

Paul's Letter to the Romans



Events Associated With Paul's Letter to the Romans Written From Corinth During His Third Missionary Tour, c. A.D. 57–58

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the ROMANS **INTRODUCTION**

1. Title. When Paul wrote this epistle he probably gave it no title. It was simply a letter he wrote to the believers in Rome. But subsequently the epistle came to be known as "To the Romans," Gr. *pros Rhomaious*, the title given to it in the earliest manuscripts. Later manuscripts enlarged the title to a descriptive. "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans," and this title is still used in some English versions.

2. Authorship. That Paul the apostle is the author of this epistle has never been seriously questioned. Some scholars have suggested that ch. 16 may not have been a part of the original epistle sent to Rome but that it was rather a separate letter sent to Ephesus, where Paul had labored for some time (Acts 19). This theory is based largely on the length of the list of names in Rom. 16 and upon the assumption that Paul could hardly have known so many friends in a city that he had as yet not visited. However, since people naturally drifted toward Rome from all parts of the empire, it is not impossible that the apostle could have had many friends in that capital city. Moreover, all the earliest manuscripts include ch. 16 as an integral part of the epistle. Consequently, conservative modern scholarship leaves the epistle intact.

3. Historical Setting. It seems evident that the Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth during Paul's three-month stay in that city on his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 20:1–3). Many scholars date this visit in the winter of 57–58, but some prefer an earlier date.

That the epistle was written from Corinth is indicated by his references to Gaius (Rom. 16:23; cf. 1 Cor. 1:14) and Erastus (Rom. 16:23; cf. 2 Tim. 4:20) and by his commendation of Phoebe, whom Paul describes as rendering special service to the church at Cenchreae, the eastern seaport of Corinth (Rom. 16:1).

At the time of writing the epistle, Paul was about to return to Palestine, bearing from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia a contribution for the poor among the Christians in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25, 26; cf. Acts 19:21; 20:3; 24:17; 1 Cor. 16:1–5; 2 Cor. 8:1–4; 2 Cor. 9:1, 2). He intended, after completing this mission, to visit Rome, and from there travel on to Spain (Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:24, 28). As yet he had never been able to visit the Christian church in the capital city of the Roman Empire, though he had often desired to do so (Rom. 1:13; 15:22). But now he believed that he had completed his missionary labors in Asia and Greece (ch. 15:19, 23), and was eager to move westward to strengthen the work in Italy and to introduce Christianity in Spain (see AA 373). In order to accomplish this latter purpose Paul desired to secure the blessing and cooperation of the believers in Rome. Therefore, in anticipation of his visit, he wrote them this epistle, outlining to them in strong, clear terms the great principles of his gospel (chs. 1:15; 2:16). See pp. 104, 105.

4. Theme. The theme of the epistle is the universal sinfulness of man and the universal grace of God in providing a way by which sinners may not only be pardoned but also restored to perfection and holiness. This “way” is faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died, rose again, and ever lives to reconcile and to restore.

As Paul writes this epistle his mind is full of the issues raised in his controversies with the Judaizers. He takes up the basic questions, and answers them in a broad presentation of the whole problem of sin and God's plan to meet the emergency. First Paul shows that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, have sinned and continue to fall short of God's glorious ideal (ch. 3:23). There is no excuse for this, for all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, have received some revelation of the will of God (ch. 1:20). Therefore, all men are justly under condemnation. Moreover, sinful men are now hopelessly incapable of extricating themselves from this predicament, for in their depraved condition it is wholly impossible for them to obey God's will (ch. 8:7). Legalistic attempts to obey the divine law are not only doomed to failure but may also be evidence of an arrogant and self-righteous refusal to recognize man's weakness and his need of a Saviour. Only God Himself can provide a remedy. And this He has done—by the sacrifice of His Son. All that is asked of fallen man is that he exercise faith, faith to accept the provisions made to cover his sinful past, and faith to accept the power offered to lead him into a life of righteousness.

This is Paul's gospel, as developed in the first part of the epistle. The remaining chapters deal with the practical application of the gospel to certain problems dealing with the chosen people and with the members of the Christian church.

5. Outline.

- I. Introduction, 1:1–15.
- A. The salutation, 1:1–7.

- B. Personal explanations, 1:8–15.
- II. Doctrinal Exposition, 1:16 to 11:36.
 - A. The doctrine of justification by faith, 1:16 to 5:21.
 - 1. Righteousness attained by faith, 1:16, 17.
 - 2. The universal need of righteousness, 1:18 to 3:20.
 - a. The failure of the Gentiles, 1:18–32.
 - b. The failure of the Jews, 2:1 to 3:20.
 - 3. Righteousness provided in Christ, 3:21–31.
 - 4. Righteousness by faith an Old Testament doctrine, 4:1–25.
 - 5. The blessed effects of justification, 5:1–11.
 - 6. The effects of justification contrasted with the results of Adam’s fall, 5:12–21.
 - B. The doctrine of sanctification by faith, 6:1 to 8:39.
 - 1. Death to sin, resurrection to newness of life, 6:1–11.
 - 2. Deliverance from the bondage of law and sin, 6:12–23.
 - 3. The relation of the law to sin, 7:1–13.
 - 4. The conflict between flesh and spirit, 7:14–25.
 - 5. The Spirit-filled life, 8:1–39.
 - C. The election of Israel, 9:1 to 11:36.
 - 1. Paul’s sorrow over Israel’s rejection, 9:1–5.
 - 2. The justice of the rejection, 9:6–13.
 - 3. God’s will not to be questioned, 9:14–29.
 - 4. Israel’s lack of faith the cause of the rejection, 9:30 to 10:21.
 - 5. The final restoration of Israel, 11:1–36.
- III. Practical Application of the Doctrine of Righteousness by Faith, 12:1 to 15:13.
 - A. The Christian’s sacrifice of himself, 12:1, 2.
 - B. The Christian as a member of the church, 12:3–8.
 - C. The Christian’s relation to others, 12:9–21.
 - D. The Christian’s relation to the state, 13:1–7.
 - E. The Christian’s one debt—love, 13:8–10.
 - F. The nearness of the second coming, 13:11–14.
 - G. The need for mutual forbearance among Christians, 14:1 to 15:13.
- IV. Conclusion, 15:14 to 16:27.
 - A. Personal explanations, 15:14–33.
 - B. Greetings to various persons, 16:1–16.
 - C. Warning against false teachers, 16:17–20.
 - D. Greetings from Paul’s companions and amanuensis, 16:21–23.
 - E. Benediction and doxology, 16:24–27.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Paul commendeth his calling to the Romans, 9 and his desire to come to them. 16 What his gospel is, and the righteousness which it sheweth. 18 God is angry with all manner of sin. 21 What were the sins of the Gentiles.*

1. Paul. Earlier called Saul. For the meaning of the names see Additional Note on Acts 7. Paul was following ancient custom when he inserted his name as the author in his introductory greetings. For examples see Josephus *Antiquities* xvi. 6. 3, 4; Acts 23:26; 1 Macc. 11:30, 32.

Servant. Gr. *doulos*, literally, “one bound,” hence, “a bond servant” or “a slave.” Paul frequently uses this term to express his relationship as a believer to Christ (Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:1). The word involves the idea of belonging to a master and rendering bondman service to him. Paul recognized that Christians belong to Christ by purchase (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19), and often applied the term *doulos* to believers (Rom. 6:22; 1 Cor. 7:22; Eph. 6:6; cf. 1 Peter 2:16; Rev. 19:2, 5).

This is not a title of which we should be ashamed. We should gladly acknowledge that we are Christ’s purchased possession and surrender ourselves to His will. Such absolute service is true freedom (1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 4:7), for the more we are bound by the authority of Christ, the more we are free from bondage to men (1 Cor. 7:23).

Jesus Christ. For the significance of these titles see on Matt. 1:1.

Apostle. Gr. *apostolos*, literally, “one sent out,” hence, “a messenger,” “an envoy,” “one sent on a special mission.” In the NT the title is usually restricted to the men who were personally selected and instructed by Christ, namely, the Twelve (Luke 6:13), and to Paul, who also was directly called by the Lord (Acts 9:15; 22:14, 15; 26:16, 17; Gal. 1:1) and instructed by Him (Gal. 1:11, 12).

Separated. Gr. *aphorizō*, “to mark off from others by a boundary.” *Aphorizō* is used to describe the separation of God’s people from the world (Lev. 20:26, LXX), the final separation of the righteous from the wicked (Matt. 13:49; 25:32), and the separation of apostles to special duties (Acts 13:2). It is a further explanation of Paul’s apostolic calling and implies that he was selected from the world and from among his fellows and consecrated to the gospel ministry.

Gospel. Gr. *euangelion*, a word made up of two parts, “good” and “message” or “news” (see on Mark 1:1). The word “evangelize” comes from the same two roots. An evangelist is one who tells good news. In the letter to the Romans Paul fulfills his commission to make known God’s good news. Tyndale, in 1525, understood the phrase “unto the gospel” to mean “to preach the gospel.” He has been followed in this interpretation by a number of modern translators. Others prefer to leave the phrase ambiguous. The context would seem to indicate that Paul is here stating the purpose of his calling and separation. He has been called to be an apostle and set apart to proclaim God’s good news concerning His Son (see on Rom. 1:3).

2. Promised afore. This promise was made specifically in the OT passages that predicted the coming of the Messiah, but was also implicit in the meaning of the entire OT. The gospel was no afterthought on God’s part, neither was it any abrupt change in His steadily unfolding purpose for man. It was but the fulfillment of His promise made to our first parents (see on Gen. 3:15) and to each succeeding generation.

By his prophets. Not only the writers of the prophetic books of the OT but others, such as Moses (Deut. 18:18), Samuel (Acts 3:24), and the psalmist (Ps. 40:7), prophesied of the gospel (cf. Heb. 1:1).

Holy scriptures. Throughout this epistle, Paul frequently refers to passages from the OT to show that the gospel was in full accord with the teachings of the already acknowledged oracles of God (see Acts 26:22, 23). Paul was especially anxious to prove to his own countrymen that Christianity was built on the foundation of their own prophets and holy writings.

3. Concerning his Son. The KJV has placed v. 2 in parentheses, thereby indicating that “concerning his Son” is to be connected with the last phrase of v. 1, “the gospel of God.” It is also possible to connect this phrase with “the holy scriptures,” or with “promised afore.” The RSV repeats the word “gospel,” thus making the opening words of v. 3 read, “The gospel concerning his Son.”

Jesus Christ our Lord. In the Greek these words are not here in v. 3 but at the end of v. 4 (see comment there).

Made. Gr. *ginomai*, “to become.” The word may have the meaning “to be born” (see Gal. 4:4; see on John 8:58).

Seed of David. The Jews were expecting the Messiah to come from the royal line (Matt. 22:42; John 7:42) as predicted (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5). See on Matt. 1:1.

The flesh. That is, His human nature (see ch. 9:5).

4. Declared. Gr. *horizō*, “to mark off by a boundary,” hence, “to designate,” “to determine,” “to define.” The word is translated “ordained” in Acts 10:42; 17:31. *Horizō* is the root of the compound Greek word translated “separated” in Rom. 1:1.

With power. Or, “in power.” This phrase may be connected as an adverb with “declared,” or as an adjective with “Son of God.” Taken adverbially, the passage would mean that Jesus was powerfully or miraculously declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection. Taken adjectively, the passage would refer to the exalted state of Christ as “Son of God in power” at or since the resurrection. Either interpretation is in harmony with other scriptures (see Eph. 1:19–21). Neither interpretation gives any support to the idea that Jesus lacked in any divine power or quality preceding His resurrection.

Spirit of holiness. Some understand this to mean the Holy Spirit and cite ch. 8:11 in support of this interpretation. However, the Spirit is never so designated elsewhere. Others see the phrase as the counterpart of “according to the flesh” (ch. 1:3). They note that according to the flesh Jesus was descended from David, but according to the spirit of holiness He was also the Son of God.

The theological implications of this passage have been discussed at length by many interpreters. It does not seem, however, that Paul is chiefly concerned here with contrasting the humanity and divinity of Christ, but rather with making it clear that Jesus is at one and the same time the promised Jewish Messiah and the divine Son of God.

From the dead. Paul is presenting the resurrection of Jesus as proof of divine sonship. Jesus had consistently claimed that He was the Son of God (Matt. 27:43; John 5:17–30; 10:36) and had predicted that He would rise again the third day (Matt. 12:40; John 2:19, 21). Now Paul is affirming that Jesus has been decisively proved to be the Son of God by the miraculous fulfillment of His predicted resurrection.

In the Greek the words “Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 3) appear at the end of v. 4. Paul finally identifies the Son of David and the Son of God with the Jesus of Nazareth already acknowledged as Christ and Lord by the Christians.

These names were full of meaning to a Jew. “Jesus,” a transliteration of the Greek form of the Aramaic *Yeshua*‘, “Joshua,” means “Jehovah is salvation” (see on Matt. 1:1). “Christ” is a transliteration of the Greek equivalent of the Heb. *Mashiach*, “Messiah,” the “anointed” (see on Matt. 1:1). “Lord,” as a title for a divine ruler and master, was already familiar from its use in the LXX (see on John 20:28).

5. By whom. Or, “through whom.” Paul claims that his apostolic commission was from Christ Himself, not from men.

We have received. The plural is probably used for the singular, a not uncommon practice for men in authority. However, it is also possible that Paul is including the other apostles.

Grace and apostleship. Many interpreters take these two terms together as the equivalent of the grace, or favor, of apostleship. Paul often speaks of his call to apostleship as the “grace that was given” to him by God (Rom. 15:15, 16; Gal. 2:7–9; Eph. 3:7–9). Others, however, prefer to understand “grace” as referring especially to the personal grace of salvation, which Paul had first accepted on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1–16; cf. 15:10). For the meanings of the term “grace” see on Rom. 3:24.

To Paul, his conversion and call to apostleship, occurring almost simultaneously, must have seemed as one event. From being “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim. 1:13) he was called immediately to preach “the faith which once he destroyed” (Gal. 1:23). No wonder Paul could exclaim, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10), not only a converted Christian, but also a commissioned apostle.

Obedience to the faith. The Greek phrase thus translated occurs again in ch. 16:26, where the KJV translates it “the obedience of faith.” This is the more literal rendering, for the definite article is not present in the Greek. In the absence of the article, “faith” is probably not equivalent here to “the faith,” that is, to a body of doctrine to be received and believed (see Acts 6:7; Jude 3, where the article does occur). Faith means rather that habit and attitude of mind by which the Christian shows his loyalty and devotion to Christ and his dependence on Him. Such faith produces obedience.

“Obedience of faith” may be understood as meaning either obedience to faith as a controlling principle or the obedience that characterizes or springs from faith. Either way, the significant fact is that Paul associates faith with obedience. The great message of the Epistle to the Romans is that righteousness comes by faith (ch. 3:22; etc.). This is the good news that Paul has been called to make known. He regards his apostleship as a commission to bring about the obedience that springs from faith among all the nations.

All nations. This phrase commonly refers to Gentiles as distinguished from Jews, and may point to Paul’s own special apostleship to the heathen (see Acts 22:21; Gal. 1:16; 2:7–9; Eph. 3:1, 8). Here, however, the phrase may reflect the original commission that Jesus gave to His disciples (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16), and the charge to Paul at the time of his conversion (Acts 9:15) to carry the gospel to the whole world.

For his name. Meaning, probably, “for the sake of his name.” The ultimate purpose of Paul’s mission was to promote the knowledge and glory of Christ. Particularly would the name of Christ be magnified by the obedience that comes from faith in Him. Paul was ready to risk his life for such a cause (Acts 15:26; 21:13; cf. Acts 9:16).

6. Among whom. That is, among all the nations, or Gentiles, in whose behalf he had received his commission. Perhaps Paul is hereby expressing his authority to address the believers at Rome.

The called of Jesus Christ. This may mean “the called who belong to Jesus Christ,” “called by Jesus Christ,” or “called to belong to Jesus Christ.”

7. All that be in Rome. By this Paul evidently means all Christians in Rome (see v. 8).

Beloved of God. God loves all men (John 3:16; Eph. 2:4, 5), but for Christians, who have been reconciled to God through the death of Christ, the barrier that once separated them from God's love has been removed (Rom. 5:10; see on John 16:27).

Saints. Gr. *hagioi*, literally, "holy ones." The term is common in the NT to describe Christians (Acts 9:32, 41; 26:10; Eph. 1:1; etc.). It does not necessarily denote persons who are already perfect in holiness (see 1 Cor. 1:2; cf. 1 Cor. 1:11), but rather those who by their profession and baptism may be assumed to be separate from the world and consecrated to God.

The basic idea of *hagios* is "separated from a common to a sacred use." It was in this sense that the equivalent Hebrew term *qodesh* or *qadosh* was used in the OT and applied, for example, to the tabernacle and its furniture (Ex. 40:9). It was used of the Jewish people as a nation (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:6), not that they were individually perfect and holy, but that they were separate from other nations and set apart to the service of the true God, whereas other nations were devoted to the worship of idols. Thus it is used here of the Christians in Rome, who have been called to be separated from other men and other ways of life and consecrated to the service of God.

Grace. Gr. *charis*, "good will," not the usual word of greeting used in a Greek letter. The ordinary term was *chairein*, which expressed a wish for health and prosperity. *Chairein* occurs in the NT in the letter of Lysias to the Roman governor Felix; (Acts 23:26), and in James's epistle (James 1:1). In each of these instances it is translated "greeting." *Chairein*, as used in 2 John 10 ("God speed," KJV), indicates that Christians were accustomed to greeting one another in this manner (see Matt. 26:49; 27:29; 28:9; Mark 15:18; Luke 1:28; John 19:3, where *chaire* and *chairete* are translated "hail").

But instead of *chairein*, "greeting," with its prevailing idea of temporal prosperity, Paul used *charis*, "grace," a word that was beginning to take on a uniquely Christian meaning (see on Rom. 3:24).

Peace. The usual Hebrew form of greeting was *shalom*, "peace," or *shalom leka*, "peace to you" (see Gen. 29:6; 43:23; Dan. 10:19; Luke 10:5, 6; etc.). Jesus so greeted His assembled disciples after the resurrection (John 20:19, 26).

The life, death, and resurrection of Christ had brought new meaning to both these old familiar terms. "Grace" was now understood as the redeeming love of God in Christ (see 2 Tim. 1:9). "Peace" was now peace with God through redemption (Rom. 5:1). With this Christian significance, "grace" and "peace" became Paul's customary greeting in all his epistles (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; Philemon 3; cf. 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4). Peter and John also used similar greetings (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3; Rev. 1:4).

God our Father. As the Creator, God is the Father of all men (Acts 17:28, 29), but especially of Christians, who have been born of God (John 1:12, 13; 1 John 5:1; cf. 1 John 3:1, 2), who have been adopted into His family (Rom. 8:15), and who are becoming like Him (Matt. 5:43–48).

Paul's greeting is really a prayer that God would grant grace and peace to the believers in Rome. Thus in all his epistles his greetings are more than a passing courtesy. They have been transformed by Christian love into a prayer for heavenly blessing.

Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus and the Father are placed together, both being considered the source of grace and peace. This is evidence of Paul's recognition of the divinity of Christ (see Phil. 2:6). In the NT Jesus is frequently referred to as the One who has brought peace to man (John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:17).

8. I thank. Paul begins many of his letters by thanking God in behalf of his readers (see 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3–5; Philemon 4), and at times expresses his desire to see them (Phil. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:4). Paul recognized and was grateful for progress already made by others in the Christian way, even though they might be in need of censure (see 1 Cor. 1:4, 5, 11). In this way he encouraged the believers and won their more sympathetic attention to the instruction to follow.

My God. This phrase emphasizes the personal nature of Paul's relation to God as a Christian and as an apostle (cf. 1 Cor. 1:4; Phil. 1:3; 4:19; Philemon 4).

Through Jesus Christ. In thanksgiving, as well as in prayer, we may approach God through Christ (see Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:15).

Your faith. That is, your loyalty and devotion to Christ, your Christianity. A similar good report is mentioned in ch. 16:19, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men."

The whole world. This may be the equivalent of our "everywhere" (see on John 12:19; cf. Acts 17:6; Col. 1:6), or it may be understood as representing the Roman Empire. Since Rome was the capital city and travelers were constantly passing through on their way to various parts of the empire, it is easy to see how reports of the new religion of the Roman Christians could spread to "all the world." Especially would this news be carried and received with interest by the members of the other Christian churches throughout the empire. Paul may have been thinking of these in particular as the ones who were proclaiming the faith and obedience of their fellow believers in Rome.

9. God is my witness. Only God could know the truth of such a declaration, and the apostle appeals to Him as witness (cf. 2 Cor. 1:23; 11:31; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5, 10). Paul is writing his letter from Corinth, where his sincerity has recently been seriously questioned, especially because of the postponement of a promised visit (2 Cor. 1:15–24). Now he is about to leave for Jerusalem, apparently turning his back on the church at Rome. It is possible that his sincerity will again be doubted. It may even be suspected that he is ashamed to preach the gospel at Rome. At the moment Paul is not in a position to prove otherwise. He can only assert his love, his many prayers, his earnest desire to see them, and call the all-knowing God to witness that he is telling the truth (Rom. 1:9–16).

With my spirit. Or, "in my spirit." Paul's service is no more ceremonial function, but a spiritual one, a devotion of himself to God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ.

Without ceasing. Paul showed similar concern for other churches (see Eph. 1:15, 16; Phil. 1:3, 4; Col. 1:3, 4; 1 Thess. 1:2, 3; 2:13). The progress of the gospel everywhere was his one consuming interest.

Make mention. Paul had never seen the Christian community at Rome, but he never failed to remember them in his prayers.

Always. Many prefer to put a comma after "you," thus connecting "always in my prayers" with v. 10, "always in my prayers making request ... to come unto you."

10. At length. Or, “at last.” Paul had long desired to visit Rome (see v. 13).

Have a prosperous journey. Better, “may be prospered.” The literal meaning of the Greek word is “have a good journey,” but in NT times the word was commonly used to denote being prospered generally (see 1 Cor. 16:2; 3 John 2).

The will of God. God knows the end from the beginning, and it is always wise for us to submit ourselves to His will and direction. This was ever Paul’s practice in his ministry (see Acts 16:7, 9, 10), and we are instructed to do the same (James 4:15). By the will of God Paul’s request to visit Rome was later granted, but hardly in the manner the apostle expected. He arrived there a prisoner in chains (Acts 28:14–16, 20).

11. Gift. Gr. *charisma*, “a gift of favor or grace,” from the word *charis*, “grace.” This spiritual gift that Paul longed personally to share with the believers at Rome was evidently the blessing of encouragement and growth in Christian faith, as further explained in v. 12.

Established. Or, “strengthened.” Paul does not say, “that I may strengthen you.” He knows that he is but an instrument through which God Himself will strengthen and invigorate the spiritual life of the Roman Christians (see Rom. 16:25; 2 Thess. 2:17).

12. That is. With all Christian humility and courtesy Paul hastens to correct any impression he may have given by the statement in v. 11 that it is for him only to impart and for them only to receive. It is not his intention to “have dominion” over their faith (2 Cor. 1:24). He recognizes that his readers also are Christians, and he himself expects to be benefited by the sharing of a “mutual faith.”

Comforted. Or, “encouraged.” Verse 12 seems to be more than a mere expression of tact and courtesy. The experienced apostle joins himself with the believers at Rome as needing to be no less encouraged by their faith than they by his. Christian perfection is not to be found in seclusion or in isolation from others. It is developed as the faith of Christians is encouraged and stimulated by that of their fellow believers.

13. Not have you ignorant. A favorite expression with Paul when he wishes to call special attention to some important point (see Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; Thess. 4:13).

Let. That is, hindered or prevented. “Let” had this meaning when the KJV translation was made. Paul gives further evidence of the sincerity of his desire to visit the church at Rome. It had been not only his wish but often his definite purpose to see them (Acts 19:21). But in one way or another he had been prevented from making the journey (Rom. 15:22; cf. 1 Thess. 2:18; Acts 16:6, 7).

Have some fruit. Paul hoped to reap some harvest among them of men brought to a knowledge of Christ or to an increase of faith and good works. Jesus had directed His disciples to “go and bring forth fruit,” in their own lives and in the lives of others (John 15:16; cf. John 4:36). “Fruit” is a common figure of speech in the NT. Paul uses it to represent both good and bad results (Rom. 6:21, 22; 7:4, 5; Gal. 5:22; Phil. 1:22; 4:17; Col. 1:6).

Gentiles. Or, “nations” (see on v. 5). The words “among you also, even as among other Gentiles” suggest that the church at Rome was predominantly Gentile in its origin.

14. Debtor. Paul felt that “necessity” had been “laid upon” him to preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9:16). This sense of obligation to make the gospel known as far as possible to all the nations of earth may have been due in part to his special commission to the Gentiles

(Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:13). But a similar obligation rests upon all Christians everywhere, who have received the blessings of a knowledge of salvation (see MB 135).

To the Greeks. Paul adopts the conventional Greek division of all mankind into Greeks and non-Greeks. The Greeks regarded all people who spoke any language other than their own as barbarians. The term is not necessarily one of reproach. The distinction is primarily one of language and race (see 1 Cor. 14:11). At Rome, the great metropolis, were representatives of all nations and all levels of culture and learning. Paul declares his indebtedness to preach the gospel to the whole Gentile world, regardless of race and culture.

