

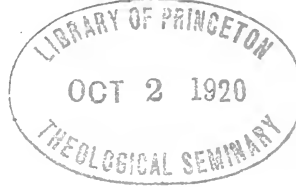








THE



EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS;

WITH

A COMMENTARY

AND REVISED TRANSLATION,

AND INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS,

BY

ABIEL ABBOT LIVERMORE.

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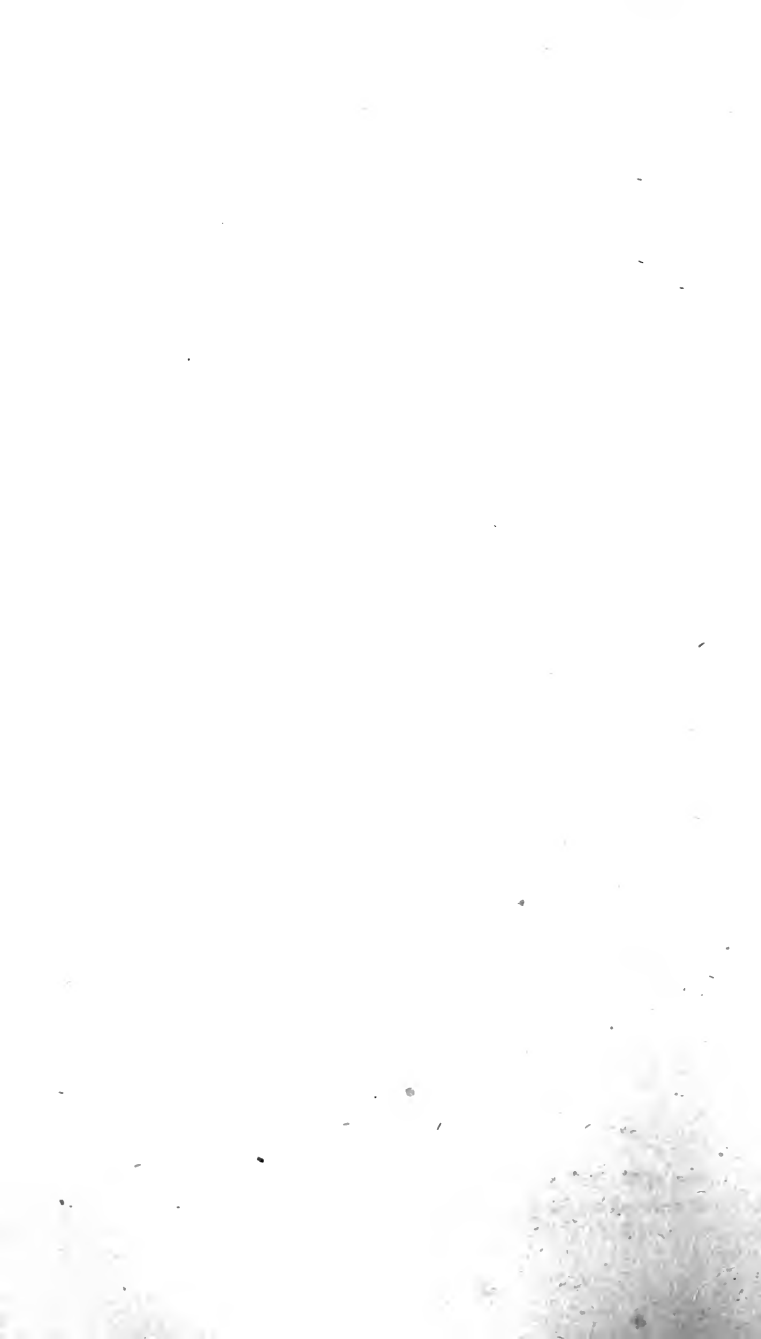
TO THE  
LIBERAL CHRISTIANS OF THE UNITED STATES,

THE  
CHURCH OF THE FUTURE,  
VARIOUS BODIES, BUT ONE SOUL,

THIS  
ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN AN EPISTLE, "HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD,"

IS  
AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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# INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS.

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## ESSAY I.

### THE BIBLE, INSPIRED AND INSPIRING.

THE question of the inspiration of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures is one of those great moral problems, which never are, but always are to be, solved. It was discussed in the earliest, and probably will be in the latest ages. For it is in part an historical inquiry, and different principles of historical judgment will lead to different conclusions. It is an intellectual and spiritual question, and therefore all the complexities of mental culture and moral character will come into play, and determine each person to his result. But perchance new words will not be thrown away on such a rich and sublime theme, pertaining to the point where the mind of God has connected itself with the mind of man. To-day, as in the morning prime of the Church, when learned fathers mused and wrote, the fresh dew rests upon it, and glistens bright to heaven. Ever new, as ever old, the march of human affairs, the novel experiences of the race, the arrival of new geniuses, and the successive crises of Christianity, cannot drain dry of interest to every conscientious mind the magnificent question.

Man still asks, and will for ever ask, as if it were too good news to be true, *Has* the Infinite Intelligence in any sense *spoken*? Is there a *Word* of God? Is there a whisper of

the Eternal Wisdom, a breath of the All-brooding Love? And if there is, is it worthy of its amazing origin, and fit for its glorious mission? Have the serene heavens articulated to the ear of the laboring Earth their lofty truths, and explained her dark secret? Has this little globe, where man sins in haste and repents at leisure, in all its revolutions through boundless space, ever grazed on the golden shores of immortality? Or, has no other light ever fallen from the sky but that of sun, moon, and stars; no other voice spoken in the great silence above than that of the deep-toned thunder; and no other spirit stirred in the bosom of man than his own restless heart? The ear of Mercy suffers not the cry of the young ravens to go unheard; has it not caught as faithfully "the still, sad music of humanity," and vibrated with answering compassion? In reply to such interrogations, we answer, in the first place, generally, Yes; there is a *Word* of God, more articulate than the lessons of the creation; the Highest has spoken, not with the accents of a mortal tongue, but by the revelation of wisdom and love, less clearly unfolded in the law by Moses, but shining forth in full effulgence in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

But as soon as we advance beyond this general proposition, we alight upon a hotly contested arena of theological warfare, where several theories find their several champions. First, we have the doctrine of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, or of the major part of them, and generally held by the Trinitarian churches. According to this view, the sacred writers were amanuenses to the Holy Ghost, to record whatever was dictated to them, word by word, and sentence by sentence. *The New Church*, or Swedenborgians, hold a similar theory, modified by the doctrine of an internal sense, and correspondences, and also by the rejection of the historical books of the Old Testa-

ment, and the Epistles of the New, as uncanonical. The Roman Church adheres to a literal and infallible inspiration of the books of the Bible; but then the truth thus conveyed is only to be administered in homœopathic doses to the mass of mankind, as they are able to bear it, under the lock and key of St. Peter, and his unerring successors in the papal chair. The belief in natural inspiration, — the inspiration of truth and love given to every man, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, but given to some more than others, shining more clearly in Moses and in Christ, in David and Paul, than in others, but shining also in Socrates and Seneca, — this belief is extensively diffused in Germany, and has strong advocates in England and America. By this rule all inspiration is of one and the same kind, and differs only in degree. But the doctrine we prefer is what may be called a moral inspiration; special, miraculous, *supernatural*, but not *unnatural*; above reason, but not irrational; a spiritual even more than an intellectual afflatus, vouchsafed in different degrees according to the age and its wants, from the baptism of the cloud to that of water, and thence to that of fire and the Holy Spirit, the dove and the cloven tongues. But according to this view, the Bible itself is not the identical inspiration, but a record of inspirations; a history, a monument, of that golden age, when the blind Earth, after all her far, solemn voyagings around the universe, put as it were into port, saw a vision of angels from the heavenly hills, and heard as the mighty sound of many waters the voice of her Sovereign.

We would remark, before commencing the argument in favor of any one of these theories, that this multifarious state of the question does not stagger our faith in the speciality of inspiration, and its uncounted value to mankind. For all great spiritual subjects must lie, from the nature of

the case, in indefinite and wavering outlines upon the general mind. Some will draw the circle here, others there. God, Jesus Christ, the soul, duty, truth, immortality, are all subject to this imperfect conception, and conflicting realization, and degrees of faith. Some ask, What precisely is inspiration? How much of it is in the Scriptures, or in particular books? What is the exact limit where the natural ceases, and the supernatural begins? We cannot tell any more than we can say exactly what reason, what genius, is. These points are in litigation as well as that of inspiration. One man says, genius is self-excitement; another, that it is the power of lighting its own fire; another, that it is transcendental intuition; and yet another, that genius is study; it is that in the mind which studies. But these various definitions cannot destroy our faith in the gift of God called genius, however hard it may be to define it. The doctrine of inspiration, or of supernatural genius, like the rest of its class, is neither definable, nor demonstrable by a multiplication, but by a moral, table.

Some one has said, that many men are convinced, but few are persuaded; the one being more exclusively a mental, and the other a combined mental and moral state. The fact of inspiration is based on impregnable intellectual grounds, but full justice is not done to it, until it makes its appeal to the deep spiritual experiences and moral sentiments of our being. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." "In his light we see light." "He that doeth his will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," or not. It is all the better, not the weaker, for this class of truths, that they cannot be decided by Euclid and the blackboard, but address the whole living man through the entire range of his faculties, and put to the test every drop of his manhood, be it in head, or heart, or hand. Give us, we say, these moral questions, which inclose in their discussion

education, character, life, conscience, as well as bold thought; for their agitation does us more good than other questions can by their settlement. Welcome the themes that overcome us with a new emotion, break the rusty chains of monotony, and lead us up to a mount of mystic Transfiguration. With human beings in every conceivable attitude toward the Infinite and Eternal, from defiant rebellion to adoring trust, how should any rigid uniformity of belief as to the nature, quantity, or mode of that aid by which God assists his striving children be possible? That must be a poor and small, not a wellnigh boundless question, which can be solved with absolute certainty, can be put into the scales and weighed with a pound of tea, or set down upon the slate and worked out by the rule of three. We make these remarks because the tendency of our material times is to be impatient of moral uncertainties and contingencies, and to call nothing true which cannot be proved, and nothing good which will not pay. Better the reign of the Schoolmen again, than that our vast and varied being should be shrivelled up to the materialism of business, or to the mere mechanics and mathematics of science. The elements which enter into this single question of inspiration are subject to the laws of two worlds. Both poles look towards an infinitude; one on the side of immortal man, and the other on the side of the Eternal God.

Then, again, in their use as well as their nature, it is all the better that moral problems, such as the one under consideration, do not, like the forty-fifth proposition, annihilate choice, and extort assent. That cannot be the greatest of questions which can be settled in this world. The Supreme Intelligence has not with his revelations sought to override the soul's birthright of freedom, but has tenderly respected the fearful play of the human will, as a privilege incalculably dear and valuable. Inspiration does not become dem-

onstration or infallibility. But the Church of Rome, for example, misunderstands human nature as much as she transcends her own sacred office, when she padlocks the mouth of discussion, and excommunicates all who do not bow in compliance with her own assumed exemption from error. She, a mortal Church, undertakes to do that which the Eternal One himself forbore to do out of his regard to man's moral freedom. But by inflicting a mortal wound upon reason, she has sentenced not man alone, but herself, to irrationality. She decrees that science, literature, and theology shall not move in this moving universe, and the retribution is sure as doom, that she herself shall be tied to the dead past, and die with it. Other bodies of Christians have sought to establish the same eternity for their fragmentary *ism*, and to shut the doors on all progress. But not in such wise has the wisdom from above been given to the family of man. The Infinite does not descend in fire from heaven to consume with his brightness the finite. The truths of inspiration are not refrigerators and silencers, but awakeners, of the intellect and the heart. Nothing is fixed, nothing final; ends become means, conclusions premises, to lead on and up to higher ends and nobler results, to God, to immortality, to the eternity of eternities. Hence, though above man so high, the Inspired One respects him, and teaches him to respect himself: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say; why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" The Scriptures are so wonderfully given, as to be an unfailing fount of wisdom, and yet they do not play the tyrant over the nature they were commissioned to redeem. Thus the Infinite gives, thus the finite receives in kind, wisdom, truth, love without end. Virtue under this system is no chain, but a deliverance from all chains, — perfect freedom, perfect joy. While every Christian must say with the deepest humility, "By the grace of

God I am what I am"; he will equally recognize that other hemisphere of truth, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find." For the Most High has delegated to his child the awful trust to some extent of self-creation, with its tremendous risks and its superlative happiness.

We would not dogmatize, then, on the subject of inspiration, or say that our theory is the only one consistent with the best influence of the Scriptures upon the inner and outer life, for we do not believe that the Great God has narrowed to such confines the flowing streams of his spirit. Upon whom doth not his light arise? Nevertheless, while we would not dogmatize, we are entirely and earnestly persuaded that wrong notions of the nature, extent, and method of divine aid blight with a killing mildew many of the fair blossoms of Gospel promise. For the exact fact, reality, truth, is always a million times better than any error, however moderate, or seemingly innocent. The distance between error and truth cannot be measured by any arithmetic of ours. Terrible evils in the long range of the future may be coiled up in the serpent eggs of some insignificant falsities of to-day. Good Christians do verily grow towards perfection under every variety of spiritual cultivation; but then the proposition stands for ever that the best method is the best, and that it is to be sought with the whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, as we love our Maker.

But one of the most common and fatal sources of error in regard to inspiration, as to all spiritual matters, is the inclination to run to extremes in opinion, and in no country more than America has this tendency been accelerated by the surrounding forces of society. It is an age of haste. We precipitate ourselves with the momentum of gravitation on whatever we undertake, and apply our minds to moral and political subjects as fiercely as our axes to the ancient forests. Americans like strong doctrines and strong laws.

The medium, which Horace pronounced most safe, is too tame for their exasperated genius. The law of extras and ultras is in the ascendant. Hence, remarkable results follow. They whet the five points of Calvin to their utmost sharpness, or break them off altogether. They raise the revival system to a white heat, and glory in putting their converts through quick. One distinguished divine declares Christianity to be a failure, and another alleviates the irrational dogma of original sin by the supposition of a pre-existent state. Hell has been stormed and carried by assault by one denomination, and the Devil himself unceremoniously reduced to a nonentity. Extreme individualism is crumbling up already broken sects into still smaller fragments, as if division were the only fundamental rule. Fanaticism knows no stop until it invents a new style of Mahometanism, and plants a new Mecca for the faithful in the valley of Utah. Rationalism drives on full tilt until it lands on the cloud banks of Pantheism. "That bourne whence no traveller returns" is now visited twenty times of an evening, and a railroad is not more thronged with comers and goers. The truth is, our young blood boils too hotly in the veins to give us the grace of strong, serene life. We are eager, rush headlong, go the whole, do not discriminate, and prefer smart, brilliant paradoxes to sound, moderate truths that are not startling. Nowhere on the planet does the moral pendulum oscillate with a wider sweep from side to side, because nowhere else are the faculties of the whole man mustered, as here, to the conflicts of politics, morals, science, and theology. These extravaganzas are more hopeful than harmful, for they show that the dead and buried souls of men have heard "the trump of resurrection"; and though they stagger awhile in their grave-clothes, as did Lazarus at the broken tomb, they shall soon hear a commanding voice of the Master, "Loose them; let them go."



To apply these remarks to the matter before us ;—we are satisfied, from the best inquiry and observation we can make, that a large number of persons of education and intelligence are out-and-out rationalists. The exaggerated statement of a writer in a late number of that very able religious newspaper, the *New York Independent*, is that four fifths of the young men of our country, who have so many lectures written for their special behoof, are sceptically inclined. We would qualify this by saying, that we are not hastily to infer that these times are more irreligious than others, for religion may be manifested now in new forms. But for all that, disbelief in some quarters has become a fashion ; while, on the other hand, the *Evangelical* churches, as they exclusively term themselves, are insisting in their books and tracts, with even stronger emphasis, on the extreme views of a verbal and plenary inspiration, as if alarmed at the daring invasions of human reason. But a split must come ere long even among them, and already the charges of heresy are hurled as ready missiles from the lofty battlements of more than one of their seats of learning at some peccant man or school. But it is a peculiarity of evil, that it cannot be overcome by evil ; only good is a champion equal to that encounter. We would modestly propose to act as mediators between the extreme right and the extreme left, and with our Unitarian views point out what we regard as a more excellent way. We would show the rationalist, that the highest act of human reason is to discern and receive the lessons of the Divine Reason, and that his theory makes revelation an even greater wonder than it was before with the doctrine of miracles. We have not credulity enough to believe in his view, as he says he has not enough to believe in ours. On the other side, we would show the advocates of a verbal dictation, that, so far as the supposed advantages of such a process are concerned, a miracle would

still be necessary in every case to guard each mind from error in perusing the book thus written; for the difficulties of language, translation, various education and spirituality, still intervene, and shatter their perfect white light of truth into the sevenfold dyes of the rainbow. The subject must be insured against error, as well as the object rendered immaculate, else their case is not made out. But the discrepancies of testimony confirm the honesty of the witnesses, the varieties of intellectual and moral power charm us as in a work of genius, and the age-long language and world-wide character of the book set it heaven-high above the range of suspicion that it was the work of a clique or the project of a conspiracy. This theory confounds all simplicity, and destroys all progress. It makes the Old Testament as good as the New, and sets the Gospels on the same level with the Epistle of Jude or the Book of Revelation.

But such is the craving for excitement, the appetite for bold, extreme views, that the moderate man is charged with want of moral courage. Because a man does not startle the world with turning Romanist on one side, or Pantheist on the other, it is gravely suggested that he is deficient in independence. Strong, piquant statements fascinate the world, though the truth may be crucified between them. The main aspect of religious controversies is, that both parties are so wide of the mark, that you care little who succeeds. It is the potsherds of the earth, grinding one against another;—let them grind. How faintly do we as yet see that the truth, the truth, winnow it clean as we can from the chaff of corruptions, is all-important, and infinitely valuable, and worthy of a world more of pains, studies, and sacrifices than we make, to secure it without spot or blemish.

Another error and evil in the consideration of this question of Biblical inspiration and authority is, that all its

contents have been merged in one volume, the writers all squared by the same standard, the characters all required to be morally perfect, the same Procrustean rule applied as the test to the Song of Solomon and the Sermon on the Mount. No moral perspective has been observed, and no moral imagination has been exercised, in recreating and reconceiving the diversified life of the ancient world. The Scriptures we hold to be inspired, a speciality in literature, an authority in faith, "the law of the spirit of life," — a book which man, or men, could not have composed, collected, and commissioned — one paramount key-note sounding from beginning to end — unless the writers had enjoyed an illumination superior to what Virgil received in writing his poems, Xenophon his histories, or Shakespeare his plays. But then the inspiration is not one in quantity or one in quality throughout. It has rises and falls, lights and shadows, expansions and contractions, of the divine element. So it is in the works of creation; why not then in the works of grace? We do not presume to tie up the Infinite Power to one mode of operation in matter; why should we in the yet more boundless realm of spirit? In this characteristic, we submit, the Bible is a natural book, it lies like fair Nature herself, vast, varied, unequal, beautiful, amazing, but holding an infinity of particulars subordinate to the one grand strain. It is a book which steers clear of the common vanity of authors; one in which the writers claim little for themselves, but all for their subject, — are sometimes unknown, — do not override the freedom of man, — at times say they speak as men; but yet a book in which one harmonious and ever-brightening radiance of the religious sentiment shines, from Old to New, from Adam to Christ, and the idea of God, and man's duty to him, sit enthroned and sovereign. It is a history, poem, hymn, sermon, prophecy, argument, dialogue, essay, fiction, tragedy, and its sweep of

variety is equal to its steadiness of aim. In such a state of things, to plant a genealogy from Chronicles side by side with the beatitudes, and to attempt to extract as much spiritual nutriment out of the sketches of the rude Philistines and Edomites as from the Epistles to the Corinthians, seems to be a confounding of all moral distinctions. The Canon has always been in discussion; some receiving more and others less; Luther stigmatizing the Epistle of James as an epistle of straw, and Swedenborg rejecting those of Paul from the word of the Lord, as not of the highest authority and spirituality. Now we contend that the spiritual and vivifying power of the Scriptures is not impaired, but enhanced, by this various dealing with its contents, and this miscellaneous condition of the book itself. For man was not made to be most influenced by set rules, but by large principles; not by an abstract creed, confession, or constitution, indited after the manner of a legal instrument, but by a mingling in one volume of all the methods of literary and moral composition. The very state of the Bible, which is objected to as invalidating its authority, is most favorable for awakening attention and inquiry, speaking to different stages of culture, and leaving human freedom inviolate. Each one calls that part best, which is best suited to his state of character. He reads what he affects. He calls that inspired which to him is inspiring, and he truly judges that the height of the cause must bear some proportion to the depth of the effect. So tenderly has the right of free judgment been respected, and so little has the human mind been overborne by the wisdom from on high, that thus far the major portion of the Christian world is buried in Judaism, sticks to Moses and the Prophets, and has not yet reached Jesus and his glorious company of Apostles, nor heard the angelic song of Glory to God, and peace on earth, nor the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, nor

the prayer on the cross. But by the refining and reforming processes of Christian thought, Judaism is gradually waning from its supremacy, is chiefly valued as it stands connected with the Gospel as its antecedent, and because its records are the treasure-house of such unequalled strains of devotional poetry, golden sentences of wisdom, and sublime prophecies, while the Gospel is daily rising to its just sovereignty, as the effectual instrument for the regeneration of the whole world.

According to the declarations of the book itself, revelation is progressive, the Jewish Scriptures containing a promise, and the Christian a fulfilment of the same. It is remarkable that, while all other nations placed the age of gold in a remote past, the Hebrews dated it in the far-off future. But if there are these gradations in the general system from the law of Moses to the love of Christ, why should it be a thing incredible, that there are degrees of illumination, and that, while to One was given the Spirit "not by measure," to others of the sacred speakers and penmen it was granted as they were fitted to bear it, or as the wants of the time required? Among miracles there may be the greater and the less; why should not the supernatural as well as the natural works of God exhibit variety? We may not be able to tell the precise quantity or quality of inspiration in a given case, as we often find it difficult to determine the exact calibre of a genius, and define the position of a Wordsworth in one age, or a Smith in another; but when we see the sun, we say without hesitation, "There is the king of day," though we may be unable to compute the temperature, number, or essence of his beams. So we say of the Bible, "There is the sun of suns, with light from beyond the empyrean." Like the mighty luminary of the sky, it has some dark spots on its disc, but when we candidly examine it, and see its incomparable superiority to

the sacred books of other nations ; when we find it so suggestive of spiritual truth, dealing with the highest relations, duties, and prospects of man as it respects God, the universe, and futurity ; when we contemplate the unity and progressive nature of the plan it unfolds, and consider that the agents who were concerned in it lived thousands of years apart, and that the conspiracy to impose upon mankind, if conspiracy it was, ramified over distant generations, and embraced a long line of the greatest and best men who have lived on the earth, with Jesus Christ at the head, and that these men lifted up a light in the world which would condemn their own characters if their purposes had been dishonest ; and when we reflect upon the results of this work in the world, its duration, its subjection of different ages, nations, and civilizations more or less completely to its controlling spirit, its rich and unceasing development of truth to suit the progress of man, new germs coming out of old seeds ;— upon a calm survey of all this ground, we cannot doubt that the Scriptures contain the record of a supernatural revelation from God, mingled indeed more or less with the individualities, and of course the imperfections, of the persons who indited them, but possessing an inspiration and an authority, in addition to their truth, not granted to other books of wisdom and genius. It is philosophical to account for a stupendous effect by seeking for an adequate cause, and we confess we can discover no cause able to produce the effect the Bible has had upon the world except its special and inspired character. No other sacred books have claimed universality, or insisted upon being heard in the forum of conscience and the privacy of the heart, as the unerring guide, as the perfect comforter, as the life-giving inspirer. It is not criminal to neglect to read Plato's Dialogues, — other things may more than make up for that loss ; but it is criminal to neglect to read the New

Testament, for he who misses that loses a great good, which no library of Alexandria or the Vatican can supply.

It has sometimes been said, in reply to these views, that the volume does not claim to be inspired, and that it sets up for itself no such superiority as its advocates allege in its behalf. But to this we answer that it does contain a "*Thus-saith-the-Lord*," repeated many times, and that however we may make that phrase a mere Hebraism to express a good impulse, or a dictate of reason and conscience, yet we cannot avoid the conclusion that the conduct of the Prophets and of the Apostles was often regulated by some principle or communication from above, different from the ordinary exercise of the human faculties. If it is replied that these were peculiar men, gifted religious geniuses, aboriginal saints and sages, then we would inquire, why other nations, far more favored by education, position, and native talent, have not been able to produce, we do not say a whole list like that of the Hebrew commonwealth, but even one solitary character of a faith like Abraham's, of a purity like Joseph's, of a wisdom like that of Moses, of devotional song like the Psalms of David, of hallowed imagination like that of Isaiah, of a charity like the love of John, and of a zeal equal to Paul's. The Israelites were once slaves, a stiff-necked people, according to their own candid history, not richly endowed either intellectually or morally, hard to be improved, easy to backslide; yet they supply a cluster of religious leaders, reformers, and idealists, such as the world has never witnessed before or since,—such as not merely one nation, but all nations, cannot match. And when upon such pillars the capital was set,—the Lord of glory,—the Temple of the Most High was perfected on earth. These men speak and act as for God, and not man, and, inspired with a holy spirit themselves, they have become divinely inspiring to others, who have even so much

as touched the hem of their garments. The mighty cause has achieved a sublime effect. We rather would say, that it is an eminent feature of this book that it *does* claim a rightful supremacy over the faith and obedience of all men, a kingdom of heaven over all the kingdoms of earth. They *do* speak in character, and they unconsciously assume, when they do not directly express, their right and title to enlighten and guide every man's mind, heart, and conscience before his Maker. Especially in the New Testament, where the plan of thousands of years culminates to its glorious consummation, the assumption by Jesus and his Apostles of more than human wisdom and authority is plain as the noonday. If this were fanaticism, it combined with it a discretion and a power to substantiate its claims, such as no other fanaticism ever afforded, and such too as no other wisdom of the wise, nor power of the strong, has been able to present. If this were dishonesty, it was coupled with the most remarkable purity of private life, fervor of self-sacrifice, love of the truth, and devotion to the good of mankind. If it is so easy for poets to sing like David, for preachers to argue like Paul, and if it was only a rare religious genius who spoke through the wondrous lips of Jesus, then we would earnestly press the question till it is answered, Why, why has the history of six thousand years been so destitute of such instances? Why cannot vast Christendom now, with its rich experience, its cultured mind and heart, yield one work, or small chapter, or hymn, that shall be read without blame along with the seventeenth chapter of John, or the fifteenth of the First of Corinthians; one that shall carry such a weight of spirituality, that shall so speak to the depths of the moral nature, and announce the duties of a race with such an easy and natural majesty, as the beatitudes and golden rules of the Galilean carpenter?

The argument of permanency is a strong one in behalf of



an inspired and authoritative revelation. Wise Egypt, polished Greece, and proud Rome, as institutions, exist no more; but homely Judæa, as an institution, lives, spreads, emigrates, and lays hold of immortality. Assyrians, Tyrians, and Romans, as races, are obsolete, but the Jews are shone upon by to-day's sun in every latitude and longitude, a quite universal people, hale and hopeful from the battle of three thousand years. The pivot of the argument is here, that the religion and polity of this wonderful people, though superseded by their development and exhaustion in Christianity, were so potent with vitality from their divine origin, that they live on and keep the heart warm and the soul firm from generation to generation, long after the original impulse has been transferred elsewhere. If Judaism, the incipient institution, have such longevity, what will be the duration of Christianity, its full-grown power? The Veds of Hindooism, the Morals of Confucius, the Oracles of Zoroaster, the Koran of Mahomet, are doomed and declining. None of these have been able to get the least hold upon the Western and ascending races; they are imbedded only in the Eastern and perishing races. The seeds of truth from Judæa flying westward have taken root, and the fate of Babylon has not been the fate of Jerusalem, to die out of all memory and affection of mankind. Our domestic Mahometanism of the Great Salt Lake, and its volume of fables, contain the elements of a speedy dissolution. This book, on the other hand, does not die, but lives; is translated into many scores of languages and dialects, and diffused like the leaves of Vallombrosa, east, west, north, south, to the ends of the world. Other systems, propped up by colossal pillars of empire, buttressed and fortified by hoary customs, are waning, and dropping piecemeal; but this volume is young and beautiful to-day, and no thought yet has gone higher than its thought of God, no love has welled up

from such depths as its love of God. How shall we speak befittingly of the difference between the two cases, except we say, "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" ?

Then look at its power of resistance against all the enginery brought to bear upon it in these hard-headed Western nations. All species of scepticisms have taken their turns at it to demolish it,—the scorn of Lucian, the philosophy of Hume, the history of Gibbon, the science of France, the freedom of Paine, the rationalism of Germany, the materialism of England and America ; but none of these things essentially move it. For they who say of the Church, "We have sapped its life," and of the Scriptures, "Lay that volume on the upper shelf," have not read the papers, and are not living in the living world. Indeed, they have no more apprehension of the zeal, number, breadth, and success of the Christian enterprises now on foot, and wafting their promises to every clime, than a babe has of the powers of language. We well know how even learned men may refine and re-refine their theories, and run off upon a wrong track, until they lose all hold of the realities of the universe, and their arguments and their principles become as baseless as the fabric of a dream. Is it not so with this class ?

We press the inquiry, then, How happens it, if this revelation does not contain the special, inspired truths of the divine and otherwise and hitherto incommunicable reason of the Absolute and Infinite One, that the more the din of appetite and passion is hushed, and the still, small voice of reason is heard,—that the farther and the loftier science and learning swell their triumphs,—that the more arts and inventions are perfected,—and, in a word, the more deeply the human soul enters into the knowledge of the scheme of creation,—the more widely does this scroll fly abroad in the earth, scattering its leaves as from the tree of life for the

healing of the nations? If not consentaneous with the higher than human plane of thought, how has so old a book, so new and young a power, permeating with its spirit education and government, art and literature, leading the world's leaders, burning in the lyrics and stories of freedom and the appeals of temperance, and melting in the accents of peace, and smoothing the seamed and haggard face of society with every lovely feature an angel might wear? That the Bible, asbestos-like, can stand the fire and light of modern investigation, and grow purer and brighter by the searching analysis; that it becomes mistress of the hardiest races, and is spread most widely throughout two nations and fifty millions of haughty Anglo-Saxons, and that, unsatisfied with any past achievements, it goes on conquering and to conquer;—these are presumptive evidences of no little weight in support of some remarkable power in these books, unknown before. For we still urge the question upon every reflecting mind, Why have the rebellious Hebrews effected a result to which the philosophical Greeks, the sagacious Romans, the devout Arabs, the contemplative Hindoos, the brilliant Persians, and the moral Chinese, have proved unequal? By what wit or wisdom were they of a provincial state able to accomplish the universal and the eternal kingdom? We know no better solution than the words of Jesus on a like occasion,—“Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

This lofty superiority of the Gospel especially has been well expressed by Ackermann, in his work entitled “The Christian in Plato.” He says, as quoted in the *Christian Examiner* for January, 1839:—

“We affirm that, out of the Church of the Lord, there never was a more Christian philosophy than the Platonic. We affirm that Christianity,—which from the beginning lay in the bosom of history,—before its bodily appearance

in the person and life of Jesus, had reached a degree of perfection in the minds of thinking men, who were inquiring after divine truth,—and this ideal gospel was Platonism. In uttering this, we have said the most and the best of him which we can say with a well-grounded conviction. Platonism can never have more than an ideal power and greatness.

“ But now if Platonism, by its ideal nature, its religious sublimity, the perfect beauty of its dialectic form, is so admirably fitted to astonish and inspire the thinking, and to win all souls that aspire after the Divine,—how great, how infinitely great, must be the hidden, inward power of the plain words of the humble Jesus, which, though destitute of all that is so enchanting in Platonism, have not only established a mighty Church, but have triumphantly outlasted Platonism, its most venerable and most powerful antagonist! And if, as is well known, in the whole philosophical literature of ancient and modern times, no production can be found which equals Platonism in its æsthetic perfection of form, in profoundness, in wealth of ideas, and in the lofty soaring of a spirit inspired by God, how incomparably high must Christianity stand, since we see the loftiest work of human art and wisdom far beneath it!”

But in advocating the characteristic of a special inspiration in the Scriptures, we encounter some who reject it on the basis of a mistaken intellectualism. They wellnigh adore, it may be, the specialities of genius, their Goethe, or Carlyle, or Coleridge, but recoil from the specialities of inspiration, the Isaiah, the James, as something contracted and canting. We would suggest to any such, that thought must be incarnated, and that that wisdom is most wise which walks among men and mingles with their life its pure and holy stream. These persons profess, to use one of their own terms, *to ignore* the moral, and look upon mere thought

as the chief immaterial power, and for inspiration they write genius. But the point is, that by this step they lose not only the rich spiritual experiences of a believer in a special Christianity, but they in reality forego the grandest form and the most enduring which intellectual energies can achieve, and that is wisdom. We live in an age and a land where smartness, shrewdness, cunning, and brilliancy of thought are esteemed as the most regal gifts of the mind, and full-orbed and compacted wisdom is put at a lower figure, if it have not the trumpets of praise and self-love to blow its own progress. The leading sceptics, however, as a general rule, have not been the first-class minds, the immortal few who have led the ages, but they have been themselves the thing they most admired in others, ingenious, smart, active, shrewd intellects, but not clothed upon with Miltonic thunder or Newtonian light. The ingenuity which can invent a new steam-engine, or discover a better method of growing peaches, is not always associated with the other attributes which are requisite to appreciate the lofty, contemplative thought, the impartial wisdom, the august reverence before highest Heaven, the fervent and life-and-death devotion to the truth, and the all-embracing charity, of Him who spake as never man spake. Let those who are disposed to reject revelation, in any form or degree, understand that in doing so they are not taking a higher, but a lower, intellectual, as well as moral position, than the full receiver. The brilliant eccentricities of genius delight us for a time, but they soon become "stale, flat, and unprofitable." Intellectual dynasties rise, flourish, and decline. At certain periods of life we are Byronic, then Carlylian, then Franklinian, then Shakespearian. At certain ages, of Pericles, Augustus, or Queen Anne, a special form of literature, shaped by the ideas which have then come to light, is developed, superseded, and in time fossilized into the perma-

ment formations of which our intellectual earth is built up. But it is the solitary glory of the book of books, God-breathed and life-giving, to arch itself over all ages; and while

“His truths upon the nations rise,  
They rise, but never set.”

In the wisest intellects of Greece and Rome there is a certain unsoundness; we feel that they have not got hold of the true theory of the universe and intellectually thought the thoughts of God. Hence, upon their works must be written, “*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*” They are read and will ever be read by a few of the learned, and known as mighty names and spells of power by a larger class of the intelligent, but they exert no real controlling power on the mind of universal humanity. They are not strong, wise, all-sided, and absolute enough to hold the spiritual sceptre of the ages. Before Christianity got fairly under weigh, Platonism and the Aristotelian philosophy for a time quite overbore it; but as it has won for itself a larger freedom, and spread over a greater extent of mind, it has sloughed off these earlier corruptions, and it has, and it will, more and more become itself, in its native spirit of power, and love, and a sound mind, and reign sovereign over the philosophy, as well as the morals, of the world, and inspire art, science, and literature with their inmost wisdom, as much as piety and philanthropy with their justifying and rapturous sentiments. We may rest doubly assured, that no mere feeble work of mind, however elevated in moral tone, could thus master the masters of the mental sphere. The testimony of such imperial natures as Taylor, Milton, Pascal, Locke, Newton, Bacon, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, demonstrates that they felt a deep in the Scriptures calling upon the deep in their own being; or, as the last has expressed it, that in “the Bible there is more that *finds* me, than I

have experienced in all other books put together ; that the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being ; and that whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

But it is said, What do you gain by your speciality of revelation ? You only receive at the most the truth, and the rejecter of inspiration receives as much as that, and more than that is folly or superstition. Is he not as happy in his unbelief, as you are in your belief ? Does he not extract as much good from life, and from the great Nature, and encompassing Providence, and solemn Past, as you do ? We must reply, that, according to our views, he loses much every way. He misses intellectually no little of the power which the full conviction of faith would give ; and he fails of receiving in the heart that peculiar peace and rest of soul, which come from reposing on the promises of God, and feeling that they are his promises, and that, if these fail,

"The pillared firmament itself is rottenness."

The more earnest the faith, the more do we rise from the din and smoke of earth into the stormless calm and azure of heaven's heights. Life then assumes ever a deeper meaning, a tenderer joy, a more heart-felt satisfaction. We pass within the outworks to the life of life ; and the zest of youth and spring is again fresh in sense and soul. For in the Scriptures we look at all things from a divine, not a human stand-point, and the joy and strength and love of the Highest pass into us while we are beholding. And then also, in those darker days, when "the house we live in" begins to decay, and "mind and memory flee," how securely does the devotee to this higher wisdom and love witness the desolation going on, and hear the busy carpenters tearing down the scaffolding of his existence, only that his true being may stand out in all its simple beauty and reality !

He knows as Plato never knew ; and the special wisdom of God hath appeared to bring this life and immortality to light, that, though "his outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day"; and "that, if his earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, he has a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

As the Scriptures are inspired, so, if faithfully used, do they become life-awakening and soul-inspiring. As they are living, their pupil is living likewise ; as they are wise and loving, he is changed into the same image from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. The soul of the world is brutish, and its ear dull of hearing ; but when God thunders and lightens out of heaven, men cannot but look up with awe ; and when he says, in the still, small voice of love, though it thrills through the soul more than all the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," they cannot but hear him, and they have heard him more than any or all other teachers for twenty centuries, and they will go on hearing him for ever.

We live, in truth, in an image-breaking age. We are impatient of the past, because forsooth it is the past. We bid it good-by, and seem to care not to meet it again. Our young country stands straining on the lists, champing the bit till it is white with foam, and hot with impatience to thunder forth and scour the plain in still wider circles of enterprise, and challenge still prouder victories over matter and over men. Young America is a terrible power in the earth. But the voice of the Master, mightier than that of any earthly potentate, shall be able to say, "Peace, Peace!" instead of war, to this Hercules, and he shall sit clothed and in his right mind.

But in order that the inspiration in the Bible may become



inspiration in us, we must read, and muse, till the fire burns. The deep book must be read with our deepest mind. "If the well is deep, and we have nothing to draw with, from whence then can we have that living water?" Voltaire confessed that he had not even read the whole of the book upon which he poured out such a merciless scorn. Other infidels have confessed to a similar neglect. We say, then, for honesty's sake, give as much study to your theology as you do to your geology or astronomy, your navigation, engineering, or farming, and "hasten slowly" in making up a final judgment on a collection of books so various, so reverend, and so ancient. But if you weigh it carefully, and drink in its spirit, if you read and re-read its Job and its John, and con its moral tables and golden rules, and exult in its songs, and hush your heart with its prayers, and descend depth after depth into the passion and pathos of Jesus, and, after all this spiritual process, you still find it to be only a bundle of Jewish and old wives' fables, then you will have falsified, we do not say the highest yearnings and moral instincts of your own being, but the colossal testimony of the ages, the innermost experience of the wisest men of the Christian ages. He who turns from the book, when he has thus taken it home to heart and head, has not only to disclaim the power of the Scriptures, but he has got a yet harder battle to fight with history, to deny "Christianity as an existing power in the world, and Christendom as an existing fact, with the no less evident fact of a progressive expansion."

But were we never so familiar with the Scriptures, and could we rehearse *memoriter* its psalms and its parables, it is not then by any means to be laid aside, as an old-world book, which we have learned out. The Bible can never be exhausted in that way. If it wears threadbare, it is to the superficial and cold, not the warm-hearted and the deep-

souled. We honor God in matter by going to see his Great and his Fair, and we should honor him in mind by admiring yesterday and to-day and for ever the types of his Great and his Good, the heroes of his earlier, and the saints of his later dispensation. We greet with all hail the spring and the song of birds; we walk in the autumn wood without weariness; and with fresh delight and wonder revisit Niagara and the Alps, the Atlantic and the Rhine. Why should we not commune with the Super-Nature, the Soul of things, with new inspiration? Here is the oldest history, the purest theism, here are the wisest laws, the highest idealities of the spirit-world, and the thoughts of the Son of God. There may be a familiarity which breeds contempt, but there is an intimacy which ripens into love. The use of the Bible promiscuously in schools, to be spelled and murdered by dullards of the form, may be injurious, but its reverential and early reading by childhood must be favorable to clearness of intellectual vision, as well as purity of heart. It may be so read as to enslave, not free, the soul; there is such a superstition as Bibliolatry, but when intelligently and reverently studied and digested into the mind, it becomes the charter of the fairest freedom, as well as the missal of the lowliest faith and penitence. Then we would say, let these holiest words be lisped by children at their mother's knee, and let them circle round the fireside of home, and let them make musical and devout the walls of school-room and capitol. Life is too hard with soul-seducing temptations and crushing afflictions, for us to cast away this balm of the heart, this munition against evil. Verily we cannot estrange ourselves from this wise and mighty counsellor without losing something of the best part of life, and vacating a domain of rich experience, refined intellectual culture, and sweet and happy ideas of God and life and life's future, for the want of which no amount of earthly prosperity and

pleasures, though broad as the sea and countless as the sands on its shore, can ever compensate.

Inspiration is not infallibility ; else it must be subjective in the mind of each receiver, as well as subjective in the mind of the giver. Inspiration is no chain of compulsion, either to the intellect or the heart. High and holy as it is, and descending from the heaven of heavens, it falls gently on the soul, as the rain comes from the zenith, nor mars nor breaks a single petal of the tenderest flower. Though coming from above, it is, like all light, discolored by the atmosphere it passes through, and issues to us as Mosaic, Pauline, Johannine, or Petrine. Inspiration is not, again, perfect character, any more than it is perfect knowledge. It is a help, not a substitute, for our natural powers. The men inspired may not always be the men perfect ; there is in them likewise the play of the terrible engine of the will. It is as Peter said of the miracle done to the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, so of the world taught,—“ Why marvel ye at this ? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we made this man to walk ? ” It was not because they were so perfect in character, or so wise in intellect, beyond all other men, that Paul and John spoke as they did, but because they were illuminated from on high that they and all men might become more wise and more perfect. Inspiration casts no discredit on human nature, but it honors and glorifies it rather, that it can be the sharer and congenial recipient and user of so heavenly a wisdom. It has no conflict with, and assumes no haughty precedence of, reason and genius, but, on the contrary, the intellectual kings and princes of the race have bowed their laurelled heads at the foot of the cross, and have felt glorified, not humiliated, by the act. In its light they have seen light, and been made strong and beautiful as angels by its life and its love. From its elevated plane of vision, they

have spoken with a second-hand inspiration, and have kindled anew the failing hope of the world, and disarmed the problem of despair, the destiny of man.

O wonderful Bible! book of the ages, theme of David and Paul, of Moses and Jesus! a recorded revelation from Infinite Wisdom to frail, ignorant man, sitting in sackcloth and ashes! Egypt is gone, but a race of slaves from her bosom have been the teachers and leaders of the nations. Greece and Rome, too, have had their rise and growth, decline and downfall, and they too are gone; their mythologies and their philosophies have crumbled with their Parthenons and their Pantheons. But this mighty river of thought, the confluence of divers streams of wisdom on the highest subjects of God and the soul and the soul's eternity, taking its rise in the remotest mountains of antiquity, flowing down with an ever-accumulating volume and power through successive climes and countries, bearing on its broad bosom the freight of untold treasures,—corn from Egypt, gold from Ophir, myrrh and frankincense from Arabia, silks from Persia, oil and honey from Syria, and its own richest wealth from Judah's sacred mount,—still pouring onward with its deepening and resistless tide, as from the hollow of God's own hand, at once giving a refreshing draught to a thirsty soul, and fertilizing provinces and kingdoms with its inexhaustible streams;—what if it have a tinge and a taste from the soils it has passed through, a sediment from the affluence of its tributaries, and a bitter and a sweet from the luxuriant vegetation which adorns its banks and dips into its current? Is it not still the Great River of the waters of life, making glad the city and church of our God, rolling ever onward with its majestic sweep, and carrying with it the innumerable commerce from every kindred and tongue and people under heaven toward the Greater Sea?

## ESSAY II.

### THE EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE New Testament has, properly speaking, four kinds of writings embraced in it, the Life of Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels, the History of the Founding of his Church in the Acts of the Apostles, the Commentaries of the Apostles themselves on their Master's work and doctrine, and their own, in the Epistles, and a mystic, magnificent Prophecy at the conclusion, in the Book of Revelation. There is, therefore, an epic order and completeness in the volume. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end, or rather the beginning of an end. Biography in the Gospels, History in the Acts, the Epistles, and Prophecy in Revelation, make up the fourfold literature of the New Testament. And whatever may be said, or conjectured, of the way in which these writings were preserved, and gathered into one volume at last, we cannot doubt that the providence which was in their production was also in their preservation.

The Epistles are all characteristic. They are no vain repetitions of one another, and though they contain no new doctrines, or additional substance of the Gospel, they give new views of its relations to the existing systems of faith and practice at that time in the world. They reflect decidedly the style of thought and character of those who wrote them, and contain internal evidence of their real authorship. Paul's pen moves, like himself in his missionary tours, in impetuous sallies against error and superstition and sin, but not without an instinctive, though not a formal, order and logic. John's word is Love, love of God to men, love of

Christ, love of men to God and Christ and one another,—love at first, love at last, love midway. James is an essayist, gives the reasons of things, moralizes, and philosophizes, and illustrates. Peter breaks out with the noble impulses of his fiery zeal, and glories in his personal evidence of the dignity of the Lord. While Jude mingles the light of the new with examples from the older dispensations, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws a detailed comparison between the Jewish and the Christian system in favor of the latter.

The Epistles thus written by Apostles and apostolic men were the earliest commentaries upon the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we have their deeds, in the Epistles we have what is equally interesting, their words. They add no fresh matter to the Gospel, as some critics have asserted, nor increase by a single unit or fraction the truths of Christianity. But they have an exceeding charm, as showing what impressions the new light made as it broke on the human vision, what new experiences it wrought, how the new state of mind and character agreed with the old, what plans, theories, explanations, conjectures, hopes, followed their conversion, what was their posture of mind in presenting the Gospel to others, and how it stood the test of time and trial, and with what prophecies and promises they cast it, when they meditated their own cessation from the work, into the bosom of the mighty Future. Nothing could indeed be more opportune to the cause of the Christian religion than thus to have the very letters of apostles and disciples on the subject nearest to their heart, written from the midst of the great work of preaching the Gospel to the world. These writings cannot stand as high, as an authority of what Christianity is, as the words of Jesus himself, but they illustrate those words, show how they took root in human nature at that period, how they

were misunderstood or misapplied, and what guards, cautions, encouragements, were necessary for the infant Church.

Especially in the selection of Paul to give the largest testimony of this kind, we see a certain impartiality of Providence. A person is called, not of the original Twelve, one unbiassed by personal attachment to Jesus, unacquainted with his life, but one of great learning, genius, and weight and force of character, who, from an independent standing-point, should give his testimony to the truth, reality, value, and power of the Gospel. But we have elsewhere, in a succeeding essay, developed more at length the priceless boon of such a recruit to the Christian ranks as the Apostle Paul.

The value of the Epistles is not, therefore, that we can settle by them dogmatically any disputed question. The points open before are as open afterwards. Their office, indeed, is not an authoritative one at all,—that had been sufficiently discharged before; but it is moral, suggestive, cumulative. In the mouth of two or three witnesses should every word be established. Here is the more deliberate judgment of the apostolic mind, in later years of life, after the first fervors of discipleship had ripened into an abiding devotion, and they moved forth from the provincial limits of Judæa upon the broad arena of the world. They witnessed the central spiritual Power beginning its impersonal and immortal work in the earth. It might have been said that the Gospels were enough, that the Epistles were superfluous; as the Turk objected to the Alexandrian Library, that, if it contained only what was in the Koran, then it was useless, or if it contained more than was in the Koran, then it was pernicious. But the worth of the Epistles is seen when we consider that we understand Christianity by the experience and testimony of other minds, as well as by those of our own, and that a Pauline or a Johannine interpretation, even

if it add no new article to the creed, nor make any actual conquest of original truth, helps to set us right about what has been revealed, opens new vistas of thought, clothes old sentiments with fresh illustrations and figures, envelops us in a new atmosphere of associations, and serves as a prime conductor to powerful influences, which were otherwise insulated and impotent by distance of time, and antiquity of custom and mode of thought.

It is noteworthy that the Epistles have two characteristics; namely, that they are local and temporary, at the same time that they are universal and perpetual. Like all things spontaneously and lyrically done, they were written with the best adaptation to Rome and Ephesus at that day, while they meet with full satisfaction the demands of the world, and of all time. Thus their speciality is their charm and forte, and their impress from the questions of that age their suitability for all ages. For the difficulties and deficiencies of the churches and individuals addressed were of such a nature as to bring in turn most important principles into review, discussion, and application, so that we here have what may be called the Handbook of the Christian Religion. The controversies cover the chief ground of opposition to the Gospel, both among the Jews and the Gentiles, and if the writers did not enter into the Atheistic debate to prove that there is a God, or far into the Deistic one to prove that there is a Christ, it was because both facts were essentially taken for granted, and the real objections lay elsewhere. For as Judge Marshall once keenly remarked, in the Supreme Court of the United States, to a young lawyer who was arguing an obvious point at a tedious length, "Some things must be presumed to be known to this bench," so some facts must be taken for granted as true in this world, or we shall never make any headway. Sixty centuries have not passed over the world in vain. It



is hardly worth the while to stop to prove to a blind man that the sun shines, or to a deaf one that it thunders. More imperative duties call us away, than to convince a fool of his folly, or a crazy man of his insanity. The Apostles, therefore, leaving the fields of mere speculative criticism and debate, where a handful will always doubt, and where almost unanimous humanity will believe in the monumental facts of revelation, moved all their forces to those practical points, where the real obstacles lay to the cordial reception of Christianity by the mass of mankind in Jewish and heathen communities, and to its supremacy over their lives; and they executed this function so effectually, that in four centuries the religion of Him who was hung upon the cross, and buried in a tomb, had ascended the throne of the Cæsars, and waved its sceptre over the known world.

The Epistles are less intelligible to the men of another generation, because of their peculiar form as epistolary writings. They are the letters of only one side of the correspondence, and the messages, verbal or written, on the other side are sunk in oblivion. The peculiar state of things which called them forth is also a matter of mere inference or allusion. But what thus makes them harder to understand, makes them more individual, and piques our curiosity. For the odor and color of the times, and nations, and places, are in them. They are savored with Judæa, and they taste of Asia Minor and Greece. They daguerreotype in sunlit pictures the Christian movement in its varying phases, arrest it and perpetuate it in the young flow and flush of life, and give it to our view to-day as a piece of the granite reality of history. It is doing in religious literature what is done in art in the burial of Pompeii in the ashes of Vesuvius, and the revelation of the very form and pressure of life, the stamp of the human bosom, on the disinterred ruins at this late day; or, to cite an even more memorable

instance from geology, it is a view of the first age of the Church like the picture of the ancient earth in its throes of birth into a new era, which we see drawn in eternal lines of stone on myriads of fossils of plants and animals.

This sweet and solemn antiquity, too, more than makes up for any obscurity, and it grows more hallowed and powerful as the ages roll away. For here are no crude speculations of yesterday, but the venerable thoughts of two thousand years ago. Could their authors have anticipated such a perpetuity, such a celebrity, such a stupendous influence in the world? Probably not; and it is well they wrote unconsciously and instinctively for greater and for longer than they themselves knew. Had they foreseen the result, that thought would have been a disturbing cause to their composition. Paul would have written less pertinently for Colosse, had he known he was writing for England and America in 1854. But doing best for that time, he did best for all time, and struck a chord which has vibrated in the heart of ages. This is no made-up and artificial immortality; no trick and artifice of men have kept these writings so long afloat, and saved them from falling into oblivion. They live, and spread, and take to themselves the supremacy of the world, because it is their indefeasible right and title, and no power can say them nay. They have earned all they own.

How often and how reverently have these words which we con over to-day been read and meditated upon in the long ages of the past, by men of every kind and character and condition! They have been lisped in nurseries, and committed to memory in schools, and mused over in solitude, and preached from pulpits, and ejaculated at the altars of prayer and the bedsides of the dying. The mother and her child, master and pupils, priest and people, monks and nuns, choirs and cathedrals, theologians and philosophers,

have bent over these immortal words with holy awe, and to the young they have been a religion, to the sorrowing a comfort, to the wicked a fear, and to the tempted a defence. Amid persons of what infinite varieties of character, in what varying moods of mind, under what complexities of circumstances, and with what diversities of motives, have these words of John and Paul been applied, and how have they sounded on their way in the world, and made the stony Memnon of humanity awake and sing in the morning beams of the Sun of Righteousness! Men and nations wax old and pass away, but these words live, bright with eternal truth, warm with eternal love. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

Furthermore, we can readily see how much diversity, as well as antiquity, has woven its spell over these books. The very names of Romans, Corinthians, Hebrews, are suggestive of volumes of history. They have a broad geographic and historic scale. They rest upon innumerable pillars of ancient association. They are the product of manifold exigencies, the expression of various minds, and echoes from the life of different cities and countries. If the system of revealed truth had been presented by but one intellect, though a highly versatile one, we can readily perceive how much the Gospel would have lacked of its present power and interest, and the charm of its diverse style, taste, and intellectual and spiritual action upon the one truth. In this view, how barren and tame is the Koran of Mahomet, compared with the New Testament! Paul's chapter on Charity is not a work of supererogation after the Master's Twofold Law of Love, and the Parable of the Good Samaritan. James too can utter good exhortations on the necessity of morality, and the union of faith and works, which do not tire after the Sermon on the Mount. The Gospels are the best, but the Epistles are good.

The evidences that the Epistles are the genuine productions of the authors to whom they are accredited, are various and satisfactory. As to their purity, we have the testimony of many ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the early Christian Fathers, showing that they existed from the first essentially in the same form they retain at present. Eagle eyes, of both friends and foes, have watched over the Christian records, no serious corruptions have crept into the text, and antiquity furnishes the means of purifying the few spots which have dimmed the fine gold of truth. Then as to their authorship, we may say it is as well authenticated as that of other ancient writings, — as well as the circumstances of the case will admit. We have as good reason to believe that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, and James his Epistle, and John his, as we have to believe that Virgil wrote the *Æneid*, or Cicero the Oration for the Poet Archias. He that doubts the latter must, like Father Hardouin, doubt the other. There is the declaration of both believers and unbelievers in Christianity. There is a long string of quotations, reaching back to an early period. There are the undesigned coincidences between the history and the Epistles, which, in reference to Paul, Paley has wrought up with so much completeness in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. These are the intrinsic reasons of the case, the internal marks of truth, the style, the cast of thought, the *animus*, all combining to form a somewhat impalpable, but very persuasive, very cogent proof, that they were written by the persons purported to be their authors, and that they have not been materially altered or corrupted. If we trace back these books from the point of the present, step by step, and age by age, we can easily gather from such an induction of successive suppositions, as to their being corrupted, or imposed on mankind in one era or in another, the extreme difficulty and improbability, and almost impossibility, of such a prodigious fraud being

perpetrated upon the world, and nobody being found to detect and expose it, in all the range of the early centuries, when they were gaining their foothold of general acceptance.

But even if the present testimony were invalidated, and the voices of tradition, history, style, and character were dumb, here are at least the books themselves in existence, and in possession of a vast influence, and we must account for them in some way, and for the spell they have thrown over the world. Something cannot come from nothing. Who wrote them? Who framed the mighty arguments of the Epistle to the Romans? Who winged the heavenly dove that flies aloft in the Epistles reputed to be John's? If these Apostles did not compose these words, we do not therefore get rid of wonders, but, on the contrary, we multiply them. Then there were as good as two Pauls, two Johns; the Paul of the Acts and the Paul of the Epistles; the John of the Gospels, and the John of the Epistles! To believe in two is harder than to believe in one. These books must be accounted for, and is there any explanation of their origin easier, more natural, or involving less credulity, than the current one in the Christian world, that they are the productions of those authors to whom they are generally attributed, and that they have been handed down, through all the accidents and vicissitudes of ages, in as sound a state of preservation and accuracy as the classics, or any work equally ancient? Nay, that they are in a better condition than other works of antiquity, because they were kept and copied with more care on account of their sacred character, because they were more extensively quoted in the Christian Fathers, and were translated in a greater number of versions.

There are in all twenty-one Epistles, thirteen by the Apostle Paul, one by the Apostle James, three by the Apostle John, two by the Apostle Peter, one by Jude, and one to the Hebrews, usually attributed to the Apostle Paul, but probably written by some author of the apostolic age, perhaps Apollos or Barnabas. About one third of the New Testament is thus put in an epistolary form.

There has never been any very serious doubt, among Christian writers, of the authorship of any of these Epistles, except that to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude. The merits of the question of their genuineness rest upon an induction of circumstances in each separate instance. They have been very generally received as canonical, and as having been written in the apostolic age, if not by the Apostles themselves; but they are not regarded by Biblical critics universally as being of as high authority in the settlement of disputed points in theology as the other Epistles.

The general object of the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians was to show that righteousness and salvation were to be gained under the system of Christianity by faith inspired by love, and were to be manifested in a good life. These are Doctrinal Treatises.

The Epistles to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians, whilst they also inculcated the Christian doctrines, were more specially devoted to correct errors and corruptions which had sprung up in the churches in those respective places. Many of these vices were the fruits of Paganism, which had not yet been entirely eradicated. This class of Epistles is Pastoral.

The Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are personal exhortations, advice, and congratulations. These pri-

vate letters were made public on account of the great value of their contents.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show by allegorical interpretations the superiority of the Christian dispensation to that of the Jews, and how the former had naturally grown out of the latter, as a natural development and progress of the less to the greater, and elements to their perfect organization.

The object of the Epistle of James is to correct some erroneous notions which had sprung up in relation to faith and works, perhaps from the strong language of Paul, and to inculcate practical Christianity. This Epistle, with those of Peter, the First Epistle of John, and the Epistle of Jude, are called General or Catholic Epistles, because they were addressed to Christians at large, rather than to any particular churches. The author of this Epistle is supposed to be James the Less, a kinsman or cousin of our Lord.

The Epistles of Peter have for their general purpose a mingling of Christian doctrines, designed to correct prevalent errors, and of practical exhortations to righteousness of life in a corrupt and heathenish age. They conclude with assurances of the speedy coming of Christ in his kingdom.

The First Epistle of John is general, and inculcates Love with as much earnestness as Paul insists on Faith, or James on Good Works. Neither is there the least shade of inconsistency between the three. All are right; and put the three together, Faith, Love, and Good Works, and you have a complete and well-proportioned Christian character. The natural characteristics of these several apostolic minds led them to look at the Gospel from these different stand-points, which are in radical reality one and the same. For it is the one Christian heart that loves, trusts, and works, as the leaf, the flower, and the fruit grow on the same tree, and from the same deep root. Were there no leaf of Faith, there

would be no flower of Love; and were there no leaves and flowers, there would be no fruits of Good Works.

The Second and Third Epistles of John, addressed respectively to Cyria, or, as it is rendered in our English version, the Elect Lady,—it is doubtful whether it is a common or proper name,—and to Gaius, are short greetings filled with the same love, which is the eternal theme of the Gospel of John and the First Epistle.

The Catholic or General Epistle of Jude is one whose genuine authorship is in question, but it is probably the composition of a brother of James the Less, the kinsman of our Lord. He warns the churches against the vices of the heathen world, and reminds them of the certainty of the law of God's retributive providence, as administered under the elder dispensation, and as impending in the later one over evil-doers, and he predicts the approaching advent of Christ in his kingdom.

A more particular introduction to each of these Epistles will be given hereafter, as they shall severally be commented on.

#### THE PROBABLE ORDER, DATE, AND PLACE OF WRITING OF THE SEVERAL EPISTLES.

	Place.	A. D.
1 Thessalonians,	Corinth,	52
2        “	“	52
Galatians,	Corinth or Ephesus,	52 or 53
1 Timothy,	Crete,	Latter end of 55
Titus,	Ephesus,	56
1 Corinthians,	“	56
2        “	Macedonia,	57
Romans,	Corinth,	58
2 Timothy,	Rome,	61
Ephesians,	“	62
Colossians,	“	62



	Place.	A. D.
Philemon,	Rome,	62
Philippians,	“	62
Hebrews,	Italy,	63
1 Peter,	Babylon,	65
2 Peter,	————	—
James,	————	70
1 John,	Ephesus	—
2 John,	“	—
3 John,	————	—
Jude,	————	—

## ESSAY III.

### THE APOSTLE PAUL.

ST. PAUL, though chosen last, is the first in rank of the "glorious company of the Apostles." The Twelve, striving among themselves who should be the greatest, little thought that a native of Tarsus, a city of an insignificant province of Asia Minor, would bear off the palm from the children of the Holy Land. They were appointed to a general office, but he was singled out for a peculiar mission, for which neither the zeal of Peter nor the love of John was adequate. To overstep the limits of Palestine, and carry the Gospel to the vast Gentile world, required a rare combination of gifts, and in Paul that combination was found. The chosen one must be born as it were between Judaism and Gentilism, that he might not be too much tyrannized over by either system. He must be conversant, too, with the old, that he might better measure and appreciate the new. Paul was a Greek by nativity, a Roman by citizenship, and a Jew by religion. Versed in Gentile lore, and taught at the feet of Gamaliel, he was prepared to see, when his eyes were opened, the perfection of the truth as it is in Jesus. With a profound sense of duty inwrought by the Jewish faith, with the culture of a Grecian city, and under the shield of that magic citizenship by which Rome was then opening privileges to the traveller who possessed it over the habitable globe, Paul was furnished in a remarkable manner for his work, by birth, education, and position.

