

Paul's Letter to the ROMANS



John Carter

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

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JOHN CARTER

"Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." (Acts 23:11)

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FOREWORD

THE Author has asked me to “write a short Foreword for the book”. I do so with pleasure, believing that these pages will be a help to the understanding of one of Paul’s epistles “in which”, as Peter truly says, “are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).

This is especially true of Paul’s epistle to the Romans. His arguments concerning “law” and “the law”, “sin” and “sinners”, “flesh” and “spirit”, God’s federal principles “in Adam” and “in Christ”, and the dualism that we all experience in the flesh—these things are not easily understood, but require patient and reverent study.

This “analytical study” was begun some years ago in connection with a Bible Class, and with no thought of publication. Afterwards the matter was contributed to *The Christadelphian* in a series of articles appearing in the volumes for 1929 and 1930. The work is now issued in this more permanent form, in the hope that it may be of further use against the great day of “the manifestation of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19).

1931

C. C. WALKER

FOREWORD TO THE 1992 EDITION

WHEN the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the believers meeting in Rome, the city was the centre of the Mediterranean world. All roads led to Rome, and Roman laws were imposed by its officials in all its provinces. Jesus’ command to his apostles: “Go ye into all the world,

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and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), had to be carried out against the backcloth of Roman life and culture which permeated all the territory it controlled. The Romans themselves were pagan, and the gospel message was a great challenge, transforming all that the Empire stood for. The Lord Jesus is king, not Cæsar (Romans 10:9). In Christ, law and its obedience is replaced by grace and faith (Romans 4:16); citizenship of an earthly kingdom with citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

Yet the Lord's command was also made easier by the Roman network of communication routes. Along these great roads, the gospel flame burned its way, taking the news of the coming kingdom into the heart of the Empire. How fitting therefore, that the great Pauline declaration of the gospel should be written to believers *in Rome!* Paul's letter is the manifesto of the revolution which turned the Roman world upside down (Acts 17:6). Paul himself later travelled to Rome under guard to be tried before Cæsar's judgement seat, but he knew his real trial was not to be in Rome, but when he stood before his Lord: "For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10).

Paul's letter has helped countless generations since to appreciate God's love which He commended to us, "in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). At least two generations have also been helped by Brother Carter's careful analysis of the book. Ever since it first appeared, serialised in *The Christadelphian*, it has been a classic commentary on a unique book. This latest edition, totally reset and arranged in a more easily followed format, is therefore lovingly commended to another generation, in the hope that they too will thrill to the record of God's salvation.

July 1992

MICHAEL ASHTON

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Section I

INTRODUCTION

(1:1-15)

THE letter to the Romans has been described as the profoundest book in the world. It differs from most of the other letters that Paul wrote in that it does not appear to have been written to meet difficulties in the church to which it was addressed. In argument it closely resembles the letter to the Galatians. The latter "stands in relation to the Roman letter as the rough model to the finished statue". A sympathetic reader of Galatians catches the feeling of fierce controversy which pervades it, while in Romans there is a calmly reasoned exposition of the same fundamental truths. Romans is a statement of Paul's teaching concerning the principles of God's dealings with men.

The occasion of the writing of it was a projected visit of Paul to Rome after he had visited Jerusalem with the funds he had collected during his third journey for the relief of the poor in Judea. The references to this intended visit are the main local features in the letter. As it is a statement of principles, comparable to a treatise as much as to a letter, it can be studied independently of a knowledge of local conditions and the need for it being written. These aspects need not therefore detain us.

The Address (1:1-7)

Paul introduces himself as the "*servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God*" (verse 1). He was the bondsman of Jesus Christ. This free-born Roman citizen gloried in this relationship. While men generally sought for and boasted of the position of free-

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man, the bonds slave of Jesus Christ had a greater honour. For here the man was at once servant and free. And so Paul encouraged the slave to remember that in Christ he was free, at the same time exhorting the free to remember that he was Christ's slave (1 Corinthians 7:22). But the word "servant" reflects more than social customs of the first century. It has its roots in the Old Testament. The prophets were God's servants (Amos 3:7; Daniel 9:6). Jesus was the Servant pre-eminently (Isaiah 42:1; Acts 4:27, RV). Paul claims to belong to such a succession of divinely appointed ministers of the Word of God.

"Called to be an apostle"

He was called to be an apostle—"a called apostle", leaving out the italicized words. The twelve were "called" and named "apostles" (Luke 6:13). And Paul was not less so. He was "sent" by Christ (Acts 26:17) and "separated to the gospel of God". He recognized that there had been a preparation going on throughout his life, fitting him for the work to which he was appointed. "It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (Galatians 1:15,16, RV). The actual separating to the work was on the Damascus way, when Paul beheld "the heavenly vision" which changed the course of his life. Finally, when the time had come for the gospel to be carried to all nations, "the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

The work was the proclamation of God's gospel, or good news, which had been the subject of promise through God's prophets in the holy scriptures, and which centred in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

There are two aspects of Jesus Christ, neither of which can be ignored nor separated from the other. In the past Christendom has exalted Christ into co-equality and co-eternity with God, which in effect denies that he was *Son* of God. The Modernist school, together with other writers who in recent years have approached the study of the life of Christ from their own particular point of view, frankly

treat the scripture record of Christ's birth as a fable, and make him simply a son of man. But this will not do. The life and work of Christ cannot be explained from such a point of view. He was Son of God as well as son of man. However "great the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh" may be, yet as a fact it is attested by the life, the works and the words of Jesus.

Paul states these two aspects of Christ, his Davidic descent and his Divine sonship. The language concerning his descent from David is plain, but the construction of the words describing him as Son of God has given rise to much difference of opinion. Paul says, God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, *"was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead"* (verses 3,4, RV).

"Declared to be the Son of God"

That Jesus was Son of God is clearly affirmed; but what do the words "with power" qualify, and what is meant by "the spirit of holiness"? Some give "with power" an adverbial force connected with declared; for example, Weymouth's translation gives "decisively", or "miraculously" in his translation in modern speech. Others connect them with "Son of God", and make Paul say that Jesus was declared Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, contrasting with the days of his flesh, when he was Son of God in weakness. The passage has even been used to support the idea that Jesus only attained to Sonship of God by resurrection from the dead.

"The spirit of holiness" has been regarded as synonymous with "the Holy Spirit" and with "holy spirit nature", and also as meaning a character of holiness. How shall we view the passage?

The word "declared" denotes 'to distinguish or mark off one object from others by drawing a line between them': so of local boundaries, of definitions, of appointments to specific work or office, of discriminations. As a boundary stone marks off one district from another, or the horizon (a word derived from the one Paul here uses) is the boundary of

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heaven and earth, so Jesus was marked out, defined, distinguished, as Son of God, by three signs: (1) with power; (2) according to the spirit of holiness; (3) by the resurrection of the dead. This seems the simplest construction; it accords with the facts; grammatically it is not without the support of scholarship.

“With power”: “I have greater witness than that of John”, Jesus said, “for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John 5:36). “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (14:11). Again, “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father” (15:24). In all these statements there is an appeal to the witness of the works that he did, attesting that he was God’s Son. They were “the Father’s” works. They were of a fulness and range altogether surpassing any that had been performed before by any of the prophets. God was the source of life; the Son raised the dead. God was the sustainer of life, sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons; the Son provided food. All nature’s operations have their origin in God’s power; the Son stilled the storm with a word. Sickness and death have their source in sin against God; the Son forgave sins, and healed the sufferers. But what man can forgive sins? He cleansed the Temple, because they profaned “my Father’s house”.

“The spirit of holiness”: One usage of the word “spirit” is illustrated by the following passages. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7). “Shall I come ... in the spirit of meekness?” (1 Corinthians 4:21). Restore one “overtaken in a fault ... in the spirit of meekness” (Galatians 6:1). In these passages the word “spirit” refers to character. So in the passage before us. Jesus was marked out as Son of God by the character of holiness that he exhibited.

All men are sinners. “Ye being evil” is Christ’s own description of men. The flesh of itself cannot rise higher

than this. Whence then the sinlessness of Jesus? It is only explicable in the light of the record that he was God's Son. He was God's servant, that He upheld (Isaiah 42:1). He was hidden in the shadow of God's hand (49:2). On this matter the discussion between Jesus and his adversaries, recorded in John 8:12-59, is very instructive. Claiming to be "the light of the world", his right so to speak was challenged by them. He answered that the Father that sent him bore witness of him. His paternity thus mentioned, they asked him, Where is thy Father? They ask again, Who art thou? And in his answer he said, "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him" (verse 29).

Addressing those who accepted his teaching thus far, Jesus said that if they continued in his word, the Truth would make them free. This was a hard saying to a son of Abraham. As Abraham's children they were already free. But Jesus explained that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. It was in the power of *the Son* to make them free. Although claiming to be Abraham's children they sought to kill Jesus. This was evidence of moral descent other than from Abraham, for Abraham looked for Christ's day but they were seeking to kill him. They did the deeds of their father. Their father was not God, for then would they have loved Christ, who came from God. Then very plainly Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do ... *Which of you convicteth me of sin?*" What a challenge in the midst of such a discussion! How readily under such circumstances would they have produced evidence of sin, had they been able. But unconvicted, his claim stands. He was of God; he heard God's words; he kept God's commandments and always pleased Him. His sinlessness proves his Divine Sonship. His holiness of character marks him out as Son of God, for only a son of God could live such a life.

"By the resurrection from the dead": How did his resurrection establish his Sonship? First it must be noticed that when he cleansed the temple, calling it his Father's house, and he was asked by what sign he would show his authority to do that, he answered, "Destroy this temple, and

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in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). John explains that he spake of the temple of his body. The resurrection of that body was the sign of his authority to cleanse his Father's house; in other words, his resurrection shows that he was the Son of God, who was the owner of the house.

The resurrection of Jesus differed in one respect from the resurrection of any other. Elisha restored to life the Shunammite's son. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain. But these were attestations of the fact that God was with the men through whom the miracle was performed. But no such circumstances attended the resurrection of Jesus. *That* was not an accompanying feature of a prophet's message. "Him hath God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, for it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Not possible; for sin being the cause of death, perfect obedience must ensure resurrection from the dead. But in what way does this distinguish him as Son of God? In this way. From the days of Eden, when the promise concerning the woman's seed was made, God had indicated that redemption would be accomplished by a Son.

Here a beginning of redemption has been made; "the first fruits" has been gathered. Death has met its conqueror, because Sin has been condemned. The man to accomplish this is therefore Son of God. The whole plan centres in a Son. The pledge of accomplishment is here; Christ is raised. "The resurrection of the dead" is therefore sure.

It is in John's gospel that we have the record of these contentions concerning the paternity of Jesus, in which he makes appeal to the three things mentioned by Paul. And John's gospel was written to show that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (20:31).

"Grace and apostleship"

Through Jesus, son of David and Son of God, Paul had "*received grace and apostleship*". The persecutor became the ambassador. But he never forgot his former course of life, and never ceased to thank "Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful,

INTRODUCTION (1:1-15)

appointing me to his service; though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Timothy 1:12,13). He was a chosen vessel to preach Christ, that obedience springing from faith might be rendered by some from among all the nations to Christ's glory. The brethren at Rome were among those who had so obeyed. They were the called of Jesus Christ, "*beloved of God, called saints*". Not "named" saints; but saints "called" of God. The gospel called them to "come out" and "be separate". As such they were saints. Paul concludes his opening sentence, consisting of seven verses, with the invocation, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ".

Paul and the Church at Rome (1:8-15)

The apostle's first thought is Godward. How revealing are Paul's letters as to the man he was. "*First, I thank my God.*" This was characteristic of him, for in many of his letters he expresses thanks to God. His life was constantly beset with many difficulties. About the time this letter was written the riot in Ephesus had put his life in peril (Acts 19:29-30). When he left Corinth a plot on his life caused him to change his route (20:3). But this was only one danger out of many that he constantly encountered. At the end of a long list of the things he endured, he adds that "there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28).

With what feeling, then, does he say, "*I thank my God ... for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world*"? He is Christ's accredited ambassador to the nations, and he fully realizes his grave duty. But he earnestly ("*in my spirit*") serves God, and unceasingly prays for those who are his charge, giving thanks for their steadfastness of faith.

His work was a matter of daily supplication, too. He wished to see those at Rome, if it was God's will. It was in his power as an apostle to impart to them some spiritual gift, possibly some of the gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 14, and which were bestowed by the laying on of an

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apostle's hands (Acts 8:14-17). But the benefit was not to be all theirs. With fine tact he adds, "*That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me*" (verse 12). Who would have thought that they could have conferred a benefit on Paul? May we not learn that each one helps another, and that those who labour in the word and the doctrine, and who may seem strong and untiring, yet find help and comfort in the steadfast faith of all?

"Fruit among you also"

Rome had often been in Paul's thought. "*Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto*" ("hindered hitherto"—RV; for "there are two Anglo-Saxon words somewhat alike in spelling but directly opposite in meaning *laten* 'to permit', and *lettan* 'to hinder'"—Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*). He would have fruit among them as among other Gentiles. For he had an obligation to discharge to all, whether Greek or non-Greek, cultured or non-cultured. So now for his part he was willing to preach the gospel at Rome.

The prospect of this work at the metropolis must have greatly stirred the thought of Paul, the Roman citizen, for it had often been in his mind. His breadth of outlook, helped by the fact of this citizenship, enabled him to see great possibilities for the spread of the gospel by its active proclamation there. Yet how different were the conditions under which he at last arrived at Rome, from those of which he had thought. Over three years passed, mostly spent in custody, and when at last he reached Rome he was a prisoner. But "the word of God was not bound", as he said during a later imprisonment. An open door was found, though he was bound with a chain; and much literary work was done to the enriching of all later generations of God's saints—if, as is probable, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians were written at Rome.

The reference to the preaching of the gospel leads to the statement of the theme of the letter.

Section II
THE THESIS STATED
The Righteousness of God
is revealed in the Gospel
for Man's Salvation

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

(1:16,17)

IN these words the apostle introduces the great theme of the letter. There were many features of the gospel message which did not commend themselves to the wise and great of the world. To the Jews "Christ crucified" was a stumbling block. The death of Jesus was an evidence to them that he was not the Messiah. How could the Messiah meet a felon's death? The claims of Jesus had been the means of making the idea of a Jewish Messiah a derision. "The King of the Jews" as an inscription over the gallows was an offence to them. Then the claims made by the disciples that Jesus was risen and that salvation could only be obtained in his name added insult to injury. To the Greeks the gospel was foolishness. Priding themselves as they did on their search for wisdom, it was inconceivable to them that a humble carpenter, who met such a death as did Jesus, should satisfy their needs.

The contrast between the message that Paul had to deliver and the things for which the imperial city stood would make some ashamed. But not so Paul. He knew what the gospel could accomplish in the purpose of God. Even in Rome, the preaching of Christ crucified (i.e.,

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a crucified king) could save some. The results of the preaching would remain when the inhabitants of Rome, and even their city, had all passed away.

"The power of God unto salvation"

The gospel was "*the power of God unto salvation*". It was a power operative upon those being saved, who received it in the love of it. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). It is the means God is employing in "drawing men" (John 12:32), "seeking" and "teaching" men (John 4:23; 6:44,45). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18).

The necessary attitude on the part of man is belief of the gospel. It is to "everyone that believes". The opportunity is for all races, but the Jew is the first to have it preached to him. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you" (Acts 13:46). "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name ... beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). But the same condition applies to all. "He that believeth (the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

In this statement Paul cuts away from the Jew the hope of attaining to salvation by works of law. It is not by the law but by the gospel; and not on the condition of works, but of faith. This is the foundation of Paul's position in opposition to the Judaizers of his day.

"To every one that believeth"

To appreciate to the full the argument of Paul, it is necessary to remember that in the English translation the verb "believe" and the noun "faith", which are from two roots, yet represent cognate forms of one word in the Greek. It is unfortunate in some respects that we have not in English a verbal form of the word faith. Its absence tends to obscure the connection that would then be obvious between the last verse of Hebrews 10 and the first verse of chapter 11. It weakens the emphasis connected with the repetition of the word in other places, as, e.g., "Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted to him for righteousness"

THE THESIS STATED (1:16,17)

(Romans 4:3 with verse 9), "for we say that *faith* was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness".

What gives the gospel this power for salvation? It announces how man can attain to a position in which he is acceptable and well-pleasing to God. This is a problem almost as old as the race. How can sinful man attain to a state of reconciliation with a righteous God? It is insoluble by man, but has been wonderfully solved by Divine wisdom. The Divine means had been typically indicated from the beginning, yet it is evident that men had exercised their minds upon the subject. Thus in the book of Job we find Eliphaz asking, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" or, as the RV margin, "be just before God" (4:17). Job opens his reply to Bildad with the words, "I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?" (9:2). Bildad returns to the matter in his third speech, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (25:4). David beseeches God to "enter not into judgement with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psalm 143:2). The wise man adds his testimony, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Sin had caused a breach between God and man. God decreed that sin should be punished with death. All have sinned. How then can sinful and mortal man be reconciled to God? Clearly it is impossible for man; but God devised a way. The gospel tells of that way.

"The righteousness of God"

Paul says that in the gospel "*is revealed the righteousness of God*". Alone, the words "righteousness of God" simply mean the character of God as righteous. And they are so used in this letter. When the writer asks, "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" it is clear from the contrast that God's character is indicated. So also in 3:25,26: "God hath set forth Jesus ... to declare his righteousness ... that he might be just (righteous)".

But it is equally clear from other statements that a further meaning is included in the words. Thus we read in

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Philippians 3:9, that Paul's desire was "to win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith". There is here contrasted a righteousness which comes from keeping the law, and a righteousness which comes from God. This righteousness is one which has its source in God, which is available for man upon the exercise of faith. The words occur again in Romans 3:22, "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe". "Unto all and upon all that believe" indicates a righteousness which comes from God. In the nature of the case it is evident that God would not in any way manifest a righteousness, available for man, which is not in harmony with His own essential attribute of righteousness.

From the comparison of these passages we learn that Paul means that in the gospel there is unfolded a scheme of God, whereby man can be accounted righteous in His sight. And so Dr. Thomas says, in *The Revealed Mystery*, Proposition 27:

"The phrase, 'the righteousness of God', is expressive of that system of means, whereby sinners who are subjected to it become righteous in heart and state. It is contained in the gospel of the kingdom, and makes that gospel the 'power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth'. He that does as the Samaritans did, is himself made 'the righteousness of God in Christ' 'whom God hath made unto the justified, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption'. Proof—Romans 1:15-17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21."

"Just" and "Righteous"

It is desirable to notice that in connection with this word also two words in the English versions do duty for one group of related words that Paul wrote. These two words are "just" and "righteous", with their related forms "justify", "justification", and "righteousness". The important passage, Romans 3:21-26, well illustrates the matter; in particular verse 26, "To declare ... at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus". Moffatt preserves a uniformity

THE THESIS STATED (1:16,17)

of translation by using the word "just" throughout, but with the loss of the fuller meaning connected with the word "righteousness". He translates the verse thus: "It was to demonstrate his *justice* at the present epoch, showing that God is *just* Himself and that He *justifies* man on the score of faith in Jesus."

What is it to "justify"? First as to the meaning of the word. "The meaning is 'to pronounce righteous.'" Again, "The verb means properly to pronounce righteous. It has relation to a verdict pronounced by a judge. In so far as the person 'pronounced righteous' is not really righteous it has the sense of 'amnesty' or 'forgiveness'. The word means to declare righteous, to treat as righteous." To these may be added the meaning in Grimm-Thayer's *Lexicon*:

"In Paul's writings ... righteousness denotes the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him."

This is borne out by the use of the word. In the case of Christ himself the word expresses a statement of what he really was. But when God declares a sinner righteous it must be by the forgiveness of his sins. So Paul reasons in Romans 4, where he quotes David's words, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin", as an illustration of God justifying the ungodly, whose faith is counted, after the example of Abraham, for righteousness.

How can God righteously forgive sin? That is answered in the demonstration of the theme in the course of the letter. The answer may be briefly given here, by asking, What ways were open to God when man sinned? and quoting Robert Roberts' answer in *The Blood of Christ*. He says:

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.' Now, how was this state of things to be remedied? There were three ways of mending it. One way was to exterminate the species. But this would have been a poor remedy. It would have been to confess failure—that God had set a-going an arrangement on this planet for His glory and could not make it work. This was impossible. God has said that He has not made the earth

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in vain: that He formed it to be inhabited by the righteous: and that as truly as He lives, it will be wholly filled with His glory yet. The second way would have been what might be called the toleration-of-sin method—the universal and indiscriminating pity method, by which the wickedness of disobedience would have been ignored and mankind allowed to occupy the earth immortally for their own pleasure. But this also was impossible. It would have meant God's abdication, and the handing over of man to eternal misery. There was a third way—a middle way, and that is the way which has been adopted—namely, to enforce the law against sin, and at the same time leave the door open for mercy to repentant and obedient sinners. How such a method could be made consistent with itself has been exhibited to us in the birth, death and resurrection of Christ."

"The just shall live by faith"

Paul finds proof that man attains to this state of forgiveness and acceptance by faith in a quotation from Habakkuk: "*As it is written, The just shall live by faith*". This is not the only allusion to the manifestation of God's righteousness and salvation in the Old Testament. As Paul says, it was witnessed by both the law and the prophets (Romans 3:21). In Psalm 78, one of a series prophetic of Christ's reign, the writer says:

"O sing unto the LORD a new song;
For he hath done marvellous things;
His right hand, and his holy arm, hath wrought salvation for him.
The LORD hath made known *his salvation*:
His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the nations."
(Psalm 78:1,2, RV)

The parallelism shows the close connection between the salvation and the righteousness of God. David asks, in Psalm 24, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?" (verse 3) and answers that the one so doing, "shall receive a blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (verse 5).

Isaiah has several statements in which we get the same association of ideas. In 45:21 the escaped of the nations are invited to contrast the god of wood that cannot save and the Holy One of Israel, who declared His purpose from ancient time, beside whom there is no god, and who is a

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just God and a Saviour. It seems almost a paradox to describe the Almighty as a just God and at the same time a Saviour, and many times the statement must have provoked thought to students of God's ways. For if God is just and man is a sinner, how can He save? Yet such is His purpose. For the message continues:

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come ... In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

It is in Christ that the words are fulfilled, for they are twice quoted and so applied by Paul (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10).

Righteousness and Salvation

Another parallelism occurs in Isaiah 46:13:

"I will bring near *my righteousness*; it shall not be far off, and *my salvation* shall not tarry."

In this place the prophet addresses the stout-hearted that are far from righteousness. But in chapter 51 he speaks to those who seek righteousness. Yet the message is similar.

"My righteousness is near;
My salvation is gone forth ...
My salvation shall be for ever,
And my righteousness shall not be abolished."

(verses 5 and 6)

In chapter 54, telling of the coming changes to storm-tossed and afflicted Zion, when her children are all taught of God, he concludes:

"This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." (verse 17)

Here then are indications of a salvation to be wrought out by God, who is righteous, and who yet in some way reckons righteousness to those who seek Him. The explanation of the way is the theme of the letter to the Romans.

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How does Paul treat the subject? He first shows man's failure to attain to righteousness himself. The manifestation of God's righteousness is then exhibited. The bearing of this upon the believer's life is considered. The problem of Israel's place in the divine scheme is next discussed. Some practical exhortations bring the main body of the letter to a close. The matter might be presented in tabular form thus:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1:18—3:20 | Man's failure to attain righteousness. |
| 3:21—5:21 | The righteousness of God revealed. |
| 6:1—8:39 | The revealed righteousness of God in relation to the believer's life of holiness. |
| 9:1—11:36 | The revealed righteousness of God in relation to Israel. |
| 12:1—15:33 | Practical exhortations. |

Section III

THE THESIS DEMONSTRATED (1:18—11:36)

Man's Failure to Attain Righteousness (1:18—3:20)

AFTER stating the theme of his letter Paul then shows that there had been universal failure to attain to righteousness. Mankind, the world over, lived in a state of sinfulness, and therefore there was a universal need for the gospel scheme of redemption. The need for God's plan is thus proved historically. The Gentile world is first considered, and then the Jewish world.

The Failure of the Gentiles (1:18-32)

The picture drawn by the apostle is a very dark one, but there is no question of its accuracy. All writers on the state of the pagan world bear witness to the facts mentioned by the apostle. A popular writer sums up the condition of the Roman world at the beginning of the first century AD, thus:

"Look at the Romans. The Romans were in no decline like the Greeks. Theirs was a brave, magnificent world in its pride of power and mastery and success. But historians tell us that underneath this showy power and magnificence was a sink of rotteness. Family life was unspeakable. Tyranny and cruelty was rampant. The people were degraded and brutalized. Their favourite amusements were the hideous slaughters in the arena. Slavery was the curse of the Empire. Two men out of every three who walked the streets of Rome were slaves, and two women out of every three, and two girls out of every three were subject to every whim of their masters, to every suggestion of passion or lust. The slaves were wretched. The best of them crowded to Christianity when it came. The worst of them debauched Rome. They brought in new unnatural vices.

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They corrupted the masters. They corrupted the children. Every passion of the golden youth of Rome was ministered to by them. The Roman boys grew old and jaded and rotten with vice before they were out of their teens. A half-century later Paul indicates the position in his terrible first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. 'God gave men ... to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts'.

Thus speaks J. Paterson Smyth. Deissmann says the period "suffered from deep religious and moral evils. Paul has in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans drawn a night-picture of contemporary civilized life, particularly that of the great cities, which—to our shame be it spoken!—stands without parallel save in the cosmopolitan cities of modern Christendom".

"Ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"

The picture is thus not limited to one age, but describes the paganism of to-day, which has only a slight veneer of Christian profession over it. In fact, when Christendom went astray, it returned to paganism in its doctrines, and it is not to be wondered at that in its practices also it fulfils again the proverb of the washed sow returning to its wallowing in the mire. It is equally true of the heathen to-day, as well as of other days. "The perpetual truth of the portrait is acknowledged by the heathen to-day", is the testimony of one interested in missionary enterprise.

Tacitus is quoted as saying:

"The epoch was rich in disasters, savage with battles, rent with factions, cruel even in peace; the swallowing up or overthrow of cities, the pollution of sacred functions, the prevalence of adulteries, the corruption of slaves against their masters, of freedmen against their patrons, and when there was no open enemy, the ruin of friends by friends."

"On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

"The wrath of God"

Having seen by these representative quotations what the state of the world was like in the first century, we follow the guidance of the apostle as, led by "the spirit of truth",

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he probes to the root of the evil. He begins by saying that *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness"* (Romans 1:18). The wrath of God has past, present and future associations. There is to be a startling exhibition of wrath in the day of Christ's return, about the nature and source of which there will be no mistake. All the prophets tell of this coming day of Jehovah. In very expressive language, Paul says that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7,8).

There have been outpourings of wrath in the past, as when in the days of Noah, God "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth", and it repented God that He had made man. An earth filled with violence was cleansed by water. The post-diluvian apostasy was punished by the confusion of tongues, the effects of which remain to this present, with all the consequent misunderstanding and strife among nations.

These were manifest displays of God's displeasure. But man has been punished in many ways less visibly due to the hand of God: in fact, where apart from revelation it might be questioned whether God had anything to do with the matter at all. A national illustration is seen in Assyria, which, after being used as a "hired razor" against Israel, boasted against God. In turn God "punished the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isaiah 10:12).

Christ's reference to wars and commotions preceding the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the further reference to distress of nations with perplexity and with hearts failing for fear in the last days, all show God's hand working, though unseen, to the fulfilment of His purpose.

The social evils which follow in the train of human life which is turned from God and spent in the gratification of the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), are the working out in the actual facts

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of life of the wrath of God. Men may find many names for the secondary causes, but the root cause is in the Divine arrangements. The laws which govern life are His.

Men stand related to these operations of God's law, and suffer in themselves the consequences of wrong courses of action. They may, as members of a nation, be amenable to some more direct and specific punishment of God. They may also, by knowledge, be individually amenable to a revelation of the righteous judgement of God, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

There is an evident contrast between the "wrath of God revealed from heaven" and the "righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel". Both have present aspects, and both stand related to man's future destiny.

"They are without excuse"

The cause of wrath is "the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (RV). The "truth" suppressed is not the system of doctrine which we usually denominate "The Truth", but as the context shows, it means a more general knowledge of God. Paul explains, verses 19 and 20, that the power and divinity of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, man by this being without excuse. The world witnesses to the existence of a Supreme Being, who is powerful and wise. The intelligibility of nature proves it has been produced by intelligence.

Men have the capacity to discern God's existence from the evidence about them. God "has not left himself without witness", as Paul said to the people of Lystra, in that "He did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). But nature can tell us nothing of God's purpose with man, and His requirements of man. For this, revelation is necessary. But this necessity has been met. In patriarchal times, from Adam to Moses, the revelation of God had to be preserved by individual effort. The mass of mankind turned from it, both before and after the flood. In the place of revelation men put their own speculations, the result being seen in the representations of God as

magnified men, with all the passions of men, in Greece and Rome, and as animals of various kinds in Egypt. They were guilty of the folly of worshipping either their equal or their inferior, neither of which could possibly be Creator of the world (verses 21-23). Such a worship reacted upon their own actions, and established as habits the very corruptions they had defied.

“God gave them up”

This turning from the worship of God brought punishment from God. Three times the apostle uses the expression *“God gave them up”* (verses 24,26,28). They were abandoned to the course of life they had voluntarily chosen. This judicial abandonment produced an ever-increasing state of debasement until the practices of the pagan world were not decently describable. The lesson is important and instructive. One writer says: “We learn from experience that one sin leads to another, and that lust indulged gains greater mastery.”

“This is the very curse of evil deed,
That of new evils it becomes the seed.”

There is a play upon words in verse 28 not preserved by either the AV or the RV, but which brings home the warning. Various attempts have been made to reproduce the emphasis of the repetition: “Even as they reprobated keeping God in knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind”, or, “Because they cast out the knowledge of God, God gave them an outcast mind”.

Several passages of scripture, by this same figure of speech, emphasize the lesson that cause and result correspond. In the parable of the vineyard, Jesus drew from his hearers the sentence that the lord of the vineyard would “miserably destroy those miserable men” (Matthew 21:41, RV). Paul warns the teachers among the brethren to take heed how every man builds upon the foundation he had laid, for “if any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy” (1 Corinthians 3:17, RV). Conversely, Christ promises the Pergamians, who held fast his name, that if they overcame he would give them a new name (Revelation 2:13,17).

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Peter similarly teaches that with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us again. "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in your temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7, RV). Then after a threefold insistence on "these things" (verses 8-10), he says, "For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (verse 11, RV). We "supply ... these things" and God will "richly supply" the right to enter the kingdom. The future depends upon the present, whether in the matter of character in this present life or in the reward that Christ will give at his coming.