To the wise. The gospel has a message for all. Philosophers were inclined to scorn the ignorant multitude. Jewish scribes regarded as cursed, people who did not know the law (John 7:49). But the gospel is for all men. In fact, it seems to have been most readily received at first by the common people (1 Cor. 1:26–29). Nor were the “wise” to be overlooked. The Greeks prided themselves in their wisdom and sought eagerly after it (1 Cor. 1:22). Nevertheless, the gospel was for them also. Paul himself was highly educated. People may differ in language, culture, and intelligence, but the gospel is for all. The relation in which men stand to Christ is deeper than national and personal distinctions.

15. As much as. The Greek idiom is difficult. Many interpreters understand the first part of this verse to mean “so far as I am concerned, and so far as I may have opportunity, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also.” The RSV translates the first part of the sentence simply, “I am eager.” Others suggest, “It is my wish.”

At Rome. Paul had already preached in the great cities of Ephesus, Athens, and Corinth. Now he is eager to proclaim the gospel in the capital city of the world.

16. Not ashamed. The Jews considered Paul an apostate. He had been despised and persecuted among the Gentiles. He had been driven from city to city and had been regarded as “the filth of the world” and “the offscouring of all things” (1 Cor. 4:13). He was well aware that the preaching of the cross was “foolishness” to the Greeks and a “stumblingblock” to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23). But because Paul was so thoroughly convinced of the truth of the gospel, and because he himself had so fully experienced its blessing and power, he not only was not ashamed of any part of it but even gloried in that which was most offensive to many, the cross of Christ (Gal. 6:14).

Of Christ. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words. However, the omission does not change the meaning of the passage.

The power of God. The gospel is the way in which God exerts His power for the salvation of men. Wherever the gospel finds believing hearts it is a divine power by which all the obstacles to man’s redemption are removed. Paul is stating a fact that he knows to be true from his own experience. He has felt this “power of God” in his own life and has witnessed its effect upon others (1 Cor. 1:18, 24; 2:1–5).

That believeth. The gospel is for all men (1 Tim. 2:4), but it is “the power of God unto salvation” only to those who willingly accept it. That willing acceptance is faith (see John 3:16, 17).

Jew first. Paul always puts the Jews first, in privilege and in responsibility (ch. 2:9, 10). To them had been committed the oracles of God (ch. 3:1, 2). They had had the law and the typical services of the Temple. The Messiah had come through them (ch. 9:5). It was only natural that the gospel should be preached to them first. In fact, this was the order in which the gospel actually was proclaimed to the world (Acts 13:46; cf. Matt.

10:5, 6; 21:43; Luke 24:47; Acts 18:6). Paul, in his ministry, customarily began his work in the synagogues (Acts 17:1, 2; 18:4, 6; 19:8). One of his first acts after his imprisonment in Rome was to present the gospel to the Jewish leaders there (Acts 28:17, 23).

Greek. Gr. *Hellēn*, here equivalent to “Gentile,” as in Rom. 2:9, 10; 3:9; see on John 7:35. “Jew and Greek” was the Jewish designation of all mankind according to religion (see Acts 14:1; 1 Cor. 10:32). “Greek and barbarian” was the Greek division according to nationality and culture (see on Rom. 1:14).

17. Therein. That is, in the gospel.

The righteousness of God. This phrase may be understood as referring to God’s own righteousness, or to the righteousness that comes from God, or to the righteousness that is acceptable to God, or to God’s way of restoring man to righteousness. It would seem that in this summary statement of the great theme of the epistle, Paul is using the term “the righteousness of God” in a general and comprehensive sense. The gospel reveals the righteousness and perfection of God (ch. 3:26). It reveals the kind of righteousness that comes from God and how it may be received by man (Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:9; see on Rom. 4:3–5).

Revealed. Or, “is being revealed.” The present tense indicates continuous action. The righteousness of God was especially revealed in the death of Christ (ch. 3:21–26), but the revelation is repeated in the continuous proclamation of the gospel and in the spiritual experience of each person who hears and believes the gospel (Gal. 1:16). Man could never conceive or attain to this divine righteousness by his own unaided reason and philosophy. The righteousness of God is a revelation from God.

From faith to faith. Compare “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18) and “from strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7). The righteousness of God is received by faith, and when received, results in ever-increasing faith. As faith is exercised we are able to receive more and still more of the righteousness of God until faith becomes a permanent attitude toward Him.

As it is written. Here, as in v. 2 and in many other passages in the epistle, Paul seeks to prove that the gospel message is in agreement with the teachings of the OT.

The just shall live by faith. Or, “He who by faith is righteous shall live.” The phrase “by faith” may be connected with “the just” or with “shall live.” The quotation is from Hab. 2:4. During the Chaldean invasion, Habakkuk was comforted by the assurance that the righteous person is kept safe by his trust and confidence in God (see on Hab. 2:4). A similar meaning may be seen in Paul’s use of the quotation in Rom. 1:17. The just man will not live by reliance on his own works and merit but by confidence and faith in God.

Others prefer to connect “by faith” with “the just” as more exactly expressing the theme of the epistle, righteousness by faith. Paul is trying to show that it is by faith alone that a man can be righteous before God. Only the person who by faith is righteous shall live. Taken either way the meaning is essentially the same. In either case the emphasis is on faith.

18. For. Here the main argument of the epistle begins. Paul first seek to show that all men, Gentiles and Jews alike, need the righteousness that is revealed in the gospel. For all men are sinners and therefore exposed to the wrath of God, whether Gentiles (ch. 1:13–32) or Jews (chs. 2:1 to 3:20).

The wrath of God. That is, the divine displeasure against sin, resulting ultimately in the abandonment of man to the judgment of death (see Rom. 6:23; John 3:36). The wrath

of the infinite God must not be compared to human passion. God is love (1 John 4:8), and though He hates sin, He loves the sinner (SC 54). However, God does not force His love upon those who are unwilling to receive His mercy (see DA 22, 466, 759). Thus, God's wrath against sin is exercised in the withdrawal of His presence and life-giving power from those who choose to remain in sin and thus share in its inevitable consequences (see Gen. 6:3; cf. DA 107, 763, 764; SC 17, 18).

This is illustrated by the terrible experience of the Jews after their rejection of Christ. Since they had become confirmed in their stubborn impenitence and had refused the last offers of mercy, "God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen" (GC 28).

When God's wrath against sin fell upon Christ as our substitute, it was the separation from His Father that caused Him such great anguish. "This agony He must not exert His divine power to escape. As man He must suffer the consequence of man's sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression" (DA 686). Finally, on the cross, "the wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. ... The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man" (DA 753).

Thus, as Paul explains in Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, God reveals His wrath by turning impenitent men over to the inevitable results of their rebellion. This persistent resistance of God's love and mercy culminates in the final revelation of God's wrath on that day when the Spirit of God is at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, the wicked have no protection from the evil one. "As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose" (GC 614). Then fire comes down from God out of heaven, and sin and sinners are forever destroyed (Rev. 20:9; cf. Mal. 4:1; 2 Peter 3:10).

But even this final revelation of God's wrath in the destruction of the wicked is not an act of arbitrary power. "God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life" (DA 764). God gives men existence for a time so that they may develop their characters. When this has been accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. "By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire" (*ibid.*; cf. GC 543).

Revealed. Or, "is being revealed" (see v. 17). The full manifestation of the wrath of God will be seen at the end of the world (Rom. 2:5; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2 Thess. 1:7–9; Rev. 6:16, 17). But God's displeasure against sin is also being revealed in the condition of mankind. The debasing vices and deliberate wickedness to which the sinner is given over (Rom. 1:24–32), prove God's condemnation and punishment of sin. Paul's preaching of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (v. 17) also serves to reveal the wrath of God more clearly than ever before.

From heaven. The revelation of divine wrath comes as a message of warning from God's throne.

Ungodliness. Gr. *asebeia*, "lack of reverence for God," "irreligion" (see v. 21).

Unrighteousness. Gr. *adikia*, "lack of right conduct," "injustice" (see v. 29).

Hold. Gr. *katechō*, “to possess,” “to hold fast,” “to hold back,” “to hinder,” “to suppress.” The context here shows that the meaning “hold back” is to be preferred. Compare similar uses of the word in Luke 4:42; 2 Thess. 2:6, 7.

The truth. This refers particularly to knowledge concerning God (see Rom. 1:19, 25; see on John 8:32).

In unrighteousness. In and by their wickedness men were holding back and suppressing the truth about God. In their determination to practice iniquity men were unwilling to retain the knowledge of a pure and holy God who they knew was opposed to such deeds and would punish them. By so doing they were not only suppressing the truth in their own hearts but also concealing the truth from others.

19. May be known. Or, “is known.”

In them. That is, in their hearts and consciences (see ch. 2:15).

God hath shewed. God reveals Himself to man in three ways: by an internal revelation to the reason and conscience of each man (Rom. 2:15; cf. John 1:9), by an external revelation in the works of creation (Rom. 1:20), and by special revelation in the Scriptures and in the person and work of Christ, which confirms and completes the other revelations. Paul is here referring to the first two. God has endowed men with reason and conscience. He had made them capable of seeing and investigating His works. He has spread before them the evidence of His goodness, wisdom, and power. Thus God has made it possible for Gentiles as well as Jews to learn of Him.

20. Invisible things. That is, “his eternal power and Godhead,” as later mentioned. In their blindness men had substituted visible images for these invisible attributes of God.

From the creation. That is, ever since the creation.

Clearly seen. The invisible things of God may be clearly perceived by the mind with the help of the created works of nature. Even though blighted by sin, the “things that are made” testify that One of infinite power created this earth. All around us we see abundant evidence of His goodness and love. Thus it is possible for even the heathen to recognize and acknowledge the power of the Creator.

Godhead. Gr. *theiotēs*, “divine nature,” “divinity,” “Godhood.” This is the only occurrence of *theiotēs* in the NT. The apostle here speaks of the divine essence and the manifestation of the divine attributes, not of the Trinity as such. Compare the word *theotēs* in Col. 2:9, which properly means “Godhead.”

Without excuse. The revelation of God through conscience and nature is sufficient to enlighten men as to the divine requirements. In the face of this revelation, they are without excuse for the nonperformance of duty, that is, for their idolatry and for hindering the truth.

21. When they knew God. Or, “although they knew God,” that is, through the revelation of conscience and nature (see on v. 20). Furthermore, God-fearing men like Noah and his sons knew God, and this knowledge they passed on their children. But because of sinful neglect, the minds of most of their descendants soon became darkened, and the knowledge of God was largely lost among the Gentiles.

Glorified him not. The unwillingness to honor God as the divine Creator was the real source of the darkened minds and abominable practices of the Gentiles. To glorify God means to reverence, love, and obey Him.

Neither were thankful. Unwillingness to give thanks to God for His love and goodness toward men is one of the causes of corruption and idolatry. Ingratitude hardens the heart and leads men to forget the Being to whom they are unwilling to express thankfulness.

Became vain. Gr. *mataioō*, “to become foolish,” or “to become futile.” In devising vanities, the Gentiles themselves had become vain and foolish. The human mind that worships dumb idols of wood and stone becomes like the objects of its worship (Ps. 115:8). Compare *kenos*, also translated “vain” (see on 1 Cor. 15:10), but meaning “empty,” or “hollow.”

Imaginations. Gr. *dialogismoi*, “reasonings,” “thoughts,” “speculations.” Paul is using the term to refer to the futile ideas and speculations that the Gentiles had come to hold regarding God in opposition to the truth that they had once known and that was still set before them in God’s created works (v. 20).

Foolish. Gr. *asunetos*, literally, “without understanding” (see Matt. 15:16), hence, “unintelligent,” “senseless.”

Heart. A comprehensive term used for all the human faculties of thought (Rom. 10:6), will (1 Cor. 4:5), or feeling (Rom. 9:2). The Jews regarded the heart as the seat of man’s inner life. It may be the home of the Holy Spirit (ch. 5:5), or of evil desires (Rom. 1:24; cf. Mark 7:21–23).

Was darkened. Men had sunk so deep in ignorance and sin that their minds had become dark and senseless, and they no longer perceived or understood the truth. To produce such darkness has ever been Satan’s purpose in the great controversy. God has given to every man “individuality, power to think and to do” (Ed 17). Salvation depends upon the right exercise and development of this power in choosing to have faith in God and to obey His will. Consequently, for six thousand years it has been Satan’s studied purpose to weaken and destroy this God-given power, that men may become helplessly incapable of recognizing, receiving, and practicing the truth.

Therefore, one of the first and most necessary promises of the gospel is that God will give to man a new heart or mind (Eze. 36:26; cf. John 3:3). “The words, ‘A new heart also will I give you’ ..., mean, A new mind will I give you” (CT 452). That this marvelous transformation of heart and mind has been made possible for everyone who has faith in Christ is Paul’s message in the Epistle to the Romans.

22. To be wise. Paul is not here referring simply to the pretensions of Greek philosophy, although he placed a low estimate on such wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18–25). He is describing the conceit of those whose wisdom is connected with any willful departure from divine truth and out of which idolatry must have originally sprung in its many and fantastic forms. Men turned away in their supposed wisdom from the true knowledge of God, and heathenism was the inevitable result.

Became fools. The climax of their folly was idolatry (see Jer. 10:14, 15, for what foolishness could be greater than to worship an animal instead of God?)

23. Changed. Better, “exchanged.” In their folly men had exchanged the worship of God for that of images. Instead of looking up to a Being clothed with majesty and power, they bowed down to reptiles and beasts. They exchanged a glorious object of worship for that which was degrading and humiliating (see Ps. 106:20; Jer. 2:11). Man was appointed

the lord of the animal creation (Ps. 8:6–8), and he degrades himself by worshiping the creatures God made to serve him (cf. Hosea 8:6).

Uncorruptible. That is, not subject to death, and thus not liable to decay as are all creatures. Paul contrasts the “uncorruptibility” of God with the “corruptibility” of man. God only is unchanging, indestructible, immortal, and therefore the proper object of worship (1 Tim. 1:17).

An image. Men were not satisfied to worship God “in spirit” (John 4:23, 24). They were not content with God’s revelation of Himself in nature (Rom. 1:20). They chose to represent Him to themselves by images resembling men, birds, animals, or reptiles. Paul seems to be marking the successive stages of the moral and intellectual degradation of the heathen, ending in the representation of the living God of heaven by unclean reptiles and other creatures crawling upon the earth.

Gods in human form were common in Greek and Roman religion. The worship of all kinds of creatures, such as bulls, crocodiles, serpents, and ibis, was prevalent in Egypt. In imitation of the idolatry of Egypt the Israelites made their golden calf (Ex. 32:4). Later Jeroboam set up two golden calves at Dan and Bethel and offered sacrifices to them (1 Kings 12:28–32).

Some of the more cultured pagans may have regarded the images as mere symbolic representations, but many of the common people saw in the idols the very gods themselves. The Bible does not take any such distinction into account, but simply condemns all image worshipers as idolaters (Ex. 20:4, 5; Lev. 26:1; Micah 5:13; Hab. 2:18, 19).

24. Gave them up. When the heathen willfully turned away from God and shut Him out of their minds and hearts, God left them to walk in their own ways of self-destruction (Ps. 81:12; Acts 7:42; 14:16). This is part of the price of our moral freedom. If men insist on following their own evil way, God will allow them to do so by withdrawing His gracious aid and restraint. Then they are left to reap the results of their rebellion in ever deeper enslavement to the power of sin (see Rom. 1:26, 28; cf. GC 431).

Uncleanness. That is, impurity, moral defilement, such as is specified in vs. 26, 27. Gross immorality usually accompanies idolatry and was anciently consecrated as a part of religion.

Through the lusts. Or, “in the lusts.” This refers to the moral condition in which they were already when God left them to the consequences of their depraved inclinations and desires.

Dishonour their own bodies. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, but this dignity is lost through immorality (1 Cor. 6:15–19; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4). Heathenism leaves its mark on the bodies, as well as on the souls, of men and women.

25. Changed the truth. Or, “exchanged the truth.” They bartered the truth about God for what was false.

A lie. Compare Jer. 10:14. Idols are embodied lies. Man must make them, yet they are supposed to represent Him who made man (Isa. 40:18–20). They have eyes, but cannot see; they have mouths, but cannot speak (Ps. 115:5–7; 135:15–17).

Worshipped and served. The first term may refer to worship in general; the second, to worship through special rites or sacrifices.

The creature. That is, any created being or thing.

More than. Better, “rather than.” They rejected the Creator to worship the thing created.

Blessed. Gr. *eulogētos*, not the same word used in the Beatitudes (see on Matt. 5:3), but an expression of praise and glory frequently, as here, ascribed to God (see Ps. 89:52, LXX; Rom. 9:5; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31). The ascription is especially appropriate here, to show Paul’s own loyalty to God in contrast with the apostasy of the heathen, which the apostle is describing.

26. Gave them up. See on v. 24.

Vile affections. Literally, “passions of dishonor.” History confirms this account of the unnatural vices of pagan society. In fact, in contrast with the freedom of the pagan writers of his day, Paul describes the immorality of the heathen with considerable reserve. He considered it a shame even to speak of such things (Eph. 5:12).

27. Men with men. Paul here refers euphemistically to the depraved practices of sodomy and homosexuality.

Was meet. That is, was due. The recompense for their error of idolatry was physical, mental, and spiritual degradation. This was the inevitable penalty for what they had done.

28. They did not like. Literally, “they did not approve.” This implies that their rejection of God was not unconscious. They refused to recognize Him. Instead of increasing their knowledge of God (v. 21) they suppressed the truth (v. 18), and thus became “the Gentiles which know not God” (1 Thess. 4:5).

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis*, “full knowledge.”

Gave them over. See on v. 24.

Reprobate. Gr. *adokimos*, “disapproved.” A related word, *dokimazō*, “approve,” is translated “like” earlier in the verse. Since men did not “approve” to have the knowledge of God, God gave them up to a “disapproved” mind. As a consequence of their determination to forget Him, God left them to a state of mind that was evil, and which He therefore could not approve.

Not convenient. That is, improper, indecent.

29. Unrighteousness. A general term already used to describe the condition against which God’s wrath is being revealed (v. 18). Compare the lists of sins in Gal. 5:19–21; 1 Tim. 1:9, 10; 2 Tim. 3:2–4.

Fornication. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word.

Wickedness. Gr. *ponēria*, a general term for baseness, malice, vileness, meanness.

Covetousness. Gr. *pleonexia*, “the desire to have more.” Paul elsewhere describes this sin as idolatry (Col. 3:5).

Maliciousness. Gr. *kakia*, in meaning somewhat similar to *ponēria* (see above under “wickedness”). Some suggest that *ponēria* represents active wickedness, in contrast with *kakia*, which stresses the inward state of wickedness.

Envy. Gr. *phthonos*. Envyings are listed also among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21).

Debate. Gr. *eris*, “strife.” Paul is not referring to debates in the modern sense of the term. The Greek word emphasizes primarily the elements of contention, quarreling, and anger (see also Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:9, where the same word is variously translated in the KJV as “strife,” “contention,” “debate,” or “variance”).

Deceit. Gr. *dolos*, “craft,” “deceit,” translated “subtilty” in Matt. 26:4; Acts 13:10; “guile” in John 1:47; 1 Thess. 2:3; etc.

Malignity. Gr. *kakoētheia*, “malice,” “spite,” “malevolence,” “subtlety.”

Whisperers. Gr. *psithuristai*, “talebearers,” “scandal mongers.”

30. Backbiters. That is, slanderers.

Haters of God. Gr. *theostugeis*, which may also be rendered “hateful to God.” In classical Greek this word usually occurs in the passive sense, “hated by God.” However, many interpreters regard the active sense, “hating God,” more appropriate in this list of sins.

Despiteful. That is, insolent. Paul uses the term to describe his own behavior prior to his conversion 1 Tim. 1:13, translated “injurious”).

Proud. Gr. *huperēphanoī*, “showing oneself above others,” “arrogant,” “haughty.”

Boasters. Gr. *alazones*, “braggarts,” “snobbish persons.”

Inventors of evil things. That is, inventors of new forms of vice and self-indulgence, of which Nero was an example (see pp. 81–84; DA 37).

Disobedient to parents. That this sin should be included in the list shows the light in which Paul regarded disobedience to parents (cf. Mal. 4:6; Luke 1:17).

31. Without understanding. Gr. *asunetoi*, the singular form of which is translated “foolish” in v. 21.

Covenantbreakers. That is, false to their agreements.

Without natural affection. Infanticide and divorce were common in Paul’s day. When, by their persistent rebellion against God, men grieve away the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), their lives reveal the lack of love and natural affection. God does not force His Spirit of love upon men. When they persist in their opposition to God’s will, God gives them over to their own unnatural and selfish inclinations Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

Implacable. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word. The same Greek word occurs, however, in the list of sins in 2 Tim. 3:3 and is there translated “trucebreakers.”

Unmerciful. That is, without pity and compassion. The morbid satisfaction spectators derived from the slaughter of gladiators and martyrs in Rome indicates how little pity and compassion were in the hearts of men in that age. Jesus taught that to be unmerciful is evidence of a corrupted character, one that is unfit for heaven (Matt. 25:41–43).

32. Knowing. The word implies “full knowledge” (cf. on v. 28).

Judgment. Gr. *dikaiōma*, “ordinance,” “decree.” Paul is referring to the righteous sentence of God that declares what is right and wrong and connects death with sin and life with righteousness. This decree is revealed not only in the OT but also in the conscience of every man (ch. 2:14–16).

Paul has clearly emphasized in this first chapter that the sins of the heathen were committed in the face of considerable knowledge about God (vs. 19–21, 25, 28).

Commit. Better, “practice.” The Greek implies repeated and continued action.

Worthy of death. This does not refer to civil justice but rather to the fatal consequences of sin (ch. 6:23).

Have pleasure. Or, “heartily approve,” “applaud.” The word describes more than a passive assent to evil; it suggests an active consent and approval (see Acts 8:1; 22:20). The climax of Paul’s catalogue of sins is the depraved wickedness of deriving satisfaction from the evil practices of others. So far does man degenerate when he refuses to know and honor the true God.

Paul’s dark picture of heathen corruption can be verified from the secular writings of the 1st century. One of the most frequently quoted descriptions of the iniquity prevailing in Paul’s day is that of Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, who in his work *De Ira* ii. 9. 1 declares: “Every place is full of crime and vice; too many crimes are committed to be cured by any possible restraint. Men struggle in a mighty rivalry of wickedness. Every day the desire for wrong-doing is greater, the dread of it less; all regard for what is better and more just is banished, lust hurls itself wherever it likes, and crimes are now no longer covert. They stalk before our very eyes, and wickedness has come to such a public state, has gained such power over the hearts of all, that innocence is not rare—it is non-existent” (Loeb ed., *Moral Essays*, vol. 1, p. 183). See also the Wisdom of Solomon 14:22–30. Compare DA 36, 37.

For 4,000 years the experiment as to whether man could save himself by his own works had been carried on. “The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion” (DA 35). Now it had become clearly apparent that another plan of salvation was required. “Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker” (DA 37, 38; see Gal. 4:4, 5). The good news that man’s condition is not hopeless but that righteousness is available to all who have faith in Christ was Paul’s message of hope to the heathen world. This is the “gospel of Christ,” the theme of this epistle to the believers in Rome.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 DA 600

14 AA 246, 380; CS 212; DA 440; Ed 65, 139, 263; Ev 218; MB 135; 4T 52; 5T 731

16 CT 255; FE 200; GW 16; MH 215; ML 61, 224; 7T 12

16, 17 AA 380

17 GC 125; SR 341

18–32CG 440

20 COL 18, 22, 107; CT 187; DA 281; Ed 134; MH 410; MM 103; PP 116; 8T 255

21 AA 14; COL 18; FE 331; PP 82; 5T 738

21, 22 CT 424

22 COL 199; 2T 42

25 COL 18; FE 329; GC x; PK 281; PP 91; 4T 595

28 PP 82, 91

29–32Ed 235

CHAPTER 2

1 *They that sin, though they condemn it in others, cannot excuse themselves, 6 and much less escape the judgment of God, 9 whether they be Jews or Gentiles. 14 The Gentiles cannot escape, 17 nor yet the Jews, 25 whom their circumcision shall not profit, if they keep not the law.*

1. Therefore. Or, “because of this.” The reference may be either to the judgment stated in ch. 1:32, “they which commit such things are worthy of death,” or to the fundamental thought of the whole section of vs. 18–32. Paul is continuing his argument that there is universal need for the saving power contained in the revelation of the righteousness of God by faith (vs. 16, 17). He has already traced the downward course of man from the first willful rejection of the knowledge of God through all the stages of idolatry and vice. Finally in v. 32 he has described that last stage of human degradation in which men have not only lost all virtue themselves but have come to the place where they approve the vice of others. They retain only the consciousness of their guilt and misery, for they know the just sentence of God that is pronounced against those who do such things.

Paul now proceeds to explain that the Jews are no less guilty than the Gentiles and that they also need the provisions of the same plan of salvation. He shows that the Jews have enjoyed greater light than the heathen, and yet they have done the same things. Much of what has been said about the Gentiles in ch. 1:18–32 also applies to the Jews, for they too have sinned against knowledge and conscience.