In considering also the "final causes" of the selection of Paul by that Infinite Intelligence, who adapts now an in-

sect to its element of air or water, and now a planet to its orbit, we discern much of fitness and foresight. There is a great work to be done, and a mighty workman is chosen for its execution. The original nature of Paul fitted him to perform a sublime mission. Without question, he is the leading intellect among the sacred writers. He had a too sharply defining imagination for a poet, too logical an understanding for a psalmist, and too impassioned a nature for a philosopher; but he nevertheless combined in himself much of all these characters. His illustrations are often beautiful, his soul is constantly attuned to praise, and by single flashes of thought he compasses results which others attain by long processes of argumentation. Whatever there might be of ruggedness of outline in the forms in which he presented his thoughts, those thoughts themselves burned with an inextinguishable fire of conviction. He was no quoter nor second-hand repeater. Whatever might go into his mind came out personal and Pauline. Wide in his outlook, yet distinct in his aim; indomitable of will, but flexible when that will must bend or break; profound in his thought, but practical in its application; zealous in temperament, yet imbued with a charity that would clasp the world in his embrace; loving controversy, but loving the truth better than victory; highly intellectual, yet always paying allegiance to the supremacy of the moral powers,—the Apostle presented an ample range of contrasts in his genius and character. The intense earnestness of his mind, in whatever direction it moved, and whatever posture it took, is seen in every sentence. Culture had not quenched the generous flame of native ardor. Inspiration had not dulled the energies of a spirit which concentrated the forces of a hundred wills in a single breast, and which heaved with the affections as of a hundred hearts. His whole being pulsates with life. Every faculty is in a high state of vitality.

If we complain of imperfections, they are not the imperfections of deficiency, but of superabundance. If his page be dark, it is "dark with excess of light." When he enters upon his theme, the windows of heaven are opened and the fountains of the great deep are broken up. It is as the wise man said, "Lo, my brook became a river, and my river became a sea." In the flood of emotions and thoughts on which he is borne along, all temporal interests are swallowed up, and the reader arrives with the writer at the same all-important conclusions, and responds the same devout Amen!

The Apostle's life also possessed a remarkable unity. He believed Judaism divine, and he advocated it with his whole soul. And when new light came, and he recognized the higher divinity of the Gospel, he was "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." His notable conversion, therefore, was a change in direction, not in motive, or zeal, or conscientiousness, or devotion to the service of God. It was like the change of his name, the substitution of one, and that the first, letter for another, changing, but not annihilating, the original sound.

Yet Paul had passed through very different religious experiences from those of the other Apostles, and he derived new power from this source. It has been said, that we cannot fully know the strength of an opponent's argument, unless we have at some time been of his belief. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. A Jewish doctor could tell him nothing new. He had been a Jew after Christ had lived and died, a Jew in opposition and persecution, and he had tasted the guilt of that passion and the force of that prejudice. Men and women he had hauled to prison and to death. In his inhuman bigotry he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and persecuted them from city to city. The very existence of

the Christian Church was endangered by this arch-enemy. But in the height of his career, he is arrested by a voice from heaven ; a voice, not of vengeance, but of mild exhortation and warning from the Lord, whose cause he was pursuing with rancor and murder. Every circumstance connected with the conversion of Paul substantiates its miraculous origin. But within the precincts of his own mind, we detect no compulsion or violation of his free agency. The blow by which he was stopped in his course of persecution was sudden, but the process of mind through which he became fully imbued with the Christian faith and charity was progressive. For a season he sits in blindness and prayer, neither eating nor drinking. For three years he dwelt in Arabia and foreign places, and only once during fourteen years visited Jerusalem, the head-quarters of the new faith. Though no one, accordingly, was more active in proclaiming Christianity to the world, or entered so fully into what might be called the missionary cause of that period, no one, again, had a more personal, peculiar, and vivid religious experience. From a persecutor he had been raised to the glorious office of an Apostle ; the chief of sinners, he had found mercy. Hence there is a vividness of emotion, an intense yearning of love and gratitude, that can find no words strong enough to do them justice. Jesus had not been known to him personally in his daily walks and familiar conversation and travels, as he had to the other disciples. He had spoken to him from heaven, and communicated in visions. He was, therefore, a more solemn and awe-inspiring being, a more transcendent benefactor, to Paul, than to John who reclined in his bosom, or to Peter who denied him and was pardoned. Paul was very far from regarding or speaking of Jesus as God, but he more constantly calls him Christ and Lord. The events of his own life became the background on which his rescue from the guilt and fate of

a persecutor of the Church stood out in strong relief. His own experiences became motives to prompt him to save others. He had measured the depth of that pit out of which he had been drawn, and he spared no toil or suffering to lift up others also from its dark recesses into light and liberty. The line kindles with personal emotion when he speaks of sin and pardon and salvation, and he added to the power of argument the intensity of personal consciousness and conviction.

Then, too, his life subsequently to his conversion furnishes abundant materials to illustrate and vivify his discourse. He had sounded all the depths of the inward life, and he had traversed all the regions and scenes of its objective manifestations. Hence his character was one of no halting or half-way quality. The pendulum of its movement had a wide swing, and it passed through many arcs of a complete circle. What the Apostle said, he said with all his heart, and what he did, he did with all his might. His faculties have totality of action, and when they enter into battle they give their whole momentum to the charge, without fear or misgiving. He could speak like a prophet, because he had lived like a hero. He could write with the enthusiasm of poetry, though without its form, because in his history were the elements of romance. His journeys, his perils, his shipwrecks, his scourgings and stonings, his chains and imprisonments, his joys and his triumphs, all afforded vivid figures of speech, with which his glowing mind clothed itself in the act of composition. He had touched the extreme points of earthly vicissitude, and measured the length and breadth of hope and fear. One day on the point of being adored as a god, he was liable on the next to be killed as a common malefactor. Now the object of the most affectionate confidence, and revered as holding the sceptre of an Apostle's authority, he was exposed by the sud-

den turn of the wheel of his fortunes to the suspicions of his friends or the malignity of his enemies. Under such circumstances, his words are laden with the unction of the truth for which he lived and suffered. His language becomes action rather than the medium of meditation, and the page seems to heave with the throbbings of a living heart. It thrills and trembles with the exultations and agonies of his powerful emotional nature. "Who," he exclaims, "is offended, and I burn not?" "I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The writings of Paul, as said by a brother Apostle, "are hard to be understood," but he himself is transparent and intelligible. His weaknesses and his excellences are depicted with all the accuracy of legal testimony.

In analyzing, therefore, the sources of his power, we detect as one of the greatest charms of his writings their vigorous and vital personality. His epistles are an autobiography. They might be called "The Confessions of St. Paul." However abstruse the point of controversy, the face of Paul himself looks out from amidst the arguments. We feel that it is a warm and living hand, fed from a great heart, that is leading us through the labyrinth of free will and foreknowledge. Paul will ever stand within the circle of our human sympathies, for if we cannot in every instance trace the line of his thoughts in their logical sequence, though we never can doubt that that sequence exists to his own mind, we always feel the electric shock of his enthusiasm. His tears and bloody stripes wet the leaf we read, and the resonance of his gratitude echoes and re-echoes from side to side. His dangers and sufferings, his joys and triumphs, his glorious self-sacrifice and his poignant self-reproaches, his scathing moral indignation and his sweet and earnest charity, are portrayed on every page as by the colors of the painter, more than the words of the writer. This

autobiographical characteristic of his writings may diminish in some measure the perfection of that "dry light" in which a more impersonal writer would look at his subject, but it will ever add an inexpressible charm to the earliest controversies of the Christian Church, that they were incorporated into the living experience and interest of so large and vital a soul as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles. To this quality especially we may attribute much of the interest which attaches to his writings in the churches of the Reformation, because in him more than in any other Apostle is manifested that marked and self-relying independence which constitutes the genius of Protestantism.

Paul had points of resemblance to the other Apostles, but there were also points of difference. He had zeal, but it was unlike the zeal of Peter. It was the zeal of a wider and more cultivated nature, and hence it was intellectually more catholic, and morally more courageous. The horizon of the one was long limited to the boundaries of Palestine. The horizon of the other, from his earliest conversion, became the utmost ends of the earth.

The love of Paul was great, but it was different from the love of John. The affections of Paul were more concerned with persons, and those of John more with principles. The charity of Paul had a more sympathetic, earthly, and circumstantial character. He remembers all his friends, delights in mentioning their names, and has a good word for each and all. The love of John is impersonal, mystical, rapt, as if already borne beyond the fellowship of time and sense. To the great mass of toiling, struggling spirits seeking to rise to God on the wings of ardent devotion, and to embrace all humanity in universal charity, Paul speaks the more effective word of encouragement. But to the few of celestial temper and exquisite tenderness of soul, John is the more welcome Apostle; for, lying in the bosom of



Christ and of God, he discourses without a pang or effort of perfect union with the Divine nature, and of the heaven of love in which that union is eternal.

Again, Paul moves in a different plane from that of James, who is the Apostle of what may be called the minor morals. Paul is more versatile, and passes readily from the discussion of the great questions of Judaism and of Christianity to the inculcation of the humblest social duties. But James dwells almost habitually in the range of the prudential and familiar. Paul illustrates from his imagination as well as from his experience; while James animates his subject with the ship, the wave, the fountain, the horse, the rich man with his gold ring, and the poor man in his rags. Paul gives principles, James rules. The motives to which Paul appealed are drawn from a wider compass of thought, and from more profound depths of sentiment; while those employed by James lie within the limited, spiritual sphere of a fisherman of Galilee. The Epistle of James is condensed, epigrammatic, and allows but a short space between its premises of doctrine and its conclusions of duty. But the phalanx of Paul's style sweeps the whole field of revelation, history, and human nature, touches heaven and touches earth, and from the whole immense range of contemplation brings to bear on the human heart, not reasons of conscience or utility alone, but inspirations of love and quickenings of spiritual power.

As the characteristics of Paul differ from those of his apostolical associates, so has he had a peculiar influence and destiny in Christian history. He may be called the Apostle of the Protestant Church, if John be that of the Oriental and the Greek, and Peter of the Roman Catholic. The Cathedral of St. Paul stands in London, the Protestant metropolis, and St. Peter's is in Rome. The mysticism of John, the zealous but compromising spirit of Peter, and the

strongly marked intellectual and controversial qualities of Paul, have unconsciously given a cast and coloring to the great bodies of Christendom. As Christ has not yet become the real head of his own Church, those who stood as it were in the capacity of mediators between him and the world have given, not merely a local name and habitation, but an intrinsic spirit, to the churches of nations and ages. Orientalism delights in the Johannine love, and the mystic union with the divine. The Romish Church has too readily coalesced with the existing faith and ceremonies of its converts, whether in ancient Rome or in modern China, as Peter is accused of doing with regard to Judaism. But the Apostle Paul is essentially a controversialist in the good sense of that term, an evangelical dialectician, a tenacious advocate of the truth, ready at all times to do good battle for its smallest iota, whether in theology or morals. The mystical and the ceremonial sects receive Paul with qualification. The followers of Swedenborg do not regard him as canonical, and the liturgies of Greece, Rome, and England contain scarce a sentence from his glowing utterances of truth and love. But the Protestant chiefs have held Paul in great repute. Luther found in him the doctrine of justification by faith, which he hurled as his most effective missile at the Vatican. Calvin took, as heads to his sermons, hundreds of texts from the Epistles of Paul, but scarcely one from the Gospels, and the confessions of faith of all those churches which hold the Trinitarian dogmas and the doctrines of grace, technically so called, bristle with weapons, offensive and defensive, from the same grand armory.

In order to understand the causes of the somewhat exclusive and despotic influence which the writings of Paul exercise over the majority of the Protestant world, we must take into consideration a variety of facts. Paul's writings are argumentative, and Protestantism, in coming out of the

errors of the past and remonstrating against them, necessarily lives and moves and has its being in controversy. Then the vitality of Paul was great; great in his person, great in his mission, and great in history. He has none of the Oriental repose. Paul never could be imagined as the father of monkery. The Protestant and American age, therefore, with all its energy, inventiveness, and restless progress, finds itself mirrored in him as its congenial representative. His vast circumference of intellectual vision, and the strange contrast of his spiritual experiences, that seemed to be almost too many to be comprehended in the life of one man, place him in contact at innumerable points of sympathy with the many-minded soul of Protestantism. He is decided, and perhaps sometimes borders on dogmatism, though he gives sufficient scope to the speculative faculty. And those very qualities which, to our minds, mar him as an image of absolute perfection, make him all the more the Apostle of a peremptory, doctrinal, and yet inquisitive age. His zealous and practical characteristics also, his earnest exhortations and rousing appeals, are much in harmony with modern religious methods, and especially with that great moral crusade in which Christendom is now precipitating itself upon the heathen world. Paul the man of facts and of business, Paul the itinerant preacher, Paul the traveller from city to city and country to country, Paul the writer of epistles to the churches and calls for contributions of charity, Paul the foreign missionary, must excite unusual interest in an age of locomotion, philanthropy, and missions. He has, as we most firmly believe, been marvellously misinterpreted, looked at, so to speak, microscopically rather than telescopically, and of course made to preach doctrines which he never held, and the incipient element of which in the Christian Church it was one of the leading aims of his letters to extinguish. Still, in certain preliminary and infe-

rior stages of the progress of the individual and of mankind, we can easily conceive that Paul, with his highly-colored peculiarities, would exercise a more potent sway than Jesus Christ, with his stainless perfections. Paul was chosen to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles make up the greater part of the world.

We believe that there is a new age of Christianity to come, when they who have been so long striving, as did the Twelve, who should be the greatest, will return to Him who *is* the greatest, and when the churches of the Fathers shall give way to the churches of the Epistles; and the churches of the Epistles to those of the Gospels; the churches of the Apostles to the Church of Christ. Those who call themselves *evangelical* would be better characterized as *epistolical*, for they draw, as did Luther and Calvin, more largely from the Epistles than from the Sermon on the Mount. The true order is Patristical, Apostolical, Christian. The reform which still remains unaccomplished in theology is to recede from the commentaries of his followers to the text and spirit of the Infallible Teacher.

But if we complain of the errors of interpretation, it devolves upon us to show why and how all was obscure, and how it happens that he who said, "In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," should furnish in his own writings the chief debatable region of theological controversy.

In the first place, if Paul was an Apostle of inspiration, he was also a being of impulse. His genius was regulated not by rule, but it swayed and vibrated under a powerful enthusiasm of a healthful description. In rhetoric, he cannot conclude one figure of speech before he enters upon another. He is full of allusions, suggestions, and hints, and is dramatic without marking distinctly the changes of the

dialogue. In logic, his power of argument is unquestionable, but a clew is needed to guide us through the labyrinth, where aisles and side passages are constantly diverging from the main corridor. Paul is abrupt, emotional, parenthetical; he makes rapid transitions and obscure intimations, and repeats in one connection what he has said in another. He reasons, allegorizes, narrates, and exhorts, in the same breath, and makes his page, not a homogeneous texture, but a rich mosaic. And like the ancient orators and philosophers, in general, he writes informally and unsystematically; not announcing his subject and its divisions when he begins, nor marking the successive stages of its advancement, nor pausing to recapitulate when he is done. We can conceive a close logical thinker, a severe legal understanding, a profound and far-sighted intellect, taking great pleasure in unravelling the tangled skein of his discourse, and in following the one consecutive thread of his argumentation, until it should be confessed, what we believe to be true, that the last charge that can be sustained against the Apostle is, that he is a loose and illogical writer. If he break the rules of composition, it is to follow the higher laws of his own transcendent intellect.

Then his writings are all epistolary. Judging by his speeches reported in the Acts of the Apostles, his oral discourse was sufficiently intelligible. But a letter is necessarily a blind composition except to the correspondents themselves. It refers to many things known only to the parties concerned, is filled with obscure allusions, and takes many points for granted. It is unexpected in its transitions, informal in its statements, bold in its liberties, familiar and personal in its illustrations, careless in its diction, and loose in its arrangement of topics; a production written on the spur of the moment, rather than by mature study and careful review, and often most successful as a letter

when least capable of being classed with any other composition.

In writing to public bodies, as he generally did, Paul escapes some of the infelicities of the epistolary style, and raises his letters more into the rank of set treatises. His subject, too, the wonderful new religion, and his object, the conversion to the Gospel of all mankind, imparted of course a gravity and dignity not common to ordinary correspondence. His salutations are Christian greetings, and his compliments, exhortations to love and good works. He is lyrical, percussive, impassioned, and at times satirical, but all in earnestness and good nature, and all the filaments of the discourse are woven into a complete whole. With the principles he held, and the end he had in view, the letters of Paul are works of artistic beauty, and full of unity and life. They are the flower of his genius, dashed with a heavenly odor, and imbued with a quick contagion to all true souls of like divine sentiments. They burn, they glow, they are warm and heaving with life-blood.

Besides these qualities of an informal style and an impassioned soul, the Epistles have the length, the stress of argument, and the range of thought, essential to works of a larger calibre. For whatever Paul did must bear the stamp of a strong and earnest nature. He was not one to trifle or bandy words with friend or foe, but threw his whole soul into every thought and action. The bright blade of his falchion is always unsheathed. His mind is ever at its full tension. Hence his letters, though written for a transient purpose, bore his spirit like a rushing wind to distant cities, and diffused it throughout humanity. He alludes, in one instance, to the weightiness of his epistles, as not being matched by the authority of his personal presence. But none except himself has disparaged his oral address. His discourses in the Acts of the Apostles are full of beauty and

power, and we read of the effects of his eloquence, when, standing as a defenceless prisoner before the proud and titled of the earth, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."

We must remember, likewise, that all was not as clear to the Apostle, though miraculously illuminated, as to those who have lived later, and possessed in Christian history the key of interpretation. We behold the Gospel in its diffusion, he beheld it in its cradle. Though less subjective than the other Apostles, he might be said to be too near the object to see it well. Granted that he was a prophet, yet it is one of the conceded points of his office, that he does not fully comprehend the burden and bearing of his own predictions. Granted that he was inspired, yet inspiration is help, not substitution; a gift of degrees; and it is not of universal infallibility any more than it is of absolute sinlessness, and does not forego individual thought, style, argument, and illustration. Paul again and again announces himself as speaking as a man, as well as from the Lord. He is evidently and professedly his own free agent, as well as the servant of Jesus Christ; the personal pronoun often occurs in his writings, and he utters himself, not with a servile dictation forced upon his mind, but with a truth-seeking aspiration rising from it. He drew the water of life from the fountains of his own being, though those fountains were as the rock in the desert until smitten by a divine rod, and bitter as those of Marah until sweetened by the branch of Christian charity.

In reviewing the actions and writings of historical characters, we are too prone to imagine that they judge themselves from our point of view instead of their own. We attribute to them an anticipation of all that has since befallen them of fame and influence. We do not sufficiently consider, that to them, as to us now, the future spread out a cloudy

curtain; or if, as in the case of prophet and apostle, they could discern the faint shadows of events to come, yet their perspective was very imperfect. Time, that brought the fulfilment, must also bring the explanation. There is no reason to suppose that Paul foresaw that his Epistles would constitute more than a third part of the permanent Scriptures of the Christian Church. Many believe, and not without plausible reasons, that he viewed the catastrophe of all things as then impending, and that his own were some of the last zealous words that would be spoken to arouse dormant consciences. Paul gives no intimation of having foreseen Christian Europe and Christian America. Much less, probably, did he suspect that the hurried and impassioned letters which he dictated in the intervals snatched from tent-making, travelling, and preaching, and which bore the form and imperfection of the hour in some respects, would be exalted into permanency and universality, and that one hundred and fifty languages at the end of twenty centuries would repeat his exhortations and arguments to all the tribes of men. He wrote, if we may say so, instinctively, rather than intentionally. As he himself said, "necessity was laid upon him," and a zeal, all absorbing and unselfish, urged him onward. Thus writing for the time, he has doubtless written the best for all times, though, had he foreseen his fortune as an author as well as an Apostle, he would probably have re-edited his letters, to use the modern phrase. But it is well that he did not know the boundless sphere of his influence, for it might have proved a disturbing cause even to his apostolic singleness of heart. It is well that the great do not ever anticipate at the moment the consequences that are to flow from their words and deeds. With all their obscurities, therefore, the Epistles accomplish a greater mission for universal humanity, because they speak so individually to Timothy and Philemon, Romans and



Ephesians. The cases of his churches in fact generalized the world. But being "Tracts for the Times," and all the better for that reason, we must not complain that these letters contain some riddles when read in our times. Paul had in his mind, when he wrote, men and women living in a totally different state of society from the present, and the whole warp and woof of whose social and traditional existence were otherwise compounded and colored. It is indeed wonderful that, in this view, while the form and occasion of the Apostle's works were thus peculiar and temporary, their spirit is so central, and their adaptation so comprehensive and eternal.

Another cause of obscurity lies in the controversial character of the Epistles. We have not the statements of the other side, except by implication. We are obliged to read Paul's opponents through Paul. Most of that world of thought and manners which Paul had in his eye, which shaped his arguments, gave complexion to his style, fired his enthusiasm, and aroused his energy, is irrevocably dead and buried, and not even the best trained and most creative moral and historical imagination can raise it again to life. We have glimpses here and there of customs and characters then prevalent, and of the agitating questions of the Church, but they are pale and ghost-like. If the Apostle were hard to be understood in his own day, and his reasonings began so early to be wrested to prove another doctrine than he intended, how significant was that fact of the fortune of subsequent ages, when whole systems of theology would be built upon his authority, that are alien to his spirit!

We are not inclined, again, to make sufficient allowance for the barrenness of language at that period for communicating such truths as Jesus and his Apostles taught. The Hebrew tongue was very limited in its vocabulary, and stiff and circumscribed in its idioms. The Greek, though in

some respect the most perfect of languages, had yet sprung from a people rather volatile and witty than spiritually-minded, and more æsthetic than moral. And the Jewish Greek, or Hellenistic dialect, though richer than either Hebrew or Greek alone for the purposes of the sacred writers, was yet too confined and sensuous to give a distinct and luminous outline to that new cast of moral thought, and those higher spiritual conceptions, which it was the mission of Paul to introduce into the Gentile world. Old words must be filled with a new sense. Old idioms must dilate with a grander style of spiritual imagination. Hence we often feel that the writer was obliged to resort to circumlocutions, and multiplicity of terms and sentences, to do himself justice, and that his language sometimes breaks down under the weight of his thoughts. Then the translation into English has still further complicated the difficulties of language. Paul, though rendered in the tongue of Shakespeare and Milton, is obscure, with the best helps of modern criticism. But we can easily imagine, that, if he had originally possessed such a rich and powerful instrument of spiritual expression as the English or German of our day, the demands of so many-sided and profound a soul as that of Paul to defend and embody itself in words would have been more adequately supplied.

From these remarks upon the general obscurity of the Apostle, we would descend to some specific points in which he has been, as we think, greatly misunderstood. Unhappy Paul, crucified in the body in his day, crucified in the spirit in ours! He is constantly made to prove what he never believed, to uphold what he spent himself in overthrowing, and quoted continually as authority for sentiments on which he would have bestowed a hearty *anathema maranatha*. Cant recites, with measured tone and dogmatic purpose, sentences that came glowing in a white heat from his ardent

soul. Bigotry is intent upon digging up the flowers which he planted to adorn the garden of God, to find some root of bitterness. Theologians express their ideas in his words, rather than his ideas in their words. The most free from technical or philosophical limitation of any of the writers of the New Testament, unless it be John, recasting the Gospel in his own forms of phraseology, Paul is the last man to be quoted to justify any sort of exclusiveness or uncharitableness in religion, or to tie down all the world to the same formularies of faith, worship, and works. A freely living and a freely moving soul, airing himself in the atmosphere of different countries and continents, conversant with the works of God and the philosophies of men, touching at one point the culture of the intellectual Greek, and at the other that of the believing Hebrew, commissioned to proclaim and establish in new regions so loving and liberal a system as the Gospel, love from God, and good-will to men, with his bosom heaving in sympathetic beatings to every pain and wrong of the race, and with his tears flowing like a fountain whenever ill betided any portion of the Church, Paul is made to utter a language at variance with every emotion of his heart, and every purpose of his life, when he is interpreted as the teacher of doctrines inconsistent with the fatherly character of God, condemnatory of human nature, and darkening its destiny here and hereafter. Paul has given us, not a body of divinity, rigid and narrow, but a soul, and that soul consists in faith, hope, and charity. With what amazement would he have looked upon the spectacle of modern textual theology! With what severity would he have lashed that principle of interpretation that can at one time torture out of his writings justifications for exclusive creeds and persecuting churches, and at another, licenses for social inhumanity and public wrong! Would he recognize, indeed, and own as his writings, those

epistles, crumbled up, almost without regard to connection, into chapters and verses, compacted sentences divided and subdivided into separate propositions, sometimes mistranslated, and shaded with the expressions and biases of a dark age of society and theology, — when read, read piecemeal, as if constituting a charm, not a composition, — and when quoted, quoted in fragments, broken from their place and connection, to point a sentence or prop up a doctrine, as if they were independent proverbs, not closely jointed limbs of a living and inseparable body? There is no part of the Sacred Scriptures so much injured by this mode of treatment as the long sentences and close argumentation of the Apostle Paul. No book but one so potent and vital as the Bible could survive for any considerable time such a Me-dean process. As it is, a new translation can hardly be expected that will secure so generally the suffrages of the Protestant sects in England and America as the imperfect one of King James's reign. But in the mean time, paragraph Bibles, and editions with here and there an explanatory note in the margin, like those of Shakespeare and other English classics, to say nothing of commentaries, might do something to remove the veil from these glorious works. The Epistles are a mine still to be worked, and capable of yielding new supplies to the golden currency of truth.

One very important question in regard to these writings is, whether they really make any essential doctrinal addition to the Christian religion, or not. They no doubt contribute many new illustrations, applications, and developments of the truth, but do they impart what is absolutely new, and what cannot be found in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles? On this subject theologians have differed, but even those who take the negative still concede a species of new revelation to Paul, inasmuch as he gives more fully than any other the philosophical explanation of the conclud-

ing facts in the life of Jesus, the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and his posthumous influence upon his Church. Macknight, one of the most moderate and candid of critics, speaks as follows: "With respect to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, let it be remarked, that, while the greatest regard is due to them, especially to the Gospels, because they contain the words of Christ himself, we are not in them to look for the full account of the Gospel scheme. Their professed design is to give, not a complete history of our religion, but the history of its Founder, and of that illustrious display he made of his glory as the Son of God and Saviour of the world, together with an account of the spreading of the Gospel after our Lord's ascension. The Gospel doctrine is to be found complete only in the Epistles, where it is exhibited with great accuracy by the Apostle to whom the Holy Ghost revealed it as Christ had promised." Other commentators and divines avow the same remarkable theory, and the spirit of it has widely vitiated the theology of many centuries.

We believe, on the other hand, that Paul was not a revealer, but an analyzer, applicer, commentator, of the Gospel. He philosophized about its facts and truths, but he did not originate a single essential one. If any distinct principle of Christianity were disclosed in the Epistles alone, we should regard it as a matter of great wonder, if not of questionable authority. We cannot believe, with Bolingbroke, that the Gospel of Christ is one thing; and that the Gospel of Paul, and of all those who have grafted after him on the same stock, is another. But if the *doctrines of grace*, so called, do depend solely or chiefly upon the words of Paul, then we submit that they occupy a secondary, and not a primary, place in Christian theology. That Jesus should be born and sent into the world to bear witness to the truth, and should leave that truth unspoken, and that it should devolve

on one who had not been imbued with the spirit of his Master's personal intercourse and instructions, but converted from the ranks of his enemies, to consummate the glorious design, is utterly incredible. We believe the character of God, and of his Son, the need of the Gospel, and all its leading features, its succession to Judaism, and its universality for the race, are all taught in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. The miracles, parables, and conversations of our Lord are not distinctly dwelt upon, though they are referred to by Paul, but the primal truths which underlie them are the basis of his every argument and exhortation. If the doctrine of the Trinity, the total depravity of human nature, justification by faith, election, effectual grace, and the final perseverance of the saints, or any other dogma, were actually to be found in Paul, we should regard it as wonderful indeed that our Saviour had not even lisped of it in his Sermon on the Mount, his commission to the Twelve or to the Seventy, his parables, or his farewell discourses and prayers with his disciples. But the proof-texts which are employed to defend the above doctrines are more largely drawn from the Epistles of Paul than from other portions of the Scriptures. The Apostle settled some controversies, but he has originated many more. For the sake of maintaining the value of tradition, the Roman Catholics and the Puseyites contend that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be upheld on the authority of the New Testament alone. The Fathers must be brought in to complete the structure which the Apostles left unfinished. Were that ground tenable, it is evident that, so far as you thus strengthen tradition, you really weaken the word of God. It is a dangerous concession to make respecting any Christian doctrine, that it is defensible upon some other grounds than those of the Bible. And so we may say of Calvinism, that if it be, as some say, in the Epistles of Paul, but not in the discourses of Christ,

so much the worse for Calvinism, to say nothing of Paul. It is pretty conclusive evidence that Christianity and Calvinism are discordant systems. But we hold that there is no such unfortunate clashing of authorities; that the New Testament is a homogeneous book; that all its witnesses yield a harmonious testimony, and that the Gospel is one and the same in essence, though differently cast and colored in passing through finite minds, and that the Christianity of Paul is easily seen to be identical in all its substantial with the Christianity of the Evangelists.

Dr. Channing justly says, in a letter to a friend: "You must show that the passages in the Epistles which are thought to teach other and higher doctrines than Jesus taught are in fact only different forms of the same truth,—and narrower forms, being adaptations of it to a particular age, and very peculiar state of the Church. As long as men think they find in the Epistles great principles not communicated in the Gospels, the latter will pass only for initiatory teaching. Here, I apprehend, is the chief use of Biblical criticism,—not to disclose new truths, but to show that the darker parts of the New Testament, which belong almost wholly to the Epistles, contain the same doctrine with the simple and luminous teaching of Jesus."\*

The mistake which has been committed in relation to the doctrine of Justification by Faith has so lately been exposed in a number of the *Christian Examiner*, † that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it further. Paul's doctrine is one thing, an amplification in fact of what may be found in every verse of the Sermon on the Mount, but the doctrine which has been attributed to Paul is quite another thing. In fine, we might suppose that the strongest espousers of the notion of any justification, except that implied in the superiority

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\* *Memoir*, Vol. II. p. 416.

† For March, 1851.

of the spiritual principle in Christianity over all merely legal, ceremonial, or habitual rules, was sufficiently demonstrated by the Apostle himself. If Paul preach justification by faith, he preaches again and again still more loudly justification by charity; and if he insist upon the value of doctrine in his discussions, he always winds up his Epistles with the most spirit-stirring exhortations and provocatives to love and good works, as if the destiny of a thousand souls depended on every grace and virtue, and the only reasonable conclusion to the whole matter was, to fear God and keep his commandments.

That the Election of Paul is not anything more than the election of Christ, or the election, in fact, of nature, or life, we believe, is substantiated, not by any stiff and formal theory, that cuts the knots it cannot untie, but by the necessary and rational interpretation of language. If we please to resort to a theology of texts, and bits of patchwork, and believe that "figures of speech are the pillars of the Church," we can prove anything and believe everything. But if we take into view the broad and general tenor of the Apostle's teachings, we shall see him vindicating with seraphic fire the impartiality, not the exclusiveness, of the Divine administration, and that, if God diversified men's external privileges, he made those most favored with spiritual advantages the more responsible trustees of such benefits for the good of all. The election of Paul is like the election of Providence, by which birth, nation, age, clime, color, are determined for us, or by which the painter, the poet, the artisan, are by the natural faculties of their minds predestinated to their several offices. He made the doctrine, not one of ease, but of energy; not of final condition, but of intermediate privilege; and he does not put his own case, sealed and illustrated as it apparently was by the most explicit Divine authentication, beyond the possibility of his being a castaway.



And in relation to that capital article of modern theology, the Atonement, it is remarkable how little the fact has been taken notice of, that, while the Apostle lays great stress upon the death of Christ, or, to use the vivid and speaking metaphor, "his blood," he lays tenfold more emphasis on the resurrection of Christ, as the controlling evidence of the truth of his mission, as the life-giving revelation of immortality. As it has been said a hundred times, and must be said as many more, the word *atonement* occurs but once in the New Testament (Romans v. 11), and there, according to uniform usage, it should be rendered *reconciliation*. The modern idea of the Atonement is rebutted on every leaf and chapter of these letters, and wherever it seems to find any occasional footing, it hangs merely upon the flowers of the Apostle's branching and luxuriant rhetoric, and constitutes no part of the essential root and trunk of his reasoning. We believe the doctrine in question subversive of the natural justice of God, while conflicting at every point with that boundless mercy which shines as a central sun in the Gospel. The expression, "for Christ's sake," which is frequently used in prayers and graces, and is designed to convey the impression, that what God gives to man he gives, not on account of his own intrinsic benevolence, or man's own intrinsic need, but on account of what Christ has done and suffered to purchase his favorable regards to a rebel and rejected race, also occurs but once in the Christian Scriptures (Ephesians iv. 32), and should by every principle of a uniform translation be there construed *in* or *through Christ*. The idea of its being necessary that something should be done or suffered by Christ, in order to render it consistent for God to forgive even his penitent child, is the master idea of the Atonement, and there is not a vein or artery in the Protestant body which has not been more or less tinged by it. The doctrine of the Atonement is the main post in the

battle-field of modern controversy, and under differing forms, and with the interest either of adoption or of denial, it commands the range of theological literature. The mode of understanding the figurative language of the Scriptures, on which it is maintained, would equally well give countenance to the doctrine of Transubstantiation; and let it be added, that the theory on which it is founded perpetuates the system of Jewish exclusiveness, with this single gloomy addition, that, unlike that temporal system, it spreads it over the vast compass of man's spiritual being, and sends it down to the remotest ages of futurity.

It is not a little singular, that the writings which so often take for their theme the liberty of Christ, the spiritual emancipation from the letter to the spirit, the universal faith of Jew and Gentile, bond and free, should be the very ones that by a misunderstanding are employed to promulgate the partial and limited systems of Depravity, Election, and the Atonement. Who indeed would recognize in the systems of Calvin and his modifiers, unyielding as iron, and fixed and remorseless as fate, the tender and trembling responsibility of Paul, the charity that yearned and prayed for the worst, and cast not a solitary creature, except as self-exiled and self-condemned, beyond the pale of mercy? If it be doubted whether a system of theology can be essentially mutilated by the process of adding a little here, and subtracting a little there, which in obedience to their theories has been practised by the great doctors of Christendom upon the Epistles, take an illustration in Hogarth's picture of *Perspective*, and see how fatally by such a perversion nature and reality may be driven out with a pitchfork in that art which represents ideas by forms, and which is kindred to that which represents them by words.

\* John Keats makes a distinction between great men and sublime men. Of the very few constituting the latter class,

Paul is one. He was a sublime man in his nature. Wherever he lived, and whatever position he might occupy, he would leave his mark upon the world, broad, peculiar, and eternal. He possessed that immeasurable might of will and resource of soul, which make one stronger than a million of ordinary capacity. They become under his creative and inventive agency as clay in the hands of the potter. They are as the elementary substance through which his electric energies circulate. In the true census, men are to be weighed, not counted. Genius is an intellectual gift, but sublime men are more than geniuses. They are seers, prophets, apostles, founders of states, fathers of their country, moral and spiritual archetypes of new eras of history, new stages of man's progress towards God. This class possess genius, but their genius is not exclusive; it is but one element of that august assemblage of powers by which they communicate a new vital force to the dormant mass of humanity, and speak the work of genesis, that brings order and beauty out of ages of darkness, chaos, and despair. It is their mighty moral, as well as intellectual power, which makes the earth gravitate nearer to heaven, and man more to resemble his Maker. To genius, to a superlative moral nature, Paul added the more transcendent gifts of inspiration. Sublime as a man, he became still more sublime as an Apostle of Christ.

Paul was sublime in his life and actions. His history includes contrasts greater than those of any romance. Once a persecutor of that faith of which he afterwards became the very chiefest Apostle, arrested in the height of his defiance by the voice from heaven of that Master for whose sake he afterwards died, after adding suffering to suffering and labor to labor while he lived, the story of Paul, were we not so familiar with it from the nursery, would be read as the most wonderful of biographies, and as containing at once the

sublimity of epic, and the pathos of tragic life. We are accustomed to estimate these subjects so exclusively from a devotional and conventional point of view, that we fail to form those clear critical and æsthetical judgments at which we arrive in estimating other questions of history and biography. The scale of Paul's enterprises was Titanic. To change the religion of the world was a task of no little magnitude. His actions are great, like his plans,—great in conception, great in motive, and great in progress, execution, and result. Anything small, mean, or unworthy we may be sure took instant flight from so impressive and luminous a presence. Wherever he moves, he bears with him the sceptre of unresisting authority and godlike beneficence. What men have erroneously called boastings were but the expressions of his childlike frankness, and the uncalculating pouring forth of that love which only asked as its reward sympathy in return. No man surpassed Paul in candor, none in the disinterestedness of his motives. Both in the quantity and the quality of his work, his life rose to the sublime. In all the great centres of the old nations, at the head fountains of thought and influence, Jerusalem, Athens, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, he was present, and his presence was felt; he spoke a word that stirred the world, and that word was the Gospel of Christ, the sum of Divine wisdom for man. Paul awoke revolutions, organized institutions, and applied Christianity to new uses and adaptations, and gathered in a grand unity Jew and Gentile, bond and free, in one Church. Three hundred years did not elapse before the cross was the ensign of Rome, when Rome was the mistress of the world. And to-day, in all the hundred capitals of the nations, in a hundred different tongues, Paul is read, preached, and meditated upon, and next to the unapproachable Master impels the religious thought of the races and the ages.

Paul is sublime in his writings and in his earthly immortality. The brightest geniuses pale in the revolutions of time. Their names may be known as the commonplaces of history and literature, but their ideas have grown obsolete, their compositions cease to instruct and charm; little by little they die out of the memory of men, and they transmit to other hands the sceptre of their once unquestioned dominion. Their works are as the fossils of an earlier stratum of the earth. They lie in dead languages and on dusty shelves, read by a handful of scholars, but retaining little living hold upon the mind of the civilized world. But it is the glory of Paul, as it is of a greater than Paul, to win new power by time, to add as years and centuries pass new subjects to his faith, new provinces to his empire. The author of one third of the New Testament, the preacher of Christian truth to mankind, no king ever had so wide a sway, no kingdom such a duration. He has spoken words that have thrilled deeply, and will thrill for ever, the soul of man. Coleridge said, "I think St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans the most profound work in existence."\* Channing remarked, "We cannot but consider the letters of Paul, with all their abrupt transitions and occasional obscurities, as more striking exhibitions of genuine Christianity than could have been transmitted by the most labored and artificial compositions."† It is in the words of Paul that Christian devotion offers her warmest tribute of praise, Christian joy expresses her ecstasies, and Christian sorrow finds the charm of her soothing and her patience. Paul guides and instructs the living, comforts the sick and stricken, and opens upon the bed of death the bright vistas of a hope shining down from heaven. In Paul, Charity found a tongue to discourse with more than human eloquence of her beauties

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\* Table Talk, Vol. II. p. 100.

† Memoir, Vol. I. p. 380.

and glories, and in Paul the Resurrection and Life Everlasting speak in a tone so reasonable and so majestic, so convincing to the understanding, and so consolatory to the heart, that even at the mouth of the grave, where we commit "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," Faith seizes the extinguished torch of life, lights it anew at her altar, and leads the way through the dark valley of the shadow of death with a hope built in heaven and full of immortality.

## ESSAY IV.

### THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

THOUGH first in the order of the Epistles, the letter to the Romans is not probably the first in time. The Apostle is supposed to have written more than half of his epistles to the churches before this date. But the reasons of its being placed in the forefront were, that it was addressed to the Christians in the chief city of the world, that it was the longest one, and the most important in doctrine and exhortation. So highly, indeed, was it valued in the history of the Church, that it was called the Marrow of Divinity, the Key of the New Testament, the Christian Church's Confession, the Most Divine Epistle of the Most Holy Apostle.

This Epistle was undoubtedly written at Corinth, because Gaius, who is here spoken of as his host (Romans xvi. 23), was baptized by Paul at Corinth (1 Corinthians i. 14), and because Phœbe, who is commended to the Roman church, and was probably the bearer of the letter to Rome, was deaconess of the church of Cenchrea (Romans xvi. 1), the port of Corinth, and a few miles distant from that city. The Apostle also mentions Erastus as the chamberlain of the city (Romans xvi. 23; compare 2 Timothy iv. 20), and Corinth was a city of high rank, and the capital of Achaia.

The Apostle made two separate visits at Corinth, the first of about a year and a half in duration (Acts xviii. 1, 11), and the second of about three months (Acts xx. 2, 3). By as accurate a comparison of the dates of his journeys as can well be made at the present day, in the absence of a specific

chronology, Paul is conjectured to have written the Epistle to the Romans about the year 58 of our Lord.

There is no valid ground for the belief of the Roman Catholics, that the church at Rome was founded by the Apostle Peter, or for the inference from it, that, because Christ said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and "Upon this rock I will build my Church," therefore the Church of Rome is entitled to hold supremacy over the other churches of the world, which may be far superior to her. For where Peter is spoken of in Eusebius, as the founder of the church, it is conjointly with Paul, and the probability is, that in both cases it is to be understood of the subsequent establishment and enlargement of the Church rather than of the original foundation.

Who was the real founder of the church at Rome, is a question to which no confident answer can now be given. "The strangers of Rome," spoken of in Acts ii. 10, may have carried the knowledge of Jesus to the capital of the world. The Christian brethren and sisters spoken of so affectionately by Paul (Romans xvi. 3-16) were no doubt actively engaged in promoting the cause of Christianity, if they were not the prime movers. But that the Church of Rome was not originally founded by an Apostle is strongly to be inferred from Romans xv. 20-22, where Paul expressly lays it down as one of the fixed principles upon which he proceeded in his apostolic labors and missions, not to interfere with another man's work, or build on another man's foundation.

The genuineness of this Epistle as the writing of the Apostle Paul rests upon the following testimonies. It purports to be his work, and has his name attached to it. The voice of antiquity, both historical and traditional, pronounces Paul as the author. Then the internal evidences are numerous and conclusive that he wrote the Epistle.



The style, cast of thought, moral characteristics, all belong to him. The undesigned coincidences between the history of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, and the allusions in the Epistle, have been developed in a very convincing argument by Paley, in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. The authorship of the Epistle has never been seriously questioned.

It is difficult now to reënter into that world of physical, intellectual, social, political, and religious relations in which Paul was living, and from which he wrote this Epistle. But warm-hearted as he was, he naturally contracted, chameleon-like, the color of the circumstances around him, and while he was faithful to the lofty landmarks of Christianity, he taught the new religion with adaptation to the men of that period. He doubtless learned from Priscilla and Aquila (Romans xvi. 3) the state of things in the imperial city, and having an opportunity, in an age when there were no mails or telegraphs, to send a letter to Rome by Phebe, he writes the following Epistle. As he was soon to take another journey to Jerusalem, to carry the contributions of the churches to relieve the poor disciples there, and expose himself to great danger, he may be supposed to write under a quickened sense of responsibility, and with the utmost anxiety to guard the Roman church from the heresies which were creeping in.

If we divide the Epistles into three classes, the Doctrinal, the Ecclesiastical, and the Pastoral, we shall place the Epistle to the Romans in the first division.

We find in it, indeed, no new doctrines, no positive additions to the Gospels, except in the way of argument, illustration, and application. But Paul had a twofold problem, requiring great delicacy, address, pith, and eloquence to solve; namely, to wean the Gentile part of the Church from their fondness for the Grecian philosophy, and to withdraw them from their Pagan practices; and also to lead the Jew-

ish converts to conform to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, instead of the laws of Moses. We are prone to forget in what a crude and formative state were these early churches, how lately they had been converted from old creeds and customs, how truly they were babes in Christ, and needed the sincere, pure milk of the Word. We are, therefore, under an illusion when we look back to the primitive Church as the golden age of Christianity. We learn enough from the New Testament, and still more from the early church histories, to convince us that abominable customs and monstrous heresies were found at an early day in the churches founded by the Apostles themselves. (1 Corinthians v. 1; vi. 5, 6, 18; xi. 21; xv. 12; Ephesians v. 18; 1 John iv. 2-4; Revelation ii. 6, 15.) The real golden age of Christianity is buried in a remote future, not in a traditional past.

It has sometimes been asserted that Paul raised as many questions as he laid, that his writings are the debatable land of theology, and the grand armory of the theological warfare, from which every combatant may pick out the weapon that pleases him best. But it is plain that Christianity came to arouse dormant human nature, and it is but natural that the first exhibitions of its activity should be somewhat irregular. Jesus said, he came to bring, not peace, but a sword. Discussion, argument, controversy, are inseparable concomitants to the progress of truth. We may deprecate justly the angry jars of the conflict, but we cannot help being gratified with the victories of truth, and hailing its champions as among the most illustrious benefactors of mankind. Paul has indeed awakened much controversy, but it has resulted from misinterpretation of his writings, from preconceived theories, and stubborn prejudices, and philosophy, falsely so called, and we cannot but rejoice to see these slowly yielding the field to the mighty prevalence

of truth. "The Conflict of Ages" has not been in vain, and the Apostle, though quoted too long on the wrong side of the question, is truly the Achilles of the host. He was the sublime vindicator of spiritual freedom in his day, and he is the legitimate father and forerunner of Luther, who has led the way to civil and religious independence in our age. Paul and Luther have many spiritual features alike, but not less did the mission they came to perform in ages wide apart bear a kindred resemblance.

The single key, in few words, we conceive, which will unlock the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and the Galatians, is not, as has been stated, "justification by faith," as if the great question were, how a man is judged or estimated on the side of God, but "righteousness by faith," faith-righteousness, or how a man really is in his own character, on the side of himself. The Apostle shows conclusively, that neither Grecian wisdom nor Hebrew law could be trusted as adequate to produce this superior, spiritual faith-righteousness; that, in fact, they had both been tried, and found wanting, but that religion of Jesus was chartered, treasured, and energized with powers adequate to achieve the grand result. It was the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation.

To meet the successive points of this high argument, and vindicate for so lowly an instrument as the Gospel of the Crucified One an entire right to lead the most civilized nations, to command Greece, Rome, or whatever else was most refined or powerful in the ancient world, nay, to take the children of Revelation themselves under its tutelage, and to fulfil the faith of Abraham, the Law of Moses, the hope of David and Isaiah, was the programme of these Epistles. For we can understand that the righteousness, which was based upon knowledge, philosophy, wisdom, and thus connected only with things seen and temporal, the Grecian

type of character, must be far inferior to the righteousness founded on the principle of faith, and thus connected with things unseen and eternal; and, again, that the law-righteousness of the Hebrews, like the wisdom-righteousness of the Greeks, must be hard, technical, definite, and limited, and that it could never rise to the height and beauty of a spiritual character, formed on the ideal of a Heavenly Saviour and Father, and energized by the hopes and promises of eternal life. In the fulness of time, when other experiments had failed, the well-beloved Son came, that he might establish the righteousness which is by faith, and which would thus have in itself a perpetual spring of growth, purification, and power. The word *justification* occurs but three times in the New Testament (Romans iv. 25, v. 16, 18), and in those instances the idea would be truly given by the term *righteousness*, understood in the active sense, or the process of making righteous or just. Romans iv. 25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again *for the making of us righteous.*" Even in the Calvinistic translation of King James the true idea occasionally breaks out, as in Romans v. 19: "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

The vice of the common theory of Pauline interpretation is, that it makes the Apostle, who was an enemy to all shams and an advocate of the most earnest realities, concerned chiefly on the questions, how man can escape, not sin, but condemnation; and how he can gain, not righteousness and sanctification, but acceptance. This is putting the emphasis altogether in the wrong place. Faith-righteousness, not faith-justification, was the bent and aim of the Apostle's discourse, and faith-justification was to be the consequent, not the antecedent, to faith-righteousness. By substituting Christian faith instead of Grecian wisdom, or Hebrew law for the mainspring and motive-power of life

and character, Paul had taken hold of the most effective and well-adapted instrument in the universe for the achievement of the great end of human existence. He was primarily devoted to the discussion of the need, value, fitness, beauty, and divine intention of this instrument, but that he either neglected or forgot the natural and necessary works of obedience, benevolence, and improvement, which would flow as surely as streams from the parent fountain, is disproved by the long and animating exhortations with which he filled the concluding portions of every epistle, calling trumpet-tongued upon his converts to show the purity and strength of their faith by the consistency of their lives and the devotion and benevolence of their characters.

The difficulty of understanding the Apostle's writings arises not from the matter so much as the form of his composition. He was an artisan, but not an artist. His materials were abundant, his arguments weighty, his figures of speech brilliant, his stream of thought and feeling deep and impetuous; but not adhering to the rules of rhetoric and logic, it is sometimes impossible, and not unfrequently hard, to grasp his meaning. His obscurity is not attributable to imperfect conception or feeble statement of his ideas, but to the number, the rapidity and sweep, of his thoughts and emotions; not to negative blank darkness, but to blinding, dazzling light. We are distracted by the affluence and splendor and intricate confusion of the intellectual treasures which he pours out before us. We feel that here are gifts of mind and heart, appeals of eloquence, and gems of imagination, sufficient to set up and endow half a dozen orators and poets, while the Apostle himself, owing to his lack of artistic order and clear logical sequence, comes short, in the appreciation of the world at large, of being either a first-class reasoner or illustrator of truth. But to the few, who penetrate his unpromising exterior, and enter the secret

places of his power and his glory, the image of the Apostle Paul rises upon the view as one of the greatest writers the world has ever seen, independently of his title to inspiration. His style has been called by a German critic *a battle*; I would rather say it was a thunder-storm,—the torrents of rain pouring down from the sky, the vivid gleams of lightning darting among the clouds, and the deep-toned thunder rolling in the distance,—a certain indistinctness over the whole, and a commingling of elements, but everywhere glory, majesty, terror, richness, and beauty; and after his darkest passages the rainbow of the Divine love arches over the heavens, and tinges with its lovely colors the black and drenched earth.

THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

## REFERENCES.

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THE following editors, authors, and commentators have been consulted in the preparation of the comments on the Epistle to the Romans:—Griesbach, Tischendorf, Luther, Beza, Tyndale, Sacy, McKnight, Comprehensive Commentary, Doddridge, Trollope, Adam Clarke, Bloomfield, Barnes, Stuart, Dabney, Hammond, Le Clerc, Henry, Chalmers, Burder, Burkitt, Lardner, Lightfoot, Cellerier, Lord Lyttelton, Paley, Haynes, Winer, De Wette, Hug, Olshausen, Neander, Tholuck, Norton, Whitwell, Robinson, Belsham, Horne, Abbot, Farmer, Wilson, Milman, Taylor, More, Hodge, Goadby, Improved Version, Gerard, Whately, Fratres Poloni, Poole, Christian Examiner, and Christian Register.



THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

CHAPTER I.

*The Salutation, Introduction, and a Description of the Wickedness of the Gentiles.*

PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated

1. *Paul.* It was the custom anciently to place the name of the writer at the beginning of an epistle, instead of at the close, as is done now. Acts xxiii. 26. The letters missive of churches now retain the old method. The change of the Apostle's name from *Saul* to *Paul* has been variously accounted for; either as a compliment to *Sergius Paulus*, Acts xiii. 7, 9, 13, or as a preference of a Gentile to a Hebrew name, which is a more probable supposition. Paul was an apostle to the heathen world, and he was willing to conform to their taste in matters of indifference. 1 Cor. ix. 21, 22. The critics cite many cases of a similar transformation; as of *Tarphon* into *Trypho*, *Joiakim* into *Alkimos*. — *A servant of Jesus Christ.* Tischendorf edits, *Christ Jesus*. The original is *slave*; that being the condition of most servants in the East. It was a term of honor rather than shame, when connected with a master of great dignity. The slaves of kings were often their chief officers, and sometimes prime ministers. The obvious sense is, that Paul was wholly devoted for life, body and soul, to Jesus Christ, as his master; who had subdued and converted him by his power; a service not of bondage,

but of perfect liberty.\* — *Called to be an apostle.* Chosen an apostle. The italics of the translators are needless here, as in many other instances. The Apostle, with a becoming dignity, advances at the outset his credentials and claims to be heard, as an authorized messenger of God. Some have conjectured that Paul was the true substitute for Judas Iscariot, and that the choice of Matthias, Acts i. 26, was not made with the Divine sanction. Be that as it may, the appointment of Paul to the sacred office was an undoubted interposition of God, bearing in every particular the most unquestionable marks of miraculous agency. Acts ix. He was equal in office to Peter and the other Apostles. It was not a service he had voluntarily assumed, or in which he stood on his own word or authority; he bore the commission of Heaven, and none might innocently gainsay his message. It was not he, it was God, it was Christ, empowering him, as a chosen vessel,

\* When writers call the Apostle boastful, they forget that he couples with his own name *servant*, and that his boasting was not that of self-esteem, but of exultant gratitude, and conscious authority and power, for which he was accountable, and which men were to respect, not for his sake, but for God's sake and their own weal.

unto the Gospel of God, which he had promised afore by his 2 prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus Christ 3

to bear the Gospel to the Gentile world. Jesus and the Twelve uttered their message primarily "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The special designation of Paul was to preach the Gospel to all nations. — *Separated unto*, i. e. set apart, or consecrated, to the office of proclaiming the good news from heaven. Jer. i. 5; Acts xiii. 2; Gal. i. 15. The whole stress of the verse is, at once to establish his claims as an apostle, and also, as Theophylact said, "to express his humble-mindedness, and to intimate that he had not found because he had sought, but that he had come because he was called." John xv. 16, 19. Negatively, in Gal. i. 1, and positively, in 1 Cor. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 1, Eph. i. 1, Col. i. 1, 1 Tim. i. 1, 2 Tim. i. 1, he reiterated his apostolic authority, as coming, "not of men, neither by man," but "by the will of God," "by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ."

2. *Which* clearly refers to Gospel. — *Promised afore*. This phrase will be better understood after it is known that it is all comprised in one verb in the original Greek. The simple word means to *bring a message*, or *news, tidings*; compounded with a particle, meaning *well* or *good*, it signifies to *bring good news*; and hence comes its secondary meaning, to *announce the Gospel, to preach Christianity*, which is preëminently glad tidings, to mankind; and compounded with two other Greek particles, meaning *before*, and *upon* or *to*, it occurs in the text, and should be rendered *proclaimed* or *announced before*. Thus Stuart, "*which he formerly, or in former times, declared or published*." The word *afore* in English has either become obsolete, or fallen into vulgar use,

and *before*, in all correct speech and writing, has taken its place. — *By his prophets in the holy Scriptures*. The term *prophets* here includes all the writers of the Old Testament, whether lawgivers, like Moses, psalmists, like David, or professed predictors of future events, like Isaiah; and *the holy Scriptures* mean all their writings. This was a sentence of conciliation for the Jewish Christians, to soothe their easily alarmed prejudices at the admission of Gentiles into the Church, by proclaiming the antiquity and Hebrew sanction of the Gospel promises. Every part of the declaration is guarded and weighty. As Erasmus observes, "the promise is not made by any body whatever, but by God himself; nor through any persons whatever without distinction, but through his true and divine prophets; nor in any ordinary way, but in the sacred Scriptures." Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; Isa. xi., liii., lv., lxi.; Jer. xxxi. 31–34; Dan. vii. 13, 14; ix. 24–27; Joel ii. 28–32; Micah v. 2; Hag. ii. 6–9; Zech. ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5, 6. These references are but specimens of a general character of prediction, anticipation, hope of the Messiah, which runs quite through the Hebrew Scriptures, from the first book to the last. This ruling idea constitutes a part of the very substratum of the elder dispensation. The testimony of the prophets is often appealed to by our Lord and his disciples. Luke xxiv. 25–27, 44–46; Acts x. 43; xviii. 28; xxvi. 22, 23; Tit. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 10; 2 Pet. i. 19–21. For the general expectation, not only among the Jews, but in all nations, of the coming of a great deliverer about the time of the advent of Jesus Christ, see the comments on Matt. ii. 2.

3. *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ*.

our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to

This connects with verse 1, the intermediate clause being parenthetical, or at least explanatory, and the whole reads, *separated unto the Gospel of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ.* Tholuck observes, "We find here, what often occurs in the writings of this author, a large group of coordinate clauses. With reference to these, we remark, that Paul's peculiar mode of thinking, and consequently also of expression, is most aptly compared to a throng of waves, where, in ever loftier swell, one billow presses close upon the other. Like all men of lively temperament, he ever seeks to heighten the impressions of his words, by appending new explanations or definitions."—*Which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, or who was born of the seed of David as to his natural descent.* All the ingenious commenting of Olshausen and others upon these words, to extort the idea that the whole human nature of Jesus is here meant, mind as well as body, in contrast with his divine nature, as expressed in the next verse, is purely groundless and gratuitous. It is an *ex post facto*, or subsequent notion, inferred from one of the greatest corruptions of the Christian doctrine, and having no basis in the living text of God's word. The simple statement is, that Jesus was, so far as his early parentage was concerned, born of Mary, the descendant of David, and it is a work of supererogation to go behind that statement. The Apostle might have a twofold purpose; first, to negative that early heresy that the Messiah did not come in actual flesh and blood; 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7; and secondly, to dignify Christ in the eyes of the Jews, and to show the fulfilment of ancient prophecy by

the fact of his sonship to King David. See Matt. i. 1; ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22; xxii. 45; Luke xviii. 39; John vii. 42; and many other texts, which prove that by the Son of David was understood the long-desired Son of David, or the Messiah. The assertion of Barnes, that "the expression 'according to the flesh' is applied to no other one in the New Testament but to Jesus Christ," and the deduction from that, that the phrase has some very deep and sphinx-like idea in it, is all confuted by Rom. ix. 3, where the same words are employed relating to the Jews.

4. *Declared.* Margin reads *determined.* The word in Greek means *to define, limit, determine, decree.* *Horizon* in English is one of its derivatives. It occurs only eight times in the Christian Scriptures, either as a verb or participle, and six of the eight are in one writer, Luke. In Luke xxii. 22, Acts xi. 29 and xvii. 26, it is rendered in the Common Version, *determined*; in Acts ii. 23, *determinate*; Acts x. 42 and xvii. 31, *ordained*; Heb. iv. 7, *limited*; and in the present instance, *declared.* The meaning seems to refer to his being *proved* or *clearly shown* to be the Son of God, not as it respects the original decree or ordination of God, but in the sight and to the satisfaction of mankind. The mode in which this was done is stated in the next clause of the verse, viz. *with power*; powerfully declared to be the Son of God. Col. i. 29. So Luther and many others make the phrase adverbial. The point in which he was thus declared is then stated, to wit, *according to the spirit of holiness*, or, as to his, Christ's, holy spirit; it was there the stress of the proof fell. And then the means by which the declaration and proof were

the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom 5  
we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith  
among all nations, for his name: among whom are ye also the 6

given follows, i. e. *by the resurrection from the dead*. By printing the word *Spirit* with a capital, it is intimated that the Holy Spirit of God is signified, whereas the words, *according to the spirit of holiness*, are contrasted with those in the foregoing verse, *according to the flesh*, and simply mean the holy spirit of our Lord, as the sanctified and sent of the Father. The resurrection is appealed to, in numberless places, as the "confirmation strong" of his being the Messiah, the Son of God. There were many other proofs, but this one took the lead, and more *powerfully* demonstrated his claims as a divine teacher. Matt. xii. 38-40; xxviii. 18; Acts ii. 22-36; x. 39-42; xiii. 30-37; 1 Cor. xv. 14-17; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 18. It is perhaps needless to add, but for the cavil made, that the resurrection of Jesus to life and immortality proves far more than the restoration to life of Lazarus, or any one else, because it occurred under widely different circumstances, and was followed by consequences altogether peculiar. The miracles of Christ were all shining proofs of his divine mission, so declared by him, so received by the people, so preached by his Apostles, so believed in the Church Universal; but the miracle of the resurrection was the superlative and crowning witness that he was the Son of God.

5. *By whom*, i. e. by or through Jesus Christ. He was the mediatorial, not original cause. The spiritual gifts came from God through his medium. — *We*. I, Paul. — *Grace and apostleship*. Hendiadys, or a Hebrew rhetorical figure for *grace of apostleship*. So "life and immortality" means "immortal life." Paul would represent himself as "not a

whit behind the very chiefest Apostles" of the original band; for if they did not assume their apostleship of themselves, but received it from the Master, so did he, under even more solemn circumstances. Acts ix. One of the most burning convictions of his mind was the inconceivable grace which had converted him from a blasphemer and persecutor to an Apostle. 1 Tim. i. 13-15. The word *grace* is elsewhere translated, in some cases, *favor*. See Luke i. 30; ii. 52; Acts ii. 47; vii. 10; xxv. 3. Uniformity of rendering is important to a good translation, wherever the original words signify the same thing. — *For obedience to the faith*. The marginal reading is, *to the obedience of faith*. Our author here touches for the first time with a gentle hand upon the grand theme of his letter, "*the obedience of faith*, as contradistinguished from *legal obedience*." It was his office emphatically, as an Apostle "among all nations," or to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, to proclaim the obedience of faith, to convince men to obey the Gospel, not as a form or ritual, but as a faith, as a great internal and spiritual principle of life, peace, and progress. He afterwards brings out this idea into mountain-like prominence, and accumulates upon it the mighty powers of his genius and inspiration. — *For his name*, i. e. for his sake; for his glory. "In order that, by means of the propagation of the faith among all nations, Christ may be glorified."

6. *The called of Jesus Christ*, i. e. Christians. The mischievous afterthought of the commentators, and their prying curiosity, whether it means Christians by profession, or Christians in reality, disciples externally called and enjoying the out-

7 called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father

ward means and privileges of Christianity or disciples *effectually* called and inwardly sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption, may all be spared. It is a substantive term meaning Christians; and when we can decide what we mean at the present day by that term, we can ascertain beyond doubt what Paul intended when he said, "the called of Jesus Christ." It was not for the Apostle, it is not for any mortal this side of the revelations of eternity, to pronounce who is, and who is not, called effectually by God in his providence, and by Christ in his Gospel. We look upon certain companies of believers, and we call them Christians, substantively, bodily. They may be in errors of doctrine, as were the disciples at Rome, or in errors of conduct, as were the disciples at Corinth; but neither the errors of doctrine in the one, nor the vices of the other, prevented the inspired preacher of Christianity from calling them disciples, Christians, "beloved of God called to be saints." There is a lancet criticism which cuts up everything by the roots, and suffers nothing to wear its natural grace and simplicity in the field where it enters. The writers of the Holy Scriptures used free popular language, bold figures of rhetoric, quotations, allusions, as authors have done in every age; and unless we interpret their words accordingly, if we wring every phrase to see how much meaning we can extort from it, if we cut — to use the commonplace of critics — their language to the quick, we turn the revelation into a mystery and the Bible into a hidden book. The methods of Biblical criticism are often spoken of slightly, but they are as essential in their place as the arts of computing numbers, for we never can

force the rhetorical, any more than the numerical figures, to yield the right result without the right rules.