"Knowing the judgement of God ... "

The indictment of the Gentile world reaches its climax and conclusion in the last verse of chapter 1: "*Who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*" They knew by the vestiges of primitive revelation they retained, and by their own experience of the effects of wrong actions. Deliberately to pursue a course of wrong is bad, but to find delight in others pursuing the same course is to reach the depths of moral depravity, the very opposite of that which "rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:6).

The Ground of God's Judgement (2:1-16)

Before proving that the Jews were also guilty before God, Paul lays down the grounds of individual responsibility to God. The application of the principles stated leads to the conviction of the Jews as having failed to attain righteousness. There is thus a distinct development in the argument. While the Gentiles had been suffered to go their own ways, and in blindness of heart had generally sunk to the state of depravity already described, someone might say, as indeed one in the position of the Jew would say, "I assent

to the case presented, but my position is one of privilege; I am not blind, I see". And the apostle replies, "Granted; and as you are in such a position, so you have a greater responsibility; as you, individually, see, so you become personally amenable to God's judgement to be declared by Christ. Greater privilege brings greater responsibility".

"Thou art inexcusable"

Paul gives the matter a very direct application by stating the argument as though he was dealing with an opponent personally present. It resembles the answer of Nathan to David: "Thou art the man". The man of knowledge agrees that the statements made are true. He judges that those who do such things are worthy of death. Paul answers, "*But you do the same things, and in passing judgement on others, you also condemn yourself; and you are without excuse*" (2:1). In contrast with a man's judgement, condemning others but excusing one's self, God's judgement is "*according to truth*" (verse 2); all who sin are subject to it in one form or another. But some claimed immunity from God's judgement. The Jews, trusting in the fact that they were Abraham's children (Matthew 3:8,9), thought that all Israelites would have part in the world to come.

Some, in our day, for different reasons, have denied God's purpose to judge them. For example, a man brought several to the knowledge and obedience of the Truth, yet since he was not baptized it was claimed that he would not be raised for judgement. It was affirmed that no scripture evidence was available to prove otherwise. The answer was given that the principles stated in Romans 2 governed the case. Did the man tell those he instructed they ought to be baptized? Yes. He judged that was their duty? Then he condemned himself as disobedient to the known and acknowledged commandments of God. For the Word of God says: "*And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?*"

"The riches of his goodness"

There is an alternative explanation: "*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering,*

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not knowing (ignoring) that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" And what are the facts relating to the destiny of such? "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God" (verses 3-11).

That the scripture covers such is clear, for there is a despising of God's goodness, an ignoring of the fact that that goodness has for its aim man's repentance—a change of life to conformity with God's will. And the judgement is future; wrath is treasured up to a day of wrath. Those "who do not obey the truth" will receive "indignation and wrath".

The verses that follow at first appear obscure. They are certainly misunderstood by the majority of writers outside the associations of the Truth. Careful attention to the connection of thought supplies the meaning. Paul has said that God's judgement will include both Jew and Gentile; that "there is no respect of persons with God". He supports this statement in verses 12-16. Whether verses 13-15 be regarded as a parenthesis or not, it is evident from the punctuation of the RV (which omits the parenthesis marks of the AV) that the statement which begins at verse 12 is completed in verse 16.

"The day when God shall judge"

Resolving the statement into parts, we are informed, in proof of the impartiality of God's judgement, that "*as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men*", and "*as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law ...*

in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men". The Jew regarded the Gentile as being "without law", and spoke of him as such. The Gentile was out of covenant relationship with God. Paul uses the words in a similar sense. He does not contemplate those of whom he speaks as being without any law at all, for he says they "have sinned", which implies a knowledge of God's will, as the preceding verses also show. The word "law", while often used of the Mosaic law, does not exclusively apply to it. In fact, even when the Mosaic is in mind, the emphasis is upon law as such, and not on the particular illustration of law in the Mosaic code. Law is a revelation of God's will.

We must notice also that those who sin "without law" "perish", and those who sin "under the law" will "be judged". The idea of the verse we think might be freely paraphrased thus: 'As many as have sinned (in disobeying the truth, verse 8) outside covenant relationship, will perish when Christ comes. Their doom is sealed. But as many as have sinned in covenant relationship will be judged, for they have stood related to a possible reception of glory, honour and immortality.'

The verse is closely connected with what has gone before. Thus interpreted, it is in harmony with other scriptures; it presents a precise definition of the end of the different classes of those who know God's will. Those ignorant of God's will, such as the heathen, etc., are not considered at all in the verse. They perish at the end of this life, and have no connection with a "perishing" when Christ comes.

We can now consider verses 13-15. Again the language is coloured by Jewish usage. They had a law—they heard it read every Sabbath day, and by that means knew the law. They were law-hearers; and using law in the same comprehensive sense as in verse 12, a man who hears and understands the gospel is also a law-hearer—he hears God's revelation explained. To hear God's message is a privilege, but the hearing does not justify, it is rather the condition of judgement: "*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified*" (verse 13).

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"The law written in their hearts"

And now in verse 14 we get an illustration of this fact: "*For when Gentiles (such as are Gentiles and not Jews) which have no law (which are esteemed by Jews as having no law) do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts*" (verses 14-15, RV). "The work of the law" is that which the law requires, just as the "work of God" (John 6:29) is that which God requires. A knowledge of this is written upon the heart of the believer of the Truth when the Gospel is received. Such a believer is an epistle of Christ written upon the fleshy tables of the heart, contrasting with the law of Moses written upon stone, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:3. Such evince at this present time that disposition which Israel will manifest in the time to come, when under the covenant they will all know the Lord; for, says God, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it" (Jeremiah 31:33).

These Gentiles do it "by nature". But this does not mean that they do it instinctively, as though it were a natural thing for a Gentile to serve and obey God. Israel, with a law, shows how difficult human nature finds the keeping of God's commandments. How impossible then for those uninstructed in God's law to find out what is pleasing to God and to do it! History and experience alike show that man cannot discover for himself what man "oughtest to do". The idea of "a light within" is a fiction, as Dr. Thomas has shown in *Elpis Israel* (chapter 4). The correct bearing of the passage has been well given by Brother Roberts, in *The Law of Moses* (page 20) as follows:

"It is customary to speak of these ten commandments as 'the moral law'. This is an objectionable description on two grounds: it takes for granted a false theory of 'morality' and it ignores the divine estimate and description of the ten commandments. The false assumption of human philosophy is that 'the moral law' is as natural and spontaneous a thing as the physical laws of the universe ... If the so-called moral law were an element in the nature of things, it would be found asserting itself like the law of gravitation or the law of eating and drinking. Instead of that, man left to himself is an ignorant savage, who kills and steals with as little scruple as a

lion or tiger. He has no idea of wrong in these acts. He never exhibits the conception of moral restraint till the idea has been introduced to him by some process of instruction. Even Paul (in Romans 2:12-15), where he is supposed to sanction the idea of an instinctive sense of right and wrong among 'the Gentiles which have not the law', recognizes that men are only 'a law unto themselves', and 'do by nature the things contained in the law', when 'the work of the law' has been '*written in their hearts*'. It is very few Gentiles who have been the subject of this operation. His testimony of the world in general harmonizes with experience to this day that 'the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God' (Romans 8:7), and that the Gentiles, unilluminated, 'walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened', and are without God and have no hope (Ephesians 4:17,18; 2:12). Those who had had 'the work of the law written in their hearts' had had it so written by the pen ministrations of the Spirit of God by the instrumentality of the apostles, as Paul says: 'Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in the tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart' (2 Corinthians 3:3). These were the 'Gentiles' of whom Paul writes in Romans 2. The rest he speaks of as 'other Gentiles who walk in the vanity of their minds' (Ephesians 4:17)."

Dr. Thomas has some remarks to like effect in the Preface to the Third Edition of *Elpis Israel*, which can be consulted by those desiring to follow up the subject.

"By nature"

What Paul appears to mean by the words "by nature" is that the Gentiles of whom he speaks keep God's law of themselves, not as a national observance but by a new nature begotten by the gospel, in which they are constrained by the love of Christ. They manifest this response in the exercise of their minds concerning right and wrong, "their conscience", thus enlightened, "*also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another*" (Romans 2:15).

It is not the possession of the law, then, that confers a title to life. It is doing God's will that counts. Some Gentiles illustrate this, and so are pleasing to God, although the Jew denied any such thing being possible in the case of the Gentile. But if they are well pleasing to God, then He will reward the Gentile as well as the Jew,

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and thus there is no respect of persons with God, as Paul is demonstrating. All who are well-pleasing, irrespective of race, will receive immortality in the day of Christ.

The apostle has shown that the conduct of the Gentiles left no doubt about their failure to live righteously before God. He has exhibited the principles upon which individuals are amenable to God's judgement. He now turns to consider the Jew.

The Failure of the Jews (2:17-29)

The Jew prided himself upon being a member of God's nation. It was a fact that God had separated them to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself from among all peoples: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). God had given them laws, excellent as befitted their origin, and of such a character that other nations would be compelled to say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deuteronomy 4:6). So exceptional were these laws that Moses asks, "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (verse 8). But they failed to keep God's laws, and rejected His messengers, and God avenged the "quarrel of the covenant" by plucking them from off their land and overturning their kingdom. Their subjection to a Gentile power was a witness of national failure to keep God's law.

But the Jew of the first century did not so view the matter. Adversity fostered racial pride, and made them the more hate and despise the Gentile. So they cherished the privileges that remained. They had the law, and the temple, and the priesthood. What other nation had these? Surely the Jew was favourably regarded by God.

"Thou art called a Jew"

Paul answers, 'But if you have the law, do you keep it?' He enumerates the things in which they boasted: "*Thou bearest the name of a Jew*" (verse 17, RV): all others were Gentiles; they were the people separated from all other nations. "*And restest upon a law*": the fact that God had given them a law was regarded as a mark of favour.

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“He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgements unto Israel” (Psalm 147:19). But the reception of a law was not in itself a ground of satisfaction; the keeping of it would have been. They would then have been truly children of Abraham, of whom God testified, “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5). “*And gloriest in God*”: that is, in what God had done for them, and in that He called Himself the God of Israel. This should have humbled them and not fostered pride. “*And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law*” (verse 18): they knew and approved in theory, but not in personal practice.

The privileges enumerated determined the Jew's estimate of his relationship to other men. He was a *guide*; the rest were *blind*. He was the *light*; the others were in *darkness*. He was *instructor* and *teacher*; they were *foolish* and like *babes*. He had in the law *the form of knowledge and the truth* (verses 19-20).

It was true the law was the form (or ‘embodiment’, as the word appears to mean, and as the Jew, whose words Paul here presents, would use it) of the knowledge and truth of God. At the same time the ritual required by the law was only a shadow of good things to come, as Paul elsewhere says. It was not the very image of those things, much less the good things themselves. They were “a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17). But the Jew, with a complete disregard of many messages of the prophets, apparently thought of the law as final.

“Thou that sayest ...”

In verse 21 Paul presses home the principles of verse 1. The Jew knew and he condemned others, but did the same things himself. Practice did not correspond with profession. The questions come sharp and fast. You teach others; do you teach yourself? You preach that a man should not steal; do you steal? Adultery is wrong; do you do that? You abhor idols; do you rob temples? Much as the Jews detested idols, their covetousness overcame their repugnance to the extent of the plundering of temples. That such was

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done is evident from the remark of the town clerk of Ephesus, that Paul and his companions were not robbers of temples (Acts 19:37). In glorying in the law, yet flagrantly breaking it, they dishonoured God.

The last charge made, that of robbing temples, brought Jewish inconsistency in a conspicuous way to the notice of the Gentiles. In the other things named, too, they would observe that the Jew did not act as he taught, with the result that *"the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, because of you, even as it is written"* (verse 24).

"The name of God is blasphemed"

"God went to redeem Israel unto himself for a people, and to make him a name" (2 Samuel 7:23). And God caused to cleave to Him, as a girdle cleaves to a man, the whole house of Israel, yet they would not hear (Jeremiah 13:11). As the prophet's girdle, hid by the Euphrates, had become marred, so God said He would mar the pride of Judah. He had taken them to be unto Him for a name, but they had become, like the girdle, unprofitable. Malachi says Israel profaned God's name in offering unacceptable sacrifices (1:12).

In Isaiah's day, when some were taken captive and the Assyrian was at the gates of Jerusalem, God reminded Israel that He had delivered their fathers from Egypt, and then asks, "Now therefore, what do I here, saith the LORD, seeing that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them (such as Shebna) do howl (in distress amidst the siege, and through lack of faith), saith the LORD, and my name continually all the day is blasphemed" (Isaiah 52:5, RV). The profession of being the people of God required on their part faith in God, and failure to do according to what they claimed to be was blasphemy of God's name.

It was so in Paul's day. There was a marked contrast between the claims of the Jew and the conduct of the Jew. The Gentiles were not slow to notice it, and to deride both the Jew and his God. So Ezekiel says that "when Israel came unto the nations, whither they went, they profaned

my holy name; in that men said of them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land" (36:20). Thus God's name was profaned through Jewish inconsistency, causing God to scatter them among the nations, and in causing the Gentiles to remark scornfully about their being the people of the Lord.

It has been said that the world is a better logician than a theologian. It is so in every age. It is easier to test a believer's actions than to test his beliefs, and so the belief is generally estimated by the action. The Christadelphian is more easily scrutinized than the Truth is examined. How careful should the name-bearer of God be!

"If thou keep the law ..."

The Jew not only had a law, but he practised the rite of circumcision. This was the token of the covenant that God had made with Abraham (Genesis 17:11). Surely this divinely appointed rite was a proof of God's favour. But his trust in circumcision was equally misplaced as his trust in the possession of the law. It was the sign of his incorporation in the chosen nation, inflicted on his flesh when but a child. He was the helpless subject of it. What ground of personal acceptability to God could there be in that? Nay! since it was an indication that by birth he was a member of the nation which had a law from God, it was a reminder of his moral obligation to keep that law. And so Paul disposes of this ground of boasting by saying (verse 25), "*Circumcision indeed profiteth if thou be a law-doer; but if thou be a law-breaker thy circumcision is become uncircumcision*". If your course of life is in harmony with your covenant relationship to God, symbolized by circumcision, it is well: but if not, what better are you than the Gentile? Although a Jew, you are a Gentile in act.

Conversely, "*if the uncircumcision (the Gentile) keeps the enactments of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned as circumcision?*" (verse 26). If obedience to God is the important thing, then such a Gentile is what a Jew ought to be, and is more entitled to the name than a Jew by birth.

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There was a further result. *"The uncircumcision by nature"*—the man Gentile born—*"if it fulfil the law"*, as Paul has shown some Gentiles do (verse 15), *"judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision art a law-breaker"* (verse 27). The "letter" was the law engraved on stones; circumcision was an outward symbol. Here then is a turning of the tables. From the vantage ground of knowledge the Jew had judged the Gentile (verse 3), but now the Gentile "judges" him because the Gentile keeps God's law and he fails to do so.

"He is a Jew, which is one inwardly"

This leads to the conclusion that the external, the law and the outward rite, was not in itself of value. It was the inward disposition that mattered. Moses had told them "to circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked" (Deuteronomy 10:16). He is a Jew, a real Jew, heir of God's promised blessings, who is inwardly such, whose life is in harmony with the terms of God's covenant, whose circumcision is of the heart, in the cutting away of the sins of the flesh. Such a circumcision is in the spirit, not in the letter; in reality, in all that is implied in the rite—in the understanding and application of its meaning—and not in the mere observance in external things of the requirement of the law.

The word "Jew" is derived from "Judah", which means "praise" (Genesis 29:35). Jacob plays upon this meaning in his blessing upon the tribes (49:8). And Paul says the real Jew has his praise not of men, but of God. The Pharisee would not recognize him, but God would do so.

Jewish Objections Met (3:1-8)

A Jew would at once raise objections to the conclusion stated. In Paul's own reasoning in the past such objections must have occurred. They must also have been constantly raised by his Jewish opponents. The difficulties are presented in the form of question and answer, and by separating these the section is simplified.

“What advantage hath the Jew?”

QUESTION—“*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision?*” All advantage seems to have been taken away.

ANSWER—“*Much every way: first of all, in that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.*” Only one advantage is named, but it involves the others. The religious books of Israel were not like those of other nations. “By divers portions and in divers manners” God had spoken to them through the prophets. “He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgements unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgements, they have not known them” (Psalm 147:19,20). They were thereby acquainted with God’s promises. While these included the blessing of all nations, Israel was the subject of special promises. They were to dwell in the land covenanted to the fathers, and to be the head of the nations when Israel’s Messiah ruled the world. Jesus said to the woman at the well, “Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews”.

“What if some did not believe?”

QUESTION—“*For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?*” Paul has shown that in God’s sight the true Jew is the one circumcised in heart. Many who called themselves Jews were not therefore such in this sense of the term. Many rejected Christ—the one promised in the Oracles which were placed in their custody. How could God fulfil His word in view of their disbelief? The objector reasons that on Paul’s view of the case, the promises could not be fulfilled, and therefore God is not faithful.

ANSWER—It must have been a sore problem to many. They had built upon the fact that they were the chosen nation, and so were fully entitled to whatever God had promised. As God would not deny or fail in what He had promised, Israel must inherit the blessing.

The problem is considered at length in chapters 9 to 11. It is here dismissed very briefly. “*God forbid*” or “*Let it not*

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be." We must necessarily think of God as true to His word, even if every man be found false. God will fulfil His word in the way that He has intended, and not as man thinks that He should. In all God's dealings with man, He is faithful, and the unfaithfulness is on man's side. Absolutely, as well as relatively to His word, God is faithful and man unfaithful; God is holy and righteous and man is sinful and unholy. This is seen in David's case and it was acknowledged by him in Psalm 51, which Paul now quotes. David had been convicted by the prophet of the sin which was the great blot on his life, and he turns to God and says, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight: that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest" (verses 3,4). David confesses his fault and declares God to be righteous in His decrees.

"Is God unrighteous?"

QUESTION—"But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath?" David's sin had the effect of showing, by contrast, that God was righteous. This would not have been shown if David had not sinned. If that is the effect of man's sin, can God consistently punish man for sin? The mere putting of such a case, impugning God's holiness, is so abhorrent to Paul that he explains, "I speak as a man"—I am putting it as men state it.

ANSWER—Again comes the emphatic "*God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?*" That God is judge is an elemental fact; it is axiomatic. Any idea that conflicts with that must be false. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? God is judge, and He is righteous in His judgments.

"Why am I still judged as a sinner?"

QUESTION—The last question is now re-stated from man's point of view: "*But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? and why not ... Let us do evil that good may come?*" And as the apostle is stating the question he is reminded

that it was a charge against him that he taught the end justified the means. He had taught that man was justified, not by works but by faith. His opponents attributed to him the slanderous conclusion that it therefore did not matter what a man did, for the more a man sinned the more grace had opportunity to abound. This perversion of his teaching is considered in chapter 6.

ANSWER—The objection is dismissed with the words, "*Whose condemnation is just*". One who argues thus is a self-confessed sinner, and as such deserves condemnation and not immunity from judgement.

The Witness of Scripture (3:9-20)

In the opening question of this section there is some doubt about the exact meaning of a word. "*What then? are we better than they?*" (AV); "*What then? are we in worse case than they?*" (RV). If the AV is right, the Jew asks, In view of what has been said, are we Jews really the possessors of privileges from God, which show that we are better in His sight than other peoples? Adopting the RV, the Jew asks, Since you have shown that our privilege makes us so much the more responsible, then are we really in a worse position than the Gentiles, contrary to all that we had thought?

"Are we better than they?"

In either case the practical result is the same. The Jew is neither better nor worse in his moral standing before the Deity. "*We before laid to the charge, both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin*", Paul answers. The preceding sections had been a demonstration from the facts of history of the failure of both Gentile and Jew. To this is added the testimony of Scripture.

A number of passages are gathered together from the Psalms and Isaiah. The quotations show that none are righteous, all are gone out of the way. *Throat, tongue, lips and mouth* (verses 13-14) trace the stages of speech; the beginning an *open sepulchre*, full of corruption; the end *cursing and bitterness*. *Feet* swift on errands of destruc-

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tion, but never turning to the paths of peace. The root of the evil is stated last: *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

"That every mouth may be stopped"

What can the Jew say to the testimonies of his own Scriptures? That the Gentile world is there described, and these statements do not apply to him. But the Jew was *"under the law"*. The acceptance of the law of Moses was an essential element in their covenant relationship to God. *"All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."* The law is theirs and defines their duty. But the result of law is to produce conviction of sin—*"that every mouth may be stopped"*; there is no answer they can give. And therefore *"all the world* (and not the Gentile only, as the Jew claimed) *may be brought under the judgement of God"*. All the world becomes "liable to an action", "answerable to God". This is further confirmed in verse 20: *"Because by works of law shall no flesh be accounted righteous in his sight: for through law cometh the knowledge of sin"* (RV and margin). "Works of law" is general, "works of any law", the law of Moses being the illustration. The Jews have the law of Moses and it does not justify. If the Gentiles had a law, it would not justify them.

In this verse Paul quotes words from Psalm 143:2, which reads: "And enter not into judgement with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified". The significant change from "every man living" in the Psalm, to "all flesh" in the epistle, indicates why the law could not justify. For "flesh" suggests human nature with all its weakness. Law gives a full knowledge of sin, but cannot remove it. God has arranged that "no flesh shall glory in his presence", for "all flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass".

The Righteousness of God Revealed (3:21—5:21)

IT has often been remarked that upon no subject has controversy been so keen and so bitter as upon the sacrifice of Christ. The life and death of Jesus of Nazareth are so unique that they challenge attention and thought. The claim was made by Jesus that his life's work was vitally connected with God's dealings with men. The Father sent him. It was his meat and drink to do his Father's will. That will necessitated that he should go to Jerusalem and be ill-treated and crucified. And this was for the remission of men's sins, and that they might have life. He taught that he would be raised from the dead; that he was the Resurrection and the Life; that he would raise up whomsoever he would at the last day, and give eternal life to his people. All these things are plainly stated concerning him in the gospel records.

"Redemption through his blood"

The apostles' teaching about him is the same. Jesus "being delivered up by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:23,24). "Those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" (3:18). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

These are the facts. They are not matters of dispute. It is in the explanation of why God chose to perform the work in this way that difficulties and differences arise.

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Much confusion has arisen through pressing a figure beyond what it was intended to teach. Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). There are two things to be learnt from these words. First, that Jesus was doing something that was a service, a ministration; and second, that this service would result in the release of the many who came within the reach of the benefits of his work. Both matters find abundant emphasis in apostolic writings. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18,19). "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Revelation 5:9). Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). The deliverance is from sin (Romans 6:17), and finally from death. Sin relates man to wrath, and so the deliverance from sin involves a deliverance from wrath. Jesus "delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). Deliverance culminates in "the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

"To give his life a ransom"

It is clear that these two features are the intended lessons of the figure used. But if we try to go further, we pass beyond the intended use of the metaphor, and get confusion. Suppose we ask, To whom was the ransom paid? In the early centuries this was the subject of much debate. Some said that the ransom was paid to the Devil, who found Christ too powerful for him, and he had to let him go, thus losing both his captives and the ransom price. On this view the Devil was either self-deceived or deceived by God into accepting a ransom that he could not retain. Some "fathers" said one thing and some another. How grotesque are such ideas! Apart from the false teaching about a superhuman devil involved in the theory, to what a low level of morality is God represented as having descended, in resorting to a stratagem for the deliverance of men.

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When a ransom is paid for the release of someone held captive, no one expects the return of the ransom, as well as the release of the captive. Beautiful as the figure of ransom is when rightly used, it is fatal to any attempt to use it in all possible aspects for the establishment of a doctrine, when we take into account the fact that Christ not only laid down his life, but also took it again.

The fact that sins are forgiven limits the use of the figure. If the ransom is regarded as an "equivalent price" which has been paid, no room is left for forgiveness, and since forgiveness of sins is so prominent a part of the gospel message any use of the metaphor which excludes that phase must be wrong.

The Sacrifice of Christ

Some of the speculations on the subject look very absurd with the changing times and beliefs. It is not impossible that a similar fate will befall some of the speculations of today. The true explanation of Christ's work should commend itself in every age to the judgement of all who are instructed in God's ways.

Men have fallen into absurd theories through holding other false doctrines. The doctrine of the devil, referred to above, prepared the mind for a wrong view of Christ's sacrifice. Any who hold the doctrine of the immortality of the soul are thereby prevented from understanding the need for and meaning of God's redemptive plan. For if men have life inherently, nothing that Christ did was necessary to secure it for them. His sacrifice could only secure men's release from hell or some other place of punishment, and their transfer to some place of felicity. But many today would quietly drop both the doctrine of the devil and of hell torments, and do not realize the illogicality of repudiating these doctrines while retaining the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

Paul's explanation in Romans of how God's righteousness has become available for man is not expressed in the language of metaphor, although some of the words used are figurative. The sections 3:21-31 and 5:12-21 are, we believe, the most important in the whole of the Scriptures

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on the subject. They might well be the touchstone by which to test every theory. The best exposition of the subject in the Truth's literature is to be found, in our judgement, in the pamphlet, *The Blood of Christ*. The passages just mentioned are frequently referred to therein, Brother Roberts remarking that in the course of his exposition they have been frequently on his lips.

There are many pitfalls in connection with the subject. Our safeguard is to stick close to the text of scripture, following the reasoning of the apostle as he develops his theme.

God's Righteousness Manifested (3:21-31)

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
(verses 21-26)

The quotation is given from the AV. Any changes in the remarks that follow are based upon the RV.

The manifested righteousness is "*apart from law*". In the concluding words of the preceding section Paul had said that "by works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight". Conformably with this, the righteousness which is now manifested is not one which man can establish for himself by the observance of law. It is not earned. It is by faith in Jesus Christ. It is all-embracing in its scope, "*unto all and upon all that believe*". One method for all is necessary, because the need of all is the same. All have sinned, and have therefore of themselves failed to reach the end

God intended for man—His approval and participation in His glory to be revealed in the earth.

“Justified by grace”

Those who believe, who exhibit faith in Jesus Christ, are justified—deemed righteous—freely by God’s grace. This is a gift which God has arranged in mercy, quite unmerited by man. And it is through the redemption that is in Christ that the deliverance is effected: “*in Christ*” because he has himself “obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12). He “brought life and immortality to light”, illustrating in himself God’s “purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9,10). It was his work to obtain this deliverance, and having obtained it, he became the author of salvation, the author and finisher of our faith, the firstborn among many brethren. Of God, he “is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Redemption, or deliverance, as a Biblical idea, is illustrated by Israel’s release from Egypt. God had said to Moses, “Say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgements: and I will take you unto me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (Exodus 6:6,7). No ransom was paid to Egypt in this redemption, but God’s people had to exercise faith in the word of God. “By faith, Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them” (Hebrews 11:28).

“A propitiation”

So far, Paul has spoken of what has been accomplished, but he has not explained by what means it has been done. This he does in verses 25 and 26. Every phrase is pregnant with meaning: “*God has set forth Jesus to be a propitiation.*” The word translated propitiation has been the subject of considerable discussion among “the learned”. It was originally an adjective but came to be used as a noun. So it is argued that here it means “propitiatory-gift”. But

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beyond question the word is used in the sense of "propitiatory-place" in Hebrews 9:4, where, speaking of the ark of the covenant, which was overlaid with gold, the writer says there was "over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the *mercy seat*".

All the ideas of the passage in Romans support the same meaning being attached to the word there as in Hebrews. If it be objected that the idea is abruptly introduced, and that it would not be so understood by the first readers, it may be answered, (1) that in the context Paul says this work of God in Christ is witnessed by the law and the prophets; and (2) that the language of the ritual system of the law is the language by which Christ's work is explained in the New Testament. The words "*in his blood*", connected in this very place with "propitiation" (note the punctuation of the RV), is language which has its alphabet in the account of the sacrifices of the law and of preceding times.

God, then, has set forth Jesus to be a mercy seat. We notice first a contrast. The mercy seat of the law was hidden in the innermost apartment of the tabernacle. To it once every year the High Priest alone approached, and then with blood. But the Christ-mercy-seat is publicly set forth, for the events connected with him were not done in a corner, but were exhibited for all to see.

"Above the mercy seat"

What was the mercy seat? It was the appointed place of meeting between God and man. God said: "There will I meet with thee (Moses), and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Exodus 25:22). To quote again from *The Law of Moses*, Brother Roberts says, page 122:

"'There will I meet with thee' is a revelation, and a prophecy—not anywhere: not with wilful unhumiliated man as he roams in his pride through the earth with a sense of misconceived rights—but *there*; over a blood-sprinkled ark, or through a

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God-vindicating slain lamb: over an ark containing the God-written law on indelible stone, the miraculously budded rod, and the golden pot of manna; or through men in the profoundest submission to the authority of God: conforming, in punctilious and reverential affection to His appointments, and rejoicing in everlasting life received from His hand as the reward of faith and obedience."

"Through faith in his blood"

Christ has been set forth as a place of meeting and communion between God and men. He becomes this to a man by faith on his part. This faith is "in his blood", for by his shed blood Jesus has become the place of meeting—the mercy seat, as was foreshadowed by the sprinkling with blood of the typical mercy-seat. The whole work is of God; God has set forth Jesus, and He has done it *"to declare ... his righteousness"*. Why was this necessary? *"Because of the passing over of sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God."*

For four thousand years God had "passed over" (a different word from the one usually translated "remission", as the RV and AV margins show) sins. Did God then lightly esteem sin? No. He forebore for a time in view of this exhibition of His righteousness. He foreordained this work, "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" (Hebrews 9:15).

"That he might be just, and the justifier ... "

God's righteousness did not, could not, ignore sin. Mercy was not indifferent to holiness. Hence there must be this declaration of God's righteousness as the basis for forgiveness. It was, continues Paul, *"for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus"* (verse 26). Apart, then, from that declaration, God could not righteously forgive sin. To understand the subject, it becomes essential to find out in what way Jesus showed that God was righteous in all His appointments, in order that sins might be forgiven.

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We begin to understand as we consider the words of Jesus to John the Baptist. When John demurred to the request of Jesus for baptism, Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". John had proclaimed that "all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass" (Isaiah 40:6,7); in other words, John was preaching that man was mortal. Man finds himself in this position because of sin. Adam transgressed the law of God, bringing upon himself the sentence that he should return to the dust. All his descendants inherit his nature and die. We see Jesus, a member of Adam's race, voluntarily submit to a rite which symbolizes burial, and therefore death, and which exhibits man's relation to death by divine appointment. God was well pleased with His Son, as the voice from heaven proclaimed, and afterwards John pointed to Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world".

We see Jesus again on the night of his arrest, knowing full well what would befall him on the morrow. We are privileged to hear his prayer to the Father; and, knowing that it was his Father's will that he should go forward to suffering and death, he addresses the Father in the words, "O righteous Father".