Thou art inexcusable. The Jews were quick to condemn the Gentiles, but since the Jews had been so favored for centuries with greater light than the Gentiles, they were absolutely without excuse for committing the same sins. See Vol. IV, pp. 30–34.

Whosoever thou art. Paul begins his discussion of the failure of the Jews to attain to the righteousness of God with a general statement that was applicable to all men. He began his discussion of the failure of the Gentiles with a similarly general statement (ch. 1:18). Perhaps this is evidence of the apostle’s skill in argument. It might have excited immediate opposition from the Jews if Paul had named them in the first sentence. Paul chooses rather to approach the subject gradually and in general terms. Then, after he has presented evidence, he makes the specific application to the Jews (ch. 2:17).

Judget. Gr. *krinō*. This word does not of itself mean “to condemn,” but rather, “to separate,” “to distinguish,” “to select,” “to show preference for,” “to determine,” “to approve,” “to pronounce judgment,” and, where the context so requires, “to condemn.” In this case the context of vs. 1–3 indicates the sense of condemning.

Another. Literally, “the other one.”

Thou condemnest. Gr. *katakrinō*, a form of the verb “to judge” that plainly implies adverse judgment or condemnation. Paul’s argument is similar to that of the prophet Nathan when speaking to King David (2 Sam. 12:5–7). Paul told the Jews that by the very act of sitting in judgment upon their fellow men they are pronouncing sentence upon themselves. They declare criminal acts of which they themselves are guilty.

Doest. Gr. *prassō*, a word denoting habitual or customary practice.

An example of the Jews decrying the immorality of the heathen and extolling their own purity is found in the Letter of Aristeas: “For most other men defile themselves by promiscuous intercourse, thereby working great iniquity, and whole countries and cities pride themselves upon such vices. For they not only have intercourse with men but they

defile their own mothers and even their daughters. But we have been kept separate from such sins” (cited from R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. 2, p. 109). That moral conditions among the Jews were not nearly so ideal as here indicated is evident from incidental references in rabbinical writings to the unnatural vices practiced among the Jews as well as from the preventive regulations in rabbinical laws regarding these vices. The actual situation is probably reflected with reasonable accuracy in the following from The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (see R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2), a Jewish pseudepigraphical work of about the early 2d century B.C. “And in the seventh week shall become priests, [who are] idolaters, adulterers, lovers of money, proud, lawless, lascivious, abusers of children and beasts” (The Testament of Levi 17:11). “These things I say unto you, my children, for I have read in the writing of Enoch that ye yourselves also shall depart from the Lord, walking according to all the lawlessness of the Gentiles, and ye shall do according to all the wickedness of Sodom” (The Testament of Naphtali 4:1).

It is a matter of common observation that those who are quick to criticize and accuse others are themselves frequently guilty of the same offenses. Sometimes men are particularly zealous in opposing those offenses that they themselves secretly practice. The classic example of this is the base hypocrisy revealed by the pious accusers of the woman taken in adultery. “These would-be guardians of justice had themselves led their victim into sin” (DA 461). David readily condemned the supposed injustice reported by Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1–6).

2. *We are sure.* Literally, “we know.” Paul is assuming that the truth of God’s judgment is admitted and that he may therefore base his argument upon it.

Judgment. Gr. *krima*, implying a decision rendered, whether good or bad, in this case a condemnation.

According to truth. Emphasizing the true standard of measurement in God’s judgment. God does not judge according to appearances (see John 7:24). His judgment of men is based upon a knowledge of men’s motives and of the real nature of their conduct and is without partiality (Rom. 2:11). Even the most secret sins are brought under His scrutiny (Eccl. 12:14).

3. *Thinkest thou?* Do you suppose, because of your greater knowledge of the truth, or because of your connection with a godly ancestry or with the chosen people, that you will be exempt from judgment? This delusive hope of personal exemption from the judgment is a common form of self-deception. It stands in contrast with the truth of God’s impartial judgment of all sinners. Yet it seems to have been a popular opinion among the Jews that so long as they observed the rites and ceremonies of their religion, God would not judge them as severely as He would the abandoned and idolatrous Gentiles. They felt that their nationality ensured them special consideration in the judgment. This false notion was rebuked by John the Baptist. “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father” (Matt. 3:8, 9; cf. John 8:33; Gal. 2:15). Sin is sin wherever and by whomever it is committed. Nor does it become less sinful by being committed in the midst of religious privileges. The people of God have no special license to sin, as though God would not be so strict in noticing the offenses of those who profess to serve Him. On the contrary, the Bible consistently

teaches that the most serious sins among men are those that are committed by the professed people of God (see Isa. 1:11–17; 65:2–5; Matt. 21:31, 32).

Thou shalt escape. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek.

4. *Despisest thou?* God's love and patience produce only a contemptuous feeling of security in the heart of a person hardened in sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11; cf. Ps. 10:11, 13). The Jews were accustomed to using the argument that since God was still blessing them, He therefore did not regard them as sinners (see Luke 13:1–5; John 9:2). How easily we fall into the same deception today. As God graciously continues to grant us time and opportunity to make ready for His return, we blindly presume on His mercy and patience by continuing complacently in our sinful ways. We fail to recognize the purpose of His forbearance and long-suffering.

Riches. A favorite word with Paul to describe the quality of God's gifts and attributes (see Rom. 11:33; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:8, 16; Phil. 4:19; Col. 1:27; etc.).

Goodness. Gr. *chrēstotēs*, "excellence," "kindness," "mildness," "gentleness."

Forbearance. Gr. *anochē*, literally, "a holding back." In classical Greek this term was used of a military truce. It implies something temporary that may pass away under changed conditions. Thus it is used to describe the "forbearance" of God in connection with the "passing over" of sins (ch. 3:25). In His forbearance God has held back His wrath, as if He had made a truce with the sinner. This does not mean that His wrath will not finally be executed. On the contrary, it implies that it most certainly will, unless the sinner has taken advantage of this time of truce to repent.

Longsuffering. Though God hates sin, yet in His long-suffering He does not come forth immediately to punish sin the moment it is committed. Rather, He spares men day by day to give them opportunity to repent and be saved (2 Peter 3:9). Men "despise" the long-suffering of God by inferring that He never intends to punish sin and that consequently they may safely persist in sinning.

Not knowing. A voluntary ignorance is implied (cf. Hosea 2:8).

Leadeth thee. The Greek may be interpreted as expressing an effort that may not realize its purpose. The phrase would thus mean "is meant to lead you," "is trying to lead you."

Repentance. Gr. *metanoia*. As elsewhere in the NT, this word implies a rightaboutface, a change of mind and purpose and life. It means more than simply sorrow for sin (see on Ps. 32:1).

5. *After.* Gr. *kata*, "according to," "because of."

Hardness. Or, "obstinacy," "stubbornness." The Jews were in a state of mind where the goodness and forbearance of God had no effect.

Impenitent heart. That is, a heart that refuses to repent. There has been no change of attitude in the heart. The hardness is voluntarily continued and increased, in spite of God's leading.

Unto thyself wrath. In contrast with the riches of God's goodness (v. 4) and the heavenly treasure (Matt. 6:20). The rejection of the riches of goodness has as its consequence a treasure of wrath. A man who rejects God's love is not in the same condition as one who has never known divine grace. Every blessing and privilege bestowed brings a corresponding responsibility. Persistent resistance of the love of God

gradually accumulates a store of wrath for the day of reckoning (see Deut. 32:34, 35). As in Rom. 1:18 (see comment there), wrath is the divine displeasure against sin, which results in the abandonment of man to the judgment of death.

Paul does not say, “God is storing up wrath,” but rather, “You are storing up wrath for yourself.”

Against the day of wrath. Literally, “in the day of wrath.”

Righteous judgment. The “day of wrath” will reveal to men and to angels, both good and evil, that God is a righteous judge. This revelation will consist of His rendering to every man according to his deeds (see DA 763, 764; GC 668).

This final revelation, which takes place at the consummation of all things, is to be contrasted with the revelation of the wrath and righteous judgment of God as seen in the depraved condition of mankind (ch. 1:18).

6. Will render. Paul is quoting Prov. 24:12 or Ps. 62:12. That men will be judged according to what they have done is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures (see Jer. 17:10; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 2:23; 20:12; 22:12). Everyone, including the privileged Jew, will be rewarded or condemned according to his actual life and true character.

Some have found a problem in reconciling this passage with the doctrine that “man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28). However, Paul is not drawing here a contrast between faith and works but rather between what a man really is and what he might profess to be. Paul maintains that God judges a man according to real deeds of righteousness or unrighteousness. Later in the epistle Paul explains that mere works of law, as contrasted with works of faith (see 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11), are not real deeds of righteousness (Rom. 9:31, 32). Works are recognized in the final judgment as evidence of faith. Faith in God’s grace is not a substitute for right conduct and holy living. Faith can prove its reality and sincerity only by such evidence (James 2:18). God will render to every man according to this evidence.

7. Patient continuance. Gr. *hupomonē*, “patience,” “perseverance,” “steadfast endurance.” Paul is not speaking of a passive resignation but of an active endurance.

In well doing. Literally, “of good work.” The whole phrase might be translated “perseverance in good work.” The Bible does not teach that God will give eternal life to those who occasionally perform good deeds. He gives it to those who so continue and persevere in well-doing that it becomes evident that it is their way of life to obey God (see Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10).

Seek. Gr. *zēteō*, which may denote earnest striving, as in “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). Compare “We endeavoured to go into Macedonia” (Acts 16:10). The same verb is used in these passages. It is not sufficient simply to have a desire for eternal life. “It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it” (COL 280).

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Glory and honour and immortality. These are bestowed at the time of the resurrection (see 1 Cor. 15:42, 43; cf. 1 Peter 1:4–7). In his original sinless state man was crowned “with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:7). All this will be restored to those who perseveringly “seek” for it.

Eternal life. Grammatically, as the Greek clearly indicates, this phrase is connected with the clause “who will render” (v. 6) thus: “who will render eternal life to those,” etc. God will render eternal life to those who seek for it in the prescribed manner.

8. Contentious. Gr. *eritheia*, “a mercenary, self-seeking spirit.” *Eritheia* also had the meaning “labor for wages.” Later the term came to mean “selfish or factious ambition,” “intrigue,” “rivalry.” Elsewhere in the NT the same word is used to refer to intrigue and partisanship (2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:16; 2:3; James 3:14, 16). In most of these instances the KJV translates *eritheia* as “strife,” evidently on the assumption that the word was derived from another root of somewhat similar sound, *eris*, which means “contention,” “quarrel” (see on Rom. 1:29).

In contrast with the righteous, who persevere in well-doing, the unrighteous are here described as self-seeking and factious in their attitude toward God and the truth. It was a similar spirit that led so many of the Jews to oppose the gospel (see Acts 13:45; etc.). Their legalistic, mercenary attitude toward religion and their self-centered view of salvation led them to reject God’s way of righteousness by faith in Christ, and thus to reject God Himself.

Obey the truth. Compare the experience of those who “hold the truth in unrighteousness” (ch. 1:18). Those who are factious and self-seeking do not care to be loyal to the truth. Being “lovers of their own selves” (2 Tim. 3:2), they have not received “the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). They prefer to have “pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:10, 12).

Indignation and wrath. Grammatically these words are not connected with the clause “who will render” as are the words “eternal life” (see on v. 7). It is necessary to supply some such words as “there shall be.” Paul may have intended this change of construction to express the nice distinction that, while God is the source and giver of eternal life, He is not strictly and primarily the author of eternal punishment. Destruction is the necessary result of the sinner’s own conduct (see on ch. 1:18). A similar distinction may have been intended by the construction change in ch. 9:22, 23 from the passive “fitted to destruction” to the active “prepared unto glory.” God Himself prepared the vessels of mercy for glory, but the vessels of wrath are fitted, or have fitted themselves, for destruction (see GC 543).

The word order in the Greek is “wrath and indignation.” The Greek word translated “wrath” (*orgē*) is understood as expressing the settled feeling and disposition. Compare “the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). The word for “indignation” (*thumos*) expresses the momentary impulse or outbreak of the feeling of wrath, as in the day of final destruction (Rev. 14:10). For the meaning of divine wrath see on Rom. 1:18.

9. Tribulation. Gr. *thlipsis*, denoting the pressure of a crushing burden, as of trials and calamities, and in this case, of punishment for sins.

Anguish. Gr. *stenochōria*, literally, “narrowness of place.” The idea is one of constraint. In the LXX translation of Deut. 28:53, 57, the word describes the confinement

of a siege. Here it describes the anxiety and distress that a man experiences when he is pressed in on every side by afflictions and trials, or by punishment, and does not know where to turn for relief. Contrast the frequent OT description of a state of joy as a bringing into a large place (2 Sam. 22:20; Ps. 118:5).

Upon every soul of man. That is, upon every human being. This verse has been used to support the idea that the soul and not the body is to suffer the penalty. However, the word for “soul” (*psuchē*) frequently denotes the whole person (see Rom. 13:1; cf. on Ps. 16:10; Matt. 10:28).

Jew first. As the Jew is first in privilege and opportunity, so he is first in responsibility and guilt (see on Rom. 1:16; cf. Luke 12:47, 48).

10. Glory, honour, and peace. Contrasted with the “tribulation and anguish” to be suffered by those who do evil.

Worketh good. These words are in contrast with “doeth evil” (v. 9). For the relationship of good works to salvation see on ch. 3:28.

11. Respect of persons. Gr. *prosōpolēmpsia*, literally, “an accepting of the face,” meaning “partiality.” This word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Col. 3:25; Eph. 6:9; James 2:1. *Prosōpolēmtēs*, “one who shows partiality,” occurs in Acts 10:34, and *prosōpolēmpτεō*, “to judge with partiality,” in James 2:9. None of the three forms occurs in the LXX or in non-Christian writings; hence the word is believed to be of Christian origin. In the OT the corresponding Hebrew phrase means either to give a gracious reception to a suppliant or suitor (Gen. 19:21; Job 42:8) or to show partiality (Lev. 19:15; 2 Chron. 19:7). In the NT the word always has the bad sense of partiality. Freedom from partiality is part of God’s character as the righteous Judge (Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7; Job 34:19).

12. For. Because of their privileges the Jews had questioned whether the principle that “there is no respect of persons with God” (v. 11) could be applied to them. They had so far abused their favored position that they had even come to the place where they felt free to condemn the crimes of others while committing the same sins themselves (vs. 1–3). Now Paul proceeds to explain how God will exercise impartiality in judging the privileged Jew and the less privileged Gentile. Each will be judged by the method appropriate to his case, the Jew by the written law against which he has sinned, and the Gentile by the unwritten law of conscience against which he has sinned.

Without law. This expression evidently means without specifically revealed or written law, for the heathen are not without the unwritten law of conscience (vs. 14, 15). The Gentiles will not be judged by a law that they do not possess. Nevertheless, if they transgress the unwritten law of conscience they will be lost just as those who have sinned against greater light. Paul has already explained that the sins of the Gentiles are inexcusable, for they have rejected God’s revelation to them in nature and conscience (ch. 1:19, 20, 32). The lack of greater light does not give one the right to sin against lesser light. The heathen who sin will be lost, even though they do not have God’s written law. They have sinned against the law they do possess, and punishment follows as the inevitable consequence.

In the law. Literally, “in law,” that is, in the sphere of law, under the authority of law. In this general statement of the principle of God’s judgment, Paul uses the term “law” without the definite article “the.” In the Epistle to the Romans “law” appears about 35

times with the article and about 40 times without. The problem of identifying the particular law referred to in each passage has been the subject of much debate for many years. This much seems certain, that no final decision as to whether the reference is to the Ten Commandments, the ceremonial law, or otherwise, should be based merely on the presence or absence of the article. However, it seems to be quite generally agreed that in the absence of the article the emphasis is being placed upon “law” primarily as an abstract and universal principle. When the article is present, the stress is upon “the law” as a special and concrete code.

In the absence of a precise and simple rule for arriving at the identity of “law” by means of the use or nonuse of the definite article, it will perhaps be wisest to rely mainly upon the context to indicate the particular identification to be made. In each significant passage where the term “law” or “the law” occurs, mention will be made as to whether the article is present or absent in the Greek. Then the context will be considered to help determine whether the reference is to the moral or ceremonial law, to law as a principle, or to other aspects of law.

In this verse, since the article is not present, the passage may be understood as a statement of the principle that those who have sinned against law will be judged by law. Those who have sinned without law will perish without law. However, it is evident from the context that Paul is also alluding to the revealed, or written, code of moral conduct against which the Jews have sinned. Fundamentally this is the moral law of the Ten Commandments, but Paul may also have had in mind the whole OT system of instruction, rules, and standards of moral conduct based upon the Ten Commandments (see PP 464). Those who have been privileged to know this law and yet have sinned against so clear an expression of God’s will are to receive greater punishment than those who have been less enlightened. The severity of punishment corresponds to the measure of guilt, and the measure of guilt depends on the amount of opportunity. That there are different degrees of punishment is clearly taught in the Bible (Matt. 11:21–24; 12:41, 42; Luke 12:47, 48).

Judged by the law. The parallel “shall also perish” suggests that this is a judgment of condemnation. The word “judge” may have this meaning where the context so indicates (see John 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 13:4, where the KJV translates “condemned,” “damned,” “judge,” respectively). Both classes of sinners will be condemned; both will perish. But judgment “by the law” is mentioned only of those who have the law.

13. Not the hearers. The Jews had opportunity to hear the law read regularly in the synagogues (Acts 15:21). But they had come to suppose that theoretical knowledge of the law in itself constituted righteousness. They did not seem to recognize the necessity of perfect and perpetual obedience. Jesus rebuked the Jews for this attitude toward the Word of God. “You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; ... yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39, 40, RSV; cf. DA 211). “The Jews had the Scriptures in their possession, and supposed that in their mere outward knowledge of the word they had eternal life” (DA 212). This same mistaken view that knowledge alone brings righteousness and salvation is still current among Jews, and Christians, today. That God’s will must not only be known but obeyed is also taught in Matt. 7:21, 24; Luke 6:47–49; James 1:22.

Of the law. Literally, “of law.” The article “the” is absent in the Greek. Those who have a law to which they may listen and by which they may be guided should be obedient to it, if they wish to be “justified” in the judgment. The context indicates that as far as the

Jews are concerned Paul is still alluding to the standard of moral conduct available to them, the standard revealed in the OT and especially in the Ten Commandments.

Justified. Or, “accounted righteous,” “declared righteous.” Paul is still contrasting the position in the judgment of those who know the will of God, and yet are unwilling to obey it, with the position of those who not only know God’s will but give it their full compliance. That such obedience can come only from faith has already been mentioned in the epistle (ch. 1:5, 17; cf. ch. 3:20). This verse gives further emphasis to the fact that men are judged, not by what they claim to know or profess to be, but by what they have actually done (ch. 2:6).

14. When the Gentiles. Literally, “whenever Gentiles.” The absence of the article “the” calls attention to their character as non-Jews.

Have not the law. Literally, “have no law,” or “have not law,” that is, no specifically revealed code of moral conduct such as the Jews possessed. Paul is about to explain that the Gentiles do have a law, but of another kind.

Do by nature. That is, do spontaneously, not consciously acting according to the requirements of an external law, but according to the promptings of conscience (v. 15). “As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart” (Ed 29). Those among the Gentiles who have recognized the revelation of God in the works of creation (ch. 1:19, 20) and have responded to the divinely implanted impulse to do good have done “by nature” the things contained in the law (see COL 385).

In the law. In this case “the law” is the literal translation. The article is present in the Greek (see on v. 12). Paul is quite evidently referring to the principles of the moral law as especially revealed in the Ten Commandments. The Gentiles could not possibly perform “by nature” the many activities and ceremonies prescribed in the whole Mosaic law, but they could fulfill “by nature” the requirements of the moral law. Paul later explains that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (ch. 13:10). See DA 638.

All this is in comment on v. 13, that only “the doers of the law” will be accounted righteous. Ignorant Gentiles who have shown by their spirit of love that they are real “doers of the law” “are just before God,” while informed, privileged Jews and Christians who show by their lack of love that they are only “hearers of the law” are not justified.

A law unto themselves. The need and the impulse to do good that exist in the reason and conscience are, in a sense, a standard and law to each man, as further explained in v. 15 (cf. James 4:17).

15. The work of the law. That is, the work that the law requires, the conduct the law demands. The phrase has also been understood to mean the practical effect or work of the law itself in establishing the distinction between what is right and what is wrong.

Written in their hearts. Even though Gentiles do not know the written law, whenever they reveal love for God and for their fellow men they show that what the law requires is written in their hearts (see Jer. 31:33; Heb. 10:16). For the meaning of “heart” see on Rom. 1:21. “Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, ... there is revealed the working of God’s Holy Spirit” (COL 385; cf. Gal. 5:22). The Holy Spirit is by no means restricted to Jews and Christians, but works on the minds and hearts of men everywhere. This passage must have been hard doctrine for the Jews to accept. It is no less needed

today by Christians who are tempted to assume too narrow and selfish a view of salvation (see John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4).

Conscience. Gr. *suneidēsis*, “co-knowledge,” a second knowledge that a man has of the quality of his acts, along with his knowledge of the acts themselves. Paul uses *suneidēsis* more than 20 times in his epistles. Men have the faculty that enables them to pass judgment on their thoughts, words, and actions. The conscience can be overscrupulous (1 Cor. 10:25) or “seared” by abuse (1 Tim. 4:2). It can be enlightened by further knowledge of truth (1 Cor. 8:7), and it acts according to the light it has.

Bearing witness. Paul points to the exercise of conscience among the Gentiles as further evidence that they still possessed some awareness of the will of God, despite their ignorance of the written law.

Thoughts. Or, “reasonings,” “thoughts.”

The mean while accusing. These and the remaining words of v. 15 have been variously explained. “The mean while” is translated from a word meaning, literally, “in the midst.” By connecting this word with “one another” it is possible to arrive at the meaning “between themselves.” Some understand this as referring to reflective consideration of questions of right and wrong. The RSV translates the passage “their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them.” Some take “between themselves” to mean Gentile with Gentile and conclude that Paul is here referring to accusations or vindications being carried on by the Gentiles among themselves.

Taken either way, this passage indicates that Paul is establishing his point that the Gentiles were not without some sense of right and wrong. By their response to the promptings of conscience they are to be judged.

16. In the day. That is, the time of final judgment (Acts 17:31). The KJV connects this verse with Rom. 2:12 by placing vs. 13–15 in parentheses. It is not necessary, however, to regard vs. 13–15 as parenthetical. Verse 16 may be regarded as summing up the entire preceding argument.

Secrets. Or, “hidden things.” It is by these that the character is really revealed (see on Prov. 7:19). Since God has an exact record of every secret thing in our lives (Eccl. 12:14; cf. Matt. 10:26; Luke 8:17; 1 Cor. 4:5), He is able to judge without “respect of persons” (Rom. 2:6, 11; cf. GC 486). “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing” (Eccl. 12:14). This verse further explains Paul’s main argument in Rom. 2. The favored Jew, with all his knowledge of the law, was inclined to look down upon the ignorant Gentile and to adjudge him quite unworthy of salvation. But only God, who can read the inner life, is in a position to make such decisions. The loving disposition, the readiness to obey the law of conscience, are things that only God can fully know. Yet these are the essential things that really constitute the keeping of God’s law. They are the qualities of character that God expects of Jew and Gentile alike, and in the final judgment no amount of external piety will atone for their lack.

By Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is not only our Saviour but also our Judge (Matt. 25:31–46; John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1).

According to my gospel. Some have understood this to mean that Paul was so confident of the truth of his message that he could here assert that his gospel would be the standard in the final judgment (see 1 Cor. 15:1; Gal. 1:6–9). However, Paul may have simply meant that the fact noted, namely, that not only will men be judged, but they will be judged by Jesus Christ, is set forth in the gospel. Coming judgment is clearly taught in

the OT (Dan. 7:9–12, 26, 27). But one of the distinctive teachings of the gospel is that He who lived and died to save men is also to judge them (2 Cor. 5:10).

17. Behold. Gr. *ide*. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading *ei de*, “but if.” *Ide* and *ei de* are quite similar in appearance and sound. The reading “but if” strengthens the connection between vs. 17–20 and 21–24.

In his epistle thus far Paul has shown that the Gentiles have sinned. He has explained that Jews and Gentiles alike are subject to God’s impartial judgment. Now he proceeds to show that the Jews are guilty of the same sins and vices for which they are so ready to condemn the Gentiles. In this way Paul is proving that all men everywhere are under condemnation and in need of the righteousness and salvation revealed in the gospel.

Art called. Or, “call yourself,” “bear the name of.” Paul is saying, “Suppose you call yourself a Jew,” “What if you claim the name of Jew.”

Jew. The title “Jew” first occurs in 2 Kings 16:6 (see comment there). After the Babylonian captivity it became the national name of the Hebrew people. The Jews apparently took much pride in their name and nationality (Gal. 2:15; Rev. 2:9; 3:9); to be a Jew meant to be distinguished from the heathen and to enjoy special privileges (Rom. 9:4; Gal. 2:15). In his discussion of the guilt of the Jews, Paul momentarily admits their boasted privilege (Rom. 2:17, 18) and their assumed superiority over others (vs. 19, 20). Later he brings out the flagrant inconsistency between their lofty profession and their actual practice.