7. *To all that be in Rome.* He does not say Romans, but all, foreigners and natives, Jews as well as Gentiles. That searching critic upon the Common Version, Symonds, would properly substitute *are* for the obsolete indicative *be*. — *Beloved of God, called to be saints.* See the remarks on the preceding verse. Terms similar to these were applied to the relation between God and the Israelites. See Ex. xix. 6; Deut. xxxii. 19; xxxiii. 3; where they are called "a kingdom of priests," "a holy nation," "his sons and daughters," "his saints," and "the people" whom he "loved." The Epistles abound with such phrases relative to the Christian Church. Rom. viii. 33; Eph. i. 4; Phil. ii. 15; Col. iii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 10; Tit. i. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John iii. 1, 2. As to the term *saints*, Archbishop Newcome says, "All Christians were thus called, because they were dedicated to God, 1 Cor. vii. 14, and because they professed a religion which tended to make them holy." 1 Cor. vi. 11. See also Acts xxvi. 10; Rom. xii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 1; Eph. iii. 8. But, he adds, "those who were thus denominated might fall from personal holiness." While, on the other hand, the very benediction of the Apostle is a wish that they might have more and more sanctity and spirituality, thus precluding the notion that they had "already attained, or were already perfect," or even out of all manner of spiritual danger. — *Grace to you, and peace.* A wish that all the blessings of the Gospel, its happiest influences, might be shed over their hearts and lives. The apostolic benediction has various forms, as it occurs in different Epistles, but

and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole

its general import is the same, and cannot be mistaken. Well would it be if the ministry of modern days adhered more closely to these forms, instead of habitually introducing, as many do, doctrinal phraseology, which has no guaranty in the word of God, and which often jars on the ear of their dissenting brethren.—*From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, i. e. according to Dr. Wells, Salmeron, Pyle, Dr. A. Clarke, and others, whose authority is adduced by Wilson in his “Concessions of Trinitarians,” “All blessings spiritual and temporal be unto you, from God our Father, as the Fountain of them, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the channel through which they are conveyed to us.” Coleridge, also a Trinitarian, repudiates in strong terms the idea of any invocation. “Invoked! Surely a pious wish is not an invocation. ‘May good angels attend you!’ is no invocation or worship of angels.” But if it were otherwise, and there were something of the nature of a prayer, the conjunction of the name of Christ with that of God no more proves his deity, than the language of Paul in Acts xx. 32 is to be taken as predicating divine attributes of “the word of his grace,” because he connects it with “God” in the same clause. See also Eph. vi. 10, and the comments on Matt. xxviii. 19. Some have proposed to read, “God, the Father of us and of our Lord Jesus Christ”; but it is a violence which the usages of the language will not bear. No real difficulty arises from the ordinary formula.

We have now closed the introduction of the Epistle. In violation of the rule of the rhetoricians, to make the first sentence short, the Apostle opens wide his subject with words of

power and number. “No sooner does he mention the name of Christ, than the whole import of the title flashes upon his mind,” and he condenses the whole revelation of Christianity in the first paragraph. According to Griesbach’s edition, if the parenthetical clauses in verses 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were left out, the simple subject-matter of the introduction would read thus: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” As Olshausen remarks, Paul directs attention in his salutation to three points: 1. The pre-announcement of the Gospel by the prophets; 2. The dignity of the Redeemer; and 3. His own calling to the office of an Apostle.

8–15. The Apostle, having saluted his brethren with a Christian greeting, gives in these verses an introduction to his Epistle, delicate, conciliating, and respectful.

8. *First*. In order, in time.—*Through Jesus Christ*. In consideration of, with respect to, Jesus Christ. As stated by Cappe, the preposition *through* here does not represent Jesus Christ as the medium of conveying the Apostle’s thanks to God, but as the medium of conveying to the Corinthians the blessings that excited his thanksgivings on their behalf; and by whom, therefore, his gratitude might be said to be inspired.—*For you all*, or, as we should say, on your account.—*Your faith is spoken of*, i. e. with praise, celebrated. In chap. xvi. 19, it is “your obedience” that “is come abroad unto all men”; and in 1 Thess. i. 8, “For from you sounded out the

9 world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in  
 the Gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you  
 10 always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at  
 length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to  
 11 come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto

word of the Lord"; and "in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad." The cause of thanksgiving in every case was that the Gospel was first believed, then obeyed, and then professed and published to others. The Apostle's gratitude alights sometimes on one and sometimes on another point in this process. — *Throughout the whole world*, which means, in the phraseology of that day, the Roman empire; for that included nearly all the known world. From no other city, in fact, could the knowledge of Christianity be so widely diffused as from the city of Rome, which was then the metropolis of the globe. The Apostle to the Gentiles felt deeply thankful, that, from the great centre of human power and fame, the Gospel of Christ was going forth for the knowledge, faith, and obedience of the nations, and he gracefully compliments the disciples there for their instrumentality in such a work, and seeks to win their favorable attention.

9. *God is my witness.* A solemn appeal to God in confirmation of what he declares. It is not an oath, but it savors of the spirit of an oath. — *With my spirit*, i. e. spiritually, sincerely, with a true heart, and not according to a mere outward ritual. — *Without ceasing*, — *always*. Griesbach and Tischendorf correct this repetition of the same idea, by pointing the passage so that *always* is joined to verse 10, where it properly belongs. The whole then reads, "that without ceasing I make mention of you, (10) always in my prayers making request," &c. So Luther, Beza, Sacy, and many others. The ardent affec-

tions of the Apostle carried in the arms of his prayers his converts and all the disciples of Christ to the throne of grace, where he unceasingly invoked upon them the needful blessings of their condition. 1 Cor. i. 4; Eph. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 3. Since the duty of intercessory prayer is illustrated by such examples as those of Jesus and his Apostles, there can be no doubt of its efficacy, nor excuse for its neglect.

10. *If by any means*; or, that if by any means. Some editions put this clause, to the word *God*, in parentheses; but it is to be taken as the burden of his petition, making request that he might have a prosperous journey to visit them. The history in Acts xxv. — xxviii. shows that his journey to Rome was far from prosperous in outward respects, carried there as he was a prisoner, and being shipwrecked on the way; but those were light things for his heroism, if he could be the instrument of spreading the doctrines of life. — *By the will of God.* A promise, that is never out of place, expressed or understood, in the plans of so dependent a creature as man. James iv. 15.

11. *For I long to see you*, &c. Chap. xv. 23 — 29. Though the Apostle had many personal friends at Rome, as the list in chap. xvi. testifies, yet his great object was not friendship, or the pleasures of travel, or the spectacle of a magnificent city, but the promotion in them and in himself of the purposes of the glorious Gospel. In comparison with them, all other things sunk into insignificance. — *Some spiritual gift.* Not miraculous, but *mutual*. Ver. 12. The Apostle

you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, 12 that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith

desired to aid them, and to be aided himself in the religious life. Specially commissioned and endowed to preach the Gospel, and to produce its superhuman credentials, he was not above the range of human sympathies, auxiliaries, and necessities. He anticipates, by a journey to Rome, his own growth in grace and goodness, as well as the confirmation of their faith. Such is the nature of Christianity in every age; a system of giving and of receiving, of blessing and of being blessed, of action and of reaction of good; this is the sphere of vital relations and influences into which we are introduced by the benevolent Saviour.— *To the end you may be established.* “This does not refer to an increase of knowledge, but to a more lively and cheerful acceptance of what they already knew, to that more vigorous excitement of spiritual life which is always the consequence of intercourse among men of congenial sentiments in religion.”

12. This is a commentary on the preceding verse. He is afraid he has used too strong an expression. The object is to soften the bearing which it might seem to have, and to show that his wish was not to “have dominion over their faith,” but to “be helpers of their joy.” The church of Rome was not of his planting, as was that at Corinth; and we perceive a great difference in the tone of the Epistle to the Romans, compared with that of the Epistle to the Corinthians, arising from that fact. In one case, he speaks more as a father or master, in the other, as a brother and equal. This delicacy of spiritual touch, to use a figure from another profession, and this fine adaptation of style and manner to the occasion, without infringing in the least upon sincerity and entire rectitude, has

procured for Paul the title of “a perfect Christian gentleman.” — *Comforted together.* Tholuck thinks “the sense to be preferred is to refresh, stir up, which is always the fruit of social intercourse between men of vital religion.” “We must not, however, suppose that mere communication by word is here meant; there is also implied that inexplicable, immediate action of spirit upon spirit, which takes place whenever there is a fellowship in love, and more especially among Christians.— *The mutual faith both of you and me.*\* It has been said, that the moment another joins his belief to our own, it adds an immeasurable strength to our assurance. The Apostle has here used the word *faith* for the third time, and it is the grand rallying-point of his ideas throughout the Epistle. But by *faith* he meant, and we ought to understand, nothing narrow, technical, mysterious, or irrational. It is the *great spiritual principle*, in contradistinction to ritual rules; the life of the new, growing character, not the dead routine of habit; the internal world of sincere, self-wrought convictions and earnest purposes, contrasted with a superficiality, not of hypocrisy, but of second-hand notions, adopted habits, and all the borrowed garb of traditions and conventionalities. Faith of the heart, deep-seated, living, working, growing, transforming! faith in God, in Christ, in goodness, in immortality, the believing, confiding, aspiring, hoping state of the heart! The wonder is, not that the word is ever hovering, like a Pentecostal tongue of fire,

\* He deferentially intimates that they could benefit him, as well as he them, and that the obligation would by no means be all on their side. What a beautiful Christian politeness and refinement softens the zeal of authority and apostleship!



13 both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as  
 14 among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the  
 15 Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome

along the Apostle's line, but that men, souls, minds, kindled by God, should fall into such deathlike torpor, as for ever to need the electric word.

13. *Oftentimes I purposed to come unto you.* CHAP. XV. 23, 24, compared with the text and with Acts xix. 21. Paley, in his "Horæ Paulinæ," draws an inference from the easy, incidental, but uncalculated agreement of these passages, in favor of the truth of the history, and the authenticity of the Epistles. By the induction of a great number of these particulars of conformity between the acts and the writings of Paul, he has welded an argument of much strength against the historical doubter.—*Let.* Obsolete English for "prevented," "hindered." Isa. xliii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 7.—*Some fruit.* The object was spiritual benefit, edification, *improvement*, that almost forgotten word in the current creeds of the churches calling "themselves by the noble titles, Catholic, Evangelical, Christian. Every verse of St. Paul implies, presupposes, that neither he nor his converts had attained the perfection of the Christian life; rather, that they had but entered upon the immortal race of progress.—*As among other Gentiles*, or, better, "as among the rest of the Gentiles."

14. *I am debtor.* This is no merit of mine; I only do my duty. Paul had been placed under obligations by his special calling and conversion to minister as widely as possible to the world of the glad tidings of heaven. He was a chosen vessel, Acts ix. 15, for this purpose. But his native zeal

made him feel with far more vividness these obligations, and labor with far greater intensity to fulfil them. 1 Cor. ix. 16.—*Greeks, Barbarians; wise unwise*; or, as we should say, "civilized" and "uncivilized"; "learned" and "unlearned." By the Greeks were meant the Greeks and Romans, who professed to be civilized, (though in reality they were in a species of barbarism,) and who called all other nations, as the Jews, Egyptians, &c., Barbarians. The terms were designed to cover all nations and all conditions. Paul's mission was as broad as humanity. "The Gospel claims to have power to instruct all mankind, and they who are called to preach it should be *able* to instruct those who deem themselves wise, and who are endowed with science, learning, and talent; and they should be *willing* to labor to enlighten the most obscure, ignorant, and degraded portions of the race. This is the true spirit of the Christian ministry."—BARNES.

15. *As much as in me is.* As far as it respects myself; or, as far as my ability or opportunity may serve.—*To you that are at Rome also.* A better rendering of the original is, "Even to you that are at Rome." The point was, that he was ready to preach the humble doctrines of a crucified Master even to the proud and refined inhabitants of the imperial city. He does not say "Romans," but "those at Rome," Jews as well as Gentiles. This ends what has been called the Introduction; though we are to recollect that the

also. 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

Apostle makes no set divisions, and follows no arbitrary rules.

16. *For I am not ashamed, &c.* Griesbach and other critics omit the words, *of Christ*, as not in the Greek. As has been remarked, this sentiment was dictated by the association of ideas; for after mentioning Rome, the city of power and splendor, he naturally reverted to the Gospel of humility, love, and mercy, and declared his courage to preach it even before the lords of the earth. He should not blush for his Divine Master even in the imperial presence itself. Mark viii. 38; Rom. x. 11; 2 Tim. i. 8, 12; 1 Pet. iv. 16; 1 John ii. 28. Though the declaration of the heroic Apostle was peculiarly fitted for a period when the name of a crucified Saviour was coupled with infamy, yet the sentiment is worthy of adoption now as then, and has a use in every age. There is such a thing even at this day of its wide-spread diffusion, and the general respect paid to its claims, as being ashamed of the pure, undefiled, uncompromising Gospel. Among infidels, who call it false, worldlings, who brand it as visionary, and bigots, who make it odious, we may shrink from the full and fearless avowal of our faith. Denying Peter and timid Nicodemus have had their imitators in every age. But there is no cause to be ashamed of the Gospel in itself, when we have distinguished its heaven-sent truth from human corruption, and its perfect precepts from the inconsistent lives of its professors. For it is the truth of God, the life of Christ, and the salvation of a sinful world. We ought never to be ashamed to believe, profess, and follow our Master in any circumstances whatever, or at any period of life; his service is true honor and unfading glory. His re-

ligion "has an immortal life, and will gather strength from the violence of its foes. It is equal to all the wants of man. The greatest minds have found in it the light which they most anxiously desired. The most sorrowful and broken spirits have received from it a healing balm for their woes. It has inspired the sublimest virtues and the loftiest hopes. For the corruptions of such a religion I weep, and I should blush to be their advocate; but of the Gospel itself I can never be ashamed." No. Its doctrines, promises, examples, its cross and its crown, are worthy of all acceptance, of eternal gratitude and eternal praise.

"Jesus! and shall it ever be,—

A mortal man ashamed of thee!

Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,

Whose glories shine through endless days!

"Ashamed of Jesus! that dear friend,

On whom my hopes of heaven depend!

No! when I blush, be this my shame,

That I no more reverse his name!

"And oh! may this my glory be,

That Christ is not ashamed of me!"

— *The power of God.* 1 Cor. i. 18, 24. The *dynamis*, the *dynamical* moral agent of God for the salvation of mankind. It is a great relief to human weariness and distrust, while engaged in promoting the influence of Christianity, to fall back on this proposition, and remember that it is "the power of God," and therefore instinct with all the energies and means of a final victory over sin and wretchedness. — *To every one that believeth.* The Gospel is the power of God, but faith is the necessary condition of its efficacy on the part of man. Believing is receiving it in good faith, as if it were the power and truth of God, and obeying and practising upon it with that full persuasion. — *To the Jew first, &c.* Not by preference, for the strain of the

17 Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness

Epistle is to place all on an impartial platform, but in order of time, and opportunity of knowledge and obedience. Mat. xv. 24. Thus this verse may be said to contain the gist of the whole controversy, viz.: 1. The Gospel is true, is the power of God unto salvation. 2. The condition on the part of man is to receive it in faith, and of course to work out its saving purposes. 3. Its universality over all religious and national partitions, whether Jewish or Gentile. The Apostle bears down upon these points with all the enginery of his learning, genius, and zeal, in the following chapters; and if he seem obscure, it is because we are dazzled with excess of light; or if doubtful in proof, it is through the complicated abundance, not the poverty of his arguments and illustrations.

17. *Therein*, i. e. in the Gospel, is the righteousness of God revealed. Many render the noun, justification, pardon, acquittal, freeing from condemnation, accepting and treating as righteous. So Stuart, Thompson, Improved Version, Bloomfield, Barnes, and a host of others, both Liberal and Calvinistic. But there is perhaps a deeper sense than that, and one that also has its authorities. — *The righteousness of God*; or rather, “the means by which God would make us righteous.” See the Scriptural Interpreter, Vol. VII. p. 242. So Tholuck: “The Gospel makes known a way to that perfect fulfilment of the law which is required by God.” So Robinson, in his Lexicon of the New Testament: “The righteousness which God approves, requires, bestows.” So Doddridge: “The method which God hath contrived and proposed for our becoming righteous.” “*The righteousness of God* plainly signifies, in several passages of this Epistle, not the essential righteous-

ness of God’s nature, but the manner of becoming righteous, which God hath appointed and exhibited in the Gospel.” So Goadby: “It may signify the method which God has contrived or proposed for our becoming *righteous*; for the righteousness which arises from a scheme which God has by his infinite wisdom planned, and through his goodness revealed to men, may properly be called *the righteousness of God*; and it may further be called so, as being that righteousness which he requires, or which is most acceptable to him, as being most agreeable to his nature.” So Adam Clarke: “God’s method of saving sinners.” Though there are shades of difference in these interpretations, they all unite in the common idea, that by “*the righteousness of God*” the Apostle does not here mean God’s method of treating the sinner as just, but his method of *making the sinner just*, of *doing the work*; for the difficulty which the Gospel meets is not how God should treat men, and how remit their offences, but how men should *become* what they ought to be, just, righteous, in heart and life. The word *justification*, some may be surprised to learn, occurs but three times in the whole Bible; and those are in this Epistle, chap. iv. 25, v. 16, 18; and in every instance the better rendering is *righteousness*. The great need of a sinful world is not justification, but righteousness; the righteousness of God; his method of helping men to become righteous, true, pure, good. Doubtless there is a secondary idea involved; and that is, the pardon of those who have failed of doing their whole duty; the remission of sins. But this secondary idea has by most theologians of the old schools been raised into the place of the primary one, and the primary one has fallen into a lower rank.

of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall

That the question opened by the Apostle is not one of justification so much as one of righteousness, is demonstrated by what follows, in which he describes the abominable *unrighteousness* of the Gentiles, and also the *wickedness* of the Jews under the Law, and therefore the need of the Gospel method of making both Jews and Gentiles soundly righteous, and so, of course, acceptable to God; viz. by faith, by the great spiritual principle of Christianity, in contradistinction to the mere light of reason and nature among the Gentiles, and the legal system of the Jews. Paul's doctrine is, then, 1. A doctrine of righteousness; 2. By consequence, a doctrine of justification; not the reverse, as too often interpreted. Chap. iii. 22; x. 3-10.—*From faith to faith.* I. e. from one degree of the spiritual principle to another and higher. Thus the Institute 988 of Gerard is, that "a noun repeated, and governed by different prepositions, forms an idiomatical expression, denoting continuance and increase." Ps. lxxxiv. 7; Jer. ix. 3. Thus Theophylact: "It is not sufficient to have believed at first. We must ascend from initial to more perfect faith." Tholuck also understands the phrase as a climax, and agrees with Melanethon, Beza, Le Clerc, and others; but many take different views. The fundamental idea of faith, as held by many, is, that it is capable of no increase nor diminution; that, being once received, it is wholly and for ever received, allowing neither addition nor multiplication. But the general apostolic representation of the spiritual principle of the Gospel is its progressive degrees from weakness to strength. Such is its nature, whether in the form of faith or hope, which is but a species of vivid faith, or charity, which is human or brotherly faith and confi-

dence. Chap. vi. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 16; iii. 18.—*As it is written.* The Old Testament was law, literature, and religion to the Jews; and the frequency with which it is quoted by Jesus and his preachers shows us how essentially the germ of the more spiritual revelations of the new were wrapped up in the ruder forms of the old covenant. Men do not know how much they lose when they cease to reverence Moses and the prophets.—*The just shall live by faith.* The order and sense of the original is, "The just by faith shall live." So it is pointed by Griesbach. It is a quotation from Hab. ii. 4. The application at first was doubtless to the evils, national or personal, religious or civil, under which the old Hebrews were suffering, and from which the faithful man was delivered. The use here, by accommodation, is to portray the effect of the faith-inspired righteousness in achieving man's true life. The just, or, to preserve uniformity of rendering, the righteous, by faith, shall inherit what may by eminence be called "life." The righteousness of the Gentiles was imperfect, the righteousness of the Jews legal; as Jesus told his disciples that their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Matt. v. 20. But the man who was righteous from the spiritual faith of the Gospel, would possess the true being of the soul. We may see in the general interpretation of this passage, also, the swaying bias of the ancient theology. The question was transposed from how men should be just or righteous, to how they should live, or be happy; for the term *life* sometimes means happiness in the Scriptures. But the powerful brunt of the Apostle's eloquence against Gentile and Jewish errors is everywhere *faith-righteousness*; knowing

18 live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven  
 against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the  
 19 truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of  
 God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them.

full well that, if men's souls were thus made alive out of the death of trespasses and sins, there would be no danger or difficulty but what God would accept and forgive them, and they would live, be happy. His fears were not for God's government, but for man's fulfilment of its conditions and eternal laws. "A righteous man is a man who is right in all his relations. He is right towards himself, having harmony within; right towards his fellow-men, sustaining towards them just the offices, and cherishing just the dispositions, which become him; right towards God. Righteousness is, therefore, the one command, the one Gospel."—GANNETT.

18. *For the wrath of God, &c.* The righteous displeasure of God at the sins of his rational creatures is not, of course, like the anger and wrath which we speak of in reference to human passions. The expression is, as all agree, *anthropathic*, or speaking of God after the manner of men. The Apostle proceeds now to show the crying need of this faith-righteousness, of which he had given a description in verses 16 and 17; first, i. 18–32, by the shocking degradation of the Gentiles; and secondly, i. 1–iii. 19, by the unfaithfulness of the Jews to their greater privileges, as the possessors of a special revelation from God.—*From heaven*, i. e. from above; a divine disclosure. The righteous displeasure of God at the moral disobedience of his creatures is shown in the natural retribution which sooner or later follows the transgressor, and finds him out with unerring certainty; also in the successive revelations of the Hebrew Scriptures, which are as full of warnings as of promises; and,

finally, in the Gospel of Christ, which, though a system of love throughout, is nevertheless decisive in maintaining the integrity of the moral law, and cautioning men against its smallest infractions.—*Ungodliness and unrighteousness.* Impiety and injustice. Two generalizations which respectively cover the violations of the two great moral laws, love to God, and love to man.—*Who hold the truth in unrighteousness.* Or, more correctly, who hinder, obstruct, or stifle the truth by injustice, iniquitously. They repressed, as Neander paraphrases it, the truth that manifested itself to them, the consciousness of truth that was springing up in their minds, by sin. The germ of truth that began to be opened was crushed and destroyed; for the deification of nature falsified the religious element, and turned down to the seen and temporal what from its nature is a yearning after the invisible, infinite, and eternal. Such a perversion must work immense mischief, making what is highest in man sink the lowest, and throwing the holiest sanctions over the grossest passions.

19. *That which may be known.* Not what was known, but what was knowable, or to be known.—*Is manifest in them.* Is manifested in their minds. The handwriting of God was upon their souls, created in his image. God in nature found a sense of God in man to appeal to, where it had not been wronged and effaced. A divine hand has laid deep in the soul this elemental basis of worship and heavenly love, and the structures of false religions stand as firmly as they do, because they have this foundation.—*God hath showed it unto them.* How

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are 20 clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, 21

he has done it, is exhibited in the next verse. Acts xiv. 17; xvii. 26-28.

20. This verse is a powerful vindication of the truth of natural theology, the evidence of the existence and power of God from his works, and the sufficiency of the creation, were man true to his own nature, to teach him at least some of the primary lessons of the divinity. The fine balance of the Apostle's mind, even in his intense zeal for the revelation of Christ, is shown by his concession in this passage of the reality and power of the teaching of God in the physical universe, "the natural apostles of the sun, moon, and stars." He recognized the world as the shadow of God, the evanescent forms of matter as the projection of the eternal realities of the spirit. A creation crowded with visible effects leads the mind naturally back to the great fountain of causes in God. — *For the invisible things, &c.* Griesbach justly makes all but the last clause parenthetical, so that, if it were left out, the sense would be complete thus, joining v. 19 to the last clause of v. 20: "God hath showed it to them, so that they are without excuse." — *From the creation.* I. e. in time, ever since the world was made. — *Clearly seen.* Even Aristotle says, "God, who is invisible to every mortal being, is seen by his works." The natural impression made on the mind of man of the being and attributes of God is not necessarily due to science, though it may be heightened by it. The untutored Indian believes without hesitation in the Great Spirit. — *Being understood.* Literally, *minded.* The difficulty with most things is, that they are merely *sensed*, so to speak,

not *minded*; mind is not put into the observation, but eye, and ear, and sense only are concerned. — *Even his eternal power, &c.* These were "the invisible things of him." "The idea of almightiness first strikes the religious consciousness on the contemplation of nature; and hence the consciousness of dependence on a higher power is the predominant sentiment in natural religion." — *Godhead,* divinity, or supreme, godlike excellence. Wisdom of Solomon xiii. That the power of God is not the only quality enstamped on the creation, is indicated by the obligation alluded to in verse 21, "neither were thankful," and by Acts xiv. 17. Still it devolved on Jesus peculiarly to show men the Father in God. — *Without excuse.* Idolatry is not represented as a misfortune, but as a sin. Of course there are different complexions of guilt in different periods and persons; but that a system that does so much to imbrute the soul and deprave society is caused by some moral lapse and darkening of the inner light, is self-evident. Conscience must have been often trodden upon, and the strong instincts of the heart resisted, before men could come to the worship of Juggernaut, and to suttees, or the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. When we leave the light of the soul and God, there is no guaranty against any amount of folly and wickedness, however great or gross.

21. The reason why "they were without excuse" is here given. The knowledge they possessed, or had the opportunity to acquire, they did not carry into effect, and consequently, in process of time, they lost their

neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and  
 22 their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be  
 23 wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncor-  
 ruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to

knowledge of the true God. The parable of the talents contains the doctrine applicable to this subject. Matt. xxv. 29. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."—*Glorified—thankful*. Two points, one referring to the reverence due to the Divine sovereignty, and the other to the love due to the Divine goodness.—*Vain in their imaginations*, &c. The Apostle speaks in metaphysical order. Unfaithfulness to the sense of God in the soul, and to the knowledge they possessed of him, beclouded their intellect, and then darkened their heart. So surely does the wronging of any one part of our being, so fearfully and wonderfully made, diffuse evil and misery into every other part. One traitor is enough to betray the whole citadel to the enemy. Idols were often called *vanities* in the Scriptures, because they were nothing. 2 Kings xvii. 15; Acts xiv. 15. And *vain* was therefore a term applicable to a mind that followed them; while the moral corruption flowing from the worship of false gods sufficiently demonstrated the darkness of the heart. Eph. iv. 18, 19.

22. It was a peculiarity of the ancient sages that they did not call themselves wise, but, with a tinge of affectation, "lovers of wisdom," or philosophers. This wisdom, which was not wisdom, was the rock on which the Greeks split in their rejection of the Gospel, as previously in their construction of a cruel and licentious mythology. To men seeking after such wisdom, the cross of Christ was foolishness. 1 Cor. i. 22, 23. These ancient systems of false phi-

losophy have largely infected Christian theology, and perverted the truth as it is in Jesus. It will be long before the Church will outgrow entirely the errors which have been superadded to the simplicity of Christ by the pantheistic and scholastic schools of the ancient masters. Men still draw their ideas of the nature of God and man from Plato, Aristotle, Philo, and Augustine, more than from the New Testament.

23. There were three stages to the process. First, false and foolish systems of philosophy, verse 22; then idolatry, verse 23; and finally, the practical immoralities and obscenities that flowed from idolatry.—*Changed*, &c. They substituted for the glory due to the Eternal God the homage paid to perishable creatures. The great value and task of the Hebrew revelations, and the explanation of many of the Jewish institutions, was the aim to lift mankind out of this pit which they had dug for themselves. It hardly seems credible, were not history authentic on the subject, that intellectual and moral beings could sink so low as to worship a cat or dog, a snake or crocodile. Juvenal says, in the fifteenth of his Satires:—

"Who knows not to what monstrous gods, my friend,  
 The mad inhabitants of Egypt bend?  
 While these the ibis piously enshrine,  
 Those think the crocodile divine;  
 Others  
 Set up a glittering brute of uncouth shape,  
 And bow before the image of an ape;  
 Thousands regard the hound with holy fear,  
 Not one, Diana; and 't is dangerous here  
 To violate an onion, or to stain  
 The sanctity of leeks with tooth profane.  
 O holy nations! Sacro-sanct abodes,  
 Where every garden propagates its gods!"

birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore 24 God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and 25

24. *Wherefore God also gave them up, &c.* See also similar phraseology in verse 26. This language cannot, of course, be intended to signify that God does really forsake even the most abandoned; but it is a mode of speaking of him from a human point of view. We may desert God, but God never deserts us. We must be careful in these cases not to make logic out of the old Hebrew rhetoric. The Jews, deeply penetrated with the conviction of the dependence of all things on God, referred to him and his working all events, and they at times seemed to annihilate the free agency of man, when they really designed only to express their consciousness of the superintending providence and love of God over all, from the greatest to the least. The Apostle uses the idioms of his nation. The attempt to make "the theology of the heart" stand for "the theology of the intellect" has been productive of not a little evil and error in Biblical criticism. The laws of God are vindicated in the punishments as well as the rewards of moral actions; and that they who do wrong should go on from bad to worse, is a result which takes place as naturally, under his providence, as that they who do well should go on from good to better and best. *Eccles. iv. 19.* The system is God's; under which he that hath gains more, and he that hath not loses even that he hath. The language in *Eph. iv. 19* is, "have given themselves over," &c.—*Through the lusts, &c.* Symonds says *in*, and Tholuck *to*, the lusts. This revolting picture of moral corruption reminds us how common a feature licentiousness is of all forms of gross error and

absurdity in religion. It would appear as if an abandonment of a temperate and rational faith were the signal to plunge into the foulest sties of pollution. Witness the history of modern fanaticisms, as well as the idolatries of the ancient world. When the central light of creation is put out, men undertake to walk by the guidance of the phosphoric glare of their own most depraved passions.

25. *Truth of God into a lie.* Philo, in speaking of the amazement of Moses at the Israelites for making the golden calf, says, "What a lie they had substituted for how great a reality!" Idols were called "lies," "vanities," nothings. *Jer. xvi. 19, 20; Amos ii. 4.*—*Worshipped and served.* Better, revered and worshipped; the first verb referring to the sentiment, and the other to its expression in worship, or some other mode.—*More than, or, rather than.* The proneness of the world to idolatry, as proved by all past history, should make the Christian Church extremely guarded, both in its doctrines and its ritual, against any competition between any thing created and that eternal and uncreated and all-glorious Intelligence from whom all things have proceeded. It is to be feared, however, that even the disciples of Him who said, "Our Father who art in heaven," have not kept entirely clear of this insidious perversion of true worship. And in view of the corruptions of the Christian Church, both doctrinal and practical, we can say with another sense and application than the writer had, "What greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate



served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.  
 26 Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for  
 even their women did change the natural use into that which is  
 27 against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use  
 of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with  
 men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves  
 28 that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as  
 they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them

or the market. Literature becomes frivolous; science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honor. Society lives to trifles, and when men die, we do not mention them."—*Who is blessed for ever. Amen.* Paul here shows his education at the feet of Gamaliel. After anything that might seem to be irreverent, both Jews and Mahometans are accustomed to insert a doxology, as if to deprecate any participation in such impiety. Rom. ix. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Gal. i. 5. Tholuck mentions that, in a history of heresies sprung from Islamism, the pious author, as often as he introduces a new sect, adds, "God be exalted above what they say!" The word *Amen* is derived from a Hebrew verb, *it is certain, true*, and implies assent to what has been said, and a prayer that it may come true. The Masonic expression is similar, "So mote it be."

26, 27. *For this cause, &c.* Like cleaves to like. But the wickedness of these licentious idolaters excluded the pure idea of God. Their sphere of corruption repelled his sphere of holiness. Without raking over the loathsome particulars of this mass of abominations, it is enough to say, in general, that the ancient Greek and Roman writers have left on their pages abundant testimony to the truth of this picture, in all its darkest colors, as painted by the Apostle.

And the history of modern idolatry, as given by travellers and missionaries, presents evidence of corruption and gross sensuality scarcely less horrible. But if it be said, as it sometimes is done, by way of objection to, or disparagement of, Christianity, that the licentiousness of modern cities in Christendom is equal in enormity to any tales of ancient or idolatrous countries, it should be considered that these dreadful sins do not, as in heathenism, receive permission or encouragement from religion, but exist under protest and in spite of it, and that the whole aim and spirit of the Gospel is to purify the bodies as well as the souls of men, to carry the beauty of holiness into all the relations of the sexes, and to throw the check of self-denial over all the animal instincts. Lev. xviii. 22, 23; 2 Kings xxiii. 7; 2 Mac. vi. 4. The depth of degradation is set forth in these verses, as it was not lust merely, but *unnatural lust*, of which the Apostle brings an accusation against the Gentile world.—*That recompense of their error which was meet.* An inevitable retribution of course followed such violations of the natural laws, both in the body diseased and in the mind corrupted.

28. They were so abandoned they seemed to be God-forsaken. See comments on verses 18, 24, 26. The natural consequences which resulted from transgressing the laws and econ-

over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, 30 proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

omy of the physical and moral world are set down in the Hebrew style as a divine judgment. — *Reprobate*. An adjective derived from the verb above, "did not like." Either a mind incapable of moral judgment or discrimination, or one vile and depraved, and deserving reprobation. "It is properly used of adulterated coin." — *Not convenient*. Not becoming, fit, decent. The original conveys a stronger sense than the English translation. The progress of wickedness, from its incipient stages to its final points, is given with great vividness and Hogarthian fidelity and plainness in this whole passage. It unrolls from point to point, like a panorama. Beginning with suppression of the innate sense of the divine in the soul, and the rejection of the testimony of nature to the being and character of God, and proceeding through various lapses of pretended philosophy and practical idolatry, the heathen fell, step by step, into deeper and deeper degradation, until they realized the hideous condition described in verses 29–32 by the brilliant, cumulative style of Paul, in which one strong word is piled upon another, like Pelion upon Ossa. The fact that Paul had travelled far and wide over the Eastern world, and dwelt in the great cities of the most polished nations, must add much weight to his testimony over that of one who had never looked beyond the windows of his own hermitage.

29. *Being filled with all unrighteousness*. Violation of the elemental law of love to God by idolatry, and of love to man by unnatural lust, spread disorder through all the de-

tails of moral duty, and made every point at which man came into contact and relation with man a sore and a sin. Each word of this dark sentence conveys a distinct signification. — *Unrighteousness*. A general term covering the whole ground. — *Fornication*. All illicit intercourse. Griesbach and Tischendorf's editions exclude this word. — *Wickedness*. Malice, evil disposition. — *Covetousness*. Love of one's own, to the exclusion of the good of another. — *Maliciousness*. Injurious treatment, a habit of doing mischief to others. — *Full of envy*. A rhetorical variation, naturally introduced to relieve the mind. Envy is the evil spirit that grows up among the inequalities of the human condition. — *Murder*. Public and private, wholesale and retail; in war, the amphitheatre, and by assassination. — *Debate*, i. e. strife, sharp contention. — *Deceit*. Juvenal says in his Satires, "What shall I do at Rome? I cannot lie." — *Malignity*. More particularly, misrepresentation, a devil of great power in modern days. — *Whisperers*. Slanderers in secret.

30. *Backbiters*. Not so, but slanderers in public; the reverse of *whisperers*. The want of a correct English version of the sacred Scriptures renders it necessary to give a considerable amount of mere verbal criticism, which would otherwise be entirely superfluous. — *Inventors of evil things*. I. e., in the corrupt age of Grecian decay and Roman luxury, of new pleasures, vices, and cruelties, in which the history of that period shows that kings and their parasites abounded. A high premium was

31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affec-  
 32 tion, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment 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.

## CHAPTER II.

*The Impartiality and Equity of the Divine Government, both to Jews and Gentiles.*

THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that

promised by a Roman emperor to any one who would invent a new pleasure. Eccles. iii. 29. — *Disobedient to parents.* The customs of the heathen world in relation to the exposure of parents in sickness or old age, and non-provision for their comfort generally, when they became useless, are incredibly cruel and unnatural.

31. The Apostle speaks in the figures of rhetoric, like other writers: and in this description of the wickedness of the old pagan world, he employs alliteration in several instances in the original, though it is of course lost in the translation; *thonon* and *phonon*, *asunetous* and *asunthetous*, &c. — *Without natural affection.* The case of sick and infirm parents has been mentioned. Children also, especially of the female sex, were sometimes exposed by their unnatural parents to wild beasts, or to die of cold and hunger. “Emperors murdered their parents, and violated their sisters.” — *Unmerciful.* This has a different signification from the previous word *implacable*. One word relates to their enemies, and the other to the poor, afflicted, or suffering in general. The heathen did not forgive their foes, and so were implacable; they did not provide for the relief of human distress and want, and so were unmerciful. The whole ancient world had not one hospital, asylum, refuge for the deaf, dumb, blind, insane, wounded, or sick! Even the natural affections were not sufficient to call such institutions into

being until the worth of man as man, as a child of God, was revealed in the light of a divine, immortal faith. It should be observed, however, that Griesbach indicates the probable, and Tischendorf the certain, omission of *implacable*, as spurious, in the text.

32. *Judgment.* Law, ordinance. — *Worthy of death*, i. e. of the severest punishment. — *But have pleasure in them that do them.* This was the climax of depravity. They not only did these deeds in the heat of impulse, but, with a reflex action of the understanding, they coolly and deliberately approved of others in doing the same things, or they bore part with them in doing the same things.

In such gloom was the ancient world wrapt without revelation. How blind, and miserable, and earth-bound a being was man when left to himself! For if the many were sunk in wickedness, the few were addicted to errors so gross, and the blemish of so many corruptions clung to their lives and characters, as to leave us little to choose between them. Aristotle and Cicero permitting revenge, Cato suicide, and Socrates sacrificing to Æsculapius, were quite as sad moral vagaries in such sons of light, as the brutality of the soldier, the pollution of the devotee, and the hard heart of children towards their parents, in the people at large.

## CHAPTER II.

The Apostle proceeds from point to point, without formal arrangement

judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy-

or announcement of topics, leaving to the reader to detect the joints in his armor. Without any title put to them, his writings would be seen at once to be epistolary, by the freedom, abruptness, obscurity, and want of finish with which he wrote. The world has too long undertaken to interpret as complete and methodical treatises upon Christianity what were earnest, informal, and fragmentary "Tracts for the Times," circulars to the churches, and letters to friends.

The present chapter advances in the line of argument commenced in the last one. The Gospel was a free gift to all men. All who received it on conviction would be saved by it. It was a *free* gift. Neither Jews nor Gentiles had done anything to merit this Divine interposition, for both had sunk into great wickedness. But as no claim existed by reason of their depravity, so, on the other hand, no obstacle in either case existed on account of that same depravity. The mercies of God were not purchased by merits, nor excluded by sins. Having in a few ghastly outlines sketched the horrible corruption of the heathen world, of man in a state of nature, Paul now abruptly turns round, and virtually asks a Jewish objector, whom he might readily imagine was carping by his side at the gross wickedness of the Gentiles, (putting his question in the second person to give force to his address,) But is the case much better with you, boasted children of Abraham? If the heathen have been unfaithful to the light of nature, have not you been almost equally so to the law of Moses and its moral spirit? Is not your claim as preposterous as theirs? But Paul in the discussion does not limit himself to the solitary topic of the ground on which the Christian revelation was given; for, breaking away

in the freedom of a zealous interpreter of all God's dealings with man, he justifies the ways of Providence in all directions, and announces the equitableness of the whole Divine administration, as commenced in this world and to be continued in the next. It is still a great service, even at this late day, to show that the natural sentiment of justice has not been wounded by the varying gifts of either Nature, Providence, or Revelation, whether bestowed on individuals or nations. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Well does Milton pray, at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*,

"What in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low, raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to man."

1. *Therefore.* This indicates too close a logical sequence, where scarcely any exists. It is rather a gently transitional than a closely consecutive term, and would be better worded by *moreover, then, accordingly.* Though, if there be a closer connection, it must be, as Neander says, in this way: As the Apostle had said, i. 32, that the height of wickedness was that they not only did evil, but took pleasure in others that did the same, thus showing a deliberate, conscious corruption of heart; so those who know the law of God well enough to judge others, condemn themselves in the very act of judging, because they do the same things; all the while showing by the fact that they set themselves up as judges, that they know what is good, though they pursue the wrong. The inference, if there be any, is from the guilt of approving sin in others, the Gentiles having a certain light of nature, to the guilt of condemning sin in others, the Jews having the

2 self; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure  
 that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which  
 3 commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest  
 them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt  
 4 escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of  
 his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that  
 5 the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy  
 hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath

clearer light of the law, and yet doing things as bad as the Gentiles. It would have offended the Jews to specify them by name; the change in topics is accordingly made by implication rather than by assertion. — *O man, whosoever thou art.* Man, a covert way of introducing the Jews; and man, as contradistinguished from God in verse 2. So Locke. The Apostle was always careful to make his argument heavy, but his address courteous and inoffensive. — *The same things.* Paul does not care to enumerate the particulars; but this declaration of the gross immorality of the Jews is amply sustained by the discourses of Christ, by the history of Josephus, and the fact of the retributive overthrow of the Jewish nation.

2. But whatever may be the inconsistency of human judgment, we know there is a judgment somewhere that is true and right, and that is the Divine one. Some suppose a Jewish interlocutor here, but it is quite needless. Though the Jews are not entitled, because of their own shortcomings, to sit in condemnation on the heathen, yet there is One whose judgment is founded on truth and rectitude, and he is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity."

3. He begins to unmask his battery. He here appeals to the Jewish conscience. Chrysostom puts the

antithesis well: "Thou hast not escaped thine own condemnation, and shalt thou escape that of God?" The fact that you are the children of Abraham, will avail you nothing in mitigation of the sentence, much as you may pride yourselves upon it, but will rather aggravate your guilt, because you have been unfaithful to a greater light than the Gentiles ever possessed. He dimly intimates the great argument of his letter, that the Jewish prerogative would avail nothing under Christianity. He is laying down self-evident propositions, that would open the way for conclusions which the Jews had not foreseen.

4. "*Despisest*, or "presumest upon," or "misconstruest" his rich and abundant goodness. — *Not knowing.* More specifically, not "considering." — *Leadeth.* Should lead, or seeks to lead; that is its natural effect and intention. The Apostle multiplies words to describe the enduring mercy of God; and in proportion as that was great, the darker and deadlier became the sin of impenitence. This passage is referred to in 2 Peter iii. 15. "Goodness" in both instances means not so much moral excellence in general, as kindness.

5. *After, &c.* I. e. agreeably to the dictates of thy hard and impenitent heart. — *Treasurest.* Layest up, little by little, as if it were something precious, instead of vile and corrupt. A tinge of irony lurks in the word.

against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: 6 to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory 7

— *The day of wrath*, or punishment, the effect of indignation.— *Revelation of the righteous judgment*. Stuart suggests, “revealed righteous judgment.” The Apostle, in accordance with Hebrew usage, to which our Lord himself conformed in teaching the doctrine of a future righteous retribution, dramatizes the idea by fixing on a “day,” and announcing the decision of a “judge” seated on a bench. It is a great pity that the interpreters of the Scriptures have not learned even yet the distinction between the form and the substance, or what is pictorial and what is essential, but often stickle with as much pertinacity for words as for the immortal truth, which they convey.

6. *According to his deeds*. The grand principle is here announced of the impartiality of God’s awards, as made with single reference to life and character. The theological issues which have been got up relative to faith and good works, as to which is the criterion of acceptance, are irrelevant. Character is the test; character of course having a root in faith, or, in other words, in a deep, inward principle of spiritual truth, and blooming outwardly by a necessary force of life in the flowers and fruits of beautiful and useful good works. If it be possible to state any doctrine in human language so that it cannot be mistaken or misrepresented, the doctrine of a righteous moral retribution is so stated in this passage. As men live, so will they be judged here and hereafter; live inwardly, in motive, will, desire, and intention, as well as outwardly, in act, speech, and habit. The Gospel does not alter the native grounds of acceptance with God, as the Apostle announces here, except as greater privileges establish a

greater trust to be accounted for, and more animating and effectual motives to obedience. The impartiality of the Divine administration is evinced in the award meted out to the Gentiles according to their lesser, and to the Jews according to their greater light. Of course, the infinite, back-lying *cause* of all good is in God; and man’s highest exertions could not call into existence one pulsation of the eternal life of the spirit, as they cannot one sensation of the mortal life of the body. But then the life of the spirit, as well as the life of the body, is dependent on certain *conditions*, and over those man has a partial control, and so far as he has, he is responsible. Good works save no man; but without good works no man can be saved. The cause of salvation is God, and especially God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; but the cause acts through instruments and conditions, and those man is livingly conscious to himself that he can to some extent govern. But the basis of his true action is faith; faith in God, faith in his own spiritual and immortal nature, and faith in Christ as his Divine Leader.

7. *Patient continuance in well-doing*. Perseverance in a good life. Beautiful words of soberness and truth! Remember that these are the words of the Apostle of faith, and that they are not inconsistent with his teachings of faith, as constituting the mainspring of righteous action.— *Glory and honor and immortality*. I. e., as we should say in English, “a glorious and honorable immortality”; but it is much better and richer in these cases to retain the Hebrew idiom. “Behold,” says Chrysostom, “how, in discoursing of the things to come, being unable to describe them, he

8 and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are  
 9 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;  
 10 but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good; to

calls them *glory* and *honor*. For as they surpass all that is human, human things cannot supply any image adequate to represent them. From among the objects of this earth, however, which seem to us the brightest, he instances, and he could do no more, *glory* and *honor* and *life*." In spiritual vision and tone of reality, in speaking of things unseen and eternal, we perceive the unrivalled superiority of the Apostles of Christ over all other moral teachers. They speak what they do know, and testify to that which they have seen.

8. *Contentious, &c.* Rebellious, or stubborn in opposition. The Jews were called "stiff-necked," and that is the quality indicated here. By the *truth* is here meant whatever each man feels to be truth, what is truth to him, Jewish truth to the Jews, and Gentile truth to the Gentile. The truth in itself is one and the same; but as seen through different mediums, it comes to the universal spiritual sense, so to speak, of man, shaped and colored diversely, as that sense itself varies in different men. The Apostle here refers, as is evident from the sequel, to this original truth.—*But obey unrighteousness.* Are not true to their moral convictions.—*Indignation, &c.* Still, as in former instances, *anthropathic*. The indignation of God must not be confounded with the sour and bitter petulance of man. The dialect of earth must of course very imperfectly represent the things of heaven.

9, 10. *Tribulation and anguish, &c.* Words are heaped upon words in the fluent speech of Paul, to depict the

suffering of the unfaithful soul. The two previous terms, the indignation and wrath of God, become here the tribulation and anguish of the wrongdoer. The Apostle constantly depicts the punishment of sin as mental, not material. His own rich and glowing nature taught him that in the soul was the vital sphere of ecstatic bliss or deepest misery.—*To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.* The first indicates here the comparison which had already been implied in the previous course of his argument. The Jew, first in privilege, must also be first in punishment, if disobedient; highest in reward, if faithful. This is nature and justice as well as revelation; and whatever we may find in human systems drawn from Paul's Epistles, we never find in those Epistles themselves aught that clashes in the least with the eternal sentiments of equity and justice and honor, that are incorporated into the substance of human nature itself. Difference of talents and opportunities affords no ground of injustice, for of him to whom much has been given much will be required.—*Glory, honor, and peace.* No doubt figures taken from what men most covet, and such as set forth in a striking light the transcendent life and happiness of a righteous soul.—*Worketh good.* How plain and simple and beautiful are the descriptions of the Apostle as to the value of good works, and the nature of the justification which the good may hope to win! Not James is more conclusive on the subject of righteousness of life, as constituting the only foundation of the Divine ac-

the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect 11 of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law 12 shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law *are* 13

ceptance. In fact, the Apostle was too good a worker himself, not to know the power and efficacy of an active obedience.

11. *No respect of persons with God.* However nationally the Jews might be distinguished by the possession of a divine revelation, that circumstance individually would not alter the grounds of the equitable assignment of good to the good and evil to the evil. An effectual quietus is here administered to the haughty Jewish pride, which took airs to itself for enjoying, however it might use, the rich gifts of the Divine mercy. To rebuke that disdainful selfishness was one of the first steps towards accomplishing the object of the Epistle, and proclaiming the right of the Gentiles to become Christians without first becoming Jews and being circumcised. That spirit, once condemned by Paul, is still too rife in the Christian world, and in the narrow and jealous spirit of its exclusiveness the Church has proved itself to be too often as it were only a new edition of Judaism. It has not come to be a superfluous task to preach that God is no respecter of persons, even in the nineteenth century of our Lord. For the walls of caste and class and clan still tower aloft and divide the great brotherhood into hostile sects, parties, races, and nations.

12. *Without law.* Meaning those who had no revealed law, or rule of conduct, like the Jews. This is a further elucidation of the principle stated above.—*Sinned in the law.* The Jews would be judged by the light they had, and it was self-evident that, as their light had been clearer upon the questions of duty, so must

their responsibility be enhanced, and their conduct be more rigidly judged than that of the benighted Gentiles.

13–15. Paul's favorite custom of parenthesis. As he had advanced a general principle, which included all men in the impartial government of God, he feels that it would not be perfectly intelligible unless it were more fully explained and amplified. Two points of obscurity required attention. He had spoken of the "tribulation and anguish," v. 9, that might come even on the Jews, who were so proud of their national prerogatives as to feel that their salvation was insured to them. This problem is solved by the obvious truth, that merely to hear the law would not avail the Jews, though they were children of Abraham, unless hearing ripened into obedience. The other point was to make it apparent how he could properly speak of a "law" in reference to the Gentiles. This difficulty was met by falling back on the moral nature of man, and showing that there was a law written on the "heart," a conscience, and accusing and excusing thoughts, which rendered the Gentiles responsible agents. Nowhere more than in St. Paul, the supposed teacher of human depravity, that might be called "total," or, as it has come to be very much regarded in an age of the humanities and philanthropies, "half total" is there oftener or more fervently uttered the noblest faith in man, man as the child of God, man as the temple of the Holy Spirit, man as the receiver of the moral law in a state of nature, and pervaded by those spiritual questionings, and alternate self-reproaches



14 just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified; for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto  
15 themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean-

and self-approvals, which stamp the lowest of the race as bearing one link of that moral chain on earth whose other remote link is joined to the throne of God in heaven. They misjudge and wrong the magnanimity of the Apostle's confidence in man, who pick out texts that darken this view of our nature, or predicate any other than an acquired depravity. He speaks vividly of the wickedness of the world, yet not as natural, but as unnatural; as the abuse of those powers which God had originally bestowed. The depth to which man sank showed the height from which he fell. The dark list of his wickednesses set off by contrast the fearful abuse of those powers which glowed originally with a divine purity and brightness.—*Just, justified.* The fact that these two terms are used in opposite members of the same antithesis demonstrates that their signification is similar; for the primary, elementary idea is in both terms the being just in itself considered, and the secondary and inferred idea, the being regarded as just by another, the legitimate consequence, of course, of being just in one's self. It would be equally good for the argument to put "just" in the last as in the first clause of the sentence, and read the whole thus: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be just." Tischendorf omits *the* before *law*, thus making the proposition general. They shall of course be regarded and judged as just. The most unanswerable commentary on the Scriptures is that which the Scriptures themselves afford.—*Are a law*

*unto themselves.* The heathen nations do not agree with one another as to the code of moral action, but none are so degraded as to repudiate all distinctions of right and wrong. Some things are good, morally, and some are bad, morally, even in the Hottentot kraal and the Australian bush. Conscience and God are said by travellers to have terms for their expression in every language, however meagre. On this original moral basis in man, it is evident, the revealed law must rest for its foundation. Revelation comes not to create, but to educate. It is light where there was before an eye to see, it is bread where there was before a palate to taste and a stomach to digest. No real advantage is ever permanently gained by undervaluing the natural moral sense for the sake of glorifying revelation. None were more ready than the bearers of these special mercies to men, to acknowledge and appreciate the indestructible elements of morals and faith in human nature itself. Would that their followers had been as considerate!—*The work of the law.* The working operation of the natural law, which he goes on to particularize below.—*Conscience.* Better, consciousness, moral sense of good and evil in its exercise. This is introduced to explain what he means by the law written in the heart. The recognition of conscience is abundant in heathen literature.—*Their thoughts the meanwhile, &c.* Their thoughts alternately accusing and excusing one another. This refers to a second and subsequent action of the mind, when it more deliberately re-

while accusing or else excusing one another;) — in the day when 16 God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and 17

views and rejudges its actions and motives. Man has sometimes been compared to a court, in which the heart is judge, conscience is the jury, consciousness and memory the witnesses, the thoughts the counsel, accusing and excusing one another. Consciousness and memory bear testimony as to the fact itself alleged. The thoughts busily suggest this or that thing in aggravation or extenuation of the offence. Conscience, as a jury, simply decides on the law and fact, whether the individual be guilty or not. And the heart, or combined moral man, pronounces sentence according to the decision of the moral sense and the circumstances of the case, mingling mercy with justice. Such comparisons, however, are very liable to mislead, if pressed into too many particulars, and taken according to the letter and not the spirit. Analogies are very good for illustrations, but they make hazardous arguments.

16. *In the day.* A resumption of the subject of v. 12. "When" would express the simple sense of "the day," without its dramatic garb. — *The secrets of men*, i. e. not only their open acts, but their hidden purposes and motives, will be subjects of judgment, for from these their open acts have proceeded. The decisions of human conscience would be corrected by the Divine tribunal. Ecces. xii. 14; 1 Cor. iv. 5. — *By Jesus Christ.* The distinct and independent personality of Christ, as another being than God, could not in any form of language be more explicitly announced than in the text. "By" expresses agency and subordination, and it is to be observed that this exercise of the office of judge is dated

in the future, indicating that the separate identity of Christ continues beyond this world. John v. 27. — *Gospel.* In its ecclesiastical, not historical sense. Paul, without a doubt, refers not to any Gospel he had written, but to his preaching of the Gospel. Rom. xvi. 25.

17. *Behold.* Griesbach and Tischendorf correct the text so that it reads "but if," which better suits the logic. The Apostle here tightens the chain of his reasoning in relation to the Jews, and unfolds more fully the bearing of his argument, that the greater were their opportunities of light and knowledge, the less excusable were they for doing what they condemned in the Gentiles; and that if the Mosaic law had thus failed of perfecting their life, how much was the greater motive-power of the Gospel needed! — *Thou.* He uses the singular number rhetorically, and thus makes his appeal more direct and pungent. — *Art called, &c.* Macknight writes "surnamed." The high distinction is thine of being called a Jew. No terms could be more opprobrious than those with which the Jews loaded the Gentiles. Paul selects the points of national pride among his countrymen with the unerring instincts of his own experience. — *Restest in the law.* Stuart, "leanest on the law." The fallacy of the Jews was to rest in the law as final, when by its very nature it was progressive and prospective, and served only as a schoolmaster to bring them to a greater teacher, Christ. — *Makest thy boast of God.* Gloriest in God as peculiarly thy God, a local, national Divinity, not the Father of universal humanity. Deut. iv.

18 makest thy boast of God, and knowest *his* will, and approvest the  
 19 things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and  
 art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of  
 20 them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher  
 of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the  
 21 law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not  
 thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?  
 22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou com-  
 mit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?  
 23 thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law

18. *Knowest his will.* It was the boast of the Jews that they had been admitted into the inner counsels of the Almighty, and they took airs of great superiority to the rest of mankind on that account, though, as the event has proved, they were blinded to the beneficent plan by which all mankind would be comprehended in the impartial love and salvation of the Father of all.—*Approvest, &c.* The literal sense is, “triest the things that differ”; but on this is grafted in the usage of language the secondary idea, that in this trial the things that are worthy are approved, and the opposite rejected. This clause refers to that educated and discriminating moral sense which was trained under the system of Mosaic laws and institutions. The moral code of the Jews was elevated as much above that of other nations of antiquity, as their worship transcended the grovelling of idolatry.

19, 20. *A guide, — a light, — an instructor, — a teacher.* The New Testament gives us many intimations of the spiritual pride with which the Jewish people looked down from the height of their privileges on the rest of the world, and the jealous exclusiveness with which they claimed to be guides and teachers of others, while they called the Gentiles “blind,” “in darkness,” “foolish,” “babes”;

and the writings of the Rabbins are full of illustrations of the same disposition. The fact was, that they had superior advantages, but the inference they deduced from it was false and mischievous, viz. a lordly arrogance and a narrow contempt, and the practical fruit in self-complacent corruption of life and character was still more deadly. Matt. xi. 25; xv. 14; xxiii. 15.—*Hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law;* 1. e., dropping the Hebraism, “the form of true knowledge in the law.” The great outlines of truth were delineated by Moses and the Prophets, but it remained for Christ to clothe those outlines, grand as they were, with the humanized and intelligible spirit of the Father. “God is one,” meets the want of the mind. “God is a Parent,” satisfies the heart. In these verses the writer dwells at length on all the points of national boasting among the Jews, that he may make the better preparation for the reproof he was about to administer in the subsequent passage.

21–23. He gives additional emphasis by putting the appeal to their consciences in the interrogative form. He specifies the well-known immoralities of the Jewish people, and even of their rulers and priests and teachers, as glaring violations of that more perfect form of religious truth of

dishonest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed 24 among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision 25 verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the 26 uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncir- 27

which the Hebrew commonwealth had been made the depository. That a great depravation of manners and morals had crept into the Holy Land is sufficiently proved by the concessions of Josephus and other Jewish writers, as well as by the rebukes of Christ and his disciples and apostles. The various specifications of Paul are, however, rather to be received rhetorically than logically, though without question theft, adultery, sacrilege, and blasphemy were throwing, at that period, dark shadows over the Jewish name, and dishonoring Him whom they worshipped, among the heathen nations throughout which they were scattered abroad. As illustrative of this passage, consult the following: Matt. ii. 5-14; iii. 10; also, the vials of a holy indignation poured out in Matt. xxiii., Mark vii. 7-13, from the lips of mercy itself.

24. As Paul was writing to the Jews in a considerable measure, he uses the *argumentum ad hominem*, the personal argument, and substantiates his positions out of the mouth of their own revered prophets. We may suppose that he had several passages in his mind, at the moment of writing, as well as the general strain of prophetic remonstrance. See 2 Sam. xii. 14; Neh. v. 9; Is. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 23.

25. It shows the immense transition through which the mind of the Apostle had passed in its moral revolution, to set such a declaration as this by the side of his blind zeal for Judaism and persecution of the Christian Church, that dated back but a few

years. No doubt circumcision to the true Jew was good, as an expression of fealty to God, a signature written in blood, of obedience to what he felt to be a divine command, as is every act, be it a sigh, or a tear, or a word, by which the soul indicates its relation to the Highest. But, of course, all the truth and efficacy of rites and ceremonies, under whatever system, older or later, depend on the sincerity and earnestness with which they spring from a moved soul at the time, and are indorsed by a good life afterwards. It is observable that circumcision stands for Judaism, as the cross for Christianity.

26. Paul carries his triumph still farther into the adversary's country. He had just rebuked the presumption of the faithless Jew; he now encourages the humility of the faithful Gentile. There is a running argument conveyed by implication all along in these verses. Its purport is, that if, even under the former dispensation, righteous uncircumcision was better than unrighteous circumcision, how much more would the same principle hold good under the spiritual system of Christianity, and how vain to require the Gentiles to be Jews before they could be recognized as Christians!

27. The tables would be turned. The Jews who began, ver. 1, with taking the bench of judgment, would find himself at the criminal's bar, while the man whom he had contemned as the culprit would be seen rising into the majesty of the judge. We must remember that this Epistle, though

cumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by  
 28 the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not  
 a Jew which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision which  
 29 is outward in the flesh: but he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly;  
 and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the  
 letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

### CHAPTER III.

*A Description of the Wickedness of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles, and the Insufficiency of the Law, unless it were fulfilled by the Righteousness of Faith.*

WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of

addressed to the Romans, was intended for Roman Jews in general, or those who, once Jews, had then become Christians. Paul takes them on their own ground, and by holding up the high spiritual demands even of the Law, demolishes their boasted infallibility and sinlessness as Jews, and shows the superiority of the faithful heathen over the faithless Hebrew. He breaks to pieces their national idols, and, including all under the same category of disobedience, infers the universal need of Christ.

28, 29. The teeming mind of Paul is not content with following a single line of thought, but it throws out filaments of attachment and nutriment on every side, like a vigorous and deeply rooted tree. While the upshot of his Epistle is Christianity, he reflects back light on the Law, and defines the true Jew. At the very moment when he would lift the minds of his readers above the narrowness of that sectarian spirit among his Jewish brethren, which "gave to party what was meant for mankind," he dignifies the Law even more than its own upholders did, by analyzing its vital spirit, and detecting in it the immortal essence of truth, and in faithful obedience to it, an allegiance of the heart to God. For the doctrine which Paul here advocates, he could adduce numerous testimonies

from both the earlier and later dispensations, which agreed in laying the stress of obedience on the heart, and not on external conformity.—*Neither is that circumcision, &c.*; as if he had said, that is not circumcision which is *only* outward in the flesh. The Jewish observances, external as they were, had their only living roots in the heart, and if they failed of that spiritual hold, they proved but a "sere and yellow leaf." Unfaithful as the Jews often proved to this code of definite and imperative law, and therefore falling even below the better class of Gentiles, who were a law unto themselves, the Apostle clearly demonstrates the want of that quickening spiritual faith, which, as a moral principle, would accomplish what a mere legal principle never could effect, a regenerated and progressive life of the soul, a steady assimilation to the Father through the Son.