"Obedient unto death"

We see him on the cross. He is there according to the determinate counsel of God. He is there because he is obedient in all things, even to the death on the cross. Was it right he should be there? Who will say it was not? It was right that he was there because he was a member of a race that was mortal, dying because of sin. His submission to it was a voluntary declaration that God was righteous in involving all in death. That righteousness could only be exhibited by the willing submission to death of one in that position.

We perceive this when we reflect that an angel could not be there. Neither was the offering of an animal (except in a typical sense) an exhibition of God's righteousness, for the animal had done no sin; and apart from it being a divine

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appointment as a typical expression of what was later to be effected by Christ, it was not right that it should die.

Could the voluntary death of a sinner have exhibited the righteousness of God? It might so far as that man was concerned, but there the matter would have ended. The death of a sinner could not have brought any justification of others. The object of God was to bring good out of evil, to people the earth with men and women redeemed from sin and death. This needed a conqueror over death. The death of a sinner would not have secured this. And as all humanly begotten are sinners, the redeemer must be "set forth" by God. He must be of God's providing, because only thus can the two things necessary be obtained. The one who dies must righteously die, must voluntarily die, and yet be sinless that resurrection might follow.

"Not possible that he should be holden of it"

Only divine wisdom could evolve the scheme, and only divine power could carry it out. Because Christ did no sin, "him hath God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, for it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). Although tempted in all points like us, Jesus was without sin. Sin was overcome, and the nature over which sin rules in all others was publicly exhibited as appointed to death by the holy decree of God. Thus sin was condemned and a way found for sinners to be forgiven.

But upon what principle can this which Jesus did become effective for the forgiveness of sins? It is evident that God's righteousness was declared. It is also clear that Christ should be raised from the dead. But how can others benefit by his work? The answer is, that God is dealing with the race of mankind upon federal principles. This is explained in 5:12-21, the consideration of which must be left until we come to that section.

"He hath given back to man his righteousness"

Paul says this purpose was witnessed by the law and the prophets. We might notice that the Book of Job bears testimony to it. It has already been pointed out that Job and his friends discuss the question of how mortal man can be just before God. The answer which Job's friends proposed

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was inaccurate and inadequate. God says they had not spoken that which was right concerning Him. It was left for Elihu, who claims to speak in God's stead, to expound God's ways. He says God speaks to man by dream (Job 33:14-18); God disciplines man (verses 19-22); and God provides a ransom (verses 23-28). We quote the last verses from Rotherham's translation:

"If there had been near him a messenger who could interpret—

One of a thousand,
To declare to the son of earth His uprightness.
Then hath he showed him favour, and said,
 'Set him free from going down to the pit,
 I have found a price of redemption'.
His flesh hath been made fresher than a child's,
He hath returned to the days of his youth;
He made supplication unto God, who hath accepted him,
And he hath beheld his face with a shout of triumph.
Thus hath he given back to man his righteousness.
He sang before men and said,
 'I sinned, and uprightness I perverted,
 Yet he requited me not;
 He hath ransomed my soul from passing away into
 the pit,
 And my life in the light shall have vision'."

"One of a thousand"

And Elihu sums up thus (verses 29,30):

"Lo! all these things doth God work,
Two ways; three, with a man;
To bring back his soul from the pit,
To enlighten with the light of the living."

The correspondence of this statement with the one in Romans is remarkable. Here, in what is one of the oldest books in the Oracles of God, the question is proposed and answered as to how man will be reconciled to God. By it through all the ages witness has been borne to God's plan, which at last was realized when "God sent forth his son, made of a woman", "to save his people from their sins".

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He was the messenger, the one of a thousand, who could interpret and show God's uprightness, who was the price of redemption, and for whose sake God will not requite man for his sins, and through whom man will at last receive that change of body which is as fresh as a child's with all the vigour of youth.

"Where is boasting then?"

Paul notes the consequences which follow from what he has said (Romans 3:27-31). He first points out that "boasting ... is excluded". No one can glory before God. Is this end achieved by "*a law of works*"? That would leave room for human satisfaction and pride in human achievement. It is by "*a law of faith*"; a law—or rule—which requires faith in God. The essence of faith is trust in another; it carries with it the need for help and the conviction that the one trusted can help. Faith in Christ is an acceptance of the benefits of Christ's work, apart from which man is helpless. "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, apart from works of law*" (verse 28). If it is "by faith", the Jew's trust in works of law was misplaced; and if "apart from works of law", a Gentile must not be brought under law (which to the Jew meant the law of Moses) as a condition of obtaining salvation.

"Jew and Gentile"

There is one principle of salvation for all. God is the God of both Jew and Gentile. "*God is one*" (verse 30), as the Jews believed, and as the prophets and apostles all affirm, and therefore He must be God of all. From this Paul infers that His plan is one for all: "*And he shall justify the Jew by faith, and the Gentile through faith.*" (The margin of the RV preserves here some distinctions in the use of the article.) The Jew had the Word of God; he needed to put faith in the promises therein revealed. To the Gentile the gospel was preached, which, since it contains the subject matter of faith, is called "the faith".

Lastly, an objection is stated: "*Do we then make law of none effect through the faith?*" (verse 31). That is, Does the gospel do away with law? "*God forbid*", Paul answers;

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"Nay, we establish law." He does not here show how he establishes law, being content with the bare affirmation. Later in the epistle he returns to the subject. But law—the Father's will—has been fully established by Christ, who magnified the law and made it honourable. The believer in Christ is not free from law, but under law to Christ. He lives not unto himself, but unto him that died for him, constrained to do this by the love of Christ. "Love fulfils the law."

"Fulfil in us Thy faithful word,
Through him who died to make it sure,
Our mercy seat, our righteousness,
Who lives again to die no more."

The Lesson of Abraham

In 3:21-31 Paul has shown that there is a righteousness available for man, through the work of Christ; and he has noted that this method excludes all human boasting, and puts all men under the same conditions for the attainment of salvation. But the Jew trusted in circumcision and his possession of law, and he considered that he had in them a ground for confidence. The things in which the Jew gloried are now considered in their relation to Abraham. This testing of the Jewish confidence in circumcision and law by an examination of the case of Abraham was particularly appropriate. For not only was Abraham the father of the Jewish nation, and a man who was called "the friend of God" but the basis of Abraham's relationship to God was a subject discussed by the Jewish teachers. Even the passage upon which Paul bases his argument was quoted by them in their discussions.

While Abraham's case might be regarded as a test case for any time, it was very topical to introduce it when Paul wrote. In Romans 4 he demonstrates that Abraham was justified apart from works, verses 1-8; before he was circumcised, verses 9-12; and independently of law, verses 13-22; and that the record was for all time, verses 23-25.

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH (4:1-8)

The question of verse 1 is put as from the Jew. It would at once arise in his mind, What about Abraham? *"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory."* It was held that Abraham was justified by works, and if such was the case, then he presents an exception to the conclusion that Paul has drawn, that no flesh shall glory in God's presence. Paul at once denies that Abraham is an exception: *"But not before God"*; or, filling out the ellipsis, *"Abraham hath not whereof to glory before God"*. This denial is at once supported by an appeal to the Word of God. *"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."*

"Counted for righteousness"

It will help to make the argument clearer to observe that the translators of the AV have used three words in this chapter as renderings of the word which is translated "counted" in this verse. It is translated "counted" in verse 3; "reckoned" in verses 4, 9, 10; and "imputed" in verses 6, 8, 11, 22, 23, 24; in the RV it is uniformly rendered by "reckoned". The AV translators have also introduced variety in other places in the epistles where this passage from Genesis 15 is quoted. We meet it again in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23. While the same words are used in the original, the AV gives us *"it was counted to him for righteousness"* in Romans; *"it was accounted to him for righteousness"* in Galatians; and *"it was imputed unto him for righteousness"* in James.

The record in Genesis 15 provides an interesting background to the statement quoted and discussed; and seen as a whole, clearly bears out the argument of the apostle. In verse 1 we are told it was "after these things", that is, after Abraham had rescued Lot from the confederate kings who had invaded Palestine, as recorded in chapter 14, and when he probably felt in danger of reprisals, that the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy reward shall be exceeding

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great" (Genesis 15:1, RV margin). Abraham asks, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" He was childless: he had no seed; one born in his house was his heir. The answer of God is that one who would be his offspring should be his heir. And Abraham is taken out, and asked to number the stars, and he is assured that so numerous shall his seed be.

Then we have the statement which plays such an important part in Paul's argument. The narrative then continues, "And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" Instructions are given to Abraham to make ready for the confirmation of the covenant. Here we have the promise of a seed to an old man, together with an assurance that God would give him the land where he was then living for an inheritance. The sixth verse is in the nature of a divine comment; it interrupts the story to tell us of Abraham's response to the promise of God, and the resultant attitude of God to Abraham. All Abraham did was to take God at His word—to believe that He would do as He promised. And God reckoned this faith for righteousness.

It would be quite true to say that Abraham did something. But what he did, in its very nature, excluded any works as a basis whereby he might earn righteousness himself. For the essence of his faith was confidence in God and not in himself. It was based upon something promised and expected—the very antithesis of payment for works done.

"Not of grace, but of debt"

By an illustration from ordinary life Paul shows this to be the case: "*Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt*" (verse 4). When a man has done a day's work the day's wages are his due. But if there is no work, but only faith, what a man receives must be of grace. Paul does not state this converse in such general terms; he expresses it in language particular to the subject under discussion: "*But to him that worketh not, but*

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believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." If it is by faith it is not by works; and if by faith then it is of grace and not of debt that righteousness is received.

Some have thought that there is conflict between James and Paul. Both quote the same words from Genesis. But they are speaking of different times in Abraham's life. James shows from the offering of Isaac that faith wrought with works. As Dr. Thomas has remarked, Abraham the sinner was justified by faith; Abraham the saint was justified by works. This is Paul's teaching, too, in the later chapters of this letter to the Romans.

"Blessed is the man ..."

Another scripture is quoted by Paul in proof of his conclusion that justification is by faith: "*David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*" David describes "the blessing" (RV), that is, God's blessing, the pronouncing blessed. What this blessing is can be clearly seen by putting together the six parallel phrases:

- "justifying the ungodly",
- "faith counted for righteousness",
- "righteousness reckoned without works",
- "iniquities forgiven",
- "sins covered",
- "sins not reckoned."

ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BEFORE HE WAS CIRCUMCISED (4:9-12)

Abraham realized the blessing which David describes. But is such a blessing for the circumcision, for Abraham's natural descendants only, or for others also? "*Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?*" The scripture, upon which all were agreed, is repeated: "*For we say, To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness.*" It being agreed that Abraham

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attained to righteousness, the value of circumcision for righteousness is determinable by considering him. Was righteousness reckoned to him when he was a circumcised or an uncircumcised man?

"The sign of circumcision"

The history answers the question. He was justified at least fourteen years before he was circumcised and his justification was independent of it. In fact, he received circumcision as a *sign*, a *seal*, authenticating the righteousness which he had when uncircumcised.

Two conclusions are drawn from this fact, but to appreciate them we must remember that from the first it was God's intention to bless all nations in Abraham and his seed. This blessing is described as a "justifying of the Gentiles by faith" in Galatians 3:8. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." The blessing principally is justification. All material blessings follow from this, even as toil and a thorn-producing earth came in the wake of sin. Peter uses the passage in the same way in Acts 3:25,26: "Unto you (Jews) first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities." While the Jew is first, all nations are included. The blessing is a turning away from iniquities.

"The father of them that believe"

Now, if Abraham's justification had been bound up with circumcision it would have limited the blessing to the circumcised, the Jews. But since he was not circumcised when he received this blessing he is therefore the father of them that believe, even though they are uncircumcised (verse 11). Further, since circumcision had nothing to do with making Abraham acceptable with God, it follows that circumcision alone, in the case of the Jew, cannot make him acceptable. Those Jews only who have Abraham's faith are children of Abraham. He is *"the father of circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but*

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who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision" (verse 12).

So Abraham is the father of all who believe, who have his faith, whether Jew or Gentile. The condition of acceptance in his case was faith. It is the same for his children. As his faith was prior to, and independent of, his circumcision, his seed includes a believing, though uncircumcised, Gentile; and excludes an unbelieving, though circumcised, Jew.

ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED APART FROM LAW (4:13-22)

The Jew trusted in the law as well as in circumcision. It was a kind of anachronism to say that Abraham kept the law, yet the Jewish teachers said he did this anticipatively. It was therefore necessary to show that the promise is not dependent on law. Paul does this by showing that the promise and law are incompatibles. They cannot function together.

"Not through the law"

"For not through law (i.e. any law—law as such) was the promise to Abraham or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world (for the promise concerned a world, not just the land of Palestine that Israel had under the law), but through the righteousness of faith." It was faith-righteousness and not law-righteousness that was the condition of inheriting the promise: *"For if they which are of the law (who depend on law) be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect"* (verse 14). If a man depends on law as the ground of acceptance he seeks to earn eternal life and obtain the inheritance on merit. But this is contrary to the method revealed, for the inheritance was promised to Abraham on the condition of faith. If life is earned by keeping law, neither promise nor faith enter in.

"Of faith ... by grace"

It is also impossible in fact: *"For the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression"* (verse 15). By law comes knowledge of sin and consciousness of guilt and liability to punishment. Under law, sin-

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ning man comes under wrath. And man cannot keep the law; so law works wrath upon all. Therefore the apostle concludes, "*For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace*". Because of the impossibility of it being by law, if the promise and the inheritance are received at all, it must be by grace, operative through faith. And so it is. And so the promise is secure to all the seed; secure alike to the believing Jew, the seed who lived under the law, and the believing Gentile. This is involved in the promise that Abraham was made the father of *many* nations.

If inheritance were of law, he could only be the father of those under law. Since law could give no title, the promise then would not be "sure" to any. But the purpose of God, who made the promise, is sure. Abraham is appointed the father of many nations by God, and in the sight of God—"before God"—he was such then. "*I have made thee a father*", said God to him, when there was as yet no seed, and Abraham and Sarah were old. But God, who could, and did, quicken "dead" but believing Abraham and Sarah, so that a child was born of her when she was past age, called those things which then had no existence as though they already had come into being (verse 17).

"Fully persuaded"

So faith triumphed even in the lifetime of Abraham, in that at last the "seed", Isaac, was born. It was a remarkable promise and wonderful faith. Against natural hope of fatherhood he believed in hope, to the end that he might become the father of many nations, as God promised. It was not that he ignored the difficulties and apparent impossibilities of fulfilment: "*Without being weakened in faith he considered his body now as good as dead*" (verse 19, RV). Yea, looking at God's promise, unbelief did not cause him to waver, but he was strong in faith; by this full persuasion that God was able to fulfil the promise, giving glory to God. And as on the earlier occasion in his life faith was reckoned for righteousness, so Paul now applies the declaration to this later and more conspicuous exhibition of faith on the part of Abraham.

THE OBJECT OF THE RECORD (4:23-25)

We have noticed that the statement in Genesis 15:6 is a divine comment on Abraham's faith and its result, and is not at all necessary to understand the promise made to Abraham. Why is it then recorded? Simply to tell of God's approval of Abraham's faith? Paul says in effect that it is there recorded as an illustration, for all generations, of the principles which govern God's acceptance of man to friendship. Paul's words are a striking witness to the inspiration and divine preservation of the Word of God. God only could foresee the existence and the needs of generations to come, and provide accordingly:

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification."

"For us also"

It is written for us also; how we should value it! It is written that we may know that our faith is reckoned to us for righteousness on the same condition—if we believe God. Abraham believed that God would raise up Isaac; and, later, he believed that God would raise him up from the dead, if he offered him up for a burnt offering as he was commanded (Hebrews 11:19). And Isaac represented Christ, THE SEED, whom God raised up first in birth and then in resurrection. The faith of Abraham had both Isaac and Christ for its objective.

It all centres in the work of God in Christ, who makes the promise sure. Immortality comes through Christ, and without him the promise cannot be realized; to this end Christ died, that offences might be forgiven, and he was raised to complete the work. It would have remained incomplete without his resurrection, for then death would not have been abolished; and if not in his case, then it would not have been in any other. *"For our offences"* and *"for our justification"* are practically synonymous phrases; the death and resurrection of Jesus were both essential to accomplish that which the words express.

The Blessings of Justification (5:1-11)

There is a close verbal connection between the last verse of Romans 4 and the first verse of chapter 5: "Christ rose for our justification" ... "*Justified then by faith.*" The thought goes further back still. For when in 3:21-26 Paul had established that a way of righteousness was available, he drew attention to three consequences. From these he was led to consider the witness of the Old Testament in its record concerning Abraham. He now, in 5:1-11, resumes his consideration of the effects of justification.

"Being justified by faith"

There is a strong note of confidence in the words of these verses. They reflect a very real feeling on the part of the writer. Paul's early efforts to live righteously were strenuous. He can say that he was considered by men to be blameless as touching the righteousness which is of the law (Philippians 3:6). Yet he felt no satisfaction, no security, no peace.

With the conviction (in his case based on the evidence of sight and hearing) that Christ was risen, and that therefore the things taught in connection with him were true, there came, as the result of his faith in Christ, the realisation of those things which he had before sought, but which had eluded his grasp. Paul appreciated the blessings of justification with all the ardour of his nature, and in proportion to his sense of disappointment with the result of his own previous efforts.

"Being justified ... we have peace with God." "Peace" is a constant element in all Paul's salutations. When the gospel is truly and earnestly believed, although there is no audible expression on God's part of His favour, there is an attainment of peace. It is sin that separates from God. This was literally illustrated in the exile of Adam and Eve from Eden, and is not less actually so in the state of all their children. Justification—the forgiveness of sins—brings peace. Increasingly valuable then becomes the designation of God as the God of peace.

This peace, stilling troubled thoughts, and making conscience quiet, is fully experienced in fellowship with God. "In everything", says Paul to the Philippians, "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus ... These things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:6-9).

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ"

It is *"through the Lord Jesus Christ"* that such a happy result has been brought about. It is by Christ also that *"we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand"*. We have had our "introduction", Christ being the one who has introduced us. The word "is especially applied to the introduction of a subject into the presence of a sovereign, or a worshipper into the presence of the object of worship". We have no right of approach, either as subjects or worshippers. Christ brings us near. He "suffered for sins ... that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). To value rightly the privilege indicated we must remember that an approach to an eastern monarch without being previously called meant death unless the king chose to exercise his clemency (Esther 4:11). Possibly with reference to this custom, Jesus said that "the pure in heart shall see God", the Great Monarch of all the earth.

"Grace ... and ... glory"

The introduction is into "this grace wherein ye stand". This grace is a state of favour, of acceptance, of safety, of protection, so long as the believer abides therein. In this position the believer "stands": he stands fast or firm. In it he rejoices in hope of the glory of God. In this word *"rejoice"* we meet the word previously translated "boasting", which the apostle said was excluded. But here the boasting is in God; there it was in man's own achievement. Here the rejoicing has for its object the divinely arranged *"glory"*—a sharing of the nature of God.

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But the same word is translated "glory" in verse 3: "*Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.*" The rejoicing, or glorying, is not confined to the prospect of the unalloyed good, which is in the future. It is a present experience amidst much evil. The life of the average believer is placid compared with the troubled life of Paul. His life was eventful enough as seen in the story recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; but what is recorded there is but a fraction of the sufferings he underwent, some of which he enumerates in 2 Corinthians 11. Suffering and hardship in some form or another is the appointed lot of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. It can be avoided in part by conformity to the world; but such conformity is at the expense of Christ's favour. "Suffering loss", in some cases of parents, in others of children, in others of friends, in some of worldly prosperity, are among the things involved in following the narrow way for the sake of Christ and the gospel. Paul says, "We rejoice in tribulation"—do *we*? It is a paradox to speak of rejoicing in prospect of good and at the same time rejoicing in subjection to present evil. The reason is that the evil is seen to be a part of the means by which God tries and disciplines His children.

"The love of God ... in our hearts"

Paul prayed for the Colossians that they might be strengthened with all might, "unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness". James says, "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience". And here in Romans Paul adds, "*knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us*".

How has this sense of God's love been shed abroad in our hearts? By the change produced in a believer by the message which the apostles proclaimed through the enabling power of the Spirit. As Paul elsewhere expresses it, "God hath revealed the things he has prepared for them that love him, unto us, by his Spirit ... We have received ...

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the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak ... in words which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:9-13). This appreciation of God's love evokes a responsive love to God: "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

There is proof of this love of God towards His creatures in that Christ died, at God's appointed time, for the ungodly, who were weak and unable to help themselves. This love contrasts with human love in this: while one could scarcely be found who would die for a *righteous man* (the man who always does his duty), although for a *good man* (one who is benevolent and kind towards others), one might be found; yet here we have God's love shown in Christ's death for those who were *sinner*s.

"When we were enemies"

God "*commends His own love*" (verse 8); He invites us to consider it as deserving of attention and emulation. It is unique—this act of love. And it carries with it an assurance that all God's purpose will be fulfilled. For, says Paul, that which is done is greater than that which remains to be done. The greater being accomplished, the lesser cannot fail: "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*" (verses 9,10). There are two parallel pairs of statements in these verses which we might well note as being mutually explanatory: "Justified by his blood" (verse 9) is parallel to "reconciled by his death" (verse 10); and these effects follow, "We are saved from wrath through him" (verse 9) and "we are saved by his life", i.e. the life that he now has (verse 10).

"We rejoice in God"

Not only are these great results assured, but now there is blessing: "*And not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" "We glory in hope" (verse 2), "in tribulations" (verse 3), and as a climax to all, "We glory in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom we*

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have now received the reconciliation" referred to in verse 10. The RV again preserves a uniform rendering.

We have peace (verse 1) because we have received this reconciliation. The two are inseparably linked. There can be no peace without friendship with God in any sphere of human life. How vain are human efforts to attain it! How the Bible goes to the root of the matter, not only laying bare the source of the trouble but also making known the only remedy.

Righteousness and Condemnation through Federal Heads (5:12-21)

In 3:21-26 we saw that Jesus had declared God's righteousness as a basis upon which God forgives sins, when men approach Him in faith. He does not there say *how* Christ's work is effective for the forgiveness of the sins of other men. If we reflect that the wages of sin is death, and that all have sinned, and that therefore all should die, we are faced with this question: How can God accept what Christ has done as a means of putting away sins and accepting the sinner to favour? It has been explained by saying that Christ died instead of us, as a substitute. But this is contrary to the facts, every way. If Christ had died instead of us, he should not have been raised, and we should not die. But we die, and Christ was raised, his resurrection being everywhere insisted upon as a necessity in the case for man's justification. Besides which, substitution is wrong in principle for it is not right that a sinless man should die instead of others.

A Second Adam

The explanation of Scripture is that the race as a whole is involved in the ruin brought about by the first head; that a new head, a second Adam who is also a last Adam, has been raised up who has broken the entail, and become "a new centre of healthy life"; that as men suffer the consequences of the first Adam's sin they may share the last Adam's work of righteousness.

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A possible objection may be raised that it does not seem right that men should suffer the consequences of another man's wrong-doing. But leaving the Bible for a moment, is not this at any rate a fact in life? By heredity, the effects of evil lives are borne by generations who did not share in the wrong. More, the evil itself is likely to recur in the generations following. If the Bible be ignored, the facts cannot be. But to state it thus is only to put half the case. There is a double entail. The good that men do lives after them in their children by the same law of heredity. Nature's laws are "equal". Jezebel's daughters follow her pernicious ways, while Timothy reproduces the sincere faith of a godly Lois and Eunice. The Bible gives a classic expression of the facts in the well-known words of God, spoken amidst awe-inspiring conditions, at Sinai.

And here, once more, things are traced to their ultimate source: "I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy to a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:5,6). The statement takes account not only of inheritance but also of individual persistence in evil or in good. It involves, what no study of nature can ever tell—that right will at last prevail in a godly seed, that the entail of righteousness reaches further than the entail of sin.

"In Christ shall all be made alive"

The comparison between the two Adams, worked out at length in Romans 5, is briefly referred to in 1 Corinthians 15: "Christ is risen ... and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (verse 20). His resurrection is the pledge of a harvest. And this harvest of resurrection bound up with Christ, but which some in Corinth were denying, is put by Paul as a counterpart to the harvest of death connected with Adam: "For since by man came death", not only for himself, but for all his posterity, "so by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (verse 21).

It is by "man" in both cases. The second man must be a descendant of the first man. He must work his way out of

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the evil into which the first brought all. Only by being in the evil, subject to the effects of sin, can he come out of it. Death can be overcome only by one coming under its dominion. And mankind is involved in the consequences of the "fall" of the "man", and of the "rise" of the "man". "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (verse 22). In Adam—by physical descent from him, by generation—all die. In Christ—by union with him, by regeneration—shall all be made alive. This defines the "all".

For all universally is not meant. While it is true that all absolutely of Adam's posterity by descent from him die, yet here the apostle's thought is concerned only with those who attain to life and immortality. As in Adam *they* all inherit death, so in Christ *they* all obtain eternal life. Both death and life are bound up with a federal head—one head leading along the way to death, the other leading along the way to life.

"As by one man ..."

Let us now follow the ampler treatment of this theme in Romans 5. By the opening word of verse 12 Paul links up with the preceding section. "*Wherefore*", or "For this cause", because certain conditions exist, in order for us to receive reconciliation something had been done. And this explanation begins in verse 12, but is not immediately concluded. In characteristic manner Paul breaks off to supply proof of the opening words. He says "as" something happened in connection with Adam, "so" something has been brought about in Christ. But instead of saying at once "so this has come to pass", Paul breaks his sentence, and not until verse 18 is the statement completed, and then it is introduced by a re-statement of the substance of verse 12. A complete statement would have read: "*As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so also by one man came righteousness and life by it.*"

"By one man" is a phrase governing every clause in verse 12. Through one man sin entered the world; through him came death; through him death passed unto all, for that, or because, all sinned as the result of his sin. Thus

amplified, some of the difficulty which has occasioned much strife of words is removed. Adam sinned and was punished with death. His children inherit mortality and also a tendency to sin so inevitable in its sin-producing power that Paul can say that through Adam's sin all sinned, and therefore all die through him.

"From Adam to Moses"

Paul now turns aside to establish from the universal prevalence of death from Adam to Moses the fact of the unity of the race in its inheritance of a death-stricken nature from a transgressing head: *"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression"* (verses 13,14).

From Adam to Moses might be called the patriarchal age. We must not infer that Paul means that during this time no law of God was known. The history in Genesis forbids such a conclusion. For there we read of Abel's offering, made at an appointed time, according to a particular method. We also read of righteous Noah. Abimelech was a righteous man, God witnessing to the integrity of his heart; while of Abraham God said, "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5). On the other hand the destruction of the Antediluvians, the Sodomites, and the inhabitants of Canaan, testifies of God's law broken beyond remedy by all the members of each society thus punished.

But God's law differed in its individual punishments during the time from Adam's exile from Eden to the law being given to Israel. The Edenic and Mosaic laws were penal. God said that Adam should die for transgression and the law of Moses cursed all who failed to keep it perfectly. Men sinned during the interval, but the penal consequences of the law of Moses could not be executed when the law did not exist. Sin is not imputed, not brought against them, not set down against them, where there is no law, such as the Edenic or Mosaic.

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"The figure of him that was to come"

Yet death reigned. It reigned though those subject to it had not sinned in the same way as Adam, for the reason that they could not come under the law which was given to him, since they were outside of Eden when born. Neither were they under any other law which had the same conditions. How then did death reign? It was because of their descent from Adam, which is the point Paul is proving. But since there is unity between Adam and his offspring, he is in this respect a *"figure of the one to come"*. This leads to the contrasting of the two heads, in what they did, and in the effects of what they did.

There is a contrast in results. The free gift is not as the trespass: "For if by the trespass of the one, the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many" (verse 15, RV). The one is Adam: the many, his descendants. Trespass on Adam's part, death the result. Against that we have obedience on Christ's part, and life the result. But other words than these are used to express this obedience and this result. Christ's work and its effects are of God's grace, and life is the gift by the grace of Jesus Christ, and these are put, by metonymy, for obedience and life. Grace "abounds" in that there is not simply a reversal to Adam's state prior to his sin, but a bringing of man to the attainment of eternal life. The possible scope of grace is "the many" who are dying. But, "while it embraces all, all may not embrace it".

Again there is a contrast quantitatively. *One* sin brought the ruin which extended to all; but redemption covers *many* sins: "*For the judgement came of one (offence) unto (sentence of) condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification (or sentence of righteousness)*" (verse 16). And if God has involved all in death through the trespass of one, much more will He be gracious through the righteousness of one. In the words of verse 17: "*For if by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.*"

“Death reigned” ... “Life will reign”

A strictly corresponding statement to the first half of this verse would read, “Much more will life reign through the righteousness of the one”. But that is not so. For while the Adamic unity is upon a flesh basis, the individual members being part of it by birth, the Christ unity is upon a different basis altogether. While a person is a part of the Adamic unity without any action on his part, he is required to contribute something before he can be included in the Christ unity. Because he has been given freewill and endowed with moral qualities he must willingly respond to God’s invitation to share in the salvation God has made possible. There must be co-operative work with God on the part of man. And because this is so, and because the majority of mankind proves unresponsive, Paul finishes the statement in harmony with the facts of the case—*“Much more shall they that receive the abundance of the grace ... reign in life”*. These concluding words certainly disprove all theories of universal salvation, which men have built upon the word “all”, and upon a supposed necessary equal extent of the effects of the work of Adam and Christ.

“Disobedience” ... “Obedience”

In verse 18 we have the re-statement of the idea of verse 12; put in such a way that it also sums up what has been established in the intervening verses. The *trespass* of one contrasts with the *righteous act* of the other. In the issue of their acts, *condemnation* contrasts with the *justification* of life. The means in each case is more precisely stated in verse 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.”*

“Made sinners”, or “constituted sinners”, indicates that men become sharers by birth (the basis of union with Adam) of all the results that come in the train of Adam’s transgression. “Made righteous”, or “constituted righteous ones”, indicates that men share by being born again (the basis of union with Christ), the righteousness and life of which Christ is the possessor.

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“Sin reigned” ... “Grace reigns”

What purpose then did the law of Moses serve? It *“came in beside”*, as an additional element, that the trespass might abound (verse 20). The law had the effect of showing that when man was placed under law, sin inevitably followed. The law only the more demonstrated the need for God's scheme of righteousness. But God was equal to the increased need. As sin abounded, grace abounded more. And as sin reigned in death, that being, as it were, sin's domain, so also grace has its kingdom. It reigns through righteousness, as the result of Christ's life of righteousness, of Christ's death which exhibited God's righteousness and the resultant gift of righteousness to the believer. And it reigns *“unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (verse 21).

