus Christ accorded with the revelation by God to Paul of a mystery. A mystery was a spiritual truth which could not be explained except by direct revelation. But after it was explained by an inspired man, it was no longer a mystery. The sum of the mystery embraced the union of the Jew and Gentile on the same level in Christ. The relation of the Jew and Gentile was the burning question in the church in Paul's day. [Nothing could be settled until it was settled. This question well-nigh wrecked the churches in Galatia.]

which hath been kept in silence through times eternal,—The numerous ages that have elapsed between the creation of man and the appearing of the Christ.

26 but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets,—[“Now” is in contrast with the time in which the mystery was kept secret. “Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph. 3: 5, 6.) The apostles here are called “prophets,” in as much as they are bearers of a new revelation. Their writings, then, certainly are prophetic; for a prophet is not primarily, but only accidentally, one who foretells the future, being rather one who, having been taught of God, speaks out his will. (Deut. 18: 18.) Paul feels that the

festes, and ⁶by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the ⁷nations unto obedience ⁸of faith: 27 to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, ⁹to whom be the glory ¹⁰for ever. Amen.

⁶Gr. *through*.

⁷Or, *Gentiles*

⁸Or, *to the faith*

⁹Some ancient authorities omit *to whom*.

¹⁰Gr. *unto the ages*.

letter he has just written has this character, and that it ranks among the means which God is using to carry out the publication of the new revelation. It is, therefore, of this very letter, as well as of the others which had proceeded from his pen, that he is speaking in this passage.]

according to the commandment of the eternal God,—[This commandment of God was the command to carry out his eternal purpose in the word of his Son when he said: “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28: 18, 19.) The mystery of the oneness of Jew and Gentile in Christ was not only manifested to the apostles, but made known authoritatively.]

is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith:—For the obedience to which faith in God leads.

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.—[This sums up all the great ideas of the Epistle. The power of the gospel which Paul was commissioned to preach; the revelation in it of the eternal purpose of God; its contents, faith, and obedience; its sphere, “all nations” of the earth; its author, “the only wise God,” whose wisdom is thus vindicated—on all these points he had continually dwelt. This outburst of lofty praise is a most fitting ending to this marvelous letter.]

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