### CHAPTER III.

Another link of the argument is presented. If the Jew were entitled to no precedence over the Gentile in receiving the new gift of God in the Christian dispensation, then the objector would cavil at the advantage of being a Jew at all and living under the Law and the Prophets. To this disputant the unflinching Apostle

circumcision? Much, every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? I speak as a man; God for-

now addresses himself, and adopts the Socratic method of question and answer.

1. The Jewish adherent is supposed to speak and catechize the Apostle as to the proud preëminence of his nation, as one favored by God, and whose distinguishing badge and symbol was circumcision.

2. This verse begins the reply to the above objection. Discarding the numerous privileges of the Jews, which he recounts in chap. ix. 4, 5, Paul seizes upon the Scriptures as a sufficient answer on this occasion, constituting as they did so rich a source of spiritual life and inspiration. They are called elsewhere, Acts vii. 38, the lively, or life-giving oracles.

3. But might not this advantage of possessing the Scriptures be overruled. For of what use was the instrument if it were not received and applied in faith? The truth was, as hinted in the first clause, that some, many, did not believe, but that sin could not render ineffectual the faith, or, better rendered, the faithfulness of God. His benevolent purpose stood, though man failed in doing the part assigned to him. Macknight and some other critics assign this verse to the Jewish objector, rendering the last question, "shall not their unbelief," &c.

4. *God forbid.* There is no word *God* in the Greek; it is simply, Let it not be, or may it not be so.—*Let God be true, &c.* It is better to sup-

pose God is faithful, even if it should drive us to the conclusion that all men were steeped in falsehood. At all hazards, we know and are sure, that, if there is evil on any hand, it is not in God.—*That thou mightest be justified.* Ps. li. 4. Every examination into the works or ways or word of the All-Perfect One can of course only reveal more distinctly his glorious goodness and justice.

5. The opponent again speaks. If all the sin and evil in the world only enhance the justice and glory of God, because they call forth those attributes to aid in overcoming them, then why should such useful servants of the Almighty suffer condemnation? It is a natural and powerful objection. As Paul asks, Paul only could answer it.—*Commend, i. e. illustrate, or honor.*—*I speak as a man.* Humanly speaking; speaking as men do.

6. The reply of the Apostle is abbreviated and suggestive; as if he had said, What righteous judgment could there be upon such principles? and we know that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Gen. xviii. 25. The fact of such a boundless authority as is invested in God excludes the possibility of his confounding right with wrong, as the above supposition would imply. In such principles the fact of a righteous administration of the affairs of God's moral government must be given up, because men would not be responsible.

7 bid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of  
 God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet  
 8 am I also judged as a sinner? And not *rather*, as we be slander-  
 ously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that  
 9 good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we  
 better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both

The reference to Abraham would be effectual with the Jews.

7. This verse is still a continuation and amplification of what the Jewish interlocutor objected in verse 5, and which was interrupted by the Apostle repelling instantly in verse 6 the idea that God would not judge the world, and that he would not judge it in righteousness. If the sins of men are the occasion of more fully revealing the lustre of the Divine truth and mercy, why are those sins punishable, and not rather matters of honor and reward? Cavillers of every age have harped on the same rusty chord. It is enough to say, that though the cloud and the rain do give some rich prismatic tints of the light of the sun, which his full beams would not yield, yet his greatest glory and majesty are in his unclouded and meridian shining. The light of heaven breaks through the darkest sins of men; but far more would the goodness of God be seen and felt if they had always been true and faithful. But being finite and imperfect, that is simply to suppose an impossibility.

8. This is accounted the rejoinder of the Apostle. The *and* implies the continuation of his argument, and the idea seems to be to carry out the objector's sophism in the previous verse, and show its absurdity by its mere statement. Why should we not then, according to your principles, avow the doctrine (which we are unjustly accused of holding) of doing evil that good may come? You acknowledge that is wrong; the very

accusation against us implies that its condemnation is regarded as just. Why do you then adopt a sentiment which leads to the same conclusion? Theodore says, "It is right to know that, when the holy Apostles taught that where sin hath abounded grace did much more abound, some professors of the old religion, spreading falsehoods to their prejudice, reported that they said, Let us do evil that good may come." — *Slanderously reported*. Blasphemously said. — *Let us do evil*, &c. This principle of expediency has been too general in every age, but it has been associated in most Protestant minds with the order of Jesuits in modern times. All who take any other principle than the right as their ultimate standard, fall under this category and condemnation. Nothing short of believing the true, loving the good, and doing the right, can fill out the measure of a true disciple of Christ. — *Damnation*. A Calvinism for condemnation. The figurative language of the Bible is always sufficiently expressive without our English additions. Doddridge regretted extremely some of these harsh renderings. There is no reference whatever to a future state, but a simple declaration that such persons were condemned, and that their condemnation was just.

9. *What then?* &c. Put by some as another question of the opponent, but by Locke and Tischendorf as commencing a new paragraph of the Apostle after the dialogue was concluded. The question reverts to verse 1, as to whether in moral char-

Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, 10  
 There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that under- 11  
 standeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone 12  
 out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there  
 is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sep- 13  
 ulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of  
 asps *is* under their lips: whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bit- 14  
 terness: their feet *are* swift to shed blood: destruction and mis- 15  
 ery *are* in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: 17  
 there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that 18  
 what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under 19  
 the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may  
 become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law 20

acter, not privileges, the Jews had any preëminence over the Gentiles; and the answer was a decided negative. What was before proved is now repeated, that both Jews and Gentiles were in a depraved, degraded spiritual condition, and therefore needed the Gospel, one as well as the other. The Jew could not plead his righteousness as constituting any claim to this blessing any more than the very Pagan.

10-18. To substantiate his position beyond contradiction, he quotes from their sacred writings as applicable to the Jews what they were so ready to apply to the Gentiles, a brilliant, poetic picture of the deep apostasy of mankind, in which every faculty and sense is singled out as enacting its part in the drama of wickedness. Throat, and tongue, and lip, and eye, and foot, with all the internal powers which act through these instruments, have become parties and agents in the spiritual rebellion. The whole moral and physical man was in insurrection against the authority of conscience and God. Still, such passages are not logic, but rhetoric, and they are misquoted and wrested when they are employed to demonstrate that there is no goodness in the

world, and that man's best acts are an abomination to God. The quotations are from the Septuagint version of the Psalms, in order as follows, with some freedoms: Ps. xiv. 1-3; v. 9; cxl. 3; x. 7; Is. lix. 7; Ps. xxxvi. 1. The Jews were prone to apply these severe condemnations to the Gentiles, but it was of the Jews they were originally written, and to whom they are now applied. The argument of Paul would possess a double force when expressed in words endeared by the national faith.

19. *The Law.* A comprehensive term, meaning the writings of the whole Jewish revelation, Psalms and Prophets, as well as the Pentateuch. John x. 34. In the case above, the quotations were not from Moses, but from David and Isaiah. This severe description of the depravity of men was addressed to the Jews, who were under the Law; and if they could not escape such charges even with their privileges and aids to righteousness, then, certainly, the whole world must bow in silent condemnation before the perfect purity and goodness of God, and confess itself worthy of punishment.

20. *The deeds of the Law*, i. e. acts of obedience to the Law, or such deeds



there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the  
 21 knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the  
 law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;  
 22 even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ  
 unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no differ-

as the Law requires or approves. In the 19th verse *Law* has the article *the* before it, but here it has not in the original, though the translators have erroneously put it in. The Apostle makes his proposition general. By deeds of law, by legal obedience, can no man be justified. The path of our acceptance with God does not lie in that direction. We are not disposed, with many critics, to understand by Law here the ceremonial law of Moses in contrast with the moral law, nor the Law of Moses, perhaps, at all, but law universally. "No flesh" seems a general expression, referring to the whole human family. The catalogue of sins enumerated above were not violations of the Mosaic law specially, but of all law. And granting that the proposition held good of the Mosaic law, and referred primarily to that, *a fortiori*, by so much the stronger reason, as that was the accredited and superior provision of God, would the same be true of every inferior and less distinct law of conscience or nature. If Jewish obedience could not justify, much less could pagan obedience. And the reason plainly is, that the obedience could not be obedience, could not be perfect; there would be much to forget and to forgive, and for that law, as law, makes no provision. Neither conscience nor law is a consoler or forgiver. The object of both is to bring sin to light, to reveal the hidden moral quality of actions, not to provide the main motive of obedience, or to furnish the reparation when the evil is done. Other powers must do that office. Both are powerful and essential in their province, but their

province is not universal.—*Justified.* The grand scope of the Apostle's argument all through these chapters is not that narrow point to which it is generally referred, of justification, properly so called, but, as elsewhere translated, of righteousness, and God's righteousness; that is, God's method of making men righteous. That was the chief aim of all revelation, not how to account men, how to justify them, but how to make them just, how to give them a spiritual rectitude and right and holy development, so that they might be proper subjects of moral acquittal.

21, 22. The Law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ; good for its time, and place, and people; but the full method of God's righteousness, i. e. his operation of making men righteous, and so of course fitting them to be justified and accepted by him, was not, by law, a mere declaration of duty, of things forbidden and things required, but by that method to which the Law and Prophets themselves bore witness, as superior to themselves, and that method was by faith, a spiritual principle, faith in Christ, a moral motive, taking profound hold of the heart, and not a simple legal motive, appealing to the conscience. In all this course of remark the Apostle shows himself as good a philosopher of human nature as he is theologian of the Gospel.—*Unto all and upon all, &c.* The invitation to this faith of Christ, the spiritual lever to raise the world, was as broad and generous as humanity. There was no restriction to Jews, no favoritism, no chosen nation,—welcome the world to the world's Saviour,

ence; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 23 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is 24 in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation 25 through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to de- 26

to God's righteousness, to the soul's life, and to heaven's reward.

23, 24. *All have sinned.* The Gentile had not kept the law of conscience and light of nature, the Jew had not fulfilled the Law of Moses, — all alike had come short of the glorious distinction of being righteous, the honor God gives to the faithful. Here Locke distinctly recognizes the principle we have laid down, though he does not elsewhere so clearly follow it, and he renders the 24th verse, "being made righteous gratis by the favor of God, through the redemption which is by Christ Jesus." The grace of God is his favor, free, unbought, flowing from the fountain of his pure love, and the eminent instance of that grace is the gift of Christ, and his mode of making men righteous by him. Here are the Gentile law of conscience and light of nature and the Jewish Law of Moses fulfilled in a higher law of faith, a spiritual principle, involving trust, love, hope, and centring in Christ, as the majestic and spotless ideal of humanity, the being who showed us how God would live on the earth, if God were man.

25, 26. *Propitiation*, rather a propitiatory or mercy-seat, in reference to the mercy-seat in the Jewish temple, which was the golden lid of the ark, over which the cherubim bowed, and on which the Shekinah, or cloud of the Divine glory, rested; the place of the holy presence where God appeared and spoke his will. Ex. xxv. 17-22; Lev. xvi. 14-17; Heb. ix. 4, 5. Once a year it was sprinkled with blood. Christ was now the mer-

cy-seat, sprinkled with his own blood, the bright and holy place of the Divine presence and glory shining in his face; him over whom angels bowed and sung their song of jubilee, and through whom God appeared and spoke his will. Christ is "the altar form of the divine," — we accept the term of a late divine, Dr. Bushnell, — but then it is in a free spiritual sense, in no narrow, legal, technical import. This Jewish figure would have no speaking significance except to the Jews, and cannot have been meant for universal impression, because the rest of the world lack the preliminary facts on which that figure is predicated, viz. the temple, mercy-seat, sacrifices, &c. of that ancient people. Still, the scion of divine truth being once well set in the old stock of Judaism, it throve apace, and now the world subsists its spiritual life on Christ, not because he is a mercy-seat, but because it eats the bread God has prepared, and its tormenting hunger is satisfied, and strength and growth have come apace. — *Faith in his blood.* The cleansing power of Christ is of course in no literal sense in his blood, but in the great love and self-sacrifice that led him to do and suffer so much for man's disenthralment from sin. The noxious emphasis put upon the physical sufferings, as if they were a payment of our debts, an endurance of what we should otherwise have suffered, but what we shall not suffer now, has often blinded men to that glorious sacrifice of the spirit, that bowing of the most noble nature that was ever on the earth to shame and loss and agony, for our sakes. Juda-

clare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just,  
 27 and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where *is* boast-  
 ing then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but  
 28 by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified

ism was legal, but, really, Christianity, as many preach it, is made more legal than Judaism. Its cords are not cords of love, but of steel. Its spirit is made, not a spirit of salvation, but of condemnation. The mouth of its teachers is opened, not with promises, but with threatenings. Its character of Gospel, or of good news, is made to consist in its declaration of safety to a mere fragment, an infinitesimal of the human family, and its consignment of the vast majority of conscious and immortal spirits to everlasting woe. Tholuck justly remarks, that "blood stands for bloody death, the acme of his holy and love-devoted life." — The 25th verse is somewhat obscure in its connection of clauses and their dependence on and relation to one another, but the following ideas will be found in it, though a diversity of judgment exists among the critics as to the meaning of the particles. 1. Jesus Christ is set forth as the mercy-seat; the manifestation of the presence and love of God. 2. Faith in Christ, and especially in his blood or cross, the crowning act and embodiment of his spirit and life, is the means by which that benefit is appropriated. 3. Notwithstanding the Jews and Gentiles had sinned, God passed by or overlooked those sins in his forbearance, and still declared his righteousness, i. e. his method of making men righteous. Acts xvii. 30. In verse 26th, the Apostle resumes the idea of God's declaring or setting forth this method of making men right, and thus at the same time, 1st, showing his own righteousness, or that he himself was just, and also, 2d, making righteous or just, and of course accounting him so, whoever

appropriated the benefit to himself by faith. — *In Jesus*. Tischendorf rejects these words, as not belonging to the true text. By the fatal mistake of confounding illustrations with arguments, the above passage respecting Christ, as the mercy-seat of God, has been employed to uphold the theory of vicarious atonement. But the Apostle uses that fact to explain his subject, not to establish a rigid analogy between the two, — between the use of the mercy-seat in Judaism and the office of Jesus in the Gospel.

27, 28. All ground of glorying, whether of the Jews in the punctilious observance of their Law, or of the Gentiles in their philosophy and light of nature, is therefore excluded. The lower system of law in both cases is superseded by the higher system of faith. The Divine method of making good men, and accepting and accounting them such, is henceforth a system of faith, a spiritual principle, working by love, working on the whole nature of man, and transforming him into the image of Christ. The wise man said: "To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord: and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation." Eccus. xxxv. 3. Jesus is the propitiatory, as he is called in ver. 25, or the propitiation, as he is also termed, 1 John ii. 2; not because he is either literally, — and it is evident he could not be both at the same time, except in a figure, — but because the moral and divine influence he wields over the human heart is such that he disposes, draws men to accomplish that good work of faith, obedience, and the forsaking of all unrighteousness, which is a true propitiation. The error which the Apos-

by faith without the deeds of the law. *Is he* the God of the Jews 29 only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, 30 and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law 31 through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*The Promise confirmed to Abraham, on the Ground, not of the Righteousness of the Law, but the Righteousness of Faith.*

WHAT shall we say then that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to

the Law. For the Law was not final and perfect, but introductory and prospective. Jesus came, as he said, not to destroy, but to fulfil it. Matt. v. 17. He, therefore, who demonstrated the end at which the Law itself aimed, was the friend, and not the enemy of the Law. Paul, therefore, instead of being an iconoclast of what his nation most reverence, proves himself to be still a Hebrew of the Hebrews, by leading them on from law to faith, from Moses to Christ, from the rudimental beginning to the glorious consummation and capital of the Divine dispensations.

He was combating with so much force was not that a pure and holy life was of little or no account with God, but that, in order to produce such a life, a system of faith, a system adapted to the heart and hope and love of man, and not merely a legal technical system, appealing chiefly to the conscience, was needed, and was provided in Christianity. It was not because they were Jews, but because they were men, that the converts of Paul could hope for the benefits of the new system. It was not by the care and diligence they took in observing law, but the faith they reposed in Christ, which would enable them to make rapid advancement in Christianity. The great work they first had to do was the work of faith, and the chief law they were to observe was the law of faith, for faith is a work and is a law.

29, 30. The sum of these verses is simply, that God is the God of the whole family of mankind, and not of one branch of it only, and that he is just as ready to accept to the system, whose privileges are secured by faith, the Gentile as the Jew, or, to use the abstract terms, the uncircumcision as the circumcision. *By* faith and *through* faith mean the same.

31. The conclusion is, that the Jews, so far from objecting to this view, should accept it as the real method of fulfilling and establishing

the Law. For the Law was not final and perfect, but introductory and prospective. Jesus came, as he said, not to destroy, but to fulfil it. Matt. v. 17. He, therefore, who demonstrated the end at which the Law itself aimed, was the friend, and not the enemy of the Law. Paul, therefore, instead of being an iconoclast of what his nation most reverence, proves himself to be still a Hebrew of the Hebrews, by leading them on from law to faith, from Moses to Christ, from the rudimental beginning to the glorious consummation and capital of the Divine dispensations.

#### CHAPTER IV.

As the Apostle was writing to Jews principally,—and though in name an Epistle to the Romans, this is really an Epistle to the Hebrews,—he cites in this stage of his argument the eminent instance of Abraham. At first sight it would appear to be one not applicable, or, if applicable, not favorable to his cause. But under his discriminating zeal it becomes a powerful weapon of defence, and carries conviction to one taking a Jewish point of departure.

1. This verse, like the beginning of chap. iii., contains the question of a Jewish opponent. He there took up the general case of the chosen people, but here the particular case

2 the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he  
 3 hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the

of the patriarch Abraham. Owing to a mistranslation, the precise point of the question is lost. It is not what Abraham hath found, but what he hath found or obtained as it respects the flesh, i. e. circumcision. A better rendering would be: What shall we say, then, that Abraham, our father, hath obtained as it respects the flesh.

2, 3. The Apostle replies. But the particle *for* implies that something was understood, as much as to say, There is no ground for boasting, "for if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to boast, but not as it respects God." As uniformity of rendering is very desirable, the term which, in chap. iii. 27, is translated "boasting," should be so given here, instead of "glory." In the last clause the Apostle denies the proposition so far as God, the standard, is concerned; though, so far as man was concerned, Abraham might be thought to have ground of boasting. The Apostle would show that their much-honored ancestor was himself originally in the precise category of the Gentiles now; and that he was admitted to the distinguished privileges of a divine revelation on the basis of faith, and not on works or obedience to law, except by the law and work of faith, the very process through which both Jews and Gentiles were received to the Christian fellowship. Of course nothing that any mortal could do would merit from God any, even the least, of his favors, whether temporal or spiritual. All is of pure love and grace, in this life and in the life to come. When we speak of being saved by our own merits, if any do, we use words of foolishness. We are saved, if saved at all, by the free, unpurchased mercy of God. But then this very mercy

has established certain conditions which must be fulfilled on our part. The first of these is faith, the second obedience. They are not the cause, but the condition, of salvation. They were so in the case of Abraham, of the Jews, and of the Gentiles. One law reigns over all. In beating down, therefore, the exclusive pretensions of the Jews, Paul does not disparage works in their place and for their proper use, — his Epistles are eloquent vindications of good works. — but he would elevate the spirit of religion above its letter, moral principle over legal conformity, and the exercise of the religious affections and aspirations over the mere activity of conscience in yielding submission to a law. Truly speaking, faith itself is a work, and the great work; for when it is accomplished, in spirit and in truth, all other works follow as naturally as the day the night. Mark the words of Jesus, John vi. 29, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." If the question be whether justification — i. e. to be put in the way of being, and of being accounted, just or righteous, and so ultimately of salvation — be meritorious or gratuitous, the answer must be, gratuitous. But if the question be — and here is the real hinge between the Calvinist and the Arminian — whether it be conditional or unconditional, we decide at once that it is conditional. Abraham fulfilled that condition, which was faith. That was his duty and his work, and he did it; and obeying that law of faith, it was counted to him for righteousness, for the simple and sufficient reason that it *was* righteousness. The only true God would only count as righteousness what was so in reality, not proceeding upon those subterfuges and

Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not 4 reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but 5 believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of 6 the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose 7*

make-believes in which men entangle and sophisticate themselves. Faith is the living germ of all righteousness, out of which all the graces and virtues bloom and bear fruit.—*The Scripture.* Gen. xv. 6.

4, 5. Abraham's case is here generalized into a universal proposition. God accepts no man because he is perfectly righteous, because no man is so; but he justifies and puts in the way of righteousness and perfect goodness him who is endued with this vital germ of faith. These are no arbitrary and artificial relations of the parties, but natural, original, and fundamental. Peter declared it when he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." And he who has faith, which is faith, possesses the possibilities and probabilities of all righteousness, however he may err, or even commit black and heinous sins, as did Abraham, David, and Peter. What is all human virtue by the side of Christ, and before the glory of God, but a marred and stained work? Saints are called saints by courtesy, and in a figure of speech; but "there is none good but One, that is, God." If the religious privileges accorded to Abraham and to the Jews had been given because they had fulfilled the whole duty of man, it might have been reckoned as the payment of a debt, and not the granting of a favor. But they could plead no claim on the score of merit. Their

only and sufficient fitness for the blessing was that they believed in God earnestly and sincerely, and that trust, being the elementary principle and representative of all the noble results which would follow, procured, not as cause, but as condition, for very imperfect and even sinful men, by anticipation, the promises of God. It may interest English readers to know that *counted* in the 3d verse and 5th, *reckoned* in the 4th, and *imputeth* in the 6th, are the same word in the original. Uniformity of rendering would be a decided improvement in our present version.

6 – 8. To substantiate his *argument ad hominem*, his special appeal to the Jews, he adds the other greatest name of Hebrew history, David. Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. The Psalmist is understood to refer to himself. Here also the vital point is expressed in the last clause of Ps. xxxii. 2, "and in whose spirit there is no guile." Though he had deeply sinned, yet, owing to this faith in God, he did not give up in despair, but still prayed for pardon, still rose and struggled on, and fought the good fight of faith. Such a man is blest, not because he is perfect, not because he is not very sinful, but because he has a working faith, a guileless, honest purpose; and though overtaken by temptation, he rallies again and again, "never says die," to use a common saying, but "believeth all things, hopeth all things." But if we were to take the passage to prove, what some seem anxious to use it for, that God treats men with-

8 sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not  
 9 impute sin. *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision  
*only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was  
 10 reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reck-  
 oned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in  
 11 circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of  
 circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had*  
*yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them  
 that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness  
 12 might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision  
 to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in  
 the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which *he had* being  
 13 *yet* uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of

out any regard to their good or ill moral desert, gives and withholds his blessings capriciously, forgives one gratuitously, and sends another to an eternal hell, we should feel that this was wresting the Scripture to man's destruction and God's dishonor. Abraham had faith, and so had David and Paul; and though one was a liar and a bigamist, and another an adulterer and murderer, and another a persecutor and bigot, yet that faith, buried as it sometimes seemed to be and overwhelmed under the desolations of terrible passions and temptations, was the spark of spiritual life, that never went out, but burned on, and burned off in the end all impurities.

9-12. Paul resumes and pursues the argument from Abraham, and turns the example and name, which the Jews were most ready to quote to justify their exclusiveness, into a potent precedent against them. The faith of Abraham, which was righteousness, preceded, not followed, circumcision, and he took that seal, not as title to future privileges, but a sign of privileges granted already. It was the seal of possession, not of promise. Gen. xv. 6; xvii. 24, 25. Abraham was ninety-nine, and his

son Isaac thirteen years old, when the rite was performed, while his righteous faith had a much earlier date. Hence, ver. 11 and 12, two consequences very significant followed; the first, that Abraham is the father of them who trust in God, though not sealed with the peculiar Jewish ceremony, and to whom that trust is accounted incipient and prospective righteousness; and then, again, that he is not the father of the circumcision, as such, but to them only of the circumcision who walk in his steps of faith, faith which he exercised before he was himself circumcised; one consequence an encouraging one to the Gentiles, who had faith, though they had not circumcision; the other an alarming one to the Jews, who had the circumcision, but had not faith.

10, 11. *How was it then reckoned?* i. e. under what circumstances. Lightfoot shows from the Talmud, that the Jews gave this very term of a seal or sign to the rite of circumcision.

13. The strong and beautiful development of the Apostle's historical argument proceeds to a new point. The Jews had three strong-holds, as they thought, for their peculiar national distinction, impregnable against

the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the

the Gentile claim to the rights and privileges of the Gospel, unless they first submitted to the Jewish ritual. These were Scripture, circumcision, and Law. The first the Apostle had disposed of in ver. 2-8 by reference both to Abraham and David. The second, circumcision, had been despatched in ver. 9-12. The third, Law, so far as it related to Abraham, he enters upon now. Without the formality of heads and topics, the reasonings of Paul will always be found to have a method.—*For the promise, &c.* The remarkable fact is cited, that the promise to Abraham, on which the Jews plumed themselves so highly, was not given to Abraham when he was under the Law system, but under the faith system; and the Apostle would infer, therefore, that it was not restricted to his seed under the Law merely, but extends to his seed under faith, and was equally open to Jew and Gentile, provided they fulfilled the condition he did, of believing. So far from being a subject of the Law, Abraham lived in the enjoyment of the distinguished blessings and promises granted to his faith more than four hundred years before the Law was given.—*Heir of the world.* Gen. xv. 5, xvii. 5, are referred to, not literally, but freely.

14. If to be under the Law, as the Jews now claim, is requisite to this heirship, then the promise to Abraham and his posterity is rendered null, for he was under faith, and not under the Law. He thus convinces the Jews that, if they made

their privileges depend on Law, and not on faith, they overturned their own system. To maintain faith was as necessary for them as for the Gentiles.

15. The nature of law is rigid. It is more a terror to evil-doers than a praise to them that do well. Its office is not consolation, but condemnation. Its spirit is rebuke of evil, indignation at wrong; it "worketh wrath," displeasure. It reveals what transgression is, but it cannot of itself give the power of obedience and performance; for that power we must look to higher principles and motives. Chap. vii. 7-13.

16. Instead of shaking, as he might seem to do, the structure of Judaism, by this train of argument, he put it upon a firmer foundation. He removed it from the uncertain ground of obedience, capricious and varying in each individual example, and established it upon the broad and eternal basis of the free grace and mercy of God. He made it sure to the branch of the law, and also to the branch of faith. McKnight remarks, that "in this passage, by the most just reasoning, the Apostle hath overthrown the narrow notion of bigots, who confine the mercy of God within the pale of this or that church, and by a noble liberality of sentiment he hath declared that all who imitate that faith and piety which Abraham exercised, while uncircumcised, shall, like him, obtain the inheritance through the free mercy of God by Jesus Christ."



17 faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I  
 have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom  
 he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those  
 18 things which be not as though they were : who against hope be-  
 lieved in hope, that he might become the father of many nations,  
 19 according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And  
 being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead,  
 when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness  
 20 of Sarah's womb : he staggered not at the promise of God through  
 21 unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being  
 fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to per-  
 22 form. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.  
 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to  
 24 him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on  
 25 him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was deliv-  
 ered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

17. *As it is written.* Gen. xvii. 5, quoted from the Septuagint version. — *Before him*, i. e. God ; in his sight, or in his account. — *Quickeneth the dead*, i. e. Abraham and Sarah, who were as good as dead. — *Calleth those things*, &c. He foresaw the natural and spiritual creation which would grow out of this stock of Abraham, as if it were already in existence.

18 – 22. He proceeds to enumerate the circumstances which made his faith so difficult and so praiseworthy. He considers not himself nor his wife, but saw in the power of the Almighty means to overcome every natural obstacle. Being firm in this filial trust in God, and confident that his power was equal to his promise, he had no doubts or fears. In this sublime reliance on the Being of Beings, Abraham had taken the first step of all righteousness, and hence it was so accounted to him. It was a nominal admission of a preëxisting fact ; it was a declaration of what was already true. His faith was counted to him for righteousness, because it *was*

righteousness, — not a manifestation, but a spirit, not in motion, but in being, — righteousness that was preliminary, hopeful, antecedent, causative of more and more of its own nature. In ver. 19, *now* is expunged from the text by Tischendorf as spurious ; also in ver. 21.

23 – 25. And he then applies this illustrious and venerated example of the father of the nation to the case in point. If they would be children of Abraham, as they boasted of being, they must vindicate their right to that title by showing the same spirit in their altered circumstances which the patriarch exhibited in his day. For to follow an example is not to follow its letter, but its spirit ; not to do precisely the acts which the exemplar did, but to act as he would do if he were placed in our circumstances. Honorable mention was made of the faith of Abraham, not to glorify his name alone, but to kindle a like flame of holy love and trust in the bosom of every child of God, Jew or Gentile, and especially to direct it

## CHAPTER V.

*The Effects of the Righteousness of Faith on the Character, and its Results in the World, by establishing a new Spiritual Human Race with Christ at the Head, corresponding to the Natural Human Race with Adam at the Head.*

THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by 2 faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; 3 knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; be- 5

to that new and glorious object of faith presented in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom was set the seal of truth that he was raised from the dead. *Delivered* should be translated *delivered up*. Our offences were the cause of his sufferings, but he did not suffer to appease the anger of God, or to take the place of the punishment which men would otherwise have endured as a penalty for their transgressions. His death was to have a moral, not a diplomatic effect, and to change not the divine decrees, but the human heart and will. His resurrection was the attesting of the fulfilment of that system of Christianity in which all men, according to their faith or self-approbation of the benefits of the dispensation, would be put in a way of justification, i. e. religious privileges leading on to the righteousness of character and life from the elementary righteousness of faith, and perfecting all in a spirit moulded, colored, and inspired after the pattern of the divine in Jesus.

## CHAPTER V.

1, 2. Having shown what the nature of this faith in Christ was, and how the elder dispensation justified it, the Apostle proceeds to develop its effects and fruits. The first of these is peace or reconciliation with God. When we have this confiding trust through Christ in God as our

Heavenly Father, and are put by it in the way of righteousness, the justification process, we become contented and satisfied. We bow to the will of God, we accept his dealings with us submissively, because we are assured that his laws and his dispensations, be they joyous or be they grievous, are well meant, and full of hidden blessings and love.—*Access*. A term taken from the custom of the East, where there is an officer whose particular duty it is to introduce persons to the king in his seclusion and state. Jesus introduces us to the presence of the Most High Sovereign.—*This grace*, or favor, is the Gospel, to which the avenue is faith.—*We stand*, or stand firm; in reference to the wrestlers in the games, who maintained a strong and erect position.—*Rejoice*. The same term in the original which is rendered *boasting* in iii. 27, and *glory* in iv. 2 and v. 3, and *joy* in v. 11. The hope of the glory of God is the hope of that glory which God gives, of which by sin we come short, but to which by faith we attain. ii. 23.

3–5. Instead of regarding afflictions, as the Jews were prone to do, as judgments and tokens of God's displeasure, Paul, in the light of Christianity, deems them as means of greater attainments in the true life of the soul. He proceeds to point out the sequence of Christian expe-

cause the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy  
 6 Ghost, which is given unto us. For when we were yet without  
 7 strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for  
 a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man  
 8 some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love to-  
 ward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.  
 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved  
 10 from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were

riences, and to rejoice in trials instead of being cast down by them. Eccus. ii. 10; Acts v. 41. The order is trial, patience, proof, hope. Trials, properly borne, cultivate patience; patience affords us proof of what we really are, and this proof becomes the basis of our reasonable hopes for the time to come, such as will not fail or disappoint us, for the exercise of these affections and virtues in us is re-enforced by a higher power, by communications from the love and holy spirit of God himself. Robinson translates the word rendered *experience* by *proof, approval, tried integrity*. *Holy Ghost*, in our version, begins with capitals, to indicate that it is a person; but no such idea is, we believe, intended by the original. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, which had in love imparted spiritual graces and gifts to the Christian Apostles and believers. Such are the glorious golden links of the chain which draw up the soul heavenward, — trial, patience, proof, hope, possession, — but they are all melted and welded in the love of God to us, and are made pure by his spirit.

6. *Without strength, — ungodly.* Terms in which is described the state of the Jews under the Law, and of the Gentiles in a state of nature, at the time of the coming of Christ, according to chapters i., ii., iii. — *In due time*, i. e. the fulness of time, as elsewhere expressed in the Scriptures, or the appointed time for the coming

of Christ. — *For.* In behalf of, or for the sake of, not in the place of, or as a substitute for, the ungodly.

7, 8. To exalt the idea of Christ's self-sacrifice, the Apostle appeals to the common experience of mankind. For a righteous man, i. e. one who simply did right, scarcely one would be willing to sacrifice his life, though for a good man, one who did good, a public benefactor, some would have resolution enough to give up their own lives. But the distinction of the death of Christ is, that it took place, not for the good, not for the righteous even, but for the downright wicked. Martyrs die for their country, die for Christ and God, and are, therefore, animated in their sufferings by the dignity and holiness or greatness of the beings with which they connect themselves by the act. But in the case of Christ the sacrifice was for the unrighteous and wicked.

9, 10. The antithesis established in these verses is between what Christ did for them in a state of sin, and what he could do after he had by his sufferings brought them into a state of faith and prospective righteousness. In the ninth verse the contrasted terms are *justified and saved*, and in the tenth *reconciled and saved*. These are most important verses, as showing the particular offices of the death of our Lord, as compared with those fulfilled by his life and teachings. The precise effect of his death was to produce faith; first, in his im-

reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only *so*, but we 11 also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have

mediate disciples and apostles, who, until that event and his resurrection, never really entered into the spiritual conception of his kingdom; and secondly, in all men, Jews and Gentiles, by this luminous and impressive proof of his love, self-sacrifice, disinterestedness, and the heavenly nature of the kingdom he came to establish. That faith thus produced was the access to justification, the righteous process; therefore, to believe was to be justified, to be reconciled; and in order to effect belief, a real, comprehensive, and spiritual faith, looking "before and after" the death of the founder of the system, seemed to be unavoidable and essential. — *Saved from wrath*. Wrath in the punishment of sin, as seen from the human point of view, but benevolence as seen from the Divine plane. What is called wrath in God must be different from wrath in man, though it is not to be supposed that displeasure at sin and approbation of virtue are unknown to Him whose name and nature are Love and God or the Good. What the nature of the *wrath* here spoken of was, is evident from the fact that the *love* of God is said to have provided, ver. 8, 15, the means of saving the sinner. — *Saved by his life*. This declaration is highly worthy of note, as distinguishing the life of Jesus, his teachings, examples, &c., as the grand instruments of our own salvation no less than his death. His cross wins us, reconciles us, "draws," as John has it, "all men unto him"; but his spiritual life, his righteousness, carry on in us the process of sanctification, changing us into the same likeness, until our moral safety is secured. God now shows his mercy, not, as before, in the death, but much

more in the life of Jesus, his life on earth and his life in heaven.

11. *Joy*. Elsewhere rendered too capriciously by King James's men, *boast, rejoice, glory*. The Apostle institutes an indirect comparison here between the Christian glorying in God through Jesus Christ, and the Jew glorying in the Law by Moses, or in being the child of Abraham. — *Atonement*. This word occurs only here in the whole New Testament, but it has singularly given a name to a much disputed Christian doctrine. It is the same term which, as a verb, is translated *reconciled* in verse 10. It should be here *reconciliation*, a restoration of the sinner from a state of disobedience and hostility to one of union with God. This sense was intended by the translators themselves when they used the term *atonement*, for it meant *reconciliation*, not *satisfaction* or *propitiation*, in the contemporaneous literature, the "old English undefiled." Thus in Shakespeare's play of Othello :

"*Lod.* Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?"

"*Des.* A most unhappy one: I would do much

To *atone* them, for the love I bear to Cassio."

Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher :

"*Bar.* I have been *atoning* two most wrangling neighbors."

Thus Dryden :

"The king and haughty empress, to our wonder,

If not *atoned*, yet seemingly at peace."

Other examples might be cited to the same purport. So far as this term is concerned, the idea expressed by this passage is, that, through Christ, the sinner, who was before alienated, was made *at one* with, *atoned*, reconciled to God.

12 now received the atonement. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon

12-21. In this well-known passage Paul turns over a new leaf of his argument, and describes in a grand and comprehensive comparison the benefits of the Gospel as made free to all mankind. He represents Jesus Christ as the spiritual head, as Adam was the paternal ancestor, of the whole family of man. As Jew and Gentile both dated back to Adam as their great natural head, so was it designed in the new dispensation that they should both alike, one without exaltation over the other, hail from Christ as their spiritual head and progenitor. This is the leading outline of thought, but the Apostle descends into a minute comparison in many points between the physical and the spiritual Adam. The sin of the first Adam is set against the righteousness of the second Adam; death produced by sin, against the life produced by righteousness; condemnation, against justification; many made sinners by one man's sin, against many made righteous by the obedience of one; offences abounding by the defective power of the Law, against grace abounding even more; sin reigning unto death, against grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ. We read so familiarly and technically the sublime strains of Paul, and take them so much as a matter of course, inwoven as they are into the current theology, that we fail to appreciate their wonderful power and richness, and the immense addition they are to the treasures of Christian thought. However unable we may be to arrange the exact joints and articulations of this compact logic, we can yet gain sufficient inkling of the general purpose to be satisfied that Paul was no loose, inconsequential writer, and that, though addicted to rabbin-

ical styles of expression and arrangement which sometimes embarrass us, he yet soared with a lofty genius and a Christian freedom into regions all his own.

12. Sin entered into the world by one man, because, according to the history in Genesis, Adam was the first to sin, the first to set an example, and to infect his constitution, and, through the laws of hereditary descent, the constitution of his posterity, with evil more or less inveterate. But the supposition that Adam acted in any federative capacity by which all men became hostile by their very nature to all good and prone to all evil, is a monstrous impeachment of His goodness who should thus place on so perilous a contingency the fate of a whole race. It is a supposition not sustained by facts; for bad as men are, they are not purely evil. It is a supposition not required by any means in this course of reasoning; for it is of sin, actual transgression, positive offences, disobedience, not of depravity of nature, that Paul is here speaking. By turning rhetoric into logic, and figures of speech into literal propositions, the warm pictures of man's actual wickedness have been converted into cold formulas, expressive of the total theoretic depravity of his spiritual constitution.—*One man.* Adam is mentioned as being the more conspicuous actor, and standing for the twain who were one flesh.—*Death by sin.* The penalty joined to the offence. What is that penalty? That it is not merely natural, physical death, is evident from the fact that the grace of God by Christ does not remove it, but men continue to die as before. By *death* we are to understand, then, moral as well as natural evil; it is a general term to describe all the bad consequences of disobe-

all men, for that all have sinned: for until the law sin was in the 13 world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, 14 death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also 15 is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is by*

dience, both to the body and the soul. The redemption of the Gospel delivers men from bad habits, destructive vices, which attack health and life, from the fear of death, which is its chief evil, and from sin, which disqualifies the soul for its full life and happiness hereafter. The mistake we often make in trying to understand a passage like this, freely, popularly written, is that we cut too close, press the meaning of terms too far, and do not give enough scope and freedom of movement to a deeply moved and highly impassioned nature, pouring itself out in a mingled flood of arguments, illustrations, historical references, glancing from heaven to earth, and earth to heaven, to the past, to the future, to man, to God, to Adam, to Christ, to life, death, and futurity. — *All have sinned.* All suffer the penalty, because all have committed the offence, and not merely because Adam sinned. Nothing appears in this passage of what schoolmen and theorists call *original sin*; it is actual, personal unrighteousness which is laid at every man's door.

13–17. This passage is an explanatory and parenthetical one according to the common version, though Griesbach and Tischendorf incorporate it into the regular tenor of discourse. — *For until the law.* I. e. sin existed not only after the Law was given, by which it was more fully brought to light, but it was found in the world from the beginning, though not imputed or charged so severely upon men who lived only under the

light of nature. Acts xvii. 30. Neander gives the following as the probable train of thought in ver. 13, 14, a very obscure passage: "Paul brings forward the objection that the sin of Adam had reigned in the world until Moses, although no positive law was in existence, and without law there could be no imputation of sin. He repels this objection by the fact that death still reigned even over those who had not sinned, like Adam, against a positive law. This fact is an objective evidence of imputation, and, as is evident from the preceding remarks, this imputation proves itself to be just in the conscience, which exhibits men as transgressors of an undeniable divine law." — *The figure of him that was to come.* I. e. the second Adam. In what respects the first Adam was a type or figure of the second is unfolded by the Apostle in the following passage, to the end of the chapter.

15. Some critics make the first clause of this and of the 16th verse interrogative instead of affirmative. Paul discriminates the difference between the offence of the first and the gift of the second Adam. While, by the sin of the first, the consequences of death passed upon many, i. e. all, so by the second did the gracious gift of God in life and light and love abound unto many, i. e. all. The remedy provided was designed to be as extensive as the malady. The "many" in one case is as broad a term as the "many" in the other. We may dwell upon single terms, and

16 one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as *it*  
*was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one  
 to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justifi-  
 17 cation. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much  
 more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of  
 18 righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore,  
 as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemna-  
 tion, even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon  
 19 all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience  
 many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many  
 20 be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence  
 might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more

squeeze a great deal of meaning out of one or two words, and pour our theories into the vehicles prepared by the author, but we do not thus arrive most directly at his probable meaning, for we may thus refine until we refine all the substantial meaning away. Any other work reduced to this exhaustive process would be entirely killed, but the Bible has an indestructible vitality, and bears being murdered again and again by dull and prosy theologians and commentators.

16. Then another superiority of the Christian over the Adamic state was, that in one case it was a penalty incurred by one at first, and visited upon the guilty and condemned; but in the other, free grace abounded notwithstanding many offences, to put mankind into the process of righteousness and justification.

17-19. These are amplifications of the same thought, and presenting other faces of the same crystal. In ver. 17, the contrast is between death and life, in ver. 18, between condemnation and justification, and in ver. 19, between one man's disobedience leading to many sins, and many men's righteousness resulting from one man's obedience.—*One*

*man's offence* should read *one offence*.—*Made righteous*. This points to the position which we have all along endeavored to establish in regard to the interpretation of this Epistle, that the great question with Paul was not justification by faith, as both Orthodox and Liberal interpreters seem to allow, but righteousness by faith. It was not how God might treat or regard man being a sinner as if he were righteous, but how he might render him being a sinner really righteous. It was not a justification-process, but primarily a righteousness-process, a mode of making man righteous, and only secondarily a process of justification.

20. *That the offence*. Not of course in order to make it abound, but so that it did abound. To obviate the tacit objection which might be made why the Law should enter, as if to aggravate the evils of the Adamic state and multiply offences by exalting the moral standard, it might now be said that it was done to bring out in bolder relief the abounding grace of the Gospel. "The universality of the Apostle's expressions is very remarkable. The same 'many' who were made sinners by the disobedience of one are made righteous by

abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace 21 reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The Doctrines of Emancipation from Sin, and Sanctification of Heart and Life.*

WHAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace

the obedience of the other. If *all* men are condemned by the offence of one, the same *all* are justified by the righteousness of the other. These universal terms, so frequently repeated and so variously diversified, cannot be reconciled to the limitation of the blessings of the Gospel to the elect *alone*, or to a part only of the human race."

21. Sin and grace are represented as two monarchs disputing the throne of the world, and reigning over their respective empires of death and life. But, as if to guard against misapprehension both here and elsewhere, righteousness is constantly introduced as the result of grace, and as the condition of eternal life. Instead of a good life and character being undervalued by the Apostle in these passages as of little worth, they are put in the foreground as the object of grace, and the fruit of the Gospel, and the preliminary to that eternal life by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Judaism still lingers in the Christian churches. The Epistles of Paul are needed to emancipate us, and lead us into the fulness and freedom of the knowledge of Christ.

## CHAPTER VI.

The doctrine of justification has been hitherto discussed, but from this point in the Epistle the doctrine of sanctification is taken up. These words, *justification* and *sanctification*, are old theological terms, and they convey little meaning now to many.

Let us try to explain them. The Jews claimed the privileges of the Gospel exclusively to themselves, but Paul opens the door to the Gentiles as also embraced in the plan of the grace of God. Neither Jew nor Gentile had any merits or claims to plead; both were sinners before God, and he admitted them to the blessings of his love freely, without money and without price. He put them, in other words, in the way of becoming, of being made just, holy, good. The Jews were taken as they were, and the Gentiles were taken as they were; and the Jews did not have to become Gentiles, nor the Gentiles Jews, in order to become the disciples of Christ. They were both put in the way, entered in the school, the Church, the fold of Christ, freely, by the pure and loving and compassionate grace and favor of God. The sole condition of their entrance was faith, confidence; for in order to get any good from the Gospel, they must come to it in a humble, believing, prepared state of mind, conscious of sin, conscious of spiritual need, and relying fully upon Christ as able to supply that need to the utmost. It then depended subsequently upon the personal fidelity of the disciple how far he was benefited, purified, quickened, and prospered in the spiritual life, after thus by an act of free and unpurchased love and grace being put in the way of God's righteousness, i. e. in God's method and culture for making righteous, holy, and good men. The question arose,



2 may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin,  
 3 live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as  
 were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

and Paul proceeds to discuss it, whether so generous and gracious a system, relaxing the severity of the old Hebrew law, would not be abused, and the Gospel, free to Jew or Gentile, asking only faith or trust as its elementary condition, disdaining no sinner, however flagrant, be made a system of license, and not a culture of holiness. After being placed by the liberal offers of Christianity on the basis of this ample justification, the sins of neither Jews nor Gentiles being any more remembered against them, and only faith being demanded for the present and fidelity for the future, would the system work well? would they not relapse, would they not be ready to yield to sin because God had provided such ample means to cancel and destroy it, and so mercifully increased his blessings when men had most aggravated their transgressions? Hitherto the Apostle had applied himself to the discussion of the establishment and conditions of the Gospel method of righteousness and holiness; he now turns to its practical reception and operation, the philosophy of its motives and influences, and how it would bear upon human nature to sanctify it. In other words, he now changes the topic from justification to sanctification.

1, 2. The argument is further developed. The objection would naturally arise, that, if no virtue of ours could establish any claim to God's favor on the ground of merit, but that his blessings must still descend to us on the score of his free love and grace, the Apostle was confounding all moral distinctions. If, as men became more corrupt, the mercy of God had been made more apparent, should we not continue and increase in sin,

to call down more and more of such glorious gifts of the Spirit? The answer, in one word, is, No; it would be *inconsistent*. — *God forbid*. Let it not be. — *Dead to sin, live, &c.* The two courses are as opposite as any thing can be; one is as death, and the other as life. If we are really dead, we certainly cannot live. So the man of sin is slain once for all. Paul may be here regarded not so much as answering existing as anticipated objections which his large and sympathetic moral imagination, not to say prophetic power, foresaw. Antinomianism was the name later given to this exaggeration of grace to the discredit of practical obedience and good works.

3-7. The simple thought here is, that the disciples of Christ by baptism, which was the sign of their allegiance to their Master, had renounced their former wicked life, and could not therefore consistently resume it. As has been said, if Christ died *for* sin, they died *to* sin. But the mind of Paul, rich in comparison and analogy, was not content with the simple thought. He overflows; he pours out a flood of contrasts, resemblances, relations to the central idea, fragmentary and incomplete, but suggestive and instinct with power and life. With what a master's hand does he carve out new forms and images of truth, and create new spheres of contemplation! We are apt to make so much of the inspiration of Paul that we are blind to his sublime genius, one of the greatest in every faculty that was ever enshrined in mortal clay.

*Baptized into Jesus Christ.* So was it said of the Israelites that they were baptized into Moses in the cloud and

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like 4 as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have 5 been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old 6 man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is 7 freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that 8

in the sea. 1 Cor. x. 2. This mode of expression means that they took upon themselves the profession of a faith or religion by such a rite as baptism, or figuratively by whatever outward sign. Matt. xxviii. 19. To be baptized into Christ meant the same as to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We get a clew to several facts here. 1. Baptism was a perpetuated Christian rite. 2. Baptism was a token of Christ's death, as well as the Supper. 3. Baptism would seem to have been performed by affusion or immersion; though, from the silence of the Scriptures on the subject as to the definite mode, we learn that that mode was not essential, else it would have been described. The silence as well as the speech of the Scriptures is significant. The somewhat circuitous path of the Apostle's association of ideas seems to be first, in ver. 2, of the Christian having died to sin, then, ver. 3, this death to sin having been symbolized by baptism into the great vital fact of the Gospel, the death of Christ; from death, by a natural association, he passes, ver. 4, to the resurrection from death, verified bodily in Christ, and to be verified spiritually in each believer; in ver. 5, he clinches the connection of ideas between baptism and burial, death and resurrection, by reiterating it in more direct terms; and, ver. 6, is led, in speaking of Christ's death, to recall what kind of a death it was, crucifixion,

and that, as his body was crucified, so should our old man, our body of sin, perish, and then we should be emancipated from the service of sin; for he who is dead, or that which is dead, cannot sin. Thus this oblique and somewhat zigzag chain-work of ideas conducts us to the same conclusion as above, that, as the man of sin had been slain once for all, he could not by any possibility rise again to do mischief. It was simply irrational and impossible, therefore, for a Christian to talk of continuing in that to which he had died.

7-11. An amplification of the same thought of the inconsistency of a Christian voluntarily continuing in sin. As the Apostle had showed on the negative side of death the impossibility of living any longer by choice in sin, so now he shows the same impossibility on the positive side of life. — *Dead to sin*. They could not abide in it or return to it any more; now much more, being alive to righteousness, they could not relapse. They have had therefore two pledges to the faithfulness of discipleship, — death to sin and life to Christ. They were as insensible to sin as the dead are to an object, and they were as conscious of Christ as if he were an integral part of their being, or section of their life.

7, 8. There are two conclusions to the proposition in ver. 6, that "the old man" is crucified; one is, that he who is thus dead is "freed," literally

9 we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over  
 10 him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he  
 11 liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to  
 be dead, indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ  
 12 our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that  
 13 ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your  
 members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield

*justified*, from sin, or delivered from its degrading service and bondage,— a negative benefit; and also, ver. 8, that there is a positive new life, answering to the new organic spiritual man, implanted by Christ. The language of the seventh verse is probably a scrap from the Talmud, which Paul knew by heart, where it says, “The man who dies is freed from the commandments. 1 Pet. iv. 1.” And the analogy is drawn in ver. 8, that, if we follow Jesus in his death, we shall also follow him in his life and resurrection. Neander remarks, with great justice, that “expositors, for want of entering sufficiently into the profound views of the Apostle, and of grasping the comprehensive survey that stretches from the present into the future, have often erred, by a mistaken reference of such passages either solely to the spiritual resurrection of the present state, or solely to the bodily resurrection of the future.” The truth is, that Paul often merges and mingles one in the other, with a free and flowing rhetoric, that does not stop to measure words.

9, 10. He argues that the death of Christ, the Head of the new faith, ought not to shake any one’s confidence in the eternity of his spiritual power and life. For he died to sin, or on account of the sinful, undeveloped spiritual condition of mankind once, or once for all, and so he cannot die again, his “passion” cannot be repeated. “This death was the

death of death.” The connection he once sustained to a mortal and tempted condition is broken for ever. But so far as his life is concerned, that is infinite and eternal, for it has God for its scope, to whom he liveth. None would infer from this passage, as some believe, that the Son of God is the sole God since his ascension, or that his distinct and conscious personality, which he possessed on earth, is swallowed up and lost in the Godhead. The personal existence of Jesus is as distinctly recognized apart from God in heaven as on earth.

11. For the same thing is required of the disciple as of his Master. Like Christ, like Christian. The twofold process,— death to sin, and life to God,— they also are to undergo, with this difference, that it is to be carried on through a medium, a Mediator, “through Jesus Christ our Lord”; a term which stands for his whole life, death, teachings, Gospel; for they are all media, instrumentalities, agencies to accomplish the union of man with God and of man with man.

12–14. The personification of Sin is continued.—*Therefore*. The rational conclusion from the foregoing remarks was, that the dominion of sin was not to be allowed even in our mortal bodies, whose passions and appetites are so strong, much less in the immortal mind. The body of itself cannot of course sin, any more than any other mass of matter, but

yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are

through its senses and propensities, which are all good in themselves, and only evil when allowed to gain the ascendancy over the moral and spiritual faculties, the body can bring even the mind into subjection to the law of the members, and turn the very instruments created by God for righteous and holy purposes into weapons of moral evil. Thus hunger may lead to gluttony, thirst to drunkenness, love to lust, speech to slander, and by this civil insurrection and war within man, the true sovereignty may be usurped by the mob of bodily passions. But it is a totally unauthorized and most pernicious error to infer that man is born naturally and wholly depraved, because he is connected for a time with this material organization, out of whose perversion these occasions to sin arise. The mind and the members were both pronounced "good" by the All-wise Creator, and it is only when the order of authority is reversed, and the law of the mind is subjugated to the law of the members, that we can call either mind or members evil. He then libels not only himself, but his Maker, who literally, and not in an impassioned and figurative sense, calls his nature totally depraved. Man can hardly sink so low, or so entirely divest himself of the spiritual attributes, that something good, some "moral remains," will not survive.

"E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."

Chrysostom well remarks: "He does not say, Let not the flesh live,

neither act, but, Let not sin reign. For he came not to abrogate human nature, but to rectify the will." — *Alive from the dead.* The Greeks and Romans, polished as they were by a splendid material and intellectual civilization, were spiritually dead in trespasses and sin, and even surpassed the untutored children of nature in their rank vices of sensuality. But the Christian believers had been brought to life from this moral death, and they were bound therefore to bring forth the fruits of such a life in all manner of virtues and graces. — *For sin shall not have,* &c. The promise is given, that sin would be even better subdued under grace, or the gracious influence of Christianity, than under a legal system like the Mosaic code, or, in general, any dispensation of law. For law appeals to only a part of man's nature, his will, conscience, understanding, and fears, but grace to the higher affections and aspirations likewise, which are far more availing and enduring. The fact, therefore, that they were under the gracious system of Christianity, with all its tender and affecting motives of Christ and him crucified, instead of relaxing their moral conduct, was even more effectual than the austere code of Moses to guard them against sin.

15, 16. The Apostle resumes the question of ver. 1, with a modification, though it is rather a new illustration than a new argument he gives in the following verses. The main idea of the first of the chapter was, that it was simply inconsistent and

to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto  
 17 righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of  
 sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which  
 18 was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the  
 19 servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men be-  
 cause of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your  
 members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity ;  
 even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto  
 20 holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from

impossible that one who had died to his old sinful life should continue in it any longer. He organically cut off from such an inconsequence as well as immorality. The main idea of the last half of the chapter is that of service, slavery ; an illustration well understood then, and, alas! too intelligible now. After stating the caviller's objection, and expressing his abhorrence of it, — *God forbid*, — he proceeds to remind them of the necessity of the servant rendering obedience to his master. The service we have chosen we must take the consequence of, for we cannot obey one master and obtain the rewards of another. We are paid in kind. Good is paid with good, and evil is paid with evil. — *His servants ye are*, &c. You must take the alternative of the condition you have adopted. God does not punish men arbitrarily, but according to the nature of the course they pursue. He has affixed by constant laws certain consequences to certain actions. He has coupled sin and death, and obedience and righteousness, by irreversible bonds. To be good is to be happy, i. e. to live ; to be wicked is to be miserable, i. e. to die.

17. *That ye were the servants of sin.* The emphatic word is *were*. The matter for thanks was not in reality that they *were*, but that they *were so no longer*. A truer rendering therefore would be, "But God be thanked,

that, *having been* the servants of sin, ye have obeyed," &c. — *That form, original, mould, type of doctrine.* The disciples are represented as poured like melted wax or metal into this mould, and taking the exact impression and stamp of Christianity.

18–20. You cannot but be the servants of somebody. There is no other alternative. Again, if you are the servants of one, you cannot be the servants of another. No man can serve two masters. Formerly you were under bondage to sin, and, of course, you were exempt from the service of righteousness, ver. 20. But having changed this service from one master to another, you are now the servants of righteousness, and are just as free from the service of sin now as you were from that of righteousness before, ver. 18. And, ver. 19, as in one case there was a progress from step to step, a piling up of sin on sin, and your faculties, by the momentum of habit and use, acquired greater and greater proneness to evil ; so now, as the process is reversed, these same members and powers of your nature gain more and more aptitude for the new service, and go on from moral righteousness to spiritual holiness, from justification to sanctification. — *I speak after the manner of men*, &c. ; i. e. I take illustrations from human society and the institution of slavery, with which you are familiar, in order that you may, not-

righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye 21 are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. But now 22 being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages 23 of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

withstanding your unspirituality, the better understand the unsearchable riches of Christ.

21 - 23. Having portrayed the different nature of the service of their former life and the service of Christ, and the utter inconsistency and impossibility, if they had become Christians, of their going back to wallow in the mire of heathenism again, or to accept the beggarly elements of a former dispensation, Paul now antithesizes the rewards of one career to those of the other, as a continuation of the same argument why they could not continue in sin.— *What fruit.* The phrase is significant. Not by arbitrary rewards and punishments does the Moral Governor of the world mete out the opposite results of sin and goodness, but as natural consequences, as *fruit*, they grow up on the good tree or the evil. Virtue is paid in virtue, and vice in vice; or, in the words of the Talmudists, quoted by Tholuck, “a good action is the reward of a good action, as a wicked action is punished by a second.” As has been said, the universe is so constructed that nothing can hurt us but ourselves; sin, or its occasions and temptations in our own heart and life.— *The end of those things is death.* We need not cut down the glowing Apostle to the bold statement of either physical or spiritual death. Not thus can we interpret well. He

says these things are deadly, destructive; they plant diseases in the body, they plant stings in the conscience, and conjure up terrors in the future. The same remarks apply below to the sentence, “The wages of sin is death.” Imagine the sinner a laborer, and the wages he earns are destructive of his health, his happiness, and his hopes. For every purpose of moral impression this indefiniteness of language is better than the most elaborate descriptions of punishment. The results of our lives on earth are too vast to be gathered up into any one form or phrase of words, unless it be some such broad ones as life and death.— *Fruit unto holiness.* Paid in kind, as remarked above.— *Wages — gift.* The sinner earns his own fate, works it out as if it were day-wages. But the service of virtue is disinterested. God wisely arranged it that we may love and serve him for his own glorious sake, and not for the loaves and fishes. When we seek the thing, the reward will take care of itself. But if we are thinking all the time of the reward, the act will be likely to be vitiated by self-reference. Not happiness, not virtue’s reward, but virtue, is “our being’s end and aim.” And by Jesus and his Gospel has the gift of eternal life been communicated, and the knowledge and conditions of it made household words in the whole earth.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Cessation of the Law on Account of its Inability to meet all the Spiritual Wants of Man.*

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is

## CHAPTER VII.

1-6. The Apostle continues the subject of a complete sanctification, or, in other words, of a perfected human being after the model of Jesus. His object in this section is to show that every scrap and fragment of obligation to the Law were annihilated. He addresses the Jews, who were acquainted with the Law, and shows them by a familiar illustration how entirely it had been superseded by the Gospel, and how perfectly free they were to become Christians without any longer continuing to be Jews. It was a matter requiring great delicacy and address to maintain the Divine legation of Moses and the original binding authority of his institutions, and at the same time to lead the Jews onward, who had been thus educated, and every fibre of whose intellectual and moral being was inwoven in the Law, and to open to their faith and admiration the greater beauties and glories of Christianity. In truth, the idea of the progressive nature of all religion, as well as of life in general, seems to be one of the hardest lessons for man to learn, whether under the Jewish or the Christian system. He becomes fossilized in ceremonials and creeds, and hears with reluctance the ceaseless command of God's providence, Go up higher.

1. *As long as he liveth.* The word *he* is not in the original, but is put in by the translators. The question is

whether the personal pronoun should be *he*, the man, or *it*, the Law, for the Greek will admit of either word. Commentators as usual are ranged on opposite sides of the question, but *it* is more consonant to the argument. Paul is made to say the very thing in the Common Version which he was trying to disprove. He wished to show that the Law was not living, that it was dead; that it could have no more rightful dominion over the Jews, because it had been superseded by that more perfect form of faith and worship of which it was the harbinger.

2, 3. He proceeds to enforce the idea of the abrogation of the Law in general by an instance of its particular cessation in the case of the marriage contract. A woman is under obligation to be faithful to her husband so long as he lives, but at his death she is released from all such claims, and is at perfect liberty to marry a second husband, without the charge of adultery. 1 Cor. vii. 39. Thus final and utter is the dissolution of the Law of Moses by the entrance of the Gospel of Christ. The Law was dead, and all indebtedness to it had for ever ceased. It was a thing of the past, as much as the obligation legally of a woman to be bound to her husband after he had died. In regard to the many questions how St. Paul's rhetoric shall be justified, and how the several limbs of his comparison shall be matched with one another, we have nothing to say

loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband 3 liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by 4 the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, 5

while the main drift of his remarks is so apparent. Thus Beza says, "The old man is the wife, sinful desire the husband, sins the children"; and Augustine, that "there are three; the soul is the woman, the passions of sin the husband, and the Law the law of the husband." Origen, Chrysostom, Calvin, and others, "Men are the wife, the Law the former husband, Christ the new one." If Paul were a writer who carried out his figures regularly, all such criticism would be very fine and useful, but he is not; and to attempt in every instance to set the different parts in order is not only a work of supererogation, but of impossibility. To hunt needles in haymows, or to attach again the strewn leaves of the forest to the identical boughs from which they have fallen, would be as easy and as profitable as to pursue this word-criticism to its niceties, with a view of resting upon it any essential doctrine or precept. The Bible in general, and the writings of Paul in particular, lie, like great Nature herself, vast, various, somewhat chaotic and disjointed, a creation in progress, and not a creation finished, but everywhere full of gleams of surpassing beauty, touches of deepest feeling, and electricities and magnetisms and fires of quickest power. The words of Prof. Stuart are most true, and it would have been well if he had always "recked his own rede." "Many a time have I read

the Epistle to the Romans without obtaining scarcely a glimpse of it. When I ask the reason of this, I find it in neglect to look after the *general* object and course of thought in the writer. Special interpretation stood in the way of general views; the explanation of words hindered the discerning of the course of thought."