The Revealed Righteousness of God in Relation to the Believer's Life of Holiness (6:1—8:39)

IF we try to put ourselves back in the position of a Jew of the first century, trusting in the keeping of the law as a means of gaining the favour of God, and also consider the reaction Paul's doctrine of justification by faith would produce, we shall the better understand the objection brought by the Jews against Paul's teaching. If salvation is by God's grace in the forgiveness of sins, and the multitude of sins has provided an opportunity for an abundant display of mercy, then to continue in sin would give greater opportunity for mercy to abound still more. Why not continue in sin? Why not, in the words of the objection, stated and dismissed in 3:8, do evil that good may come?

It was only too true, alas, that some did indeed accept this sophistry, and act upon it. They "perverted the grace of God into immorality", as Moffatt translates Jude 4. The effect of this false deduction persisted long. John, a generation later, had to write concerning the teachers who would lead astray (1 John 2:26), and insist upon the truth that the child of God cannot follow his former ways, but "purifies himself as he is pure".

It would seem to the Jew that Paul's doctrine opened the flood-gates to evil, and that therefore it must be false. This was a rank perversion of Paul's teaching, but its speciousness made an answer necessary for the sake of both Jew and Gentile. For the former, to show that his conclusion was wrong; and for the latter, the laxer of whom so readily accepted it, to show that a life of sin was inconsistent with that relationship to Jesus Christ into which they had been introduced by grace.

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The objection really shows a failure to understand the basis upon which divine favour was bestowed. It is only in union with Christ, the last Adam, that man is accepted to friendship with God. Only by his obedience were life and immortality brought to light, and union with Christ involves personal association with him and a desire to be like him. A voluntary surrender to sin is incompatible with such association. Moral harmony with him must be its outcome, for it has for its aim eternal fellowship with a holy and righteous God. The sophistry Paul opposes is a contradiction to the means and the aim of salvation.

In putting the question Paul repeats words he has used in the preceding sentence: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound".

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (6:1—7:6)

He first indignantly repudiates the suggestion with a "*God forbid*", before passing on to refute the false teaching behind the question. The refutation consists of three answers, the first showing the meaning and implications of baptism (verses 2-14); the second based upon an analogy drawn from slavery (verses 15-23); the third taken from an illustration from law (7:1-6).

THE FIRST ANSWER: THE BELIEVER HAS BEEN UNITED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM (6:2-14)

Paul appeals to the profession of the Christian; he had been united with Christ by baptism. This was a symbolic burial, acknowledged as such by the subject of it. So Paul asks, "*We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?*"

"Dying to sin"

What is this "dying to sin"? The words are used of Christ's death in verse 10: "The death that he died, he died unto sin once for all." By baptism the believer is united to Christ in his death. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "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 which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15). In what way did Christ die to sin? He died because he was, through his mother, a sharer with the rest of mankind in a state of mortality. He was subject to evil that had come through sin. And Paul personifies sin, and uses the word as expressive of that which came as the result of sin. Christ's death was necessitated by the entrance of sin into the world, and in his death he met all the claims of sin, and he rose to freedom from all its effects. But when we use this language we are using the language of personification. For, literally, sin can claim nothing. Sin is disobedience to law, or in the more comprehensive phrase of John, sin is lawlessness, and God, whose law is disobeyed, imposes the penalty of broken law. When Paul says sin has reigned unto death, sin is likened to a monarch whose sway extends to death. Literally, death is the punishment God inflicted for the disobeying of His law.

To pay attention to this personification is an enlightening exercise. (See *The Atonement*, by C. C. Walker, page 16.) The figure must be noted, and the fact thereby expressed, observed, and by that means the building of theories upon abstractions is avoided.

The believer died to sin in baptism. His act expressed his recognition that sin had produced death. How then could he live any longer therein? To persist in sin was to live in the domain of sin, to come again under the sovereignty of sin, to acknowledge again that which in baptism had been repudiated. How beautiful are the arrangements of God! His appointments are admirably adapted for the ends He has in view. There is the recognition of His supremacy and of the estate of man. God is honoured and then man is blessed. Is not that as it should be?

"Buried with him through baptism"

Verse 3, in the RV, opens with the word "Or". It indicates an alternative to what has been said in verse 2. Either the believer has died to sin to live no longer therein, or he has completely failed to understand what baptism effects and

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what is meant by it: *"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"* In that case they had not understood that baptism was a symbolic death, and that it was God's appointed means for sharing in Christ's death. But it was not only an identification with Christ in death. The rite of baptism contained not only the negative side of death to sin; for Christ was raised, and the believer too was raised out of the symbolic death of baptism. And both in death and resurrection there is a parallel between Christ and the believer: *"We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."* In Christ's case, there was a life subsequent to this death; and so in the believer's case. The death was to sin; the new life cannot be a continuance of the old. There is a newness of life: life considered not so much in its acts as in its motives, as a new principle of life.

"We also might walk in newness of life"

The correspondence must continue beyond death: *"For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be—it logically follows—also by the likeness of his resurrection"* (verse 5). The likeness of Christ's resurrection is the newness of life in which the baptized one then walks. In that new life he knows, not simply as a fact but as a matter of experimental knowledge, that his old self was crucified with Christ: *"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"* (verse 6). The body of sin is sin's body—the body subject to the motions of sin. This was done away, rendered impotent, paralysed, in the sense that sin's supremacy was broken, so that sin is no longer served as a master.

We have in Paul himself a man who experienced what is here described. He felt the constraining love of Christ. He can say in the letter to the Galatians, where he is dealing with a similar perversion of his teaching to that which he is here considering, "For I through (experience of) law died unto law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified

THE LIFE OF HOLINESS (6:1—8:39)

with Christ, yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through law, then Christ died for nought" (2:19-21).

This language, glowing and enthusiastic, is not the language of an unbalanced religious fanatic, to whose words it is difficult to attach any definite meaning, but was written by a man with a singularly balanced and logical mind. It expresses a sober fact, realized in the experience of everyday life by one who appropriated as few do, because they do not feel the need as he did, the blessings of union with Christ. He knew, as he wrote in Romans 6:7, that "He that hath died is justified (emancipated) from sin"; a master cannot claim possession of a slave that is dead.

"We died with Christ ... we shall also live with him"

This union with Christ reaches to the consummation of the purpose of God: *"If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing (as we do know it to be a fact) that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died he died unto sin once; but the life that he liveth he liveth unto God"* (verses 8-10). It follows that we must *"reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus"* (verse 11).

The conclusion is stated in verses 12-14. While verse 1 suggested the desirability of persisting in sin, Paul reverses the terms in his conclusion: *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither present (as a continuous act, 'go on presenting') your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present (as a completed act, 'by one decisive act, one resolute effort') yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."* All—heart, soul, mind, and strength—are to be used in God's service. *"For sin shall not have dominion over you."* It shall not enthrall. There may be temporary victories by sin, but its old supremacy is broken.

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The reason given seems strange: "*For ye are not under law, but under grace.*" But Paul knew. Law, as the condition of a man's life, forged again the shackles of sin. But grace—that forgives, and a man who falls starts again, and in the issue grace triumphs where law would fail.

THE SECOND ANSWER:

THE BELIEVER HAS CHANGED MASTERS (6:15-23)

The question in verse 15 appears to repeat the question of verse 1, with an added support from Paul's words that they were not under the law but under grace: "*What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?*" Paul however uses a different tense of the verb, and the distinction has been explained in the following words:

"Paul makes a deft use of the present subjunctive in Romans 6:1, and of the aorist subjunctive in 6:15. As he often does, he opens the argument with a rhetorical question in the future indicative: 'What shall we say then?' He has two points in mind as possible wrong deductions from his great climax at the end of chapter 5, that grace immeasurably surpasses sin: 'Where sin abounded, grace superabounded.' No doubt the Judaizers had already drawn both of these inferences from Paul's doctrine of grace as an argument for licence. One inference is that Paul leaves the door open to a life of sin, the habit of sin, as a means of giving God a chance to display His grace. Paul puts it bluntly with the present subjunctive: 'Are we to abide in sin that grace may come to abound?' Are we to live in sin as if at home in that state for such a pious subterfuge? Paul scouts the imputation and disproves it by the analogy of death and life as illustrated by baptism. But one more false alternative remains. The cynical Judaizer may argue that Paul at least allows occasional indulgence in sin, a lapse now and then, as one of the privileges of grace. So Paul faces this phase of the subject with the aorist subjunctive: 'Are we to commit an act of sin because we are not under law, but under grace?' (6:15). Paul evidently chooses the aorist tense to suit this idea. Once more he scouts the idea, but argues powerfully against it by the illustration of slavery. Voluntary yielding to sin means becoming the slave of sin. The habit of sin begins with the first indulgence" (A. T. Robertson).

"Servants of sin ... or of obedience?"

Paul answers that they become the bond-servants of the one they obeyed. The figure is taken from the prevailing system of slavery. Were they disposed to sin? Then they

would become sin's slaves. No man can serve two masters, as Jesus taught. And as he said again, "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin" (Matthew 6:24; John 8:34). Sin's service, Paul says, is "*unto death*"; the service of obedience is "*unto righteousness*" (verse 16). We should have expected the antithesis "obedience unto life" but that might have been misunderstood as allowing the claims of the Jews concerning the law. "Unto righteousness" describes the end of the service—God's righteousness; and answers the question of verse 15, "Shall we sin?"

With a burst of thankfulness Paul adds that though they were the servants of sin formerly, they had "*obeyed from the heart a form of doctrine to which they had been delivered*". They had been handed over to this standard of teaching for it to be their guide. They were freed from sin, had changed masters and were now the "*servants of righteousness*".

"The wages of sin is death"

This was a crude figure he had taken from the custom of slavery. Paul apologizes, and explains that he uses this forceful figure because the very question he is considering shows on the part of those who raise it a lack of spiritual understanding. In the past they had yielded their members as "*slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity*", uncleanness expressing the man-ward and iniquity the God-ward aspects of their acts. Now, righteousness was their master, and their life was a process of "*sanctification*" (RV). Before, they had given undivided allegiance to sin, and rendered no service to righteousness. The "*end of those things*" of which they were now ashamed was death. What was the end of the new service? Now there was sanctification, and finally life. For as pay is given to the soldier for service, so sin, too, pays wages, even death. But, and here again it is a contrast and not a parallel, "*the gift of God (not the wages of righteousness) is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*".

In these verses the two masters have been variously described. To note the terms used will help us to a clearer view. In verse 16 sin contrasts with obedience; in verse 18

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with righteousness. In verse 19, uncleanness and iniquity contrast with righteousness; while in verse 22 sin is opposed to God. The figure of personification comes clearly into view as we gather up these contrasted words.

THE THIRD ANSWER:

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM LAW (7:1-6)

There has been a burial of the believer and a following new life; a change of masters, a quitting of the service of sin and an entering of the service of righteousness. The lesson is pressed home by an illustration drawn from the most intimate relations of life, that of marriage. At one time the Christian was united to an old course of life as two that are married. He died with Christ, and was thus by death freed from the old union. A new marriage had taken place to a new course of life.

The previous section was a reply to the contention that a man might sin because he was not under law, but under grace. Paul has demonstrated from the figure of slavery that such an argument was wrong. He now turns the tables, as it were, by giving the last proof by means of an illustration from law.

Again the opening word is "Or" (RV). You either must admit that what I have said is correct, or you are ignorant of the very principles of law upon which you insist so much: "*Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men that know law), how that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth?*" (verse 1). The appeal is to a principle of all law; its rule lasts during lifetime, and terminates with death. Law cannot do anything with a dead man.

This principle is illustrated in the law of marriage, called in verse 2 "*the law of the husband*", that is, the law concerning the husband. This law fastens a wife to her husband while he lives but when he dies she is "*discharged*" from this law. To be joined to another while the husband lives is adultery. The death of the husband frees her from the law in question, with the result that she is at liberty to be joined to another without offence.

“Dead to the law”

Here is the illustration. The application begins at verse 4: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ.” The application at first appears to be confused. In the illustration the husband dies, but in the application the believer dies. But the difficulty vanishes when we remember that what is spoken of as the death of the believer is really the termination of a particular relationship on his part. The habits and practices of an individual, naturally (as man now is) contrary to the law of God, are summed up in the phrase “our old man”. The individual is wedded to this “old man” by law, because law produces sin and this binds together the two. But the “old man” has been crucified with Christ, as Paul said in 6:6. And with that crucifixion came freedom to marry another.

It is all accomplished through Christ’s work: “Ye were made dead to the law through the body of Christ”—through what was done in his body nailed to the tree. The law cursed him there in the mode of his death. He never came under its curse by any personal act, but by the hanging on the tree he was brought innocently under its curse. But death met all the claims of the law; there its curse came to an end, and Christ rose to a new life.

The “old man” is crucified with Christ because the old past is blotted out for Christ’s sake. Since it was law that bound the individual to the “old man”, the death of the “old man” leaves the individual free to marry another. This other is the “new man”, united with Christ risen from the dead.

“Fruit unto God”

And just as the change of service yielded “fruit unto sanctification” (6:22), so now as the result of this new relationship there is bringing forth “*fruit unto God*”.

To restate the illustration and application may simplify the argument. The wife is the individual consciousness that persists through all the changes. The husband is the “old man” to which the person was bound. “The law of the husband” corresponds to the Mosaic law which had the

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effect of rousing the innate tendency to sin and so bound the individual to the "old man". This law becomes inoperative through the death of the "old man". The new marriage is to the "new man", and describes the new state in Christ consequent upon union with him.

Paul shows the necessity for the change by a consideration of the results of each state: *"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death"* (verse 5). "In the flesh" does not mean an embodied existence, for Paul was as much in the flesh in that sense when he wrote the words as at any time in his life. But before he had trusted in the flesh, hoping by flesh descent from Abraham and by his own achievements to obtain salvation. But those efforts only made manifest that the flesh was really a "body of sin". The law, with its restrictive "Thou shalt not", only made evident that human nature was evil. The passions aroused, in their outworking brought forth fruit unto death.

"Newness of the spirit"

In contrast to that former state, *"now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter"* (verse 6). We have been "discharged" as the woman was "loosed" in verse 2, the same word being used. The death to that which held was the symbolic death of baptism, in which the old course of life was repudiated. It was through that way of life that the law had power. With the crucifixion of the old nature the law ceased to be operative, just as the law of the husband was no longer operative in the case of the wife whose husband had died.

With what result? The result is a service, reverting to the metaphor of the slave. But it is a serving in newness of the spirit—in a new life which is the reality of which the law, with its varied ceremonial means of approach to God and its ritual teaching of holiness, was but the shadow. The oldness of letter was the Jewish service with mind fixed on the literal observances of the law, but without

recognition of the "spirit and truth" therein represented and which Jesus said must be the distinguishing worship of those who come unto God (John 4:23).

And so Paul proves that while the believer is not under law but under grace, he is not free to sin.

The Position of Law (7:7-25)

It will have been observed that there is constant reference to law in the letter to the Romans. For this there is more than one reason. There is the fact that the Jew played such an important part in the early days of Christianity. The apostles were Jews and for some time all the disciples were Jews. The law of God was brought to bear upon the people of Israel in practically every phase of individual and national life. They could not avoid giving attention to it. And when Gentiles were accepted as fellow-heirs with the Jews it is easy to understand that nearly every influence would tend to make the Jew think that the Gentile must come under the law. And as a consequence the conflict arose which caused the letter to the Galatians to be written.

But apart from this immediate cause, it is difficult to see how the subject could be avoided in any comprehensive consideration of the relationship of man to God. At the beginning man was placed under God's law. And God had given Israel a law. Was it by means of law that man was to attain to life? What was God's purpose in giving Israel the law?

"Is the law sin?"

In this letter Paul had already made references to law which made a fuller treatment necessary. In 7:5 he had spoken of the motions of sins which were by the law, and in 5:20 he said that the law entered that the offence might abound. In view of this close connection between law and sin, the question arises, as it certainly might arise in the mind of a Jewish Christian, Is there something in the law itself that is sinful? But Paul puts it more emphatically than that—"*Is the law sin?*"

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It is a monstrous supposition, since law is a revelation of God's will. But what, then, was the basis of this apparently inevitable connection between law and sin? Whenever law is made known sin is manifested; law then has the effect of exhibiting the sinfulness of man. Paul supplies proof of this from his own experience. He gives us a bit of spiritual biography so searching, so going to the roots of things, that it also expresses the experience of all men who are exercised concerning the keeping of God's law.

In all this chapter we must remember the personification which is employed. Paul, as it were, separates the individual from the impulses which belong to him, and speaks of the impulses as though they were a separate power.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet: but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for apart from the law sin is dead" (verses 7,8). Sin is there, but latent. A man might desire many things, but in the absence of prohibition the desire is not sinful. But sin found occasion, opportunity, "a base of operations", with the coming of the commandment. The law showed the rulership of sin over man in that the desire persisted after the prohibition was known. Without the law sin was dead; it was not manifested as sin; its resistance was evoked by the law.

"Sin revived, and I died"

The proof of this Paul finds in his own life. In childhood as a Jewish boy he lived a boy's life, unconcerned about the law. But as he grew older at successive stages the law was borne in upon him, directing his actions. It was then that he realized that there were impulses within him which were contrary to law. *"Sin revived"*, or sprang to life. Its presence was recognized. And the conviction was produced in Paul that he was a sinner and death-doomed. In a curt but expressive way he says *"I died"*. He lived unconscious

of transgression before he knew the commandment, and sin was dead; but when sin sprang to life, he died.

What was the result of this moral development? His instructors who taught him the law told him that its aim was life. But with a bitter awakening Paul found it ended in death. Remembering that we have in these verses Paul's experiences of law during his developing years, we see that the words of verse 10—*"the commandment which was unto life"*—expresses the Jewish point of view to the law. Whether that was a correct view we leave for consideration to a later passage. But for a right understanding of the allusion here, the context must be kept in mind. It was found to be unto death for the reason that sin finding occasion through the commandment beguiled him, and through it slew him. *"Deceived"* or *"beguiled"* (RV)—the language is reminiscent of Eve's explanation of her taking the forbidden fruit: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13). But there it was the serpent, here it is sin. The beguiling influence then was without, now it is within.

"The commandment is holy, and just, and good"

What follows? The question asked in verse 7 was, "Is the law sin?" In the light of his experience Paul finds that the law is not sin, but on the contrary the very antagonism of sin to the law shows the law was holy. The commandment was *"holy, and just, and good"* (verse 12). It was holy, having its source in God; just in the righteousness of its appointments; good in its beneficial objects in directing human life.

But could the law be good when such dire results followed from its operations? *"Did then that which is good become death unto me?"* (verse 13). Was the responsibility for his condemnation to be placed on the law? No, Paul answers, it was sin that was to blame. And sin is shown to be *"exceeding sinful"* in that it uses a good law for man's destruction. It is thus seen in all its malignancy and awfulness.

Commencing at verse 14, Paul develops proof of the holiness of the law and of the innate sinfulness of human nature, by an appeal to present experience: *"For we know*

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that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

The law is spiritual in that it is of Divine origin, and partakes of the character of its Author. As an expression of God's thoughts, it is higher than man's thoughts. Man does not think God's way because of what he is. Man is carnal, made of flesh, in which at present resides a principle contrary to God. It produces works which are the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-24). Paul adds to the words "I am carnal" the further definition, "sold under sin". Sin has effected the purchase of all. Sin personified is represented as the owner of the human race. All are his slaves, to do his bidding. While on the part of the believer there is not now the voluntary surrender to sin, yet so long as the flesh in its present constitution continues, so long will sin exercise its influence.

Because of this, provision is made for the forgiveness of sins: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10). "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1).

The figure of slavery in the words "sold under sin" governs the sentences which follow. There is a constant repetition of the word "I" and also of the word "do". In verse 15, the three occurrences in the AV of the word "do" in fact represent three different original words, which are discriminated in the RV (or RV margin). The particular "I" must be determined by the qualifications made and the context. For while Paul is the "I", yet in this analysis of Paul's actions—and the analysis is representative of all in a similar position to Paul—conflicting elements are brought to light. Paul and all believers are, each one, a kind of duality. There is the old man of the flesh and the new man in Christ Jesus.

The development of the new man by the word of the gospel does not at once eradicate the old. There is, indeed, a repudiation of the old, but who does not know that it still exists and asserts its power? Who would not wish

that it were indeed eliminated entirely? But those who most earnestly so wish are those who recognize the truth of Paul's statements.

“What I hate, that I do”

Verse 15 opens with “For”, confirming that man “is sold under sin”: *“For that which I work (or carry out), I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do.”* As the slave performs his task, blindly unquestioning, not having regard to why the task is set and what the object is, but simply in response to command of the owner, so there is a surrender to sin's service. It is a service which is not the voluntary act of a righteous man, but an act he really repudiates. There is a failure to perform the good intention, and a doing of the thing which is hated. But this doing of what he would not, of what he hated, this disapproval, is a consent that the law is good (verse 16). But if there is the mental acknowledgement that the law is good, why the failure to perform? Because Paul was, as it were, two persons. It was not Paul the disciple of Christ, the Son of God, that carried out the act, but sin that dwelt in him. Sin is a tyrant in residence, antagonistic to and thwarting the new and better desires.

Is it correct to describe it that way? Does sin inhabit man thus? Everyone who sincerely tries to follow righteousness knows that it is so, for there is failure to suppress sin either in one way or another, and also failure to achieve the new desire: *“For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh (defining the “me”), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me”* (verses 18-20).

The situation is summed up in the words of verses 21-23: *“I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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.”*

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Some attempt has been made, as, for example, in the margin of the RV, to make "the law" of verse 21 a reference to the law of Moses. But Paul is speaking of the law in himself, the evil present with him. And it is the existence of this principle in him that causes the cry of anguish which immediately follows. Because of it he explains that while he delights in the law of God after the inward man, this other law overcomes his wishes.

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"

Oppressed by the contemplation of this, he exclaims, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (verse 24). There is a deliverer, and with obvious relief Paul adds: "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*"; and concludes, "*So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*" (verses 24,25).

In these verses we have a series of synonymous phrases and the list might be supplemented from other parts of Scripture. As Brother Thomas wrote:

"This new mode of thinking and feeling created in a true believer by the divine law and testimony, is variously designated in scripture. It is styled 'a clean heart and right spirit'; 'a new spirit' and a 'heart of flesh'; 'the inward man'; 'new creature'; 'the new man created in righteousness and true holiness'; and 'renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him'; the 'hidden man of the heart' and so forth."
—*Elpis Israel*, page 141.

Contrasted with these expressions we find "sin that dwelleth in me"; "the law, that evil is present with me"; "me, that is my flesh"; "a different law in my members"; "the law of sin in my members"; and "the flesh". The recognition of this variety of expression to describe the duality that exists consequent upon the reception of the Truth will help to a correct understanding of chapter 7.

An extended treatment of the difficulties which some have found in an apostle writing concerning himself such words as Paul uses, may be found in an article by Brother Roberts, entitled "The Seventh Chapter of Romans", in *The Christadelphian*, September, 1906.

THE LIFE OF HOLINESS (6:1—8:39)

Paul was human and he knew the difficulties of life. His apostleship did not exempt him from any conflict that is the common lot of all. His early efforts to keep the law of Moses, combined with his later knowledge of God's purpose, must have given him a fearless and honest power of introspection. While it is one Paul, he yet recognizes that he is under two influences. In Galatians he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". Here he says, speaking of failure to do as he would have liked, "It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me".

There is a danger of these words being used to get rid of personal responsibility. They will always remain true when every effort has been made to follow righteousness, but should only be used when that effort has been made, when the words from Galatians can also be used. To follow a way of sin and excuse it by putting the blame on "sin that dwelleth in me" is as far removed as possible from Paul's position. In fact, it would seem that those only can rightly use his words who are trying most to be followers of Paul as he was of Christ.

"The law of God ... the law of sin"

To set the Lord always before one's face, to love enemies, to pray for those who act spitefully towards us, to think on the things that are just, lovely, and of good report, and on those alone, is a mode of life that will test the ability of the best to serve God.

What a fulness of service is asked by Jesus when he says we must love God with heart, soul, mind and strength! At the end of day, has God ever been out of sight? Has ill-treatment or abuse or neglect evoked no bitter thoughts? Has no unfair, unlovely, unrighteous or unkind thought been entertained? Why, with the best of intentions, have other things found an entrance into the mind? Is not Paul right when he speaks as he does in this analysis of human action?

You say in despair that the position, then, is hopeless. Not so. There is provision in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and help. We are exhorted to make a habit of drawing near

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to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy for past sins, and grace to help in present needs.

The Deliverance in Christ Jesus (8:1-4)

In the eighth chapter of Romans we come to a variety of difficulties. The opening verses in particular have caused considerable discussion in connection with the subject of the sacrifice of Christ. We need to get a right grasp of the meaning of the words used. We must ever keep the context in mind, and take account of other passages which deal with the same subject.

Paul's Argument so far

It might be well to review the argument of the letter up to this point. The universal failure of man to attain to righteousness was first proved, and then God's provision for man being accounted righteous was demonstrated. That provision was through the work of Jesus, by which God arranged for the forgiveness of sins. There was acceptance in Christ by union with him. He was a new federal head raised up by God. In Christ, with sins forgiven, there is peace with God and an assured prospect of eternal life.

These things established, Paul deals with the life of the believer in his present state of justification. The particular form of his statement is influenced by objections brought against his doctrine. The voluntary adoption of a sinful life was shown to be inconsistent with the profession of the believer and the purpose of God. The Jew in particular was instructed that in Christ Jesus he is not under the Law, yet not therefore free to sin; but he is united to Christ to serve in a new life which does not consist of external ordinances, but of a full surrender of their own selves to the will of God.

By law sin was made manifest. From his own experience Paul illustrates this, for he found within him impulses which asserted themselves in opposition to the will of God. These tendencies persist in the believer, and considering their influence, Paul groans in wretchedness. But he turns his downcast soul towards God. There is hope

in Him and in His purpose: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" there is deliverance from this body of death.

It is of this deliverance, the means for the accomplishment of which he has before considered, that he speaks in 8:1-4. It is the deliverance which the Law could not effect but which God has effected. It is, in one word, Salvation.

"There is now no condemnation"

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The "therefore" expresses an inference from the statement that there is a deliverance from this body of death in Christ. Since the Redeemer has come and the believer is "in Christ", "now" there is no condemnation. This word "condemnation" occurs otherwise only in 5:16, where Paul says that Adam's sin in its outworking involved all in condemnation. Not, be it observed, condemnation for Adam's sin, but as Paul showed in 5:12, "all sinned" through Adam's sin, and therefore condemnation came upon all.

But in Christ as the result of sins being forgiven, there is acquittal. Man is reckoned "Not Guilty"; there is no condemnation. And this is the happy state of the believer—although his life is such as Paul has described in the seventh chapter, although the clogging effects of human nature hinder the full expression of the life the believer now tries to live. In this result grace and law stand in marked contrast. There was condemnation under the Law—Paul calls it elsewhere a ministration of condemnation. But since grace pardons, the believer is acquitted.

"In Christ Jesus"

This applies to them who "are in Christ Jesus". The RV with all modern editors of the Greek text, omits the last phrase of verse 1, *"who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit"*. The omission, if justified, throws greater emphasis upon the words "in Christ Jesus". The words describe rather than define those who are of Christ. They are not used to express a condition of exemption, as though Paul said "if we walk not after the flesh", but they tell us what manner of persons they are who are "in Christ Jesus"

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in the full and real sense in which Paul uses these words—they are such as walk after the spirit. Paul is not here contemplating the failure on the part of some to attain to the deliverance provided; they are not immediately in view. He has his mind on the certainties of God's plan, and these cause his thankfulness. The words occur, without any doubt as to their genuineness, at the end of verse 4, and other aspects of their meaning must be considered there.

But how has it come about that there is no condemnation in Christ? The "for" of verse 2 introduces the explanation: "*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 sin" has already been considered in connection with chapter 7. It is one of the many descriptions of the ruling impulses of human nature with its evil inclinations—"the law of sin which is in my members". Now Paul calls this ruling principle "the law of sin and of death", the added words showing the issue of sin. This summarily describes the state of man, evilly inclined morally, mortal physically. Paul says he is "made free" from this. In what sense is he made free? It is evident that he does not mean an actual present freedom, for he has been bemoaning just before the continued existence of "the law—evil present with me". He is, however, free from the condemnation that arises from the operation of the "law of sin in his members". That freedom is at present enjoyed. And a full deliverance will follow, when the "bodies of our humiliation will be conformed to the body of his glory" (Philippians 3:21).

"The law of the Spirit of life"

We can now examine the words which describe the agency by which the freedom has come. It is spoken of as "the law of the Spirit of life". In the phrase "law of sin", "law" has the meaning of operation, procedure, a principle of life or conduct. And in this other phrase, used in such close connection, "law" must have the same meaning. It is the law "of the Spirit". It was by the Spirit that God revealed His purpose through the apostles and prophets. By it His will was made known. When the knowledge of that purpose and will of God finds an entrance into a person's mind, the

new mode of thinking, by metonymy (the cause being put for the effect), might be called "the spirit". Since the result of this reception of the truth of God is life, it is called "the law of the Spirit of life". In the words of *Elpis Israel*, page 89:

"Where the truth has possession of the sentiments, setting them to work and so forming the thoughts, it becomes the law of God to them; which the apostle styles 'the law of his mind'; and because it is written there through the hearing of 'the law and the testimony', which came to the prophets and apostles through the spirit, he terms it '*the law of the spirit*' inscribed 'on fleshy tables of the heart'; and 'the law of the spirit of life', because, while obeyed, it confers a right to eternal life."

The words denote the gospel message received into a good heart and directing the life. It is closely akin to what is involved in the word "faith" as used by Paul in this letter, but it is expressed in such a way that the source and the end are brought to view. We must mark the repeated words "in Christ". It is "in" him we are made free; not out of him, nor apart from him.

Verse 3 explains how "in Christ" there is this freedom: "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God ...*" has done. God has done what the law could not do, and because of this there is the freedom of verse 2.

"In the likeness of sinful flesh"

What has God done? "*Sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, (He) condemned sin in the flesh.*" The Law (of Moses) could not condemn sin; it condemned the sinner. Under its operation sin sprang to life, was stirred to activity. Not that the Law was unfriendly; it was "holy, just, and good". But the flesh was weak, and the Law could not acquit. In a controversy between man and sin before the Law, the man is condemned. But how can God acquit? By doing what He has done, by condemning sin in a representative of the race, as we have seen in earlier chapters.

It was necessary for this that God should "send his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh". Have we to infer from that word "likeness" that the flesh of Christ only *resembled*

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sinful flesh, and was not actually such? A similar phrase occurs in Philippians 2:7: "He was made in the likeness of men." This likeness was identity; Jesus was a man. And that Jesus partook of the flesh common to men is decisively proved by Paul's words in Hebrews 2:14, where terms are added together to establish that Jesus shared the flesh and blood of the children (verse 10) whom he came to lead to salvation: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." To appreciate the emphasis of this language, the reader is recommended to read the passage through several times, omitting in turn the words "also", "himself", and "likewise", and then with all three words omitted. It will then be apparent that their work is to emphasise the "sameness" of Christ's nature and ours.