Restest in the law. Literally, “restest upon law.” The Jews had come to rely upon the mere possession of law as an assurance of God’s favor. They leaned upon the fact that they had the law and were thus distinguished from others, instead of using the law as a rule of life and a light to the conscience. The same Greek word here translated “restest” occurs in the LXX in Micah 3:11. “Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.”

Makest thy boast of God. Literally, “boasts in God,” or “glories in God.” The Jews claimed to have a special relation to God, but instead of this relationship revealing itself in humble dependence and loyal obedience, it manifested itself in conceit and arrogance toward the people of other nations. This was a perversion of the glorying that God commends: “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth” (Jer. 9:24). It is true that the Jews had been greatly privileged by their knowledge of God (Deut. 4:7). This should have been reason for gratitude rather than for idle boasting. Unfortunately, it is much more common to boast of privileges than to be thankful for them. It is no evidence of piety for a man to boast of his knowledge of God. A humble thankfulness that he has such knowledge, a thankfulness that leads him to desire that others may have the same privilege, is evidence of true piety in the life of the Christian.

18. His will. That is, God’s will.

Approvest. Gr. *dokimazō*, “to test,” “to prove,” “to discern” (see Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 3:13; 11:28; 2 Cor. 8:8), or “to approve” as the result of testing (see Rom. 14:22; 1 Cor. 16:3; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Things that are more excellent. Literally, “things that differ”; hence, things that are excellent, from the point of view of one who approves of them. This passage refers either

to the ability of the Jews to discriminate by means of the law between good and evil, or to the fact that the Jews actually approved, in theory, the things that excel. They were proud of this refinement of their moral sensibilities, as if mere approval without obedience constituted righteousness. It is clear that Paul is preparing to contrast the spiritual enlightenment of the Jews with their spiritual failure (vs. 21–24).

Instructed. Gr. *katēcheō*. The verb occurs in the papyri with the connotation of legal instruction. Compare its use in Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 1 Cor. 14:19; Gal. 6:6. *Katēcheō* is the source of our English “catechize.” The Jews were carefully instructed in the teachings of the law in their youth, and for the rest of their lives listened to the regular reading and exposition of the OT.

19. Art confident. It was God’s purpose that the Jews should be witnesses and teachers of truth to the world. Their sin lay in merely boasting of their privilege without fulfilling their corresponding responsibility.

Guide of the blind. See Matt. 15:14; see on ch. 23:16.

20. Instructor. Or, “corrector.” The Greek word combines the senses of both teaching and discipline.

Babes. That is, religiously immature persons. The Jews so regarded Gentile proselytes to Judaism. Jesus used the term to refer to the common people who heard Him gladly (Matt. 11:25). Paul thus described the new Corinthian converts (1 Cor. 3:1).

Form. Gr. *morphōsis*, “a form,” “an outline,” “a semblance.” Paul is referring to the outline without the substance. The only other occurrence of this word in the NT is in 2 Tim. 3:5, where the “form of godliness” is contrasted with the “power thereof.” In Romans, Paul is speaking of the outline, framework, embodiment, of knowledge and truth that the Jews had available in the law. God had designed that this “form” not only should be a guide to the Jews but should in turn be used by them to teach the truths of the gospel to the Gentiles.

In the law. Perhaps a general reference to the teachings of the OT as a whole (see on v. 12).

21. Therefore. Since the Jews had made such high profession of godliness and had laid claims to such lofty superiority, it was right that much should be expected of them. But Paul now depicts the inconsistency between their claims and their actual conduct. “They say, and do not” (Matt. 23:3).

Dost thou steal? Such inconsistency was not a recent development among the Jews. Long before, the psalmist had decried the moral declension of his people (Ps. 50:16). In making the charge of stealing, Paul no doubt had in mind, among other things, the dishonest methods of conducting business, such as were carried on right in the Temple area itself with the approval and cooperation of the priests and rulers (see on Matt. 21:12; see also DA 155). The charge of adultery may have included special reference to the loose practice of divorce (see on Matt. 5:31, 32). On moral conditions among the Jews see on Rom. 2:1.

22. Commit adultery. See on v. 1.

Abhorrest. Gr. *bdellussō*, “to detest,” “to turn away from in disgust.”

Commit sacrilege. Or, “rob temples.” This is generally explained as the plundering of heathen temples, meaning that Paul is here referring to the inconsistency of robbing temples in spite of the professed defilement of contact with idolatry. That the Jews had a

reputation for such a crime may possibly be inferred from Acts 19:37–41, where the town clerk of Ephesus acquits Paul and his companions of being temple robbers. This sin was forbidden by the Jews in harmony with Deut. 7:25. Josephus thus paraphrases this prohibition: “Let none blaspheme the gods which other cities revere, nor rob foreign temples, nor take treasure that has been dedicated in the name of any god” (*Antiquities* iv. 8. 10 [207]).

However, it is possible that Paul is referring to the Jewish desecration of the Temple and of the Temple services. The essence of idolatry is the profanation of God, and of this the Jews were in a high degree guilty. They made God’s house a “den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

23. Boast of the law. A summary of vs. 17–20.

Breaking the law. A summary of the line of thought set forth in vs. 21, 22.

Dishonourest. See on v. 24.

24. Is blasphemed. Or, “is spoken profanely of,” “is abused.” The Gentiles judged the religion of the Jews by the inconsistent lives of its devotees and thus were led to blaspheme the God and Author of the religion. The Jews boasted of the law, but because of their disobedience, reflected disgrace on the Lawgiver. The evil conduct and hypocrisy of the Jews caused the Gentiles to despise a religion that seemed to have no effect in purifying and restraining those who professed to follow it. The Jews were so jealous of the name of God that they would not even pronounce their most sacred name for God (see Vol. I, pp. 171, 172). Yet they lived in such a manner that the Gentiles were led to blaspheme His name.

It is written. The reference is probably to Isa. 52:5, though Paul may also have had 2 Sam. 12:14; Eze. 36:21–24 in mind. Paul applies the passage in a new sense. Isaiah was speaking of the contempt in which God’s name was held by the enemies because Israel had been allowed to fall into their hands. Paul is saying that the cause of the dishonor is the inconsistent life of the Jews themselves.

25. Circumcision. The Jews attached great importance to the rite of circumcision, as though the mere outward ceremony guaranteed special divine favor. God instituted this rite as a sign of His covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:9–14; Acts 7:8). As a mark and reminder of this relationship, circumcision could have been a blessing to the Jews. But since they had so largely failed to live up to the essential requirements of the covenant, circumcision had become nothing more than an empty form.

The law. There is no article in the Greek (see on v. 12); therefore the clause “if thou keep the law” is perhaps the equivalent of “if thou art a lawkeeper.” The law-keeper is contrasted with the lawbreaker of the next clause. The Greek places emphasis upon the habitual practice of obedience. Sincere willingness to obey God’s law was always the condition on which God agreed to fulfill His gracious promises to the Jews (Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 26:16–19; Jer. 4:4).

A breaker of the law. Or, “a lawbreaker.” “Law,” here, has no article in the Greek (see on v. 12). “Breaker” comes from an old Greek word *parabatēs*, meaning “one who passes over a line,” hence, a “transgressor” as the word is translated in Gal. 2:18; James 2:11; etc. There are many different Greek words in the NT to express the various aspects of sin. *Parabatēs* implies one who transgresses a commandment distinctly given.

Is made. Literally, “has become.”

26. The uncircumcision. That is, the uncircumcised man, the Gentile.

Righteousness. Gr. *dikaiōmata*, “requirements,” or “precepts” (see on ch. 8:4). Paul has already explained that it was possible for Gentiles to fulfill what the law required (see on ch. 2:14, 15).

Counted. Or, “reckoned.” If a Gentile obeys the requirements of the law, his uncircumcision does not make his obedience any less acceptable. Circumcision was a symbolic rite intended of God to assist the children of Israel in the development of a way of life in complete harmony with the law of God. If Gentiles, without the benefit of this symbolic rite, have done the things contained in the law, they also will share in the promises made to the Jews (see Matt. 8:11). Compare 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; see Vol. IV, pp. 27, 28.

27. By nature. “Uncircumcision which is by nature” may be considered as the counterpart of the phrase “Jews by nature” (Gal. 2:15). The words would then mean “in his natural state of uncircumcision.” Or the phrase may be regarded as the equivalent of “physically uncircumcised,” in line with the argument of Rom. 2:28, 29 that true circumcision is not something external and physical but rather a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal.

Judge. In the sense of condemnation. The idea may be that of putting to shame by contrast (cf. Matt. 12:41, 42).

The letter. Gr. *gramma*. This word was used for writing or documents of all kinds (see Luke 16:6, 7; Acts 28:21). In this context it evidently refers to the written law in general. The emphasis is on the fact that the Jews possessed the law in writing, in contrast with the Gentiles, who were not so favored (Rom. 2:14). The Jews transgressed the will of God even though they had the advantages of the written law and were circumcised. Thus they are condemned by the obedience of those who fulfill the law under less favorable circumstances.

28. Not a Jew. Mere outward conformity to law does not make a person a real Jew, according to the Bible definition, even if he is a descendant of Abraham and has been circumcised.

29. Inwardly. Literally, “in secret” (cf. Matt. 6:4). Real Jews are those who possess the spirit and character that fulfill God’s purpose in calling them to be His chosen people. God separated them, not merely to perform certain external rites, but to be a people holy in heart and life (Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 30:14; Ps. 51:16, 17; Isa. 1:11–20; Micah 6:8).

Of the heart. The spiritual background of circumcision, without which the external ceremony was worthless, was plainly taught in the OT (see Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Eze. 44:9; see also Acts 7:51; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11). The design of circumcision was that it should be a sign of separation from the heathen world and of consecration to the true God. The rite implied the renunciation and forsaking of all sins, the cutting off of everything that was offensive to God. Such a work was manifestly “of the heart.”

In the spirit. Literally, “in spirit”; that is, in the inner, spiritual life.

Not in the letter. Compare the same figure in Rom. 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6–8. True circumcision involves an internal, spiritual work of submission to God and is more than a mere external compliance with a ritual requirement.

Praise. This could be regarded as a play on words. The name “Jew” is derived from “Judah,” which, in Hebrew, is built around a root word meaning “praise” (see on Gen. 29:35). In Rom. 2:17 Paul began his analysis of the spiritual condition of the Jews by

referring to the name of which they were so proud. In v. 29 he has described the kind of person who is worthy of this name. It is appropriate that Paul should add that the real Jew is the person whose praise is not from men, but God. Compare 1 Sam. 16:7.

Much of what has been said about the Jews in this chapter may be applied to professing Christians. One who is in possession of the Word of God and understands his duty is highly privileged. This knowledge can lead to holiness and happiness in this life and to eternal life hereafter. But it is a fearful thing for Christians to neglect the privileges they enjoy. They will be judged according to the light they have received. The mere profession of religion cannot save them, no matter how orthodox their beliefs may be. The estimate that men may place upon their apparent piety is not the true measure of their real characters and standing with God. External rites and ceremonies are much less important than the condition of mind and heart. The fact that one has been baptized will not, in itself, save him. The fact that one is listed as a member of the church, or that he was born of godly ancestors, does not guarantee his salvation. The real Christian is he who is one inwardly, for true religion is a matter of the heart.

In all his daily living the Christian must make the praise of God the objective of his striving. We are not to do our work “with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:6; cf. Col. 3:22). Christ is our example in this. He said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). Paul similarly testified to pleasing, not men, but God (1 Thess. 2:4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 MB 124, 125; MH 485

1–38T 85

4 COL 202; CT 366; SC 27; 8T 64

5 Ev 27; TM 146; 7T 88

5, 6 GC 540

6 CS 21; DA 708; EW 53; GC 673; 4T 646; 7T 180

7 CS 149; EW 114; GC 533; LS 48; ML 167; 1T 39; 2T 102, 229; 7T 235

9 GC 540

10 MYP 54

11 AA 380; CS 162; FE 315, 336; PK 369; TM 192; 4T 225; 5T 677

12, 13 GC 436

14–16COL 385; DA 239, 638; GC 436

29 AA 204; FE 399

CHAPTER 3

1 *The Jews' prerogative: 3 which they have not lost: 9 howbeit the law convinceth them also of sin: 20 therefore no flesh is justified by the law, 28 but all, without difference, by faith only: 31 and yet the law is not abolished.*

1. What advantage? Literally, “What surplus?” What special privilege or advantage does the Jew have over the Gentile? Since a real Jew is one inwardly, what is the advantage of belonging to the chosen race? Since an uncircumcised Gentile who fulfills the requirements of the law is regarded as if he were actually circumcised (ch. 2:26), what is the use of being circumcised at all? A Christian might ask in a similar way, If baptism and church membership in and of themselves bring no special advantage (see on ch. 2:29), what is the use of being baptized and joining the church at all?

2. Chiefly. Or, “first of all.” Paul mentions only one advantage in this passage, and does not go on to enumerate others. He answers the question more fully in ch. 9:4, 5.

Unto them were committed. Or, “they were entrusted with” the oracles (see below).

Oracles. Gr. *logia*, literally, “brief sayings.” The word occurs only four times in the NT (see Acts 7:38; Heb. 5:12; 1 Peter 4:11). In this context Paul evidently uses it to denote the OT Scriptures, though he may have been referring in particular to God’s promises and commands to His people Israel. The first advantage the Jews enjoyed was that they had been entrusted with the direct revelation of God concerning the divine will for man. This was a great honor and privilege and carried with it a corresponding obligation to share this divine revelation with the rest of the world (see Deut. 4:6–8). Had the Jews recognized and appreciated the privilege and responsibility with which they had been entrusted, God could have worked through them for the salvation of the world (see Vol. IV, p. 26).

3. Did not believe. Or, “were without faith,” or “were unfaithful.” There is a basic similarity between the Greek words usually translated “believe,” “belief,” and “faith” in the KJV. “Believe” is *pisteuo*. “Belief” is *pistis*. “Faith” is also from *pistis*. “Not believe” is *apisteō*. “Unbelief” is *apistia*.

The reference is doubtless to the lack of belief and faith in God’s revelation and especially to the lack of faith in Jesus, the promised Saviour. There is perhaps a reference to the general unfaithfulness among the Jews, their failure to live up to the knowledge and instruction with which they had been entrusted. Paul does not say that all Jews were faithless or unfaithful. “Some of the branches were broken off” (see on ch. 11:17).

However, “some” (*tines*) may represent the great majority (cf. Heb. 3:16).

Unbelief. Or, “lack of faith.”

Make ... without effect. Gr. *katargeō*, “to make null and void.” This word occurs frequently in Paul’s epistles and is variously rendered in the KJV as “make void” (Rom. 3:31), “bring to nought” (1 Cor. 1:28), “put away” (1 Cor. 13:11), “abolished” (Eph. 2:15), “ceased” (Gal. 5:11), etc. The basic meaning is “to make idle.” The failures of the Jews do not imply that God failed to keep His promises to them. The promise of salvation is still valid, but always and only to those who have faith (Rom. 1:16). In our time some may be tempted to regard the long delay in the return of Christ as a failure on God’s part to fulfill His promises to His people. But the promises of God are conditional (see on Eze. 12:27). It is our own sin and lack of faith that have made it impossible for God to fulfill His promise of a soon return. The same sins that shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. “In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years” (Ev 696). See Vol. IV, pp. 30–34.

The faith of God. Or, “the faithfulness of God,” that is, God’s fidelity to His promises. On the faithfulness of God see 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23; 11:11; 1 John 1:9.

4. God forbid. Gr. *mē genoito*, literally, “May it not come to pass.” Paul uses this expression 14 times, always to indicate a feeling of strong aversion. The corresponding Hebrew expression is *chalilah*, literally, “a profane, abominable, unthinkable thing” (see on 1 Sam. 20:2).

Let God be true. Or, “let God continue to be true,” or “let God be found true,” or, “let God prove true.” Even though men have proved false to their trust, let God be seen and acknowledged to be true (see 2 Tim. 2:13).

Every man a liar. The words of Ps. 116:11 in the LXX.

As it is written. The quotation is taken from the LXX of Ps. 51:4. In this psalm David expressed the depth of his repentance for his sin with Bath-sheba and acknowledged that God was just in the condemnation and punishment of the sin. Paul appeals to these words of David in support of his argument in v. 3 that the unfaithfulness of men has by no means nullified the faithfulness of God, but rather has only served to establish God’s righteousness.

Justified. Or, “acknowledged righteous,” or “declared righteous.” This is the only meaning of the word that could be applied to the all-righteous God.

Overcome. Or, “prevail.” The Greek word was sometimes used with reference to court trials.

Art judged. Or, “go to law” (see 1 Cor. 6:1, 6, where the same Greek term is thus translated). Paul may here be referring to the central issue in the great controversy between good and evil. God’s character and justice have been, as it were, on trial before men and the whole universe (see Rom. 3:25, 26).

5. Commend. Gr. *sunistēmi*. This word and its related forms are used in the NT with two shades of meaning: (1) “to commend” (2 Cor. 12:11), and (2) “to establish,” “to prove” (Rom. 5:8; Gal. 2:18, translated “make”). The latter sense probably applies in this passage. Paul is preparing to meet the objection that if the sin of man tends only to commend and establish the righteousness of God, why should that sin be punished?

Righteousness of God. See on ch. 1:17. In this context it would seem that Paul is emphasizing primarily the perfection of the divine character.

What shall we say? A common expression in Paul’s writings (chs. 4:1; 6:1; etc.).

Is God unrighteous? In the Greek the form of this question implies that the answer must be negative.

Who taketh vengeance. Literally, “who brings on the wrath,” that is, who brings on the divine displeasure against sin (see on ch. 1:18).

I speak as a man. Compare Rom. 6:19; Gal. 3:17. Paul’s sense of reverence seemed to call for an apology for his outspoken analogy between things human and divine.

6. God forbid. See on v. 4.

How shall God judge? That God will judge the world is assumed as needing no proof. Certainly Paul would not need to persuade Jews of this fundamental truth (see, for example, Eccl. 12:14). Therefore, since it is generally agreed that God will be the judge of the world, the conclusion suggested in v. 5, that He is unjust in punishing sin, must be rejected. For if it is unjust for God to condemn and punish sin because sin has indirectly served to establish His righteousness, how can He judge at all?

7. The truth of God. That is, God’s truthfulness, or veracity, His fidelity to His promises.

Hath more abounded. God’s truthfulness could not be increased, but it may abound more to His glory by being more fully manifested.

My lie. That is, my falsehood, my unfaithfulness, to the claims of God and conscience, my virtual denial of the truth of God’s promises, especially by my rejection of His offer of salvation through Christ. Paul repeats the contrast of v. 4, but this time,

perhaps for the sake of argument, he speaks as though he himself were raising the objection (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6).

Judged. Or, “condemned” (see on ch. 2:1). If my unbelief and falsehood serve to reveal the truthfulness of God, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? How can an act that tends to promote the glory of God be regarded as evil? And if this objection be valid, why should we not continue in sin so that more good may result? Paul does not stop to explain the obvious fallacy of such reasoning, so destructive of all morality. It is self-evident that the sinner deserves no credit for the good that, contrary to his intentions, comes out of his sin.

8. We be slanderously reported. Literally, “we are blasphemed.” The false report was a gross misrepresentation of Paul’s faith and doctrine, and yet it was “affirmed” that the apostle had said such things. The charge that Paul, and Christians generally, were guilty of teaching such error was apparently an inference drawn from such teachings as that a man is justified by faith and not by works of law (ch. 3:20, 28) and that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (ch. 5:20). The full refutation of this charge is presented in ch. 6.

Damnation. That is, condemnation or judgment. It is not clear whether the last clause refers to the slanderers just mentioned or to those who would dare to say, “Let us do evil, that good may come,” or to those who speak and act according to such a pernicious principle. The latter interpretation seems to fit the context better, for Paul’s allusion to the slanderers is only incidental to his main purpose in vs. 5–8, that of cutting off from the Jews every possible claim of exemption from God’s judgment.

9. What then? The query expresses a transition in Paul’s argument. Here it refers back to vs. 1 and 2.

Are we better than they? Gr. *proechometha*, which some have rendered, “Are we worse than they?” However, the context seems to be against such a translation. Paul has already declared in v. 2 that the Jews had important advantages over the Gentiles. Nevertheless greater privilege involves greater responsibility, and in that sense it is true that the enlightened Jews merit more severe punishment than the unenlightened Gentiles (Luke 12:47, 48). The rest of the verse makes it clear that, regardless of advantage or disadvantage, Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin and in need of justification.

No, in no wise. That is, not at all, not in the least.

Before proved. Better, “already charged.” The charge was made against the Gentiles in ch. 1:18–32 and against the Jews in ch. 2:1–29.

Gentiles. Literally, “Greeks,” meaning, however, Gentiles (see on ch. 1:16).

Under sin. That is, under the power, or control, of sin. The expression denotes subjection to sin as a power that rules in the life of all men in their natural state, unrenewed by the grace of God (see Rom. 7:14; Gal. 3:22).

10. As it is written. Paul now turns to the Scriptures to prove his charge of universal sinfulness, which he has already made on other grounds. This Biblical evidence particularly emphasizes that even the chosen people share in the universal need for righteousness. The following series of quotations is drawn from Ps. 14:1–3 or 53:1–3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa. 59:7; Ps. 36:1. The texts agree largely with the LXX, though with some variations. Paul does not specify where any of these passages may be found, evidently assuming that his Jewish readers were well versed in the OT Scriptures. He

uses similarly compounded quotations in Rom. 9:25–28; 11:26, 27, 34, 35; 12:19, 20; 2 Cor. 6:16–18.

There is none righteous. From Ps. 14:1 or 53:1. Instead of “doeth good,” Paul uses the term “righteous,” thus giving the same sense but in a form that fits more readily into his whole argument on righteousness by faith. This sentence is a summary of all that follows.

11. None that understandeth. From Ps. 14:2. In abridging the passage, Paul rightly expresses the negative sense implied in the original. The universal lack of understanding is due to the darkening and perversion of the intellect because of sin (Rom. 1:31). The things of God have become foolishness to unregenerate man (1 Cor. 2:14; cf. Eph. 4:18). The psalm from which Paul is quoting begins with the declaration, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1).

Seeketh after. Literally, “seeks out,” that is, searches for. There is no spiritual desire or effort to know God (cf. ch. 1:28).

12. Out of the way. A citation from Ps. 14:3 agreeing exactly with the LXX (where it appears as Ps. 13:3; see Vol. III, p. 627).

Become unprofitable. The equivalent Hebrew expression in the psalm quoted means “to be corrupt” (see on Ps. 14:3). The Greek means “to become useless.”

Good. Gr. *chrēstotēs*. In the NT this word occurs only in Paul’s writings. It is translated “kindness” in Eph. 2:7; Col. 3:12, and “gentleness” Gal. 5:22, where it is listed among the fruits of the Spirit. The word may be defined as a kindly disposition toward one’s neighbor. When men have no desire to know God, and their understanding has become darkened, they do not have this kindly disposition (see Rom. 1:28–31).

No, not one. It might be objected that the Bible and history record the lives of many noble men and women who have lived righteously, in the fear of the Lord. After this statement the psalmist himself refers to “the generation of the righteous” (Ps. 14:5). Paul’s own disciple and companion, Luke (see on Acts 16:10), does not hesitate to say that Zacharias and Elisabeth were “both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). But “the generation of the righteous” would be quick to agree with Paul that “all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) and that they constitute no exception to his description of general sinfulness. They would be the first to acknowledge that they once were under the dominion of sin and that the righteousness they now enjoy has come from God through faith.

13. Open sepulchre. As the open grave will soon be filled with death and corruption, so the throat of the wicked, opened for speech, is filled with corrupt and deadly falsehood. Compare Jer. 5:16, where the quiver of the Chaldeans is also called an open sepulchre. Some explain the figure to mean that their speech is like the odor of a newly opened tomb (see John 11:39).

Have used deceit. Literally, “were deceiving.” The tense denotes perseverance in the practice of deceit. The Hebrew of Ps. 5:9 means literally, “they made their tongues smooth,” that is, they used smooth, flattering words.

Poison of asps. This part of the verse is identical with the LXX of Ps. 140:3. The poison of falsehood is as deadly as a serpent’s venom.

14. Whose mouth. See Ps. 10:7. “Throat,” “tongue,” “lips” (Rom. 3:13), may be considered as the successive stages by which speech is produced. “Mouth” sums up all in one.

15. *Their feet.* Verses 15–17 are an abridged quotation from Isa. 59:7, 8, where the prophet is depicting the character of the Jewish nation in his time.

18. *No fear of God.* A quotation from Ps. 36:1. Paul began this series of quotations with a general statement about the sinfulness of all men. He then referred to some of the various manifestations of sin. Finally he quotes a statement as to the origin of sin. Wickedness springs from a lack of reverence for God. Where there is no regard or reverence for the character, authority, and honor of God, there is no restraint from evil (see also Rom. 1:32).