4, 5. *Ye also are become dead to the law.* Mark the courtesy and fine sense of the Apostle. Instead of saying the Law was dead, which would have carried out his analogy in regular order, he avoids shocking their prejudices by making a bald declaration like that, and adroitly says, *ye* are dead. This confusion of figures, and also of persons, *ye* and *we*, in these verses, is common to all lively and copious writers. Christ was the new husband, and union with him, instead of yielding the deathlike results of the Law, was to bring forth living and godlike fruit. — *Who is raised from the dead.* A vital article in Paul's creed was the ascended and glorified Messiah. The Apostles who were personally acquainted with our Saviour call him most frequently by the simple name of Jesus, while Paul, who surveys his greatness at a distance, and views him as seated aloft in the heavens, the conqueror over sin and death, usually employs the title of Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, Christ our Lord. — *Motions of sins.* Better, as in the marginal reading of the common version, *passions.* Paul



which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth  
6 fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that  
being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in new-  
7 ness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. What shall we

nowhere commits the lapse of making nature identical with sin, or sin with nature. — *Which were by the law.* The passions were stirred up by coming into contact with the Law; the irresistible fury of desire against the immovable rock of the constitution of things. James i. 14, 15.

6. *That being dead.* Just above it was *ye*, who are dead to the Law, but the idea once being broached, and the offence of its first blush being taken away, he now says directly, by a change of person, that *the Law* is dead, while the *ye*, which was dead above, is now alive to Christ as the new Master. It is proper to say, however, that both Griesbach and Tischendorf edit as follows, keeping up the figure as in ver. 4: "But now, being dead, we are delivered from the Law, wherein we were held." — *In newness of spirit, &c.* 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. This is a Hebraism, which, properly rendered into English, would read, that we should serve the new spirit, and not the old letter. Revelation, like the rest of the creation, is progressive; the Law came by Moses, grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The Gospel too has its earlier and later ages, its morning daybreak and its noonday glory. It therefore becomes the duty of man to follow the leadings of the Divine hand, and to move onward with the moving universe. He must live up to the spirit of his age, and have full confidence that there is yet new light to break out of the word of God. The more wisdom and love we carry to the revelation, the more wisdom and love we find there; and the more faithfully we act up to our present light, the more clearly does the future

shine upon us. The human soul is a germ, destined to an everlasting growth in wisdom and goodness; and it is not the province of any being except Omnipotence to say, Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. Dr. Arnold has well said, "There is nothing so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed when all the world is by the very laws of its creation in eternal progress; and the cause of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural, but most deadly, error of human indolence and corruption, that our business is to preserve, and not improve. It is the ruin of us all alike, individuals, schools, and nations."

7–25. This passage discourses one subject, the inability of the Law to meet the spiritual wants of human nature throughout. If the law were dead, as he had proved it was, a Jewish objector would ask, Why is it dead? Is the Law sin? Is the Law bad? How can it be, if it was given by God? Paul replies at length in this section, showing wherein the Law succeeded, and wherein it failed, and what would avail to answer the whole demand of the soul. This is strictly in accordance with the general object of the Epistle to demonstrate the value of faith-righteousness, and its superiority to the philosophical righteousness of the Greeks, or the legal righteousness of the Hebrews.

The form in which this discussion is carried on is by personification and dramatic interchange of characters. The Law is one person, Sin is another, the *I*, the essential man, is

say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet.* But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For

another. By this means the consideration of an abstract theological topic is made vivacious and intelligible, and impressed on the memory and imagination as it could not be done by mere abstruse language.

But in the interpretation of this chapter, we find among the critics the same tendency before referred to under ver. 2, 3, of pressing particulars too far, and not looking clearly enough at the general purpose. The Scriptures must no more be cut to the quick in criticism than any other book of history, poetry, or morals. *Ne quid nimis*, there may be too much of a good thing, is a feeling not infrequent in reading religious literature.

7. The Apostle queries as if with an objector, respecting the mission of the Law. *Is the Law sin*, because it is now obsolete, and has no more any rightful dominion over men? By no means. So far from being bad itself, the very spirit of the Law is to reveal what is evil; it is the spear of Ithuriel whose touch is to disclose the horns and cloven foot; it is a moral judgment-seat. It was the mission of the Law specially to give activity to the conscience, and thus bring sin to light, as it was of the Hebrew ritual to cultivate veneration, and is of the Gospel to quicken love and benevolence. The Law was good as far as it went, but it could not accomplish every thing. Jesus came not to destroy, but to fulfil it, to carry forward its plan to an entire completion.—*Thou shalt not covet.* Exod. xx. 17. It has been suggested that this quotation is made after the Hebrew manner, only the beginning being given, but that the whole tenth

commandment is intended by it.—The courtesy of the Apostle is again manifest in his saying *I*, instead of *you*, and thus appropriating whatever might be obnoxious in his comparison, to himself.

8. *But sin, taking occasion, &c.*, strengthened by the consciousness which the Law itself gave of the guilt of sin. Sin is impersonated throughout this chapter, and is represented as lying in wait, like an artful enemy, for its victims. It is the body of sin lying back, which, instigated by the prohibition of the Law, results in the particular lust or concupiscence. And without the Law there would be no sin, i. e. the consciousness of sin would not be created; mankind would do the same wicked acts, but they would not be aware, at least in so high a degree, how wicked they were. The absolute violation of a law is as great in the case of an ignorant as of an intentional agent, but the difference as to relative guiltiness in the two cases is world-wide. In one case, man sins with his eyes wide open, and in the other with them shut, or blinded.—*All manner, &c.* There is no end to the multiplex forms which the seminal principle of moral evil will take on, when it is warmed into life and is exasperated by the opposition and revelation of the prohibitory law. The language of Paul is of course highly figurative and panoramic, giving in large and high-colored outlines the battle, which is carried on in the breast of man, in miniature. All attempts likewise to settle the inquiry how far the Apostle is speaking in his own person, and how far in that of another man; or how far he personates himself in his

9 without the law sin *was* dead. For I was alive without the law  
 once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.  
 10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be*  
 11 unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, de-  
 12 ceived me, and by it slew *me*. Wherefore the law *is* holy,

unregenerate, and how far in his regenerate state; or whether he assumes at different stages of his argument both characters,—overstrain the point, and make a stiff interpretation. The Apostle evidently wrote in the spirit of a glowing enthusiasm, without always stopping to measure the exact force of his words, or indicating the precise points of transition in his discourse. In general we may say, this is a picture of human nature, in three conditions : first, before the Law was made known, in which the sense of good and ill was blunt; secondly, after the promulgation of the Law, when the conflict began of its prohibitions with the aroused propensities to sin, the grapple between the interior *I* and the circumstantial *me*; and thirdly, the Christian experience, where the faith of Jesus has been strong enough to give the preponderance to the good principles, and discomfit the bad ones, and the restless heart of man finds rest in truth and love.

9. This verse describes the process from the state of careless, unobservant nature, where man feels comparatively contented with his sins, because he is not aware of their heinousness, to the legal condition, in which the prohibitions of the Law set his offences in order before him, and thunder in the startled ear of conscience the penalties of disobedience. At this threatening aspect of the spiritual state, the heart of man dies within him. His hope and his courage fail, because he sees the yawning chasm between the just requirements of God on one side, and his own

short-comings on the other. Olshausen remarks: "As a rapidly flowing stream rolls calmly on, so long as no object checks it, but foams and roars as soon as any hinderance stops it, just as calmly does the sinful element hold its course through the man, so long as he does not stem it; but if he would realize the Divine commandment, he begins to feel the force of the element, of whose dominion he had as yet no boding."

10, 11. As sin was the general fountain, of which lust or concupiscence was one of the issues, so the Law was the general authority, of which the commandment is represented as a special provision or injunction. The object of the commandment indeed was to produce spiritual life and happiness, but the knowledge of the nature and enormity of sin, which was made known by the Law, rendered the particular sin of which I was guilty more aggravated and deadly than it would have been, if I did the same thing without the knowledge which the law gives. Lev. xviii. 5; Luke x. 28. Thus Neander writes: "The deception which was practised by the power of the hitherto slumbering, but now rampant, sinful desires, consisted in this, that when the Law in its glory, the moral archetype, first revealed itself to the higher nature of man, he was filled with earnest desire to seize the revealed ideal; but this desire only made him more painfully sensible of the chasm which separated him from the object after which he aspired. Thus, what appeared at first a blissful ideal, by the guilt of death-pro-

and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we 14

ducing sin became changed into its opposite."

12. *The law is holy, &c.* The Apostle was sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, for on one hand he had to show the superiority of the new way of salvation to the old one, and at the same time, on the other, to avoid so far shocking the prejudices of the Jews as to turn them away in disgust from his argument, or to do violence to his own hallowed associations of an early religious education. He here reiterates his eulogy of the Jewish Law. Not because he loved Judaism less, but because he loved Christianity more, he had become an apostle and advocate of the Gospel to all nations. We see in this verse the easy, impulsive movement of a noble nature, intent upon its purpose, but just to what was past, and honoring the rudimentary school of the Law and the Prophets. He says both the general law and the special commandment were praiseworthy, and he lavishes upon them terms of respect.

13. But if the Law and commandment were thus excellent, how could they work so ill and deadly an effect upon human consciousness and character? Did they change their nature so that good had the effect of evil, and sweet tasted like bitter? Far from it. It was sin that was detected, not the Law that was perverted. Just as letters written in lemon-juice appear when brought to the fire, though they were before invisible, so did the deathlike character of sin manifest itself when touched by the criterion of the Law. What in the twilight of natural conscience appeared as sin, became doubly malignant in the clear

daylight of the Law. The Law did great good as far as its sphere extended, but it never was designed to "come full circle" in the Divine plan. It was a preliminary education, an infant school of religion for the world. The Divine ordinance was to "erect amongst the people of Israel a hearth and an altar for God, from which as a centre the sacred fire might then be more easily spread over the whole earth." 1 Tim. i. 8. — *God forbid. But sin, &c.* By pointing this clause differently, according to Griesbach and Tischendorf, a much clearer sense is given, and an answer is made to the preceding question, thus: Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid; but sin; that is to say, sin was made death unto me; that it might appear sin, might appear in its true colors, working death in me by that which is good, that is, by the Law, that in this way, by the detection of the Law, sin might be revealed in its real character as exceedingly sinful. Rom. v. 20. Thus we detect "in the symptoms of a positive disease the morbid matter which has been for a long time lurking in the system."

14. There is no complaint therefore to be made of the Law; its tendency is spiritual as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough, and, while it brings to light the venomous nature of sin, provide a cure for its fatal poison. What is to be complained of is sin, our second evil selves, for "it is the royal privilege of good that from all evil it knows how to educe good, as it is the curse of evil that it perverts to evil all that is good." — *I am carnal, &c.* There has been much ink wasted by the

know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.  
 15 For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not;  
 16 but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I  
 17 consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is no more I that

critics to decide how far St. Paul is giving his own individual experiences, and how far he speaks for human nature at large. Perhaps we may more truly say, that he sweeps both the general and the personal into the full torrent of his speech, and, with his quick-glancing mind, appropriates to his argument all that was truest of men in the plural, while he dissected man in the singular, and demonstrated the morbid anatomy of sin as a disease of human nature. — *Sold under sin.* Enslaved, bound as a slave to the master who has bought him. In the use of the *I* instead of *we*, we perceive the delicacy with which Paul identifies the evil with himself rather than with his countrymen.

15–20. The collision between the sense of duty and sensual desire, between the higher and the lower nature, between the law of the mind and the law of the members, the essential interior *I* and the circumferential *me*, is here drawn out at full length. It is a portrait, a daguerreotype of what is going on down deep in the bosom, of the game of life which every man is playing for his soul. The Apostle painted on a great scale what is true of the humblest or the youngest of the human family, the ceaseless struggles between appetite and reason, passion and conscience, the superficial desires and the innate moral forces. Gal. v. 17.

15. *I allow not.* Literally, I know not; i. e. I am perplexed to understand it; I know not how it is that I should act so inconsistently, as not to do what I would, but, on the contrary, to do the very thing I hate. This is a puzzle. The present rendering of the common English ver-

sion mystifies the sense completely by seeming to repeat the same formula twice in the same verse; but the above rendering relieves the difficulty entirely. Tholuck remarks here that hitherto the Apostle had “contrasted himself in respect of his whole being with the Divine law; now, however, he begins to describe a discord which exists within himself. We set out with the fact that the Apostle still supposes an original element in man cognate with the Divine Being. This is the religious and moral sense which can never be wholly eradicated in man without his thereby ceasing to be man. Even the individual who sinks very low never entirely loses the consciousness that that divine element constitutes his proper self, and that to it all the rest must become homogeneous; in fact, that it is the Divine seed in him, which is choked indeed, but no more. Accordingly, the Apostle represents the sin, or flesh, as something foreign to man, and the godly element as his proper I. Ver. 17, 20. Hence also does he call that element the inward man, the true core of man.” Ver. 22.

16, 17. Though I do what is wicked, yet if I do it against my better convictions on account of the urgency of temptation, I virtually approve of the law as excellent, notwithstanding my inconsistent conduct, because in my heart of hearts I reverence its sanctity. I will therefore divide my personality, and say it is no more I proper who do the evil deed, but indwelling sin, an unlawful settler upon my premises, a tenant, whose behavior I do not like, and whom I should be glad to evict from my property.

18–20. This is mostly an ampli-

do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, 18  
 in my flesh, 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 19  
 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 20  
 dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil 21  
 is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the 22  
 inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring 23  
 against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the

fiction, after the usual copious manner of the Apostle, of what he had said before. No stronger testimony against the innate total depravity of mankind can be adduced than that of Paul, the very teacher who is generally supposed to teach this and the other Augustinian and Calvinistic doctrines in the most decisive manner. If language has any meaning, sin in the soul is not predicated by him as any more inborn or natural, than disease in the body, or as constituting the inmost self and usurping the central seat of personality, but as an excrescence, a law of the outward members, not of the mind, the inner and immortal selfhood.

This collision of the higher and lower powers of man is known to profane as well as sacred literature. Tholuck quotes richly to this effect. Thus Thucydides says: "It is an impossibility, and shows great simplicity for any one to think that, when human nature is driven eagerly to the commission of any act, it can be hindered either by the force of laws or anything however formidable." And Xenophon has this passage from a Persian: "For I have manifestly two spirits. For a spirit that is one and single is not both bad and good at once, nor at once loves things virtuous and things vicious, and at once is willing and unwilling to do them. But it is clear that there are two

spirits, and that when the good prevails, the virtuous things are done, and when the bad, then are wrong things attempted." Diodorus, Euripides, Epictetus, Simplicius, Plautus, Seneca, Lactantius, and the Jewish Rabbins, are quoted to the same effect. Ovid writes: "Desire prompts one thing, my mind persuades me to another. I see and approve the better, but follow the worse." Even the Christian is not exempt, so long as he lives, from temptation, but has to pray like Paul that he may not be a cast-away; or, having some thorn in the flesh of which he cannot be rid, that the grace of Christ may be sufficient for him. 2 Cor. xii. 7-9; Phil. iii. 12, 13.

21-23. He sums up the evidence. There is this contrariety in human nature, so steady and uniform that he calls it a law, that when our better nature wills what is good, our lower propensities do what is evil. The interior and essential self does not cease to reverence and enjoy the moral ideal of love, beauty, and truth, the law of right; but the appetites are grovelling, and the passions are headlong, and they carry the soul captive in self-indulgence and pleasure. — *Bringing me into captivity.* The literal sense is, taking me prisoner of war. The psychology of Paul, and his doctrine of the inner and outer man, the law of the mind

24 law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!  
 25 who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God

and the law of the members, corresponds with many of the views of the old moralists and philosophers, as Plato, Plotinus, Philo, and Plautus. All through this passage the object of the Apostle seems to be to illustrate, by a detailed picture of the working of human nature, the inability of the Law to achieve the complete redemption of man from moral evil. The mere declaration of the wickedness of sin, and its prohibition, cannot keep mankind from sinning; but they must be addressed by more powerful motives. Law, as a restraint, is good, but higher motives must arouse the soul to positive good, as the best bulwark and safeguard against evil. Faith must summon into the field the powers of the world to come. Let in the light of heaven, and the darkness of earth will flee away. The whole philosophy of moral action is contained in another precept of the Apostle: Overcome evil with good. Good is the only sufficient antidote in the universe to evil. But by the expulsive power of a new affection all the forces of sin may be put to rout. Faith, hope, and charity, these three give us the victory over "the world, the flesh, and the Devil."

24. Wound up to desperation by the conflict between different powers of his own nature, the civil war in his breast, he exclaims, Who can deliver me from the body of this death! or, as is variously rendered, "the body of such ruin," or, "the body of this misery," or from the sensual power, which causes me suffering and death. Misery and death are used as synonyms, as well as life and happiness. The idea may be, also, that it was better to die than to live in such a strife with one's self, and tormented with remorse for evil done, and as-

pirations for good left undone. The margin reads, *this body of death*. 2 Cor. v. 4, 8.

25. The common view is, that hitherto Paul had been speaking as an unconverted Jew, but that he now resumes his own address, and gives thanks for his own personal redemption. That idea is not natural. Paul had been through all these experiences on both sides of the question. He sketches them off in bold outlines, not stopping to say how much applied in each instance to himself, and how much was appropriated from the example of others. 1 Cor. xv. 57. — *I thank God*, &c. As much as to say, Jesus Christ delivers me from this wretchedness and moral death. This was the logical conclusion of the whole chapter. Jesus could do what the Law could not accomplish, — put an end to the internal insurrection. But in exalting Christianity to the first place, we must remember that the Law occupies the second place, and that it was a good schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. The chief scope of the Law was conscience; the Gospel came to include in its ample culture the heart, with all its boundless affections and aspirations. The last clause is but an enumeration of what had been expressed before.

There are three principal forces, or creators of character, which at different periods have engaged the attention of mankind. They are all good, and there is need of them all to keep the whole man sound and morally healthy and growing; but the error has been, that too exclusive devotion has been given to one, and the others have been neglected. These three are, Wisdom, which answers to the mind; Law, which refers to the conscience; and Faith, which appeals to the heart. The

through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The Adaptation of the Gospel to all the Offices of a Perfect Religion for the Human Soul.*

*THERE* is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free 2

three most eminent civilizations, or refinements of human society, have been based upon these three ideas: the Grecian upon Wisdom, the Hebrew upon Law, and the Christian upon Faith; but the greatest of these is Faith.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Apostle naturally turns from the deficiencies of the Law, and the ineffectual struggles of its subjects, to the satisfactions of Christian faith. This chapter is concerned with the capacity of the Gospel to perform all the functions of a perfect religion for human nature, and thus to justify itself as the legitimate successor and substitute of the preliminary dispensation. All the points of its adaptation are touched upon; its freedom, its spirituality, its peace, its life, its filial spirit, its hope, its patience, its prayerfulness, and its love. Few passages can be found in the Scriptures which in the same compass contain a more full and glowing portraiture of all the excellences, beauties, and glories of the religion of Jesus, and none in any literature more eloquent in expression, or more glowing with wisdom, truth, and love.

The commentators divide the chapter into several sections, according to their various theories and views of the Apostle's aim and reasoning, but scarcely any two agree together. Indeed, it is evident that Paul did not lay out his discourse with formal arrangements like modern divines, but

commingled logic and rhetoric together, made sudden and abrupt transitions, frequent parentheses, and gave, perhaps, within the limits of a single chapter, specimens of half a dozen different styles and modes of argument, appeal, remonstrance, and illustration. There is no writer whose composition is so compacted and dovetailed together as that of the Apostle Paul. His style has "the universal joint," of which mechanics speak, and while it moves in every direction, it holds firmly to its purpose.

1. *There is therefore now no condemnation, &c.* As an inference from the foregoing chapter, he draws the conclusion, that now, under the Christian faith, there is no condemnation of the Law against those who have abandoned it and become disciples of Christ. Their new loyalty releases them from their old duty. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, "he that believeth on him is not condemned." Condemnation is a legal term, and as the Law is dead, its subjects are free. The last clause of the verse, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, is rejected from the text, as of insufficient authority, by Griesbach, Tischendorf, De Wette, and many other critics and editors. It was probably interpolated as an explanation of the phrase *in Christ Jesus*, from ver. 4, first into the margin, and then into the text, until it was generally received; but it is not in the best versions and manuscripts.

2. The spiritual laws of the Chris-



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

tian faith had not only released men from the bondage of the Mosaic institutions, but they had also emancipated the believing soul from the more terrible laws of moral transgression and death. Rom. vii. 25. The main stress of the Apostle's discourse is to show that the Gospel is good, not so much to acquit its receivers and justify them, as to spiritualize them and raise them out of the bondage of the appetites and passions. Righteousness and holiness are the great ends of religion, not justification; not how we *stand* with God, but how we *are* in character and life before him. It is astonishing how much error is produced by a slight displacement of terms, or a small change of definitions, as a single rivet loose in a machine will throw the whole into utter disorder. The current orthodox system has fastened upon the Church a legality of Christianity as hard and bony every whit as the legality of Judaism. It is still, Thou shalt *believe*, or die; as it was before, Thou shalt *do*, or die. It pays the debts of the sinner as punctually and fully by the sufferings and merits of Christ, as the Law before required it to be done by the obedience of the devotee. Instead of freedom, spiritual motives, culture, growth, hope, patience, and love, we hear from the Church the terragant tones of denunciation, threatenings of hell-fire, dogmatic and compulsory belief, exclusive communion, and severe judgment. The Church has come out of the legalities of the Old Testament only to enter into a new set of legalities, erroneously predicated upon the New, and under Catholicism to be subjected to the law of ceremonies and dignities, and under Calvinism to the law of creeds and dogmas. The Christianity of the Church is

still Law, not Love.—The printing of the word *Spirit* with a capital is an error, because it is intended to carry, and does carry, the impression, that by it is meant the Holy Spirit, or the third person of the Trinity; whereas there is nothing throughout the whole chapter to justify such an idea. The spirit here spoken of is the spirit of man, the soul, the law of the mind, chap. vii. 23, the higher moral and spiritual nature. The phrase in this verse would better read, *the law of spiritual life*, &c.

3. Positive good is the only remedy for positive evil, as the only antidote to darkness is light. The power of sin must be met by an answering power, and that power is provided in the Gospel. The passions are rampant and the appetites eager; then the moral forces must be equally decided and energetic. The defect of the Law was that its form was, Thou shalt *not*,—a system of restraint, a curb put upon the lower man; but the glory of Christianity is, that it says, Thou shalt, — thou shalt love, believe, hope, obey,—and is thus a system of excitement and culture to all the noblest faculties of human nature, as well as a restraint on the lower desires. The Law rather stirred up the opposition of the propensities, than spoke to the depths of the soul. The very air of a prohibitory command kindles the embers of sleeping desire, as the ancients wrote; Seneca, "that parricides began with the law"; and Horace, "that the human race, bold to perpetrate anything, rush through forbidden evil"; and Ovid, "that we strive for what is denied, and always desire what is refused." King Solomon spoke to like effect when he said, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." Neander rejects the notion that the

the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh : that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk <sup>4</sup> not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the <sup>5</sup> flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the

meaning of this verse is that "Christ bore for men the punishment attached to sin by the Law," but interprets this and the next verse thus: "That what was impossible to the Law, what it was unable to effect owing to the predominant sinfulness in human nature, was accomplished by God when he sent his Son into the world in that human nature which had hitherto been under the dominion of sin, and when he condemned sin, that is, de-spooled it of its power and supremacy, and manifested its powerlessness in that human nature, over which it had before reigned, in order (ver. 4) that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in believers, as those whose lives were not governed by sinful desire, but by the spirit, the divine vital principle of the spirit that proceeded from Christ." I am happy to introduce such passages from modern orthodox writers, because they prove that the ancient bigotry is breaking up and passing away, and new views are dawning upon the human soul. The able and conclusive work by Mr. Wilson on the Concessions of Trinitarians might be matched by another equally satisfactory on the concessions of Calvinists.— *And for sin.* Because of, or on account of sin. No doubt it was on account of the existence of sin, and with a view to do it away in the world, that Christ came ; but here is nothing said or implied, as both Neander and Olshausen confess, of a vicarious sacrifice or atonement, whatever may be found elsewhere.— *Condemned sin.* Not the disciples are condemned, ver. 1, because they have left the Law and become Christians, but sin is the thing condemned. As the dis-

ciples of Jesus, they would be accepted if they were Jews, and they would not be condemned if they were Gentiles.

4. *Of the law.* I. e. the righteousness required by the Law. It appears, then, that there is no contrariety between the Law and the Gospel, because righteousness is the great desideratum in both systems ; but what the Law, appealing to less powerful motives and influences, could not accomplish, is effected by Christianity. But it is never to be forgotten that the system of Moses advocated a high moral standard of action, and that its result was, imperfect as were its motives and sanctions, viewed as an education for the race, that under his system were exhibited some of the noblest specimens of character the world has ever seen.

5. The different moral states of persons, as they pursue one or another aim in life, is described by the Apostle with a simplicity and directness that a child could understand. We take on the hue of our pursuits, chameleon-like, and if riches, fame, or pleasure be our chief interest, they assimilate to their own spirit ; or if righteousness, goodness, and usefulness be our "main chance," then we grow into their likeness. Hence it is of the greatest consequence that we should, if possible, arrange the circumstances of our lot in life, our profession, family, citizenship, neighborhood, church, friendship, and all other things, so that they will bear favorably, and not adversely, on the religious life. The Christian, like the mariner, must learn to take advantage of all the winds and waves to carry him on his true course. The

6 Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally-minded is 7 death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the

power of temptation and sin may never be entirely vanquished and annihilated, but the general progress will be certain and triumphant as the morning light.

6. This is a summary of all religion and all morality, an epitome of all human experience, history, and destiny. Paul would raise the contemplation of his readers above the narrow confines of the question between Jews and Gentiles, and show them both the higher view of life and faith, the eternal boundaries of moral being independent of all special beliefs. Whether they were children of Abraham, or "dogs of the Gentiles," they would be bound by those original and eternal necessities of our moral being, by which vice is misery and ruin, and virtue life and peace. As it respected Christianity, they would be no better if they were Jews, and they would be no worse if they were Gentiles. Spiritual considerations towered heaven-high above all nationalities and religious parties.

7. This verse contains a statement, which is self-evident, and inevitable by the very terms in which the proposition is couched. The carnal, worldly mind is not in harmony with God, from the very fact that it is carnal and worldly. James iv. 4. These qualities erect a barrier mountain-high against the Divine Spirit and peace. While the world is *in*, God must be *out*, of the heart. The law in spiritual things is as decisive as in material ones, no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Gal. vi. 8. This is one thing, but it is another and more laborious attempt, to prove from this verse the total sin-

fulness of human nature. For, observe, it is not the *mind* that is pronounced enmity against God, but the *carnal* mind, that which minds the things of flesh and sense supremely, that which is obedient to the law of the members, chap. vii. 23. The Apostle constantly recognizes an interior I, and core of the spiritual being, that always remonstrates against being made the tool and slave of the body, and living to fulfil its low purposes. Indeed if the natural state of the human being in his healthy and normal exercise were hostility to God, why does his conscience remonstrate, why does reason resist, and why does the heart loathe, a sinful life? In that case peace and satisfaction, instead of remorse and bitterness, would follow wrong-doing, because such a course would square with the native bent of the powers. We are told on high authority, that "he that sinneth wrongeth his own soul"; but how can he do that, if it is already full of corruption and sin? Mankind are doubtless bad enough, and their spiritual condition is dark and gloomy enough, but we need not color more highly than the reality, or think to honor Christ and Christianity by making the pit out of which they draw the sinner deeper than it is in truth. Else we incur the hazard of dishonoring the creation and providence of God, in proportion as we glorify the speciality of revelation.

8. *That are in the flesh*, i. e. in the fleshly, sensual mind; for they disobey the first grand ordinance of human nature, which requires that the spirit should govern the body, not the body the spirit. Their conduct cannot be satisfactory to the Creator, because it

flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life

is a direct violation of his plan and law. Chrysostom well says, he does not affirm that the bad man cannot become a good one; but that, while he continues to be bad, he cannot possibly obey God, or please him." Fire is not so opposite to frost, nor light to darkness, nor sweet to bitter, as is right to wrong, and the spirit of vice and sensuality to the pure and benevolent law of God.

9. The distinction is here indicated between the spirit of the believer, and the spirit of God, and the spirit of Christ, and as much separate personality is ascribed to one as to another. The true Christian life implies such a permanency and uniformity of a righteous, benevolent, and holy disposition in man, that it may be said that the spirit of God and of Christ have taken up their constant abode in him. This is the sense of the word *dwell*. Therefore, in such a case the fleshly life is excluded by force of preoccupation, and the inferior propensities are held in check, not by the grinding compulsion of a law, but by the fulness and abundance of the divine life, which overflows, restrains, and sanctifies them. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Olshausen remarks, that "the possession of this spirit of Christ is naturally not to be measured according to the mere feeling (the agreeable sensation of the nearness of God, of comfort, of spiritual joy), for this is too fleeting, and the state of grace may be entirely unimpaired, even in great barrenness and dryness, — nay, in the progress of the inward life, the sweet sensations of the first young love are almost ever disappearing; but according to its real effects and fruits. If the man observes not these

in himself, and temptations at the same time increase and strengthen, then at all events he is in a suspicious and assaulted state." No creed in Christendom has so good a criterion of what really disqualifies a man from being a Christian as this little sentence of Paul: "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Not dogma, not ritual, not profession, justifies the title, but the state of the heart. For although the truth is an all-important instrument to create the right spirit, yet some men with bungling tools can achieve more work than others with all the inventions and appliances of the age. The test of the children of the light is, that they are looking towards the light, though at ever so great a distance, and that it shines upon and irradiates their faces, and cheers and guides their pathway, upward and onward through all the stages of their spiritual career.

10, 11. Various criticisms have been made upon the sense of this passage, but the true import is not very difficult to understand, nor are the different views wholly dissimilar one to another. There is a negative proposition, a positive proposition, and, finally, a promise. The negative proposition is, that the body is dead because of sin; or, in other words, by the Christian spirit the old man with his passions and desires is mortified, or put to death. The positive proposition is, that the effect upon the spirit is life, as the effect upon the body is mortification or death, and that a new man comes into being. Then the promise is, that the spirit of God, so quick and powerful that it made even the dead Christ live

11 because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors not to the 12 flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of

again, will give new vitality even to the frail body, and make it a glorious instrument of righteousness. But here, as elsewhere, there is a large indefiniteness, and penumbra or shadow of sense, surrounding the Apostle's thought. In one clause he seems to be speaking of this life, then he dilates in his conception, and, glancing from time to eternity, he comprehends both worlds in his survey. This indistinctness is not probably a blemish in considering themes so vast as those he handles in this chapter. If the intellectual effect is not so sure, the spiritual influences are more rich and suggestive from the wide horizon of his contemplation. Rom. vi. 5-7. Eph. ii. 5. Olshausen remarks: "As surely as the spirit is immaterial, yet really dwells in the material body, so surely does the Divine Spirit penetrate and unite with the human, without annulling his essence, or confounding his laws; for the human spirit is the very organ for the Divine, and that is a perverse state (sin) if he is not working in it. We have too little knowledge of the substance of the spirit to get a clear insight into such penetration of spirit by spirit; meanwhile nature offers analogies not to be rejected in the material world; for instance, the penetration of electric or magnetic streams."

In regard to the style and logic of Paul, Locke remarks in this connection: "I think there is not anywhere to be found a more pertinent, close arguer, who has his eye always on the mark he drives at. This men would find if they would study him as they

ought, with more regard to the divine authority than to hypotheses of their own, or to opinions of the season. I do not say that he is everywhere clear in his expressions to us now, but I do say he is everywhere a coherent, pertinent writer, and wherever in his commentators and interpreters any sense is given to his words that disjoints his discourse, or deviates from his argument, and looks like a wandering thought, it is easy to know whose it is, and whose the impertinence is,—his, or theirs who father it on him."

12-17. These verses may be considered in some measure as going together, and constituting a species of parenthetical clause on the spirituality and filial adoption of the true disciples of Jesus.

12, 13. As he had before argued that they were not debtors to the Law, to live after the Law, chap. vii. 4, so now he shows that they were to live, not a less strict and elevated life than the Jewish believers, but one more so, one on a higher moral plane, and connected to God by a nearer and tenderer relationship.—*Mortify*, put to death the sinful deeds and desires. To die or to live, the respective issues of two different kinds of life, are equivalent to being miserable or being happy. Sin creates a deadness of the whole man, where it is allowed free scope, and blights body, mind, and heart by its blasting power. Jesus came that "we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly." He unseals in the depths of human nature "a well

the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of 14 God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the 15 spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth 16 witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if 17 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

of water, springing up into everlasting life."

14. The true sons of God are not the children of Abraham alone, but those who have the spirit of God, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. The relationship is not by physical descent or race, but by spiritual resemblance. The connection of ideas with ver. 13 seems to be, that they shall live and not die, because by means of their spiritual likeness they are children of God, i. e. immortal like God, and not subject to dissolution.

15. The Christian believer, instead of being admitted to a less intimate relationship with God than was enjoyed by the chosen people, or being subjected by the new dispensation to a slavish fear, as was the case, necessarily, with the Jews, because they were a rude people and their faith was a rudimental one, entered into the most delightful spirit of adoption, or filiation with God, so that he could without blame or fear call God by his most endeared name of Father. Olshausen remarks, that "Abba, like Papa, can be spoken by the mouth even of the babbling child, and properly therefore characterizes genuine childlike disposition and manner." Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6. The rise and progress of true religion in the soul may be tested very much by this criterion, how much we have of the true filial and confiding love of a child towards our Heavenly Father, and how far we can, under all circumstances, even of darkness and grief and fear,

cast ourselves into his arms, and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

16, 17. He now comes to the proof that this spirit of adoption was a reality, and not a fancy, and he appeals to the inward testimony of the spirit. The disposition itself is the proof, and carries its own weight of argument with it. The voice of God in the heart cannot deceive us, but gives us persuasive evidence that we are the sons and daughters of an Almighty Parent. But an important inference follows, that, if we are the children of God, then, as in earthly relationships of a like kind, we are his heirs, and have an inheritance, in prospect, great and glorious as becomes such a testator, and one too which we share with the elder brother and oldest son of the spiritual family, our Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. i. 22; 1 John iv. 13. What delightful assurances, what comforting hopes, and what animating motives are supplied from this source to enable us both to do and to endure all the holy will of Him whose children we are! We may look up to heaven, and forward to eternity, if this conviction be planted deep and strong in our heart of hearts, without distrust or terror. For we know that here and hereafter, now and for ever, all is eventually well, all is right, all is good, all is infinitely blessed and glorious, in the universe of One so mighty, so wise, and so good. Luke xxii. 29; John xvii. 24; Rev. iii. 21.

18 together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time  
 are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be re-  
 19 vealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth

18. 2 Cor. iv. 17; Col. iii. 4. He draws encouragement from this sonship and heirship to God, to support the disciples of Jesus in their hard struggles and persecutions in the world. If they looked for honors and rewards in the present state, they were of all men most miserable; but when they included both worlds in their contemplation, they were the happiest and most enviable of mortals. Nothing they suffered here, though it were the dungeon, cross, rack, or stake, could for a moment weigh against the glory and bliss and eternal peace of heaven. Even the Jewish Rabbin caught a similar idea, when he said, "One hour's refreshment in the world to come, is better than the whole of life on this side of the grave." It is true we may exaggerate, but it is equally true that we may underrate, the happiness of heaven. For if there is any meaning in language, any reason for exultation, any truth in the yearnings of the human heart, any reliance on the visions of apostles and prophets, martyrs and confessors, any trust in the promises of Jesus, then the life of the good in the world of spirits is to possess a richness, fulness, peace, love, and spontaneous and joyous exhilaration, such as our best experiences here but very faintly represent and prophesy.

19-22. In this sublime passage, the Apostle, warmed with his subject, depicts the whole creation as yearning and agonizing and travailing in pain to achieve this glorious spiritual emancipation of the children of God. But we must beware of that prosaic and bold literalism, which has so much stood in the way of the Occidental nations understanding the Oriental Bible. For by what the Apostle

here says, we are not at liberty to suppose that he predicates either the fall of inanimate nature with the so-called fall of Adam, or the restoration of inanimate nature with the return of man to the ways of righteousness and peace. At the most, Paul but describes, as in ver. 21, the new and higher *uses* to which even the material world would be put by a Christian civilization than by savages and barbarians. But the main current of his eloquence is unquestionably after the spirit of King David in his Psalms, where the exuberance of his piety and love overflows and invests all nature with its own glorious hues, and he calls upon rocks, hills, seas, stars, and every work and every creature of God, from the worm in the sod to the angel in the sky, to unite with him in praising the Almighty, and singing his songs of gratitude and love. The longing, the Apostle would say, that man might find his way to God, is so intense, the prophecy of the manifestation of God's children is so sure, that all nature breaks forth in unison with it. It is the key-note of the universe, by which rivers flow, and stars revolve, and nations rise and fall. To this point the sum of created things is gathered, and herein all culminates and flowers, that mankind should become the rational, affectionate, and obedient children of God. In setting forth the idea, the Apostle makes use, no doubt, of the phraseology of his age and nation, by which a restoration of all things, a golden age to come, is frequently described. The lion and the lamb were to lie down together. Poisons would no more infest the earth, nor tempests sweep the sky, nor sickness and pain fasten

for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was 20  
made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who  
hath subjected *the same* in hope; because the creature itself also 21  
shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious  
liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole crea- 22

on the human body. Heaven would come down to earth, and men would be as happy as angels. But Paul touches lightly on the imagery of such an age of peace and felicity; and there is no intrinsic evidence here that he used the popular notions in any closer sense than to illustrate the splendid march of Christian regeneration and life, and consummation of all the lower ends and aims of created things in the one total and superlative object of the union of man with God. Tholuck sums up much wisdom in few words, when he says: "Such descriptions are neither to be interpreted altogether outwardly, nor yet altogether inwardly." It may here be mentioned, that the Jewish theologians held the tenet that "the Messiah would renew the world and purge and consecrate the place of hell itself." Said one: "Though all things were created perfect, they nevertheless became corrupt when the first man sinned, nor will they return to their right condition until the Messiah cometh, because there are six things which shall return to their primeval state,—the beauty of man, his life, the length of his stature, the fruits of the earth, the fruits of the trees, and the lights of heaven." In illustration of the passage, Luther is also quoted as saying: "God will not only make the earth, but also the heavens, far fairer than they now are. The present world is his working clothes; hereafter he will put on an Easter and Whitsunday suit."

19. *Earnest expectation of the creature.* Even the dumb and voiceless

*creation*—for so should *creature* be rendered—longs to witness the visible glory of a new spiritual state of mankind.

20. For the external world has been made subject to the abuse of man on account of his ignorance and his wickedness, not as it were by its own choice, but by the will of its Lord and Master, who has done it in anticipation of that "good time coming," when man would no more lay a wasteful or sacrilegious or perverting hand upon plant, mineral, element, or animal.

21. So that the recovery of man's spiritual nature shall be matched by a like redemption of the natural world from its neglect or abuse, and its consecration to the highest purposes of human existence, and the fulfilment of the Divine plan.

22. All nature has undergone, as it were, the pains of parturition, in expectation of that brighter and happier era of human improvement and spiritual regeneration; for she has felt herself wronged and perverted from her true end by the lusts and passions of an ignorant and wicked race. Her fair fields have been dyed with human blood; her benevolent forces have been turned into instruments of fratricide; her seas have been the pathway of the slave-ship, robbery, and piracy; her richest productions have been tortured into the means of gluttony and intemperance, and her fair domains and possessions have been the prizes of a grasping covetousness and a proud ambition. The creation is delivered to man to re-make and embellish, not to mar



23 tion groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not  
 only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit,  
 even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adop-  
 24 tion, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by  
 hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth,  
 25 why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not,  
 26 *then* do we with patience wait for *it*. Likewise the spirit also  
 helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for  
 as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with  
 27 groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the

and deform. He is to be a co-worker with God in reducing the wildness of rude elements and coarse materials to science and art, and making a garden, a farm, a ship, a home, a city, where before were a forest, and the wild beasts, and the unvisited sea.

23. This earnest longing is especially shared by those who have tasted the incipient blessings of the Christian life, and who know to what higher good, even a complete emancipation of the soul and an entire consecration of the bodily powers, the Gospel leads the way. Nothing can cause so much disquiet to the true follower of Jesus, as the hinderances to the full and harmonious development of his Christian character, and the stumbling-blocks to a true and noble life. Loss and pain and grief are sore evils, but they cannot compare in poignancy of suffering with a restless heart, or a wounded conscience, or a corrosive temper, or a worldly ambition, or a sensual desire, or anything else which impairs or depresses the inward life. 2 Cor. v. 2, 4; 1 John iii. 2.

24, 25. *Saved by hope*; or, in hope. Our salvation thus far is rather a matter of hope than of reality. We hope we are saved. Neander remarks, that, "from the relation of the Christian life of faith and love to a creation that is to be perfectly developed and completed only in the

future state, it follows that *faith* and *love* cannot subsist without *hope*."

"The faith that operates by love could not persist in the efforts which so many obstacles oppose, in conflict with the inward and outward world, if the prospect were not granted of certainly attaining its end. Hence *perseverance* in the work and conflict of faith is the practical side of hope." — *With patience*; or, perseverance. Patience is a passive virtue, perseverance is an active one.

26, 27. The spirit here spoken of cannot be the Spirit of God, because he is represented as knowing what its mind is, which it would be unnecessary to remark if he were that identical spirit itself. But the Apostle personifies the indwelling spirit of the Christian life and character, as he had before sin, chap. vii. 17, which worked like a distinct power in himself. In enumerating, therefore, the offsets to the trials and persecutions which the Christians were exposed to, he mentions this aid of the spirit of spirit, of the character, the historic unity and continuity of soul, which helps make many things clear. If we have infirmities, we also have aids; an immortal nature struggles, and aspires, and dilates within us. We cannot by a distinct act of volition pray as we ought, but this instinctive and spontaneous spirit, soul of our soul, intercedes for us with inarticu-

hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. And we 28 know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. For 29 whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many

late sighs, and instructs us how to pray. — *Knoweth what is the mind of the spirit.* Whitwell translates it, "For he who searcheth the heart knoweth what the purpose of the spirit is, that it is conformable to his will in its requests for Christians." The All-seeing One recognizes the purity of motive of the spirit in its spontaneous supplications and inward intercessions. There are two steps, therefore, in these verses; first, the natural uplifting of the spirit to God in prayer and aspiration, not always spoken; and secondly, there is the consciousness that God knows all, and approves of this movement of the human heart toward himself. A Mahometan quoted by Tholuck has written:—

"Each *Lord, appear!* thy lips pronounce, contains my *Here am I!*  
A special messenger I send beneath thine every sigh.  
Thy love is but a girdle of the love I bear to thee;  
And sleeping in thy *Come, O Lord!* there lies *Here, son!* from me."

— *Because he, or it, the spirit, maketh intercession.*

28. To confirm still further their independence of the Law, and to relieve their minds of all anxieties they might have respecting the security of their salvation, he now declares that they were embraced in the purpose and plan of God, and might therefore dismiss all their fears.— *To them that love God,* whether Jews or Gentiles. A spiritual qualification, and not a national one, was all that was necessary to secure this great boon. The very purpose of God was

to save such as loved and obeyed him, and were thus his called, chosen, elect ones. To the good, the whole universe has been so exquisitely made and balanced and inspired, as to do only good in the long run, and never final evil. To bring about this result, reflect likewise how well the soul itself must be attuned in all its powers, and how admirable and intentional its adaptation must be to the creation in which it dwells and is educated! The suggestion here made was full of consolation to the persecuted Christian, that pain and persecution and death could not really and intrinsically harm him, so long as he kept up the union of love with God, and observed his commandments of which that love was the fulfilling. This is a sufficient key to unlock the dark problem of human destiny; for if we place ourselves at the right point, at the focus of love, then we can look all its confusion into order, and all its evil into good, for much of evil is only good in the process of development. So ingeniously and so benevolently have all things been made, that nothing can permanently hurt us except we ourselves. What a motive is here supplied to knowledge, obedience, diligence, faith, and love!

29, 30. The simple thought of these formidable verses is, that they need not fear exclusion from the pale of God's mercy if they transcended the Law, for it was his very purpose, his choice, his election, his decree, that this very thing should take place, that Christianity should

30 brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he  
 31 justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these  
 32 things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not

supersede Judaism, and that they, whom he was addressing in his Epistles, should be disciples of Jesus, and not of Moses. To make the idea more impressive, he enlarges it, and welds together a long chain of words, — *foreknow, predestinate, called, justified, glorified*, — to bind their salvation strong, and show them that they could not be lost out of so comprehensive a plan, which extended to every particular of their calling, and of their character as Christians. Norton translates thus: "For those whom God foreknew, he predestined should be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom he predestined, he summoned; and whom he summoned, he made righteous; and whom he made righteous, he glorified." God is spoken of as having already glorified the disciples of Christ, because it is certain that he will do it. He sent his Son, but it was not to stand alone in the heavenly places of virtue and goodness and spiritual power; many brethren like him, more or less, were also to be gathered around him, lovely forms of character, fair and holy and sublime images of the great Archetype, — apostles, prophets, martyrs, confessors, patriots, philanthropists, the Christ-like and the God-like. As to the question of Election or Predestination as a theological doctrine, it will be more fully discussed in the next chapter, much of which is occupied with its considerations and bearings. Suffice it to say here, that this passage was laid down by no means as a doctrine of exclusion, —

not how many were rejected, but as a doctrine of comfort and encouragement, — how many were called and purposed to be Christians, and had, as it were, the Divine guaranty that they should not fail of eventual salvation. God had given them the glorious distinction, independently of national lines, to bear the image of his Son, and to grow into his perfection and love. Eph. i. 4-6.

31, 32. *Then.* If this be so, what shall we say? What limit shall we assign to the security and happiness of the Christian? With the Almighty on our side, we need fear no enemy, for all hostility is powerless against his shield of protection. It was, perhaps, from some passages like the conclusion of this chapter, that Longinus judged Paul worthy of a place among the greatest orators of antiquity. In giving us his Son, we have the strongest pledge and bond which could possibly be given by God to insure to us his love, for in that unspeakable gift all things were included and guaranteed. The subjective and personal realization of the goodness of the Creator is not sufficient at all times, ver. 26, 27, but we require, and in Jesus we possess, an objective and eternal expression and word of the love of God, stronger than any language, — a great and manifest and most significant fact, all over vocal and articulate, and jubilant of the love of God for his children. Too much stress can hardly be laid on the life and death of Jesus; but it is evident, here as well as elsewhere, that the chief purpose they fulfil is to lead us on and up to that

with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing <sup>33</sup> to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* <sup>34</sup> he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? <sup>35</sup> *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed <sup>36</sup> all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him <sup>37</sup>

inconceivable and majestic benignity of the Father. 1 John iv. 9, 10.

33, 34. That the purpose of the Apostle is one of vindication and defence, not of indoctrination, as before intimated, is apparent here, where he reiterates the calling and justification of God and the intercession of Christ, as proofs that the disciples were safe. There remain, therefore, none to accuse or to condemn, for the only two beings who have any rightful authority to do it are God and Christ. God would not do it, for he is himself the Justifier; and Christ would not do it, for he is the Intercessor. 1 John ii. 1. If anything seems assured in the Scriptures, it is the distinct personality of Christ as separate from God, as one being is separate from another; and this is here represented as extending to the future world, as well as the present state.

35-39. The Apostle here rises into a strain of the loftiest and most impassioned eloquence, in describing the certainty of the Christian's hope, and the immortality of the love of God to him, as manifested by Jesus Christ. He presents the thought first in an interrogative form,—Who shall separate us? and then in a positive form,—Nothing shall separate us from this great fountain of life and happiness.—*The love of Christ*, i. e. the love which Christ had for his disciples, not the love which his disciples had for

him. He could not have spoken either with that ecstasy or that assurance of the feeble and fluctuating sentiments of men that he could of the overflowing mercies of God, and the eternal love of Jesus. It must be a coal from the altar of heaven, not a spark of human striking, that could kindle and that could justify so splendid a flame of enthusiasm.—*Shall tribulation, or distress, &c.* The items of trial here enumerated were the ones to which the Christians of that day were especially exposed. But they were bound to live through them all, and retain their hold of the great treasure which had been vouchsafed to them in this heavenly love and compassion of Jesus and of the Father.—*As it is written.* Ps. xlv. 22. The old times were made good, and, as in the days of Jewish persecution and slaughter, so now the faithful few were obliged to face danger and death. It was not many years after this was written, that Paul himself suffered martyrdom at Rome under Nero, the Emperor, by being beheaded, according to the most reliable traditions, and thus encountered the fate which he had long foreseen was in store for him.

37. *More than conquerors.* So far from being defeated by these adversities and trials, they only call forth a more unflinching courage, and win for us a greater victory. Through

38 that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor 39 things to come, 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.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Divine Sovereignty in the Rejection of the Jews and the Choice of the Gentiles defended on Historical Inferences from the Old Testament.*

I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me

this love of Him who died for us, we die for Him, and repay martyrdom with martyrdom, and cross with cross.

38, 39. Phil. i. 6; 1 Tim. i. 12. But he was not content to repudiate the suspicion that any of the peculiar trials and sorrows of the Christian world at that time could shake their hold upon this heavenly love; he challenges the whole creation to deprive them of the boon. He darts from earth to heaven, from time to eternity, from life to death, and calls upon worlds above worlds, and creations beyond creations, to produce any cause potent enough to tear away this eternal pillar of faith and hope, the love of God in Jesus Christ towards mankind. He appealed to mighty agents; he rose to angels and archangels; he dared the visible and invisible; for nothing could be so strong, so living, so lasting, so prevalent and victorious, as this Eternal Mercy. We believe it, we know it. All things declare it in heaven and earth; and two thousand years of Christianity since these words were written have rolled up an ever-accumulating amount of testimony to their truth, have multiplied million-fold their witnesses, and peopled this world and the world to come with the examples of their beauty and power. What Paul prophesied history has fulfilled; and prophecy and history now clasp hands for a yet

more glorious future. The spirit of this passage gives assurance of the final triumph of the Gospel in this world, and it inspires a calm and a strong assurance that all will eventually be won to this omnipotent love in the world to come.

A poor, simple man once said: "I have lost all my property; it is all gone. I have lost all my relations; my last son is dead. I have lost my hearing and my eyesight. I am all alone, old and poor; but it all makes no difference. Christ never grows old, Christ never is poor, Christ never dies, and Christ never will forsake me."\*

## CHAPTER IX.

This is one of the hardest passages to interpret probably in the whole Scriptures; for the subject treated of is the very purpose and will of God in his government, providence, and grace in that dark and debatable region where human freedom borders upon the Divine decrees. Man proposes, God disposes. God's kingdom ruleth over all, but man has a kingdom within a kingdom. Man wills, acts, thinks, chooses, but the very faculties by which he performs all these decisive acts were originated, planned, decreed, moulded, and colored by the Supreme Power. All this world is made by the Blessed

\* Mrs. Stowe.

witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and con- 2

God, and in no part of it has any evil Demiurgus had a finger. How, then, shall we account for evil and sin? Why are we to be blamed for the action of faculties and elements which we had no option in bringing into existence, or shaping into form and destiny? Or, as the Apostle puts it in the mouth of an objector, Why doth he yet find fault? Is not God himself the author of sin? How can man be finite and be at the same time responsible?

These and other wild speculations like them may not be capable of being refuted by anything like a demonstrative argument, but they are capable of a fair moral answer, and of being sufficiently relieved and explained for all the practical purposes of cordial duty and of entire confidence in the goodness and wisdom of the Supreme Being.

The sovereignty of God is a great and glorious truth. To decree all things is of the very nature of God, who would not be God if he did not originate and determine all things, endow all beings with their peculiar nature, arrange for them their abode and their culture, and mark out for them their general course and the boundaries of their being. The decrees of God, therefore, are not an abuse, but a legitimate and necessary use of infinite power as it respects God; and they are not a terror, but a mercy, as it respects man, for they are his only shield against blank night, and chaos, and annihilation. The single anxious question is, whether these decrees are just or unjust, benevolent or cruel, or indifferent? Is the election of God partial or impartial, has he or has he not respect of persons, or are his decrees capricious, and does he treat his creatures at random?

The point being settled, then, that

God, to be God, must be a Determiner and a Decreeer of all things in general, we come to this second stage of the inquiry: Whether the character of his decrees, so far as we know them, is such as comports with his justice, honor, and benevolence. The sources of our information are Life, Consciousness, Observation, History, and Scripture. Now all these witnesses convey to an attentive and candid mind a broad and firm impression of the righteousness and benignity of the Infinite Disposer, as generally viewed in the present world. The numerous Scripture declarations of the goodness and truth of God are not merely the ejaculations of pious and trusting hearts, but the truest and most profound utterances of the reality of things; a just vindication of the ways of God to man, when they have been subjected to the most piercing intellectual and moral examination. There is, in fact, only just that amount of darkness resting upon the subject of the moral government of God which we ought to expect from its infinite and eternal character, and from our very limited apprehension of its nature and operations. This certainly could not be the universe of the Almighty, if our puny faculties, born yesterday, could grasp with success its vast problems, and explain the uses of all things. We find it a somewhat difficult task to comprehend a new pattern of the steam-engine, or to trace all the parts and bearings of a watch or a clock. Shall we not, puzzled with things finite, learn to reverence and wait, rather than to hastily prejudge, or unfilially complain, as it regards the boundless questions of a system of things whose Maker is God, whose space is Infinity, whose duration is Eternity, and whose agents and subjects are innumerable creatures of

a tinal sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were

life and progress, from the worm to the seraph?

Thus comprehensively viewed, we find not one word in this ninth chapter of Romans, respecting the Divine sovereignty and decrees, that is not taught us in all our human life, and that is not perfectly harmonious with the absolute eternal perfection of God, and with his just and benevolent dealing with his finite and dependent creatures. We rise from the perusal of Paul's reasoning in this chapter, not only with Bossuet's famous ejaculation, "God is great!" but with the more peculiarly Christian conclusion, "God is good!"

As if aware that he might by his reasoning in the last chapter have given offence to his Jewish brethren, and desirous to win them to a candid judgment of his reasoning, he turns to them with the warmest and most patriotic devotion, and commemorates the great glories of the Hebrew commonwealth. But his regard for their past renown as the people of God did not blind his eyes to their approaching fate, of which he warns them now and which he proceeds to show by an historical argument was in harmony with the past dealings of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the history of Moses and Pharaoh, and the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah. Out of the mouth of their own history, therefore, he adduces the arguments that would condemn them and justify God in his rejection of Israel, and his adoption of the Gentiles in the new Church of Christ. It was a special argument to the Jews, *argumentum ad hominem*, and could be but imperfectly understood except by that people; but the principles which he here discusses are applicable to all cases, and to every age of the world.

Three additional preliminary re-

marks are all that are required. One is, that it is primarily an election to external privileges and advantages which is here discussed, and only secondarily and as resulting therefrom by the use or abuse of said privileges and advantages, that the moral and spiritual state and character come within the reach of the predestinating agency of God. Jacob was chosen and Esau rejected, but Esau seems to have been quite as good a man as Jacob, perhaps better. Many Jews, although of the privileged race, were notoriously bad; while many of the Gentiles, though less favored in external advantages, attained to a superior spiritual life.

The next remark is, that the election here spoken of is by no means a final decision of the everlasting destiny of the parties concerned. There is not a word, or a syllable, intimating that the election of Jacob instead of Esau, insured the eternal salvation of one, or prejudiced the eternal salvation of the other. On the contrary, to them who received most would the demand be made for most in return. The condition of the Jews, who so largely rejected Christ, and of the Gentiles, who so often accepted him, showed that, even as respected their spiritual state here, the one by not being of the elect was not cut off from Gospel privileges, nor the other necessarily included in its blessings; then how much less likely it was, that it sealed their eternal fate!

The third remark is, that the election spoken of in this chapter is of a piece with the whole system of Divine Providence and human life. Election to religion is like election to art, to business, to literature, to clime, and class, and color, and the period of the world, and state of society, in which each individual is born. He who decreed that Moses should be the leader

accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to

of the children of Israel, and Pharaoh king of Egypt, decreed that Raphael should be a great painter, and Goethe a poet, and Channing a divine. The justification, therefore, of the variety of gifts, talents, and positions in human life, and its consistency with a just and benevolent Providence, are based on the same ground as the selection of the Jewish or the Christian Church out of the millions of mankind. The only proviso in either case that is necessary as a  *caveat*  against injustice, is that temporary conditions and privileges shall not be decisive of eternal consequences.

1-5. These verses contain a species of deprecatory introduction to an argument, in which Jewish history itself would be employed to vindicate the choice of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, as it respected the Christian Church.

1. *In Christ*, as a Christian. — *Conscience*, as a conscientious Christian. — *Holy Ghost*, as a conscientious and inspired Christian. The Apostle, as usual, does not directly state, in so many words, the point about which he is so deeply agitated, but leaves it to be inferred that it is the condition of his countrymen the Jews, as it regards their attitude towards the Christian Church.

2. Norton translates this verse, "that I have great grief and continual pain in my heart," &c. 2 Cor. xii. 15. "So fervent a brotherly love, which affectionately embraced in the Spirit, as fellow-members, all who are engrafted into Christ, which, eager to unite the whole globe into one Church of the Saviour, found not space enough for the vehemence of its operation in all the region from Jerusalem to Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19-23, could not but glow to incorporate into the Lord's Church the peculiar people which in its maternal

bosom had borne the germ of that Church, and brought it forth to the world."

3. *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, &c.* There are two points in doubt among the commentators; one is what was the nature of the Apostle's wish, and the other, whether it was proper for him to make the wish he did. As to the first, there can be but little doubt that he used, and intended to use, a very strong expression, signifying his willingness to do or suffer any thing right and reasonable for the sake of recovering his brethren from their unbelief. Lardner quotes and approves Photius as remarking, that the Apostle does not say, "I wish," but "I could wish, if it were fit, if it were lawful, and if my fall and misery might be beneficial to others," &c. The word here rendered *accursed* is a noun in the Greek, meaning an offering, or gift to the gods, such as it was customary to suspend in the heathen temples; and hence the secondary meanings of *devoted*, *consecrated*, or *given over to death*, or *accursed*, gradually going so far as to mean almost the opposite to the first sense. Acts xxiii. 14; 1 Cor. xii. 3; xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, 9. Margin reads, "separated." He had just spoken, in chap. viii. 38, 39, of what had no power to separate him from the love of God, death, life, height, depth, &c.; but he now seems to say, that if anything could do such an almost impossible thing, it would be his desire by such a perdition to draw the Jews to the feet of Jesus. Similar expressions are elsewhere found, as Moses says with deep feeling, Exod. xxxii. 32: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Elsewhere Christ himself is represented as having been made



4 the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption,

“a curse for us,” Gal. iii. 13; and his disciples are taught to be willing to “lay down their lives” for their brethren, 1 John iii. 16. It is simply, therefore, to be viewed as a strong expression of Paul’s willingness to suffer anything and everything to win his brethren to Christianity. He did not stop to measure terms, he took the strongest word he could find, *accursed*, without intending probably to say, however, dogmatically and literally, as some critics would force him to do, that he was willing to be condemned eternally himself, in order to save the Jews. For he was not talking law or mathematics, but pouring out a stream of glowing and impassioned thought. It was not a supposable case, that his condemnation would work such an advantage to his brethren. He makes the expression, because in that way he could best describe how much he longed to accomplish their conversion, and how dear they were to his heart. The Arabians are quoted as using strong language of affection for a friend, “Let my soul be a ransom for thee,” and in the Talmuds of the Jews is a like expression. As it regards the propriety of his wish, it is justified by his intense and overflowing love. As Fénelon remarks, “He feels everything with an infinite purity and quickness; he bears in his heart all the churches; the whole universe is too narrow for this heart; he rejoices; he is afflicted; he is angry; he is moved with tenderness; his heart is as if the seat of all the strongest passions. He humbles himself; he magnifies himself; he has the authority of a father, and the tenderness of a mother; he loves with a jealous love; he wishes to be anathema for his children.”

4, 5. Norton translates as follows: “Who are Israelites, whose was the

glory of being adopted as sons, whose were the covenants, and the law, and the service of the temple, and the promises, and from among whom the Messiah was to be born; he who was over all, being God blessed for ever. Amen.” The Apostle enumerates the glorious distinctions of the Jewish people; they were the sons of Israel, and the children of God; the glory of the Shekinah had stood over their temple; 1 Sam. iv. 21; the earlier and later covenants, the Law, the temple-service, and the promises, then the glory of such an ancestry, and more than all, the birth of the Messiah, were all theirs. He then concludes with a doxology, or an ascription of praise to God, as if moved to gratitude while recounting all these favors of the Heavenly Benefactor.

The last clause is very generally adduced by the orthodox commentators, as conclusive proof that Christ was God over all, blessed for ever. But the following reasons are entirely subversive of such an inference:—

1st. There is a doxology here at all events, and the Apostle was not accustomed to offer doxologies to Christ, but to his Father and our Father, and to his God and our God. Rom. i. 25; 2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Eph. i. 3.

2d. Again, Paul was too good a reasoner, after speaking of Christ in relation to his fleshly descent, which he had just done, ver. 5, to introduce the inconsistency of making him at the same time the eternal and uncreated God.

3d. Tischendorf and other able critics edit the sentence with a full period after *came*, and thus make the last clause an entirely independent doxology. “God, who is over all, be blessed for ever. Amen.”

4th. Nothing could have been more *mal apropos* to the Apostle’s purpose of convincing the Jews of the truth

and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; whose *are* the fathers, and of 5 whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath 6 taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all chil- 7 dren: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which 8 are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this *is* 9 the word of promise: At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived 10

of the Gospel, than to declare that Jesus, who was crucified on the cross of Calvary, was the Eternal God, who was over all things, blessed for ever. Even if that doctrine had been true, he was too good a logician not to seize a more favorable moment to announce it. He had already a most difficult task on his hands, to which he devotes his whole strength, and he would not have needlessly complicated the embarrassment of his position by asserting to the Jews that Christ was very God.