"... condemned sin in the flesh"

But why did not Paul say in Romans 8:3, "God sent His Son in sinful flesh"? Because he was stressing the sameness here also, with the additional fact that though like us in nature he was not like us in *character*. He was the sinless One.

The object is stated in the AV: "... and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh". The RV substitutes "and as an offering for sin", and puts "and for sin" in the margin. That the RV text is correct is evident, for "the idea is defined by the constant recurrence of the phrase in the Septuagint (more than 50 times in Leviticus alone) for a *sin-offering*". The matter was discussed in *The Christadelphian*, December 1913, by Brother W. J. Young, and reasons were given in favour of the RV text as against the margin and the AV. God, in sending Christ, was providing a sin-offering. This purpose had been the subject of revelation from the days of Eden, when God provided coverings of skins in place of the humanly devised fig-leaf covering.

When Abraham was approaching the place where he was to offer Isaac, and was asked about the sacrifice, he answered, "God will provide himself a lamb". And Isaiah

speaks of the arm of the Lord being bruised, suffering chastisement and stripes, that we might "be healed". The climax of the suffering is expressed in the words, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). The offering was made that sins might be put away and remembered no more. To do this God condemned sin. Where? "*He condemned sin in the flesh.*" What flesh? The flesh of sin—the flesh of the human race that is "sold under sin", and of which Christ was a sharer with all, as we have seen.

The obedience of Christ to the will of God was the condemning of sin. It was a conquest of sin. And when that obedience took him to the cross—for he was obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross", as Paul says in another place—then sin received its death warrant: it was condemned in the very flesh over which it had held sway. Concerning the word "condemned", it has been remarked that "the idea is not that of censuring, marking and branding as sinful, but that of sentencing to death, and leaving as a condemned criminal awaiting execution".

Was it necessary that sin should be condemned if Christ was to be a sin-offering? It evidently was. The ritual offerings of the Law, unblemished physically, represented an offering with unstained moral character. A sinner would not do. No benefit of such a character as is involved in a sin-offering could accrue from the death of a sinner. Only the voluntary offering of a sinless member of the sin and death stricken race could exhibit God's righteousness as the condition for the passing by of sins. But in the death of a sinner sin remains enthroned.

But now this happy result ensues. The Law could not condemn sin, but God has done it in Christ: "Through death he has destroyed that having the power of death" (Hebrews 2:14). Because this sin-offering has been provided, because *sin* has been condemned (verse 3), the *believer* is not condemned (verse 1).

What a wonderful issue here emerges in the apostle's argument. He has been discussing the position of the Law in view of the Jewish difficulty that the Law appeared to

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be sinful since sin followed a knowledge of the Law. He has shown that it is man who is sinful and that the Law is good. But the Law condemned man because he sinned, and Jewish trust in the Law was thus seen to be a vain hope. But Paul says that although the Law cannot help, yet there is deliverance. Christ is the deliverer God has raised up. While the Law condemns man, God has condemned sin, and has made Christ an offering for sin. Sin has been vanquished; sins can be forgiven; all the consequences of sin will surely be abolished. It is very easy, because of the chapter divisions in our Bibles, to miss the sweep of the argument.

“The ordinance of the law ... fulfilled in us”

The object aimed at is this: *“That the righteousness (ordinance, requirement—RV margin) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit”* (verse 4). The demand of the Law is obedience in love. This result will be reached in fulness when the redeemed family of God join the angelic hosts in doing His will, hearkening unto the voice of His word. But even now, says Paul, he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the Law (Romans 13:8; Galatians 5:14).

The “us” in the case are those who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. The RV prints “spirit” with a small “s”; with good reason, we believe, for “flesh” and “spirit” are used antithetically. And this shows us that we must now add the word “spirit” to the list of descriptions of the “new mode of thinking” brought into existence by the truth received. The “flesh” is a name for the “old man”; the “spirit” for the “new man”.

The fitness of this name can be seen by recalling the words of Jesus: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6); and also the words of James: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). The existence of the word of truth is due to the agency of the Spirit of God which directed holy men of old to speak (write) as they were moved by it. And therefore that begotten by the Spirit-word can very fittingly be called “spirit”.

Flesh and Spirit (8:5-11)

In these verses the apostle takes up and expands the ideas involved in the statement of verse 4. By giving the words a different meaning from that of Paul, much needless difficulty has been found in them. The doctrine that the Holy Spirit is a person is responsible for much confusion. So also is the idea that "spirit" refers to an immortal soul within man. Others, limiting the meaning of the word "spirit" to the power of God, look for a present indwelling of that power, and with such a belief in their minds have been led to mistake the excitement of an emotional assembly for the operation of the power of God.

But the context always helps us to fix the meaning of the words used. Every occurrence of the word in verses 5-11 has the same meaning. As "flesh" does not describe the material body, but denotes the thoughts and ways in which flesh expresses itself, so "spirit" indicates that mental and moral development which has its ultimate source in God, who is Spirit, and who has revealed His purpose by His power, which is also called Spirit.

"Enmity against God"

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death: but the mind of the spirit is life and peace: 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: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (verses 5-8). To live after the flesh is to follow its impulses and obey its dictates. There is a very wide difference between this and to live after the spirit: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:7). There is a change in tastes and aims. The disposition is altered. Thoughts are brought into line with God's thoughts. There are many things and many points of view to be left behind which seem very reasonable to a man who disregards Divine aims.

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What more natural and withal well-meant than Peter's "this shall not be unto thee", when Jesus was telling them of his impending sufferings and death at Jerusalem? Why should he who was so wonderful and good and kind to those in need thus suffer? But God required it, and Jesus, whose meat and drink was doing God's will, told Peter that he thought as men and not as God. Again, what is more laudable than to enter heartily into the world's affairs with a view to its betterment? Men have given very self-denying services in the interests of social progress. How many of Christ's brethren have been told that they are just the kind of men who ought to give a helping hand in political affairs? This illustration is suggested by the fact that a "political idea", a metaphor drawn from the political world, as one writer says, runs through these verses. But such a course would be a minding of the flesh, because it does not take account of God's will. It is an espousal of the world, a taking sides with the world.

This point of view needs to be applied to all the activities of life. When the understanding is enlightened it is then recognized that to be a partisan of the flesh will end in death—an end so certain that Paul says it "*is death*". In a sense it is death now; there is no life toward God and no peace with Him. On the contrary, the minding of the flesh is the adoption of a cause which is opposed to God, and it is therefore enmity against Him. While such an attitude lasts there cannot be subjection to God's will. There is assertion of self in opposition to God, and all thus allied cannot please God.

"The Spirit of Christ"

Such a condition is one from which the truly wise will shrink. The contemplation of it should cause self-examination to find one's standing. Hence the assuring words which follow: "*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*" (verse 9). The substitutions that the Revisers have made, and those they have not made, for the capital letters of the AV are interesting. From verse 2 to this verse every capital "S"

in the word "Spirit" is changed to 'lower-case' "s". They changed the first occurrence in verse 9, but evidently felt the necessity for the capital letter in the phrases "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ". But the obvious identity in meaning of these two expressions with each other, and also with the words "Christ in you" of the next verse, shows that there is no need to retain the capital letter. The word is used in the same sense as in the verses preceding.

The absence of the article suggests that "of God" and "of Christ" are genitives of character and if translated as adjectives, as Bullinger suggests, would introduce no ambiguity: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that a divine spirit (a God-like spirit) dwelleth in you. But if any man have not a Christ-like spirit he is none of his." The "new creature" is after a Divine pattern. The Ephesians were taught that "ye put on the new man, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness" (4:24). The corresponding statement in Colossians is, "ye have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (3:10). God has revealed Himself in His Son, who is the example for all to follow. The spirit he manifested was so God-like that he could say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father". There must be a family likeness, mentally and morally, in the House of God. Those who make no effort to develop the likeness are not of the family.

"Because of righteousness"

Paul continues, "*And if Christ is in you, (though) the body is dead because of sin, but (yet) the spirit is life because of righteousness*" (verse 10). Here Paul forges the link between the present and the future. The body *is* dead, thus hyperbolically stated because of the certainty of death. And although the believer has this mortal nature, inherited from a sinning head, there has taken place a development in him which will so certainly end in life that it is said, "the spirit *is* life". This is "because of righteousness". And as this contrasts with "because of sin", which looks back to 5:12, it must be the righteousness of Christ that is meant.

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The tracing once more of the source of the ultimate triumph to Christ will save us from despondency if we feel that in the language used in this section a standard is set beyond our reach. The "spirit" in us may be a sadly imperfect copy of the Divine pattern, but more than the best possible in each case is not expected. When all efforts have been made, the "spirit" is not "life" through a perfect "righteousness" of its own, but through that which comes from Christ.

The life is secure under the conditions defined: "*But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through (because of—margin, AV and RV) his Spirit that dwelleth in you*" (verse 11). In other words, the earnest attention day by day to the renewing of the mind will lead at last to the complete victory of the spirit over the flesh, for mortal bodies will be changed and made alive for evermore. The aims of the present, so hindered and frustrated now, will be given untrammelled expression in perfect service to God. The characters that are fitted for perpetuation will be given bodies that will last for ever.

Sons and Heirs (8:12-17)

The flesh confers no benefit, for yielding to it brings death. There is therefore no obligation to serve it. But by response to the "spirit", resurrection and eternal life are assured. There is a debt to discharge, then, but it is "*not to the flesh*", but to the "*spirit*". With these ideas (verses 12,13) the apostle links up what has been said about "flesh" and "spirit" to what he teaches about the joyous advantages of following the "spirit". "*Ye shall live*", for those who are led by the "spirit of God" are sons of God, and therefore joint-heirs with Christ of a glory to be revealed.

"*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*" (verse 14). To be led by the spirit is the same as allowing the "new man", which is "after God renewed in knowledge", to direct the life. "These" (with emphasis on

“these”), such and no other, are sons of God; they have the status of sons in the family of God.

“Sons of God”

While the word “spirit” in verse 14 has the meaning of the earlier verses, in verse 15 it seems to be used in a wider and more general sense: *“For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”* The time indicated is their baptism. Then, when they were introduced to the family of God, they did not receive a mind or disposition of slaves, but one that pertains to adopted sons, enabling them to call on God as their Father.

What a wealth of exhortation there is in these words; and first for those who were the recipients of the letter, and in particular the Jews among them. In the Galatian letter, Paul had said, “But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:1-7).

In the light of this expansion of the idea (for Galatians and Romans are obviously closely connected), we can see that in Romans 8:15 we have a further blessing to that of verse 1. The law condemned; it also enslaved. The Jew under the law did not by law attain to sonship. But the work of Christ, who was himself under the law, and under it to accomplish the work, was to redeem them, that they might receive the adoption of sons. Fear was a constant companion under the law; but fear gives place to faith, and to the trust and friendship of sons.

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And for us Gentiles in these "last days", there is exhortation. At our baptism we did not enter a household as slaves to serve with fear: "Ye are my *friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants ... but I have called you friends" (John 15:14,15). And how often God says to His children, Fear not! As the child takes the hand of its father in the dark, and finds courage in the sound of the parent's voice, sometimes not knowing that the parent shares the fear, so with perfect confidence the child of God may trust the Father in heaven; much more so knowing that all circumstances are subject to His control. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

"Abba, Father"

The terms of address which are used in coming to God are "Abba, Father". And if, as seems probable, the Lord's prayer was designated in early days by an adaptation of its opening word, just as the books of the Old Testament were named from the opening words, then here the apostle means that, being now sons, we can use the prayer which addresses God as "Our Father". It is a privileged form of approach, such as Jesus employed in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). But we must remember that Jesus could, and did, say "My Father", while he taught his disciples to say, "Our Father". He never joined with them in the use of "Our Father", thereby maintaining the difference between their sonship and his, for he was Son in actual fact, but they are sons through him—sons by adoption.

Paul cites a witness to this sonship: "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 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 together*" (verses 16,17). The Trinitarian bias of the Revisers is seen in the change to "the Spirit himself". Yet it is evident, however, that "the Spirit itself" refers to the power of God (or perhaps we should say, to God, the agent being put for the One employing it), for it witnesses with "our spirit", and is therefore distinguished from it. Thus this verse shows us

that the word "spirit" is used with more than one meaning. Both versions give us "Spirit" for the first occurrence in this verse and "spirit" in the second. While correct here, the help which the translators offer by this device of capital letters is uncertain and capricious. The AV has been changed in many passages since it was translated, as "later hands" have exercised their judgement, or have been influenced by theological doctrine. Even current editions of the AV vary in some places.

But what is this "witness of the Spirit"? It refers to the testimony of the apostles and the spirit-guided brethren of the first century. The works that they performed in the exercise of the various "gifts" were an evidence that their message was of God. Through this ministry "light" shined in men's hearts, and God brought into being a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 4:6). We must note the apostle says "our spirit", not "our spirits"; it is a new disposition which all in Christ share. Now Jesus said that if any man willed to do God's will he should know of his doctrine whether it was of God. There is a testing out in life of God's will, which produces an assurance that the teaching is from God. And God added to this the external witness of the mighty works done by the apostles whereby they were accredited as ambassadors of Heaven. Thus there was a double assurance that they were God's children.

In verse 14, "sons of God" speaks of the status of sons; in verse 16, "children of God", an apparently synonymous expression, refers more to the fact of sonship. They are children because begotten by the word of the truth of the gospel. But if children, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ, the sharing of the inheritance depending upon sharing Christ's sufferings now.

An Expectant Creation (8:18-25)

There is no exemption from "*the sufferings of this present time*" for the children of God. Rather, it is a necessity in the case, if it is a suffering with Christ. But the glory far outweighs the suffering, for the glory of the sons of God is the end to which creation looks and for which it waits. By

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a very striking and impressive personification, Paul in these verses represents creation as looking and waiting for the culmination of the divine plan. The ground was cursed for Adam's sake (Genesis 3:17), and is thorn and thistle producing. This evil in nature, associated in origin with man's sin, will be removed in connection with the redemption in Christ. The "dominion" given to Adam (Genesis 1:26), and lost by him, is restored in Christ (Psalm 8:6; Hebrews 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:27). "The LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isaiah 51:3). "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 55:13).

Whatever figurative application these words may have, there is an undoubted literal meaning underlying.

"Creation subjected to vanity"

Paul says, "*For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God*" (verses 19-21); There is an incompleteness about man's world which cannot be the end of God's purpose with it.

And just as Isaiah, in his picture of millennial peace, says that the wild creatures "shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*" (11:9), so Paul attributes to creation an expectation of this time of restoration which is bound up with the manifestation of the sons of God. And as it was subjected by God to its present vanity, not of its own will or fault, but because of man's sin, so it will experience a deliverance from its bondage and share the liberty pertaining to the glory of the children of God.

“Waiting for the adoption”

“The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain.” Suffering is the appointed lot, but in the light of the purpose of God, that suffering is seen to be travail—a birth pang which will bring forth a new order. The believers, even those who had spirit-gifts, share the common lot: *“We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”* The spirit-gifts are called the “firstfruits”. When Israel was in the wilderness, the spies brought to them the firstfruits of the land of Canaan, but a period of waiting followed before they entered into the land. And the gifts of the spirit were similarly firstfruits.

In the first century many tasted of the powers of the age to come; now there is a time of waiting, and the harvest will be received with the entrance upon the inheritance. This will coincide with the redemption of “our body”—not “our bodies”, though the change of physical nature is involved, but the “body” of which Christ is the “head”. “The manifestation of the sons of God” (verse 19), “the glory of the children of God” (verse 21), and “the redemption of our body” are but different descriptions of the grand development to be brought about at the time of the dead when God shall give rewards unto His servants. For this we “wait”: it is as yet a matter of hope, not yet possessed, but *“we with patience wait for it”*.

The Divine Will (8:26-30)

The believer is beset about with suffering, is himself subject to suffering, and is engaged in mortifying the “deeds of the body”. But hope helps in the development of patience, or endurance, and *“in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (verse 26). Two things are affirmed of the “spirit” in this verse: it helps our infirmity, and it intercedes with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Verses 26-27 are admittedly not easy to understand. They are naturally seized upon by the believer in the

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Trinity as affording conclusive proof of the personality of the spirit. But this spirit groans in inarticulate distress, which hardly seems affirmable of Deity. The passage cannot conflict with others, which teach the unity of God and that the Spirit of God is not a person but the power of God. It must also be observed that the words "for us" are omitted by most editors of the Greek text; even the Revisers omit it, yet in their translation they introduce what they have rejected on textual grounds. This action of the Revisers, together with the variations in the manuscripts, only underlines the fact that the verses have been obscure to translators and copyists alike.

"Groanings which cannot be uttered"

We borrow a comment from Grimm-Thayer's *Lexicon*. It says that the phrase "the spirit intercedes with unutterable groanings" in Romans 8:26 —

"means, as the whole context shows, nothing other than this: 'although we have no very definite conception of what we desire, and cannot state it 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.'"

We must part company with the lexicographer in the last few words. Why not give the word "spirit" the connotation so clearly indicated in the earlier verses of the chapter? If "spirit" there is synonymous with "the new mode of thinking", is it not also so here? We believe such a view provides the most satisfactory explanation. The "new man", when in suffering, approaches the Father in prayer. But for what shall he pray? For the suffering to be removed? Or for strength to endure? In his groaning he asks, after the example of Jesus, "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:27,28). "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). "*And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, that he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*" God sees within, discerning the motives, and there-

fore knows the mind of the saint—that amidst the conflict what is desired is that God's will be done.

“All things work together for good ...”

Why should such be desired? For the very good reason that *“we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”* (verse 28). If all things are for ultimate good, the sufferings of this present time can be patiently endured, that being exercised thereby the peaceable fruits of righteousness and the glory to be revealed may be enjoyed.

“They who love God” are “the called according to his purpose.” This lifts us to the highest altitude, and enables us to see the Divine view. There is, and always has been, a plan, and

“... though all the world resist Him,
God will realize His plan.”

“Whom he did foreknow ...”

The arrangement of the plan was in the eternal counsel of God: *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified”* (verses 29-30). The problems involved in a consideration of the relationship of God's will and man's will are not here raised. The case is put entirely from the Divine side. And if any should conclude that these verses teach that those who at last attain to salvation are appointed to a destiny which is unalterably fixed, it must be remembered that *no man* knows what his destiny will be.

By the attribute of foreknowledge, inscrutable to the human mind, yet revealed as a fact, God knows the end from the beginning. He says, “Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me” (Isaiah 45:11). Again, “Who as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come, let them show unto them” (44:7).

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Man has his part to perform. This is expressed in various ways in the many exhortations to strenuous endeavour to win the prize set before us. "Strive to enter the strait gate", said Jesus. "I buffet my body", said Paul, "and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Corinthians 9:27). "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" is the exhortation to the Philippians: yet even this is of God, for Paul adds, "For it is God that *worketh* in you both to will and to *work*, for his good pleasure" (2:12,13).

Paul enumerates five stages in this divine work. They span time, reaching back to God's intentions before man existed, and reaching forward to the end of His purpose with man. The first is: God "*foreknew*". The omniscience of God is abundantly declared in Scripture: "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous"; "You (Israel) only have I known of all the families of the earth." But there is the same knowledge before the persons exist. Peter writes to the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God", and says of Christ, "... who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times" (1 Peter 1:2,20). Paul says, "God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9).

"Whom he did predestinate ..."

Those foreknown, upon the basis of that foreknowledge, are "*predestined*", or marked out before for the end in view. In Ephesians 1:3-14 we have an expansion of this teaching. Verses 9-12 might be quoted here. God "having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ ... even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: to the end that we

should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ”.

“Conformed to the image of his Son”

Before passing to the stage where the process enters into human experience, Paul stays to tell the object God has in this predestination, viz., for some “to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren”. God has manifested Himself in Christ in order to bring into being a family of sons out of the Adamic stock. Jesus is the firstborn; and to his character the other sons are to be conformed now, that they may be like him, deathless and glorious, at his coming. “It behoved him ... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering” (Hebrews 2:10).

“Called” and “justified”, the next stages, describe the Divine work in the preaching of the gospel, and God’s response to man’s belief of the same. “Glorified” is the final stage, and is expressed as a past act although yet in the future, because it is a certainty to God.

The Assurance of Victory (8:31-39)

If God has made the successive interpositions of verses 28 and 29, victory is assured. God is on our side; for us God has given His Son. He “spared not his own Son”, just as Abraham “spared not” Isaac (Genesis 22:16). What Isaac was to Abraham, Jesus was to God. And if God has done that for us all, if He has given the greatest of gifts, “all things” will be given with him: “all things” necessary to salvation; and “all things” which constitute salvation.

This is driven home in a series of questions and answers: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” Who can accuse, or impeach? When God declares righteous, none can alter His sentence. Christ is the appointed judge, and he died for us, rose again, “who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

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“Who shall separate us?”

Christ having done all this for us, all is well while we are under his care. But can anything separate us from his love? *“Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”* Any or all might separate a human leader from his follower, or friend from friend. They cannot separate us from Christ, for these very things, though evil in themselves, are part of the “all things” which “work together for good”, when the purpose in view is the training of God’s people, and when the troubles have also come in connection with Christ and the profession of his name.

The word “sword” recalls to Paul’s mind what is written: *“For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”* If “for thy sake”, if difficulties and dangers have come for “my sake and the gospel’s”, as Christ said, then in those circumstances his love cannot fail. Nay, by that love the disciples of Christ are not only conquerors of these things, but *“more than conquerors”*. The opposing and troublesome experiences are not only overcome, but are seized as opportunities for the training of character, and are so made to render service.

Splendidly does Paul state his faith in support of this: *“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.”* Death cannot, for Christ has the keys of death. The things pertaining to life cannot, for all power is given unto Christ. Angels would not, human rulers cannot, affect him. No power can. Time will not change it: Christ is alive now, and for evermore. Distance is no barrier: Christ is now in heaven, and at his resurrection he came out of the depths of the earth. And in an all-embracing phrase, “any other creature”, Paul excludes every possibility of something coming between us and Christ’s love. Nothing at all, Paul is triumphantly assured, can thwart this purpose of love.

“The love of God”

It is a wonderful conclusion to this division of the epistle. It began with the question, What is the believer's life to be? A life of sin? The answer is that justification by faith involves as a consequence a sanctified life, and for this God has made every provision. Step by step Paul has led us to this grand assurance that the one who follows the way of holiness has divine resources on his side. Fear is banished in the confidence of a divine love that has done all that is necessary for, and which will reach to an everlasting salvation.

The Revealed Righteousness of God in Relation to Israel (9:1—11:36)

IN the first eight chapters Paul has established his teaching that justification is by faith. The form of the last sentences of chapter 8 suggests that the discussion on the subject is being concluded. When we turn to the ninth chapter we enter a fresh phase of the subject. Paul's doctrine was so subversive of Jewish hopes and teaching that the position of Israel in relation to God's plan must needs be considered. The Jews were God's people; the Gentile nations were not. But since the apostles of Jesus Christ were teaching that for Jew and Gentile, without any distinction, there was but one way of salvation, what becomes of the privileges of Israel? And what was the position of Israel in view of their rejection of the Messiah, and their refusal to accept the apostles' teaching?

The difficulty has been hinted at in previous chapters, but now it is fully considered. It is introduced by a statement of Paul's grief at the position in which his fellow-countrymen were placed by their attitude.

Paul's Distress at Israel's Unbelief **(9:1-5)**

He begins with a very strong affirmation of the truth of his words in saying that he has "*great heaviness and continual sorrow*" in his heart for Israel. The reason for the words, "*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit*", is to be found in the opposition that Paul had encountered from the Judaizers, and in their view that he was a renegade Jew. They

thought that his teaching showed him to be indifferent if not hostile to his own nation. But there were ties of blood and the bonds of early days, which to a man of large sympathies were productive of much distress. The sincerity of his grief is shown by the words which he adds: "*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*" He "was wishing"—it was "a real but passing wish ... already resigned as impracticable".

How manifold were the privileges that Paul's kinsmen had! The very number and greatness of them only intensifies the tragedy of their opposition to God's plan. They were "*Israelites*", the descendants of Jacob who prevailed to the obtaining of the blessing, and to whom the angel gave the name of "Israel".

"Theirs was the adoption ..."

Theirs was "*the adoption*", for as a nation they were God's son: "Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee (Pharaoh), Let my son go, that he may serve me" (Exodus 4:22). Theirs was "*the glory*", that is, that manifestation in the tabernacle and later in the temple, which denoted the presence of the Deity in the midst of His people. "*The covenants*" of promise were theirs. They were the seed of Abraham, the friend of God. They also had received a law from God, and He had appointed a temple "*service*". "*Promises*" also, many and good, had been given to them through the prophets. They were privileged in their ancestry, being descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, "*the fathers*".

"Of whom ... came Christ"

And lastly, and most important of all, if they had but known that it was accomplished, of them "*as concerning the flesh Christ came*". And in this lay the tragedy, for they had rejected and crucified the Messiah.

But these words, "of whom *as concerning the flesh* Christ came", suggest that there is another aspect of the Messiah besides his Israelitish descent. Is that other

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aspect, his divine Sonship, referred to in the words that follow—“*who is over all, God blessed for ever*”?

It has been said that “the interpretation of Romans 9:5 has been discussed at greater length than that of any other verse of the New Testament”. The margin of the RV bears witness to discussion among the Revisers. There they say:

“Some modern interpreters place a full stop after ‘flesh’, and translate, ‘He who is God over all be (is) blessed for ever’ or, ‘He who is over all is God, blessed for ever.’ Others punctuate, ‘flesh, who is over all. God be (is) blessed for ever.’”

One of the Revisers was a Unitarian, and it is possible that this note is due to his influence. Be that as it may, this note is the only one in the RV that carries a reference to “modern interpreters”. What is wanted is the interpretation of the apostles, when possible. The text of both AV and RV make the word “God” refer to Christ; the alternatives in the margin of the RV are evidently an endeavour to escape from that application, and to make the word refer to the Father.

Not a Trinitarian Formula

We believe that there is no objection to the text providing we rightly understand the sense in which the word “God” is used. The Trinitarian, who uses the verse to prove that Jesus is the Second Person of a Trinity, gives an interpretation which neither Paul nor his readers entertained. Some of the readers may have previously believed in a Trinity, but there is no evidence that at this time the doctrine troubled the ecclesias. Very shortly after Romans was written there was trouble about the precise relationship of Jesus to God, but it was far removed from a Trinitarian idea.

First it deserves notice that, grammatically, the Deity is not necessarily implied in the word “God”. The following words, quoted from a letter in a recent biography, were to explain a reluctance to use a certain doctrinal formula which implied that Jesus was one with the Deity. The writer says:

“Probably the aversion I have to such an expression as ‘Jesus is God’ is linguistic as much as theological. We are so thor-

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oughly monotheistic now, that the word God, to put it pedantically, has ceased to be an appellative and becomes a proper noun: it *identifies* the being to whom it is applied so that it can be used as the subject of a sentence; but it does not unfold the nature of that being so that it could be used as the predicate in a sentence. In Greek and in the first century it was quite different ... It is because God is to all intents a proper noun with us, which, if it is used as a predicate at all, must make an equation with the subject ('Jesus is God' being the same thing as 'Jesus=God'), that it seems not only to me, but I am sure to most people, an unnatural way of declaring their faith in Christ as Immanuel—God with us."

It is quite possible that the words used in this quotation may convey a different idea to some readers than the writer intended. But the point is this, in Greek and in the first century the word "God" did not bring to the mind, in all its uses, the same idea as it does today.

This may be further illustrated from the fact that the word was used in current speech concerning the emperor. J. H. Moulton speaks of "the everlasting apotheosis that flaunts itself in the papyri and the inscriptions of the Ptolemaic and Imperial times". Also when the Christians asserted that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:3, RV) it involved that "my Lord Serapis", whose name was frequently on almost everyone's lips, was a false god. "Jesus is Lord" was a formula of sound doctrine, expressing in crystallized form the whole truth concerning Jesus. The pagan formula of abjuration was "Jesus is accursed". Today we use the word "Lord" when speaking of Jesus and also when speaking of God, without confusion.

"God blessed for ever"

And perhaps that will help us to understand how the word "god" was used without of necessity indicating the Creator, or even being used as a proper noun. Thus Paul could say that Jesus was "over all, God blessed for ever", and mean thereby that "the phraseology that was impiously arrogated to themselves by some of the worst of men", and by which they claimed divine origin and divine honour, belonged properly to Christ alone.

But, again, Biblical use guides us. John says: "The Word was God ... and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt

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among us" (John 1:1,14). When Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and the Jews would have stoned him, they said, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God".

Surely no one would entertain the idea that the Jews meant that Jesus was making himself the Deity in heaven. Jesus replied that in their law, the Scriptures, those to whom it came were called "gods". If the official representatives of God were so designated in Scripture, wherein was his blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God, when he had shown them works which accredited his claim? (John 10:33-38). Further, the Psalm which Jesus here quotes (Psalm 82), appears to be prophetic of this, and similar, disputations between Christ and the leaders of Israel. (See Robert Roberts and C. C. Walker, *The Ministry of the Prophets: Isaiah*, page 164.) Therefore the opening verse of the Psalm: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods", was fulfilled when Jesus stood rebuking Israel's leaders. Again, in the forty-fifth Psalm, Jesus is addressed in the words: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (verse 6), the application being made by Paul in Hebrews 1:8.

The careful reader of the Bible makes the correct application of such language as this without confusion. It is possible in resisting Trinitarian absurdities to pare away the meaning of words used concerning Jesus, and so lose sight of the emphasis which the Scriptures place upon the outstanding fact that Jesus was the Son of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, a Creator who has arranged that "in all things he might have the pre-eminence"; "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 1:18; 2:9).

We do not recommend the use in ordinary speech of the word "God" in reference to Jesus; but it is well not to lose sight of such a use occasionally in Scripture, and by so doing fail to grasp the claims made for Jesus Christ our Lord, who has been "highly exalted" by the Father, and "given a name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

God's Plan has not failed: All Israel never included (9:6-13)

While so very privileged, the bulk of the nation did not respond to God's offer of salvation. Had God's word then failed? No, Paul answers: "*But it is not as though the word of God hath come to nought. For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel*" (verse 6). This statement strikes a hard blow at Jewish views of privilege. Flesh descent was the basis upon which they took their stand: "We be Abraham's children." But natural descent was not the ground of God's favour; God was making a selection. "Of Israel" indicates descent from Jacob, but such a connection did not make a man an "Israelite indeed".

"In Isaac shall thy seed be called"

Paul continues, "*Neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children (of God, as in 8:17): but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called*". To this no Jew would object. Ishmael, though a son of Abraham, was cast out. God had chosen Isaac as the progenitor of the promised seed, although Abraham had pleaded for Ishmael. But in this choice a principle was involved, which in its outworking undermined the position of the Jew. The conclusion is drawn, "*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. For this is a word of promise, According to this season will I come, and Sarah shall have a son*" (verses 8,9). Children of promise are those born in fulfilment of divine promise, illustrated in the case of Isaac. A man must have a different relationship than that of mere flesh to be a seed of Abraham. He must be begotten through the operation of divine power—literally so in Isaac's case; by the Word of God in the case of other children.