These quotations from the OT have served to support Paul's contention that the Jews are far from being exempt from the universal sinfulness of man. In view of these descriptions of the condition of the Jewish people, a Jew certainly could not hope to be saved simply because he was a Jew. And if such was the character of the chosen people, with all their privileges and advantages, what must have been the condition of the less enlightened heathen? It is thus not difficult to believe the terrible description of the pagan world in ch. 1. Indeed, the whole world is involved in sin, and all its inhabitants are polluted, ruined, and helpless. The ruin could well lead one to hopeless despondency were it not that the God of mercy has pitied us in our low estate and has devised a plan by which lost, fallen man may be exalted to "glory and honour and immortality" (ch. 2:7).

19. *We know.* A common expression with Paul, in reference to something generally conceded (see on ch. 2:2; see chs. 7:14; 8:22; etc.).

The law. The article is present also in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). The reference is generally understood to be to the OT Scriptures, from which Paul has drawn the previous quotations. The OT was divided into three collections of books, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or Writings (see Vol. I, p. 37). But the full title as it appears in Luke 24:44 was rarely used, and all three divisions might be referred to as the law and the prophets (Rom. 3:21; cf. Matt. 5:17; 22:40; etc.), or simply the law (see on John 10:34). In order to bring home more directly to the Jews the evidence of the Scriptures, and to prevent any attempt on their part to shift the reference from themselves to the Gentiles, Paul calls attention to the fact that the OT, from which he has been quoting, speaks especially to those to whom it was given. The Jews acknowledged the divine inspiration of the OT, which denounced so specifically the sins of the Jewish nation. Therefore they could hardly evade Paul's conclusion that they should rightfully be regarded as sharing with the Gentiles in the universal guilt of man.

Saith, it saith. The first "saith" is the translation of the Gr. *legō*, which here highlights the subject matter of what is spoken. The second "saith" is the translation of the Gr. *laleō*, which refers to the expression of the law. The first word is applicable particularly to the matter contained in the law, whereas the second refers especially to its proclamation. This distinction between the two words is illustrated in the translation, "all that the law says is addressed to those who are subject to the law."

Under the law. Literally, "in the law"; that is, subject to the authority of the law (see ch. 2:12).

May be stopped. In view of the evidence presented, men have no excuse to offer (Rom. 2:1; cf. Ps. 63:11).

All the world. Jews and Gentiles together. Paul has already declared the accountability of the heathen in ch. 1:20, 32.

Guilty. Gr. *hupodikos*, a word occurring only here in the NT and not found in the LXX. In classical Greek it means “liable to prosecution,” and may be followed by a reference to the violated law or to the injured party or rightful prosecutor. The passage may here be rendered, “become accountable to God,” or “become answerable to God.” God is thus represented as having a controversy with sinners (see Jer. 25:31). Paul may be speaking here of God as not only the injured party but also as the judge (Rom. 2:5, 6, 16).

20. Therefore. Rather, “because.” What follows introduces the reason why every mouth will be stopped and all the world be held accountable to God (v. 19).

By the deeds of the law. Literally, “out of works of law,” that is, works prescribed by law. In the Greek, “law” stands without the article (see on ch. 2:12). Paul is stating a general truth that is applicable to Gentiles and Jews alike. Righteousness by works of law has been the basis of every false religious system and had become the principle even of the Jewish religion (DA 35, 36). But works performed in obedience to any law, whether that law be made known by reason, conscience, or revelation, cannot justify a sinner before God (Gal. 3:21). Paul has already shown that the Gentiles have violated the law revealed to them in nature and conscience (Rom. 1). Likewise he has proved that the Jews have violated the law revealed to them in the OT and particularly in the Ten Commandments (ch. 2). Jew and Gentile alike are in need of justification. But the law has no power to justify. It can only expose the sinfulness of sin in its true colors. Justification can be obtained in only one way.

There is no contradiction between the statement in ch. 2:13, “the doers of the law shall be justified,” and this passage, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.” The former emphasizes the fact that only those will be justified who so completely commit themselves to God that they are willing to do whatever He commands—thus not being merely “hearers of law.” The latter emphasizes the equally true fact that good works of obedience can never purchase salvation. They can, at best, be but evidence of the faith by which justification is received.

No flesh. That is, no man, no human being. Paul is doubtless alluding to Ps. 143:2.

Be justified. Gr. *dikaioō*, “to set right,” “to regard as righteous,” “to declare righteous,” “to treat as being righteous,” “to present as righteous.” The word occurs 39 times in the NT, 27 of these being in the writings of Paul: The significance of *dikaioō* is somewhat obscured by the translation “to justify.” In the Greek *dikaioō*, “to justify,” *dikaios*, “righteous,” *dikaionē*, “righteousness,” are all built on the same root and the relationship between the three is clearly seen.

As used in the NT with reference to human beings, justification indicates the act by which a person is brought into a right state in relation to God. By this act God acquits a man who has been guilty of wrongdoing or treats as righteous someone who has been unrighteous. It means the cancellation of charges standing against the believer in the heavenly court. “If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous” (SC 62; see on chs. 3:28; 4:25; 5:1).

By the law. Literally, “through law.” There is no article in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12).

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis*, a term meaning clear and exact knowledge (see Rom. 1:28; 10:2; Eph. 4:13), not the ordinary word for knowledge (*gnōsis*). The law is the standard of right, and whatever fails to comply with the law is sin, for sin is lawlessness, disobedience to law (1 John 3:4). The more one becomes acquainted with the standard, the more one's consciousness and sense of sin is increased. That is why no one can be justified by works of law. As far as justification is concerned the law has done all that it can accomplish when the sinner has been led to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (see on Rom. 7:24). Law holds the mirror up to guilt, but cannot remove it.

This verse, along with Paul's statement that the law is to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24), clearly shows the relation between the law and the gospel. The gospel has by no means obviated the necessary function of law. The doctrine of righteousness by faith "presents the law and the gospel, binding up the two in a perfect whole" (TM 94).

21. But now. This may be understood either in its temporal sense, "at the present time," or in its logical sense, "in this state of the case." For its use with the latter meaning compare Rom. 7:17; 1 Cor. 13:13. Paul has shown the universal need of righteousness (Rom. 1:18 to 3:20) and now turns from the negative to the positive side of the theme proposed in ch. 1:17.

The righteousness of God. See on ch. 1:17. In contrast with the universal sinfulness of man and his futile attempts to gain righteousness by works of law, Paul proceeds to describe the righteousness of God, a righteousness that God is ready to bestow on all who have faith in Jesus Christ.

Without the law. Literally, "apart from law." There is no article in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). These words stand in contrast with "by the deeds of the law" in ch. 3:20. They emphasize that God's righteousness has been disclosed without any reference to law. That is, the righteousness of God has been manifested quite apart from the whole principle of law and the whole idea of legal obedience as a way of obtaining righteousness, or quite apart from the legalistic system the Jews presented as the basis of righteousness.

Is manifested. Literally, "has been manifested." The word may imply that what has now been manifested had previously been hidden (see Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26). Although the righteousness of God had been revealed to a certain extent in the OT, the full manifestation of His righteousness has come in the person of Christ (see PP 373).

Being witnessed. That is, being borne witness to, being attested.

The law and the prophets. That is, the OT Scriptures (see on v. 19). In the Greek the article appears with "law" (see on ch. 2:12). There is no contradiction between the OT and NT. Although this manifestation of God's righteousness is apart from law, it is not in any opposition to the law and the prophets. On the contrary, it was anticipated by them (see John 5:39). The OT is in substance prophetic of the righteousness to be revealed in Christ and received by faith, as recorded in the NT (see Acts 10:43; 1 Peter 10, 11). Paul has already quoted Hab. 2:4, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Throughout the epistle, Paul constantly refers to the OT for confirmation of his thesis that righteousness is by faith (see chs. 4; 10:6, 11). The central purpose of the ceremonial law was to teach that a man could be justified, not by obedience to the moral law, but by faith in the coming Redeemer (see PP 367).

22. By faith of Jesus Christ. Or, “by faith in Jesus Christ.” The Greek may be understood either way. In Mark 11:22, where the Greek reads literally, “have faith of God,” the KJV reads, “have faith in God.” Likewise, the literal “faith of his name” is translated “faith in his name” (Acts 3:16). The literal “the one out of faith of Jesus” is translated “him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). The saints are those who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus (see Rev. 14:12; TM 58).

Some have preferred to understand “faith of Jesus” as here meaning the faith that Jesus Himself exercised, His faithfulness, the holy life He lived, and the perfect character He developed, which is given as a free gift to all who receive Him (see DA 762). Compare “the faithfulness of God” (see on Rom. 3:3). Furthermore, His “faith” would include His faithfulness in His voluntary vicarious death (see Rom. 3:25, 26; cf. Phil. 2:8).

In any transaction of justification, both of these aspects are operative. The “faith of Jesus” is that which makes it possible for God to be “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26). “Faith in Jesus” is the channel through which the individual comes into possession of the blessings of justification (see EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 4:3–5).

However, righteousness is not received as a reward for our faith in Christ, but rather faith is the means of appropriating righteousness. When in love and gratitude the believer in Jesus commits himself without reservation to the mercy and will of God, the righteousness of justification is imputed to him. And as he continues daily in this experience of trust, surrender, and fellowship, his faith increases, enabling him to receive more and more of the imparted righteousness of sanctification.

Faith is as it were the hand that the sinner stretches forth to receive the “free gift” of God’s mercy (ch. 5:15). This gift God is ever waiting and willing to bestow upon us, not as a reward for anything we may do, but simply because of His own infinite love. The gift is ours to receive, and it is received “through faith.”

And upon all. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) as to whether these words were part of the original manuscript. Their omission does not materially affect the sense.

Believe. Or, “have faith” (see on v. 3).

No difference. Or, “no distinction.” Gentiles and Jews are all included in the same method of salvation. The reason no distinction is made between them is that there is no difference in their need (v. 23).

23. All have sinned. Literally, “all sinned.” Adam’s sin marred the divine image in man (see on ch. 5:12; cf. GW 80), and ever since man’s fall, all of Adam’s descendants have continued to fall short and be destitute of the image and glory of God (see below under “glory”). Paul is urging Jews and Gentiles alike to recognize the vital fact that all the evidence of experience and history clearly proves that fallen man, with his depraved nature, is wholly incapable of fulfilling the requirements of God’s law and of establishing his own righteousness. The only possible way to obtain righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ. By this experience of faith men are once again brought into a right relation with God (ch. 3:24), new hearts are created within them, and they are thus enabled by faith to live once again in obedience to God’s law (see on ch. 5:1).

Come short. Gr. *hustereō*, used elsewhere with the meaning “to suffer need” (Phil. 4:12), “to be destitute” (Heb. 11:37), “to be in want” (Luke 15:14). In the account of the marriage feast at Cana, *hustereo* is used to report that the supply of wine had failed (John

2:3). The Greek indicates that sinners still continue to fall short. Moreover, the particular form of the verb may express not only the fact of falling short but also the awareness of the lack. If such is the case here, the verb could be translated “consciously continue to fall short.” This sense of loss has led men everywhere to attempt to establish their own righteousness by works of law.

Glory. Gr. *doxa*. In the Bible *doxa* seems to have two main and somewhat different usages, though both are based upon the original meaning, in classical Greek, of “opinion,” “notion,” “repute.” It is often used to signify “honor,” “fame,” “recognition” (John 5:44; 7:18; etc.). In this sense it is opposed to “dishonor” (1 Cor. 11:14, 15; 15:43; 2 Cor. 6:8). In this sense it is sought (John 5:44; 7:18; 1 Thess. 2:6), received (John 5:41, 44), given (Luke 17:18; John 9:24), ascribed to God (Luke 2:14; Rev. 1:6).

If this is Paul’s usage of the term here in Rom. 3:23, then “the glory of God” means the honor, praise, or approbation that God bestows and from which men have fallen short. Since Paul is dealing in this passage with man’s standing before God, and refers in the next verse to justification, the only means by which a man may be restored to the approval and approbation of God, this sense of the term “glory” may be appropriate in this context.

On the other hand, “glory” is also used in the Bible to signify “brightness” “glorious appearance which attracts the eye” (see Matt. 4:8; Luke 12:27; Acts 22:11). It is sometimes used in a sense parallel with “image,” “likeness,” “form,” “appearance” (see Rom. 1:23; cf. the LXX of Num. 12:8, which has *doxa* for “similitude”). The glory revealed to Moses (Ex. 33:18, 22) was the character of God—goodness, mercy, forgiveness (see GW 417). This glory may also be reflected in those of God’s creatures who are capable of knowing and loving and growing like their Maker. Thus Paul speaks of man as “the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11:7), doubtless because he is capable of receiving and reflecting God’s glory. The complete revelation of the glory and perfection of God is “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

As this glory of God revealed in Christ shines forth from the gospel into the heart and mind of the believer, it transforms him into “light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8). Thus “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). The hope and aspiration of the Christian is more and more fully to participate in the glory of God (see Rom. 5:2; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14).

If “the glory of God” be understood more in this latter sense, to “come short of the glory of God” would mean to have come short of the perfection of God, to have lost His image, and to have become destitute of His likeness.

Perhaps these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and both make good sense in this verse.

24. Being justified. Since men have nothing by which they may set themselves right with God, justification must come as a free gift. Only when in all humility a man is prepared to acknowledge that he is destitute of the glory of God and that he has nothing in himself that would commend him to God is he enabled by faith to accept justification as a free gift.

Freely. Gr. *dōrean*, “freely, as a gift.” Compare the use of the word in Matt. 10:8; 2 Cor. 11:7; Rev. 21:6; 22:17.

Grace. Gr. *charis*, occurring some 150 times in the NT. Paul made more use of this significant term than any other NT writer, there being some 100 occurrences in his epistles. His close associate, Luke, used the word about 25 times in Luke and Acts, these two men thereby accounting for about five sixths of all the NT occurrences. “Grace” was by no means a new word invented by the apostles; the term was widely used in a variety of associated meanings in the LXX and in classical and later Greek literature. However, the NT often seems to attach a special significance to “grace” that is not found fully elsewhere.

Primarily “grace” means “that which gives joy or pleasure,” thus conveying the ideas of beauty, gracefulness, loveliness, something that delights the beholder. Compare “grace is poured into thy lips” (Ps. 45:2, LXX; cf. Prov. 1:9; 3:22). The same idea is present in some of the NT occurrences. When Jesus spoke in Nazareth, His hearers “wondered at the gracious words [literally, “the words of grace”] which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:22). Paul counseled the believers at Colossae that their speech should “be always with grace” (Col. 4:6).

“Grace” also carried the idea of a beautiful or agreeable sentiment felt or expressed toward another, such as kindness, favor, good will. Joseph found “favour,” literally, “grace,” in the sight of Pharaoh (Acts 7:10; cf. v. 46). As the disciples preached they had “favour,” literally, “grace,” with all the people (Acts 2:47). While Jesus was a boy “the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). Certainly the definition, “unmerited favor,” that is often assigned to the word is unsuitable here. “Grace” should be understood in the sense of Luke 2:52, “in favour with God and man,” literally, “in grace with God and man.”

As an expression of the sentiment of good will, “grace” was also used of thankfulness. Thus, “Doth he thank that servant?” (Luke 17:9) is, literally, “Does he have grace toward the servant?” “Grace” is frequently used in this sense in the expression “thanks be to God,” literally, “grace be to God” (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 8:16; cf. Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 2:14; 9:15). Certainly this is not “unmerited favor” offered by mortals to God.

As a substantial expression of good will, “grace” was also used of a gift, a favor done, a boon. The Jews came to Festus and desired “favour,” literally, “grace,” against Paul (Acts 25:3). Paul speaks of the gift that the churches had gathered for the poor at Jerusalem as, literally, “the grace” (1 Cor. 16:3; cf. 2 Cor. 8:4, 6, 7, 19).

None of the above usages is different from those found in other Greek literature. The distinctive meaning attached to the term “grace” in the NT, and especially in the writings of Paul, is that of the abundant, saving love of God toward sinners as revealed in Jesus Christ. Obviously, since all men have sinned and are destitute of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), such favor and loving-kindness on God’s part are wholly undeserved and unmerited by sinful man. Men have lived in hatred and rebellion against God (ch. 1:21, 30, 32), have perverted His truth (vs. 18, 25), have preferred to worship beasts and reptiles (v. 23), have defiled His image in their own bodies (vs. 24–27), have blasphemed His name (ch. 2:24), and have even despised God for His patience and forbearance (v. 4). Finally, they murdered His Son, sent to save them (Acts 7:52). Yet through it all God has continued to regard man with love and kindness, that the revelation of His goodness may lead men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

This is the grace of God in its peculiar NT sense. It is not merely God's favor toward those who might merit His approval, it is His unlimited, all-inclusive, transforming love toward sinful men and women; and the good news of this grace, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is "the power of God unto salvation" (ch. 1:16). It is not merely God's mercy and willingness to forgive, it is an active, energizing, transforming power to save. Thus it may fill a person (John 1:14), it may be given (Rom. 12:3, 6), it is all-sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9; cf. Rom. 5:20), it reigns (Rom. 5:21), it teaches (Titus 2:11, 12), it establishes the heart (Heb. 13:9). In some instances "grace" seems almost to be equivalent to "gospel" (Col. 1:6) and to the working of God generally (Acts 11:23; 1 Peter 5:12). "Divine grace is the great element of saving power" (GW 70). "Christ gave His life to make it possible for man to be restored to the image of God. It is the power of His grace that draws men together in obedience to the truth" (CT 249).

Redemption. Gr. *apolutrōsis*, literally, "a ransoming," "a releasing by ransom." The Greek word consists of two parts, *apo*, "from," and *lutrōsis*, related to *lutron*, "ransom." *Lutron* is a term common in the papyri to describe the purchase price for freeing slaves. The term is used to denote liberation from bondage, captivity, or evil of any kind, the idea of the payment of a price or ransom usually being implied. The English word "redeem" comes from a Latin verb meaning "to buy back," "to ransom."

In the OT the great typical act which symbolized redemption was the deliverance from Egypt. Jehovah, as the redeemer or deliverer, promised, "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm" (Ex. 6:6; cf. ch. 15:13). The purpose of the redemption was the consecration of Israel to the service of God (Ex. 6:7). In order to share in the redemption, the Israelites were required to perform an act of faith in the eating of the Passover lamb and in the sprinkling of the blood (Ex. 12).

These types are fulfilled in the redemption of man from sin and death. Jesus is "the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5:12; cf. John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). That a ransom, or price, was paid for our redemption is clearly taught in the NT. Jesus Himself declared that "the Son of man came ... to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Paul speaks of Christ as the One "who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Christians are represented as "bought" (2 Peter 2:1), or "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). Thus, in one sense, justification is not free, for a very great price has been paid for it by the sufferings and death of Christ. But it is free to us, since its cost is not met by us, but has been paid by the Son of God Himself.

This redemption ransoms us from sin (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18, 19), from corruption and death (Rom. 8:23), and finally from the present evil state into one of glory and bliss (Luke 21:28; Eph. 4:30). Through justification Christ redeems us from the penalty of sin; through sanctification, from the power of sin; and at the time of the second coming and the resurrection, from the presence of sin.

As in the case of the Israelites in their deliverance from Egypt, so also now our participation in the divine plan of redemption from sin requires the exercise of faith, a personal acknowledgement and acceptance of Jesus as our Redeemer, with all that such a step implies.

In Christ Jesus. Jesus "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). He is in Himself the redeemer (Titus 2:14)

and the ransom (1 Tim. 2:6). No wonder Paul could exclaim, “Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:11). The apostle was setting for himself no narrow limitation when he declared his determination “not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). For to know Him well is to know God’s whole plan and program for the restoration of man. There is no greater wisdom.

25. Hath set forth. Gr. *protithēmi*. This Greek verb is capable of two somewhat associated meanings. One possible meaning is “to exhibit to view.” Compare the “shewbread,” literally, “the loaves of setting forth” (see Mark 2:26). The second possible meaning, derived from the idea of setting something before, is “to determine a purpose,” “to decree,” “to purpose.” The same word is translated “purposed” in Rom. 1:13. The latter sense would agree with Paul’s teaching elsewhere (see Eph. 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9), but the context seems to indicate that the public exhibition of the sacrifice of Christ is the point being emphasized in this verse. Compare, “before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified” (Gal. 3:1, RSV), and, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

God’s purpose in the public exhibition of the sacrifice of Christ was “to declare his righteousness.” And this public declaration of God’s righteousness was not only for the benefit of mankind but for the whole universe, that the issues in the great controversy might be more clearly understood by all who may have been tempted to doubt the perfection of God’s character (see DA 626, 758, 759).

Propitiation. Gr. *hilastērion*. This important word has been discussed at great length by many commentators and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. The difficulty seems to be not only to discover the exact meaning of the Greek term but also to find an adequate English word or phrase to represent this meaning.

Hilastērion occurs only here and in Heb. 9:5, where it clearly refers to that part of the ark of the covenant usually known as the “mercy seat.” This usage of the word is common in the LXX as a translation of the Heb. *kapporeth*, which describes the lid, or cover, of the ark. It was upon this golden piece of furniture that the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14, 15), and “from which, by virtue of the atonement, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner” (PP 349). Since this most sacred of all Hebrew ceremonies was typical of the atoning work of Christ, an understanding of the significance of this name, *kapporeth*, for the central place in the typical ceremony of atonement may shed some light on its use by Paul in reference to the sacrifice of Christ.

This Hebrew word for the so-called “mercy seat” is derived from a word (*kaphar*) meaning basically “to cover.” However, only once in the OT when in its simplest form is *kaphar* used for covering in the ordinary sense (Gen. 6:14). Most frequently it appears in another form and is used in a figurative sense, with the meaning “to cover sin,” hence, “to forgive,” “to be merciful,” “to atone.” For *kapporeth* Luther used the name *Gnadenstuhl*, “mercy seat.” Later Tyndale took over the word, and from his version it passed on to many of the major English versions of the Bible. Some have suggested the translation, “place of atonement,” as representing more clearly the work of redemption and reconciliation that was accomplished there.

The translators of the LXX evidently were aware of this significance of the name when they chose to represent it by the Greek *hilastērion*. The meaning of *hilastērion* is further illuminated by a comparison of other related words which occur in the NT. *Hilaskomai* is used in the prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13), and in the description of Jesus’ work “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). Another related form, *hilasmos*, occurs twice in descriptions of Christ as “the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

As used here in Rom. 3:25, and in this context describing the offer of justification and redemption through Christ, *hilastērion*, “propitiation,” seems to represent the fulfillment of all that was typified by the *hilastērion*, “mercy seat,” in the OT sanctuary. By His sacrificial death, Jesus has been set forth as the means of atonement, expiation (see DA 469), propitiation (see SC 15), reconciliation. There is perhaps no one English word that can adequately portray all that this implies. And even some of the terms mentioned above have been given certain definitions by theologians quite out of harmony with the true nature of the atonement. Care must be exercised in the use of these terms lest unwarranted shades of meaning become attached to them.

Whichever word is used, the meaning is clear that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ has met the penalty of sin and has made possible the pardon and reconciliation of all who have faith in Christ. This, of course, must not be understood to mean that the sacrifice of Christ was, like pagan sacrifices, offered to conciliate an offended god and to persuade him to regard sinners more favorably. “The atonement of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom He otherwise hated; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God’s heart” (EGW ST May 30, 1895; cf. SC 15). Actually, God sacrificed Himself in Christ for man’s redemption. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. DA 762).

Through faith in his blood. Or, “through faith, in his blood.” The connection of these phrases with the rest of the verse may be variously understood. As rendered in the KJV, this passage means that the sacrifice of Jesus brings pardon and reconciliation to those who have faith in His blood. However, it is possible to connect “through faith” and “in his blood” separately with “propitiation,” the meaning thus being, “Whom God set forth by the shedding of His blood to be a propitiation through faith.” Either interpretation is possible grammatically. The latter may be preferable in this context as more clearly indicating the sacrifice of Christ as the means by which the propitiation is accomplished. The atoning sacrifice becomes effective through the faith that appropriates it. Unless the proffered pardon is accepted by faith, the atonement is of no avail in reconciling the minds and hearts of those for whom the sacrifice has been made.

The NT lays much stress on the blood of Christ in connection with the work of redemption. Jesus spoke of His own blood as being “shed for many” (Mark 14:24). We are “justified by his blood” (Rom. 5:9). “We have redemption through his blood” (Eph. 1:7). Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). Those who were “far off” have been “made nigh” by His blood (Eph. 2:13). The church of God has been “purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). We are washed “from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

In the OT the blood is regarded as representing life (see on Lev. 17:11). God forbade men to eat “flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof” (Gen. 9:4). The shedding and sprinkling of blood in the OT sanctuary services meant the taking and the offering of the life of the animals sacrificed. Thus the antitypical shedding of the blood of Jesus means the offering of His life as a sacrifice. The blood of Christ represents His life offered as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.

As representing the perfect life of Jesus given for man, the blood of Christ is efficacious not only for “propitiation” (Rom. 3:25), justification (ch. 5:9), and reconciliation (Eph. 2:13). “It is by receiving the life for us poured out on Calvary’s cross, that we can live the life of holiness” (DA 660).

To declare his righteousness. Literally, “for showing of His righteousness,” that is, to exhibit His own righteousness. Such an exhibition was necessary because of His work in remitting sins that are now in the past. Its purpose is further explained in v. 26.

For. Gr. *dia*, “because of,” “on account of.” This introduces the reason why the manifestation of God’s righteousness was necessary.