5th. A pretty conclusive argument against the use now extracted by Trinitarians from this clause is the fact, that, in the Arian controversy about the Trinity, this text was not adduced in its support. This fact clearly indicates the earlier and purer mind of the Church on the subject, when Platonism and Orientalism had not yet entirely overgrown the fair fabric of Christianity.

6, 7. It would be the ready objection of the Jews to Paul's doctrine, that, if the Gentiles were admitted into the Christian Church on the same footing as the Jews, then the promise of God had failed. He replies, By no means; for Israelites are not all children of Abraham, nor are all the children of Abraham Israelites. God is adopting no new and unheard

of principle, but one as old as the earliest times. The selection he made of Isaac and his seed out of all the children of Abraham, is similar to his establishment of the Christian Church now, independently of the limits of Jews or Gentiles. The emphatic word is Isaac. Not the whole family of even the patriarch Abraham were included in the promise, but only Isaac and his line. So, because they were Jews, it did not follow that all would become Christians and inherit the fullest promises of God. Gen. xxi. 12; John viii. 37-39.

8, 9. *That is*, or that is equivalent to saying. Gal. iv. 23, 28. Fleshly descent did not avail even in the most memorable instance, in which, if ever, it might be pleaded, that of the great father of the faithful. But only the children of the promise were included in the census of election.—*Sarah*. This word is emphatic. Gen. xviii. 10. She was the selected woman whose posterity were to lead the religious movements of the ages.

10-13. Gen. xxv. 21, 23. In order to make out an even more notable case of temporal adoption and rejection, he cites the instance of the very children of the favored Isaac and grandchildren of the favored Sarah,—children, too, of one parentage, of Isaac and Rebecca, and not of more,

11 by one, *even* by our father Isaac, (for *the children* being not yet  
 born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God  
 according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that  
 12 calleth,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.  
 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.  
 14 What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God  
 15 forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will  
 have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have  
 16 compassion. So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that  
 17 runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith  
 unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up,

as in the case of the children of Abraham and his wives; one child, Jacob, was taken, and the other, Esau, was left. It certainly was not moral character that decided the election, for it took place before the children were born or had made any choice of either good or evil. So that the plan of Divine selection was illustrated, and it was seen that the will of God, not the works of man, was the determining cause.—*Jacob have I loved*, &c. A Hebraism; as much as to say, I have preferred Jacob to Esau, the younger instead of the elder, contrary to the usual law of primogeniture. Not on account of moral or spiritual character specially, for in many respects Esau was superior to Jacob; but “even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” But all these cases were only illustrations of temporal election to privileges, and they did not necessitate any final injustice or eternal decision of salvation or condemnation. There is no injustice done to an Indian because he is not made an Englishman, nor to me because I was not created a Milton. I have reason to rejoice and be thankful that I was created at all, nor stand at bay on the terms of my position, higher or lower, on the scale of creation; else I might object that I was not made an angel instead of a man,

or a god instead of an angel. The spirit of criticism and complaint, once let loose, would finally be contented with nothing short of infinitude and perfection.

14–16. Ex. xxxiii. 19. But the objector may inquire, whether such a course is compatible on the part of God with his infinite perfection. Paul makes an answer to the Jews especially by quoting their revered lawgiver, whose words always had the greatest weight with them. This principle of selection was early promulgated by the words of God to Moses. God is not therefore unjust in rejecting the Jews and admitting the Gentiles to the new kingdom; for he declared long ago to Moses, your leader, that he should do precisely the thing you are now complaining of, and that he was under no restrictions, and should raise up and ordain to new and greater privileges, and the moral and spiritual results flowing therefrom such as he chose in his righteous wisdom. Ps. cxxi. 1 contains, as has been observed, a good comment on ver. 16.

17, 18. The general testimony to Moses, ver. 15, is heightened by the memorable historical example of the chief enemy of the Israelites. There was a fearful suggestion to the chosen people in citing Pharaoh, as if to say,

that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy 18 on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

they had respectively changed places, and, instead of being the favored ones of God as then, they were now in the station of the rebellious king, and the despised Gentiles were rising to their position of privilege. But throughout this whole remarkable chapter, though the point of the Apostle is to prove by historical cases that the purpose of God stood not in what man did, but in what he willed, there yet is an undertone of good works admitted, so to speak, enough to prove that God has respect to the characters of his children, if he have not to their persons, at least in their final destiny. Pharaoh became a well-known instance of the retribution of the Divine government for his cruelty and his injustice. Ex. ix. 16. Tholuck says: "Stern Calvinists, such as Beza, Peter Martyr, Paræus, and Gomar, give the Apostle's sentiments the following sense: I have created thee, O Pharaoh, to make of thee a vessel of wrath, by whose perdition I may display my omnipotence. Were it possible for God thus to speak to man, then alas for us! What are we but dwarfs, that must be content to be formed by the hand of an unconquerable Cyclops, and broken into pieces again, as toys, for his amusement. The points which the expositors and doctrinalists of this school have overlooked is, that we must never suppose God to act except in complete harmony with himself, and consequently with the whole of his attributes. In the doctrine of absolute decrees, however, justice would act and determine without wisdom and without love." Query, whether even justice were not violated in such a government as the one represented above by Beza and others, quite as much as wisdom and love.—

*All the earth.* The story of Pharaoh's overthrow was known to Greek, Latin, Arabian, and Christian writers, besides its proclamation wherever the Jews carried their history abroad.—*And whom he will he hardeneth.* I. e. God shows to one greater, and to another less compassion. He treats Moses with comparative mercy, and Pharaoh with comparative harshness. So some would paraphrase it. 2 Sam. xxii. 26, 27; Ps. xviii. 2-6. The sense is not active, but passive. God may be said to harden the wicked, because he may allow them to harden themselves, and they may even turn the instruments of his mercy into means of still greater depravity, just as the miracles of Moses only seemed to make Pharaoh still more perverse; though it could only be said in a strong, anthropomorphic sense, that God used such means to effect that end. Neander well remarks: "When Paul says, God hardeneth whom he will, the freedom of the Divine will in reference to the Divine punishment is maintained against the delusion of the Jews, that their nation could not be an object of the Divine displeasure. But that this punishment should be conditional, depending on the criminality of man as a free agent, is by no means excluded, but rather implied in the idea of *hardening*." That God does not literally harden any human heart, or tempt any man to sin, any more than he is tempted himself, is too obvious to require to be stated. James i. 13, 14. But, from a misunderstanding of the Apostle's writings, very erroneous ideas respecting the free agency and responsibilities of man, and the character and purposes of God, have been advocated in the Christian Church, and have been

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For  
 20 who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that  
 repliest against God. Shall the thing formed say to him that  
 21 formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter  
 power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto  
 22 honor, and another unto dishonor? *What* if God, willing to show  
*his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-  
 23 suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he  
 might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy,

stamped with the alleged sanction of the Apostle. His zeal and bold figurative mind have supplied just those terms, which, being understood literally, furnish an ostensible support to the Augustinian and Calvinistic theology. But when justly interpreted, they encourage no such views, either of the total helplessness and depravity of man, or of the election by God of some to eternal life, and of others to eternal woe, before they were born. If any sentiments or doctrines are clear, and habitually insisted on, both first and last, by St. Paul, they are, that every man has imperative duties to perform of faith, love, and obedience; and that God has cast off none beyond the pale of his mercy, but holds open the door of mercy to all, and that no fatal decree bars the progress of any soul to life, liberty, and heaven; that, on the contrary, he sent his Son into the world, not to pass sentence of condemnation upon it, but that the world through him might be saved.

19 - 21. Isa. xlv. 9; Jer. ii. 29. To this doctrine of Divine sovereignty objection might be made that it took away human responsibility, and that God was unreasonable to condemn his children when he had made and ordained them as he had. Palfrey has explained it thus: You cannot see the reasons of God for forming mankind after the present order, not, as some erroneously suppose, that he

has no reasons, but acts capriciously, but that you could not understand those reasons. The potter has reasons for making one vessel to honor and another to dishonor; but the clay cannot know his reasons. The object of Paul is evidently to silence that curious and speculative inquiry, that is disposed to take nothing for granted, but endeavors to pry into all the secrets of the universe, and will not bow in faith and hope, and wait for the coming of that better day when the mysteries of life will be cleared up for ever, and we shall know even as we are known. It was not, Paul would teach, in the line of this captious, querulous inquiry, that anything good could be reached, but in the other direction of faith, of filial obedience and love. In expostulating with God man would be in as absurd a position as the vessel in holding a controversy with the potter.

22 - 24. Continuing the figure of the clay and the potter, he makes the supposition, which, of course, was only a supposition, and could not be a truth, that God was willing to sacrifice his creatures in order to manifest his power and glory. But that, if that were the case, he had certainly showed great compassion towards them at the last; for he had brought these vessels of wrath, as the Jews were inclined to call the Gentiles, into the new kingdom; for it was not of the chosen vessels of the Jews

which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath 24 called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith 25 also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall 26 come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living

only that the Christian Church was formed exclusively, but the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, as every predestinarian Jew contended, were also admitted. The Jews were to beware, lest, having been so long vessels of mercy, they should now find their position reversed, and they should become vessels of wrath, and the Gentiles vessels of mercy in their place.—*Endured with much long-suffering*, &c. Olshausen truly remarks, that he is disposed to believe that “we must assume that the Apostle intended by this method to signify the different relation in which God stands to the good and the evil, since he employs such different terms for the one from what he does for the other.” (In one, it is vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,—i. e. by themselves,—and in the other, it is the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.) For, Olshausen continues, “there is something not only discordant, but absolutely contradictory, in the idea that God endures with much long-suffering what he has himself prepared.” Can anything be more horrible to infer than the conclusion of Gomar, a Calvinistic critic, that, “when God will condemn a man, he first creates sin in him in order that, after he has been plunged into sin, he may be justly damned”? But to such results does the bald and dead-letter interpretation of Paul’s writings lead. His Epistles are thus an armory from which every species of weapon may be taken, offensive or defensive, and

capable of being used for evil sometimes as well as for good. It is evident, throughout this passage relating to the clay, and the potter, and the different vessels, that it is only in relation to the temporal disposal of nations that the act of the Divine sovereignty is spoken of, and not in respect to the final determination of the salvation or rejection of individuals in the eternal world. Rom. x. 12; Gal. iii. 28; Eph. i. 11, 12.

25, 26. He proceeds to show by the prophets, as he had previously done by the history of the patriarchs and of Moses their great lawgiver, that mankind were appointed to the privileges of religious truth, not on account of merit, but by the disposal of the Higher Power. Hos. i. 10; ii. 23. Tholuck agrees that “it is not the vocation of individuals into the kingdom of grace which is treated of, but that of entire national masses, and so not of an absolute, but only of such a conditional decree, on God’s part, as depends on faith, consequently upon the bias of the will.”—*Osee*, or *Hosea*, as it is printed in the better editions even of the English versions. The obsolete spelling requires to be corrected throughout the English Bible. The original application of the prophet’s words in these verses was to the children of Israel, that they would be restored from their fallen and captive condition, which they had brought upon themselves by their sins. But the secondary application by the Apostle of the words of this ancient Scripture

27 God. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number  
of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall  
28 be saved: for he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteous-  
ness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.  
29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us  
a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.  
30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not  
after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the right-

is to the call of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, particularly the former.

27, 28. He adds to the testimony of Hosea that of Isaiah x. 22, 23. — *Crieth*. As if on a great occasion, when he would arouse and warn the careless in their fancied security. — *A remnant shall be saved*. I. e. a remnant only. It was not the first time, the Apostle would say, that Israel has been decimated by the retributions that have overtaken her sins. Her own prophets bore witness to the righteous chastisements of God. — *Finish the work*. The margin reads *account*. Make a short or contracted account. — *Cut it short in righteousness, &c.* The sense of which is, that God would fulfil his fixed and righteous decree, and shortly, speedily, bring it to its consummation in the land of Judæa. By accommodation and illustration this ancient warning was applicable to the rejection of the Jews from Christian privileges on account of their unbelief. All would not come into the new kingdom and thus be saved. But it was quite improbable then that the Jews would venture into open conflict with the overmastering power of Rome, and thus surely draw down destruction upon themselves. This great catastrophe, however, happened in a few years afterwards, when Vespasian and Titus wellnigh obliterated the Jews from the face of the earth, and drove them forth to be vagabonds

and exiles in all the world, and no more to possess a country, a city, or a holy national temple of Divine worship under the sun.

29. *Esaias*. Greek for Isaiah, i. 9. The emphasis in this verse is on the word *seed*. I. e. unless a part had been preserved, the case of Israel would have been as bad as that of the corrupt cities of the plain. The winnowing process was not applied to the nation for the first time now, but was as old as the days of Isaiah. The Jew was thus answered from the books of his own faith, and taught by the very prophets in whom he so much trusted, not to be lulled into a deceitful security as to the adoption necessarily of the chosen people into the Christian kingdom, for a day of fearful reckoning and expurgation was at hand.

30, 31. The Gentiles, not having any false grounds of confidence, any mock-righteousness, came readily to the method of righteousness by faith, as proposed by the Gospel. Whereas the Jews, who had been trained by a system of Law, became so addicted to it and so bigoted in their adhesion to it, that, when the higher law-dispensation came, many of them rejected it, because they did not perceive that it was, in fact, not the destruction of their old Law, but its glorious fulfilment. It might then be said, perhaps, Was not Gentilism better than Judaism? and why was the elder dispensation given at all?

eousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the 31 law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by 32 the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock 33 of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Because Judaism, on the whole, though attended by these drawbacks, was a necessary initiation of religious truths and institutions in an idolatrous world, to prepare the way for Jesus,—a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Jesus would have made still less advancement of his kingdom in Greece than in Judæa. As it was, the first churches in Gentile cities were chiefly Jewish in their materials, and Moses and the prophets furnished the stock on which the Gospel ingrafted its scions, and commenced the growth of new spiritual fruits and the promise of a fresh spring-time of humanity. Neander acutely observes, —and I quote him because his orthodoxy is unquestioned,—that such language as is used in these verses “by no means implies that the conduct of men makes no difference in the impartation of grace, but exactly the contrary; for he thus expresses the hinderance to the reception of the Gospel by the Jews, arising from the direction of their minds, from the state of their hearts; namely, that a confidence in their own ‘willing and running’ prevented their consciousness of their need of redemption, while those classes of heathens among whom the Gospel was first propagated were more easily led to embrace it, because they indulged in no such false confidence.”

32, 33. And how did this tremendous moral lapse take place, but by the Jews pursuing a wrong course, swerving from the early spirit of their religion, which was conceived and brought forth in faith,—for

Abraham was a man of superlative faith, and in faith found his righteousness? They had gone in quest of a legal, moral righteousness, not animated by the higher sentiments and aspirations of the soul; and they therefore became dry, hard, and bigoted, and cut themselves off from the heavenly sources of spiritual life and growth. Isa. lviii. 2, 3.

“Bound on a voyage of awful length,  
Through dangers little known,  
A stranger to superior strength,  
Man vainly trusts his own.

“But oars alone can ne'er prevail  
To reach the distant coast;  
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,  
Or all the toil is lost.”

—*That stumbling-stone.* The doctrine of a crucified Messiah was in the way of the Jews accepting Christianity; for they were in expectation of a temporal kingdom, and they could not brook the idea of the humiliation of Jesus of Nazareth, born in a manger, living as a carpenter till he entered on his ministry, poor and lowly and unattended with worldly pomp, and dying at last on the ignominious cross of Calvary. Such a life, no matter how devout, lovely, or benevolent it might be, clashed at every point with their most cherished notions, and crushed their fondest hopes. Luke ii. 34; Acts iv. 11; 1 Cor. i. 23.—*As it is written.* Isa. lviii. 14; xxviii. 16. The quotation is made from both texts. Matt. xxi. 42. Probably neither of these passages originally related to the Messiah, but they had been accustomed to be so applied in the Jewish commentaries, and Paul employs them as an argu-



## CHAPTER X.

*The Righteousness of Faith in Jesus Christ required of both the Jews and the Gentiles.*

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that  
2 they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a

ment in combating their peculiar state of unbelief. They were but showing national characteristics long ago observed and described.—*Ashamed.* The margin reads *confounded.* The stone which God had placed as the corner-stone of his edifice in Mount Zion, the strength and ornament of his great temple of revelation, became to the Jews a block to stumble over and fall upon.

Well might the Apostle mourn and weep, and wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, when he reflected upon the shame and sadness of their fall, their rejection of the Prophet of prophets, who came to fulfil their whole system of religion, and the denial of the chosen Son of God by the chosen people of God. Nothing in history is more full of pathos, nothing is more mysterious in providence and revelation, and nothing throws a more discouraging aspect over the nature and condition of man, than the rejection of Jesus Christ by the Jews, the crucifixion of the Son of God in the holy city of Jerusalem. These are historical events full of saddest import, of terrible warning, and almost incredible contrasts. But a light gleams out of the darkness: "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." These are words of inexpressible comfort, and of immortal hope. Amid all the darkness and discouragement of human depravity, whether revealed in history, or in our own consciousness, we know that a human being has never existed, that seized hold of this promise as if he were grasping the horns of the altar, to whom these words have not been trebly made good, and

"good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, been given into his bosom."

## CHAPTER X.

1, 2. The present chapter is a continuation of the same general argument as that of the last one, with new reasons, and inferences from the Old Testament. As the Apostle had spoken severely, in chap. ix 31-33, of the lapse of the Jews in their rejection of the Messiah, and the cause of it in their own conceited self-righteousness, he now, by the natural reaction of alternate emotions, is led to feel deeply for their rejection of Christ, and to express his yearning for them in the most compassionate terms. He calls those whom he addresses his brethren. He says, that, so far from having any hard feelings against the Jews, his constant prayer is for their good and salvation. It was not merely saying words of conciliation, but it was the deep desire and wrestling of his heart for them that they might come into the blessedness of Christianity.—*For Israel.* Griesbach, Tischendorf, and all the best critics read "for them," meaning, however, the same, namely, the Israelites. But the manuscripts and versions require the alteration. A new edition of the Bible is much needed, in which these palpable errors shall be corrected.—*A zeal of God;* or, a zeal for God and his law. The zeal of the Jews was so strong a national characteristic, as to be proverbial. John xvi. 2, 3; Acts xxi. 20; xxii. 3; Gal. i. 14. It arose from their original constitution as a people, from the fact that they had been put in

zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteous- 4

trust with great religious privileges, and from the persecutions they had endured from other nations, who had sought to corrupt their allegiance to God. The New Testament is full of illustrations of this zeal; it led to the crucifixion of Jesus, and the persecution of his disciples. Paul was actuated by it when he was arrested by a vision from heaven on his way to Damascus. The Jewish writers record many instances of the zeal of their nation for the law, and the Apocrypha gives a narrative of martyrdoms in its behalf. — *Not according to knowledge.* But the error was, that their zeal was not intelligent, and therefore it was narrow, bigoted, obstinate, and persecuting. It was not baptized into love, gentleness, and the higher and more genial exercises of the spiritual nature. In the particular instance under consideration, if their minds had been as much enlightened as their feelings were excited, they would recognize Jesus as their Messiah, and they would perceive that he was the very completion and fulfilment of that Law, to which they gave so contracted and blind, though devoted, an adherence.

3, 4. *Ignorant of God's righteousness, &c.* He now explains what he meant in ver. 2, by accusing them of want of knowledge. They had set up in the place of God's method of making men righteous and holy, namely, faith-righteousness, a method of their own, namely, law-righteousness, which of course acted as a virtual exclusion of the other mode. "The Apostle uses the expression *submitted*, since he considers the cause of their not receiving what God is willing to bestow to be a spirit of in-

subordination, a want of humility and acquiescence in the Divine arrangement." — *Christ is the end of the law, &c.* That is, he is the very fulfilment of the system of Law on which the Jew so much prides himself. The Law ends in Christ, who came not to destroy it, but to fulfil it. Matt. v. 17. The same argument is virtually renewed here that is conducted in chap. vii. The whole state of the case is somewhat after this wise. Man is in sin, and he knows how to escape this wretched state. He deeply feels the evil and the misery of sin, but the law of his members is stronger than the law of his mind, and he yields to his baser appetites and passions. In this state Jesus Christ is presented to him as the realization of the perfect life. He is the righteousness of God, and sanctification and wisdom and redemption. He shows what every man may become in a degree. He shows what the result of the law of the mind is, when that law is perfectly obeyed, as it could not be under the Mosaic Law, because the motives were not strong enough. To believe in Christ is therefore to believe in personal perfection and goodness. Our past sins still annoy us, for we do not get rid of all their consequences, and at times their old roots sprout up again, and trouble us. But we do not despair, for we feel that we are justified in our best hopes and prospects by the righteousness of Christ; both objectively towards God by the observance of his law, and subjectively towards ourselves by seeing what our nature is capable of becoming, if we persevere, hold fast the profession of our faith, and

ness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 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: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

do not give up the formation of a spiritual character, and the leading of a spiritual life. We take refuge in Jesus Christ, therefore, as our faith and salvation. We cannot be saved except by him, nor can the world find deliverance except in his name. He is the desire and the healing of all nations. He has engrafted a new life upon the stock of humanity, and a better kind of fruit grows on the scions of his setting and culture. All men are henceforth to become better than he has lived. He is the great head and leader of a second human race, as Adam was the head and leader of the first human race. See chap. v. Such seems to be a true statement of the condition of mankind, and the position and offices of Jesus Christ, as the Teacher, Master, Saviour, Redeemer, and Example of the world.

5. *Moses, &c.* Lev. xviii. 5. The Law of Moses requires perfect obedience, and makes no allowance for any defect in duty. The law of Christian Faith is equally strict in its requirements, and it releases man from no obligation, but it brings a new set of motives and considerations to bear upon him, and introduces him to a class of truths and promises elevated far above the range of the human reason, and fitted to inspire him with courage and perseverance when he is led astray into temptation, and to animate him to recover his lost ground. In faith is a magazine of

boundless resources, and when man's heart and flesh fail, God and Christ become the strength of his heart and his portion for ever.

6-8. *Speaketh on this wise, &c.* Deut. xxx. 12-14. The language of Moses, the very lawgiver himself, is thus quoted to justify the doctrine of righteousness by faith. The only change made is to adapt it to the case in hand;—a method of using and applying the Scriptures quite current among the Jews, but by no means always indicating the idea of a prophetic intention. The broad and conspicuous sense of the passage is, that the spirit of Christianity was not to be sought afar, but at home in the heart and in the life. There was to be the seat of its enjoyment and of its power. Not by climbing up to heaven and bringing Christ down bodily, nor by descending into Hades and bringing him up, by no difficult and distant act, was this faith to be insured, not by sacrifices, nor pilgrimages, nor macerations of the body, nor genuflexions, nor any of the ascetic and painful exercises of heathen worship, nor the severities of the Law. The eternal word of truth and faith was in the mouth and in the heart, on the very lips, and in the very bosom of man; nearer and closer and more binding on his nature than anything else. A similar use of the word Christ, as synonymous with a true faith in spiritual realities, in truth, God, and heaven, may be found in

that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt 9  
believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou  
shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteous- 10

1 Cor. x. 4, 9, and Heb. xi. 26. Olshausen remarks, that "unbelief has for its characteristic a turning to what is outward. It regards God as a distant being. From this outward direction the spirit is called back into its inward depths, in which it finds God's eternal word present, and this finding is faith itself." Hence, the more deeply and confidently we sink into the arms of God, and let ourselves down into the deep waters of the spirit, and allow them to overflow us, the more truly do we enter into life, and become living, happy, and creative sources of good to all around. If even the earlier dispensation could speak such words through Moses of the interior power of religion, how much more were they applicable to the spirituality of the new one?

9, 10. The act of the Christian is twofold; he must believe, and he must say he believes. Faith and profession — which in times of danger, like those in which the Apostle was writing, became confession — are the two poles of character; one outward, and one inward; one most necessary for one's self, the other most necessary for others, but not unnecessary for one's self; one laying hold of the greatest spiritual power, the heart, and the other of the greatest social instrument, speech. Matt. x. 32, 33; 2 Cor. iv. 13. The articles of this early creed, that was to do such great things for its subject, were not numerous or hard, as creeds of human manufacture have since become; they were not as long even as the so-called Apostles' Creed, or the Nicene, much less the Athanasian, the Augsburg, the Westminster, or the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. If creeds are so

essential, and an exact geographical outline of all the boundaries of his faith upon a host of points is so very useful and important to the Christian Church, it is very astonishing that the Apostle did not sketch a creed for us. But if we examine a little more closely, do we not find that he did this very thing in a simple and effectual way, which other men have since been trying to do in a very complicated and wire-drawn method, and have embarrassed by many needless distinctions and details, laying down many traps for weak consciences, and multiplying insincerities for strong ones? The confession was that Jesus is the Lord, is the Christ; and the faith was that he is raised from the dead. These two articles were the Pauline creed, and if they were pillars strong enough to bear up the majestic temple of such a character and life as his, we can pronounce them fully adequate to all the present exigencies of moral and spiritual beings. The staff Paul walked with is good enough and strong enough for our pilgrimage. In the confession of Peter, the belief was even more simple; it was in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. The doctrine of the resurrection was not in the creed, because the fact of the resurrection was not as yet in the history; but when it was, it became important, as summing up much of the substance of the Gospel in one point as it respected its miraculous character, its spirit of love and self-sacrifice, and its assurance of everlasting life. Jesus did not raise himself from the dead, but God raised him up, and by this great miracle indorsed, as it were, all the other miracles as of divine agency. Jesus and

ness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek : for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not

the Resurrection were the two heads of the Apostle's sermons elsewhere. Acts i. 22 ; iv. 2 ; xvii. 18 ; xxiv. 21. Why, we would ask, in the name of truth and salvation, did not the Apostle Paul lay down the programme of the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, the Total Depravity of Man, the Deity of Christ, Election, and other points, on the present occasion of stating a saving faith, if those articles are essential ; and if he did not do it, if he concentrated the attention of his converts on two memorable truths and facts, as the vital germs of the new and divine life, namely, Jesus the Lord, and his Resurrection, may we not fairly infer that he did not deem them salvatory, if, indeed, he was not then, on the contrary, entirely unacquainted with these errors, which afterwards chiefly sprang up from the unhallowed union of Christianity and Jewish and Pagan philosophy ? It will be observed that ver. 10 contains a Hebrew parallelism.

11-13. The same generous and unrestricted platform of salvation is here laid down for all who call on the name of Jesus, as elsewhere distinguishes the ministry of Paul. He is at the farthest possible remove from sectarianism, and no name is more perverted than his when used to bolster up a party. He is the advocate of the largest Christian liberty ; and his Epistles are sadly tortured when they are interpreted to teach any theology less comprehensive than that of God as the Universal Father, Man as the equal Brother, Jesus as the common Saviour, and Heaven as the

home of mankind at last. His teachings stand justified to the highest reason, to the most impartial love, and to the brightest hope. It is the ignorance, the superstition, the fear, and the hardheartedness of mankind that have petrified these flowing streams of life into fossil theologies, and frozen up the natural sympathies of the human bosom to believe in such doctrines as that of Infant Damnation, and to perpetrate such horrors as those of the Inquisition and of Smithfield.—*Shall not be ashamed.* Isa. xxviii. 16 ; xlix. 23 ; Rom. i. 16 ; ix. 33. Such passages as these are evidently quoted by way of accommodation. They are spiritually applicable, and describe a state of things, and a relation between persons and things, resembling the one originally intended.—*Whosoever shall call, &c.* Joel ii. 32. Both Jews and Gentiles are treated with the utmost generosity and benevolence by God, and in proportion as they call upon him, seek his grace, and inquire after the methods of his spiritual influence, they will alike become the objects of his parental love and mercy. He knows no nationality, no clime, no color, no party, but whosoever comes to him in faith shall by no means come in vain. It is delightful to turn from the narrow systems of human exclusiveness and dogmatism to the all-encompassing mercy and the liberal promises of our Heavenly Father. For his thoughts are not as our thoughts, and his ways are not as our ways.

14, 15. The Apostle, who through-

believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring

out this chapter is engaged in conciliating the Jewish mind to welcome the introduction of the Gentile element into the Christian Church, would here justify incidentally his own mission and ministry to the Greeks and Romans, by the necessity of their calling on God through the instrumentality of preachers sent for the purpose. By a gradation of questions, he establishes the need of Christian missions to the Gentile world, and ends by quoting from one of the most admired Hebrew prophets a description of the beautiful ministry of those who thus went forth to do the greatest possible good to their fellow-men. — *How beautiful are the feet, &c.* I. e. How grateful is the coming, &c. Of course this is simply a form of expression to describe the desirableness of their advent, and the moral grace and joy of such a beneficent movement in human affairs, when the highest truths, and the brightest promises, and the most important duties would be generally proclaimed to mankind. Nearly twenty centuries have passed away since these blessed words were written, and how far are we still as Christian nations from fulfilling this great commission, and preaching the Gospel to every creature, especially in its true and pure character as the Gospel of peace, as glad tidings of good things! War, not peace, is too often the relation between us and the Pagan world. The Gospel, also, which the missionaries thus far have spread abroad, is too darkly imbued with human errors and corruptions, and represents God in too severe, and man in too hopeless, a condition, to justify the

Apostle's description of the Christianity he was interested in communicating to the world. Isa. lii. 7. He applies the language of the old prophet, employed to describe the restoration of Israel from captivity, to the Apostles and preachers of the Gospel. This long running line of quotations by the Apostle would have an indescribable effect in soothing the Jewish apprehensions, and reconciling his countrymen to the new dispensation. For it showed them that Christianity was but a species of spiritual completion and consummation, in a nobler sense than was originally anticipated, of the best promises and declarations of the Hebrew Scriptures. A certain air of indefiniteness necessarily rests upon the point of connection between the Jewish and the Christian system, nor are we obliged to ascertain literally and exactly the precise truth of the case in order to reap from Christianity all the benefit it is fitted to impart, or to respect Judaism as its divinely authorized forerunner. These subjects must, from the very nature of the case, lie in large and indistinct outlines to the minds even of the most learned and spiritual, as is apparent from the wide diversity of opinions among critics and theologians. We may be sure, at least, that a narrow, close, literal, and dogmatic interpretation is certainly out of the line of the truth, and that only as we drink in the spirit of the Gospel in copious draughts, and take the most elevated, charitable, and enlarged views of the meaning and mission of Christianity, shall we reasonably hope to be successful in understanding this

16 glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?  
 17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.  
 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went  
 19 into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation

last and greatest gift to mankind, and its connection with what went before it in the mighty plan of God.

16. But the objection might be made, that, widely as the Gospel had been preached, it had by no means won universal assent and obedience. The hearers of the word had not always been its doers. St. Paul therefore replies again, in the words of Isa. liii. 1, that this was no unexpected or discouraging result; for if the Jews did not uniformly hearken to their religious teachers, it was but reasonable to suppose that a similar unfaithfulness might prevail among the less favored Gentiles. It was certainly no worse in this respect under the Gospel than it had been under the Law and the Prophets.

17. In other words, religion is a system of causes and effects, and if the causes are put in operation, the effects will in a measure be produced. The word of God must be heard in order to be believed, and though considerable allowance must be made for the blindness and prejudice of men,—for even Jesus and Paul did not convert all their auditors,—yet, as a general rule, in proportion to the wide and zealous dissemination of Christian truth in the world, will be the result in faith and obedience. John xvii. 20. We shall reap as we sow.

18. Ps. xix. 4, 5. But the Apostle vindicates himself and his fellow-Apostles by declaring, that, so far as hearing the Gospel was concerned, the condition of believing it had been

fulfilled. They had been diligent, east and west, and north and south, in proclaiming it to all who would hearken to its gracious messages. Their ministry had been so universal, that it might be likened to the influence of the heavenly bodies, as described in the Psalms. Their ordinances and services had been like day and night, and the shining of the sun in all the world. "When we reflect," says Neander, "what it must have imported to a Jew to behold that Divine revelation, which hitherto had only been promulgated within the narrow limits of Judæa, conveyed by numerous messengers to Greeks, Romans, and barbarians; when we reflect how it must have floated before the mind of Paul, that now a fire had been cast into humanity, which, continuing to kindle generation after generation, would bring about a totally new order of things; when we reflect upon all this, can it appear strange, that, although as yet but an inconsiderable part of the world had received the word of life, the Apostle should use such comprehensive expressions?"

19. The Jews ought to know from their own Scriptures that the Gospel was properly offered to the Gentiles, for both Moses and Isaiah said as much as that. Deut. xxxii. 21. "No people" and "foolish nation" stood for the Gentiles. Whether the rejection of Israel, of which Moses spoke, was a prophecy of what befell the Jews in their earlier or their later history, it is not necessary to decide; it is enough to know that the princi-

I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found 20 of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I 21 have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

ple laid down would find several verifications. The Jews would be made jealous by seeing blessings, which they supposed were peculiar to themselves, imparted widely to other nations. The prediction has been fulfilled; for not keeping their minds and hearts open with an enlarged spirit, they were offended, instead of being gratified, as they should have been, at witnessing the diffusion of the blessings of revelation to all mankind.

20. *But Esaias is very bold, &c.* Isa. lxxv. 1. The prophet Isaiah was even more strong and decided, and asserted that God would be found by, and be manifested to, those who sought him not, namely, the idolatrous and heathen nations. The warning of Moses was in case the children of Israel forgot their allegiance to their lawful Head and King, whereas the present verse relates to the positive admission of the Gentiles to higher privileges, at all events, and independently of any thing the Jews should do or leave undone.

21. *To Israel he saith.* Isa. lxxv. 2. Not only the Gentiles would be accepted, but, what was even more alarming, the Jews would run the hazard of becoming castaways themselves, and forfeiting to a more deserving people privileges which they had ceased to improve. The position of the prophet, standing and all day long stretching out his hands and

entreating them to return and live, and showing the most affectionate and importuning interest in their welfare, notwithstanding their disobedience and opposition, is a fine, graphic picture, drawn by a rich imagination. Tholuck says, that, "if from this passage we once more look back upon the tenth and ninth chapters, it is manifest how little Paul ever designed to revert to an *absolute decree*, but meant to cast all blame upon the *want of will* in man, resisting the *gracious will* of God.

The history of the Jews is in many respects a sad one, but it is only an enlarged sketch of what has befallen every nation, on a smaller scale; namely, to rise and flourish while faithful to the laws of God, and then to suffer decline and downfall when it became disobedient and corrupt. The providence of God manifested through Israel is similar to the universal providence manifested through Egypt, Greece, Rome, and all nations. Woe is unto any people, no matter how powerful or how famous, that has not respect unto the eternal laws of God, and builds not its renown and its strength upon the Rock of Ages. The Jews exist in every nation, as living witnesses of the truth of their ancient prophecies, and of the certainty of the retributions of the moral government of God. Their history is an eternal miracle and lesson to mankind.



## CHAPTER XI.

*The Calling of the Gentiles to redound, not to the Injury, but the Final Redemption, of Israel itself.*

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.

Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed

## CHAPTER XI.

The eleventh chapter is occupied with an answer to the objection, that, if what had been said before in chaps. vii.—x. was true, then God had rejected his chosen people Israel; which would be a thing incredible. First, the Apostle cites himself, ver. 1, and the “remnant” of his countrymen, as evidence that all were not rejected, ver. 2–5, and afterwards argues that, as the casting away was not total, so it would not be final, ver. 11–24; but that, as the rejection of the Jews had seemed to act favorably for the time being on the conversion of the Gentiles, so finally the faith of the Gentiles would react beneficially on the chosen people, ver. 25–32. He concludes with a spirit-stirring apostrophe to the grandeur and wisdom of the Divine plans, ver. 33–36.

1. Hammond suggests that it was probably this chapter to which the Apostle Peter referred, 2 Pet. iii. 16, as hard to be understood, and liable to be wrested to bad uses.—*God forbid.* Literally, Let it not be, the word *God* not being in the original at all.—*For I also am,* &c. The notable instance of the Apostle to the Gentiles was an evidence that there was no necessary and wholesale rejection of the Israelites. He elsewhere glories in his Hebrew ancestry. 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5. Paley remarks that the Apostle follows this thought, that God had not

cast away his people, throughout this chapter, “in a series of reflections calculated to soothe the Jewish converts, as well as to procure from their Gentile brethren respect to the Jewish institutions. Now all this is perfectly natural. In a real St. Paul, writing to real converts, it is what anxiety to bring them over to his persuasion would naturally produce; but there is an earnestness and a personality, if I may so call it, in the manner, which a cold forgery, I apprehend, would neither have conceived nor supported.”

2. *His people which he foreknew.* A circumlocution for Israel. God chose the Jews, not as favorites, but as instruments; not as idle and irresponsible recipients of his bounties, but as stewards, who should give account; not as spoiled and indulged children, but as trustees of a great bequest to the world; the flame of heaven was kindled among them, not to warm merely their hearthstone, but to be the altar-fire of the whole earth. If the election of the Hebrews was then an election to privileges and blessings, it was also a promotion to the highest and most responsible trusts and duties on earth, namely, to be the light-bearers and religious leaders of the world.—*Wot.* Old English, now obsolete, for *know*.—*Of Elias,* or, as the marginal reading is, *in Elias*; that is, according to the ancient mode of quotation, in the section relating to Elias. 1 Kings

thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto 4 him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*. Even so then at this 5 present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise 6 grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more

xix. 10-18.—*Saying* is omitted by both Griesbach and Tischendorf. Paul is peculiarly happy in quoting an instance of the difference between the Church visible and the Church invisible, and the encouragement there always was that the heart of the people was really sounder than it appeared to be to a casual observer.

3, 4. 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32; xviii. 30. Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, married Jezebel, a heathen woman, the daughter of the Sidonian king, and introduced the worship of Baal, a heathen deity, instead of the service of Almighty God. The children of Israel were with great difficulty weaned from idolatry, and they were constantly liable to relapse. It is sufficiently evident that only the power of a revelation and authority above themselves could have raised them out of this national, characteristic habit, and banished at last idol-worship for ever from the Hebrew commonwealth.—*To the image of Baal*. Baal is here represented in the original as a goddess, but elsewhere as a god. The gender was sometimes masculine, and sometimes feminine.

5, 6. The old saying was made good in a nobler sense than the original one, and there was now, as then, "a faithful few."—*The election of grace*. Dropping the Hebrew idiom, we read it the gracious election, or choice.—*But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work*. This is all omitted

as spurious by Griesbach and other critics of the highest class. It really adds nothing to the sense before expressed, unless it be to intensify the thought by reiteration and amplification. The doctrine of election has been sufficiently commented on in the ninth chapter. It is evident that it is an election to privileges, and not final and eternal condition or character, of which the Apostle speaks. It is an election too, which, though originally on the part of the All-wise Disposer undetermined by the personal merit of the individual, immediately takes on a character from the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the elected party of further approval or disapproval. Thus the chosen people found in election no charm to keep off the natural retribution of their sins, and the Gentiles not chosen found acceptance in proportion as they feared God and wrought righteousness. When we speak of works, we must remember that faith is a work, and one of the greatest works a human being can perform, and the Apostle grounds salvation on faith. John vi. 28, 29. There is an election of God, by which he causes one man to be born in Africa and another in the United States, one man in a Mahometan and another in a Christian land, one man black and another white, one man simple and another a genius; and there is no injustice, only variety, in such election, because no more is required of each one than he is gifted with powers to fulfil. But from the

7 grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded; according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a

point of this varied endowment, constitution, and condition, from the moment the soul begins to act, the free agency and responsibility of man run parallel with the overruling power and providence of God. In faith, in choice, in obedience, in devotion to duty, in every good word and work, all the way up from the germ to the full-grown man and perfected Christian, man must work, labor, persevere, or he cannot inherit the promises of God. The doctrine of the Apostle, therefore, relating to election, and his exhortations to duty, to good works, chaps. xii. — xv., are perfectly accordant one with the other. He who believes in Jesus Christ has already done one of the greatest works a human being can possibly perform, and one that leads on to the whole diadem of Christian graces and virtues.

7, 8. As Israel was an election from the rest of the world, so was there also a further winnowing of Israel, an election of an election. — *The rest were blinded, &c.* Deut. xxix. 4; Is. vi. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. God of course does not actually make any human being worse by a direct agency, or add a feather's weight to give the preponderance of the moral scale on the side of evil. But he is represented as doing that which he did not actually prevent, and causing that blindness which took place under his providence, and which he did not directly remove. This was in accordance with the Hebrew habit of ascribing everything, both good and bad, to the immediate agency of the higher

powers. — *Unto this day.* Olshausen remarks, that "it is evident from these words that the Apostle has in view in the first instance only a temporary hardening, and hopes that it will soon be possible to remove the spirit of slumber from them, without being obliged to apprehend that they will afterwards, when awake, continue to resist, and only incur heavier guilt." Griesbach edits this verse, with the exception of this clause, as parenthetical, thus connecting *blinded* in ver. 7 with *unto this day* in ver. 8.

9, 10. *And David saith.* Ps. lxxix. 22, 23. The expressions of David towards his enemies were still more severe than those of the prophet, for he seemed to invoke direct maledictions upon them. He says, Let the very place of God's bounty, the daily table, become a curse to them, and let the blinded eyes and bowing form of age be theirs. It has been customary among commentators to justify these words of David, as uttered not only against his enemies, but against those of God. Yet on no such ground can we excuse his revengeful directions to his son Solomon just before his death, and those perhaps are a key of explanation to some passages in the Psalms. 1 Kings ii. 1 — 9. The truth is, that Christianity is not responsible for the conduct of the patriarchs, kings, and prophets of the elder dispensation. Revelation did not drive out their human nature, nor entirely overcome its downward propensities. Inspiration does not signify either infallibility in all knowledge, or moral perfec-

stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be 10 darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back away. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God for- 11 bid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them *be* the 12

tion of character. Even the Apostles, who had been under the influence of the example and the teachings of the Master, were not perfect men. When Paul, therefore, quotes such sentiments as those of the ninth and tenth verses, he is not to be understood as doing it necessarily by way of approbation, but of illustration. He argues with the Jews on their own ground, and adduces the words of their most revered king and psalmist as descriptive of the retribution that would overtake the enemies of the truth. The rich privileges of Christianity would be perverted by the obstinate and unbelieving, and turned into evils, just as David wished the blessings of the happiest and most joyous part of life, the bounties and hospitalities of the table, might become snares, traps, stumbling-blocks, and retributions to his wicked persecutors. Christianity in the days of Paul was darkened to the Jews by the mists of prejudice and error, just as the poet king in his poetic rage and ecstasy desired that his foes might be made blind, old, and decrepit. We know what the spirit of Christ is, and there is nothing in this passage, interpreted as above, which was designed by Paul to conflict with that boundless love and mercy of the Lord; but in describing the natural consequences of unbelief and of the rejection of the Gospel, he quotes the poetry of David, as we now quote a favorite author for description, impression, or illustration of our views.

11. Having settled the question that the rejection of the Jews is not total, he now proceeds to prove that it is not final, but that the conversion

of the Gentiles would be an instrument to react favorably for the restoration of Israel to Christianity. This train of thought is pursued through most of the remainder of this chapter.—*That they should fall*, i. e. utterly. From his strain thus far, it might be inferred that he regarded the moral overthrow of the chosen people as decisive. But such is by no means his conclusion, for he rallies from this point, and expatiates on the hope that the action and reaction of Judaism and Gentilism on one another would be reciprocally beneficial.—*For to provoke them to jealousy*. The Vulgate better reads, that they may be emulous of them. See ver. 14. It was emulation rather than jealousy that was to be promoted by the causes under consideration. Acts xiii. 46. In the mighty movements of the Apostle's mind from side to side of his argument, he maintains the equilibrium of loss and gain, rebuke and hope, and indulges in no unhealthy and morbid complaints. While he draws from the old Scriptures sentences of severe condemnation, he also finds there his materials of consolation and courage. As Tholuck quotes from Chrysostom: "But as he had greatly run the Israelites down, and strung accusation upon accusation, bringing forward prophet after prophet crying out against them, Isaiah and Elias and Moses and David and Hosea, and that not once nor twice, but frequently, lest in this way he might plunge them in despair, and obstruct their return to the faith; and, on the other hand, lest he might lift the believers from among the Gentiles into arrogance, and, by

riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the  
 13 Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you  
 Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify  
 14 mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them*  
 15 *which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the  
 casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall*  
 16 the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead? For if the first-  
 fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are*

puffing up, injure them in the article of their faith, he again consoles the Jews, saying, that by their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles."

12-15. The rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, and the persecution of the Apostles and disciples at Jerusalem drove the preachers of Christianity abroad to all other countries, so that the truth was earlier preached to the Gentiles than it would have been, if its adherents had found full occupation at home. Acts viii. 1; xi. 19-21; xiii. 46-48. Therefore, if the want of faith in the Jews had so signally been overruled for "the riches of the Gentiles," and their spiritual advantage, then how much more likely it was that the conversion of the Israelites would react favorably upon the Gentile world, and contribute to the wider dominion of the faith of Jesus!—If the fall of the chosen was so potent with good, how much better would be their Christianization.—*I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, &c.* He boldly avows that his mission was to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, nay, that he was peculiarly the messenger of the Gospel to heathendom. Elsewhere in this work the remarkable adaptation of Paul to this office has been spoken of, and the vast sphere of his missionary labors described. But he was not exclusive in his sympathies, though he was specially the Apostle to the Gentiles; he wished still to be instrumental of the greatest good to his

fallen countrymen, and he magnified, enlarged his office, so as to include them in his ample labors, sacrifices, and prayers. "He would clasp the universe to his heart, and keep it warm."—*Provoke to emulation.* The same Greek word as in ver. 11, and better rendered here than there by the term *jealousy*. Uniformity in translation is also very desirable.—*Life from the dead.* This seems to be not a literal statement that the conversion of the heathen would be a resurrection from the dead, but an hyperbole of the gladness and triumph of such a change as their embracing Christianity. The Orientals say of great revolutions, that it is "as if the resurrection-day were come." The mind of Paul, rising and falling with the deep pulsations of strong feeling and thought, seizes the most vivid images to portray his subject, and he must be interpreted in a spirit kindred to that in which he wrote, or we miss entirely the scope of his argument and appeal.

16. It has been observed that *if* is used in the original no less than eight times in ver. 12-21, forming a series of suppositions designed to act by way of conciliation in his expostulating with the Jews.—*For if the first-fruit be holy, &c.* This verse contains two figures of speech meaning the same thing. The object was to show what encouragement there is that Israel would be redeemed. This is inferred, first, from the fact, that, if

the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and 17  
 thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with  
 them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, boast not 18  
 against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root,  
 but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken 19  
 off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they 20  
 were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded,  
 but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest 21

the destination of the first-fruit was holiness, then the main lump or mass might be presumed to have the same destination; and secondly, that, if the root of the tree had a certain character, then the branches must be partakers of the same character. As the fathers and patriarchs of the Jewish state had proved holy and faithful, it was reasonable to hope that the race would carry out their historic unity and destiny, and the children of Abraham and the subjects of Moses would prove, in the great crisis of their national fortunes, the advent of Christianity, worthy of their illustrious and devoted ancestry.

17-24. This passage contains a prolonged illustration, which seems to have been suggested to the Apostle's mind by his figure of the root and branches, in ver. 16. There were three parties to be represented, and his quick and teeming imagination fastens upon the tree as their best emblem. Jer. xi. 16. The early fathers of the Hebrew commonwealth were the root, the trunk and branches were the Jewish people, and the Gentiles were the scions which were grafted upon the Jewish stock, which had been pruned of its unfruitful branches to make room for the new settings. The first inference was, that, if the root was good, the branches were likewise good. The second inference was, that, if the tree had been trimmed and new scions

had been set, they must beware of taking airs upon themselves over the original branches, for if those branches had for good reasons been excised, then much more might the adopted grafts for good reasons suffer a like fortune. The third inference was, that if the horticulturist unnaturally engrafted foreign scions in a good olive-tree, the presumption was much stronger that, if occasion required, he would re-engage the natural branches upon their own tree. And all the inferences were hopeful ones both for the Jews and for the Gentiles, and also full of admonition, as showing that the Great Disposer was no respecter of persons, and that the Jews were not such favorites that they would escape punishment if they were unfaithful, and that the Gentiles were not so far forgotten or neglected that they would not be admitted to the highest privileges of human beings, but that they again must be upon their guard, for if the first election of the Jews could not save them from retribution when they apostatized from their faith, much less would the second election of the Gentiles to the distinguished rank of Christians avail them anything, if they betrayed the glorious cause which had been given them in trust. A finer intermingling of lesson and warning and encouragement, or a more beautiful play of appeal to the various motives of which human nature is susceptible, cannot

22 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  
23 off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be  
24 grafted in : for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree ; how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own

well be conceived. For we see by this instance, among others, what a dramatic master of human nature was the Apostle, who could thus argue with persuasiveness both with the prejudices of his own people and the ignorance of the heathen.—*And thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in, &c.* The question has been raised whether the Apostle was correct in his principles of horticulture, and whether the custom was not the reverse of what he has here described, and whether it was not customary to engraft good scions on a wild stock rather than wild scions on a good stock. But to this objection it has been replied, that both ancient and modern writers describe such a process with the olive-tree as the Apostle has here given, so that his illustration is an apposite one.—*But if thou boast, &c.* If disposed to be arrogant over the Jews, remember how the case stands between you and them, that they were the original people, and you the secondary election.—*Thou standest by faith.* This verse is a memorable testimony and proof, that, though the first bestowment of privileges was by the sole appointment of God, and “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” yet the retention and continued enjoyment of their religious blessings did most essentially depend upon the fidelity or the neglect of the recipients. By works of faith, or sins of unbelief, Jew and Gentile

alike would stand or fall before the impartial law of Christianity. There was no room therefore for pride, but every reason for solicitude.—*Be not high-minded, but fear.* These two states of mind are opposite to one another, as faith and unbelief are, above. The fear is not meant to be a slavish dread, but a reasonable anxiety and carefulness.—*For if God spared not the natural branches, &c.* Palfrey’s English edition of Griesbach adds as the concluding clause of ver. 21, “perhaps he will not spare thee.” John xv. 2–6.—*If thou continue in his goodness, &c. If they abide not still in unbelief, &c.* While one class of expressions would indicate that a divine fate and necessity determined all things, and that mankind were but passive and helpless instruments in the divine hand, another class speaks with great clearness and emphasis of the liberty and free agency of man, and the fearful responsibility resting upon him. So far from inculcating the doctrines of absolute decrees, of irresistible grace, and of the necessary perseverance of the saints in holiness or of sinners in wickedness, Paul is at every stage of his argument putting in an appeal to conscience, and calling upon his readers to be faithful. He thus qualifies, not only the doctrinal chapters of the middle of the Epistle with the ethical chapters of the closing part, but he intersperses throughout the warnings against evil,

olive-tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant 25 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. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is 26 written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this *is* my covenant unto 27 them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the 28

and promises to the faithful, and calls to duty. He is therefore the last man in the world to be quoted in favor of any relaxation in working out our salvation, any remittance of labor, any despair of human ability, or any depreciation of the unspeakable value, necessity, and possibility of the Christian virtues and graces. And whenever he is thus quoted, it is by the method of employing only one set of his terms, roundly asserting the total action of God in everything, without the other set, which would suitably limit and qualify them.

25. *Brethren.* However earnestly the Apostle argued, and however forcibly he combated the prejudices of his converts, he would not allow them to forget that they were brethren one of another, children of one common Parent. Where did Socrates, Plato, Cicero, or Seneca ever generalize so grandly and philosophically all men, Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, into one brotherhood?—*This mystery*, i. e. that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the Christian kingdom, while the unbelieving Jews would be rejected. This extension of privileges, and this visitation of penalties, were secrets hidden hitherto, but now made known. There are still many mysteries, many hidden secrets in religion, but there are no contradictions nor absurdities; there is nothing against reason, though there is much above reason.—*The fulness of the Gentiles*, &c. Jesus expresses a similar thought in

Luke xxi. 24. One of the secrets of understanding the writings of St. Paul is to recognize his almost universal use of the figure of antithesis. He balances thought against thought, and term against term. Hence the need of caution in understanding his style, and in taking his illustrations in too literal a vein. Hard as it might be, it was yet needful to allow that a partial blindness had fallen upon Israel, and meantime the Gentiles were entering the Church in great numbers. The disciples of Jesus were first called Christians, not at Jerusalem, but at Antioch in Syria; and while the Apostles wrote letters to almost all the great cities of the Gentile world, Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus, they directed none to Mount Zion.

26, 27. Is. xxvii. 9; lix. 20. Lardner paraphrases it thus: "In this way, according to this method of Divine Providence, all good and well-disposed men, both Jews and Gentiles will be saved, that is, will be brought into the way of salvation, will be taught by the Gospel, or will embrace the means of salvation proposed therein; the Jews being all along provoked to emulation by the Gentiles, and the Gentiles being confirmed in their faith by the circumstances of the Jewish people."—*My covenant.* Jer. xxxi. 31, 34, and elsewhere in the prophets.—*Take away their sins*, i. e. to provide the means of their effectual removal. Jesus was the Lamb of God, that



gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes; but as touching the elec-  
 29 tion, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and  
 30 calling of God *are* without repentance. For as ye in times past  
 have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their  
 31 unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through  
 32 your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded

came to take away the sin of the world, John i. 29, 36, not in a mechanical, but in a spiritual sense. His mission was to regenerate human nature with new motives and principles, so as to save men from sin, and from sinning, and to create the antagonistic and exclusive state of holiness and love.

28, 29. So far as the Gospel is concerned, the alienation of the Jews accrued to your benefit, but so far as the election is concerned, the Jews still continue to occupy a peculiar position of interest and affection, on account of the long line of illustrious patriarchs and prophets who have adorned their faith.—*The gifts and calling of God*, &c.; i. e. God repents not of his disposal of things, and recalls not his appropriation of benefits to his creatures. This is a caution against anthropathic or humanly conceived ideas of the nature and plans of the Supreme Being, and it explains what was meant by those earlier forms of language in the Old Testament, where he is described as having repented of the creation of man, or of the execution of any of his designs. Gen. vi. 6; Ex. xxxii. 14; 1 Sam. xv. 29, 35; Jonah iv. 2. The assignment of human members, senses, and passions to the Deity was a necessary mode of conveying religious ideas to the minds of the early races in the infancy of their development; but by erroneous and literal methods of interpretation, it has proved in later times a most prolific source of prejudice and infidelity. This verse, therefore, is the best

comment upon many passages of Scripture.

30, 31. These verses repeat the same thought contained in the illustration of the olive-tree, and in ver. 11, 12, 15, 25, that, in the wonder-working providence of God, even the unbelief of the Israelites would rebound to the conversion of the Gentiles and the wider extension of the truth as it is in Jesus. So infinite is the mysterious wisdom of the All-perfect One, that the seeming failures and flaws of this plan achieve a greater good. All this play and interchange of benefits in the great plan, from Jews to Gentiles, and from Gentiles to Jews, were also most happily adapted, when they were understood, to soften the bitter feuds of nationality and religion, and to reveal to them the fact that they were standing both together on one common platform of the Divine mercy; for if children of God, then were they brethren of one another.—*Through your mercy*; i. e. the mercy shown to you.—*Obtain mercy*. When, after the present rejection of the Jews, they are again taken into the Church, it is described in this term of "obtaining mercy."

32. *Concluded them all in unbelief*, &c. Better, *included*. As the previous verses suggested considerations of reciprocal benefit as motives to love and good-will between the two great parties, so this one presents views to humble their pride and reduce them to one level. The Jews had no reason to assume any superiority over the Gentiles on account of

them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the 33 depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding

their earlier position in the majestic plan of revelation, nor the Gentiles any cause to despise the Jews because they had welcomed Christianity more cordially than the mass of the children of Abraham. The lesson to both sides was humility, solicitude to be faithful, gratitude to God, and mutual fraternity. What a different history would the last nineteen centuries have recorded, if the reasonable and merciful counsels of Paul had prevailed instead of those malignant and persecuting passions which, under the holy garb and in the sacred name of the Prince of Peace, waged the wars of the Crusades, built the Inquisition, banished and killed the Jews, and dyed every Christian country with streams of human blood! And now, will not mankind cease their horrid fratricide, and henceforth learn to abstain from the hatred that twice curses; that curses him that indulges it, and curses him that suffers from it? The dark clouds of war rolling up the Eastern horizon, and enveloping all Europe and no small part of Asia and Africa in their folds, declare the yet virtual Paganism of Christian nations, and reveal the immense extent of that spiritual regeneration and pacification of the human family which Paul did so much to further, but which is still to be the work of ages to come. — *That he might have mercy upon all.* The word *all* is not indeed to be urged in such cases beyond its natural and easy import into an extreme literalness; but one cannot help remarking that the mercy is spoken of as commensurate with the unbelief, and keeping even step with it in the unfolding of the glorious scheme of salvation. Gal. iii. 22. It is difficult to understand

the force of such passages, unless they contemplate in the boundless range of the future a final and entire restoration of all the human family, Jews and Gentiles, and all the individuals of each class, under the educational and disciplinary nurture of God to holiness and happiness. But with such a belief, they become truly a Gospel, glad tidings of great joy, and they furnish the most encouraging and heart-cheering motives to exertion in the cause of human redemption.

33. *O the depth of the riches, &c.* Job xi. 7–9; Isa. lv. 8, 9. This forms the concluding strain of the Apostle's inference, from the whole doctrinal ground he had been surveying, of the relations of Christianity to the two principal parties concerned with it; namely, the Jews, already favored with a preparatory revelation, and the Gentiles, who had been trying their natural experiments of civilization in Greece, Rome, and other countries. Both had signally failed of achieving, under their respective systems of Law and of Wisdom, the highest objects contemplated in man's position in this world, and had demonstrated the need of the superior system of faith offered by Christianity. All were included in unbelief, and upon all God had mercy in sending his Son into the world, not to condemn, but to save it, and at once to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel. As the Apostle looked upon this entire map of Divine Providence, and saw its seeming discords resolved into a higher harmony, and all its parts combining together in the disclosure of the glorious intentions of God, and in the development of the holiness and

34 out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath  
 35 been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall  
 36 be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him,  
 and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

blessedness of mankind, he breaks forth into exclamations of gratitude and joy, of wonder and adoration, before such infinite greatness and goodness. There is a most valuable lesson taught by this passage. For if the Apostle, after so many chapters of discussion and argument, in which he would seem to have made everything clear to his own mind, if not to that of his readers, is yet obliged to fall back and repose in the boundless wisdom, power, and goodness of Almighty God, as the best explanation of all difficulties, and the most satisfactory justification of the whole plan of life, revelation, and futurity, then how appropriate it is for every humbler student of the same divine lore to have more faith than knowledge, and more charity than dogmatism, upon questions of such scope and perplexity!

34, 35. See Isa. xl. 13; Job. xv. 8, xli. 11; 1 Cor. ii. 16. The Apostle quotes freely from the elder Scriptures such sentences as illustrated the infinite sufficiency and wisdom of the Divine plan, and the necessary dependence and obligation of man to the Giver of all good. The language is not exact, and it shows conclusively that the quotations were probably made from memory, and that no such claim as that of plenary inspiration or perfect verbal accuracy can be maintained for the Epistles; as, indeed, what use would they subserve, if they could be made good, that is not better fulfilled by the moral and spiritual inspiration of truth and love which it is universally conceded animates every sentence with life and power?

36. This verse is a doxology; and

as such it is much more worthy of general use than such ascriptions as terminate the prayers, chants, and graces of many modern Christians, and are designed to teach or insinuate the unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. For example, "For Christ's sake," a phrase occurring only once in the New Testament, Eph. iv. 32, and mistranslated there for *in* or *through* Christ: also, "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end";—"To whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end." Why do our fellow-Christians persist in using so many of these unauthorized and unscriptural phrases, instead of returning to the simplicity and beauty of the sacred word.—*Are all things*, &c. I. e. from God as the Source, through him as the Means or Instrument, and to him as the End, are all things. Dr. Samuel Johnson has well paraphrased the sentiment in the words:

"From thee, Great God, we spring; to thee we  
 tend,  
 Path, Motive, Guide, Original, and End."

Upon this concluding passage Ols-hausen remarks: "This whole contemplation of the wonderful ways of the Lord, who knows how to gather his flock unto himself out of all languages, kindreds, and tongues, was assuredly fitted to excite a feeling of amazement and admiration. To this feeling, then, the Apostle gave vent in an exclamation, which is indeed short, but deeply felt, and full of great ideas. . . . This bold and powerful flight seems, however, to have a foundation only on the supposition of

## CHAPTER XII.

*The General Practical Duties of Christianity to God and our Fellow-men.*

I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye

an entire restoration. If only some, or but a few in all, are blessed, how is God's wisdom to become manifest in the result? But if all become blessed, without prejudice to free-will or justice, this assuredly appears as a miracle of God. The doctrine of a restoration has very many passages of St. Paul's Epistles apparently in its favor."

A spirit of energetic hope and of boundless love heaves in the breast of the Apostle, and we cannot reconcile his large and general terms with the supposition that there will not be a final restoration of the human family to virtue and eternal life. He speaks in the doctrinal part of the Epistle, which is here concluded, of election and condemnation, but in most instances he evidently refers to the possession and use, or the reverse, of spiritual privileges in the present life, not to the final condition of the soul in a future world; and where he does enter the vast scenes of futurity, whether here or hereafter, he lifts up such a strain of devout and jubilant praise to the Almighty Father, as seems only to meet with its full justification in the restitution of all things, and the reconciliation of the whole family of mankind to the love, trust, and obedience of the holy and benevolent Father, through his Son Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; Eph. i. 20-23; 2 Tim. i. 10.

## CHAPTER XII.

HAVING completed the doctrinal portion of his letter to the Roman Christians, St. Paul proceeds to discuss the ethics of the Gospel, and their relations and applications to all the conditions in which his hearers

and readers were situated. But the life of mankind on earth is in its essential characteristics so nearly alike in every age and country, that the duties here inculcated and minutely specified are such as are obligatory in their general outlines, if not in all their details, upon the Christian Church everywhere. In this chapter he expounds the duties of the disciples, first to God, ver. 1-8, and then more at length their social and religious obligations to one another, ver. 9-21. Chapter xiii. treats of the Christian's duty to the state, and the general embodiment of all service and obligation in the law of love. Chapters xiv. and xv. relate to the condition of Paul's converts in heathen communities, and their duties thence arising, with personal matters touching his writing to them, and his promised visit at Rome. Chapter xvi. ends the Epistle with friendly salutations, cautions, and benedictions.