The argument from flesh descent is two-edged. Sonship in Ishmael's case did not confer heirship; would it in the case of every son of Isaac? There would be a ready answer to this inference. Ishmael was the son of a bondmaid, and therefore the condition of birth made a difference. But this

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reply only opened the way for a crushing rejoinder. In the next generation the same principle of divine choice is seen, and in this case the children are not only sons of the one mother and the one father, but they are also twin sons.

The argument proceeds: "*And not only so; but Rebecca also having conceived by one, even our father Isaac—*" (verse 10) and before the sentence is finished a reminder is made that before the children were born, before they had "*done anything good*" (verse 11), "*it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*" (verses 11-13). In both these places from which Paul quotes, reference is made to nations. Thus to Rebecca it was said, "Two nations are in thy womb" (Genesis 25:23); and Malachi's words are: "I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation" (Malachi 1:2,3).

"God's purpose according to election"

Events justified the divine choice. The Ishmaelites and the Edomites would have been unsuitable material for helping forward God's purpose. But Paul is not justifying the selection from historical developments. He says the choice was made of the man Jacob, and through him of his descendants, "*that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth*". The purpose of God included the giving of the land to Abraham and Christ for an everlasting possession; the blessing of all nations in Christ; and the establishment of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and through Jacob as a nation.

The opening words of verse 10, "And not only so", are used to introduce further points to the illustration of the selection of Isaac. One we have noticed—the selection of a twin son of the same father and mother, ruling out any possible disadvantage of birth of a different mother of lower status, as in Ishmael's case. And if any advantage was to be found in priority of birth, then the advantage was Esau's. But when we observe that the Scriptures which Paul quotes have reference to nations, then we see that verse 10 adds also another point. The illustration in Isaac was individual, and taught the Jew that descent

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from Abraham did not make a man his heir. The illustration from Jacob taught the Jew that if flesh and blood connection had any intrinsic value, then Edom had an equal right, if not a greater by virtue of primogeniture, to be the nation of God.

Principles of Selection

The children of Israel were chosen for the service of being the custodians of the Oracles of God, and of being God's representative among the nations. The establishment of the divine work in the earth upon a national basis arose out of the conditions that were brought about with the confusion of the speech of man and the consequent growth of tribes and nations. It was not an end in itself, but it was a means of preventing the Truth of God from being overwhelmed by universal apostasy. But this view was quite different from that of Paul's contemporaries. They regarded God's choice of Israel as an end in itself, a choice bringing to every individual member of the race an inviolable promise of favour and blessing.

If God selected the descendants of Jacob and rejected those of Esau without offence, then in relation to His higher purpose He can select whom He will upon the principles He lays down. Those principles exclude the unbelieving Jew, or an Edomite is entitled to everything as well as a Jew. If God rejected Esau, He could reject any individual descendant of Isaac, even though of Jacob's line.

There is no Injustice in God's Method **(9:14-18)**

A Jew would raise no objection to the rejection of Ishmael and Esau, but when the same principle involved the rejection of some of Israel, then the justice of God in so doing was called in question: "*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid*" (verse 14). The proof is taken from Scripture, and the citation of Scripture is sufficient for Paul. The fact that it is there, since Scripture thus teaches, is sufficient proof; which is another illustration of how the apostles regarded the Old Testament. "*For he (God) saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom*

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I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (verse 15). The words occur in Exodus 33:19, where God is acceding to the request of Moses to be shown God's glory. God's graciousness to Moses, great as Moses was, was of God's will and not of any right or title that Moses had.

"God that showeth mercy"

And therefore Paul concludes: *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy"* (verse 16). In the particular passage quoted, Moses had "willed", even as he did "run" on another occasion to intercede for Israel, to the partial answering of his request but not to the saving of that generation (Numbers 14:20). Paul himself had been disposed to "run" and intercede for Israel (verse 3). But it is not of human effort but of divine will that God's mercy is exercised.

In judgement as in mercy, God is sovereign. Pharaoh's case shows this (verse 17). The context of the record in Exodus 9:15,16, RV, shows that Pharaoh had been preserved through the plague of boils further to exhibit God's power. Paul treats the statement as of more comprehensive bearing: *"The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power."* Whence Paul concludes again, *"So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth"* (verse 18). God's actions he finds are referable to God's will.

"Whom he will he hardeneth"

It has many times been pointed out that the record in Exodus tells us not only that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but that Pharaoh himself hardened his heart. Some find fault with God's action here who yet must recognize a corresponding law in human life. It has been well said, "It is by an operation of a law of man's nature as God created it, that he who will not turn, at last cannot".

Is Man then Responsible? (9:19-31)

A further objection has to be dealt with: *"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"* (verse 19). If the position and end of men

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and nations is of divine decree, why does God hold man responsible? If God hardened Pharaoh's heart, was Pharaoh to be blamed? So with Israel—if some of them have failed and that failure is in the divine plan, can they be blamed? Who has resisted God's will, or purpose—a different word being used from 1 Timothy 2:4, where man does resist God's will. The resistance to the will of God is provided for, and therefore the purpose is not withstood.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

Paul's answer is that it is presumptuous for man to reply to God, or question His decrees. God is Creator; man is the creature God has made. In a figure used by the prophets, man is the clay in the hands of the Potter. As the human artificer exercises his choice in what he makes, so God has the right. It may be said that the clay is inert, without any power of development in itself, but that man has been given by his Maker the power to choose his course. This is true, and shows that a figure cannot be pressed beyond certain limits.

The use of this figure by the prophets is consistent with all the facts of the case. Isaiah, in chapter 45, foretells the raising up of Cyrus, "for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect", and that God may be known "from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD and there is none else". And if God is supreme, Persian and other Dualism is not the right explanation of the existence of light and darkness, good and evil. Says God, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things". Then comes an indication of an ultimate deliverance of Israel of which that by Cyrus was only a type. Righteousness comes down from heaven, and the earth opens to bring forth salvation (verse 8), words which tell of Christ's return and the resurrection of the saints.

But some in Israel were dissatisfied with God's judgments. The captivity had not taught them the lesson that disobedience had brought the predicted punishment. And therefore the potsherd of the earth strove with his Maker (verse 9), the language of the prophet in this place being

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that borrowed by Paul. But there is a future for Israel, whom God invites to enquire of "things to come concerning my sons" (verse 11). God then tells that Israel will be saved with an everlasting salvation.

"Vessels unto honour and dishonour"

Jeremiah also uses the figure. In chapter 18 we are told he was sent to the potter's house, there to hear God's words. The potter was working with the clay, and as he wrought, his work was marred. So he crushed together and then refashioned the clay. And if Israel were workable in God's hands, He would devise good for them (verses 5-10); but Israel would not (verses 11-23). Jeremiah had then to take an earthen vessel (chapter 19), baked and fixed in shape, not now capable of being refashioned, and tell of impending disasters, breaking the vessel as an illustration of God's intention to break them as a nation.

God is using the clay of sin-stricken humanity, remaking it as He wills. He would do no wrong if He left the clay to perish. The soft, responsive clay is being prepared for greater things, while the hard unresponsive can only be destroyed.

Paul puts an alternative to the statement that man cannot answer God. Either that must be admitted or God has not power over the clay. This would be absurd. "*Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*" (verse 21). It is in the power of God to make of part of the lump of humanity an honourable nation, and of another part a dishonourable one. And so with individuals. But as Israel were told by Jeremiah, God conditioned His act upon Israel's response to Him.

God's Methods Shown (9:22-24)

The cavil about man's responsibility has been referred to the larger issue of God's sovereignty. His absolute rule is now shown to be exercised with forbearance, and this removes every objection. God willed to "*show His wrath (against sin), and to make His power known*". The objects of His wrath were "*vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*".

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Yet God "*endured them with much longsuffering*". The object in view was to make known, not merely His glory, but the "*riches of His glory*". While the vessels of wrath are fitted to destruction by their own acts, the "*vessels of mercy*" are "*afore prepared unto glory*" by God. God is not said to "fit" a man for destruction; but it is necessary that He should "prepare" man for glory, because man cannot "fit" himself for that end.

"Vessels of mercy"

God bears with the evildoers that He may develop vessels of mercy, and exhibit His mercy to those responsive to His will, but who have not of themselves anything which merits glory. For, as Jeremiah said, "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22). The recipients of His mercy are "*called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles*" (verse 24).

If God exhibited longsuffering with Pharaoh for Israel's good when they were founded as a nation, so in His dealings with Israel He bore long with the rebellious among them in order to develop His purpose with the elect.

In verse 22 Paul began, "What if God ..." has followed this method?—and he leaves us to finish the sentence. If God has so acted, who can complain? What injustice is there?

God's Purpose revealed in the Prophets **(9:25-29)**

God's plan has been shown to include a selection from Jews and Gentiles. This is supported by four passages of Scripture.

First quotation—Hosea 2:23. The ten tribes had been cast off, and had become "not my people". But they have to be "sown" again "in the land", and to become again "my people". If this can happen to one class of "not my people", then it can to others, and so Gentiles can become "my people".

Second quotation—Hosea 1:10. In the "place" of Israel's dispersion, where they were not "my people", there they

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will be again called "sons of the living God", and Israel and Judah will be gathered together under one head. If cast-off "no people" Israel can be restored, then Gentile "no people" can also become sons of God.

These two quotations have shown that Gentiles can become sons of God. Now it is shown that only a remnant from Israel is saved.

Third quotation—Isaiah 10:22,23. A remnant of Jacob shall return to the mighty God, the Messiah. Though numerous as the sands of the sea, only a remnant shall return, and this is associated with a decreed consumption in the land.

Fourth quotation—Isaiah 1:9. A remnant only prevented the extinction of the nation; so only a remnant would be saved, through whom at last the nation would survive.

A Conclusion Drawn (9:30-33)

In view of these facts of history and Scripture testimony, Paul asks: "*What shall we say then?*" and he answers that "*Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness*", having none of the advantages possessed by the Jews, had "*attained to righteousness*". But it was a righteousness by faith—a state in which righteousness is imputed by God upon the basis of faith. "*But Israel*"—and here we should have expected Paul to say "which followeth after righteousness", but he makes an arresting change. He says that Israel "*followed after a law of righteousness*". The whole position was misconceived by them. Instead of looking for God's method, they sought for a law which had righteousness for its end. They did not reach the goal they sought, for they tried to make God's law a means for attaining to legal righteousness, whereas it condemned them. They started from a wrong point of view. They sought righteousness "*not by faith, but as it were by works*". "By works" was the Jewish aim; "by faith" was the method propounded by Paul. The law was for the guidance of a reconciled people and it is faith that opens the door to reconciliation, and

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therefore faith comes first and then a patient continuance in the way of God's commandments.

"A stone of stumbling"

Because of this misconception the Jews "*stumbled*" at the very foundation of God's work. They did not see in Christ the one who fulfilled the law, for they tried to make the shadow into the substance. But in so doing they fulfilled the testimony of their own Scriptures. Two passages are combined, the part in parenthesis being omitted by Paul: "*Behold, I lay in Zion (for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation) (Isaiah 28:16), a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence (8:14), and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed*" (28:16).

Isaiah, in 8:14, says that God would be "for a sanctuary". This points to another arrangement than that associated with the tabernacle and temple of Israel. The discerning Israelite would look beyond the tabernacle to the things represented thereby, even Jesus, "the true tabernacle" (Hebrews 8:2). But the undiscerning did not see in Jesus "the sanctuary", and to them he became "a stone of stumbling".

So in Isaiah 28:16, the prophet tells of a foundation stone laid in Zion, in alignment with which a new order would be built up, involving that there was a lack of finality in the then existing arrangements. God had done His part in laying the foundation stone; those who *believed* found no cause for shame.

The combined passages show that God had a further purpose than Israel's national existence; that Israel had fulfilled a prediction in their unbelief; and that yet some would be saved.

Why Israel Failed (10:1-4)

In the closing verses of chapter 9 the conclusion was drawn that the Gentiles had attained to righteousness while the Jews had failed. Why had the Jews failed? Before giving the reason, Paul pauses to express again his deep concern for the Jews: "*Brethren, my heart's desire and*

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prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Paul himself had exhibited in his early life such a zeal (Galatians 1:14; Acts 22:3), and he now saw how lacking in knowledge he had been. With a large amount of sympathy he understood the position of the Jew.

"Being ignorant of God's righteousness"

Wherein did they fail to discern? They were ignorant of God's method of justification and as a consequence they sought to establish a righteousness of their own, by personal effort bringing merit to themselves (verse 3). Their zeal had not been rightly directed; their very earnestness helping to pervert their minds. That they had failed to apprehend the right method was evident, for they had rejected Christ, through whom only, in God's arrangement, righteousness could be attained. And so Paul says, "*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*" (verse 4).

Three things are affirmed of Christ's work. He is "the end" not only of "the law" but "of law", that is, of any law. In what way is Christ "the end"? He is the end in the sense that he is the fulfilment of the types of the law. He also fulfilled the law, in obeying it perfectly. But the meaning here is that Christ's work shows that law could never give righteousness to man. What has been done, by the very fact that it has been done, has put an end to the idea of the object of the law which the Jew entertained. The two methods are so incompatible that to understand Christ's work is also to see that the other method is wrong. When a man perceives that God offers righteousness through Christ, he has finished with law as a means for attaining to it, for he then recognizes that salvation can never be reached by law.

And this work of Christ is "unto righteousness to everyone that believeth". The benefits are for all; a law could only avail to those under it. "Righteousness" is not of works, but to him that *believeth*. These two aspects, right-

eousness by faith and for all who believe, are considered in the remainder of the chapter.

***Two Modes of Righteousness:
The Witness of Moses (10:5-10)***

The Jew would not be easily convinced. He had something to say in defence of his position. He could quote, or thought he could quote, good authority in support of his contention: *"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them"* (verse 5). The words are found in Leviticus 18:5, and they are the words of God: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgements: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD". Have we to conclude that there were two modes of attaining to righteousness made known by God, one by works of law and the other by faith in Christ? That also in spite of all that Paul has said about the law being unable to give life, God did offer Israel life by law, and by a law which they did not and could not keep? God did not so mock them.

"The righteousness of the law"

The truth of the matter is that there were two ways of approach to the law, one right and the other wrong. For what was the law? It was a revelation of God's will to Israel, the people of God dwelling in the land that God called "My land", touching life in all its aspects, religious, social and national. It had an elaborate ritual, as much a part of the law as the Ten Commandments. And this ritual witnessed to the insufficiency of the law to give life of itself. It consisted of ceremonies which had their roots in arrangements that were established immediately after transgression in Eden, of which they were a development and adaptation to national needs. And all these ceremonies pointed forward to Christ. Their repetition shows they were ineffectual. They enforced a lesson of what was due to a man as a transgressor, and provided an opportunity for the exercise of faith.

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An Israelite under the law, with the faith of Abraham, like him "saw Christ's day", and recognized the typical character of his offering, and that salvation and eternal life would come through Christ, who was represented by the sacrifice which he offered. The incorporation in the law of provision for sacrifices, both individual and national, told of sin to be put away. The one who kept the words of God quoted from Leviticus 18 in the way that God required, had faith, because he understood what was meant by the ritual in which he was engaged. He recognized that his salvation depended upon a divinely provided sacrifice and high-priest; he was humbled and made to trust upon the mercy of God, to the glory of God.

But the majority of Jews in Paul's day, and possibly in most other days, did not so interpret Leviticus 18:5. They thought the observance of the ritual, the keeping of the law as such, was meritorious. Faith was absent and pride was engendered in their minds. This approach was wrong; and it led Jesus, on more than one occasion, to refer them to the words of Hosea, apparently but not really disparaging of sacrifice, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice". When Paul quotes the words of Moses in Romans 10:5 he is quoting them in the sense in which the Jews used them, and he at once puts over against them other words of Moses which prove that such an interpretation was wrong. In fact they only need to be pressed, in the sense in which they were understood by the Jews, to the logical end to show the impracticability of the idea. For failure in any particular was failure to keep the law, and brought the curse of the law upon them.

The law could thus give life, but not in itself and by itself. It was the divinely arranged medium for the manifestation of faith, but it was not designed to give life in the way that the Jews understood the purpose of it being given to them. This is seen by the further teaching of Moses, through whom they received the law.

"The righteousness of faith"

But Paul avoids saying "Moses says" in introducing the second quotation. Perhaps he does so because Moses was

looked upon as the founder of a system of legal righteousness. In verse 6, Paul personifies the "righteousness which is of faith", and represents it as speaking the words which he quotes.

If we were to express verse 5 in similar language of personification, remembering that Paul is giving expression to the Jewish perversion of scripture teaching, we could do so with the words, "For legal-righteousness describeth the righteousness which is of law, That the man which doeth them shall live by them". In opposition to that, Paul continues: *"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."*

It is God's Doing

Paul's exposition of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 30 is very beautiful. Faith-righteousness in the first place tells us what has not to be said. Two things must be done for salvation: the Redeemer must be brought into the world and he must be raised from the dead. "Who shall ascend into heaven?" is explained to mean, Who shall bring Christ from above? The second question, "Who shall descend into the deep?" means, Who shall bring up Christ from the dead? These things cannot be done by man. He cannot produce a son of God, neither can he raise a man from the dead. But why has no one to be sought to do these things? Because God only could do them, and He has done them.

Let us note the things involved in these two questions. Faith recognizes the need for a redeemer: that he must be from above, that is, he must be the Son of God; and also that he must be raised from the dead, and therefore must have died. No man could bring into being such an one; it is futile to ask, Who shall do it? But it is equally unnecessary, for what God has done was needed. And faith, instead of trying to do the impossible, appropriates what God has done in gratitude and praise.

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"The word of faith"

The means of salvation have not to be wrought out. The way is opened. And *"the word is nigh thee"* which tells of it. That is, explains Paul, *"the word of faith which we preach"* (verse 8)—the word of, or concerning, faith, and not works, the word which tells of faith as the step to the attainment of righteousness.

In the light of this exposition of the words of Moses it is interesting to go back to the book of Deuteronomy and see the fulness of meaning contained in Moses' farewell words to Israel. With the confidence and unbelief of so many modern religious leaders, one writer says, "The apostle is not thinking in the least what the writer of Deuteronomy meant". But even if Moses did not fully understand the import of his own words (for the prophets searched diligently the message given through them in order to understand it, 1 Peter 1:10), yet the meaning with which Paul invests them, by his help, is found to be the right one.

The addresses in Deuteronomy were given during the closing weeks of the forty years' wilderness sojourn. Chapter 29 opens with the words, "These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb". Then Moses recounts God's provision for their needs during the wanderings, and tells again of the desolations that will come upon the land for disobedience, to the astonishment of the nations who behold it, and who say, "The LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day" (verse 28).

Chapter 30 foretells that if, when exiled, they turn to God, then He will bring them back to their own land: "And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart,

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and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (verses 5,6). Abundant blessings would follow this change of heart and this sincere service to God (verses 7-10).

"A new covenant"

We have here an anticipation of the statement of Jeremiah, when he tells of Israel being restored, and of God saying, "Behold the days come ... 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 an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (31:31-34). Again, "I will bring them again into this place ... and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever ... and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (32:37-40).

In the letter to the Hebrews we are told that the regular offerings of the law "can never take away sins" but that Christ, "when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10:11-14). Of this effectual work of Christ, Paul says that the Holy Spirit witnesses in the passage quoted from Jeremiah; and on the words, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more", he comments, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (verses 17,18).

And as Jeremiah tells of a new covenant with the better promise of forgiven sins, involving the better sacrifice of Christ for its establishment, so Moses, in other words, speaks of the same things. After telling of Israel's return from captivity, he continues, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee (it is not too hard for thee, RV) neither is it far off. It is not

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in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

In the crisis of their return Israel will not have to say, How can we bring into being the Saviour? That will have been done, and what will be required of them will be the recognition that Jesus of Nazareth, whom their fathers pierced in crucifixion, is "the Lord from heaven", who was raised from the dead; that he is the one of whom Jeremiah spoke, when he told that the Branch of David, who would reign as king, when Judah should be saved, should be called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (23:5,6). Israel will then lay aside all views of the value of human merit, and will cease to seek salvation by law, for they will be introduced into the new covenant by faith, and find therein all, and more, than their fathers endeavoured to obtain through works of law.

The circumstances associated with the giving of this address by Moses were pathetic enough, yet singularly fitting. In a little while Moses had to die because he took to himself the honour that belonged to God, and another was to lead them into the land of Palestine. What a parable of the failure of Israel, in their trust in law seeking to bring glory to themselves, to enter into the inheritance. Another generation under another leader called Joshua entered in, and it is through and with another Joshua (Jesus) that the redeemed will obtain the eternal inheritance of the land.

"If thou shalt believe ... "

Moses said he was setting before them "life and good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15). They failed for the most part then to exercise faith, but when with circumcised hearts they return to the land it will be by faith. Opportunity for faith existed in the days of Moses, as it did in the days of Paul. The apostle says this "word" which is "nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart", is "the

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word of faith, which *we* preach" (Romans 10:8). And in proof that such is his doctrine, and taking up the words "heart" and "mouth" from the quotation he has used, Paul continues, "*Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (verses 9,10). Jesus is Lord because he is the Son of God, sent by God to be the Saviour. Mark also the parallels: the heart believes unto righteousness; the mouth confesses unto salvation.

Faith-Righteousness is for All (10:11-13)

The heart *believes*; this is the way to righteousness. In support Paul again quotes from Isaiah 28:16: "*Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*" This leads to the next point—that if the qualification is faith, then salvation must be for all. He has shown before that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in their need for salvation, all alike having sinned (3:23). Now he says there is one way of salvation for all. From the fact that God is one, Paul reasoned in 3:30 that there was one means of salvation for all.

Now, in a similar way, he finds proof of the universality of opportunity for salvation in the Lordship of Christ. The confession necessary is that Jesus is Lord (verse 9). If he is Lord, then his very title involves that he is over all, and his riches extend to all (verse 12). Again scripture is cited in support, this time from Joel 2:32: "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" The appositeness of this quotation is seen when each word is considered. "Whosoever"—then it is for all; "call" implies an invocation of aid, which requires faith; "the name of Lord" refers to the purpose of redemption memorialized in God's name, as announced to Moses at the bush, and which is embodied in Jesus; "saved" tells the end to be reached by all who answer to the description of the verse.

***All have Opportunity, but Israel
Rejected It (10:14-21)***

If salvation is for all, both Jew and Gentile, then the word of salvation must be sent to all. To call on the Lord, showing faith in him, requires that men must know him. So this question is asked: *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"* They cannot: they must believe first. Questions are similarly asked concerning every successive step necessary, reaching at last the proof that God has sent preachers to all. The next one is, *"And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard?"* (of whom they have not heard?—AV). The introduction of the word "of" in the AV makes Christ the subject matter of the proclaimer. The RV makes Christ the one who proclaims. And this fits in with the chain of thought. To call on the name of the Lord they must believe; to believe they must hear, but *"How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall **they** preach, except **they** be sent?"* They must be sent, and that by Christ who speaks in them; and in hearing them he is heard. But are they sent? Yes! *"It is written, How beautiful are the feet of **them** that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (verse 15).

"Glad tidings of good things"

The place where this is written is Isaiah 52:7, and the message concerns the awakening of Zion, and her investiture with her immortal sons of the resurrection who are the beautiful garments for her adorning. Speaking of the one who brings this exaltation, the prophet says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of *him* that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace". The prophet says "the feet of *him*" which Paul changes to "them"; Christ is heard when the preachers whom he has sent are heard. And since Isaiah speaks of a preacher and a herald, God must intend sending such. This initial step, the sending of the preacher, has been done; and the links in the chain follow, sending, preaching, hearing, believing.

GOD'S PURPOSE WITH ISRAEL (9:1—11:36)

An objection is here interposed: "*But they have not all obeyed the gospel*" (verse 16). This is true, but this Isaiah foretold in words which follow closely those just quoted from 52:7: "*Lord, who hath believed our report?*" (53:1). The margin gives "the hearing of us", providing the verbal link with the inference drawn in verse 17, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*". This also supports what has been said in verses 14,15.

An excuse may be made that all did not hear. Paul therefore asks, "*Have they not heard?*" and answers in the words of Psalm 19:4: "*Yes, verily, their sound went into **all the earth**, and their words unto **the ends of the world**.*" The Psalm in the first place extols the wonders of God's creation. It is evident from Paul's use of it that there is a reference to the Messianic heavens and earth, and also to the apostles' message sent forth by "the Light of the World". Now if the message had been widely proclaimed, then Israel must have heard.

But even now Israel might plead that they did not know: "*But I say, did Israel not know?*" (verse 19). What do the scriptures, which they so diligently studied, say? Three scriptures are quoted. The first is from Deuteronomy 32:21. There Moses in the Song of Witness tells that because Israel had left God to worship idols which were no gods, so God would move Israel to jealousy by those who were not a people, who would leave the no-gods to worship the true God and become the people of God. This language is repeated by Hosea, in the passage already quoted by Paul in chapter 9. Next Isaiah, being "*very bold*", in 65:1, tells of God being "*found of them that sought me not*" in worship. And lastly, concerning Israel, the same prophet says in the next verse (65:2), "*All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people*". The "*hands*" of the "*everlasting arms*" of the eternal God (Deuteronomy 33:27) had been "*spread out*" in continual entreaty to Israel, who had nevertheless proved disobedient to Him. So the scriptures witness to the acceptance of the glad tidings by the Gentiles, and to the failure of Israel.

***Israel's Rejection never Total:
A Remnant Saved (11:1-10)***

Israel had failed. History and prophecy agreed in this, as Paul found in chapter 10. Were the Jews then utterly and finally rejected? The answer is, No. For God's message was never rejected by all Israel; in each generation there was a faithful remnant. And further, God has a purpose with the nation, when His present work among the Gentiles is complete.

"Hath God cast away his people?"

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people?" Very fervently Paul answers, *"God forbid"*, and as a reason for his intense conviction, adds that he is *"an Israelite ... of the tribe of Benjamin"*, the tribe which had been allied with Judah from the time of the disruption, and which therefore was very closely connected with the centre of Israel's worship. No, *"God hath not cast off his people"* is affirmed in the language of both Samuel and the Psalmist (1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 94:14), with the added words, *"which (people) he foreknew"*. God had chosen Israel to be His nation, and His purpose with them was not yet finished. Any who might have concluded otherwise from what Paul had written evinced ignorance of the Scriptures. Do you know that? *"Or wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars: and I am left alone, and they seek my life"* (verses 2,3).

The incident referred to was after the conflict at Carmel with the prophets of Baal, when Elijah fled from the wrath of Jezebel. Arrived at Horeb, Elijah is asked, "What doest thou here?" and makes answer that he alone is left faithful to God. He is told of coming judgement by the swords of Hazeel and Jehu, but God adds, "Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings 19:18). These in Elijah's day escaped the judgement and in them the nation survived.

GOD'S PURPOSE WITH ISRAEL (9:1—11:36)

As there was a remnant then, so in Paul's day also there were some who were faithful to God. But upon what principle was this remnant approved? "*According to the election of grace*" (verse 5). It might be objected to this, that merit was the cause of favour in Elijah's day. The seven thousand had not worshipped Baal. But why had they not bowed the knee? Because of their faith in God. Rightly viewed, their exemption from the impending troubles had its roots in faith in God.

"A remnant ... by grace"

Paul stresses the point that it is of grace. Grace and works are exclusive; one or the other—it cannot be both (verse 6).

"*What then?*" in verse 7, introduces the conclusion of what has been stated: "*That which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened.*" The bulk of Israel had sought for righteousness in their own way (9:31) and had not found it. A few had sought it in God's way and were the selected remnant.

But the rest—they were hardened. How often do we find that punishment corresponds in its form to that mode of life which man has chosen. Because the early Christians did not receive the love of the truth, God sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie (2 Thessalonians 2:10,11). Israel had such an obsession for their own mode of attaining to righteousness that God shut them up to their own folly. They might have known, for their own prophets had warned them of the danger. Paul combines two of the predictions of the prophets in verse 8: "*According as it is written, God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.*"

The words are taken from Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:9,10. The first of these passages is from the "Song of Witness", from which Paul, in chapter 10, has so well demonstrated that righteousness is by faith. The second describes an intoxication which is not of wine but of false doctrine. God had poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and the word of God was not opened and read. The

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principle involved is not without its warning for the latter-day custodians of the Truth.

David also foretells the calamity that would come to Israel. The Psalm which is quoted in verses 9 and 10 is clearly Messianic, and is therefore very appropriate in connection with Paul's subject: "*Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway*" (Psalm 69:22,23). The table, in the first application, is put for the feast spread thereon, and indicates the prosperity and privilege which proved their undoing; in false security they were ensnared.

But what essentially was Israel's table? Through Malachi, God says to Israel, "Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, *The table of the LORD* is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" (Malachi 1:7,8). Israel had a law with a sacrificial system. *This* was their privilege, and it should have been their guide. Instead of allowing it to guide them, they prided themselves upon their exclusiveness as a nation, and pursued ceremonial cleanness to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law. Their mind became focused on the details of the ritual and lost sight of its meaning. Their table became a snare. Requital came in a blind trust in law, and they were given up to their own desires. Their understanding was darkened, and the law became a burden they could not bear; with bowed backs and darkened eyes they staggered and fell. They crucified "the Lamb of God", and God "cursed their blessings" (Malachi 2:2).

In all this there is a lesson for spiritual Israel. They meet at a table—the Table of the Lord. This, like the sacrifices of Israel, is required, but if attendance thereat is regarded as alone sufficient, it may prove a snare. "Let a man examine himself" is the Apostle's counsel, "and so let him eat." The ordinance is a reminder of Christ's work, and is a call to eschew malice and wickedness, and to follow sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 11:28; 5:8).

Israel's Rejection only Temporary **(11:11-24)**

Even if the failure has not been complete, a remnant being saved, it yet remains that the majority have failed. Paul now turns to consider whether this involves the exclusion of the nation from the purpose of God.

"Did they stumble that they might fall?" That is, when they stumbled at Christ, "the stumbling-stone", was it to irrevocable ruin? The answer is, No; but their offence in rejecting the offer of salvation made to them through the apostolic ministry had resulted in the word of reconciliation being carried to the Gentiles. So Paul says: *"God forbid: but rather through their fall (same word as "offence" in 5:15—their false step, following their stumbling at Christ) salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy"* (verse 11).

"Salvation is come unto the Gentiles"

There is thus hope in their end, when this provocation takes place; and there is hope of further enrichment for the Gentiles. For *"if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?"* They are not finally cut off; and if their misfortune was the means of Gentiles being partakers of God's riches, what greater benefit will accrue to these Gentiles from their restoration? Israel suffered a "defeat" in not obtaining what they sought. This involved serious "loss" (RV) or "diminishing" (AV); but the time will come when in "fulness" they will believe, as Paul establishes in later verses.