Remission. Gr. *paresis*, the only occurrence of this Greek word in the NT. It is different from the word translated “remission” (*aphesis*) elsewhere (see Matt. 26:28; etc.). The meaning is not primarily that of forgiveness but rather of passing over or passing by. In the papyri, *paresis* is used of remission of punishment and of debt.

Sins. Gr. *hamartēma*. Not the word for sin in the abstract, *hamartia* (cf. on Matt. 18:15), that is, sin as sinfulness (1 John 3:4). *Hamartēma* refers to the individual acts of sin and disobedience. The word occurs elsewhere in Mark 3:28; 4:12; 1 Cor. 6:18.

That are past. That is, done before, previously committed. In this context it appears that Paul is not speaking primarily of the sins of individuals before conversion, but of the sins of the world before the atoning death of Christ. God had permitted the Gentiles “to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16). He had overlooked, or “winked at,” the times of this ignorance (Acts 17:30). Because of this the righteousness and justice of God had been somewhat obscured, hence the need of a public manifestation or demonstration. Now, at last, “at this time” (Rom. 3:26), such a manifestation had been provided by the sacrifice of Christ. Compare on John 15:22; Acts 17:30; James 4:17.

Through. Or, “in.”

Forbearance. Gr. *anochē*, literally, “a holding up,” “a holding back.” The word occurs in the NT only here and in ch. 2:4 (see comment there). In His love for sinful man, and in accordance with His plan to reveal more fully His love to all the created intelligences in the universe, God had patiently and mercifully protected men from the full result of their sin (see DA 764). This apparent condoning of sin had led to a serious misconception of the character of God (see Ps. 50:21; Eccl. 8:11). It is true that death had prevailed and that there had been some revelation of God’s divine displeasure against sin (Rom. 1:18–32). It is also true that the system of ceremonies had been instituted to symbolize by its sacrifices God’s regard for the awfulness of sin and the infinite price that would have to be paid to redeem man from sin’s penalty and power. But the great demonstration of God’s righteousness and of His hatred of sin was provided by the life and death of Jesus. No longer need God’s forbearance be misunderstood as indifference to sin.

God's gracious treatment of guilty sinners does not mean that He loves guilt and sin, for He has expressed His abhorrence of such pollution in the atoning sacrifice of His Son. When He admits once-rebellious sinners to friendship and to heaven it does not mean that He approves their past conduct and character, for He has shown how much He hated their sins by giving His Son to a shameful death for them.

26. *At this time.* Literally, "in the now season"; hence, "at the present time." For centuries God had "winked at" men's sins (Acts 17:30), but now, at last, in "the fullness of the time" (Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:10), His righteousness has been manifested in the sending forth of His Son.

Just. Gr. *dikaios*, "righteous." The words "just" and "righteous" in the NT are translations of the same Greek word. The meaning of the phrase is "that God may be seen to be righteous."

And the justifier. Literally, "and justifying." The connection with God's righteousness would be more apparent if this part of the verse were rendered "that he may be righteous and accounting righteous." These verses reflect the central issue in the great controversy, the central issue in the plan of redemption (see on v. 4). Satan had declared that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that if the law should be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned (DA 761). Man's subsequent rebellion and sin provided further opportunity for Satan to bring his arrogant charges against God's character and government. "God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner" (DA 761).

For several thousand years God endured the accusations of Satan and the rebelliousness of man. All the while He was gradually unfolding His wonderful plan, a plan that would not only make it possible to pardon and restore sinners but would also demonstrate for all time to come the absolute perfection of His own character and the complete union of justice and love in the divine government.

All of this was anticipated by type, symbol, and prophecy throughout the OT. The supreme demonstration was made by the incarnation, life, suffering, and death of God's own Son. God now stood wholly vindicated before the universe for His apparent overlooking of men's former sins and for His justifying of those who had faith. The life and death of Jesus proved forever how God regarded sin (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. DA 762). It proved forever God's unbounded love for all His creatures, a love that could not only forgive, but could also win fallen sinners to surrender, faith, and perfect obedience. Thus the charges of Satan were refuted and the peace of the universe was made eternally sure. God's character had been vindicated before the universe (see PP 68, 69).

Him which believeth in Jesus. Literally, "the one out of faith of Jesus." That is, the one who has faith in Jesus (see on v. 22). Justification is only for the person who accepts the revelation in Jesus of the justice and love of God, who recognizes himself as a lost and condemned creature needing a redeemer, and, having found Him, acknowledges Him with whole-hearted confidence and surrender.

27. *Where is boasting?* Since all have sinned and all have failed to establish their own righteousness by works of law, and since all are alike dependent upon the grace of God for justification, all reason for human boasting has obviously been taken away. This probably refers in particular to the pretensions of the Jews, who prided themselves on their special privileges (see ch. 2:17, 23).

Excluded. Literally, "shut out."

By what law? Literally, “by what kind of law?” In the Greek, “law” here stands without the article (see on ch. 2:12). By “law” Paul means law in the sense of a principle.

Of works. That is, a law or principle that righteousness comes by obedience to law. Such a principle would not exclude boasting, for if a man could claim justification and righteousness on the basis of his having performed the acts demanded by law, he might have some grounds for pride and boasting (see Rom. 4:2; Eph. 2:9). There would be no place for grace.

By the law of faith. Literally, “by a law of faith.” There is no article in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). Paul is referring to the principle of the gospel that justification and righteousness come by faith. Faith humbly and gratefully receives what God provides, and this hardly leaves room for boasting. “What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself” (TM 456).

28. Therefore. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “for” “For” seems more appropriate here. Paul is confirming the statement in v. 27 that boasting is excluded by the principle of faith.

Conclude. Gr. *logizomai*. The same word is used with the meaning “to think” (ch. 2:3), “to count” (ch. 4:3), “to reckon” (chs. 4:4; 8:18), “to impute” (ch. 4:6), “to esteem” (ch. 14:14). The sense here seems to be “to consider,” “to hold.”

A man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, the general term for any member of the human race.

Justified by faith. That justification is by faith clearly implies that justification is no mere impersonal adjustment of a man’s legal status in the sight of God. Faith in Christ involves a personal relationship with the Redeemer. It implies an attitude of love and gratitude toward the Saviour in response to His love for us sinners. It is based on profound admiration of Jesus for all that He is, with a sincere desire to know Him better and become like Him. It means a trust and confidence in Christ that is so entirely without reservation that we are willing to take Him fully at His word and follow His directions wherever He may lead.

Without such faith there can be no justification. God is not concerned merely with forgiving past sins. He is primarily concerned with man’s restoration, and restoration can be experienced only by means of such faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, justification cannot be separated from the transforming experiences of conversion, rebirth, and subsequent growth in sanctification. Only the faith that gladly accepts and willingly enters into every phase of God’s program for our restoration can rightfully claim the imputed righteousness of Christ in justification (see on v. 22; chs. 4:25; 5:1).

Without the deeds of the law. Literally, “without works of law.” In the Greek, “law” stands without the article (see on ch. 2:12). The meaning of this phrase is clear in the context of the whole chapter. The basis of every false religious system has been the mistaken idea that justification could be obtained by obedience to law. But works of law cannot atone for past sins. Justification cannot be earned. It can only be received by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, in this sense, works of law have nothing to do with justification. To be justified without there being anything in ourselves to merit justification.

This, of course, may not be construed to mean that the man who has been justified is thereby freed from obeying the law or from performing good works. The faith by which he has been justified will reveal itself in obedience. Paul repeatedly emphasizes the place

of good works in the life of the Christian (1 Tim. 5:10; 6:18; 2 Tim. 3:17; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8; etc.). But he makes it equally clear that these good works do not earn justification (see Rom. 4:2, 6; 9:32; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10; Eph. 2:9; 2 Tim. 1:9).

29. Jews only. Since justification is by faith and not by works of law, it is as freely available to the Gentiles, who do not possess the written law, as it is to the Jews, who have been more privileged. Salvation is offered to Gentiles and Jews on precisely the same terms. God gave His Son because He loved “the world” (John 3:16) not the Jews only. He would have “all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4). This conception of the all-inclusive love of God was not easy for some Jewish leaders of the early Christian church to grasp (see Acts 10:28, 34; 11:1–3, 17, 18; 15:1, 8–11). There is no partiality with God (Rom. 2:11).

30. Seeing it is one God. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “if so be that God is one.” Paul knows that his statement of the oneness of God is as certain to his readers as it is to himself, but he puts it into this form in order to make more effective the logic of his argument. The most fundamental of all Jewish beliefs was that Jehovah is God alone and the God of all the kingdoms of the earth (Deut. 6:4; 2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:4–6; 1 Tim. 2:4–6). He “made of one blood all nations of men” (Acts 17:26), and in Him we all “live, and move, and have our being” (v. 28). This same and only God offers justification to all men everywhere without “respect of persons” on the basis of faith.

The circumcision. That is, the circumcised, the Jews (see Gal. 2:9).

Through faith. Literally, “through the faith,” that is, the faith referred to earlier in the verse. It is not certain that importance should be attached to the difference in the wording of this and the phrase “by faith.” Some have regarded them as essentially the same in meaning. The emphasis is on faith. Faith, not circumcision, will bring justification to the Jew. Likewise the Gentile, even though he is not circumcised, will be justified by the same faith that is required of the Jew.

31. Make void. Gr. *katargeō*, “to make null and void.” See on v. 3.

The law through faith. In the Greek, “law” stands without the article (see on ch. 2:12). Paul has previously said that the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law (ch. 3:21) and that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law (v. 28). Apparently realizing that these statements could lead to the mistaken idea that faith abolishes the principle of law, Paul raises this rhetorical question and answers it with an immediate and categorical denial. It is true that Paul “made void” the Jewish idea of law as a means of attaining righteousness and the Jewish insistence that the Gentiles must follow the same method (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:16–19). But law in its true function is confirmed, rather than abrogated, by God’s appointed method of justifying sinners (see on Rom. 3:28).

God forbid. Or, “By no means” (see on v. 4).

Yea. Rather “on the contrary.”

Establish the law. Paul is emphasizing the place of law as a principle, and particularly, in the context of this chapter, as it is embodied in the revealed law of the OT. He has already spoken of the witness of the OT to the teachings that were soon to become known as the NT (v. 21). Now he asserts that law, viewed as a revelation of the holy will of God and of the eternal principles of morality, is fully vindicated and established by the gospel of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth to magnify the

law (Isa. 42:21; cf. Matt. 5:17) and to reveal by His life of perfect obedience that Christians can, through the empowering grace of God, give obedience to His law. The plan of justification by faith reveals God's regard for His law in demanding and providing the atoning sacrifice. If justification by faith abolishes law, then there was no need for the atoning death of Christ to release the sinner from his sins, and thus restore him to peace with God.

Moreover, genuine faith implies in itself an unreserved willingness to fulfill the will of God in a life of obedience to His law (see on Rom. 3:28). Real faith, based on wholehearted love for the Saviour, can lead only to obedience. The fact that Christ endured such suffering because of our transgression of God's law is one of the strongest motives for obedience. We do not easily and readily repeat a course of conduct that overwhelms our earthly friends in calamity. Likewise we can only hate the sins that inflicted such woes on the best Friend of all. One of the chief glories of the plan of salvation is that while the plan makes possible the sinner's justification through faith, it also provides powerful influences to produce in him a desire to obey.

The plan of righteousness by faith places law in its proper position. The function of law is to convict of sin (v. 20) and to reveal the great standard of righteousness. The sinner who is confronted with the law sees not only his sin; he sees also his lack of positive qualities. The law thus leads him to Christ and the gospel (Gal. 3:24). Then faith and love bring forth a new obedience to the law of God, the obedience that springs from faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), the obedience of love (ch. 13:8, 10).

It is on this question of the authority and function of God's law that the final conflict will come in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. That it is now no longer necessary to give complete obedience to every precept of God's law is the last great deception that Satan will bring upon the world (Rev. 12:17; 14:12; cf. DA 763).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 AA 380; 5T 533

4 1T 323

11, 12 COL 189

18 2T 292, 348, 560, 630

20 GC 467; 2T 449, 452, 512

25 GC 461, 468

26 COL 163, 168; DA 762; MYP 70; 4T 418; 5T 739; 9T 193

27, 28 SC 59

31 COL 128, 314; GC 468, 584; MB 50; PP 373

2

CHAPTER 4

1 *Abraham's faith was imputed to him for righteousness, 10 before he was circumcised. 13 By faith only he and his seed received the promise. 16 Abraham is the father of all that believe. 24 Our faith also shall be imputed to us for righteousness.*

1. What shall we say then? A common expression with Paul, connecting that which follows with the preceding passage (see also chs. 6:1; 7:7; 9:14, 30). If the plan of

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 2:7). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

righteousness by faith excludes all boasting (ch. 3:27), and makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile (vs. 22, 23), what then shall we say about the case of Abraham? Surely, the Jews might assert, the father of the chosen people was accepted before God because of his great merit. Paul now proceeds to explain, on the authority of the OT Scriptures, that even Abraham was justified on the same basis on which justification is offered to the heathen. Moreover, Abraham enjoyed this experience before he was circumcised (ch. 4:10). Thus it could hardly be charged that Paul was advancing any strange new doctrine in maintaining that justification still comes by faith. And he could rightfully claim that he was keeping strictly within the spirit of the religion of the OT in teaching that the Gentile world, though uncircumcised, might also be justified by faith. The record of Abraham's faith, in Gen. 15:6, provides an instance of righteousness "without the law" and yet "witnessed by the law" (Rom. 3:21).

Abraham our father. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading, "Abraham our forefather." The Jews prided themselves highly on having Abraham as their progenitor, and an example drawn from his life and conduct would be especially forceful (see on Matt. 3:9; John 8:39, 40, 53).

As pertaining to the flesh. There has been some uncertainty as to whether this phrase should be connected with "hath found" or with "our father." The former connection would read, "What shall we say that Abraham our father has found with respect to the flesh?" That is, Was Abraham justified by anything which pertained to the flesh? The other possible connection would read, "What shall we say that Abraham, our father according to the flesh, has found?" This would be referring to Abraham as forefather by natural descent. Either reading makes good sense in this context. Some see a third possible connection: "What, then, shall we say? That we have found Abraham [to be] our forefather [only] according to flesh?" (Lenski).

Hath found. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this phrase. Whether the words are included or not, Paul's purpose is clear. The general question, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" (ch. 3:1) is being answered by a review of the experience of the great patriarch. In what did the undeniable superiority of Abraham really consist?

2. Were justified. If Abraham had been justified as a reward for his works of obedience, he indeed would have had something to be proud of. But actually, Abraham had nothing to boast about in the sight of God. Paul explains why in vs. 3–5. The truth of the matter is that Abraham did not receive his justification as a reward for works at all, but rather in the same manner as all other believers.

3. The scripture. The passage quoted is from Gen. 15:6. The reading is that of the LXX. In Genesis the passage appears as a comment on Abraham's faith in the promise that his descendants should be as numberless as the stars.

Believed. Gr. *pisteuō*, the verb form of the noun *pistis*, "faith" (see on ch. 3:3). Hence the quotation could be rendered, "Abraham had faith in God," or, "Abraham put his faith in God." Abraham's faith was not merely a belief in something impersonal, but a personal trust and confidence in God (see on ch. 3:22).

Counted. Gr. *logizomai*. The same word is translated "reckoned" (v. 4) and "imputeth" (v. 6). In classical Greek and in the papyri the term was used in connection with the keeping of accounts. Abraham's faith was set down on the credit side for

righteousness. The Hebrew word used in Gen. 15:6 (*chashab*) means “to think,” “to regard,” “to consider,” “to reckon.” It occurs in 1 Sam. 1:13, “Therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.” Compare the use of *chashab* in Gen. 38:15; 2 Sam. 19:19; Ps. 32:2; Isa. 10:7; Jer. 36:3; Hosea 8:12.

For righteousness. The legal implications of the reckoning of Abraham’s faith for righteousness have been the source of earnest debate by many students of the Bible. But it may be well to observe here that it is possible to discuss the plan of righteousness by faith in such legalistic terms that it becomes no longer righteousness by faith at all. The Jews received the principles of righteousness by faith at Mt. Sinai, but because of their legalistic attitude toward this plan for their restoration, they soon turned it into righteousness by works.

The fact that Abraham’s faith was reckoned to him as righteousness does not mean that faith possesses in itself some merit that can earn justification (see EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 4:3–5). It was Abraham’s faith in God that was accounted as righteousness. Such faith is a relation, an attitude, a disposition of man toward God. It implies a readiness to receive with joy whatever God may reveal, and to do with joy whatever God may direct. Abraham loved and trusted and obeyed God because he knew Him and was His friend (James 2:21–23). His faith was a genuine relationship of love, confidence, and submission. Moreover, Abraham knew the gospel of salvation, he knew that his justification depended on the atoning sacrifice of the One to come (Gal. 3:8; cf. John 8:56). At the time of the making of the covenant, the plan of redemption was “opened to him, in the death of Christ, the great sacrifice, and his coming in glory” (PP 137). Abraham believed in the promise of the Messiah, and his “faith was fixed upon the Redeemer to come” (PP 154). It was Abraham’s thankful and confident acceptance of the atonement and of the righteousness of Christ in place of his own unrighteousness that was credited to him for righteousness. This is the same experience of justification by faith that is enjoyed by every believing Christian.

4. Him that worketh. That is, hoping thereby to merit justification. Paul is drawing his illustration from everyday life. This verb was commonly used of working at a trade for a living (see Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 9:6; 2 Thess. 3:12).

Reward. Gr. *misthos*, “pay,” “wages,” “earned reward” (see Matt. 20:8; James 5:4).

Reckoned. Gr. *logizomai* (see on v. 3). This word may be used of setting something to a person’s account that may or may not be his due. In this verse the workman’s wages are “reckoned,” or “counted,” to be his legal right. In v. 8, Paul speaks of not “imputing,” or “reckoning,” sin to the sinner.

Of grace. That is, as a gift (see on ch. 3:24).

Of debt. “The labourer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7). If necessary he can claim it in a court of law. This represents the legalistic method of seeking salvation. If justification is a reward for works, we make God our debtor. Grace is not involved at all.

5. Him that worketh not. That is, the person who does not attempt to purchase justification by his works. This does not deny the necessity of good works (see on ch. 3:28). Paul is emphasizing again the fundamental truth that man is justified, not by works, but by the faith that makes him a partaker of the life and righteousness of God and thus generates and inspires good works.

Believeth on him. Or, “has faith in him,” “trusts in him” (see on ch. 3:3). This faith is not mere belief in the goodness of God, but is trust in God Himself as justifying those who, if justice were enforced without mercy, could not be justified. It implies not only confidence in the promises of God but also complete self-surrender of the heart and life to the One whom the believer has learned to trust. Believing on Him means more than regarding His word as true. It designates a personal relation (see on ch. 4:3).

Ungodly. Gr. *asebēs*, a stronger word than “unrighteous.” It describes one who does not worship the true God, such as a heathen, and in a more general sense refers to an irreligious, impious person. Paul may have chosen this word to heighten the contrast between man in his unworthiness and the mercy of God in justifying him.

His faith is counted. This is the faith of the person who, recognizing himself as “ungodly,” unworthy, and unable to justify himself by his own works, fully trusts in God’s mercy to justify him. In contrast with the self-sufficiency of the man who presumes to claim justification as a reward for his good works, the faith that is counted for righteousness involves in its very essence the renunciation of all merit. By faith the repentant sinner presents to God Christ’s merits, and the Lord credits to his account the obedience of His Son (EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 4:3–5).

Again the word “faith” implies, not merely a legal adjustment, but the beginning of a new life of love, obedience, and transformation. The righteousness of Christ revealed in His perfect life and sacrificial death has made it possible for God to be just in the eyes of the universe and the justifier of everyone who has faith in Jesus (see on ch. 3:26). Acceptance of the righteousness of Christ by faith makes it possible for the sinner’s sinful past to be covered and his sinful self to be transformed.

6. Even as David. The quotation is from Ps. 32:1, 2 and agrees with the LXX rather than with the Masoretic text. David’s statement is quoted by Paul to confirm and further explain his interpretation of Abraham’s experience, which he resumes in Rom. 4:9. Further evidence is also thus provided that the doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works, is well supported by the OT and was understood by the greatest Jewish leaders.

Describeth the blessedness. Literally, “speaks the blessing,” hence the translation preferred by many interpreters, “David pronounces a blessing” (see RSV). Others, however, prefer to ascribe to God the pronouncing of blessing, by such a translation as, “David also tells of the blessedness.”

Imputeth. Gr. *logizomai* (see on v. 3). To reckon righteousness is essentially the same as to justify. The purpose of Ps. 32, from which Paul is quoting, is to show the blessedness of the man who is forgiven, whose sins are not charged to him, and who is therefore treated as a righteous person. No longer is he regarded as a rebellious sinner, but as a friend of God.

Without works. David does not use this phrase, but the idea is implicit in the psalm. Works are of absolutely no avail in atoning for past iniquity (see on ch. 3:28).

7. Blessed. Gr. *makarioi*, which may also be translated “happy.” The same Greek word is used in the Beatitudes (see on Matt. 5:3).

Iniquities. Gr. *anomia*, literally, “lawlessnesses,” “violations of law.”

Sins. Gr. *hamartiai*, “failures,” “faults,” sins and deviations of all kinds.

Covered. Gr. *epikaluptō*, literally, “covered as with a shroud,” “veiled.” The word occurs only here in the NT.

8. To whom. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “of whom,” “whose.” The latter reading makes possible the translation, “Blessed is the man of whose sin the Lord will not take account.”

Will not impute sin. That is, the Lord will not charge or reckon his sin against him. This is the negative side of justification, the forgiving of past sin. The positive side, as expressed in vs. 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, is the imputing of righteousness. The two are inseparable. To emphasize only the first, to think of justification as only pardon and forgiveness, may rob this experience of some of its reconciling and life-giving power. The positive realization that God has not only forgiven me but has also imputed to me the righteousness of Christ fills me not only with gratitude but also with hope and aspiration for the future. God is concerned not simply with my forgiveness but with my restoration of fellowship with Him. To think of justification as simply pardon is perhaps to look too much to the past. God wishes me to know that He has not only forgiven me but is also prepared to treat me as if I had never sinned (see SC 62). My past will not be held against me. From now on I am to be treated as a friend, even as a son (1 John 3:1, 2). Thus He gives me a fresh, new start. He has done everything possible for my complete reconciliation. And this awareness by faith of the meaning of the experience of justification inspires me with courage and determination for the future. I know that the perfect character of Christ, which has been imputed to me in justification, may from now on be imparted to me in sanctification, to transform my character into one like His. Thus, while justification deals primarily with the past, it represents not only the end of a life of alienation and rebellion but also, and even more importantly, the beginning of a new life of love and obedience.

The evangelical Heidelberg Catechism, first published in 1563, explains justification in these words: “How art thou righteous before God? ANSWER. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ; that is, although my conscience accuse me that I have grievously sinned against all the commandments of God, and have never kept any of them, and that I am still prone always to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never committed nor had any sin, and had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has fulfilled for me, if only I accept such benefit with a believing heart.” Compare EGW Supplementary Material on Rom. 4:3–5.

9. Cometh this blessedness? Or. “Is this declaration of blessedness?” There is no verb in the Greek. Paul now prepares to answer the possible objection that while it evidently must be admitted that justification is by faith rather than works, yet surely the fact that David and Abraham had obeyed the law of circumcision must have had something to do with their being justified. If this is assumed to be so, then surely those who are circumcised must have some advantage in this plan of justification. Paul answers this argument by pointing out that Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. Actually, Abraham was not circumcised until he was 99 years old (Gen. 17:1, 10, 11, 24), and his son Ishmael was 13 (v. 25). Abraham’s experience of faith in God’s promise occurred before Ishmael was born (Gen. 15:6).

The circumcision. That is, those who are circumcised, the Jews.

10. How was it? That is, in what circumstances was Abraham when he was justified? Did he have this experience before or after he was circumcised? The OT clearly records that his justification long preceded his circumcision (Gen. 15:6; cf. ch. 17:24).

11. Sign of circumcision. That is, circumcision as a sign. In instituting circumcision God said, “It shall be a token [LXX, *sēmeion*, “sign”] of the covenant betwixt me and you” (Gen. 17:11).

A seal. Gr. *sphragis*. This word was used for certain marks by which contracts and agreements were confirmed or authenticated or for the instruments by which the marks were made (see Cor. 9:2; 2 Tim. 2:19; Rev. 5:1; 7:2). Thus circumcision was intended as an external mark signifying the ratification of the covenant made with Abraham and the confirmation of his previous experience of justification by faith. Consequently, circumcision could not be regarded as the reason for a man’s acceptance and favor with God. It was only a sign and seal to Abraham and his descendants of the righteousness that comes by faith. Circumcision did not convey the righteousness but only gave outward evidence of it. Similarly for the Christian, baptism does not bring righteousness, but the ordinance may be regarded as a sign and seal of the faith and justification experienced before baptism.

Righteousness of the faith. Or, “the righteousness by faith.” Compare the phrase “the obedience of faith” (ch. 16:26).

The father. That is, the spiritual father. Abraham is the ancestor of those who have faith. As such, he is a model and example. Those who follow in his footsteps are regarded as his spiritual children (see Luke 19:9; John 8:39; Gal. 3:7, 29).