1. *I beseech you therefore, &c.* He earnestly entreats his brethren, whose hearts might be supposed to be touched by the powerful arguments and appeals he had thus far addressed to them, to give attention to the exhortations which follow, and the logical inference from the views of God's mercy which had been presented was, that they should fulfil their part in self-consecration, faith, and obedience. If, then, any conclusion could be drawn from his remarks upon faith in previous chapters, or the election to religious privileges, unfavorable to the practical duties of life, it is entirely corrected by the lessons now given. Paul was not opposed to good works as works, but to works from such a principle as the Law, that

present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *2 which is your reasonable service.* And be not conformed to this

did not cover the whole of human nature, or go down to its deepest roots, as compared with works from the living motives of faith, that encompassed all faculties, and laid hold of higher powers in God and Christ, and reached forward to another life. The law of Christian duty was not to be less, but more, strict than the law of Jewish duty; but it was re-enforced in its practical workings by more persuasive and powerful motives. The Old Testament cannot furnish such a catalogue of good works to be done, as this discourse of the Apostle of faith; nor can the classic or Oriental literature produce such an essay upon ethics. These considerations should react upon the foregoing chapters of the doctrines of Paul, and should teach us what a wrong we do him, and what a wresting we make of his words, when we cite him as an authority against the value, necessity, and imperative obligation of good works. On the contrary, he digged deep and laid his foundation of Christian truth firm and broad, in order that he might raise the noblest superstructure of character and life, which the world had seen since the incarnation. — *Your bodies*, i. e. because they stand simply for yourselves; or because the body of the animal was the offering made in the heathen and Jewish sacrifices; or because the body was the lowest part of human nature, and most required this spiritual sanctification. A combination of such reasons may have determined the choice of the word. — *A living sacrifice*, in contradistinction to the dead animals which were offered at the altars. — *Holy*, i. e. free from blemish or defect, as was required of the offerings made to the gods among the heathen, or in the temple service at Jerusalem. Mal. i. 7, 8. — *Accept-*

*able unto God.* That is, well-pleasing to him. — *Your reasonable service*, your spiritual ministry, your service of the mind and heart, and not mere external observances. This is the summary of what went before. It is in reference to the same thought, that the Apostle says elsewhere, "Bodily exercise profiteth little," 1 Tim. iv. 8. By which he meant that the ascetic and sacrificial ordinances of religion could not compare in value with the interior and spiritual exercises of faith, charity, and hope. All the services and duties enjoined by Christianity are eminently reasonable, and require for their performance, not only deep religious faith, but strong common sense. In this opening verse is unfolded in few, but fit, words the entire programme of practical Christianity. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. The system of an exclusive priesthood, of sacrifices of the dead bodies of animals and the fruits of the earth, and of painful and expensive pilgrimages, bodily austerities, and macerations, had been superseded by the reasonable service and worship of the Gospel, in which all were priests unto God, and the offering was to be a willing and pure-minded dedication of one's self, all the powers of body and mind, all possessions, and influences, and gifts, to the service of God, and Christ, and mankind. The succeeding specifications of duty were but the branches, boughs, leaves, flowers, and fruits of the one total consecration and act of faith, which constituted the main trunk of the Christian tree.

2. The first obstruction to this superior life of self-consecration comes from the world, the circumstances around one, and therefore the warning of the Apostle is here given

world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every 3

against the sin of conformity and compliance. Man is not made in the present state; he is making, or rather he is scarcely begun to be made. He is but a germ, a seed, an acorn, a bulb. He is all the time in a process of creation,—earth-creation, self-creation, God-creation. He is not therefore judged yet as to what he will be or do, or how he will enjoy or suffer. For the scaffolding is still around him, the bricks and mortar are lying all about, and the sound of the trowel and the hammer and the plane and the saw give note that here is a house, a building, a human habitation, an incarnation and temple of the Divinity. The question which the Apostle discusses in the text is whether this work shall have for its pattern an earthly or a heavenly style of architecture. The Catholic Testament reads, Be reformed in the newness of your mind. The germ of this new life is in the mind, which can be regenerated by the Gospel, and changed not into the coarse and earthly image, but into the fine and heavenly one. This process of self-formation and spiritual assimilation is indeed evermore going on in us, whether we will it or not, whether we know it or not. We are constantly growing worse or better, more earthly or more heavenly-minded. The exhortation here is to watch over this process, and guard against an easy subsidence into the follies and vices of our time, and claim and pursue the ever nobler good that is above us, and that hangs as rich, ripe fruit just within our reach if we would put forth adventurous hands and pluck it. — *That ye may prove.* John vii. 17; Ps. xxv. 9. As much as to say, such a renewed mind and character, built after the

divine and Christian type, is the touchstone of what is the will of God. We emerge from the darkness of ignorance, and petty cares, and earthly environments, into the clear azure of superior and heavenly knowledge, through the portal of this renewed mind and spiritual life. We see only so much light as we use, and we taste only so much food as we eat, and we possess and enjoy only so much good as we appropriate and incorporate. — *That good, and acceptable, and perfect.* These may better be understood as adjectives used as nouns, thus, the good, the well-pleasing, the perfect; and these are synonymous with the will of God, and what constitutes that will as it regards our moral conduct and spiritual life. The ideal of spiritual excellence is described in these terms, and the higher we rise in the pursuit and acquisition of these qualities, and the more entirely our mind is renewed from within to correspond to them, the more clear and impressive does our knowledge become of what truly is the will of God, and what are his purposes concerning us and all things.

3. *The grace given unto me.* The apostolic office and authority, which rendered it no assumption on his part to counsel and to command his converts. Humility is the pioneer of virtue which he sets forth in his enumeration. For only as the Christian possesses this quality is he prepared to act well his part in that difficult and diversified sphere of duty and trial into which he is about to introduce him, in the succeeding catalogue of virtues and graces, high and beautiful, but hard won and easily lost. — *To every man that is among you.* No matter how highly exalted any one

man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace

might be at Rome, the capital of the world, by rank, birth, nation, or office, the Apostle felt entitled by his office to give him those spiritual directions which all needed in achieving the work of the Christian character.—*To think soberly.* “True humility is the right and healthy view of ourselves and our position.”

“The saint that wears heaven’s brightest crown  
In deepest adoration bends;  
The weight of glory bows him down  
Then most when most his soul ascends:—  
Nearest the throne itself must be  
The footstool of humility.”

—*The measure of faith.* This was the criterion of standing in the Christian Church. Each one was to occupy the position assigned him in the providence and grace of God with contentment, and without either ambitiously grasping at a higher position than truly belonged to him, or indolently sinking below the one which his gifts justified him in holding. The lesson is, *Sum cuique*, his own to each one. Gal. vi. 4.

4, 5. He used the well-known illustration of the limbs and members of the human body to describe the different offices and functions of the several orders in the Church of Christ. It is a most apposite comparison; for it justifies the system of Revelation by an appeal to the system of Nature, and preaches contentment by the argument of necessity; for as all cannot be the eye, some must be the hands, and some the feet; and it satisfies the sense of usefulness by the reflection, that all are necessary in their places, and appeals to the senti-

ment of union in Christ, and responsibility to him as the head of the common body. This is a favorite illustration of Paul’s, and he employs it on several occasions. 1 Cor. xii. 12–27; Eph. iv. 25; v. 30.

6–8. He proceeds to specify the different functions of the several members of the Christian Church, some higher and some lower, but all necessary in their places for the complete working of the body of which Jesus Christ was the head.—*Gifts.* These charisms, or special gifts, range from the office of an apostle to that of a deacon; and seem to include both the special and the natural duties assigned to different individuals. As remarked by Thom, “It is not possible to define the functions of the several individualities of office and of operation, to which St. Paul assigns a place in the administration of the early Church. Some of these relate to the vivid communication of spiritual energy, which a soul deeply moved itself can impart to others; some, to the more practical qualifications for the wise government and direction of a church, at every moment liable to fatal collisions; and some to interior details of mutual assistance and coöperation, the particulars of which have for ever escaped us.”—*According to the grace that is given to us.* The Christian Church was not one dull and uninteresting body of persons exactly alike, but it presented all varieties of life, all the diversity of members of the human constitution. There was the eye of the seer and prophet, the tongue of

that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. *Let* 9

the teacher, the heart of the exhorter and comforter, and the hand and foot of the ministering servants. No organ was superfluous, none was able to monopolize all uses and honors, and discard the others as unworthy. There were different degrees of special aid and inspiration, and different natural endowments. There was the grace given to an apostle, and the grace given to a deacon. The exhortation of the text therefore is, that each one should be faithful in his sphere, with self-respect and mutual deference. "Christians are only to aim at rightly applying the measure of ability they have received; to do everything according to its proportion. They are not to indulge conceit, or to pass beyond the limits of their own stand-point." — *Whether prophecy.* This does not necessarily mean the capacity of predicting future events, but the proclamation of religious truths with a vivid sense of spiritual power and the consciousness of the reality of the message of the spirit. This function ranked next to the apostolic office. — *Proportion of faith*, or the measure of spiritual power and inspiration. — *Ministry.* This pertained to the administration of the external affairs of the Church, as attendance upon the sick, and the distribution of alms to the poor. — *Teaching.* This was the instructional and catechetical duty, to educate the young, enlighten the ignorant, and communicate the truth already made known by the apostle and prophet. — *Exhortation.* This word in Greek has the twofold sense of admonition, and of consolation. These several offices of minis-

try, teaching, exhortation, &c., might be held and discharged by the same person. — *Giveth* — *with simplicity*, i. e. without the alloy of improper motives. He now enters upon the specification of duties common to Christian believers in general, or such as fell within the scope of considerable numbers. — *Ruleth, with diligence.* This is a caution against the proverbial evil of "the law's delay." — *Mercy, with cheerfulness.* He that forgiveth an injury should not do it in so cold and reluctant a manner as to take away half the grace and welcome of the deed. In reference to passages like the text, Neander, the greatest of modern ecclesiastical historians, says: "The view we are led to form of the original constitution of the churches among Gentile Christians, as they existed in the apostolic age, *that it was entirely democratic*, is also one of the distinguishing marks between the churches of Gentile and those of Jewish origin. The case appears to be thus: All the affairs of the churches were still transacted in an entirely public manner, so that every deliberate meeting of the church resembled a strictly popular assembly. But it happened, of course, that although no definite offices were instituted, to which certain employments were exclusively attached, yet each one occupied himself with those matters for which he possessed a peculiar charism (gift); those who had the gift of teaching generally attended to teaching, those who possessed the gift of church government occupied themselves with the duties pertaining to it. Thus in every meeting of the church there



love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave 10 to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with 11 brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in 12 business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope;

was a division among its members of the various business, in proportion to the peculiar charisms of individuals, yet without the institution of any definite church offices."

9. As the root and trunk of all the Christian functions, he insists upon love, free from guile or pretence. — *Evil* and *good* are here probably used, not to describe the qualities usually attached to them as abstract terms, but rather to describe dispositions of the heart, either malicious or benevolent. The words *abhor* and *cleave* imply the greatest intensity of purpose. Our avoidance of malevolent feelings, and our adherence to kindly ones, are to be no tame and cold acts of the spiritual nature, but zealous and whole-souled. One of the Fathers said, "Wait not till thou art loved by another, but make advances and begin; for thus shalt thou reap the reward of his friendship."

10. To illustrate and impress still further this beautiful sentiment of Christian love, he likens it to the family instinct of fraternal affection. We are to love our fellow-men as if they were our own mother's sons; for are they not the sons of our common Father in heaven? And this love is to be manifested in one of the most difficult of all positions, in yielding our own advantage or honor for the sake of another. How different is the eager and grasping temper of the world from the conciliating, friendly spirit of the Gospel! Iron is not more unlike gold than is the rule of society compared with the rule of Christ. "Nothing," says Chrysostom, "tends so much to make friends, as endeavoring to overcome one's neighbor in doing him honor."

11. Some limit this verse to a qualification of the nature of love in the preceding one; as that there are many who have good affections enough, but who take no pains to act them out in the relations and trials of human life. But the movement of the whole passage indicates rather an independent exhortation to diligence, zeal, and service to God. — *Business*. Not business in the usual sense of that word, but, as De Wette interprets, zeal for all good in the kingdom of God. The word is translated diligence in ver. 8. Ecc. ix. 10. This clause and the next describe the negative and positive sides of the same duty, and the third clinches both with a higher consecration. — *Serving the Lord*. Griesbach and some other critics make a different reading, "serving the opportunity;" but the text as it is, is to be preferred. The duty of carrying our religion into our daily life cannot be insisted on with too strong an emphasis. If the lamp of Revelation has been lighted in heaven, it is that it may guide our footsteps in this dark earth. If a coal is taken from the eternal fire of God's altar, it is to kindle a flame on our hearth-stone, and make our home warm and cheerful. Where do we more need both the restraining and the impulsive, the consolatory and the admonishing principles of the Gospel, than in the thickest of life's cares and duties and engagements, from day to day, and from hour to hour! What other shield can so defend, or what other balm can so comfort and sustain!

12. Hope comes after faith, and love, and amid the trials of life widens the prospects of earth to the great

patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do re-

horizon of heaven. Joy is the proper counterpart to hope, and patience to tribulation, and perseverance to prayer. This is a description of the true method of meeting and overcoming trial and sorrow, and the different parts of the process are consistent and coöperative with one another. Because he is patient under his afflictions, the true disciple no less earnestly prays to be delivered from them, and looks forward with exultation to the day of final freedom from every clog and chain of earth. The most perfect character is thus a balance between different forces, a mediation between widely sundered powers and influences.

13. The virtues here recommended were especially necessary, in that age of the world, and under the peculiarly scattered and endangered condition of the little band of believers, amidst their numerous enemies, both Jews and Gentiles. Though hospitality was a cherished duty of the ancient nations, and found frequent and eloquent eulogies in the classic literature, yet, like every other native plant of virtue, it requires to be cultured and pruned in the garden of the Lord. While all that was good in the heathen code of morals is to be found in the apostolic ethics, it is here raised to new heights of disinterestedness and sanctified by motives of regard for the will of God and the love of Christ. The Hindoos beautifully say, as a reason for showing hospitality even to their enemies, that "the tree does not withdraw its shade even from the wood-cutter." Most affecting motives to hospitality are suggested in Matt. xxv. 35-40, and Heb. xiii. 2.

14. In an age of persecution, when

the Christians went forth as sheep among wolves, it was especially needful that they should take with them the loftiest standard of forgiveness, else their hearts would become hard and embittered, and the Gospel would die out of their souls. But this sublime precept, so often inculcated by Jesus, so beautifully exemplified by him on the cross, is of no local or transient application, but universal and eternal. Not a day passes when it is not imperatively needed in every position of human life, that the wheels of society may revolve without horrid discord, and that the children of God's infinite love may learn to treat one another as he treats us all. There can be no more striking testimony to the superhuman origin of the Christian religion, than its pure and holy precepts, so counter to the spirit of the world, and so superior to its most admired systems of philosophy and morals. What a change had Saul, the arch-persecutor of the Christians, undergone, to become Paul the Apostle of the meek and forgiving Jesus, inculcating boundless love and unwearied piety and mercy! Matt. v. 7, 44-48; Luke xxiii. 34; Acts vii. 60.

15. Chrysostom remarks that it is harder to rejoice sincerely with the joyful, than to weep with the sorrowing; and Rochefoucault makes the startling remark, that in the misfortunes of our best friends there is something which is not altogether displeasing to us. Of course it could only be an ill-regulated nature that took delight in any one's troubles, especially in those of the near and dear; but there are many ill-regulated and undisciplined minds and hearts even in the purest Christian commu-

16 joyce, and weep with them that weep. *Be* of the same mind one  
toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of  
17 low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to  
no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all  
18 men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with  
19 all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give

nity. One of the most important branches, therefore, to the general sentiment of love, is here sketched, — a sincere and cordial sympathy with our fellow-men in both their joys and their sorrows. This is one of the last and most refined manifestations of the genuine Christian character and life, and it makes the dark and howling wilderness of barbarous human nature, of untamed and uncontrollable passions, bud and blossom as the rose.

16. A continuation of the same duties of sympathy, condescension, and humility in social matters. — *Be of the same mind*; that is, as DeWette and Tholuck expound, be like-minded; united. Rom. xv. 5; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2. In the sequel, humility is enjoined, because “the greatest enemy to concord is pride.” — *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.* As the Catholic Testament runs, “not minding high things, but consenting to the humble.” The authorities, however, are in general in favor of understanding the phrase as applicable to men, rather than things, though the adjective in the original Greek leaves it undetermined. Luther paraphrases it, Let yourselves down to the wretched, nay, withdraw not yourselves from the poor and despised, who as yet know not the Gospel.

17. *To no man evil for evil.* It has been aptly said, that to render evil for good is devil-like, evil for evil is brute-like, good for good is man-like, but to render good for evil is Christ-like and God-like. We are summoned

by the voice of revelation, which is echoed in the depths of our own spiritual being, to adopt the highest style of magnanimity and mercy, and strive to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. — *Provide things honest, &c.* These checks and balances, put to the manifestations of the higher life, are fine instances of the superior wisdom of Christianity. While this lofty tone of love, sympathy, superiority to revenge, and heavenly-mindedness, is to be jealously preserved, the good opinion of the world is by no means to be scorned. For *honest* read *beautiful, honorable*, so we obtain a more exact and impressive exhortation.

18. *If it be possible, &c.* Here is the same worldly wisdom mingled with heavenly truth. Peace, peace with all men, is to be pursued, but then we are to remember the hindrances and not to expect impossibilities. We are to do all in our own power, and, so far as we can control external causes, to live a peaceable life; but in spite of our best endeavors our good intentions may be defeated. Fire and water cannot meet in harmony, and good and evil must clash; but it is the part of the disciple of Jesus to sacrifice everything but principle on the altar of peace.

19. The duties of forgiveness are so peremptory, and so difficult, that this master of morals adds line upon line and precept upon precept to enforce them. — *Avenge.* Revenge. — *Give place unto wrath*; i. e. do not come between God and the sinner, but make room for the suitable pun-

place unto wrath ; for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; 20 if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil 21 with good.

ishment which he will inflict upon the wicked, and which will be much better adapted to his case than any penalties of yours. "Do not anticipate the ways of God, allow time and space to his righteous retributions." — *It is written.* Deut. xxxii. 35. A free quotation. Even the elder covenant thus raised the standard of a high reference to God in all injuries, rather than to indulge in petty personal revenge in the treatment of our enemies.

20, 21. The first verse is the description of the method of the duty, and the second the generalization of the principle. "The sweet revenge" of the Christian is to do good unto his foe until he is ashamed of his ill-conduct and turns and repents of it and asks forgiveness. Thus the best revenge is taken by not revenging yourselves, but by treating your enemy in the kindest possible manner. — *Coals of fire on his head.* The Greek of *coals* is the word from which *anthracite* is derived. The sense of the illustration is a little obscure. The intention is obvious to express the giving of pain, for in such imagery the Orientals speak of that act. "Coals of the will" are equivalent to "cutting jests that give pain." The only question is what sort of pain is meant, the punishment of God, made more severe by your kindness, or the sinner's own shame. Tholuck, Olshausen, and others, incline to the latter idea, and "consider the coals of fire as an image for that tormenting sense of shame, which in the end forces the adversary to supplicate forgiveness, inasmuch as no heart, how-

ever hard, can permanently resist a love so uniform, patient, and everywhere forgetting and subordinating self." 2 Esdras xvi. 53 ; Prov. xxv. 21, 22. — *Be not overcome of evil, &c.* The only possible conquest we can make of evil is by the superior instrument of good, of error by truth, of darkness by light, of hatred by love, of sin by holiness. It is by the power of a positive principle alone we can overcome all weakness and evil, and by the expulsive and exclusive energy of a new and holier affection that we can drive away the evil spirits that haunt us, and introduce the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. Even heathen Seneca had a glimpse of this truth, when he said, "Pertinacious goodness conquers the evil."

This beautiful chapter of Christian piety and ethics is capable of being viewed in several distinct lights.

1st. It is in itself a very strong *proof* of the superhuman origin, the Divine authority, and the happy tendency of the Christian revelation. For we can find no passage in an uninspired writer, either in ancient or modern literature, so condensed, so qualified, so commanding in its air of authority, yet so gentle and humane in its tone of love and sympathy, so comprehensive in its rules of duty, so high and unyielding in its standard of obligation, yet so practical as it respects the wants and weaknesses of mankind. We can in short devise no reason why these books of the New Testament have

"So got the start of the majestic world,  
And borne the palm alone,"

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Duties to the State, and the Generalization of all Precepts in Love.*

LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no

except that they were written by those who acted under special commission and authority from Him of the Infinite Reason and the Infinite Love.

2d. Here is also *an interpretation* of what Christianity is; here is its portrait taken by one of the "old masters." If we wish, therefore, to understand Paul's doctrines, as developed in the previous parts of the Epistle, we must read them in the all-illuminating light of Paul's duties, which are laid down in this and the succeeding chapters. We thus learn the consistency of his system, and see that while faith was one of its poles, pointing to God and heaven, good works was the other pole, pointing earthwards, and touching with its attraction all human relations. Thus contemplated, the hard and obscure passages of this Epistle melt away in sunlight, and we see with wonder and admiration from what depths of the spirit these practical directions are drawn, and to what heavenly heights they reach in the kingdom of God.

3d. As a sketch of the *moral fruits of the Gospel*, a hand-book of daily duty, this chapter is beyond all price. If we wish to know whether we are really Christians or not, here is the judgment-seat. If we wish for information wherein we are in doubt, or impulse wherein we are weak, here is knowledge, and here is inspiration. If we desire to know what would be the state of human society under the full stress of Christian influences, we have but to imagine all the virtues and graces here laid down, in full play and harmonious concert, to understand the blessedness of that church and kingdom which Jesus

came to found on earth, and the perfection of that spiritual and social being which has been put within human reach even here below. With faith, love, and hope taking the lead, and producing all their luxuriant and beautiful branches, blossoms, and fruits, we have before us the veritable and majestic tree of life, "which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

## CHAPTER XIII.

The relations of Christianity to civil society and the institutions of the state have been much misunderstood. For while, on one hand, passages like the one before us are cited as proofs that the Gospel has nothing whatsoever to do with politics, unless it be to enjoin passive obedience to the existing powers, on the other hand, it is declared to be identical with republicanism. It is difficult for the world, from its low stand-point, to comprehend so exalted a system, and not fall into the most contradictory theories respecting its connection with the present state of things, on one side, and with the infinite possibilities of progress on the other. But there are some considerations which may serve, at least, to show that the Apostle and his compeers did not love their country less because they loved Christianity more, and that they inculcated no slavish subserviency to tyrants, however they might counsel peace, contentment, and acquiescence in unavoidable evils. The Gospel is a radical cure for every political and social, as well as every moral, abuse

power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

and sin. It puts the axe of reformation at the root of the tree, and cuts up every plant and shoot of evil growth. But its method of attack leads to its misconception as an instrument of social and civil regeneration. Because it does not, in so many words, denounce war, slavery, despotism, intemperance, gambling, and kindred evils, it is hastily inferred by some moralists that Christianity has no specific and deadly hostility to them, and does not work with direct agency for their overthrow. These critics overlook the fact, that the Gospel goes to the fountain-head in the human heart, whence are all the issues of life, and aims, by purifying that, to cleanse all its streams. Whereas, if the method of reformation had been by direct attack upon specific evils, instead of laying down a platform of exhaustive and universally applicable principles, the disappearance of one set of social wrongs would have been but the signal to the onset of a new flock, feathered and colored after the fashion of the hour. No; the method of the Saviour and his Apostles subverts the whole kingdom of evil itself, not so much by special prohibitions as by the creation of an opposite and exclusive kingdom of God. It is superfluous to say, Do not make war, Do not keep slaves, after you have said, Love your neighbor as yourself, and, Do unto others whatsoever you would that others should do unto you; for the greater comprehends the less. The preoccupation of a new affection gives assurance that a Christian will not rob, steal, lie, nor murder. But if, instead of proceeding on this truly philosophical mode of overcoming evil with good, the specification of crimes and vices had been in form, and not in their interior spirit and root of evil, the compend of morals

would have been larger than the Code of Justinian, and would soon have become obsolete. But now the spiritual magazine is perpetually recharged, and the warfare of eternal principles against the shifting phenomena of depraved passions and appetites is never remitted. No evil can escape with impunity. The Gospel sickle sweeps into its ample bend every stalk and straw of the multitudinous growth of sin. By reforming on the basis of principles, it reforms permanently the immoralities and evil institutions and customs of society, and hastens the coming of that great day when the will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Truly understood, then, this passage gives no encouragement to the theory of the divine right of kings, to the vindictive character of punishments inflicted by the magistrates, or to the cruel and arbitrary caprices of slavery and despotism. For one most important qualification which the Apostle interposes in his reasoning is, that the powers are presumed to be a terror to evil works, not to the good, which characteristic takes them of course out of the category of irresponsible and tyrannical domination, and assigns them a place among the beneficent and heaven-sanctioned agencies and restrictions of God's moral government over men. For when Paul speaks so decidedly of the duty of obeying the civil authorities, and says the magistrate beareth not the sword in vain, it has been incredulously asked, whether he could mean that the existing Roman emperor, Nero, was "ordained by God," or was "a minister of God for good," or that those who resisted the tyrant were to be condemned as "resisting the ordinance of God," or that the sword, in his case, was not "borne in

2 Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance

vain," and worse than vain, — "that sword with which Nero ripped up the body of his own mother, that sword for whose blow Nero avowed the wish that his country had but one neck, and under which, be it observed, St. Paul himself afterwards suffered martyrdom for resisting the ordinances of Nero, not to violence, but in obedience to the service of his higher Master, in preaching the doctrines of salvation through Christ?" But, in reply to these interrogations, it should be considered, that Paul is supposed to have written this Epistle to the Romans about the year 58, and that Nero became emperor only four years before, in 54; that he was then very young, and that he had not as yet displayed to their full extent those cruelties and barbarities which have since made his name a horror and a shame in the annals of the human species. Besides, Paul lived remote from Rome, and there were no mails, telegraphs, or steamers in those days to convey to the distant provinces of the empire the news of the capital. The Apostle, too, was arguing upon general principles, and not upon the subjection due to any particular ruler or emperor. He wished to turn the thoughts of the Christian body away from temporal ambition or worldly policy, and teach them that their true kingdom was not of this world, and that their true course was to show themselves good subjects of the respective governments under which they lived. It was indeed only by this pacific policy that the Christian faith could win its way in the world, or be preserved from the intrigues and corruption of politics. The grand seat of its power was not primarily in its direct external moulding of the manners, customs, or laws of society, but its dominion was over the heart. Still,

there can be no question that its ultimate power is to be developed in the entire regeneration of society, as well as of the individual soul. The kingdom within is to give form to the kingdom without, and the kingdom without to give energy and reality to the kingdom within. The private life and character of Christians can only attain their purest manifestation on the large scale, when the institutions of society and all external circumstances that bear upon them are in accordance with the standard of Christ; while, on the other hand, all attempts to reform things without regenerating men will prove a total failure. Action and reaction, reformation and regeneration, faith and good works, piety and morality, civilization and Christianity, are mutual parts of the same heaven-ordained whole. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

1. *Let every soul*, i. e. every person. — *The higher powers*. By these are meant the magistrates, of whatever rank, to whom subjection was due in the state. The proposition was a general one, that Christians, because they were disciples of a Heavenly Master, were not therefore released from their allegiance to the civil authority; indeed, that they were most distinctly bound to be good citizens, because the very purport of the state and of the church agreed in this respect, when their respective functions were properly discharged, that they both were a restraint upon evil works and an encouragement to good ones. — *Ordained of God*. The same doctrine is taught in Titus iii. 1 and 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. The origin of civil society is in the Divine Providence, which has determined the powers and circumstances of man and appointed the sphere of the social relations for most

of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and

important purposes of culture and discipline of the immortal faculties of our being. This broad and general truth is laid down by the Apostle without necessarily indorsing monarchy as of divine right, or giving any countenance to tyranny or slavery, or even making in republics the voice of the people synonymous with the voice of God. General statements of truth must, of course, be taken with reasonable qualifications. For, both in the case of Paul and that of Peter, we know that the duty of obeying God rather than men was distinctly avowed, and that they both finally sacrificed their lives to a martyr's glorious death, rather than obey the iniquitous decrees of the Roman authorities at the expense of their religion. The magistrates were the higher powers, but there were higher powers than they, to whom they yielded uncompromising fealty, even truth, and Christ, and God. For all the genuine authority of the state was derived from these higher sources, and, unless exercised in harmony with the moral government of God, it was to be repudiated as having violated the single condition on which it was entitled to respect and obedience. "The right of revolution," therefore, as it has been called, is not taken away by the Apostle in this passage, when it is properly limited, for he was himself an actor in the most stupendous revolution that was ever enacted; one that finally changed the faith of the Roman empire from Paganism to Christianity, and one that brought the Apostle and his fellow-disciples into collision with the civil government, and involved not a few of them in martyrdom.

2. *Damnation.* This is usually as-

sociated in men's minds with punishment hereafter; but the better rendering is always *condemnation*, for that covers the whole ground of the original word, and leaves the question of the time and duration of the penalty and discipline necessary for the wrong-doer in the same indefiniteness in which the Apostle places it. The idea of the verse is, that civil obedience is a Christian duty, because government is of providential origin and authority, and they, therefore, who prove refractory subjects, will expose themselves to condemnation and punishment. These words of caution were needed by the converts from among the Jews, who were inclined to refuse to pay tribute to Cæsar, and who were but too prone to embark in rash and ruinous insurrections, such as finally drew down on them the vengeance of Rome and overthrew the Jewish temple and city and nation in irretrievable destruction.

3. The ground is here stated on which obedience to the civil power could be conscientious and reasonable. When the functions of government were rightly discharged, and the evil were restrained and punished, and the good were encouraged, the ruler became "a minister of God," and was to be obeyed and aided as such in the maintenance of his authority. We see here, therefore, the all-important qualification which limits the general proposition of the previous verses. The rulers are officers of God, and are to be cheerfully obeyed as such, as long as they fulfil their true offices of promoting the great moral purposes of the Divine government itself; but when they abandon that high position, and lend



4 thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a  
5 revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for con-  
6 science' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are

themselves to fraud, to oppression, to abuse of their fellow-men, — when- ever they do by their conduct virtu- ally subvert the ends and aims of God's government, and become in- struments to enslave, corrupt, harass, and injure mankind, — their author- ity is at an end, and they can sus- tain no claim for the respect and obedience of mankind. In truth, in such cases "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," for liberty is not only a right and privilege, but a duty, since only in a state of liberty can a human being attain his true growth and development, and become the perfect being which his Creator plan- ned, and which the whole system of human life is constructed to produce.

4, 5. Factious disturbers of the peace would find that not only the right, but that might, was on the side of the civil authority, and that, if they did acts of injustice, or raised insurrections against the peace and order of society, they would not escape condign punishment. — *Bear- eth not the sword in vain.* The sword is here introduced as the emblem of authority, as the axe and the dagger were employed at different periods of the Roman republic and empire to symbolize the same thing. We see, therefore, that the passage is strained beyond its obvious and natu- ral import, when it is made to teach necessarily the doctrine of capital punishment. The kind and amount of infliction for any particular crime is not defined, because that question did not fall within the province of the Apostle, he being a moralist, not a

legislator ; but he simply declares the universal proposition that the evil- doer was to stand in awe of the civil magistrate, for he might be sure that he would find his emblem of authority was not in vain. — *A revenger to exe- cute wrath, &c.* We should be going out of the record, if we inferred that it was proper for human governments to indulge the spirit of retaliation, or that the term "wrath" was to be ap- plied in any other than a strongly figurative sense to the dealings of God with his children. These ex- pressions are a part of the necessary anthropomorphism, or human charac- ter, attached to description of what is so far above us, and beyond our reach, as the divine government. — *Con- science' sake ;* i. e. obedience was to be rendered, not only from the dread of punishment, but from conscientious motives of right, regarding the civil rulers as standing in a certain sense in the place of providence itself to the mass of mankind under their do- minion.

6. *Pay ye tribute also.* The ques- tion was much agitated among the Jews whether it was right to pay tribute to their heathen masters ; but it was decided in the affirmative by our Lord, Matt. xvii. 24–27, xxii. 17–21, and by Paul in the present passage, who assigns as the reason for it, that the officers are ministers of God, who are devoted to the main- tenance of justice and order between man and man, and therefore entitled to support. DeWette, Olshausen, and Tholuck agree in making *this very thing* stand for the general sub-

God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not

ject of the passage, viz. the service of God in upholding law and order, and not the special matter of the collection of the tribute, spoken of in this verse. The payment of taxes to heathen magistrates was justifiable, because the money was devoted to the preservation of civil society, to the support of law, and the restraint of crime and sin.

7. *To all their dues.* The topic of tribute started in the fruitful mind of Paul the general question, what are our dues to our fellow-men, and reminded him how much we owe to one another, and especially that great debt of love, which we never can entirely pay, and which indeed we are happier in never entirely discharging. The precept was to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. — *Tribute* was the general tax, and *custom* a special duty upon some articles. — *Fear and honor* were especially due to magistrates, and love to all mankind in general.

8. *Owe no man anything, &c.* Pecuniary debts are a great snare to the character, and have proved the destruction of many noble virtues. Every man should strive, as St. Paul suggests, to keep clear of them, or if he becomes entangled in them, to free himself from their depressing and hazardous embarrassment by all means as soon as possible. He whose delicate sense of honor and conscience feels a stain as a wound, will strive to be faithful and punctual in discharging all his social and legal obligations, and not only in fulfilling

the law of the land, but the law of love, and doing as he would be done by. Olshausen truly remarks, that "love has the wonderful quality, that the more it is practised, the more amply it unfolds itself and rises in its claims. . . . While therefore in other circumstances a man stands better in proportion as he owes less, love is in the best condition the more that it feels itself in debt. . . . Hence is inexhaustible as God himself, and is the absolute fulfilment of the law. In man, however, love is growing, and consequently is only the fulfilment of the law in process of approximation." James ii. 8. The debts of love are always paying, and always growing, for the more we pay, the more we have to pay, and the more we ought to pay. The capacity grows by what it feeds on, and both in the number of objects on which we bestow our affections, and the intensity of our love, the more guests the heart entertains the more room it has, and the purer and stronger is its affection for each one.

"Charity, serene, sublime,  
Beyond the reach of death and time,  
Like the blue sky's all-bounding space,  
Holds heaven and earth in its embrace."

9. *For this, Thou shalt not commit, &c.* Matt. xxii. 34-40; 1 John iv. 21. The generalization of all the negative commands, Thou shalt not do this, or that, into the one positive law of love, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, indicates the superior tone of the Gospel over every other code of morals. For it aims, not only to prevent the evil, but to

bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, 10 Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to 11 his neighbor: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law. And that,

do the good, and to use in fact the good as the antidote to the evil. For he who has a germ of love implanted in his heart will soon outgrow those lower states of character in which he would be induced to kill, or steal, or do any other moral enormity. The sunlight of Christian love sends all the foul harpies of passion and every bird of ill omen into their own native night. — *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, is conceded by the best critics to have no title to be considered genuine in the text, for the authorities are against it.

10. 1 Cor. xiii. 1–13; Gal. v. 14. The reason of the generalization of the previous verse is here given; namely, that as love can do no ill to any one, therefore it is superfluous to exhort him who loves his neighbor not to steal, or covet, or kill, for his very state of feeling not only precludes those, but every species of social wrong, so that when we lay down love as the basis, we predicate the fulfilment of every iota of the moral law. Hunt's parable of Abou Ben Adhem and the Angel cannot be repeated too often, so let it be read here.

“Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,  
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,  
An angel, writing in a book of gold.  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold;  
And to the presence in the room he said,  
‘What writest thou?’ The vision raised its  
head,

And, with a look made of all sweet accord,  
Answered, ‘The names of those that love the  
Lord.’

‘And is mine one?’ said Abou. ‘Nay, not so,’  
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerily still; and said, ‘I pray thee then,  
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.’  
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night  
It came again, with a great wakening light,

And showed the names whom love of God had  
blessed,  
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.”

11. *And that*. That is, all this is to be done, love is to be observed, the law is thus to be fulfilled by the disciples, mindful that the time is short, and the day of retribution is at hand. The time-element is brought in to add force to the exhortation. Many critics are disposed to regard Paul and the other Apostles as believers in the speedy second-coming of Christ on earth, and as therefore urging upon their converts an immediate attention to the subject of religious duty in view of the swift advance of the great day of the Lord. There is considerable phraseology in the New Testament, which may seem, when literally construed, to favor this theory of apostolic fallibility, and the following passages have been referred to in illustration: Phil. iv. 5; 1 Thess. v. 2, 6; Heb. x. 25, 37; James v. 7, 9; 1 Peter iv. 7; 2 Peter iii. 10–12; Rev. xxii. 12. Tholuck accounts for this erroneous opinion partly by the general law of human nature, which leads man to think that the object of his hope is just at hand, and partly on account of the language of admonition which Jesus often used, that his followers should be prepared for the great crisis, and which was like the phraseology taken from the old prophets, where they were describing the approaching blessings or judgments of God. Matt. xxiv. 29, 42; xxv. 13; Luke xxi. 34–36. But there are several strong objections to the doctrine, that the Apostles were in an error upon this subject.

1st. That it almost necessarily in-

knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off <sup>12</sup> the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let <sup>13</sup>

volves *Christ himself in the same mistake*, for he uses very similar language to theirs. But we cannot suppose that a wisdom so great as his in other things failed entirely in regard to so important a matter as the duration of his kingdom on earth, or that his prophetic vision, so sure in other matters, was blinded in this grand point of interest.

2d. *The interpretation of the Apostle's language is made too literal* on this theory, and we are found taking the burning sentences of the Orient and interpreting them by the cold rules of the Occident, as if every figure of speech were an accurate mathematical proposition.

3d. *Paul himself* in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians specially discards the notion of the second advent as near at hand, and bids his converts not be alarmed at any representations which he had made, and which it appears they had misunderstood; 2 Thess. ii. 2, 3; as men now misunderstand the same language and construe it as a prediction of Christ's second coming on earth.

4th. The use of the language in question is compatible with the belief that a *great length of time would intervene* before Christ came, for similar phraseology is employed in Rev. xxii. 12; yet the author had been describing a series of events which would occur before the coming of Christ, one of which alone would occupy one thousand years. Rev. xx. 2, 5, 6.

5th. In fact, *all the demands of the language* respecting the speedy second coming of Christ are satisfied, when we take into consideration the nearness of the approach of death to each

man, and so, in a sense, the coming of Christ to him; and again, the usual prophetic manner of describing the political and religious revolutions of the world by the war of the natural elements, and the overthrow of the established ordinances of nature, in sun, moon, and stars, day and night, and the ongoing of the material creation.

*For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* This, and the first clause of the next verse, *The night is far spent, the day is at hand*, are put into a parenthesis by Griesbach in his critical edition. Locke paraphrases it, that your salvation is nearer than when you first entered into the profession of Christianity.

12. The general purport of ver. 11-14 is sufficiently manifest;—it is that they should rouse themselves to duty, as men awaking out of sleep, as soldiers suddenly called to battle, and hastily putting on their armor. The past ages of the world were described under the figure of night, and the coming Christian ages under that of day. The inference was, therefore, that the conduct of the Christian should bear some resemblance to the great change in the circumstances of the world, and the condition of Christianity. Children of the light and the day were called upon to be wide awake, to be up and doing, to repudiate the works of darkness, to put on the armor of the day, and thus be prepared to fight the battle of life as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Eph. v. 11-14; vi. 12; John iii. 19-21.

13, 14. The vices here described were the fruits of a dark and benighted condition of the world, when but little light from above shone on the path of human duty and destiny.

us walk honestly, as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying : but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Sad to say, not one sin in the old catalogue has become entirely obsolete during all these mighty spaces of time, this score of centuries of the era called after Christ. Still, some advancement has been made, and the Christian Church is purer than it was at Corinth, with its intoxication around the table of the Lord, and its licentiousness among near relations. But the exhortation is still pertinent, to clothe one's self in the mantle of Christian-like excellences, and keep the body under, with its grasping desires and earth-bound passions.—*Honestly.* This word is translated, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, *decently*, and might be properly rendered so here, for the question was rather as it regarded decency of conduct than honesty. Olshausen remarks, that, “in the admonitions which here follow, we must not think of gross manifestations of fleshliness, such as even the Law punishes, so much as of more delicate spiritual manifestations in evil thoughts and inclinations, which may be quelled by a careful discipline of the body.”—*Rioting.* Rather, carousals, revels, “after supper, the guests often sallying into the streets with torches, music, frolic, and songs, in honor especially of Bacchus.”—*Chambering and wantonness.* These were the vices of licentiousness, as the others were of intoxication. The degradation of the heathen world in

both these respects was almost incredible, according to their own historians and poets ; and although our modern civilization is bad enough, yet we find, by comparing notes, that the Christian religion has raised the standard of duty higher, and that some of the darkest features of life in Greece and Rome have been ameliorated and purified. But an almost infinite work yet remains to establish peace, to emancipate the enslaved, to raise up the fallen drunkard, to enlighten the ignorant and the degraded, and preach the Gospel to the poor ; but for this glorious reformation we have now ample means and motives, and need not despair of a steady growth of the Gospel in the hearts and lives of our race.—*Make no provision, &c.* The life of the body is secured by instincts which act with certainty and constancy ; but the life of the soul requires special efforts and culture, for it is not instinctive, but rational, conscientious, and affectional, and requires the hand of diligent cultivation. The spiritual life is not unnatural, but rather, if we may say so, supernatural, or above nature, a portion of divine life, a vision of heavenly truth, a breath of purer air, an inspiration of deeper love.

“Through thee, O Lord, we own  
A new and heavenly birth,  
Kindred to spirits round thy throne,  
Though sojourners of earth.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Special Duties of Christians in the Midst of Heathen Communities.*

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful dis-

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN pursuing the great subject of the Christian life, whose basis is faith, and whose animating spirit is love, the Apostle comes in this chapter to the discussion of some of the local questions of the Roman Church, in which the law of love and the temper of forbearance and candor were all essential. The particular state of things in the ancient Church which called forth these sentences has passed away, but their wisdom and beautiful spirit are imperishable, and applicable in every age and in every Church. The general duty of love is reduced down to such distinct specifications, that he who runneth may read, and the humblest understanding may see how the divine sentiments of the Christian religion are to be carried out in every-day life. We are prone to arrogate to modern Christendom a superior culture and refinement; but the relations of him, who taught such lessons as these, to them who profited by his instructions, must have been cast in a finer mould than usual, and they can well challenge competition with the social sentiments of the most highly civilized communities of the present Christian world. Glorious Apostle! goodly Church! Here were the germs taking root for an infinite growth, for a lovely blooming, and rich fruitage of humanity. The tree of life, banian-like, was to drop its branches from these living centres, and take ever wider circles of expansion until it filled the earth.

1. *Him that is weak in the faith, &c.*; that is, the person not sufficiently advanced in the Christian character to rise above weak and superstitious scruples in relation to various ob-

servances of food and drink, and festivals and customs. A question has arisen, whether the Apostle refers to ascetics who abstained from a rich diet on principle, or to those who were afraid they should pollute themselves, if they indulged in meat and wine, with what had been offered as sacrifices and libations to the heathen gods. There were, no doubt, in the early ages, those who practised a vegetarian diet. The Essenes among the Jews, and the new Pythagorean school among the Greeks and Romans, advocated great abstinence in living. But the more probable opinion is, that reference is here made to those Christian converts from Judaism who had been accustomed to the distinction of clean and unclean animals, and all the punctilious observances of the Law, and who dreaded lest they should contaminate themselves if they partook of the ordinary food exposed in the pagan markets. This view corresponds better with our historical information, and it answers all the demands of the text. The person "weak in faith," therefore, was characterized by a scrupulousness, more nice than wise, arising from his previous legal stand-point in morals, where there was much artificial judgment as to what was right and wrong, and from his inability to rise to the higher platform of faith-righteousness, in which what was evil or what was good was determined by its essential moral character. By faith we may here understand Christian convictions.—*Not to doubtful disputations.* As the margin reads, "Not to judge his doubtful thoughts"; or, as Robinson translates, Not to make one's self the judge of the doubts or scruples of the convert. The sense is obvious.

2 putations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another,  
 3 who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him  
 that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that  
 4 eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest  
 another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth;  
 yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.  
 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth  
 every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own

Respect the conscience of a disciple, who still adheres in many things to his earlier faith; do not reject him from your fellowship, or trouble him with disputes. It is therefore at once a precept of conscience and one of charity. Acts xx. 35; 1 Cor. viii. 12.

2. This verse is adduced by one class of critics as evidence that ascetics, or vegetarians, are meant in the text. But all the necessities of the passage are met more naturally by supposing that "the words applied to the social feasts of the Christians, at which the Jewish converts preferred abstaining altogether from meats of flesh, being afraid of eating what was unclean." 1 Cor. viii. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 3. There were two classes in the bosom of the Church; one of free-thinking Gentiles, who had no compunction in eating whatever was placed before them, asking no questions for conscience' sake; and the other of those who confined themselves to vegetables, lest they might unknowingly "eat something unclean and defiling, the flesh of idolatrous sacrifices." As many animals were offered in sacrifice, much of the meat unconsumed at the altar, or by the priests, was exposed for sale in the common market, and bought up by the inhabitants for daily consumption.—*Herbs*. Vegetables, garden plants.

3, 4. The two parties were probably Jews and Gentiles; the latter eating, and the former not eating, animal

food, for the reasons given above. The twofold precept was to one, not to despise, and to the other, not to condemn, since, before the absolute standard of God, each was accepted. Col. ii. 16; James iv. 12.—*Who art thou that judgest, &c.* It is an invasion of the Divine sovereignty to pronounce judgment on our fellow-men. He who in these matters of comparatively little consequence is condemned by his followers, will, if conscientious, be sustained by God. But the whole passage teaches the duty, not only of obeying, but also of educating and enlightening conscience.

5, 6. A new set of questions is here introduced, relating to the observance of religious festivals and days.—*One man esteemeth one day, &c.* The convert from Judaism adheres to his old usages of keeping some days sacred; for example, the Sabbath, the new-moon, fast and feast days; while the Gentile convert can feel no special respect for them whatever, because he has been differently educated. The genius of the Gospel, therefore, is liberty, that each one should follow the bent of his own reason and conscience; and charity, that he should allow to others the same privilege.—*Let every man, &c.* A similar sentiment to those in ver. 22, 23. What is done should be done on the strength of personal conviction; and then the light that is in one, the inner light, that lights every man that cometh

mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth *it* unto the Lord; 6 and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die,

into the world, will grow constantly brighter and brighter. "His own mind, after all, is the ultimate text by which everything is to be tried by man, even those systems of truth and authority that claim to be infallible." He must decide by this standard whether revelation itself is entitled to his confidence and obedience.—*Regardeth*. The margin reads *observeth*. Both act under a sense of moral obligation, and with reference to God, one in keeping, and the other in not keeping, the day. 1 Cor. x. 31. The same was true in regard to eating or not eating; for in both cases they gave thanks to God, and the central idea of his government, and their duty to him, kept all things in good order, and preserved the moral perspective of life and character unimpaired.

7, 8. *For none of us liveth to himself*. We are parts of a great whole, and can claim no isolation or absolute independence. This thought, too, that we belong to God, in life and in death, is a transporting view, for it raises us out of the narrow sphere of our individual interests, and gives us the citizenship of the universe. Belsham forcibly remarks: "By the law of our profession, self, the great idol of the unbelieving world, is totally annihilated. Neither the attainment of wealth, nor the gratification of the passions, nor the preservation of liberty, nor social enjoyments, nor the love of life, nor the fear of death, are any longer suffered to predominate

in the breast, or to maintain any undue influence over the mind. When a man becomes a believer in Christ, he learns to look beyond himself, and to direct his regards to worthier objects." 2 Cor. v. 6, 8; 1 Thess. v. 10. The specific evil of any sin is, that it makes the creature the centre of life instead of the Creator; of ambition, that it seeks glory, seeks to be first, not to be useful, not to be a true and faithful part of the greater kingdom of God; of pleasure, that it would barter away the greater, the universal good, for transient gratification; of avarice, that it hoards for itself, makes its individual prosperity superior to all other things, to justice, truth, benevolence, the state's honor, the Church's holiness, and the home's affections. Vice, therefore, like the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, puts selfishness as the pivot of the universe, and makes sun and moon and golden stars revolve around it; yea, God himself to exist to further its aggrandizing schemes. But holiness, like the Copernican system of the worlds, which puts the sun at the centre, and makes the earth, moon, and planets with their satellites all revolve around the greater orb of light and life, fixes God as the point of attraction, and the controller of all subordinate worlds and beings. Nothing can make a human being more wretched than to give him up to the execution of his own purposes, unsanctified and unguided by reference to the will of God; for he un-



9 we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

dertakes to manage the interests of an immortal being by the rush-light of his own little understanding, instead of seeking the counsel of Him who knoweth all things. On the other hand, nothing can more surely make a soul happy here and hereafter than to live unto God, to keep nigh unto him in the consciousness of the spirit, to take hold of his mighty hand to lead us through the dark passages of life, and in all things to follow his plan, and not our caprice, and to bend freely and gladly all powers, possessions, and means to do his holy will in action, and to bear his holy will in suffering and discipline. Nor can we doubt that He, who has thus had the entire creation, control, and moulding of human nature, who has assigned the places of its abodes and its education, who is the Supreme Master of life and death, in whom we live and move and have our being, and to whom we go to be judged after death, will in the infinite range of his worlds, in the countless ages of his teaching, and by the manifold influences of his fatherly love and chastening, for every child he has made, find means to draw every soul created in his own image to himself, and purge away all the blots of sin; for living or dying, we are the Lord's. But the glorious hope of that final restoration when the last prodigal son shall have come back from eating the husks of his selfishness and his lust to the bountiful provisions of his father's house, is grievously abused, when it is employed to relax the immediate bond of virtue, or to lessen the tremendous guilt and horror of sin. The dictate of wisdom is, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

9. *And rose and revived.* Gries-

bach edits this, *and lived.* Acts x. 42; 2 Cor. v. 15. Christ lived that he might be the Lord of the living, and he died that he might be the Lord of the dead; in other words, the simple thought is, that he tried all human fortunes, was humiliated, and was exalted, that he might be a sufficient Saviour to every human being, that he might reign both in earth and in heaven. Tholuck says: "Since the completion of the work of redemption, Christ is the Lord of all who are admitted into the divine kingdom, and this not only during their pilgrimage upon earth, but even beyond the grave." May we not suppose indeed, with great probability, and in harmony with various intimations of Scripture, that Jesus still leads on his brethren of the spirit-land in the way of spiritual life and progress, and that the work he accomplishes for the spirits of men in the present world is but the commencement of a glorious education in wisdom, love, and holiness, a nearer approximation to God, which is to be carried on through the never-ending future? The most perfect of their race, the Howards, Fénelons, and Miltons, but learn here the a b c of that infinite lore which is treasured up in the councils of heaven, but thrill with a few preliminary emotions to that immeasurable love which flows forth without ceasing from the Heart of the universe. Heaven could indeed, we may reverently say, only remain heaven to Christ and his followers, as it should open a sphere for the exercise and culture of all those graces and virtues which distinguished their character while on the earth, while the more felt and manifested presence and glory of the Supreme Father must dilate every spirit with

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* Let 13

new power and life. Acts vii. 55, 56, 59, 60; ix. 4, 5; x. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 23; Heb. vii. 25.

“The Saviour now is gone before  
To yon blest realm of light:  
O, thither may our spirits soar,  
And wing their upward flight!”

10. One party, probably the Jews, judged or condemned their opponents; and the other party, the Gentiles, set at naught, or despised, the scrupulous Jews; but both transcended their sphere, for all alike were amenable at a higher bar. 2 Cor. v. 10. — *The judgment-seat of Christ.* The Alexandrine, Clermont, and other important manuscripts, read *God*, instead of *Christ*, and Tischendorf follows that reading in the text in his edition; but Griesbach speaks of it as “worthy of regard, and deserving further examination, but yet inferior to the received reading.” It is remarkable that several of the strongest proof-texts of the Trinity labor under critical doubts of their genuineness; for example, the one in question; Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16; and 1 John v. 7. We cannot suppose for a moment that a direct fraud was perpetrated upon the Scriptures to furnish weapons for the Athanasian side of the Trinitarian controversy, for such an attempt would have been detected and exposed as soon as it was made; but we can easily conceive that notes favoring the doctrine of the Trinity might be introduced first into the margin, then placed in the substance of the page in a smaller hand, and finally copied in the text as of equal authority with it. In fact, how can we otherwise account for the very singular fact men-

tioned above? But in the present instance, if the word *Christ* retain its position in the text, it furnishes no valid argument for the doctrine of the three persons in one God. For the reason assigned by Jesus himself for his having the judgment committed to him was not because he was the Son of God, or divine in his being, but because he was the Son of man, and might be supposed to have a fellow-feeling with those who were brought before his tribunal. John v. 22, 27. Dr. Priestley justly says, “The judgment-seat of Christ and that of God are the same; not because Christ is God, but because he acts in the name and by the authority of God, which is fully expressed when it is said that ‘God will judge the world by Jesus Christ.’” 2 Cor. v. 10.

11, 12. *For it is written.* Isa. xlv. 23. The dominion over the faith and the conscience belonged unto God, and not to man, and confession was to be made, not to fallible and harsh-judging mortals, but to the Lord and Searcher of the heart. This was the declaration of the earlier Scriptures, and this was the spirit of the later dispensation. It is possible, however, that the profession of faith is rather meant here, than confession of sins. — *Shall give account of himself*, not of another. Gal. vi. 4, 5. Independent of one another, they were all in common dependent on God, and just in proportion as they were free from human domination, they were subject to the Divine government. What principle can operate more effectually to check the wrong-doer, than the thought, that, however secret his act

us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in *his* 14 brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any- 15 thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy

may be, though it be in darkness and solitude, yet he is open to the inspection of One who will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or evil, and that the decisions of this judgment will be more perfectly carried out in the world of spirits than they can be in this infancy of our being!

13. Luke vi. 37. There is a paronomasia, a play upon words, here: Judge not one another, but judge or decide this point, &c. He wished to persuade the stronger to bear with the weaker, and to refrain even from practices which might be innocent in themselves, for the sake of those who would be led astray by their example. Tholuck remarks, that "the disposition which Paul evinces in these exhortations proves what a mighty influence the Christian faith had had in making him indulgent and humble; for if we reflect upon his natural character, we can well suppose that he would have been more disposed to kindle into anger at the weak and scrupulous, and to treat them with severity. But the spirit of Christ had taught him to be weak with the weak. And in the Christian Church, which is never composed but of those who bear and those who are borne, this is the only way in which the bond of perfectness and of peace can subsist; to wit, when the child aspires to manhood, and the man becomes a child. Such mutual subordination and forbearance is a salutary medicine for pride.

14. *By the Lord Jesus.* Either by personal communications, of which in-

stances are given in Acts ix. 4, 5, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 2 Cor. xii. 1, or by the natural action of the Gospel upon his character in giving him refinement of thought, and charity, and gentleness of heart.—*Unclean*; i. e. common. Matt. xv. 11. As much as to say, the ritual standard of the Jews is an artificial one; but to one whose conscience has been educated in that school, some things are lawful, and others are unlawful, and he must abide by his own personal conviction; for if anything is common to him, or unclean, he must act accordingly, and respect the decisions of his own mind. For if he does not regard his own rule, then he is not in a condition to become a good subject of any other kingdom. Luke vi. 37.

15. But, while the rule of the weak brother is plain, and he must obey the present dictate of conscience, the rule also of the strong brother is just as plain; namely, that he should treat these scruples tenderly, and refrain from wounding in the slightest degree one who was punctilious in meats and drinks and days. Jesus set the example of even dying that he might save, not the strong, but the weak, and call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. A savor of his compassionate and all-sacrificing spirit was to be the ameliorating influence to act on these relations between Christians at different stages of progress and spiritual culture.—*Destroy not him*, &c. I. e. peril not his salvation by inducing him to adopt a course of conduct against his own conscience. 1 Cor. viii. 11.

not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your 16  
good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and 17  
drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.  
For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, 18

16, 17. *Your good.* By which may be understood the superior intelligence and liberty of those who were not embarrassed by such scruples. They must not, by their want of charity, or disposition to shock the prejudices of their less advanced brethren, forfeit their own lofty position of independence, and bring it into ill-repute. 1 Cor. viii. 8; x. 29, 30.—*The kingdom of God, &c.* The strong antithesis is put between the observances in question and those master principles in which the essence of Christianity consisted. The category of non-essentials might be much enlarged, and we might truly say, The kingdom of God not only does not consist in meat and drink, but it standeth not in creeds, in ceremonials, in names, in dogmas, in human rules, in ecclesiastical authority, about which there have been such endless contentions, and which, by one or another party, have been set up as pillars of the Church. But the Apostle seizes upon the spiritual points as the vital ones, and enumerates three, righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy, as comprehending the leading features of the new and glorious kingdom. Words become, by long and peculiar use, so technical that we can scarcely penetrate below them, and reach the living fountain of meaning which plays at the bottom. But in the first word he determines the prominent object of the Gospel to be, not what Luther and his followers have asserted, justification by faith, but righteousness; the ardent and thorough-going soul of Paul would not stop short of the most substantial good, the reality of realities. In peace or peaceableness

is summed up the true position towards others, as in righteousness is contained that pertaining to one's self, and in holy spiritual joy, joy in the Holy Ghost, a right posture of soul so far as happiness and hope are concerned. Not that such enumeration by any means exhausts the whole subject, but we may suppose that the Apostle uses the most pregnant words, and instinctively selected each one as the representative of a salient point in the Christian style of character.—*Holy Ghost.* As the first letters of these words are commonly printed in capitals, the impression is made that a person is meant, the so-called third person of the Trinity. But that this is not necessarily the interpretation is evident from the writings even of some Trinitarian critics; for Le Clerc, Limborch, and Schleusner refer the phrase to the spirit of the Gospel, in fact to Christianity, as the holy principle and energy which gives true enjoyment to man's heart. See Wilson's Concessions, on this passage. The words Holy Ghost may also be applied to *righteousness* and *peace*, as well as to *joy*. The holy spirit of the Gospel would dilate and sanctify all these words with a new and fuller signification. Lardner understands the Apostle, not as speaking of the joy which we possess ourselves, but of that which we are instrumental in imparting to others, the satisfaction which we procure to our fellow-men.

18, 19. The three lines of action, service to Christ, acceptableness with God, and favor among men, are, when rightly balanced, harmonious with one another. Natural piety and faith in Jesus and morality in society are kindred each with the other. We

19 and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed 20 *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *anything* whereby

here have a declaration as to what is the ground of justification or acceptance with God; namely, spiritual righteousness, peaceableness, and happiness. Eph. iv. 3. The clear and potent duty of a Christian, therefore, is to promote friendly and pacific feelings, and mutual improvement in spiritual things. *To edify one another* was to build up one another in the Christian life, after the usual figure of the Apostle. Instead of thwarting this great purpose, either by harsh condemnation on one side, or by silent contempt on the other, the disciples were to unite all their spiritual forces to help one another; for if Christianity can be expressed by any one word, that word is *love*.

20, 21. He perseveres in his theme of charity and forbearance. Above, it was, Destroy not the work of Christ, ver. 15; here, it is, Destroy not the work of God, by indulgence in an unimportant matter of food; for though you may be able to do it with a clear conscience yourself, yet to another man it has the rank odor of guilt. Abstractly considered, one kind of food may be as innocent as another, but as men are educated, what is harmless to one is laden with sin to another. Conscience is not a fixed quantity, but a movable term, a fluxion; for though it exists in all, it is as various in form and texture as the features of the face. Perhaps the human being could not be found who does not recognize something as right and something as wrong, something as good and something as evil; but the particular things called right and good, or wrong and evil, will be found to

vary widely in different ages, countries, and religions. Charity, therefore, must go with conscience as its appropriate balance-wheel. — *It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, &c.* The very important principle is here introduced, that we should give up even innocent gratifications in themselves, for the sake of helping our brother more effectually in his work of reformation and self-improvement. One of the specifications is no longer applicable,—that of eating flesh; but the other, the drinking of wine, or any spirituous liquors, though for different reasons than those which existed in the time of Paul, still stands as good as ever. The Temperance reformation has brought this idea into great prominence and use. And were such a thing possible as that we could ourselves use the articles as a beverage with perfect impunity, it would remain as an act of virtue, and as a Christian duty, according to the lofty standard of Paul's morality, to abstain totally from them for the sake of our neighbor, who may be addicted to bad habits, and who may be capable of being restored to the paths of sobriety and reason if he meet with proper sympathy and pure examples and high principle among those able to befriend him. The ancient Christian was to abstain from wine, lest its use should scandalize his weaker brother, who looked upon it as a horrible profanation to drink what might have been procured to be used as a libation in the idol-worship. The modern Christian is, by the same rule of tender solicitude for his brother's virtue

thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou 22  
faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that con-  
demneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he 23  
that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith :  
for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

and sobriety, to abstain from the same article, if by such an act he can save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

22, 23. By *faith* in these verses is not meant the religion of Jesus in general, but rather a personal conviction of what is right. It is a sentiment, which is to be cherished as between the soul and its Maker, as too dear and precious a thing to be at the beck of fashion or caprice, or to be adopted as an imitation of other men. 1 John iii. 21. While having this personal confidence that what you are doing is right, do not carry it out in such a way as to cause your brother-man to sin. Be willing to concede a point to his scruples, if it is a matter in which you will not violate your sense of duty.—*Hast thou faith?* Griesbach and Tischendorf read it without the interrogation, *Thou hast faith.*—*Happy is he*, &c. St. Paul has here laid down the true method of the culture of a sound and a delicate conscience; namely, in things positively commanded by the law of God, to yield unhesitating obedience, but in things indifferent to follow the leadings of conscience, to obey carefully what on the whole seems to be for the best; and thus, by doing the nearest duty, the path of life grows clearer, and the discriminating power of conscience is increased. But while all this work is faithfully and sedulously carried on within the confines of the heart, externally, in our treatment of other men and our example and influence with them, we are with as much jealousy to avoid overriding their honest scruples, though they may

seem to us to be weak and immaterial, as we should guard against suffering our own to be trampled under foot. While, then, conscience is the keeper of peace at home, charity is the keeper of peace abroad.—*He that doubteth is damned*, &c., is condemned. Thus Neander paraphrases: “An individual who, though not sufficiently advanced in Christian knowledge to attain the conviction that the eating of meat sacrificed to idols is in itself indifferent, is yet seduced by worldly considerations to partake of it, acts in a manner deserving of condemnation, since he does not act according to his convictions. And, ver. 15, whoever eats of flesh offered to idols, following his own inclination, and taking no account of the scruples of his weak brother, and thus seduces him to follow his example without a firm conviction of its rectitude, troubles his brother’s conscience, and acts himself contrary to the law of love, and sins.” 1 Cor. viii. 12.—*For whatsoever is not of faith is sin*; i. e. whatever is not done with a persuasion of its lawfulness is sinful. This rule applies just as much to the uninstructed as to the instructed conscience. The philosophy and the morality of Paul’s doctrine are alike sound and rational. For conscience is given to each man, and he must follow his own, and not another man’s, standard of duty. If it is a dark, or a scrupulous, or a morbid conscience, still it is the best he has, and he must follow it notwithstanding its imperfections. And if he thus faithfully adheres to its dictates, it will grow clearer and more intelligent, and its decisions will more

## CHAPTER XV.

*The same Subject continued; and the Success of Paul's Ministry among the Gentiles, as being blessed by God.*

WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,

and more come into unison with the everlasting right and truth. For he who truly obeys conscience will obey one of its ceaseless requisitions, which is, that he should not hearken to obstinate self-will, or prejudice, but that he should seek every means in his power of enlightening his sense of duty, as well as of rigidly obeying it, and should call in the service of the intellect and the heart as necessary assistants to a clear and comprehensive conscientiousness, such as is constantly becoming conformed to the unerring standard of right in the moral government of God.