In what is practically an aside, in verses 13-14, Paul explains that his own work among *"you Gentiles"* is governed by what he has said in verse 11.

"Life from the dead"

Verse 15 resumes the argument from verse 12: *"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"* The casting away took place when the apostles "turned to the

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Gentiles". Thus reconciliation was offered to the Gentiles. But Israel are going to be received back. Paul asked in verse 12, "how much more their fulness?" The "much more" is life from the dead—the resurrection, at Christ's return, of the reconciled Gentiles. The parallelism (in verses 12 and 15) shows this:

The fall of them.....the riches of the world
The diminishing of themthe riches of the Gentiles
The casting away of themthe reconciling of the world
The receiving of them.....life from the dead

What is it that links the "receiving of Israel" with life from the dead for the Gentiles who have believed? The answer is, both events take place at the coming of the Messiah, for the Messiah is not only Israel's king but the Resurrection and the Life. His first work on his return is to raise his saints, give to them eternal life, and with them establish his kingdom. Their present condition of reconciliation will be consummated in the "much more" valuable state of eternal fellowship with "the heir of all things".

The Root and the Branches

Paul proceeds to prove that Israel will be restored: "*For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches*" (verse 16). When God chose and set apart the fathers, He also set apart the descendants to be His nation. The figure of the firstfruits is taken from the consecration of the firstfruits of the land, in offering which the whole harvest was consecrated (Numbers 15:19,20). In the second figure Abraham is the root and the Israelites are the branches. This metaphor, capable of yielding many lessons, is elaborated in the next verses.

The first lesson is one of warning to the Gentiles. The Jews, as branches of a cultivated olive tree, had been broken off, and Gentile branches had been grafted in, and were partaking of the root out of which the fatness of the olive came. There was no room for boasting. They were not supporting the root, but the root was supporting them. Beforetime "strangers from the covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:12), they had only become heirs of God's

“exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4) by being included in “the commonwealth of Israel” (Ephesians 2:19).

“The goodness and severity of God”

But a Gentile might boast, *“Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in”*. He should remember that it was *“because of unbelief they were broken off”*, and it was only *“by faith”* that he stood. Hence the exhortation: *“Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”* (verses 20-22).

“The natural branches”

And now Paul uses the figure in a further argument for the restoration of Israel. Gentiles, once in unbelief, had been grafted in through faith, but they must continue in God's goodness by continuing in faith. The Jew, if he continued not in unbelief, would be grafted in again. God was able to do this: *“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?”* (verse 24).

We might pause here to notice that fault has been found with Paul's knowledge of olive culture. It has been said that Paul “is here describing a wholly unnatural process. Grafts must necessarily be of branches from a cultivated olive inserted into a wild stock, the reverse process being one which is valueless and which is never performed”. It is “a process which can never be actually used”.

But Paul is right, and the critics, some of whom use language much stronger than that quoted, are wrong. Sir William Ramsay has an essay on “The Olive-Tree and the Wild-Olive” in his *Pauline Studies*. For his information he relies on Professor Fischer, of whom he says, “No better authority could be desired or obtained”. The few sentences that particularly bear upon our study might be quoted:

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"As regards Palestine, but no other Mediterranean country, he (Fischer) points out that the process which Paul had in view is still in use in exceptional circumstances at the present day. He mentions that it is customary to re-invigorate an olive-tree which is ceasing to bear fruit, by grafting it with a shoot of the wild-olive, so that the sap of the tree ennobles this wild shoot and the tree now again begins to bear fruit.

It is a well-established fact that, as a result of grafting, both the new shoot and the old stock are affected. The grafted shoot affects the stock below the graft, and in its turn is affected by the character of the stock from which it derives its nourishment. Hence, although the old stock had lost vigour and ceased to produce fruit, it might recover strength and productive power from the influence of the vigorous wild shoot which is grafted upon it, while the fruit that is grown on the new shoot will be more fleshy and richer in oil than the natural fruit of the wild-olive. Such is the inevitable process; and it is evident from the passage in Romans, even without any other authority, that the ancients had observed this fact and availed themselves of it for improving weak and unproductive trees. The words of Romans 11:17 show the whole process employed in such cases: the tree was pruned, and after the old branches had been cut away the graft was made. The cutting away of the old branches was required to admit air and light to the graft, as well as to prevent the vitality of the tree from being too widely diffused over a large number of branches (pages 223-224).

Most of the modern writers on this subject have been betrayed by the assumption that in this passage of Romans, Paul is speaking of the ordinary process of grafting the young olive-tree. This grafting is a necessary and universal fact of olive-culture. An ungrafted tree will never produce really good fruit, however noble be the stock from which it is derived. The process is familiar; and yet it must be briefly described in order to eliminate a certain error. The olive is grown from a shoot of a good tree, planted in well-prepared ground, carefully tended and treated. When the young tree is seven to ten years old, it is grafted with a shoot from the best stock procurable. The wild olive plays no part whatsoever in the life of the ordinary olive tree, which is of noble stock and grafted anew from noble stock" (page 229).

"Contrary to nature"

It will be seen that the figure used by Paul is particularly appropriate. The olive tree which God had planted in Palestine was not bearing fruit. Branches were cut off and replaced by wild-olive Gentile branches. The divine work,

which is represented by the tree, is by this process restored to fruitfulness. Gentiles become heirs of Abraham by becoming his seed through faith in Christ. The grafting of Gentiles was "contrary to nature" in that the ingrafting of the wild-olive was not the usual mode of cultivation of the olive.

All Included in God's Mercy (11:25-36)

God could ingraft Israelitish branches again, verse 24; and at the time He has appointed He will do so. Opening his statement with a phrase always used to emphasize the importance of what is being said, Paul makes known the "mystery" or "secret" that Israel's blindness is only temporary: *"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."* The fulness of the Gentiles indicates that number which God "is taking out of the Gentiles for his name" during the present age.

The fact that Israel is not finally superseded prevents any conceit on the part of the Gentiles. When their opportunity has run its course, *"all Israel shall be saved"* (verse 26). "All" contrasts with the "remnant" of verse 7, which in Paul's day obeyed the gospel. Then the "rest" were hardened. But in Messiah's day the whole nation will be saved.

"Turn away ungodliness from Jacob"

This does not mean that every individual Jew living when Christ returns will attain to salvation. On the contrary, as in the days of the Exodus, the rebels will be purged out (Ezekiel 20:34-38). All remaining will be the contrite recipients of God's mercy, and will desire to walk in His ways: *"They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the LORD"* (Jeremiah 31:34). Isaiah also had told of this, in words which Paul quotes: *"There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for*

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this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Romans 11:26,27—Isaiah 59:20; 27:9).

From the gospel point of view, at the present time, Israel are treated by God as enemies, for the sake of the Gentiles, that salvation may be offered to them. But that does not cancel their standing as the nation of God; as touching the election, that is, their selection as God's people, *"they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance"* (verse 29). God does not change His mind concerning His appointments.

"That he might have mercy upon all"

How this will prove true in Israel's case, although they are now cast off, the apostle proceeds to show. There is a parallel between Gentile and Jew. The former were at one time disobedient, but they had obtained mercy when the Jew disobeyed, when he rejected the preaching of the apostles. The latter will be the recipient of mercy, though now disobedient, through the mercy shown to the Gentiles which they enjoy until *"the fulness of them come in"* (verse 25), and which will provoke Israel to jealousy (verse 11). All, Jew and Gentile, will be sharers in God's mercy, *"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all"* (verse 32).

With all the waywardness of man, God's purpose will yet be worked out. More than that, God has used man's sin as a foil to display His mercy. All being involved in disobedience, mercy is shown in the display of kindness to the undeserving. *"The Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe"* (Galatians 3:22).

There is a thread through the tangled skein which, if followed, leads to the understanding of God's purpose. There is mercy for Jew and Gentile, operating to each in turn under the dispensations during which God has been working out His plan, and there is mercy at last to all when the Redeemer comes to Zion. But it is to the Jew first, even then; *"the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem"*.

“O the depth of the riches”

And so the apostle breaks into a strain of praise to God which closes this division of the letter. Wondrous riches of knowledge and wisdom are revealed. God's plan is equal to all necessities. His love has provided a gracious arrangement for the salvation of man. Man could not discover His judgements and His ways, nor help Him in His arrangements. God is the source: it is *“of him”*; He accomplishes the work: it is *“through Him”*; He brings it to a successful issue, uniting to Himself the sons He redeems; it is *“to him”* and therefore *“to him be the glory for ever. Amen”*.

Section IV

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS (12:1—15:33)

IN the chapters that remain the apostle makes practical application of the doctrines which he has established. Right doctrines issue in right living. Faith without works is dead. The application is made to various relationships of life, some phases of which reflect conditions of life when the letter was written, but which yield lessons for all later generations.

A Living Sacrifice (12:1,2)

A very comprehensive principle is first laid down; the believer's life must be a living sacrifice: "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (verse 1). The basis of the appeal is the work of God, full of compassion and mercy. The whole work of redemption is one of grace, as the previous divisions of the letter have shown. In view of all that has been proved in the first eight chapters, and since God has arranged that both Jew and Gentile are to be the recipients of His mercy (11:30), the brethren are exhorted to present themselves as living sacrifices.

The bodies of men and women were used in various unrighteous ways in the corrupt practices of the pagan world. Those who through some religious influence avoided the gross evils of that day very often followed ascetic practices, and thought to develop holiness by the infliction of torture and a rigorous discipline of the body. Such a course

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had the effect of focusing thought on the bodily appetites, and the punishing of the body was “not really of any value to remedy indulgence of the flesh” (see Colossians 2:23). The right way is to use all parts of one’s being, heart, soul, mind and strength (Matthew 22:37) in service to God.

“A living sacrifice” is somewhat of a paradox. The sacrifices offered under the law were dead ones. Yet the law has something to say about what might be called living sacrifices. In the ritual of the Day of Atonement two goats played a conspicuous part. One was slain and the other was sent away alive. They represented two aspects of one sacrifice. So also in the arrangements for the cleansing of leprosy, two birds were provided: one was slain and the other set free. The substance is Christ who was slain and raised from the dead, in his resurrection corresponding to the living goat and the living bird.

The believer dies with Christ in baptism, and rises with him to walk in newness of life. The life now lived is one of service to God. Hence he has to be a “living sacrifice” in this challenging language of Paul.

“Let a man deny himself”

Under another figure Jesus indicated a correspondence between himself and his followers. His death by crucifixion was foreseen by him during all the time of his ministry. He spoke to Nicodemus about the Son of man being “lifted up”, as Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. When in Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus elicited from Peter the confession that he was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And “from that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21). Jesus went on to tell them, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”. Christ, condemned to death by Pilate, after the usual custom bore his cross. The disciple must condemn Self, and must take up the cross in the “ignoring of Self”, bringing every thought into subjection to the will of Christ.

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Such a sacrifice is "holy". It is a "setting apart", a consecration. As the animal sacrifices had to be free from blemish, so conduct must be free from unrighteousness. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" was God's injunction to Israel, and Peter quotes it to spiritual Israel (1 Peter 1:16). And this is acceptable, well pleasing to God. From the disciples' point of view, it is "*a reasonable service*". This does not mean a service which, under the circumstances, is "fair" or "appropriate", although it is all that. But it is a service springing from the reason, in contrast to the unreasoning animal which was offered in sacrifice. Such are "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

"Be ye transformed"

"And be not conformed to this world", continues Paul (verse 2), *"but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Do not be fashioning yourselves according to this world's standard of life. The world of Paul's day he has described in chapter 1. The conditions obtaining at the end of the age are the subject of prophecy in 2 Timothy, chapter 4. Neither then nor now does the world offer a model for the friends of Christ to copy. They must follow a different course. Possessing the same nature as others in the world, who for the most part allow it unrestrained expression, they must change their natural inclinations. A disciple must be transforming himself—the word describing this is the same as is used of the transfiguration of Christ. The only other occurrence of the word is in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where Paul says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed* into the same image from glory to glory". In English dress, the word is "metamorphosis" and describes 'the change living beings undergo in the course of their growth', as e.g. the changes from the caterpillar to the butterfly.

How can such a change be effected? The answer is by changing the mind. This begins when the Truth is received. Repentance means a change of mind. But it is not the work of a day; it is a lifetime's work, and consists of learning

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God's "thoughts" by the reading of the Word of God. "My son (God is speaking unto us as with sons, Hebrews 12:5), give *me* thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). If this is done, the mind takes on qualities like the mind of God. When Peter would have hindered Jesus from going on his way to Jerusalem to be crucified, he was told that he did not think as God, but as men. But Peter, converted, and "begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead", counselled the elect to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). By this means "the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16), and a new man develops, "which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10). "The fleshly mind" (Colossians 2:18) becomes a spiritual mind.

"Prove what is the good ..."

The effect of this is "that ye may prove what is the ... will of God". "To prove" is 'to test or find out by experiment'; to discern by practical experience'. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light ... *proving* what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8-10). "Learn in your own experiences what is fully pleasing unto the Lord", Weymouth gives it. It must be what God wills that is tested. The result will show that God's will is good for man, acceptable to God, and perfect as an instrument to accomplish the end that God has in view.

The Right Use of Gifts (12:3-8)

An application is made of the principle laid down in verses 1 and 2. In the early days of Christianity various gifts of the spirit were possessed by members of the ecclesias. In the absence of the writings which constitute the New Testament such gifts were necessary for maintaining the Truth and for guiding the ecclesias. But like all other gifts these could be used or abused. In Corinth grave disorders arose through jealousy and rivalry, and to them Paul

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pointed out the more excellent way of the exercise of love, by which their troubles would cease.

A man who endeavoured to practise "the renewing of the mind" would bring his thoughts into line with God's thoughts. He would recognize that by faith he had become well pleasing to God, and through that faith had received any "gift" he enjoyed. The "gift" was not given for his personal benefit to enhance his glory, but to use in the building up of the church of God. This consideration cut out pride and self-importance, and guided one in the right use of his powers.

"The measure of faith"

In the exercise of his own gifts, Paul enjoins this sobriety of thought, playing upon the word "mind" as the RV brings out (verse 3). "*The measure of faith*" can mean "the measuring instrument, even faith". Faith rectifies thought, humbles and enables one to get a right perspective, such as an unenlightened man cannot. Or "faith" can mean the "gifts" associated with faith. The idea then is that they had received diverse gifts, but all were for service, and they must recognize that these gifts were of God and not of themselves.

The purpose of the gifts is illustrated by the same figure that Paul had used in writing to Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:12), and which he uses again in writing to the Ephesians (4:15). As the human body consists of many members, each having different uses, but each contributing to the well-being of the body, so also is the body of Christ. They were fellow-members of that body, and therefore it was their duty to use their gifts for the general good, each one applying himself to the exercise of his own gift, whether *prophecy, ministry, or teaching*, in singleness of heart (verses 6-8).

Rules of Daily Life (12:9-21)

In his letter to Corinth, Paul turns from considering spiritual gifts to praise the way of love (1 Corinthians 13). And in this letter his first maxim, after speaking of "gifts", refers to love: "*Let love be without hypocrisy.*" A hypocrite

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was one who played a part, a play-actor. Love must be genuine and free from pretence. But the love required was not to be a mere "sentimental benevolence"; they must "*abhor that which is evil*", and "*cleave to that which is good*" (verse 9). "Love is not a principle of mutual indulgence; in the Gospel it is a moral principle, and like Christ who is the only perfect example of love, it has always something inexorable about it. *He* never condoned evil."

"Kindly affectioned"

There must be a family bond among believers. As there is a kinship between them, so they must exhibit the affection that belongs to those akin. Remembering the root meaning of the word "kind" ('kinned') we get this idea from the AV. "Kindly affection" is the affection of those who are a family—"the love of near relations". From this comes no strife for position and honour, but a readiness to render honour to another (verse 10). 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" (Philippians 2:2-4).

The Christian life is one of diligent application to whatever is taken in hand: "*In diligence not slothful*"; and this whether in the affairs of daily life or the things belonging to the ecclesia. This pertains to the outward acts, seen of all. The source is a mental state—"fervent in spirit"; an ardent mental approach to all work. The regulating principle of all activity is the recognition that all service is to the Lord (verse 11).

The Christian outlook is not like that of other men. The principles and methods that guide the believer seem strange to those who do not know the purpose of God. The next counsel (verse 12) is to rejoice. Christianity has a radiance which is lacking elsewhere. It has it because it provides a hope, and this concerns such happiness and joy that the present catches a reflection of the future. Hope also provides an enabling power in difficulty and trial. But hope must be kept alive. Hope looks to God and finds its

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strength in Him. "*Continuing steadfastly in prayer*" is the way to obtain that help and that strength to continue in hope and endurance which comes from the personal fellowship with God.

"Given to hospitality"

And as in hope and tribulation and the joy of Christian fellowship they were sharers with their fellow-believers, so must they "*communicate to the necessities of the saints*". They "must be and act as partners", even "pursuing" (RV margin) hospitality, not waiting for the call to knock at their doors. This was very necessary in the first century. The inns where travellers might stay were houses of ill-fame, and from such association they must keep away themselves, and also keep their brethren away by providing hospitality among themselves (verses 12 and 13).

While the Christian was a pursuer of hospitality, he was himself very often pursued by the persecutor (verse 14). What then must he do? The Lord had laid down the rule in the Sermon on the Mount which Paul here repeats. We say, repeats. It is thought that none of the four gospels was in existence when Paul wrote his letter to Rome. We must not conclude therefore that the churches were ignorant of the knowledge which the gospels supply. On the contrary, this and other passages which are reminiscent of the gospels, and especially the references which Paul makes to the teaching of the Lord in 1 Corinthians 7:10,25, show us that there must have been some recognized authoritative teaching in some form, corresponding to our gospels, if not the gospels themselves.

"Bless them which persecute you"

The faithful follower of Christ is no emasculated weakling. To return good for evil, to bless when hated, requires strength of character and nobility of purpose. The natural impulse is to retaliate or nurse a grievance. What God requires is not merely the negative attitude of avoiding retaliation, but the positive one of bestowing good. This application of the opposite prevents any copying of the wrongdoing.

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Sympathy with others is required. To *"weep with them that weep"* is a manifestation of sympathy often seen. A common heritage of evil produces a fellow-feeling with the afflicted. There is a more difficult task: *"Rejoice with them that rejoice"*. The sight of another's joy is to some an envy-provoking experience. From envy free, we are called upon to be glad at the success and joy of others (verse 15).

"Be of the same mind"

Harmony and peace are enjoined in the words, *"Be of the same mind one toward another"*. And essential to this is the avoidance of the ambitions common among the Gentiles; hence Paul says, *"Set not your mind on high things"*. Here again is an emphasis upon the opposite. *"Condescend to"*, or as the RV margin more literally has it, "be carried away with" the humble; consort with them as on a level with them. A further danger to harmony is self-conceit. Therefore the addition, *"Be not wise in your own conceits"* (verse 16).

Retaliation is forbidden: *"Render to no man evil for evil"*, the language again coming from the Lord's own teaching (Matthew 5:38-48). Not only must evil be abstained from, but actions that might be misunderstood must be avoided: *"Take thought for things honourable in the sight of all men"* (verse 17). Things which the unbeliever would think dishonourable or which might offend prejudice are well avoided. And yet peace depends on two parties being agreeable. The Christian must be sure to do his part: *"If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men"* (verse 18).

These maxims for daily life conclude with difficult yet urgent precepts (verses 19-21). When unrighteously persecuted, when wrongly defrauded, what attitude must be adopted towards the wrongdoer? Does he not deserve punishment? And is it good for society that he should not be punished? These are questions which are quickly asked by the natural thinker. But such are not aware of God's objects in these commands. They are not rules for kingdoms, but for individuals who are trying to qualify for a place in a divine kingdom that is to come. To apply them to

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present forms of human society is to use them in a way for which they were not intended.

"Give place unto wrath"

God is controlling human affairs, and maintaining a measure of order in the earth, to which end governments suppress the unruly and punish the evil doer. But these governments have nothing to do with these commands of Jesus and Paul, as the saint on his part has nothing to do with the suppression of evil by the recourse to force. If he were a member of the kingdoms of this world it would be his duty to help in the suppression and punishment of wrong. Ordered society could only be maintained in that way, even the kingdom of God in its past and future aspects illustrating this. When the kingdom is given to the saints, all God-defying and incorrigible wrongdoers will be rightly dealt with.

Meanwhile the rule for saints is, "*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath*". This restriction is of very practical bearing upon the saint's character. The very limitations and apparent disadvantages are so many conditions under which characters are developed. Obedience is tested under trial, and evil circumstances provide the conditions. The returning of evil for good may also now be the means of someone turning from the evil to follow the good.

Will wrong be unpunished? Certainly not. Give place to "the wrath", to God's wrath, as the quotation following shows: "*For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*" If we are sure our wrong is real and that punishment is richly deserved, then God can punish better than we can. But the thought that someone is given over to God's wrath is so sobering that it evokes pity that men should so live as to be the subjects of it. If there is any chance of saving them from it, it lies along the way prescribed: "*Give place unto wrath ... but (on your part) if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.*"

“Be not overcome of evil”

The closing precept is of wide application and is a useful principle for life: *“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”* If we retaliate we are overcome of the evil. We cannot avoid the evil but by seeking the good. To attempt to inhibit the bad without developing what is good is a vain task. In a parable, so true of the lives of so many, Jesus told of an unclean spirit being sent out of a house, which was then swept and garnished, but left without occupant, instead of a good spirit being put in possession. Everything was left ready for the return of the evil spirit, with the inevitable result that he returned with boon companions. To break a bad habit we must form a good one. Evil is overcome by good.

Obedience to Rulers (13:1-7)

The attitude that a Jew must adopt to Gentile rulers was a subject that exercised the minds of many Jews in New Testament times. On the basis of Deuteronomy 17:15, “Thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, which is not thy brother”, some of the Jews held that it was wrong to submit to the rule of any Gentile. The question put to Christ concerning the lawfulness of giving tribute to Cæsar reflects this agitation. The question was a trap; they thought that by his answer Jesus would either come into conflict with the Roman authorities or become unpopular with the people. But Jesus avoided the snare while laying down a principle which provided an answer. The “penny” produced at his request was an acknowledgement of Cæsar’s rule, for they had accepted Cæsar’s coinage. Cæsar had claims which they must meet; but to God also must be rendered the things which are His.

As a result of this unwillingness to submit to Gentile rulership the Jews were bad subjects. And this not only in Palestine, but wherever they were settled, there was constant danger of turbulence. At first the Christians were closely identified with the Jews. Christianity was regarded as simply an offshoot of Judaism. Until Gentiles were accepted the Christians were, of course, all Jews, but as

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the gospel was proclaimed throughout the world their proportion grew less and less.

"Subject unto the higher powers"

These conditions made a statement desirable in which the duty of the Christians to the civil authorities was made known. Paul therefore explained that obedience to rulers was required of the people of God, for the reason that the social organization was subject to God, and resistance to the rulers was opposition to God's arrangements: *"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God"* (verse 1).

It is a simple element of Bible teaching that God controls. If God has a purpose with man and the earth, divine direction is a necessity in the case. Human freedom is allowed within the limits of God's purpose. In that purpose Israel is the central nation, and as other nations come into contact with Israel, oppressing or subduing them, they are the subject of prophecy. Even the numerical division into nations of the descendants of Noah was made with reference to the then non-existent children of Israel.

Seventy nations are enumerated in Genesis 10; and thrice it is mentioned that seventy souls went down into Egypt with Jacob (Genesis 46:27; Exodus 1:5; Deuteronomy 10:22). Moses tells us that "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:8). When the Kingdom of Judah was overthrown the chronological prophecies of Daniel were given, making known the rise of successive empires during the times of the Gentiles. During the last half of these "times" a persecuting power had to wear out God's saints. The amplification which the prophecy of Daniel receives in the Apocalypse shows that the saints are not merely members of the nation of Israel but individuals out of all nations who have responded to the call of the gospel. Revelation thus foretells the rise of powers who have deal-

ings with God's people, whether nationally in the case of Israel, or individually in the case of saints.

It does not follow that God's direction of human affairs involves that all the actions of rulers are well pleasing. Human volition is not destroyed, and in differing degree rulers and nations are responsible to God and amenable to divine punishment.

When declension from the faith of the apostles set in, Christians began sometimes to oppose the authorities, sometimes to fight them, until in the days of Constantine the State became nominally Christian. But the true followers of Christ recognized that "Christendom" was astray. Its doctrines were not in harmony with the Word of God, but its very existence as a religion of a state was a fulfilment of the prophecies of Christ's last message. The state has never been truly Christian. Faithful Christians have never occupied positions of authority whether in pagan or Christian times. But to them in every age the command to be subject to rulers has applied.

"Not a terror to good works"

The command applies whether the rulers are good or bad. When the letter to the Romans was written Paul had always received favourable treatment from Roman officials. But it deserves notice that in the later epistles, when the attitude of the authorities to the Christians had changed, the same commands are repeated. Writing to Timothy, Paul says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:1,2). To Titus he writes, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (3:1,2). When persecutions of Christians as such had begun Peter repeats the command: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent

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by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:13-15).

Paul gives two reasons for obedience to the authorities. First, resistance of the power would be withstanding God's ordinance (verse 2); second, they that withstand will receive judgement, possibly from the power resisted, but certainly from God, whose law is disregarded (verse 4). Rulers meet resistance with resistance; conformity to law provokes no reprisals: "*For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil*" (verse 3)—that is, in general, as the plural "rulers" shows. A society with a ruler is on the side of the good. "*Wouldest thou have no fear of the power?*" Paul asks; and he answers, "*Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good*".

"He beareth not the sword in vain"

Rulers want law-abiding citizens, and the faithful discharge of any regulation will bring the approval of the ruler. Conversely, to disobey and rebel will bring punishment: "*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*" (verse 4). Under God's arranging, a society has to promote good and suppress evil; by this God prevents the earth becoming a shambles, and ensures the working out of His plan of calling out and preparing a people for His name. The ruler "beareth a sword". The sword is a symbol of authority, but its use here suggests also that capital punishment is rightly inflicted by human powers.

While fear of punishment is a deterrent to doing evil, the Christian must not direct his course solely by that fear. The directing motive in his life is in his knowledge of what is right, and the consequent desire to do what is right because it is required by God and is well pleasing to Him. "*Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake*" (verse 5). It is not only in subjection to rulers that conscience directs.

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There are many obligations, which are often evaded, sometimes evaded boastfully and with pride, but not by the Lord's servants. They are told to regard the payment of all dues as involving much more than satisfying the demands of human rulers. They must do all to please God: "*For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour*" (verses 6,7).

"Fear to whom fear"

It is evident that a Christian cannot be a revolutionary. He does not rectify social wrongs by taking part in agitations and strifes. His attitude to governments is passive, obedience to all laws being promptly given, the only exception being when those laws clash with what God requires.

Duty to All (13:8-10)

From duty to authorities, Paul passes to the duty of all men. As tribute and taxes are not evaded, so neither are any personal obligations: "*Owe no man anything.*" Yet there is one debt which can never be discharged. However often it is paid, it still remains due. It is a permanent obligation: "*Owe no man anything, save to love one another.*" Love is always owing.

"Love is the fulfilment of the law"

Love is an unceasing duty, as continuous as the requirements of God's law. And to love is to keep God's law, for as Paul points out, one who loves is beyond the possibility of doing the things prohibited by the law. "*For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" Paul, like his Master, resolves all enactments concerning duty to a neighbour into the one duty of love: "*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law*" (verse 10).

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Primarily God is the subject of this love of which Paul speaks: "We love him, because he first loved us", and love directed towards God finds guidance in God's will. Love is not an undirected impulse, but a joyful compliance with God's will, in which obedience the doer becomes like God.

The Urgency of Attention (13:11-14)

Nothing can so much enforce the need for attention to duty as the consideration Paul refers to. The day of Christ is coming; each day brings it nearer. The present time is "night", and men sleep. But the believer belongs to the coming day, and so must be awake. He must reflect the coming day now. While the children of night garb themselves in "*the works of darkness*", such clothing ill suits the saints. It must be "cast off". In its place, they are exhorted, "*Let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy*" (verse 13). "The armour of light" is the armour of day, the day of the Lord's presence. Live now "as in the day"—as you will when you are ever with the Lord; such is the message of the words.

"Put on the armour of light"

In these verses Paul uses some favourite figures. Writing to the Ephesians, he says, "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light ... proving what is well pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:8-11). To the Thessalonians he wrote, "Ye are all sons of light, and sons of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, since we are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8).

In this last passage Paul speaks of light and darkness, and of an armour to be put on. And in Romans he repeats the figure of "putting on". Instead of following works of

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darkness, Paul exhorts, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ". In the first place Christ is put on in baptism. But this is only a beginning. Daily, Christ is put on as the believer tries to express in his own life the life of Christ. In this way he invests himself with Christ. "Wherefore *putting away* lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour ... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be *put away* from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:25,31,32). And this is because they had "learned Christ". "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye *put off* concerning the former conversation the old man ... and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye *put on* the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (verses 21-24).

In very similar language he wrote to the Colossians, "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have *put off* the old man with his deeds; and have *put on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (3:9,10).

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"

Again we observe that the evil is put away by the good being put on. We rid the evil by exchanging for the good. We put on Christ by not making "*provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*", in the words which conclude chapter 13 of Romans. The "flesh" (alias the "old man") must die of neglect. He must not be fed, looked after, thought about. But God must be the model, and Christ the example: "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you" (Ephesians 5:1,2).

Avoiding Judging (14:1-12)

In the closing verses of chapter 13 Paul has been voicing a warning against licence. His subject now takes him to the consideration of the opposite extreme—"a superstitious

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observance of things morally indifferent". The fourteenth chapter and the first thirteen verses of the fifteenth discuss the need for mutual forbearance. He first shows that it is necessary to avoid judging; then that love is self-denying; and lastly that love helps the weak, Christ himself being the example.

Jewish and Christian Scruples

We have seen that the problems of the Jews were to some extent reproduced in Christian associations. And this applied to other matters than the question of duty to rulers. A Jew who had been scrupulous in his observance of the Mosaic law naturally tended to retain his scrupulosities as a Christian. How Jew and Gentile could live together harmoniously was soon in need of settlement. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) advised the avoidance by the Gentiles of those things which would be most offensive to the Jews, while maintaining Gentile freedom from the law of Moses. But there were other sources of difficulty. The meat sold for food in Gentile cities was slaughtered in association with certain rites connected with idol worship. Should a Christian eat meat which had been offered to idols?

Other influences brought the subject to the fore. The Jewish sect of the Essenes, though small in numbers, had a marked influence. They practised asceticism, avoiding marriage, and abstaining from wine and animal food; they also strictly observed the sabbath. In the Gentile world similar ideas were abroad. The time was one of religious ferment, and there were Gentile sects that practised forms of self-discipline similar to the Essenes. This spirit of the age might be expected to have its influence upon those individuals in the Christian communities who were disposed to strict modes of life, and thus the circumstances called for some guiding statement.