Believe. The gift of salvation is offered to all men everywhere on the same terms, whether they are circumcised or not (ch. 3:29, 30). Abraham and all his true children have met these terms. The one bond of union in this spiritual family is that of faith. Some members of the family possess the external sign of this faith, and some do not. Membership is not determined by the possession of the sign but rather by the possession of that which the sign was intended to represent.

Had the original significance of circumcision not been lost, the Jews would always have been reminded of the universal scope of the plan of salvation, by which the imputation of righteousness is offered to all who believe. Thus they would have been more ready to cooperate with God in the fulfilling of the spiritual meaning of His promises to Abraham that he should be the father of many nations (Gen. 17:4) and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed (ch. 12:3).

12. Father of circumcision. That is, father of the circumcised. This is to be connected with “that he might be” (v. 11). It was God’s design that Abraham should pass on the rite of circumcision to all his physical descendants to be a sign of the faith they should share with him. Paul did not minimize the significance of circumcision, rightly understood (see ch. 3:1, 2). It was a privilege to be a member of the chosen race and to bear the seal of righteousness by faith.

Circumcision only. While Abraham was the physical ancestor of all circumcised Jews, he was the father, in the sense in which the term is used in this context, only of those who received circumcision in the same spirit and faith as he had. Mere circumcision was of no avail, but circumcision connected with a faith like Abraham’s marked those who were truly his descendants (chs. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7).

Walk. Gr. *stoicheō*, “to follow a person [or thing],” “to be in line with,” “to agree with,” “to submit to.” As a military term it means “to move in line.” Compare the use of *stoicheō* in Gal. 5:25; Phil. 3:16. Abraham is the father of those who are not only circumcised but also “walk in the steps” and follow the example of the faith that he had before he was circumcised. The example of Abraham’s faith sheds further light on the meaning of genuine faith. His faith was not a momentary experience but the habit of a lifetime, revealing itself in consistent obedience and good works. God Himself testified that “Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen. 26:5).

13. Heir of the world. This exact expression does not occur in any of the promises made to Abraham. It is possible that Paul is summing up all the promises in this comprehensive expression, or he may be referring particularly to the most inclusive of all the promises, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). This was “the blessing of Abraham” that was to be extended also to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:14). All who are Christ’s are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). Since the kingdom of Christ will fill the whole earth, Abraham and his seed are indeed heirs of the world. The promise will be literally fulfilled when the kingdoms of this world are given to the people of the Most High, and Christ will reign with His saints forever and ever (Dan. 7:27).

Through the law. Literally, “through law.” There is no article in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). Furthermore, in the Greek this phrase comes at the beginning of the verse, perhaps for emphasis: “For not through law was the promise to Abraham,” etc. Paul’s argument here closely resembles that in Gal. 3:18. There “law,” without the article (see on Rom. 2:12), is spoken of as a principle opposed to “promise.” The inheritance cannot be dependent on law, because God has granted it to Abraham by promise. Here in ch. 4:13, “law” and “righteousness of faith,” both without the article, are the two contrasting principles. Paul is asserting that the promise is to be realized and appropriated “not through law” (cf. vs. 14, 15) but “through righteousness of faith” (cf. vs. 16, 17).

14. Of the law. Literally, “of law.” There is no article in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). The ones here described are those who rely on their own obedience to obtain justification, that is, legalist.

Made void. If legalists are to inherit the kingdom, then faith has been emptied of all meaning, and there is no reason for God’s commendation of Abraham.

Made of none effect. Gr. *katargeō*, “made idle,” “made useless” (see on ch. 3:3). If the fulfillment of the promise depended on our legalistic obedience, it never could be fulfilled at all. In ch. 4:15 Paul explains why (see also Gal. 3:17–19).

15. Law worketh wrath. Legalists who depend on obedience to law for justification from sin are basing their expectations on a false assumption. The function of the law is to reveal sin (ch. 3:20) and to show it to be transgression of God’s will. Far from justifying the sinner, or bringing him peace, it condemns him and brings the wrath of God upon him. Since Paul has already proved that all men have sinned (chs. 1; 2; 3), it follows that any who attempt to be justified by the law will be involved only in wrath and condemnation. Thus the law may produce an effect the very opposite of that which is intended by the promise.

By this verse Paul is by no means denying the necessity of law. He is only clarifying the function of law in the plan of salvation (see on Rom. 3:20, 31; see Gal. 3:21).

No transgression. That is, no disobedience to a known commandment. Paul seems to be using this negative statement to confirm the truth of his positive assertion that where a law does exist, transgression is revealed, and wrath impends. He is trying to make clear to the legalists that if righteousness is not by faith but by law, there is no hope of salvation. For the Jews have a law, and they have all transgressed its requirements. Consequently, they are now exposed to the penalties of transgression, and if the promise of justification without works of law does not extend to them, they are utterly without hope.

16. Therefore it is of faith. Literally, “on account of this of faith.” The properly supplied “it” may refer to the promise (v. 13), or to the inheritance (v. 14), or generally to the way of obtaining salvation. Since the law brings only condemnation, justification and salvation must come as they did to Abraham, by faith (see Gal. 3:11, 12).

By grace. See on ch. 3:24. In this chapter Paul is contrasting law, works, and merit on one side with promise, faith, and grace on the other. Legalism attempts to obtain salvation by means of the first three. But the system is doomed to failure for the reasons already explained. Salvation could come only through grace, promise, and faith, for God must meet man’s utter helplessness. Moreover, it is the grace and love of God that wins a sinner back to reconciliation and a life of faith.

To the end. Or, “for the purpose,” “in order that.”

Sure. Gr. *bebaios*, “firm,” “established,” the opposite of “none effect” (v. 14). If the promise depended on man’s perfect conformity to the law, it would not be sure, for only Christ has yielded such obedience. But the promise is firm to all of Abraham’s seed, both Jews and Gentiles, for its only condition is the response of faith to God’s grace.

All the seed. That is, all those who believe (Gal. 3:29). Paul divides them into two classes.

Of the law. That is, the believers among the Jews, who possessed the law. The article is present in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12).

Of the faith. That is, the believing Gentiles.

Father of us all. The believing Jews and the believing Gentiles make up the family of which Abraham is the spiritual father (see on v. 11).

17. It is written. The quotation is from Gen. 17:5. At the time the promise was made Abraham’s name was changed to Abraham (see on Gen. 17:5). Paul interprets this promise as referring to the spiritual fatherhood of Abraham.

Have made. Gr. *tithēmi*, “to appoint,” “to constitute.” The verb used in the Hebrew of Gen. 17:5 may also be thus translated. For similar use of the Greek word elsewhere in the NT see Matt. 24:51; John 15:16; Acts 13:47; 1 Tim. 2:7, where it is translated respectively “appoint,” “ordained,” “set,” and “ordained.”

Before. Rather, “in the presence of.” This phrase may be connected with the words that immediately precede the parenthetical quotation from Gen. 17:5, thus making the passage read, “Who stands as the father of us all in the presence of that God in whom he believed.” Or, the phrase may be connected with the first part of the previous verse, thus emphasizing the making sure or the guaranteeing of the promise in the sight of God (see RSV).

Paul may be recalling the occasion of Abraham’s conversation with God, when in the presence of the Lord, Abraham accepted by faith the divine promise that he should be the

father of many nations (Gen. 17:1–4). In the eyes of men the promise was impossible of fulfillment. But Abraham, as the friend of God, stood in the presence of the all-powerful God of creation, who could predict the future and bring to pass His own commands. And while Abraham was there he was appointed the father of many nations.

Abraham's experience was typical of that of all believers. God promises perfect restoration to the sinner, and humanly speaking it does not seem possible that the promise can ever be fulfilled. Nevertheless, the promise is sure, for it is given to us in the very sight of the One who sees and knows us all, the God who possesses the creative power to transform us again into His image. All that is asked of us is that we accept this by faith, as did Abraham.

Quickeneth the dead. That is, gives life to the dead. The wonder-working power of God is often represented in the Bible as the power that can bring the dead to life (see Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; Isa. 26:19; John 5:21; 2 Cor. 1:9).

The reason for Paul's reference to the resurrecting power of God in this verse is not entirely clear. It seems to be generally agreed that Paul is thinking first of the circumstances of Isaac's birth (Rom. 4:19), and then of the resurrection of Christ (v. 24). Compare Heb. 11:19.

Callesh those things. The concluding part of the verse reads literally, "calls things not being as being." This may be understood as meaning that God calls into being the things that do not exist, or that God speaks of things nonexistent as though they existed. There may also be a remote reference to the calling of the Gentiles, who, although they are not yet God's people, are included in the promise as if they were. "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Rom. 9:25; cf. Hosea 1:9, 10).

All of these interpretations may really imply the same thing. God promises Abraham that he will be the father of many nations, who do not as yet exist, at a time when Abraham himself does not yet have an heir and when he has passed the age when he may naturally expect to have one (Rom. 4:19). But Abraham has faith to believe that God can give life to his dead body and can summon into existence the things promised, of which God speaks in His foreknowledge as if they already existed. The Christian's faith must be no less, and in the following verses Paul sets forth Abraham's faith as an example.

18. Against hope. In spite of apparently hopeless circumstances, Abraham continued to exercise hope and faith." "Against hope" refers to the fact that age made the fulfillment of the promise in a natural way impossible. The second "hope" was that inspired by God's word of promise.

That he might become. Or, "so that he became." This may be understood to refer to the result of Abraham's faith, "and so he became the father of many nations." Or it may refer to God's purpose for Abraham, "he believed in order that, according to God's purpose, he might become the father of many nations," or to Abraham's own hope and aspiration that he might become all that was promised. He believed with the full intention of becoming what God had promised, the "father of many nations."

That which was spoken. That is, the promise of Gen. 15:5 that Abraham's seed should be as numerous as the stars.

19. Being not weak in faith. Better, "He weakened not in faith."

He considered not. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the word "not." If the "not" is retained the expression may be understood as referring to the

narrative in Gen. 15:1–6. On that occasion it is recorded that Abram took no heed of the difficulties attending the promise, but immediately accepted it. If the “not” is omitted the expression may be understood as referring to the experience recorded in Gen. 17:17, from which Paul quite clearly borrows some of the language. This time Abraham duly considered the unfavorable circumstances, the fact that he and Sarah were well past the normal age for bearing children, but his faith was not weakened. A faith that persists even in the face of fully recognized difficulties is really greater than a faith that merely ignores them.

Dead. That is, incapable of begetting children (cf. Heb. 11:12). Some textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of “now.” The first promise of a son was made to Abraham before the birth of Ishmael (Gen. 15:3, 4), and Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born (ch. 16:16). The second promise came when Abraham was 99 (Gen. 17:1), though he called himself a hundred, and Sarah was probably 89 (v. 17).

Deadness. See Gen. 18:11.

20. Staggered not. Or, “wavered not,” “doubted not.” The Greek implies a mental struggle.

Was strong in faith. Literally, “was strengthened in [his] faith,” or “was strengthened by [his] faith.” This may be understood to mean that Abraham’s faith was strengthened. His faith grew as it was exercised. Or it may mean that Abraham himself received power through his faith. Unbelief did not cause him to waver, but on the contrary his faith made him strong. Paul elsewhere affirms that “through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive” (Heb. 11:11). This would seem to confirm the second interpretation, though the first is undoubtedly true of Abraham’s experience.

Giving glory to God. This does not necessarily imply a verbal expression of praise, but may refer to anything that tends to God’s glory, whether in thought, word, or deed (see Joshua 7:19; Jer. 13:16; Luke 17:18; John 9:24; Acts 12:23). Abraham gave glory to God by his firm confidence in God’s promises. Thus he acknowledged God’s omnipotence. In this way all who believe in the divine promises do honor to God. They bear testimony that God is worthy of confidence. Abraham also gave glory to God in action as well as in thought by his prompt obedience (Gen. 17:22, 23).

21. Being fully persuaded. Gr. *plērophoreō*, “to satisfy fully.” In the form here used it means to be filled with a thought or a conviction, hence, to be fully convinced. Paul uses the same word to exhort Timothy to “make full proof” of his ministry (2 Tim. 4:5) and to express God’s purpose that by him the gospel should “be fully known” (v. 17). In Luke 1:1 it describes those things which “are most surely believed.”

Real faith means conviction. The life of faith is a life of confidence and assurance. Thus Paul could say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). It is an error to suppose that lack of such conviction is an evidence of humility. On the contrary, to doubt God’s promises or His love is to dishonor Him, because to doubt is to question His character and His word (see TM 518, 519). It is harder for many to believe that God can love and forgive them, notwithstanding their sinfulness, than it was for the aged patriarch to believe that he would be the father of many nations. But confidence in God that He can do what seems to us impossible is as necessary in the one case as in the other. The sinner honors God by trusting His grace, as much as Abraham did by trusting His power.

What he had promised. That is, what God had promised. Since it was God who made the promise, Abraham believed it without question. Faith in God is in its essence a certain relation of a person to a person. Abraham's knowledge of God and trust in God were such that the patriarch was ready to accept all that God said and to obey all that God commanded.

Able. Gr. *dunatos*, which may have a stronger sense than simply "able." It is rendered "mighty" in Luke 24:19; Acts 18:24; 2 Cor. 10:4. The occasion of Abraham's acceptance of the promise was not the only time that he showed such confidence in the power of God. His faith was equally implicit and strong when he was commanded to sacrifice his promised son (Heb. 11:19).

The purpose of the discourse on Abraham is to show, with reference to Gen. 17:15–22; 18:9–15, how Abraham's faith in the promise of a seed through Sarah corresponds in essence to our faith in "him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:24). Abraham's faith was in a divine power above nature, in One who is able to bring life to that which humanly is dead. And as Abraham's faith in the promised birth of Isaac involved a further faith in the fulfillment through Isaac of all the promises, so the Christian's faith in the resurrection of Christ involves faith in all that is signified and assured by that event. Not only in the experience here described, but in his whole life as recorded in Genesis, Abraham stands out as an example of habitual faith in a divine order beyond the natural sight.

22. Therefore. This refers to the preceding context (vs. 18–21). It was his steadfast faith that God could and would fulfill all that He had promised that was imputed to Abraham for righteousness. Paul's analysis of the experience of Abraham provides further evidence as to the kind of faith that can be thus reckoned. The faith that Abraham possessed was no mere belief that God was telling the truth. His life of consistent trust and obedience, despite natural evidence that might have tempted him to think and act otherwise, reveals that his faith was a genuine personal relationship with God. Abraham believed *God* (vs. 3, 17). That is, Abraham placed his faith in God, not in something impersonal. His faith was not in a doctrine or in a creed but in a Person. Thus it was possible for Abraham to accept and obey whatever the Lord promised or commanded, even when humanly speaking it seemed unreasonable to suppose that such promises and commands could ever be fulfilled.

The Christian's faith today must be no less than this (COL 312). Our faith must be like Abraham's, and our lives will clearly reveal whether or not we are enjoying such an experience.

In none of these verses that speak of the reckoning of righteousness, or the accounting of faith for righteousness, is it expressly stated that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. It is, however, implied in the full meaning of the experience of justification by faith as understood in the light of God's whole great plan for the restoration of man (see on vs. 3, 5, 8; cf. on ch. 3:25, 26, 28). The law demands righteousness, which man is unable to give. But Jesus while on earth lived a righteous life and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a gift to those who desire them. His life stands for the life of men (see DA 762; EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 4:3–5). Because of Christ's perfect life, climaxed by His sacrificial death, it is possible for me to be treated as if I myself had fulfilled the requirements of the law. Thus the righteousness of Christ is imputed to me.

23. For his sake alone. Paul is concerned not only with the historical interpretation of Scripture but also with its practical application to the life of the Christian.

24. For us also. Not only to be a historical incident and example (see on Rom. 4:21; see Rom 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11), but especially to assure us that righteousness will be imputed to us in the same manner.

If we believe. Rather, “to those who believe.” This describes the class to whom faith will be reckoned for righteousness.

On him. Paul emphasizes the fact that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness must be placed in God as a person. Thus faith is not simply a conviction of the truth of a historical fact. It is a person-to-person relationship. The same Person to whom Abraham looked for the fulfillment of the promise is the One whose power and faithfulness have been manifested to a later age in the resurrection of Christ and upon whom, therefore, Christian believers confidently rely.

That raised up Jesus. The Christian’s faith is similar to Abraham’s not only in that it is personal faith in God but also in that it is faith in God as exercising the power to bring life out of death. As Abraham fixed his faith in a divine promise that only the life-giving and creative power of God could fulfill (v. 17), so Christians trust for justification and redemption in Him who has already raised Jesus from the dead for this very purpose.

The restoration of fallen man to the image of God, in which he was originally created, is possible only through the exercise of God’s creative power. The resurrection of Jesus is the supreme assurance to us that God’s life-giving power can triumph over death and that through faith this same creative power is available to us to restore the image of God in us. Christ’s resurrection was a triumph of God’s almighty power, similar to, though much higher than, the generation of Isaac from the “dead” body of Abraham. By faith in the miracle of the resurrection, with all that it implies, the resurrection is spiritually repeated in us, as we become new creatures in Christ and walk with Him in newness of life (see Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:19, 20; Col. 3:1).

25. Was delivered. Gr. *paradidōmi*. This word means basically “to hand over to another.” It is used in the Gospels for the betraying of Christ (Matt. 10:4; 17:22; John 6:64, 71).

For. Or, “on account of.” This may be understood to mean that Jesus was delivered up because of our offenses, that is, as a result of them, or in order to atone for our offenses. Actually both are implied, for the death of Christ was the result of our transgressions, inasmuch as it was the purpose of God by that death to make atonement for our sins.

Offences. Gr. *paraptōmata*, “false steps,” “blunders.” The word is translated “trespasses” in Matt. 6:14, and the singular, “fault,” in Gal. 6:1.

For our justification. Or, “on account of our justification,” meaning, “with a view to our justification.” Paul’s statement that our justification depends not only on the death of Christ but also on His resurrection sheds further light on the meaning of the experience of being accounted righteous by God (see on ch. 3:20, 28). God is not primarily concerned with a man’s sinful past, but with his future restoration. Justification is not only pardon, it is also reconciliation, the establishing of a new relationship, an experience of being set right with God. Such an experience is possible only by faith in the living Christ, who “ever liveth to make intercession” for us (Heb. 7:25). Justification is given only to those who accept and commit themselves to God’s whole plan of righteousness by faith in

Christ, which means to love the living Christ and look to Him for intercession and for transforming power. On the cross our Lord gave Himself for us. Through the resurrection He gives Himself to us.

Moreover, the resurrection of Christ assures us that what He has done for our redemption has been approved by the Father (Acts 2:36; 3:13–15; 1 Cor. 15:15, 17, 18) and that God’s purposes through Him are being accomplished (Acts 17:31). The resurrection proves the truth of Christ’s claims concerning Himself (see on Rom. 1:4) and the certainty of His promises of salvation to the sinner (John 5:40; 6:33, 63; 10:10; 11:25, 26; 1 Cor. 15:20, 22; 2 Cor. 4:14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5COL 401

3 MH 21; PP 137; 5T 526

11 PP 138, 140

13 PP 170

15 4T 13

17 Ed 254

25 5T 221

CHAPTER 5

1 *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, 2 and joy in our hope, 8 that sith we were reconciled by his blood, when we were enemies, 10 we shall much more be saved being reconciled. 12 As sin and death came by Adam, 17 so much more righteousness and life by Jesus Christ. 20 Where sin abounded, grace did superabound.*

1. Therefore. That is, in view of the statement in the preceding verse and of the whole argument and evidence of chs. 1–4. Paul has plainly shown that all men, Jews and Gentiles alike, are sinners under condemnation and in need of righteousness. He has proved that this need of righteousness cannot be met legalistically by works of obedience (ch. 3:20). But, as revealed in the good news of the gospel, God has done everything necessary to supply man’s need. God offers to everyone, as a free gift of His grace, complete pardon and reconciliation through faith in Jesus Christ, who has lived, died, and risen again for the redemption and restoration of fallen man. Having thus established the doctrine of righteousness by faith as the only way in which Jews and Gentiles together may, like Abraham, obtain justification, Paul now proceeds to explain some of the benefits that come to those who have shared in this saving experience.

Being justified. Or, “having been justified.” See on chs. 3:20, 28; 4:8, 25.

We have peace. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “let us have peace.” Manuscript evidence alone favors the latter reading. However, many commentators and translators have objected to it on the ground that it does not fit the context. They maintain that it is quite unlikely that Paul would be exhorting those who have been justified to seek to have peace. They believe that he is assuring the believers that they already possess peace as a result of their justification.

However, there is a way of translating this phrase that makes it possible to accept the reading favored by the manuscripts and still give an interpretation that is appropriate to the context. The form of the verb translated “let us have” permits the translation “let us go on having peace,” meaning, “let us enjoy the peace we have,” or “let us enjoy peace.” If Paul had meant to say “let us obtain peace,” the form of the Greek verb would have been different. It occurs in this different form in Matt. 21:38 and is there translated “let us

seize on his inheritance.” Since justification in its full sense implies reconciliation and peace, Paul is here saying, “Since we have been justified by faith, let us retain [or, “let us enjoy”] the peace that we now possess.”

If, however, the reading “we have peace” is preferred, the meaning is not essentially different. The emphasis is on the blessing of peace that comes with the experience of being pardoned and set right with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

True religion is often represented in the Bible as an experience of peace (Isa. 32:17; Acts 10:36; Rom. 8:6; 14:17; Gal. 5:22). Paul often calls God the “God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20; cf. 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Thess. 3:16). Sinners are described as enemies of God (Rom. 5:10; cf. Rom. 8:7; John 15:18, 24; 17:14; James 4:4). For them there is no peace, no quietness and assurance (Isa 57:20). But the effect of God’s provision of righteousness by faith is to bring peace to the sinner’s once troubled and alienated soul. Before the experience of justification the sinner is in a state of enmity against God, as shown by his rebellion against God’s authority and his transgression of God’s laws. But after he is reconciled, he has peace with God. Before, while still under a sense of the guilt of sin, he has nothing but fear and unrest in his conscience. Now, with his sins forgiven, he has peace in his heart, realizing that all his guilt has been taken away.

Paul’s association of peace with justification by faith makes it still clearer that justification is no mere adjustment of a sinner’s legal status with God (see on Rom. 3:20, 28; 4:25). Forgiveness alone does not necessarily bring peace. The man who has been pardoned for some crime may feel a sense of gratitude toward his benefactor, but at the same time he may also be filled with such shame and embarrassment that he seeks to avoid the company of even the one who pardoned him. Though pardoned, he may feel hardly better than a released criminal. His self-respect is gone, and there is little motivation for a life of righteousness.

If justification meant no more than that, it would actually work against God’s plan for our restoration. The only way in which the divine image can be restored in fallen man is by a confident and loving fellowship with Christ by faith. Therefore, God not only forgives, He also reconciles. He sets us right with Himself. He even treats us as if we had never sinned, by imputing the righteousness of His Son to cover our sinful past (see on ch. 4:8). He invites us to a fellowship with Jesus that will inspire us with courage for the future and provide us with an example after which we may pattern our lives.

This understanding of justification by faith shows the place of conversion and rebirth in the experience of the repentant sinner. It would not be possible for fallen man to enter into the new spiritual relationship of peace to which justification entitles and admits him, except for the miraculous change accomplished by a spiritual rebirth (John 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:14). Therefore, when God justifies the converted sinner, He also creates a clean heart and renews a right spirit within him (see Ps. 51:10). For the relationship between conversion, rebirth, and justification see COL 163; GC 470; SC 52, 53.

2. By whom. Or, “through whom.”

Have. Literally, “have had.” The Greek indicates not only the obtaining of access but a continued possession of the privilege. We have had this access since we first became Christians, and we still have it, as long as we remain Christians.

Access. Gr. *prosaḡōgē*. This word is used only by Paul in the NT and occurs only here and in Eph. 2:18; 3:12. It may here be understood in the sense of an introduction, not our

act in coming to God, but Christ's act in bringing us to Him. The same thought is similarly expressed in 1 Peter 3:18, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring [*prosagō*] us to God." The idea suggested is that of a king's audience chamber, into which the subjects may not enter alone but must be introduced by someone in authority. In this case, Jesus is the One who introduces us. We cannot enter, by ourselves, the audience chamber of God, for our sins have come between us and God and separated us from Him (Isa. 59:2). But Christ, by virtue of His sacrifice, is able to bring us back to God and to introduce us to the glorious state of grace and favor in which we now stand (see Heb. 10:19).

It is through Christ that we make our first approach to God, and it is through Christ that the privilege is continued to us. And this access to God, this introduction to His divine presence, is to be considered a lasting privilege. We are not brought to God for the purpose of an interview, but to remain with Him.

By faith. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) as to omission or retention of this phrase. However, whether Paul mentioned faith in this verse or not, it is obvious that we can have access into grace only by faith in the One through whom grace is made available.

This grace. That is, this condition of reconciliation and acceptance with God (see on ch. 3:24).

We stand. Compare 1 Peter 5:12. The state of justification is one of security and confidence.