It is most interesting and beautiful to see how the truth as it is in Jesus and his Apostles thus matches the moral and spiritual constitution of man, so that not the light is more harmonious and pleasant to the eye, nor the bread more strengthening to the digestive organs. We perceive that there is, so to speak, a dim native Christianity in the soul, which only requires to be brought into union with the Christianity of the New Testament to come out in clear and luminous outlines, and to glow with a divine beauty and sanctity. For does not reason always darkly teach even in the lowest? Does not conscience command with more or less authority? Does not hope spring eternal in the breast? Does not love ever keep a coal burning on even the humblest altar of the heart? But how soon, when Jesus speaks the word of energy and progress to these ever-living and ever-working powers, do they put on such new and more heavenly forms, acquire such superi-

ority over the lower propensities and the superficial desires of the animal nature, that we say, Behold, a new birth, a new man! For a son of man and of the earth, we have a son of God and heaven, and it doth not yet appear what he shall be.

## CHAPTER XV.

At the close of the fourteenth chapter, Griesbach appends the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of chapter sixteen, as properly belonging there, and he has many distinguished Biblical critics with him in this opinion. But the reasons, both from manuscripts and from versions, and also from the internal character of the passage and its most probable position on the whole, decide the question the other way.

1-13. This paragraph is occupied with the subject of the last chapter, the proper treatment of the disciples by one another in the internal relations of the Church, and the mutual conciliation of Jews and Gentiles. Their peculiar position required the full exercise of those graces of tenderness, gentleness, forbearance, respect, and patience, which properly belong to the Christian character. "His object was, on the one hand, to check the free-thinking Gentile Christians from self-exaltation in relation to their weaker Jewish brethren in the faith; and, on the other hand, to remind the Jewish Christians that the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God was no infringement of the rights of the Jewish people, and that it was in unison with the predictions of the Old Testament."

and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* 2 neighbor for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased 3 not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written 4

1, 2. The *strong* were those who disregarded superstitious scruples, and the *weak* those who still remained so far in their previous faith as to judge of right and wrong by that standard rather than by the superior rule of Christ. 1 Cor. viii. 7; ix. 19; 1 Thess. v. 14. So the strong were not to feel their might, and forget right, but they were to be gentle, and kind towards those less robust than themselves in adhering to a clear and Christian principle. But in yielding to the wishes and scruples of others, it was necessary to make one qualification, that it should be for his benefit, not for his harm, not to encourage him in anything which was positively wrong, but to lead along and encourage his timid faith until it acquired full vigor, and was freed from all morbid tendencies. This was the *edification*, the building up of one's neighbor in a noble and sound manhood, a true Christian character.

3. The illustrious example, that shines like the sun in a dark and selfish world, is given to corroborate the precept. Jesus was forbearing, gracious, tender, sympathetic, bearing long with his disciples, and leading them gently in all their waywardness, even as a shepherd his sheep. It certainly is a striking proof of the practical character of Christ and of his Gospel, that he took his disciples just as they were, rude and coarse and sinful and weak, like the rest of the world, and not rare and unusual specimens of human nature, and that out of these unpromising materials he created "the glorious company of the Apostles"; but the wonderful alchemy by which he effected so divine a transformation was the

patience of love and the perseverance of faith. Ps. lxxix. 9; John viii. 50.—*The reproaches of them, &c.* The language of the Psalmist was made good, and the complaint of David, that the reproaches against God fell upon his servant, was verified in the life of Jesus. "Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father," were his words to the Jews.

4. 2 Tim. iii. 16. This verse is worthy of the attention of those who think they have wholly outgrown the Old Testament, and can derive no more instruction or aid from it in the spiritual life; for by the Scriptures is here meant, of course, the Law and the Prophets. The great end, too, which they are fitted to subserve, is also touched upon; viz. as a moral and spiritual, not a dogmatic instrument. It is as sentiment, not as dogma, not as a statement of doctrines upon any subject, or even as a rule and precept, that we now use these venerable books. They are "patience and comfort" to us; they inspire "hope" and courage; they lay open the deep places of human nature; and they burn with a perpetual devotion to God, and enthusiasm for his holy cause. As kindling memorials of the piety of the saints and heroes of the most ancient ages, they will remain dear to the Christian heart through all generations. But if the Apostle is justified in using such strong language in reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, how much more truly may we say of the life of Christ and of his disciples, and the divine truths of the Gospel, that they were written aforetime for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of these later Scriptures



aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience  
 5 and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of  
 patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward  
 6 another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind *and*  
 one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the

might have hope. For they teach us by all their manifold examples and lessons, that this is not a world so dead and fallen in which we have our being, but that it is alive in every part with the presence and power and spirit of our God. When we pray, we speak not into the dark, address no deaf Deity, but one instant to hear and to answer, and ever ready to give a greater good than we can pray for, though it may not be the one to which we cling in our fond wishes. So that we are taught, whatever form or creed we may profess, that religion is a living sentiment of the heart; of patience, comfort, and hope; and that its all-animating exhortation is, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

5, 6. Having spoken of the Scriptures as a source of patience and comfort, he is led by the law of association to that higher and living fountain of these and all other graces in God himself. 2 Thess. iii. 16; Phil. ii. 2. Those were but broken beams of light, this the Eternal Sun itself. But it was not as the abstract Deity, as the Infinite and Incomprehensible, that he presents himself to us, but he comes within the circle of our faith and affections as the Father of Jesus, as bowing his majesty and manifesting all that could be manifested of his perfect attributes in a being like unto ourselves. Two natural consequences flowed from this revelation and faith of God as a Father; one was to be like-minded one toward

another,—the social duty; and the other was, with one mind and one mouth to glorify God in his newly discovered character of Father,—the spiritual duty. So that in these verses we have the two great eternal poles, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Mankind, around which the whole moral heavens revolve.—*Consolation.* Uniformity of rendering would translate this word *comfort*, as in the foregoing verse.—*With one mind and one mouth glorify God.* "The noble consequence of that concord is, that the whole Church, like a fraternal choir, gives praise to God."—*God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* We see here the great clearness with which Jesus is distinguished from God, and the character given to God as being the Father of Jesus, and as such the sole object of worship to Christians. Certainly Paul would have looked with undisguised amazement upon the fact, if he had foreseen it, that his writings would be quoted in support of the idea that God and Jesus were one and the same being, or that He who was called the Father and he who was called the Son were in any other sense one than in love and coöperation, or that supreme honor and worship should be given to any but to God, the Father of Jesus, of angels, and of men.

7. The superlative example of this gracious behavior was Jesus Christ; and every one that named him as friend and teacher was to aspire after a like perfection, without, however, losing his own identity or individ-

glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the 8  
circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto  
the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; 9  
as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gen-  
tiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, rejoice, ye Gentiles, 10  
with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and 11  
laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a 12  
root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him  
shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy 13

uality. Jesus teaches us not to be poor imitators, but to develop ourselves after the true plan with which we were created; to be, in the common phrase, ourselves and nobody else. But we are taught by facts and examples; and in Christianity we are introduced to the spotless character of Jesus and the infinite perfections of God as evidences of the reality and beauty of goodness. Jesus leads his followers "to the glory of God," and it is the duty and joy of every one who has tasted the sweetness and power of a spiritual life to coöperate in the same work of rescuing men from sin and woe, and to open to them the glorious hopes of the Christian future. Properly constituted and conducted, every church is a religious Normal School.

8. From the great stress the Apostle had put upon the privileges of the Gentiles, some might be led to the conclusion that he overlooked the Jews. But no; he reminds them that Jesus was the great teacher of the Hebrew dispensation, the fulfiller of the hopes of the chosen people. So far from rejecting his people, God had crowned all his other mercies to them of prophet and priest and psalmist, by sending the Son of his love to teach the consummation of all his plans and to perfect the promises he had made unto the fathers from the beginning, namely, that in him all nations should be blessed.

9-13. And one of the most memorable of those Hebrew promises was, that the Gentiles should be embraced in the scheme of salvation, as was indicated by the prophets. The passages quoted may be found in Ps. xviii. 50; lxvii. 5; cxvii. 1; Deut. xxxii. 43; Isa. xi. 10; and they all bear upon the point that the Jews were favored with a revelation of the will, love, and goodness of God; not for their selfish aggrandizement, or even for their own highest spiritual growth, but that they were a trust company for the world to keep in its purity, and to transmit unimpaired to the farthest dwellers on earth, and to the most distant ages, the glorious wisdom of God, the richest, purest, and most delightful of all knowledge. They were the light-bearers of the race; but in proportion to their duty and trust was the privilege of the Gentiles. If the glory of the chosen people was brilliant, in that very proportion was the claim and reasonable expectation of the rest of mankind great.—*Now the God of hope, &c.* It is unnecessary to dwell upon each separate clause of this passage, but the fourteenth verse expresses so jubilant a strain, and characterizes so forcibly the Christian spirit, that it deserves a passing word. "In him shall the Gentiles trust," or hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy," &c. How many encouraging words are in this single

and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the  
 14 power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of  
 you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all  
 15 knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren,  
 I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting  
 you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,  
 16 that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles,  
 ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles

verse, and what energy and elasticity are bound up in its few phrases! Hope, joy, peace, power, God, Holy Ghost, abounding, and believing! Too sadly and solemnly has this same thing, religion, brooded over the dim world of humanity, and dulled the fine edge of joy, and darkened the hope of man, and weakened his power, and harrowed up his peace, and given him false and degrading ideas of the glory of God and his all-surrounding and holy spirit. But it has not been the pure religion of Jesus and of Paul which has done this, but the erroneous systems of Jewish and Pagan philosophy that have stolen their way into the holy of holies of the Gospel, and that have set themselves up above all that is called God. For we see by this verse, and a hundred others in this Epistle, how full of joyous life, power, peace, and hope, is the genuine Christian spirit; and while it is so tender, gentle, and sympathetic towards the weakest of the brethren, how strong and brave it is in all manly and majestic attributes!

“Joy e'en here! a budding flower,  
 Struggling with storm and shower,  
 Till its season to expand,  
 Planted in its native land.”

14, 15. After so much free speaking and lecturing, Paul, like a true Christian gentleman as he was, deprecates the idea of intending to be censorious or dictatorial towards the Roman Christians; for he was convinced, on one hand, that they were

not unworthy persons by any means, but endowed with a large measure of current virtue, as the Church went; and on the other, that his claim of giving advice was not wholly unauthorized and gratuitous, for he had been put in commission with the Gospel. He was too apt a student of human nature not to know that a due modicum of praise is a great auxiliary of well-doing, and that many virtues are starved to death in this world because they never get a word of commendation, but receive, perhaps, instead of it, blame and reproach. The gracious Lord of all does not hesitate to say, Well done, good and faithful servant! and we may so far follow so high and mighty an example, at a humble distance, as to say, that we know of our brethren that they are “full of goodness.” Magical and electric is the word of praise; especially is it a great and good thing “to be praised by a praiseworthy man.” And in the case of the text, we know that all eulogistic words were so qualified and balanced by the cautions and admonitions of the Apostle, that none of his readers would be injured by his congratulations. The poor, persecuted Christians were beset before and behind with too many perils, toils, and woes not to be benefited by a good word, a hearty God-speed, while all the world was looking on in scorn and contempt, and classing them with fools and fanatics.

16, 17. *That the offering up of the*

might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have 17 therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those 18 things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, 19 by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where 20 Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall 21

*Gentiles, &c.* This figure of speech was in harmony with the customs of Jewish worship, the Apostle being the priest to perform divine service, and the Gentiles being the oblation to be offered up, and the Holy Ghost being the power to give sanctity to the sacrifice. It was therefore matter of honest congratulation that he had met with so much success in preaching the Gospel, and that his labors in things pertaining to God, that is, the divine service, had not been in vain. While, therefore, disposed to praise others within reasonable bounds, he was not afraid to take the just credit to himself of being a useful Apostle; for the healthy and natural virtue of a true self-estimation belongs to St. Paul.

18, 19. He was not disposed to claim any undue merit, or to exaggerate his services, but he wished simply to refer to the words and to the works of his ministry, as tokens of spiritual and divine power, and to show them how, through these instrumentalities, the Gentiles had been introduced in great numbers to the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion. The circuit of this first great itinerant of the Church was from the central point of Jerusalem over the countries of Judæa, Arabia, Samaria, Syria, Phœnicia, Asia Minor, Greece, and Macedonia,

and the islands in the Ægean and Mediterranean Seas, to the country of Illyricum, in the circumference which lay between Macedonia and the Adriatic. Illyricum is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, in the enumeration of the travels of Paul, though it is said that he went over the parts of the country contiguous to Macedonia, Acts xx. 2; and he probably at that time entered Illyricum. The history and the Epistle give, therefore, an incidental support to one another.—*Fully persuaded* implied that he had made a complete declaration of the truths of the Gospel, and full proof of all the offices of his ministry. 2 Cor. ii. 12–14; Acts xix. 1, 10, 21.

20, 21. It appears from this passage, and also from 2 Cor. x. 16, that it was a strict rule of the Apostle's ministry not to sow seed on another man's field, or to "boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hands." For many obvious reasons, so large and original a genius as Paul preferred to make his own field for the propagation of the Gospel. There was less growth of errors, sectarian passions had not been excited, and if there were any to whom the truth was not as yet "spoken," it was all the more necessary they should "see," and that those who had not "heard" should "understand." Isa. lii. 15.

22 see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which  
 23 cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But  
 now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire  
 24 these many years to come unto you, whensoever I take my jour-  
 ney into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my  
 journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first  
 25 I be somewhat filled with your *company*. But now I go unto  
 26 Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them  
 of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the

22-24. St. Paul had been so incessantly occupied with preaching the Gospel in Greece and Syria, and other contiguous countries, that he had found no opportunity to visit Rome, great as the demand of the capital was upon his attention. Chap. i. 10, 11, 13. — *Having no more place in these parts, &c.* As much as to say, having broken ground in all the principal places in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, and established radiating points of faith in Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, and other cities, he was prepared, spiritual conqueror and leader as he was, to advance upon the unoccupied West; and in that campaign he proposed to make Rome a place to halt and recruit in, but not to labor in specially, because it was already pre-occupied. The extreme point of his missionary ambition was Spain, as the westernmost country, the "Ultima Thule" of Europe in that direction; but the intermediate countries were of course to be included. It is a wholly undecided point whether Paul ever visited Spain or not, but the probability is that he did not, as he in his journey to Rome was taken as a prisoner, and after that it is presumed he had no opportunity to consummate his sublime plans of benevolence. — *Brought on my way, &c.* This custom of accompanying friends or going to meet them on a journey was more common in the early stages

of society, when travelling was more laborious and perilous. Acts xxviii. 15; 1 Cor. xvi. 6. — *Somewhat filled with your company*; as if it would not be easy to satiate the earnest desires of his heart to see, and know, and love them. To the great heart of Paul, the Roman Christians were inexpressibly dear, as is indicated by his messages in chap. xvi. to each one personally; and he could not have enough of their company.

25-28. He here describes the cause which called him from Corinth, where he is now writing to Jerusalem before he could visit Rome; namely, his carrying a contribution of the Macedonian and Grecian churches to relieve the poor disciples at Jerusalem. This reciprocity of returning temporal favors for spiritual ones was every way advantageous, as the Church was then circumstanced; for it relieved the poor at Jerusalem, it cultivated benevolence in Macedonia and elsewhere, it taught the commencing Church one of the great lessons of its aim and being, it served to melt away that wall of ice which separated Jews from Gentiles, and it gave the Apostle an opportunity to confirm his theory of a true Church of Christ by the exhibition of its practical working and usefulness. 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3. The incidental validity which is given to this narrative by the Acts of the Apostles has been developed by Paley. For the three

poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily ; 27  
 and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made  
 partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister  
 unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed 28  
 this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into  
 Spain. And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come 29  
 in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Now I be- 30  
 seech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the  
 love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers  
 to God for me ; that I may be delivered from them that do not be- 31  
 lieve, in Judæa ; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem

facts here referred to, a contribution in Macedonia, a contribution in Achaia, and an intention of Paul to visit Jerusalem, see Acts xx. 2, 3 ; xxiv. 17-19 ; 2 Cor. viii. 1-4 ; ix. 2. Such slight but agreeing circumstances are perfectly natural in an honest conjunction of different works, but they are perfectly incredible as forgeries. They are too skilful to have befallen by chance, and they are too simple to have been contrived. The comparative poverty of the disciples at Jerusalem, and the wealth of those in Macedonia and Achaia, gave a fine opportunity for a species of benevolent barter,—one giving truth, and the other gold, one material, and the other spiritual things. This is a much better rule of judgment than the usual worldly idea, that all that is given or done for churches, ministers, hospitals, and missions is pure charity ; and not that it is in reality the discharge of a sacred debt which we owe for our possession and enjoyment of the truth. Therefore the Apostle hesitates not to say “debtors” in speaking of the Gentile converts to Christianity. If there is gratuity on either side, we may say it is not on the side of religion ; for how infinitely do the labors of such a man as Paul outweigh all the gold and silver of either

hemisphere!—*Sealed to them this fruit* ; i. e. executed the plan of affording aid by this act of benevolence, this fruit of the Christian spirit and character.—*Spain*. The idea of visiting that country was a cherished plan, and the way in which he repeats the word indicates the free and artless character of a letter.

29. *Fulness of the blessing*. The Hebrew idiom for the rich, full blessing of the Gospel. Thus does Paul ever speak of Christianity as something great, generous, and good, of large spirit, of charitable temper.

30-32. He reserves to the last, with his usual self-forgetting and renouncing habit, the dangers which threatened himself from the bigotry of his own countrymen, and which finally proved fatal by sending him a prisoner to Rome, where he afterwards suffered martyrdom. See Acts xx. 22, 23, where the narrative authenticates the present passage. Often and tenderly he uses that conciliating word *brethren*, and then he calls upon them, by the high and sacred names of Christ and the Spirit, to use intercessory prayer in his behalf that he might be exempted from dangers. Col. iv. 12. Paul had two causes of anxiety, two subjects for prayer, one without the Church and one within, one lest the unbelieving Jews would

32 may be accepted of the saints ; that I may come unto you with joy  
 33 by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the  
 God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

make trouble, which they afterwards did, and the other lest the contribution from the foreign Gentiles would not be acceptable to the native Jewish party in the Church. Of the result in the latter case, we have no information ; but as it regarded the former, we know that the sad presentiments and anticipations of the Apostle were fulfilled. As Olshausen remarks, " The knowledge of the Divine plans was not in St. Paul of a fatalistic nature ; he does not say, — I know that I must surely go to Rome, and therefore I have no need of any precaution or of any intercession ; rather it was a lively, free acquaintance with the plans of the free personal God, which are fulfilled through the working together of the free action of free beings."

33. The world was dark and frowning, fears within and fightings without ; but how beautiful is the invocation of peace through the God of peace ! These gleams of sunshine give relief to the otherwise sombre picture of labor, and dangerous travel, and savage elements and more savage men, and persecution, and all manner of suffering and trial, for they show the comparative quiet of the heart, the steady and assured centre of faith, however the world might rock and reel. — According to the best critics *Amen* is not genuine.

The Apostle here concludes the ethical, as he had ended at chap. xiii.  
 36 the doctrinal part of his letter.

The former is based upon the latter, and the natural connection between the two is that of cause and effect. The doctrine was weighty, and the inference was all-important. If faith is the doctrine, the inference is a good life, so that *faith-righteousness* comprehends both parts of the Epistle. There may be particular passages in doubt, but the general aim is clear, broad, and irresistible. A closer chain of reasoning never was welded together, nor was there ever one where the heat and fire still kindle and burn along the line, as with the original zeal of the writer. Kings and kingdoms may rise and fall, but these great themes of truth, faith, duty, love, hope, and destiny will never cease to awe and entrance the human bosom. They are ever abreast of the times, and no withering blasts of age have passed over the eighth chapter of Romans or the fifteenth chapter of the First of Corinthians. Would indeed that we might be even with these high requisitions, and that we might be as good Christians in the nineteenth as Paul was in the first century of the era of our Lord, as ardent advocates of liberty, as strenuous defenders of truth, as eloquent expounders of faith, as beautiful teachers and learners and doers of charity, gentleness, and peace ! But until this is the case, let us learn the noble lessons of the Apostle's truth, and follow the advice of his practical exhortations, and catch the inspiration of his high-toned and wonderful life !

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Friendly Salutations and Messages to the Christians at Rome, from Paul and his Brethren at Corinth.—Benediction and Doxology.*

I COMMEND unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as 2 becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ 3

## CHAPTER XVI.

THIS concluding chapter of the Epistle is composed of salutations and Christian greetings, conceived in the kindest spirit of Christian love, and graciously expressed. The discussion of general principles did not lead the author to forget that mankind were made up of individuals, each with a heart to feel and an immortal soul to be saved. With a bold and free hand he sowed his pages thickly with names, facts, and events, conscious of honest purposes, and exempt from all fears of being detected in any forgery. Several incidental and undesigned coincidences have been pointed out by Paley and other writers on the evidences of Christianity, showing the honest record of the Epistle, and vindicating its authenticity. No man whose heart was not as clear as crystal would thus multiply against himself the means of his own detection; and the facts that his statements remained undisputed at the time, and that they have been credited since without any material implication against them, even by the most virulent opponents to Christianity, give us the strongest presumption of their truth.

1, 2. *Phebe, our sister*, &c. On the Christian principle, that "whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Phebe was a servant, or deaconess, of the church

in Cenchrea, an officer rendered necessary in those times by the peculiar customs of society in which the Gospel was planted. The care of the sick, the disbursement of charities, the instruction of catechumens, and the rite of baptism, required female service in some cases. Probably the person in question was a woman of wealth and influence, and had such affairs to require her presence at Rome as could be materially aided by the coöperation of Christian friends there. Cenchrea was the port of Corinth on the Ægean Sea towards Asia Minor, as Lechea or Lechæus was that on the Ionian Sea towards the west. That Paul had been in the place before is evident from Acts xviii. 18, and he speaks warmly of the aid he had received from her. Paul requests them to welcome her in a Christian manner, for hospitality was a great and essential virtue at a period when the Christians were exposed to the scorn and persecution of those to whom they went forth as heralds and preachers of salvation.—*A succorer*, &c. A patroness, curatrix. Females also rendered essential service to our blessed Lord by contributing aid to his necessities, and they have ever been among the most devoted friends and co-laborers of the Christian ministry in every age. As Christianity has done much for woman, so has woman done much for Christianity.

3. *Priscilla*. Griesbach and Tis-



4 Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the  
5 Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia  
6 unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.

chendorf read *Prisca*, of which *Priscilla* is the diminutive. The mention of her before that of her husband has been argued by some to indicate her prominence of position and character, even when compared with her distinguished companion. Notwithstanding the objections which have sometimes been uttered against the Apostle, as not assigning a sufficiently broad sphere to woman, or giving her an equal social or ecclesiastical position with that of the other sex, yet where do we find in ancient literature a more considerate respect paid to woman than in the New Testament? and who has dignified woman with a more cordial regard, or a truer spiritual equality, than the author of this Epistle?

4. *Who have for my life, &c.* The transactions here referred to probably occurred at Ephesus, as related in Acts xix. 23-41, for it appears from Acts xviii. 18-26, that they accompanied him thither from Corinth. The expression implies that they exposed themselves to imminent peril, hazarded their lives for him. 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19. The more gratitude was probably felt towards them, because, being Jews, they had espoused the cause of the Gentiles in the great controversy relating to their admission into the Christian Church without adopting Jewish customs.

5. *The church that is in their house.* In their generous behavior they had made their own dwelling a place of the meeting of the Christian Church. — *First-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.* The best editions read *Asia*, by which is meant Proconsular Asia, or Asia of

which Ephesus was the capital. The epithets of endearment and kindly regard with which Paul greets the brethren testify how far Christianity in his soul was removed from a stoical insensibility, and how warmly it embraced in the arms of an overflowing charity all who had named the name of Christ. It seems as if the heart of the Apostle could not satisfy itself with loving enough, but he poured forth expressions of love and boundless benevolence. One is "well beloved," another is "beloved in the Lord," another is "my beloved," another is "my kinsman," and "work-fellow," "helper," "host," "brother, sister, mother." All these expressions are used to describe his affectionate attachment. The difference between the Gospel and heathenism is quickly felt when we compare a letter of Cicero with a letter of Paul in this respect. 1 Cor. vi. 15. As a very good evidence that Peter was not in Rome at this time, and that in fact he had not been there up to this time, it is noticeable that no mention whatever is made of him by Paul, in writing to the very church which has since been specially connected with his name, and from which Paul, who seems to have had more to do with it than Peter, has been strangely dis-severed in ecclesiastical tradition and history.

6-11. *Mary.* Nothing further is known of her, except this high eulogium, of which it may be said, as of the noble deed of another Mary, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prison- 7  
 ers, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ  
 before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Salute 8  
 Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Salute 10  
 Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobu-  
 lus's *household*. Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Greet them that 11  
 be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute 12  
 Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the be-  
 loved Persis, which labored much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, 13  
 chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, 14  
 Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are  
 with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, 15  
 and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one 16  
 another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

spoken of for a memorial of her."—*Andronicus and Junia*. They are supposed to be husband and wife, but what was their degree of kinship to Paul, and what were the circumstances in which they were fellow-prisoners with him, are now matters buried in oblivion. The term *Apostles* is here used, not in its strictness, but in general for preachers of Christianity. Acts xiv. 4, 14. The fact, worthy of note, is mentioned, that they were earlier converts to the Gospel than Paul.—The names of *Amplias*, *Urbane*, *Stachys*, *Apelles*, *Aristobulus*, and *Herodion* stand not merely as honorable words in this catalogue of the saints, but they furnish a suggestive hint of the great body of Christian worth and holy character which has passed away and left no sign; the humble disciples, who have contributed their part to the strength of the Christian body, and whose virtues have gone to make up a share in the grand whole of the Church, and its sanctification in the world.—*Household of Narcissus*. There was a freedman of that name in the reign of the Emperor Claudius,

but he was not living at this time. It may have been his family, however, or friends, who are spoken of in this connection.

12–16. Of *Tryphena*, *Tryphosa*, *Persis*, only the names and the praise of Paul remain. But *Rufus* is supposed by some to be the brother of Alexander, and the son of Simon the Cyrenean, Mark xv. 21; but the connection is altogether uncertain.—*Hermas* is conjectured to be the author of one of the early Christian works called "The Shepherd," contained in a collection termed the Apocryphal New Testament.—*Holy kiss*. In the fervors of the Church at the beginning, this sign was used as the natural expression of the fraternal and sisterly affection of the members for one another; but when it gave rise to unjust imputations, and created scandal against the disciples, it was dropped. It is said to have been most used after the administration of the Lord's Supper. 1 Peter v. 14.—*The churches of Christ*. Paul could speak for at least two, for one was established at Corinth and another at Cenchrea. The best re-

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions  
and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and  
18 avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus  
Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches  
19 deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is come  
abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet  
I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concern-  
20 ing evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your  
feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

vised editions read *all the churches*. It is a powerful testimony to the life and deep earnestness of the Christian cause at this period, that the truth was not only theoretically believed, but that Christian love was practically cultivated and shed abroad throughout the rising communities of the disciples, and the great hearts which beat at the centre of the movement were felt in their pulsations to the humblest and remotest limbs of the body of Christ.

17-20. This paragraph is a last caution, a kind of postscript added to what he had said before against dissensions, which he was so anxious to extirpate from the early Church, and which warred so directly at every point with the truth and love in Jesus. The particular point of debate was the Gentile controversy, but it ramified into various side issues, and gave broad scope to many of the selfish propensities of human nature. It was sufficiently apparent to the clear discernment of Paul, that there were men enough disposed to make "a gain of godliness," and who, under all their seeming zeal for Christ and his Church, cloaked the unholy purposes of self-aggrandizement, and deceived the world with fair professions and the counterfeits of zeal and truth, passed, among the unsophisticated, as current coin. Phil. iii. 2, 18, 19; Tit. iii. 10; 2 Pet. ii. 3, 18. But, notwithstanding the perils of

"false brethren," the Apostle expressed an undoubting confidence in the firmness of the Church at home to resist all these seductions, and complimented them on their well-known obedience or tractableness. He was too wise a moralist not to know that praise will often go further than blame, and that an encouragement of success will reach places in the human heart which could not be touched by the severe hand of censure.—In the expression *wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*, reference is apparently made to Matt. x. 16.—*Simple*, unsuspecting, with a single eye. Matt. vi. 22.—There was special appositeness in the term *God of peace*, as it was "dissensions" against which he was warning the Christians at Rome in this very connection.—In the term *bruise Satan*, perhaps Gen. iii. 15 was in the writer's mind. The word *Satan* is an Orientalism for evil, evil accuser, and, like Wisdom, Sin, the Law, the Word, and other terms, when personified, it is employed to give vivacity to the idea of the activity and danger of evil.—*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c. Paul can never wish enough benedictions upon the heads of his brethren, but he repeats, adds postscript after postscript, and can scarcely tear himself away at last from so attractive and absorbing a theme. These successive endings, which occur one after another, xv.

Amen. Timotheus, my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and 21  
 Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I, Tertius, who wrote *this* Epis- 22  
 tle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius, mine host, and of the whole 23  
 church, saluteth you. Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth  
 you, and Quartus, a brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ 24  
*be* with you all. Amen. Now to him that is of power to establish 25  
 you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ,  
 according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret  
 since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scrip- 26

33, xvi. 16, 20, 24, 27, are so many stumbling-blocks to the critics, who attempt to systematize everything according to a set rule of their own. But are they not very much in unison with the free-working and irregular form of Paul's composition?—*Amen*, in ver. 20, is omitted by the best editors.

21. *Timotheus*; i. e. Timothy, to whom the Epistles were addressed. Acts xvi. 1, 2.—*Lucius*. Thought by many to be Luke the Evangelist, the well-known companion of Paul in many of his journeys. We learn from Acts xx. 4, that three of these individuals, namely, Sosipater, Gaius, and Timothy, accompanied Paul into Asia Minor. The *Sopater* of Acts xx. 4 and the *Sosipater* of this passage are probably the same.

22. *Tertius*. Paul's amanuensis. The name is a Latin word meaning "the third." The Apostle was accustomed to employ a writer, and it has been conjectured that some of the breaks in his sentences, and some of the irregularities of his style, are to be attributed to this fact. But he was accustomed to add his own autograph to his Epistles as an indorsement of their contents. 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Gal. vi. 11; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17. We have here a beautiful exemplification of the equality and fraternity on which the Gospel places man with man, in the fact that the amanuensis salutes the churches as

well as the Apostle, and that his soul and soul's salvation are counted of like value with those of the chiefest of the Church.

23, 24. *Gaius*. Whether Gaius of Derbe, mentioned in Acts xix. 29, xx. 4, is the same, cannot now be determined, but it is quite likely. 1 Cor. i. 14; 3 John 1.—*Erastus, the chamberlain of the city*; that is, probably, of Corinth. By *chamberlain* is meant treasurer, manager of the city funds, or, in the Roman designation, quaestor. He is mentioned elsewhere, Acts. xix. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 20.—*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* This is a prayer or benediction, simply implying the best wishes of the Apostle for the spiritual and Christian good of his converts and brethren. It is perfectly proper for one who is not a believer in the deity of Jesus Christ to use such a form of expression, as it was for Paul to commend his hearers "to God, and to the word of his grace," though the word of his grace is not even a person, much less God.—*Grace* has a peculiar technical signification in our tongue, and the original would be better translated by *favor*.

25–27. A prolonged and sublime doxology concludes the Epistle, in which the chief features of the whole subject of the work are sketched. God, as the original and everlasting author of Revelation; its purpose in his will and commandment; its incep-

tures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.

Written to the Romans from Corinthus, *and sent* by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea.

tion by the prophets; its full promulgation; and its mystery, or secret, of the admission of the Gentiles, entirely laid open by the mission and preaching of Christ; its comprehension of men of all nations, Jews as well as Gentiles, in its benevolent plan, and the aim and end of the whole system in the "obedience of faith," or faith-righteousness, character founded on a spiritual principle,—are all set forth in these few words with a remarkable terseness and power; and the assurance is given that he who had thus begun a good work in them would not suffer it to fail, but would establish them according to the Gospel. Eph. iii. 9, 10; Col. i. 26; 2 Tim. i. 10. By the term "obedience of faith" is concisely expressed the whole subject of this Epistle; not justification by faith,—that idea only partially covers the ground; but righteousness by faith, obedience to all the laws of God by the motive-power of faith, not by that of wisdom, as among the Greeks, or by that of law, as among the Jews. Christianity opened heaven, brought God nigh to man, and introduced as acting agencies upon the life of to-day the boundless hopes, promises, and warn-

ings of the future state of being. In depth, permanence, and consistency, the obedience of faith, therefore, must possess a marked superiority over all other codes of morals or systems of religion. The Gospel reaches the ultimate point, and leaves nothing on this side of the eternal world, capable of being used as a legitimate motive to righteousness of life, which it does not enlist in its sacred and all-comprehending cause. It will be observed, that the ascription of glory is not given by Paul to Jesus Christ, as we hear it in these days in many churches which have wandered from the simplicity of the early Gospel usages, but to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Tim. i. 17. For he is the Medium, Mediator, through whom our blessings have descended, and through whom our prayers should ascend.

The inscription at the close is, no doubt, a true description of the title of the Epistle, the place where it was composed, and the person by whom it was conveyed to Rome; but it is rejected by the best editors as not belonging to the original, but as being added by a later hand.

The Epistle at whose conclusion we have now arrived contains some of the most difficult passages to understand in all the Scriptures. But for strength of argument, for earnest grappling with the highest themes of

religious faith, for bold and impassioned eloquence, for burning zeal, for beauty of imagination, and for glowing love, where can we find any work superior to the Epistle to the Romans? The few dark spots on

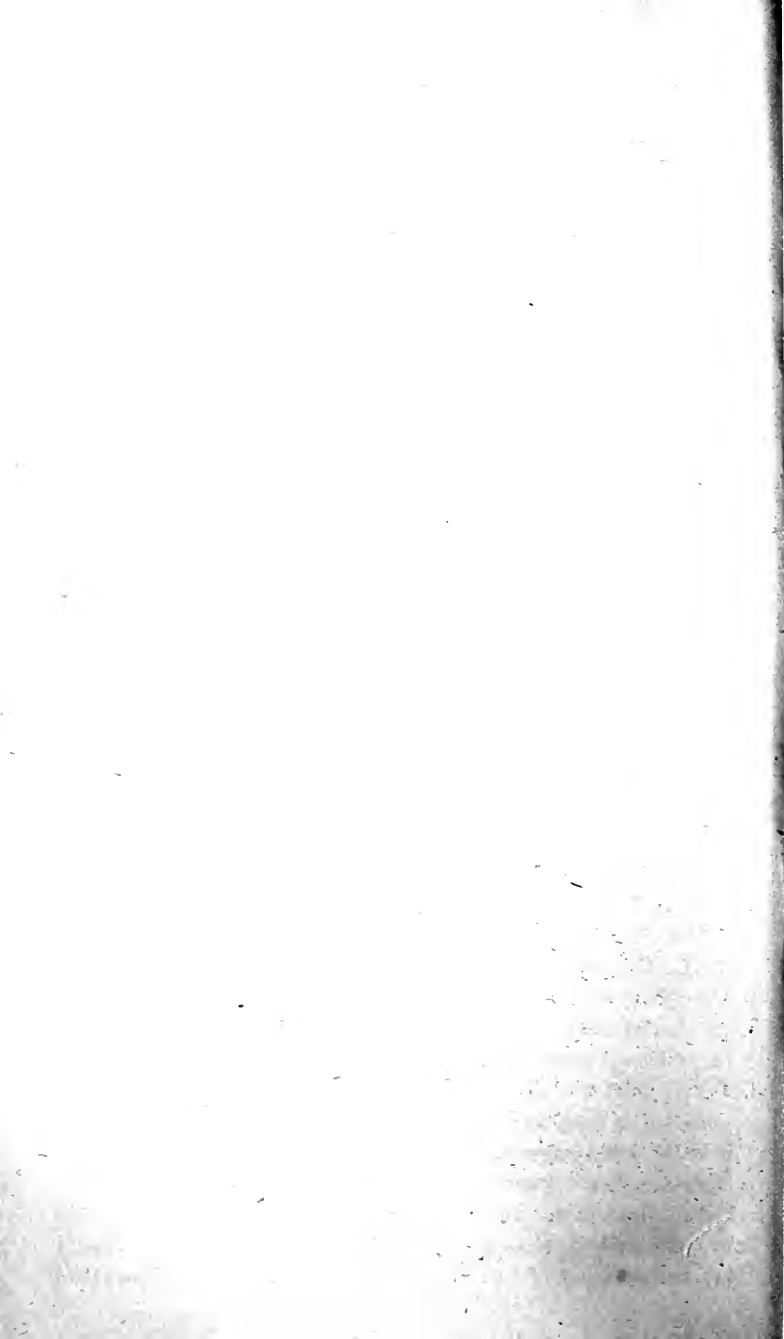
the splendid disc of this orb of light we can well pardon, for the immeasurable light and warmth of its effulgence. The more deeply it is studied, the more consecutive will its train of reasoning be found to be; and the more fully its comprehensive spirit is felt, the more fervent will be seen to be its charity, the more uncompromising its liberty. Its divine verses have not grown dead and cold by time, but they still meet the religious wants of the heart, and preach the Gospel to all ages in its freshness and its power. May we receive, believe, and obey them!

A

REVISED TRANSLATION

OF

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.





THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

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CHAPTER I.

PAUL, a servant of Christ Jesus, chosen as an Apostle, set apart  
2 for the Gospel of God, which he had promised before by his  
3 prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was  
4 born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared  
the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by  
5 the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through  
whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the  
6 faith in all nations for his name's sake, among whom are ye also  
7 the chosen of Jesus Christ, to all who are in Rome, beloved of God,  
chosen to be saints, grace and peace to you from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that  
9 your faithfulness is spoken of throughout the whole world. For  
God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of  
10 his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you, always mak-  
ing supplication in my prayers, that if possible I might now at  
length, God willing, make a prosperous journey to come unto you.  
11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual  
12 gift, in order that you may be strengthened; that is, that I may  
be comforted among you by the mutual faith both of you and me.  
13 But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that I have often  
purposed to come to you, though I have hitherto been prevented,  
in order that I might have some fruit among you also as among  
14 other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Bar-  
15 barians, both to the wise and to the unwise; so, as much as in me  
16 is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also at Rome. For I  
am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every believer, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to 17 faith ; as it is written, The just by faith shall live.

For the indignation of God is revealed from heaven against all 18 ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, holding the truth in un- 19 righteousness ; because that which may be known of God is mani- 19 fest to them, for God hath showed it to them. For the invisible 20 things of him, even his eternal power and Godhead, from the crea- tion of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things 21 made, so that they are without excuse : because that when they 21 knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 22 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like 23 unto corruptible man and birds and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gave them up, through the lusts of their hearts to 24 impurity, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves : who 25 exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. On this account God gave them up to vile affections, for 26 even their women exchanged the natural use for that which is against nature ; and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use 27 of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves the due recompense of their error. And inasmuch as they did not 28 like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not becoming ; being 29 filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malevolence ; whisperers, slanderers, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, 30 inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understand- 31 ing, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, cruel ; who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such 32 things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but take pleasure in them that do them.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them who commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not considering that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that doeth good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God.

For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be made just; for when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, they, having not the law, become a law unto themselves; who show the working of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel. But if thou art called a Jew and retest in the law and makest thy boast of God and knowest his will and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes,

who hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law :—  
 thou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? 21  
 thou who preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou 22  
 who sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit  
 adultery? thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?  
 thou who makest thy boast of the law, by breaking the law dishon- 23  
 orest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the 24  
 Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision indeed 25  
 profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law,  
 thy circumcision becomes uncircumcision. If, therefore, the uncir- 26  
 cumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncir-  
 cumcision be accounted as circumcision? And shall not uncir- 27  
 cumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who  
 by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is 28  
 not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision  
 which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inward- 29  
 ly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in  
 the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

### CHAPTER III.

WHAT advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there  
 in circumcision? Much every way: first, indeed, because unto 2  
 them were committed the oracles of God. For what? if some did 3  
 not believe, shall their unbelief make the faithfulness of God with-  
 out effect? By no means; let God be true, though every man is a 4  
 liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings,  
 and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unright- 5  
 eousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?  
 Is not God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a  
 man.) By no means: otherwise how shall God judge the world? 6  
 For if the truthfulness of God hath more abounded by my lie unto 7  
 his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner? And shall we 8  
 not say, as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that  
 we say, Let us do evil that good may come? whose condemnation  
 is just.

What then? are we any better? Not at all; for we have al- 9

10 ready proved that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin ; as it  
11 is written, There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that  
12 understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They have  
all gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable ;  
13 there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open  
sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison  
14 of asps is under their lips ; whose mouth is full of cursing and  
15 bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood ; destruction and  
16 misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not  
17 known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know  
that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under  
the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world  
20 become guilty before God. Because by the deeds of the law there  
shall no flesh be made righteous in his sight ; for by the law is the  
knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested,  
22 having the testimony of the law and the prophets ; even the right-  
eousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all  
23 believers ; for there is no distinction. For all have sinned, and  
24 come short of the glory of God ; being made just freely by his  
25 grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God  
hath set forth as a mercy-seat through faith in his blood, to declare  
his righteousness, for the remission of past sins through the forbear-  
26 ance of God : to declare at this time his righteousness (his method  
of making men righteous) that he might be righteous, and that he  
might make him that believeth righteous.

27 Where is boasting, then ? It is excluded. By what law ? Of  
28 works ? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that  
29 a man is made righteous by faith without the deeds of the law. Is  
he the God of the Jews only ? Is he not also of the Gentiles ?  
30 Yes, of the Gentiles also ; since it is the same God who shall make  
the circumcision righteous by faith, and the uncircumcision right-  
31 eous by faith. Do we then make the law void through faith ?  
By no means ; but we confirm the law.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHAT shall we say, then, that Abraham our father hath obtained as it respects the flesh? For if Abraham were made righteous by works, he hath whereof to boast, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that maketh righteous the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God reckoneth righteousness without works: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. Is this blessedness then for the circumcision only, or for the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might also be reckoned unto them: and the father of the circumcised, who are not only of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith which our father Abraham had while he was yet uncircumcised. For not through the law was the promise made to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be the heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise rendered of none effect; because the law worketh wrath; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it may be by grace; in order that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were: who against hope believed in hope, that he would become the father of many nations,

19 according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And  
being not weak in faith, he regarded not his own body now dead,  
being about one hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's  
20 womb : he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief,  
21 but he was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully  
persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.  
22 And therefore it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Yet it  
23 was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned to him ;  
24 but for us also, to whom it will be reckoned, if we believe on him  
25 who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered  
up for our offences, and was raised again for our righteousness.

### CHAPTER V.

THEREFORE, being justified (or put in the way of righteousness)  
by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ :  
2 by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand,  
3 and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but  
we rejoice in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh  
4 patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope  
5 maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in  
6 our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us. For Christ,  
when we were yet without strength, in due time died for the un  
7 godly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet perad-  
8 venture for a benefactor some would even dare to die. But God  
commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,  
9 Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified (or put  
in the way of righteousness) by his blood, we shall be saved from  
10 wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were recon-  
ciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being recon-  
11 ciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also  
rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have  
now received the reconciliation.

12 Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death  
by sin, even so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ;  
13 for until the law, sin was in the world ; but sin is not reckoned  
14 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, who is the type of him that was to come. And not as is the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification (or the way of righteousness). For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification (or the way of righteousness) of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; so that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER VI.

WHAT shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? By no means. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: so that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. But if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in 10



that he died, he died unto sin once for all; but in that he liveth,  
11 he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be  
dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.  
12 Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should  
13 obey the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instru-  
ments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God,  
as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instru-  
14 ments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion  
over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law,  
16 but under grace? By no means. Know ye not that to whom ye  
yield yourselves as servants to obey, his servants ye become whom  
ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto right-  
17 eousness? But God be thanked, that, having been the servants  
of sin, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which  
18 was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye be-  
19 came the servants of righteousness. (I speak after the manner of  
men because of the weakness of your flesh.) For as ye have  
yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity  
upon iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to right-  
20 eousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin,  
21 ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in  
those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those  
22 things is death. But now, being made free from sin, and having  
become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, but the  
23 end is everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift  
of God is everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER VII.

KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the  
law,) that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.  
2 For the woman who hath a husband is bound by the law to her  
husband as long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is  
3 loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore, if while her hus-  
band is living she be married to another man, she shall be called  
an adulteress; but if her husband die, she is free from the law, so

that she will not be an adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore ye also, my brethren, have become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, our sinful passions, which were by the law, wrought powerfully in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are freed from the law, since we have become dead to that by which we were held in bondage, so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? By no means. On the contrary, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust; for without the law sin were dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me; so that the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Was, then, that which is good made death unto me? By no means. But sin was made so, in order that it might appear as sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. But if I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law as being good. Now then, it is no more I that do this, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but not how to perform that which is good. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O

wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of  
25 this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So  
then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the  
flesh the law of sin.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in  
2 Christ Jesus. For the law of spiritual life in Christ Jesus hath  
3 freed me from the law of sin and death. For what the law could  
not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God has done, who,  
sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and on account  
4 of sin, condemned sin in the flesh ; in order that the righteousness  
of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh,  
5 but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the  
things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of  
6 the spirit. For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritu-  
7 ally-minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity  
against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed  
8 can be. Those, then, that are in the flesh, cannot please God.  
9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the  
spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any one hath not the spirit of  
10 Christ, he is none of his. But if Christ be in you, the body indeed  
is dead through sin, but the spirit is alive through righteousness.  
11 But if the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell  
in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken even  
your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh to live after  
13 the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye  
through the spirit do destroy the deeds of the body, ye shall live.  
14 For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of  
15 God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to  
fear ; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, in which we cry,  
16 Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit  
17 that we are the children of God ; but if children, then heirs ; heirs  
indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer  
with him, that we may also be glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not 18  
worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in  
us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the 19  
manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made sub- 20  
ject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath sub-  
jected the same, in hope that the creation itself also shall be deliv- 21  
ered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the  
children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth 22  
together and travaileth in pain until now ; and not only so, but we 23  
also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan  
in ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our  
body. For we are saved in hope ; but hope that is seen is not 24  
hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But if 25  
we hope for that we see not, then with patience do we wait for it.

Likewise, the spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know 26  
not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the spirit itself  
maketh intercession for us with unutterable groanings. And he 27  
that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit,  
that it maketh intercession for the saints according to the will or  
God. And we know that all things work together for good to 28  
them who love God, to them who are called according to his pur-  
pose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be 29  
conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born  
among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, 30  
them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also made  
righteous ; and whom he made righteous, them he also glorified.

What shall we say, then, to these things ? If God be for us, 31  
who can be against us ? He that spared not his own Son, but de- 32  
livered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely  
give us all things ? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's 33  
elect ? Is it God that justifieth ? Who is he that condemneth ? 34  
Is it Christ that died ? yea, rather that is risen again, who is even  
at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us ?  
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, 35  
or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or  
sword ? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day 36  
long ; we are reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. But in all 37

these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved  
38 us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels,  
nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor  
39 powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to  
separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## CHAPTER IX.

I SPEAK the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bear-  
2 ing me witness in the holy spirit, that I have great grief, and con-  
3 tinual pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were  
accursed from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen  
4 according to the flesh, who are Israelites; whose is the adoption,  
and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and  
5 the service of the temple, and the promises; whose are the fathers,  
and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came. God who is  
6 over all be blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of  
God had taken none effect. For they are not all Israel who are  
7 of Israel; nor, because they are the seed of Abraham, are all chil-  
8 dren; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is to say, They  
who are children of the flesh, these are not the children of God,  
9 but the children of the promise are reckoned for the seed. For  
this is the word of promise: At this time will I come, and Sarah  
10 shall have a son. And not only so; but Rebecca also conceived  
11 by one, Isaac our father. For the children not yet having been  
born, nor having done anything good or evil, in order that the pur-  
pose of God according to election might stand, not by works, but  
12 by him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the  
13 younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I  
hated.

14 What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God?  
15 By no means. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom  
I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will  
16 have compassion. It is not therefore of him that willeth, nor of  
17 him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scrip-  
ture saith unto Pharaoh, That for this same purpose I have raised  
thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name

might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore he hath 18  
mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou 19  
wilt then say unto me, Why doth he still find fault? For who  
hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repli- 20  
est against God? Shall the thing formed say to the former, Why  
hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the 21  
clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another  
unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath and 22  
make known his power, endured with much long-suffering the ves-  
sels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known 23  
the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before  
prepared unto glory, even us whom he had called, not of the Jews 24  
only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Hosea, I will 25  
call them my people who were not my people, and her beloved  
who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place 26  
where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall they  
be called the children of the living God. Isaiah also crieth con- 27  
cerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as  
the sand of the sea, a remnant only shall be saved; for he will 28  
fulfil and execute in righteousness his word, because the Lord will  
execute his word upon the earth. And as Isaiah said before, Ex- 29  
cept the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had become as  
Sodom, and we had been likened unto Gomorrah.

What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles, who did not seek 30  
after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the right-  
eousness which is by faith; but Israel, who followed after the 31  
law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.  
Wherefore? Because they have not sought it by faith, but as it 32  
were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stum-  
bling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone 33  
and rock of offence, and whoever believeth on him shall not be  
ashamed.

## CHAPTER X.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is,  
that they may be saved. For I bear them testimony that they 2

3 have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being  
ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own  
4 righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteous-  
ness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to  
5 every believer. For Moses describeth the righteousness, which is  
of the law, That the man that doeth those things shall live by  
6 them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this  
way, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is,  
7 to bring Christ down. Or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that  
8 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; that  
9 is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess  
with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that  
10 God hath raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For  
with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the  
11 mouth he confesseth unto salvation. For the Scripture saith,  
12 Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is  
no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord  
13 of all is rich to all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call  
14 upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they  
call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they  
believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they  
15 hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they  
be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them who  
preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good  
things!

16 But not all have obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord,  
17 who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing,  
18 and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not  
heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their  
19 words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel  
know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to emulation by  
them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.  
20 But Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found by them that sought  
me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.  
21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my  
hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

## CHAPTER XI.

I SAY, then, Hath God rejected his people? By no means. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not rejected his people whom he foreknew. 2 Know ye not what the Scripture in Elijah saith? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel: Lord, they have killed thy 3 prophets, and digged down thy altars; and I only am left, and they are seeking my life. But what saith the answer of God to 4 him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so, then, there is at this present 5 time also a remnant according to the election of grace. But if 6 it be of grace, then it is no more of works, else grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, it is no more of grace; else works are no more works. What then? Israel hath not obtained that 7 which they seek for; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded; according as it is written, God hath given them the 8 spirit of slumber, eyes that see not, and ears that hear not unto this day. David also saith, Let their table become a snare, and a trap, 9 and a stumbling-block, and a recompense to them. Let their eyes 10 be darkened, that they may not see, and their back be always bowed down.

I say, then, Have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means. 11 But through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke them to emulation. Now if their fall be the riches of the world, 12 and their diminishing the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am 13 the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; if by any 14 means I may provoke to emulation my kinsmen after the flesh, and save some of them. For if the rejection of them be the reconcili- 15 ation of the world, what shall the reception of them be but life from the dead? But if the first-fruits be holy, so shall the lump 16 be; and if the root be holy, so shall be the branches.

But if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a 17 wild olive-tree, wert grafted in their stead, and made partaker of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, boast not over the branches; 18 but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.



19 Thou wilt say, then, The branches were broken off, that I might be  
20 grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and  
21 thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if  
God spared not the natural branches, perhaps he will not spare  
22 thee. Behold, therefore, the kindness and severity of God: on  
them that fell, severity; but on thee, the kindness of God, if thou  
23 adhere to his kindness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. And  
they also, if they adhere not to unbelief, shall be grafted in; for  
24 God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of  
the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary  
to nature into a good olive-tree, how much more shall these, which  
are natural, be grafted into their own olive-tree!

25 For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this  
mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blind-  
ness has befallen Israel in part until the fulness of the Gentiles  
26 shall come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written,  
The deliverer shall come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungod-  
27 liness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I  
shall take away their sins. As it regards the Gospel, they are  
28 become enemies on your account, but as it regards the election,  
29 they are beloved on account of the fathers. For God does not  
30 repent of his gifts and calling. For as you once did not believe in  
God, but now you have obtained mercy through their unbelief;  
31 even so have these also now disbelieved, that through the mercy  
32 shown to you they may obtain mercy. For God hath included  
33 all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth  
of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How  
unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!  
34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his  
35 counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recom-  
36 pensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him,  
are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen.

## CHAPTER XII.

I BESEECH you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that  
you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,

which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this 2  
world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that  
you may prove what the will of God is, even that which is good,  
and acceptable, and perfect. For I say, through the grace given 3  
unto me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himself  
more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according  
as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as in 4  
one body we have many members, but all the members have not  
the same office ; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and 5  
are members one of another. Having, then, gifts differing accord- 6  
ing to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us  
prophesy according to the proposition of faith ; or ministry, let us 7  
wait on our ministering ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he 8  
that exhorteth, on exhortation : he that giveth, let him give with  
simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that showeth mercy,  
with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, 9  
cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another 10  
with brotherly love ; in honor preferring one another ; not slothful 11  
in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ; rejoicing in hope ; 12  
patient in tribulation ; praying without ceasing ; distributing to the 13  
necessities of the saints ; given to hospitality. Bless them which 14  
persecute you ; bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that re- 15  
joice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind 16  
one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to the  
humble. Be not wise in your own conceits. Render to no man 17  
evil for evil. Provide things honorable in the sight of all men. If 18  
it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.  
Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto 19  
wrath ; for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith  
the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he 20  
thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of  
fire on his head. Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by 21  
good.

## CHAPTER XIII.

LET every soul be subject unto the powers that are supreme. For there is no power but from God; the powers that be are ordained by God. So that he who resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they who resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise for the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only because of wrath, but for conscience' sake. On this very account also pay tribute; for they are God's ministers who attend continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, except to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this is, 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 briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to one's neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And this, too, knowing the time, that it is the hour to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we became believers. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and wantonness, not in strife and envy; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the lusts of the flesh.

## CHAPTER XIV.

HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to judge of his scruples. One indeed believeth that he may eat everything, but

he who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise 3  
him that eateth not ; but let not him that eateth not condemn him  
that eateth ; for God hath accepted him. Who art thou that con- 4  
demnest another man's servant ? To his own master he standeth  
or falleth ; but he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand.  
One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth 5  
every day alike. Let each one be fully persuaded in his own  
mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord, and 6  
he that regardeth not the day to the Lord, he doth not regard it.  
He also that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ;  
and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God  
thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to 7  
himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and 8  
whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live, therefore,  
or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and 9  
lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living.  
But why dost thou condemn thy brother ? or why dost thou set at 10  
naught thy brother ? for we must all stand before the judgment-  
seat of God. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every 11  
knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So 12  
then every one of us shall give account of himself unto God.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this 13  
rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in  
in his brother's way. I know and am persuaded in the Lord 14  
Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself ; but to him that es-  
teemeth anything as unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy 15  
brother be grieved on account of thy meat, now walkest thou no  
longer charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom  
Christ died. Let not your good, then, be evil spoken of ; for the 16  
kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and 17  
peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things 18  
serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved by men. Let 19  
us therefore pursue the things that make for peace and mutual edi-  
fication. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things 20  
indeed are pure ; but it is evil to that man who eateth with offence.  
It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do any- 21  
thing whereby thy brother stumbleth. Thou hast faith. Have it 22

to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself  
23 in that thing which he alloweth. But he who has scruples is con-  
demned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatever is  
not of faith is sin.

## CHAPTER XV.

BUT we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the  
2 weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his  
3 neighbor in respect to that which is good unto edification. For  
even Christ did not please himself; but as it is written, The re-  
4 proaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatso-  
ever things were written formerly were written for our instruction,  
in order that we, through the patience and the consolation of the  
5 Scriptures, might have hope. And may the God of patience and  
consolation grant that you may be like-minded one toward another,  
6 according to Christ Jesus; that you may with one mind and one  
mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
7 Wherefore welcome you one another, as Christ also welcomed you,  
8 to the glory of God. For I say that Christ became a minister of  
the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises  
9 made to the fathers, that the Gentiles should glorify God for his  
mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess thee among  
10 the Gentiles, and I will sing unto thy name. And again he  
11 saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the  
12 Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people. And again  
Isaiah saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and one shall rise to  
13 reign over the Gentiles, in whom the Gentiles shall hope. Now  
may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy  
Spirit.

14 But I myself also am persuaded concerning you, my brethren,  
that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able  
15 also to admonish one another. Yet I have written the more boldly  
unto you in part, as further putting you in mind, because of the  
16 grace that is given unto me by God, that I should be the minister  
of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God,

that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. I have therefore cause of glorying 17 in Christ Jesus as to the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought through me for the obedience of the Gentiles, by word and deed, through the power of signs and wonders, through the 19 power of the spirit, so that from Jerusalem, and round about even to Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ. But I 20 was very desirous so to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation; but as it 21 is written, They shall see, to whom he was not spoken of, and they who have not heard shall understand.

Wherefore also I have been much hindered from coming to you; 22 but now having no longer a place in these regions, and having a 23 great desire for many years to come to you, whenever I shall go 24 into Spain, I will come to you. For I hope to see you as I pass through, and to be sent on my way thitherward by you, after I have first been somewhat satisfied with your society. But now I go 25 unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased 26 Macedonia and Achaia to make some contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily, and 27 their debtors they are; for if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual contributions, they ought also to minister unto them in temporal things. When, therefore, I have accomplished this, and 28 sealed to them this fruit, I will pass by you on my way to Spain. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the ful- 29 ness of the blessing of Christ. But I beseech you by our Lord 30 Jesus Christ and the love of the spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God in my behalf; that I may be delivered 31 from them that do not believe, in Judæa; and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints; that I may come unto 32 you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed with you. The God of peace be with you all. Amen. 33

## CHAPTER XVI.

Now I commend to you Phebe, our sister, who is a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea; that you may receive her in the Lord, in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatsoever she may have need of you; for she hath been a helper of many, and of myself also.

3 Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-laborers in Christ Jesus  
4 (who have for my life exposed their own, to whom not only I  
5 give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles); and the  
church which is in their house. Salute Epenetus, my beloved,  
6 who is the first-fruits of Asia unto Christ. Salute Mary, who  
7 labored much for us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen  
and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who  
8 also preceded me in Christ. Salute Amplias, my beloved in the  
9 Lord. Salute Urbanus, our fellow-laborer in Christ, and Stachys,  
10 my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them  
11 who are of the household of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion, my  
kinsman. Salute them who are of the household of Narcissus,  
12 who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor  
in the Lord. Salute Persis, the beloved, who labored much in the  
13 Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and  
14 mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes,  
15 and the brethren with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Ne-  
reus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them.  
16 Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ  
salute you.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions  
and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned;  
18 and avoid them. For such persons serve not the Lord Jesus  
Christ, but their own appetite, and by good words and fair  
19 speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience is  
known to all. I rejoyce therefore concerning you, yet I wish you  
to be wise as to that which is good, but simple as to that which is  
20 evil. And the God of peace shall quickly bruise Satan under  
your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Timothy, my fellow-laborer, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosti- 21  
pater, my kinsmen, salute you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, 22  
salute you in the Lord. Gaius, the host of me and of the whole 23  
church, saluteth you. Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, and  
Quartus, a brother, salute you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. 24

Now unto him who is able to establish you according to my 25  
Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the reve-  
lation of the secret, kept hidden in ancient times, but which is now 26  
manifested, and by the prophetic Scriptures, according to the com-  
mandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for  
the obedience of faith, — to the only wise God be glory through 27  
Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

THE END.





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