It is not necessary to think that an acute trouble had arisen in Rome on the matter. Paul discusses the subject of mutual forbearance generally, giving as illustrations those scruples which he had doubtless met, concerning meats and days.

“Him that is weak in the faith”

The apostle's counsel is that the brethren who had a clear understanding of Christian liberty should receive those who had not attained to the same understanding, and at the same time refrain from constant criticism of their doubts. It is not a question of wrong doctrine that is involved. Neither is it a question of disorderly life. *“Weak in the faith”* (14:1) means, as the context clearly shows, that some were sensitive in conscience concerning eating certain foods. They had not been able to shake off the idea that the eating of certain meats was morally wrong, or that the meat which had been offered to the idol was sacrificial meat, and eating it involved an acknowledgment of the idol. To certain minds asceticism makes a potent appeal, and such would be most influenced. Weakness in *the* faith is not doubt concerning some doctrine, but a weakness in his faith in the matters illustrated. The RV gives “weak in faith” and so substantially do other translators.

The frequent discussion of such doubts would be productive of much strife and contention. Time would remedy to a large extent the failure to grasp fully the fact that salvation was independent of the observance of such rules as some would impose. Hence the advice to avoid criticism of the weakness.

“God hath received him”

But while the strong had not to despise the weak who could only satisfy his conscience by avoiding meat and adopting a vegetarian diet, the weak had his part to perform. He was disposed to think of the others in a censorious way, regarding them as presumptuous, unscrupulous, and lax. He must not “*judge*” the strong for the all-sufficient reason that “*God hath received him*” (verse 3). That being so, the censoriousness of the weak was really an impertinent interference with God's household: “*Who art thou that judgest the servant of another?*”—the “household-servant”, RV margin, not merely the slave. “*To his own lord he standeth or falleth.*” And this particular conduct is not “falling” on his part. “*Yea, he shall be made to*

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stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand"; in this matter God will acquit him of blame.

Both sides of the dispute were making actions to be sins which were not so. The error had to be avoided by a kindly toleration on the one part, and the avoidance of judging on the other.

In verse 5 Paul turns to another illustration—the observance of particular days. While really indifferent in itself, Paul here advises that *"every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"*. If, in the exercise of his best judgement, one found the observance of a day helpful to him, the day may be observed, but not as a moral obligation.

But no one was entitled to enforce his view upon the other. Paul mentions a consideration that shows forbearance might well be exercised. Both parties by their conduct desired to please God. With the Lord in view one observed the day, while with the same Lord in view another did not observe the day. And so with eating. Both gave thanks to God for that which they felt justified in eating.

"Every one of us shall give account"

This thought of verse 6 is stated as a broad principle in verse 7: *"For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself"*. The end of a Christian's life is the glory of his Lord; he does not live for his own end, to serve his own purposes. And in death, as in life, he belongs to Christ (verse 8). This is a result of the work of Christ: *"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living"* (verse 9). Christ will not frustrate his own work; and since all are Christ's, to his judgement all are responsible, and not to one another's: *"But thou (weak one), why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again (strong one), why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of God (Christ, AV). For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (verses 10-12).

The place where it is written is Isaiah 45:23, in the context of which God speaks of Himself as a just God and a

Saviour, inviting all to look to Him for salvation. He is God alone, and only God can provide salvation. In Philippians 2:10 reference is made to the same scripture and application made to the exalted Christ. The application to Christ of that which God speaks concerning Himself is instructive, and in the light of the Bible doctrine of God-manifestation, quite intelligible.

Love is Self-Denying (14:13-23)

After showing that the Christian has freedom in the matters in dispute and that a censorious spirit is wrong, Paul turns to another aspect of the matter. Should the strong one insist on his rights? There is a better way. While not accountable to the weak, they have a duty to them, a duty involving the self-denial for the sake of others of the freedom which they had.

“Destroy not him with thy meat”

Do not let us be always judging one another; but let this judgement be made once for all, that none shall do anything that will cause another to stumble, Paul says in verse 13. And before he shows what that involves, he restates his own persuasion that no kind of food is unclean, adding a qualification that provides the reason for abstinence: *“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”* (verse 14). “Save to him”: since, while not unclean in itself, he is convinced, as the result of defective understanding, that it is unclean. In love, respect must be paid to his conscience. “For”—continues Paul, giving the reason for avoiding putting a stumbling block in another’s way—*“for if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died”* (verse 15). To do what the weak thinks wrong may so offend him as to drive him from the faith, or it may cause him to copy what he yet thinks is wrong. Do not destroy him. Christ *died* for him; and can you not deny yourself of this freedom for him?

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“Righteousness, and peace, and joy”

The weak made the eating of some foods a matter of reproach. The reproach could be avoided by not partaking of such foods, and this is advised: *“Let not then your good—your enlightenment, this freedom which you have—be evil spoken of.”* And for this reason, *“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink”*; the abstaining or partaking of certain foods are not the principal factors in the preparation for the kingdom, but *“righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”* are the essential qualifications (verses 16,17). “Righteousness” in relation to God and to all the acts of life; “peace” toward God and among themselves; “joy”—not reproachfulness: gladness and happiness instead of fault-finding; in fact, those very things which will be in evidence when the kingdom of God is established. The insisting upon the right to eat might be easily productive of the opposite of these virtues, and in comparison with them “eating” is insignificant.

These essential characteristics are manifested in “a holy spirit”. Translators, with the introduction of the article and the use of capitals, indicate that in their view the reference is to the power of God. We should rather regard the words here as having reference to the disposition of the believer. They manifest such a spirit as Christ had. If they had not his spirit they were none of his. In a sanctified mind and heart, producing righteousness, peace and joy, they would find an entrance into the kingdom of God. And so Paul adds, *“For he that herein (in this character, this conduct) serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men”* (verse 18). Here is a beautiful use of liberty, refraining from its exercise to *serve*—as a bondsman who has no liberty—Christ. Men who see the act approve; God, who knows the motive, is well pleased.

“Edify one another”

“So then”, Paul continues, *“let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another”* (verse 19). To edify is to build up. It is easy to break down and destroy, but it requires thought and care and industry to build. The word is a favourite one with

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Paul. His aim was to build, but he had the opposition of many who strove to break down his work. Destruction could be wrought in many ways. Under the circumstances he is considering in this portion of the letter the insistence upon the use of liberty might have evil effects. He therefore counsels, "*Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God*" (verse 20). God has a work proceeding—He is preparing a building for a dwelling place for Himself. At the present time by means of preaching, the material is being gathered, and it is of various kinds, some suitable and some unsuitable. God will use that which survives the test (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). The counsel here, then, is to consider whether the effect of any acts may not by its influence be the means of unfitting some for incorporation in the temple of God.

To make this point clear Paul repeats that "*all things indeed are clean*". The wrong he is considering is not in the meat but in the eating; and in the use of freedom the strong might be guilty of this wrong: "*Howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence*", that is, who by eating gives offence, or makes to fall. Hence he concludes, taking for his illustrations the extremist position: "*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*" (verse 21). Better sacrifice liberty for the present than cause one to stumble. A thing right in itself may be wrong through its effects. The way of self-denial is the noble way.

"Hast thou faith?"

The strong demurs: "I have faith". Well, God knows, answers Paul; He needs no demonstration of it. "*Have it to thyself before God*"; be glad of the knowledge which is yours, the freedom from misgiving. To show your faith to man in this matter will avail nothing, but to refrain from the use of your freedom might avail much.

A warning is added to this: "*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*" It would be an easy step for one who boasted in the strength of his faith soon to allow practices which are wrong. There are matters that are indifferent; happy are those who discern

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them. But there are other matters which are wrong, but which some allow for themselves, it may be through human weakness though they consider themselves strong, or it may be through insufficient discernment. It must be recognized that one may feel justified in a course of action, and yet not be approved by Christ. Liberty soon degenerates into indulgence. A clear conscience must also be an unseared conscience. It has been truly said, "It does not follow that everything which a man believes he may do is right".

"Whatsoever is not of faith ... "

While the strong himself is in danger, in boasting of his faith, of being led into sin, there may be also a harmful effect upon the weak, if he is led to do those things which he thinks are wrong: "*But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin*" (verse 23). To do what one thinks is wrong, to that one it is wrong. In the absence of certainty, abstinence is the rule, until increasing understanding has given certainty one way or the other.

Love helps the Weak (15:1-13)

The opening verses of chapter 15 continue the subject of the preceding chapter. In addition to refraining from things which caused offence (14:13-23), Paul now counsels the positive virtue of helping the weak.

"We then that are strong ... "

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (verses 1,2). The apostle associates himself with the strong ones; he shares with them the obligation to follow the advice given. We owe this duty to them, he says. The infirmities of the weak are borne when the strong willingly adopt that self-denial which removes from the weak the burden they would suffer if the strong insisted on their liberty. This indeed meant that they would not please themselves. But when was that a duty?

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS (12:1—15:33)

In another place Paul says that the law of Christ is fulfilled when ye "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). And this is not contradicted, as some have thought, when three verses later he adds, "For every man shall bear his own burden". In the latter statement a different word is used from that in verse 2, as the margin of the RV indicates. It is uncertain whether the figure is taken from a ship's cargo or a soldier's kit, but in either case the idea behind the figure is clear. Each one will give an account of his own responsibilities, of the trading he has done, or of the equipment entrusted to him, and each must order his affairs remembering a report must be given.

There is then a duty to please the other; but it has a limitation. There is a pleasing of men in which Christ is not served (Galatians 1:10). The aim has to be "that which is good, unto edifying", unto the building up of one's brother. The edifying is as essential as the pleasing.

In the performance of this duty Christ sets an example. He pleased not himself, but fulfilled the prophecy concerning him, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Psalm 69:9). God is addressed in the words quoted. He was reproached by the Jews when they walked contrary to His commandments, and when they killed "the heir". In their hostility to God their hatred fell upon Christ. This he suffered because it was his Father's will: "Not my will, but thine, be done." The inference to be drawn is that if Christ made so great a surrender of personal desire, should not his followers be willing to deny themselves of those liberties which give offence?

"Written for our learning"

In referring to the example of Christ, Paul does not cite some incident of his life, but quotes the Old Testament prophecy. He explains that in thus turning to the Old Testament, he was making use of what God had provided for their instruction: "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*" (verse 4). Passing time has not impaired the value, even though Israel are scattered from the land where for the

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most part the messages of the Old Testament were spoken (and written), and God's work is proceeding among the Gentiles, taking out of them a people for His name. For a message to be written for the instruction of future generations is only possible if there was divine direction of the writers and providential preservation of the writings. God has foreseen and provided for the needs of His people during those times when "there is no answer of God" (Micah 3:7). In the examples of the men of God of old time and the prophecies concerning Christ they have incentives to patience and sources of comfort. Help is here provided to maintain their hope.

"Be of the same mind ... "

The scriptures are from God, and He is the ultimate source of endurance and consolation. The instruction of the Scriptures leads the thought to Him. Quite naturally, then, Paul passes in verse 5 to the prayer that *"the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"*. With the help of God, the example of Christ, the guidance of the Word of God, difficulties would be overcome, unity of mind would result, and God would be glorified.

In the light of Christ's example, Paul exhorted strong and weak to receive each other: *"Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God."* Christ's work was to bring all to God. He received all who would come to him, and all such will share the glory of God. And in bringing all, whether Jew or Gentile, strong or weak, Christ wrought to the glory of God.

How had Christ's work for the benefit of all been to God's glory? The answer is, *"For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy"* (verses 8,9). Christ was a minister—a servant. In his life of service he was an example to all to endeavour to serve each other. He was a minister of the circumcision.

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS (12:1—15:33)

Circumcision was a fundamental element of the law. But it was prior to Moses, as Jesus said to the Jews: "Moses gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers)" (John 7:22). So it was; circumcision was the seal of the covenant made to the fathers. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised ... and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you" (Genesis 17:9-11).

"That he might confirm the promises"

Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and was duly circumcised the eighth day. He was the seed promised, and the truth of God was exhibited and the promises were confirmed in that the seed had been born. In a much fuller sense the promises were confirmed in the death of Christ. Transforming the Passover supper into the memorial feast of himself, he described the wine as representative of his blood, the "blood of the new testament (covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Apart from this sacrifice the new covenant could not be established, inasmuch as it concerned the eternal inheritance of the earth. Mortal sinful men must needs have sins forgiven before they can have eternal life, this being an essential qualification for possessing the earth for ever. It is only through Christ that sins are forgiven, and thus in a very real sense he confirmed the promises made to the fathers. In this work he was, and could only be, a Jew. Of Israel, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came" (Romans 9:5).

The Jews could rightly say that Christ's work was among them and for them. But it did not end there. The promises spoke also of the blessing of all nations. This blessing, Paul says in Galatians 3:8, consists of justification by faith: "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed." To the same effect are the words of Peter: "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which

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God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:25,26). The blessing of all nations certainly includes all material blessings, but the divine order is, first, glory to God in the highest, and then peace on earth, goodwill among men. When men render that glory, peace follows: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:17). Christ's service, then, was not limited to Israel, but had for its further aim that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy extended to them.

"That the Gentiles might glorify God"

This illustration from Christ as one who ministered had a very practical bearing upon the subject of mutual forbearance. The division of strong and weak would tend to follow the racial distinction of Jew and Gentile. Christ was a servant to the Jews and the strong are asked also to render to them the service of forbearance. The strong should remember, too, that their own present position, in God's mercy, was also through the service of Christ. And on the other hand, since Christ had drawn all men to him, there was no room for the Jew to despise and censure the Gentile.

Four passages are quoted to prove that all would be joint-sharers of the glory to come (verses 9-12):

First quotation—Psalm 18:49. Here David, typifying his greater son, says, "*For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name*". Therefore the Gentiles share with Christ in praise of God.

Second quotation—Deuteronomy 32:43. "*Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.*" This is from the Song of Moses, and foreshadows the Song of Moses and the Lamb (Revelation 15:3). Jews and Gentiles rejoice together.

Third quotation—Psalm 117:1. "*Praise ye the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.*" Each of the two verses of this psalm has a point of contact with Romans 15. In the first verse, here quoted, Gentiles are called upon to

praise God; and the reason given in verse 2 is that God is kind and true. In Romans 15:8,9, Paul speaks of the *"truth of God"* and of His *"mercy"*.

Fourth quotation—Isaiah 11:10. *"There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."* The root of Jesse, who is also called a branch from the stem of Jesse, is Jesus the Son of God. To him at last all will rally, and the Gentiles will find their *"hope"* (RV) in Israel's king. If the Messiah is the root as well as the branch, he must be of divine descent as well as Davidic. And the hope of the Gentiles which is associated with him has its basis in God's work in him.

"The God of hope"

In the invocation closing this portion of the letter, God is called the *"God of hope"*, the title suggested by the word in the passage quoted from Isaiah. The God of patience and of comfort is also God of hope. Paul would have them filled *"with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit"* (verse 13). Paul was appreciative of the great riches of Christ. He would have all reach out to the fulness of the blessings, all joy, all peace, and abounding hope.

Explanation for Writing (15:14-21)

The theme of the letter is concluded. The remainder consists of personal matters. With characteristic tact and courtesy he now enters into an explanation of his purpose in writing to Rome. He has not written to them because he considered they needed the teaching. He, himself, who had written so plainly, was assured that they were *"filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another"*. Head and heart, practice and precept went together. His object in writing so boldly in some parts of the letter, was to call to their remembrance the truths believed—and that because God had called him. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, not of his own choice, but of the grace of God.

In verse 16 he uses a figure from priesthood and sacrifice. He is a minister, appointed by Jesus, to the Gentiles,

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that they might be an offering to God. As the individual believer was exhorted to "offer himself a living sacrifice" (12:1), so the Gentile church is compared to an offering. Paul's ministry was to preach the gospel, to counsel and to exhort the believers. He wanted the offering to be acceptable, without spot and blameless, sanctified by the Holy Spirit in the message delivered unto them. He has then whereof to glory; but it is in Christ Jesus and not in himself. And it is not in the achievements of Paul, but "*in things pertaining to God*", in those things connected with his service to God under this figure of the priest that he is using. The same words occur in Hebrews 5:1, describing the duties of the priests under the law.

He ventures therefore to speak of the things that Christ has wrought through him; of his preaching and of the miracles he had been enabled to do by the aid of the power of God; word and deed together being effective in leading the Gentiles to obedience. His labours had resulted in the gospel being preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum, the eastern and western limits of his travels. He has "*fully preached the gospel*" thus far. To that extent he has worked out his plan. Rome in its unconscious preparation for the gospel had built good roads and made travel easier and safer than before. Paul, the Roman citizen, as Ramsay has shown, thought imperially. He followed the high roads which Rome had made, and planted the gospel in the great centres from which the light would radiate to all districts.

The one restriction he recognized was that he did not preach where others had worked before him. It was written of the Messiah that they should see who had not heard of him (Isaiah 52:15), and this had governed his actions.

Paul's Plans for the Future (15:22-23)

Now he passes to his plans for the future. The preaching of the gospel in other places—Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia—had hitherto occupied his time, but now he is free. For many years he had longed to see Rome, and from there to proceed further west to Spain. He hoped to be helped

forward by the church in Rome, having first enjoyed their company as much as possible under the circumstances.

“A contribution for the poor saints”

Before, however, he makes the journey, he has another work to complete. During his third journey he had been arranging a collection among the Gentile believers for the needy brethren in Palestine. The place this scheme had in his mind is seen from the allusions in other letters (1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9) and also in Acts 24:17. The names of the brethren who went with him as the delegates of the churches are mentioned in Acts 20:4,5.

Paul calls this collection a *“contribution”*, a word which denotes an act of partnership or fellowship. It indicates that Gentile and Jew were sharers of one hope and one faith, and in providing this help the Gentiles became sharers with the sufferings of the Jews. Paul doubtless hopes that this expression of practical sympathy would help to unite Jewish and Gentile believers. The Gentiles had willingly and gladly made the collection. They were indebted to the Jews for spiritual things, they had been *“partakers”*—had entered into fellowship with them of their good things—and could only repay by some service in temporal things. When he had completed this mission, then he would go by Rome into Spain.

Paul speaks of *“sealing this fruit”*. It is a commercial metaphor. Instances have been found among the recent discoveries of references to *“sealing bags of corn to prevent them being tampered with and so to secure them to the assignee”*.

The journey to Jerusalem successfully accomplished, Paul says he would *“come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ”* (verse 29). This may allude to his hope of uniting Jew and Gentile in one body. If successful in his mission to Jerusalem, and the Jews fully acknowledged Gentile fellowship, the fulness of the blessing of Christ, extending to all peoples, would have been recognized by all.

“That I may come unto you with joy”

Yet the mission was not free from danger. There were many bitter opponents whose aim was to thwart the very

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object he had in view. He therefore most earnestly requests their prayers that his service might be acceptable and that he may come in joy, by the will of God, to Rome, and with them be refreshed.

How real the dangers were which Paul here foresees! There was an attempt on his life before he left Greece, immediately after the letter to Rome was written. At Jerusalem he was arrested, and when at last he reached Rome he was a prisoner in chains. But even then the Word of God was not bound, but the partial freedom Paul enjoyed enabled him by voice and pen to continue his ministry. Whether he realized his hope of reaching Spain is not known with certainty. That he was released and spent a few more years in active work is evident both from the narrative of Luke and the epistles to Timothy.

The last words of this portion are a benediction: "*Now the God of peace be with you all.*" Strife and danger were immediately ahead. But there was an inward peace despite the outward turmoil. Jesus himself, but a few hours before his arrest, and with full knowledge of what was about to happen, could yet say, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you". "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." Paul so far learned of Christ that he speaks of peace in the midst of his troubles. God is the God of peace to His people, because there is a peace of God which guards their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Section V

PERSONAL GREETINGS (16:1-24)

THE last chapter of the letter is taken up with personal messages. First, Phebe, a sister, is commended. There seems little doubt that she was the bearer of the letter; as some business of her own was causing her to go to Rome, the opportunity was taken of sending the epistle with her. A letter of commendation was a usual procedure in New Testament times. The obligation to provide hospitality for fellow-believers, necessitated alike by the conditions of the time and the duties of fellowship, made an introduction desirable to prevent imposition. Compare 2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12, and other references.

“Phebe our sister”

Phebe is described as a servant of the church of Cenchrea, the port of Corinth on the east. The margin of the RV gives “deaconess” as an alternative to “servant”, suggesting that she held some official position in the ecclesia. But the word itself does not indicate the existence of an order such as came into being in later times, nor even of an ecclesial office. It has been remarked that the word does “not necessarily imply an office, but the devotion of a Christian woman to the service of the poor and sick”. Another says, “A life of habitual charity and hospitality, quite apart from any official position, would justify the word”.

It is, of course, quite possible that sisters were appointed to administer help and comfort to sisters, many of whom would lead secluded lives. In such a case they would perhaps correspond to the position of visiting sisters in the

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ecclesias today. But the proof of the existence of such an arrangement is not to be found in the word used here.

"A succourer of many"

The hospitality desired for her was "such as becometh saints"; with a brotherly and sisterly care as to one in the family, "in the Lord". She was worthy of this, for she had succoured many, including Paul himself. The apostle seems to have been suffering from some recurring malady. He recalls when writing to Corinth that at his first visit he was "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). It has been suggested that Paul may have recovered from a sickness at Cenchrea, as his vow "seems to point to a deliverance from danger or sickness" (Acts 18:18).

"Priscilla and Aquila"

After commending Phebe, Paul passes on to greetings to friends. First come Priscilla and Aquila, whom he describes as "*fellow-workers in Christ Jesus*" (verse 3). Paul found this couple at Corinth and lodged with them, working at the same craft. They had recently come from Rome and when the apostle left Corinth they accompanied him as far as Ephesus. While there they met Apollos and instructed him in the way of the Lord more fully. They joined Paul in greetings to Corinth when the first letter to them was written. Some years later they were in Ephesus again (2 Timothy 4:19). Since they had been in Rome before, and had so frequently moved from place to place, it is not improbable that they should have returned there, and so be in Rome when Paul wrote.

An "undesigned coincidence" has been found in the reference (verse 3) that Priscilla and Aquila had endangered their lives on Paul's behalf. We know that they were with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the riot led by Demetrius (Acts 19). Luke tells us that when Paul would have entered into the temple of Diana, "the disciples suffered him not". Paul wrote of his troubles in Asia, "that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2 Corinthians 1:8). Here then was probably the occasion when Priscilla and Aquila at great

personal risk exerted themselves on behalf of the apostle. Here also we may have the reason for their leaving Ephesus and returning to Rome.

We catch a glimpse of the conditions under which the brethren met in the first century. They had no buildings set apart for meetings, but those members for whom it was convenient placed a room at the disposal of the ecclesia. When at Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila provided accommodation for the meetings in their house (1 Corinthians 16:19), and at Rome they must have endeavoured to secure a house to enable them to exercise a similar hospitality. Wherever we meet this godly pair, they are earnestly engaged in the work of the Lord.

“My kinsman”

“*My well-beloved Epænetus*” is the next mentioned. He was the first-fruits of the apostle’s work in Asia—the RV, upon textual evidence, correcting the AV, which, in speaking of this brother as the first-fruits of Achaia, contradicts what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:15. The persons named in the next few verses are unknown apart from the reference here. The little things mentioned in connection with them show us how Paul remembered their help and how he valued his friends. Mary had “*bestowed much labour*” upon him; when or how we do not know, but Paul had not forgotten. Andronicus and Junius have four notes in connection with them. They are Paul’s kinsmen, a relationship they share with Herodion (verse 11), and three others named in verse 21.

“Kinsman” can describe either family or national relationship. The word was also used of membership of the “tribe”—a form of association which was established in the founding of the cities of Asia Minor by the Greeks. Ramsay suggests those named in this chapter as Paul’s kinsmen may have been fellow-members of the Jewish “tribe” of the Tarsian constitution. Andronicus and Junius are also called “*fellow-prisoners*”: this may mean that they had shared with Paul an imprisonment, or that they, as well as Paul, had suffered imprisonment. They were “*of note among the apostles*”, an ambiguous phrase, indicating

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either that they were well known to the apostles, or that they were well-known apostles, the word being used in a wider sense than that of the twelve.

Amplias is "*beloved in the Lord*". Urbane is "*our fellow-worker in Christ*". Stachys is "*my beloved*". Appelles is "*approved in Christ*".

Greetings are sent to "*the household of Aristobulus*", and to "*the household of Narcissus*". By these expressions the slaves are indicated.

"... who labour in the Lord"

"*Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord*", are sisters, and since "it was usual to designate members of the same family by derivatives of the same root", they were possibly sisters in the flesh and in Christ.

"*Persis the beloved*" is greeted. She "*laboured much in the Lord*". Paul speaks of brethren as "*my beloved*". It has been noted "as a sign of Paul's faultless Christian delicacy" that he "does not call this Christian woman 'my beloved'."

Greetings are sent to Rufus, generally identified as the son of Simon mentioned in Mark 15:21. He was eminent in Christ. With him in the salutation is conjoined "*his mother*"—and Paul adds in a very revealing touch—"and mine". We do not know when the mother of Rufus had "mothered" Paul. But "as one whom his mother comforteth" so had Paul been in this home. It suggests the comfort and encouragement and rest after toil and trial in a Christian home under the guidance of a large-hearted motherly sister in Christ. How Paul remembers!

After many others (verses 14-15) Paul exhorts all to "*Salute one another with a holy kiss*". This was an eastern mode of salutation, men thus greeting men, and women greeting women. Like all repeated things, it could easily become a formality. It had to be a genuine expression of fellowship and love. In modern terms, Paul would say, Do not let your handshake be formal, but sincere, expressing a genuine and heartfelt greeting.

Paul concludes these greetings with the words, "*All the churches of Christ salute you*" (verse 16). With him at this time were representatives of many ecclesias (Acts 20:4;

2 Corinthians 8:19-23); Paul was an apostle; in the circumstances, he can speak on behalf of all.

“Mark them which cause divisions”

An earnest warning against teachers who cause divisions comes next (verses 17-20). This danger was ever present to the mind of Paul. He told the Ephesian elders that “grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29,30). He warned Timothy that men would leave the truth and turn to fables, and entreated him to “guard the deposit” of the truth, as a banker responsible for treasure placed in his care. Here he beseeches the believers to “*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (verse 17). The introducers of false doctrine are those who cause division. When supported, the love of the truth declines, and the light of the gospel is dimmed. The consequences are terrible; declension is punished with darkness: “Because they received not the love of the truth ... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:10,11).

To some, the difficulties of avoiding such teachers is increased by the speciousness of their statements. They are pleasing in address and state a plausible case. In the apostle’s language, “*by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple*”. Actually, they serve themselves, not our Lord Jesus Christ, though there may be much profession of it.

The ecclesia in Rome had hitherto been on their guard. Counsellors such as Priscilla and Aquila and the others named, had doubtless had a marked influence, and false teaching had found no place there. Yet there was always danger. Therefore Paul adds, “I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil”—uninfluenced by evil.

“Bruise Satan under your feet”

The warning closes with a word of encouragement: “*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*”

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There is an evident allusion to the sentence on the serpent (Genesis 3:15). The serpent cast doubt upon the word of God and taught contrary to it. The false teachers were "ministers of Satan", and after the example of their prototype, they professed greater knowledge and ability to enlighten, and "transformed themselves into angels of light". But the crushing of the serpent will rid the earth of all who have taught lies. The serpent and his progeny (Matthew 3:7) will cease to be. Truth will triumph in the earth, for God will provide pastors who will have been exalted because of faithfulness in days of difficulty when the truth was little accounted of. Then all the world will hear, and nations will say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths".

Salutations in the Lord

Greetings are added from those present with Paul when the letter was written: Timothy, Paul's son in the faith, described as "*my workfellow*"; Lucius, possibly the one present at Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent on their first journey (Acts 13:1); Jason, who may be the one who "received Paul" at Thessalonica, and who was brought before the authorities of that city by the enraged and envious Jews; Sosipater, probably the Berean, who we know was with Paul at this time.

With the courtesy characteristic of him, at this point Paul turned to the brother who had been writing to his dictation: Will you send your greetings? And Tertius, the amanuensis, adds, "*I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord*".

Then Gaius, Paul's host, and the host of the Corinthian ecclesia, too, as occasion required, sends his salutation. Gaius was baptized by Paul himself (1 Corinthians 1:14). Erastus, who held the important office of city treasurer, joins his greetings. Last "*Quartus a brother*"—"the brother" (RV), or "his brother", as Moulton would translate it. But whose brother? The brother of Tertius of the preceding verse? In Acts 20:4, we read of Secundus. Have we here three of one family, all zealous workers with Paul? If so,

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one is constrained to wonder if some well-known name hides the identity of the first-born of the family which would then have provided *four* workers for Christ. Or is Erastus the first-born, and Quartus *his* brother?—the four being Erastus, Secundus, Tertius and Quartus.

Section VI

CONCLUSION (16:25-27)

IN the closing verses the thoughts of the epistle are summed up in phrases repeated from the earlier parts of the epistle. "Now unto God ... be glory for ever." God is He who is "*able to establish you according to my gospel*". Paul's gospel is outlined in the epistle he has written. In it is summarized what he must have spoken many times. If we would like an illustration of Paul's discourse, of his reasoning out of the scriptures, as his manner was, then we have it here. The spoken word is to many an easier way of learning. To that extent we are at a disadvantage. But the spoken word passes away, while the written word remains, and can be referred to again and again. If we would know its fulness, in its height and in its depth—the message Paul preached—we must know this letter, studying it chapter by chapter, verse by verse. He calls it "my gospel" in accordance with which God was able to establish them.

"The preaching of Jesus Christ"

The gospel concerns Jesus Christ. He is the great subject of it. The good news of salvation is bound up with him, and when Paul had penned "my gospel" he at once added, leaving no room for misunderstanding, as to the character of his gospel, "and the preaching of (about) Jesus Christ".

But who authorized Paul to preach his gospel? In the dispensations of God the time had come for the unfolding of God's plan to the Gentiles. The outworking of the purpose had for long been confined to Israel. But a secret had been revealed that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs with

CONCLUSION (16:25-27)

the Jews, and in Paul's preaching this was manifested to all nations for the obedience of faith.

The prophetic writings corroborated his message. To them in the letter, as in all his discourses, appeal is made. The Old Testament and the New Testament are mutually confirmatory. The meaning of the Old is unfolded in the New, in the proclamation of the mystery now made by the commandment of God.

It is all of God. The scriptures are of Him. Christ, who is the supreme subject of them, is of God. Paul, preaching peace and the fellowship of the mystery, is the ambassador of God to the nations. Paul's gospel, outlined in this wonderful letter, is the gospel of God. Thus he concludes:

"Now to him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery 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; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen."

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