Rejoice. Gr. *kauchaomai*, translated also "boast" (ch. 2:17), "glory" (ch. 5:3). In contrast with all false boasting, the believer boasts in hope of the glory of God. The Jews boasted of their own accomplishments (ch. 2:17). The Christian exults in what God is doing. True religion is often described in the Bible as producing such joy and satisfaction (Isa. 12:3; 52:9; 61:3, 7; 65:14, 18; John 16:22, 24; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; 1 Peter 1:8).

The Greek may be translated either "we exult" or "let us exult." Compare "we have," or "let us have" (see on Rom. 5:1). Here as in v. 1, "let us have" means "let us go on having," so here "let us rejoice" would mean "let us go on rejoicing." According to these readings Paul was exhorting justified believers to keep on enjoying peace with God and to keep on exulting in hope of the glory of God.

The joyful and triumphant confidence of Paul's faith stands in contrast to the doctrine of those who believe that "faith" necessarily implies that one must constantly be in a state of hopeful anxiety and uncertainty regarding justification. God wishes us to know whether we have been accepted, so that we may actually have the peace that comes from such an experience (v. 1; ch. 8:1). John also says that we may know that we have passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14). Faith does not mean merely believing that God can pardon and restore us. Christian faith means believing that God through Christ has pardoned us and that He has created a new heart within us.

This, of course, does not mean that once we have been justified, our future salvation is thereby guaranteed and there is no need for a continuing experience in faith and obedience. An important distinction must be made between assurance of a present state of grace and assurance of future redemption (see COL 155). The former is implied in the meaning of real faith, the personal acceptance of Christ and all His benefits. The latter is a matter of hope and must be accompanied by constant watchfulness. Even though we

have the joy and peace of justification, it is necessary that we give diligence to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). The possibility of failure was a powerful stimulus to faithfulness and holiness even in the life of the apostle Paul himself. He exercised strict self-discipline, lest, having preached to others, he himself should be rejected (1 Cor. 9:27). Thus every Christian who may now be standing in grace and exulting in hope of the glory of God should also take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

In hope. Or, “on the ground of hope.”

The glory of God. See on ch. 3:23.

3. Not only so. Paul now explains how God’s plan of righteousness by faith brings peace and joy not only in times of prosperity but also in times of distress and trial. The hope of future glory and the endurance of present trouble go together. Jesus noted this fact when He said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Glory. Gr. *kauchaomai*, which is translated “rejoice” in v. 2 (see comment there).

The phrase may be translated “let us go on exulting.”

In tribulations. Literally, “in the tribulations,” hence the possible translation, “in our tribulations.” The Gr. *thlipsis* means “pressure,” “crushing,” “oppression,” and is variously translated “trouble,” “affliction.” The early Christians were called upon to endure various forms of persecution and suffering. The apostle could not promise the believers any exemption from sorrow. Instead he explained how Christian faith could use tribulations for the perfection of character.

Paul informed the disciples at Lystra “that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). The apostles rejoiced “that they were counted worthy to suffer shame” (Acts 5:41). Peter wrote that Christians should “think it not strange concerning the fiery trial . . . : but rejoice” (1 Peter 4:12, 13). Jesus Himself said, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (Matt. 5:10; cf. Rom. 8:17, 28, 35; 2 Tim. 2:12). However, Christians must not become fanatical, and glory in suffering for its own sake. They should rejoice in affliction because they consider it an honor to suffer for Christ, because they realize that it is an occasion to witness to His power in supporting and delivering them, and because they know that suffering, when properly endured (see Heb. 12:11), is made the means of their own sanctification and preparation for usefulness both for here and for heaven hereafter. The last of these reasons is the one that Paul particularly emphasizes in this context. See 3T 416.

Knowing. Paul could say this with assurance. Perhaps no other Christian has suffered more than he did in attempting to spread the gospel (see 2 Cor. 11:23–27). Paul knew from personal experience that “tribulation worketh patience.”

Worketh. Gr. *katergazomai*, “to achieve,” “to bring about,” “to work out.” The word is translated “work out” in Phil. 2:12.

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē*. “Patience” may suggest only passive resistance to evil, the calm submission of a soul that resigns itself to suffering. *Hupomonē* means more than this. It signifies also an active virtue, a courageous perseverance and persistence that cannot be shaken by fear of evil or danger. A better translation would be “fortitude,” or “endurance.” The verb from which this noun is derived occurs frequently in the NT and is

usually translated “endure” (Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; 1 Cor. 13:7; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 10:32; 12:2, 7; James 1:12; 5:11).

In the natural man, who has not been born again of the Holy Spirit, tribulation, delay, and opposition often produce only impatience, or even a surrender of the good cause he may have espoused (Matt. 13:21). But in those who are spiritual, and thus under the influence of the Spirit of love, affliction and trial produce more perfect patience and manly endurance (1 Cor. 13:7).

The supreme example of Christian fortitude in affliction was shown by Jesus during the last hours before His death. Through all the terrible cruelty and insult, Jesus bore Himself with majestic patience (see DA 710, 731, 734–736, 744). The Christian who longs to be like Christ will rejoice in whatever trials and suffering God may permit to come upon him, knowing that through these experiences he may gain more of the divine patience of Christ and thus be able to endure unto the end.

4. Experience. Gr. *dokimē*, from a verb meaning “to test,” or “to approve.” This Greek word is used only by Paul in the NT. Elsewhere it is translated “proof” (2 Cor. 2:9; 13:3; Phil. 2:22), “trial” (2 Cor. 8:2), “experiment” (2 Cor. 9:13). The word may refer either to the process of testing, “proving,” or to the result of testing, “the state of being approved.” In this context the latter meaning seems the more appropriate, for the method of testing has already been mentioned in the “tribulation.” The more literal translation would be “proof,” “approval,” “proof by testing.” Trials and afflictions that are patiently borne prove a man’s religion and character to be genuine.

Hope. Patient endurance of tribulation tests, confirms, and refines the Christian’s faith. Out of this comes ever more confident hope. It is the believer’s initial hope of sharing in the glory of God (see v. 2) that nerves him to endure, he gains a steady, calm assurance. Hope and faith grow as they are tested and exercised. For example, the disciples’ already existing faith in Christ was confirmed and increased by the miracle Jesus performed at Cana (John 2:11). The experience of Job illustrates how the severe discipline of character can strengthen the faith and hope of a sincere believer (see on Job 40; 42).

5. Maketh ... ashamed. Gr. *kataischunō*, “to disgrace,” “to dishonor,” “to come to nought.” Compare the use of *kataischunō* in 2 Cor. 7:14; 9:4. The Christian hope never disgraces, never dishonors. Paul may have been thinking of Ps. 22:5: “They trusted in thee, and were not confounded.” This is no ordinary hope, for hope is often disappointed. This is the hope that is founded on the consciousness of justification and is endorsed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart (Rom. 8:16). Such hope cannot disappoint or put to shame.

The love of God. This may be understood as God’s love for us or our love for God. The succeeding verses seem to indicate that this is God’s love toward us, which God has revealed in Christ. The Christian’s hope is not based on anything in the Christian himself but upon the assurance of God’s unchanging love for him. This sense of His love leads us in turn to love God (1 John 4:19) and to love our fellow men (v. 7), and this experience of love strengthens confidence and hope for the future. The basis of our assurance that hope will not put us to the shame of disappointment is the love of God toward us.

Is shed abroad. Literally, “has been poured out.” The giving of spiritual blessings is often described as “pouring.” “I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon

thine offspring” (Isa. 44:3; cf. Joel 2:28, 29; John 7:38, 39; Acts 2:17, 18, 33; 10:45; Titus 3:5, 6). This figure would be especially meaningful in the countries of the Near East, in view of the heat and frequent scarcity of water. “Poured out” may also suggest the richness and abundance of God’s love and blessing.

Hearts. See on ch. 1:21.

The Holy Ghost. That is, the Holy Spirit. The term “Holy Ghost” is obsolete and perhaps reflects the influence of the German *Geist*, which means “spirit.” This is Paul’s first mention, in this epistle, of the Holy Spirit, of whose presence and activity in Christian experience he has more to say later (see especially ch. 8). The Holy Spirit pours out love in our hearts by testifying of Jesus (John 15:26; 16:14), and as we behold the glory and perfection and love of Jesus, we are changed into His likeness under the influence of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

Which is given. Or, “who was given,” or “who has been given.” Paul may be referring especially to the gift at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4, 16, 17), but, in addition, to the experience of each believer (see Acts 8:15; 19:2; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The Holy Spirit is represented as dwelling in us (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).

6. For when. Paul proceeds to give further evidence that the Christian’s hope, based on God’s love, cannot fail. He describes the surpassing greatness of that love as revealed by the fact that Christ died for us while we were still in our helpless and ungodly state.

Without strength. Or, “weak,” “helpless.” Paul is speaking of the helpless condition explained in the previous chapters. In the Greek the word used here is frequently applied to those who are physically sick and feeble (see Matt. 25:39; Luke 10:9; Acts 5:15). In it is translated “impotent,” a not unsuitable description of the condition of a sinner before his acceptance of the saving grace and power of God. Paul’s reference to the impotence and helplessness of the unregenerate sinner stands in contrast to his picture of the justified believer, now rejoicing as he grows stronger in hope, in endurance, in character, and in the assurance of God’s love.

In due time. Or, “at the right time,” “at the fitting time.” This is essentially the same as “the fulness of the time” (Gal. 4:4; cf. Mark 1:15). For thousands of years the experiment of obtaining righteousness by works had been allowed to run its course. But the most zealous legalists among the Jews and the most enlightened intellectuals among the Greeks and Romans had failed to devise any scheme that could cure the world’s maladies and save man from sin and death. On the contrary, sin and degradation had brought men to the lowest depth when Jesus came to this earth. In some instances men and women had given themselves wholly over to the control of Satan, and the very stamp of demons was impressed on their countenances. Thus it was clearly demonstrated to the universe that, apart from God, humanity could never be restored. Unless some new element of life and power should be imparted by the Creator, there was no hope of man’s being saved (see DA 36, 37). It was at this decisive moment that Jesus came to die for the ungodly.

This was also the fitting time, in that it was the time foretold by the prophet Daniel for the Messiah to die (Dan. 9:24–27; cf. John 13:1; 17:1).

It was also the right time, in that conditions in the world had prepared the hearts of many to receive with gladness the good news of the gospel. All over the world were men and women who had grown weary of the endless and empty ritual of legalistic religion and were longing for release from sin and its power. Moreover, in the providence of God

the world was then united under one government, one language was widely spoken, and the Jewish people had been dispersed among the nations, thus making possible the rapid spread of the news of salvation.

Thus Christ came, and died, when the world needed Him most, at the time predicted, and at the time when His sacrifice could best fulfill its purpose of revealing the righteousness and love of God for the salvation of fallen man. See on Gal. 4:4.

For the ungodly. Literally, “for ungodly [men].” For the meaning of the term “ungodly” see on ch. 4:5. Paul is not suggesting that Christ died for “the ungodly” as a class distinguished from “the godly,” but for all as being ungodly. This is shown by the nonuse of the article in the Greek. Christ died for us ungodly men. If we claim that we do not belong to the ungodly, we exclude ourselves from the benefits of Christ’s atonement, as did the Jews (see Luke 5:31; 1 John 1:10).

7. Scarcely. Gr. *molis*, “with difficulty,” “hardly,” “not easily.” The purpose of vs. 7, 8 is to illustrate the greatness of God’s love by comparing it with the most that men might be willing to do. While among men it is hardly conceivable that anyone would be willing to give his life even for a righteous person, the marvel of the love that Christ had for us is that He was willing to die for godless sinners.

A good man. Literally, “the good [man].” According to various commentators Paul is making some distinction between “a righteous man” and “a good man,” though the exact distinction intended is not certain. It seems to be generally agreed that the “righteous” man is the one who is strictly just and innocent and is careful to perform all duties required of him. The “good” man is not only righteous but also loving and benevolent and is always glad to do favors for others. Therefore, Paul says, though one would hardly be willing to die for the merely upright or strictly just person, who may command respect, one might possibly be willing to give his life for the noble, kindly person who inspires love and affection.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). But Paul is emphasizing that this is the utmost that can be expected of human love. It is remotely possible that someone would be willing to sacrifice himself for a dear friend who is sufficiently good and lovable. But so great is the love of God for His erring creatures that Jesus died for us when we were godless and rebellious enemies.

8. Commendeth. Gr. *sunistēmi*, which may also be rendered, “establishes,” “proves” (see on ch. 3:5). Hence the passage may be translated, “God gives proof of His love to us.” The Greek word also carries the meaning of “to recommend” (see Rom. 16:1; 2 Cor. 4:2). Hence the KJV “commend” may be appropriate here as covering both possible senses, and both may be implied in this context. Christ’s death for sinners not only proves God’s love to be a fact but also sets this love before us in all its greatness and perfection.

The form of the word in the Greek indicates that God continues to prove and commend His love for us. The sacrifice of Christ remains as the greatest demonstration of His love. Jesus died once for all, yet in the enduring results of His death we have ever-present proof of God’s love for each of us.

His love. Literally, “His own love.” The love of God the Father was displayed in the death of Christ. This vital fact must be recognized for a correct understanding of the atonement (see on ch. 3:25). Christ did not die to appease His Father or to induce Him to love us. It was divine love that conceived the plan of atonement and salvation in the beginning, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have all worked together in perfect

harmony to effect it (see John 3:16; 10:30; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 17:11, 22, 23; Rom. 3:24; 8:32; Eph. 2:4–7; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 John 4:10).

Some find it difficult to reconcile this conception of the eternal love of God with the frequently mentioned divine wrath. But divine wrath is God's antagonism to sin, resulting ultimately in the complete eradication of sin from the universe. So long as men choose to remain under the dominion of sin they are inevitably involved in God's wrath (see on Rom. 1:18). It was His own love for sinners that led God to give His Son to die, and He gave Himself in that atoning sacrifice (2 Cor. 5:19).

Yet sinners. There was nothing in man to deserve God's love. The hypothetical "good man" of v. 7 was benevolent and lovable and inspired affection. But the love that God exercised toward us was not a response to any love we had for Him, for we were His enemies. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us" (1 John 4:10).

For. Gr. *huper*, which may be taken to mean "in behalf of," "instead of." Paul does not say only that Christ died "in our stead," as "a propitiation" (ch. 3:25), as "an offering and a sacrifice" for us (Eph. 5:2), and as the "ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). If Christ's death had been an unwilling one, it would have been enough to say that He died "instead of us." But Paul says also that Christ died "for" us, "in our behalf." As our Champion, Friend, and Brother, He deliberately and willingly gave His own life for our sake, because He loved us (Eph. 5:2). By this sacrifice He became our Representative, for when "one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14). Thus it is correct to say that Christ died "in our stead" and "in our behalf," and the simple word "for" seems to be an appropriate choice to cover both of these ideas.

9. Much more then. If Christ died for us when we were sinners, it is certain that He will save us now that we are justified. If His love was so great that He was willing to give His life for His enemies, surely He will save His friends from wrath (see v. 10).

By his blood. That is, by His death, the giving of His perfect life in the atoning sacrifice (see on ch. 3:25). In this verse Paul speaks of justification as being "by his blood" rather than "by faith," because he is here considering justification from God's point of view. Our faith adds nothing to God's gift but only accepts it. The infinite price that was paid for our redemption reveals not only the wonderful love of God but also the high value that God places on the human soul. Paul is reasoning that since God loves us so much He was willing to pay an infinite price for our justification, surely He will keep that which has been so dearly bought.

From wrath. Literally, "from the wrath"; that is, the wrath of God to come (see 1 Thess. 1:10; see on Rom. 1:18; 2:5).

10. Enemies. Paul repeats and enlarges the argument of v. 9.

Reconciled. Gr. *katallassō*. The word means primarily "to exchange," and hence to change the relation of hostile parties into a relation of peace. It may be used of both mutual and one-sided enmity, and the context must determine which is intended. Sin had alienated man from God, and his heart was at war with the principles of God's law (chs. 1:18 to 3:20; 8:7). However, God gave His Son that sinful and rebellious man might be reconciled (John 3:16).

The Bible nowhere speaks of God being reconciled to man. It is true that the death of Christ made it possible for God to do for man what He otherwise could not have done (see on Rom. 3:25, 26). By bearing the penalty of transgression Christ provided a way by which men might be restored to God's favor and be brought back to their Eden home (see

PP 69); and but for the sacrifice of Christ all men would have reaped the inevitable results of sin and rebellion in final destruction under the wrath of God (Rom. 2:5; 3:5; 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10). But this does not mean that God needed to be reconciled. The alienation was entirely on man's part (see Col. 1:21), and it is God who, in His great love, initiates the reconciliation: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20). Though God strongly hates sin, His love for sinners is even stronger, and He has spared nothing, however dear, to bring about a reconciliation (see DA 57). Christ did not die to win God's love for man, but to win man back to God (see on Rom. 5:8). In fact, God's plan and provision for man's reconciliation was conceived back in eternity, even before man sinned (Rev. 13:8; cf. PP 63; DA 834). Thus, in anticipation of the atoning sacrifice, it was possible for Abraham's faith to be reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:3) and for the patriarch to be regarded as the friend of God (James 2:23) long before Christ actually died on the cross.

Paul's argument in this first part of Rom. 5 is that, since we have such overwhelming evidence of the boundless love of God even for alienated sinners, what a sure foundation we have on which to base our peace, joy, and hope of final salvation.

The reference to reconciliation in this verse, as parallel to justification in v. 9, gives further confirmation to the idea that justification is not only pardon but also the renewal of a loving relationship (see on chs. 3:20, 28; 4:25; 5:1).

Death. The same as the "blood" of v. 9, by which justification was achieved.

By his life. Literally, "in his life." This may be understood to mean that we are saved by personal union with the living Saviour, who ever liveth to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25; cf. Rom. 4:25). Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19; cf. Rom. 8:11; Gal. 2:20). If the death of Christ had such saving power in effecting our reconciliation, how much more will His risen life have power to bring our salvation to joyous fulfillment.

11. Not only so. Paul mentions another of the results of justification by faith. He has already said that we rejoice in tribulations and in hope of the glory of God (vs. 2, 3). Now he adds that "we also joy in God."

Joy. Gr. *kauchaomai* (see on vs. 2, 3).

In God. There is no reason for us to glory in ourselves (chs. 3:27; 4:2), but there is every reason why we should glory in God, especially in view of His saving love (Jer. 9:23, 24; Rom. 5:5–10; 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17).

The Christian rejoices in the beneficence of God and in the fact that the universe is under God's administration. The sinner is opposed to God and finds no pleasure in Him. He fears or hates Him. One evidence that we are truly converted and reconciled to God is that we rejoice in Him and find pleasure in the contemplation of His perfection as they are revealed in Scripture.

Through our Lord. In all the acts and experiences of the Christian life, the mediation of Christ is continually made prominent by the NT writers. We rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, who has revealed to us the true character of His Father and has reconciled us to Him.

Atonement. Gr. *katallagē*, "reconciliation." The verb "to reconcile" is *katallassō* (see on v. 10). When the KJV was first published, "atonement" signified "reconciliation," "at-one-ment." This is the only occurrence of the English "atonement" in the NT of the KJV, though the word is common in the OT. In each of the three other occurrences of the

Greek word *katallagē* in the NT it is translated “reconciling,” or “reconciliation” (Rom. 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19). Paul is referring here, not to the means by which reconciliation was effected (Rom. 3:25), but to the fact of reconciliation (ch. 5:10). The Greek word for the atoning sacrifice is quite different (see on ch. 3:25).

12. Wherefore. The passage here introduced has been regarded by many as the most difficult in the NT, if not in the whole Bible. However, this difficulty seems to have been due largely to the attempt to use the passage for purposes other than Paul intended. The apostle’s main purpose seems to be to emphasize the far-reaching results of the work of Christ, by comparing and contrasting the consequences of His justifying act with the effect of Adam’s sin.

“Wherefore” probably refers back to the description in vs. 1–11 of the saving work of Christ in reconciling and justifying the sinner and in holding out to him the hope of final salvation.

As by one man. With these words Paul begins the comparison between the effects of Adam’s sin and the effects of Christ’s redemption, but he gives only the first part of the comparison. Having set this forth, he stops in his characteristic manner to discuss some problems involved in what he has already said. The digression is marked by parentheses in the KJV for vs. 13–17. However, Paul seems to resume his main argument in v. 15.

If Paul had completed the comparison, it might have read something like this: “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all men sinned; so also by one man, Jesus Christ, righteousness entered into the world, and life through righteousness, so that all, being justified by faith, might be saved.” Philip Schaff has aptly observed that “the Apostle might have spared the commentators a great deal of trouble, if he had, according to the ordinary rules of composition, first stated the comparison in full, and then given the explanations and qualifications; but such grammatical difficulties in the Scriptures are generally overruled for a profounder investigation and elucidation of the sense” (editorial note in Lange’s *Commentary* [Scribner’s, 1870], on Rom. 5:12).

In this passage the main points of comparison that Paul is emphasizing are that as sin and death, as a principle and power, proceeded from Adam to the whole human race, so righteousness and life, as a counteracting and conquering principle and power, proceed from Christ to all mankind. And as death has been passed on to all men who participate in Adam’s sin, so life is passed on to all those who participate in the righteousness of Christ. However, the parallel is not perfect. For though the participation in Adam’s sin is universal, the participation in the righteousness of Christ is limited to believers. All men are sinners, but though the righteousness of Christ is equally universal in power and purpose, not all are believers. Moreover, what Christ has gained is greater than what was lost by Adam (see DA 25).

Sin. Paul here personifies sin. It “reigned unto death” (v. 21), works death in us (ch. 7:13), has dominion over us (ch. 6:14), works all manner of concupiscence (ch. 7:8), deceives and slays the sinner (ch. 7:11).

Compare ch. 5:12, 13, 20, 21 with vs. 15–18. By Adam’s “offence” the principle of “sin” entered the world. “Sin,” in turn, became the fruitful source of innumerable “offences.” Throughout this section a distinction between “sin” as the principle and essence of lawlessness (see on 1 John 3:4) and the concrete acts of sin, here translated “offenses,” may be seen.

Entered into the world. Paul represents sin as coming from the outside into the world of mankind. The term “world” is often used to denote the human race (Rom. 3:19; 11:15; cf. John 3:16, 17). Beyond this Paul does not discuss the origin of evil. The first man violated the law of God, and in this way sin was introduced among men.

Death by sin. Before sin entered, God had warned Adam that death would be the result of sin (Gen. 2:17). After sin, God pronounced the sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).

The Bible speaks of three kinds of death: (1) Spiritual death (see Eph. 2:1; 1 John 3:14). (2) Temporal death, the “first death,” described by Jesus as “sleep” (see John 11:11–14; Rev. 2:10; 12:11). (3) Eternal death, the “second death” (see Matt. 10:28; James 5:20; Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). There has been considerable discussion as to the kind of death that resulted from Adam’s sin, and especially as to the kind of death that was passed on to his posterity (see below under “death passed”). Much of this difficulty has been due to the general misunderstanding as to the nature of death. Paul, however, does not seem to be concerned with such problems in this context. He is simply stating the historical fact that sin entered the world through Adam, and death was the consequence. There was neither sin nor death in this world before the offense of Adam. After that there were both. Therefore, Adam’s transgression was the cause of both. The important contrast is between death as a result of Adam’s sin and life as a result of Christ’s righteousness. Paul’s argument is that the gift of life and the benefits wrought by Christ are far greater than the effects of Adam’s sin. The keynote of this passage is, “grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

Death passed. Gr. *dierchomai*, “to spread,” “to pervade.” The clause may be translated, “death passed throughout upon all men.” The word suggests that death made its way to each member of the human family.

Upon all men. Equivalent to the previous “into the world,” but differs from it as the concrete parts are distinguished from the abstract whole. “Passed throughout” (see above under “death passed”) differs from the previous “entered” as going from house to house differs from entering a city.

This statement that the death pronounced upon Adam has passed upon all men shows that Adam’s sentence (Gen. 2:17) did not refer to the “second death” (see above under “death by sin”; GC 544). The second death cannot be passed on to others, for it comes as a result of the final judgment, of which it is clearly stated that “they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:12, 13). God’s final judgment, and the final sentence of eternal death, are based upon personal, individual responsibility (Rom. 2:6). All men alike go down to the grave, and it is in this respect that all men share the penalty of Adam’s transgression. Life was forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess (see GC 533). It is in this sense that “in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22).

Had it not been for the plan of salvation, the result of Adam’s sin would have been eternal death. But through the provisions of this plan, all the members of Adam’s family, whether good or bad, will be brought forth from their graves (Acts 24:15; cf. 1 Cor. 15:22). At that time it will be clearly seen and acknowledged by all that those who are to be eternally lost are in such a condition solely as a result of their own sin. They will not be able to blame Adam for their condition. Those who have “done good,” who have by faith accepted the righteousness of Christ and made it their own, will come forth to “the

resurrection of life” (John 5:29). “On such the second death hath no power” (Rev. 20:6). Those who have “done evil,” who have rejected the righteousness of Christ, and who have not obtained pardon through repentance and faith will come forth to “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29). These will receive the penalty of transgression, the final “wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23), “the second death” (see GC 544).

For that. Gr. *eph’ hō*. This phrase has been the source of much theological controversy, and has been translated in a variety of ways. It seems clear, however, that the meaning is simply “because,” or “inasmuch as.” In classical Greek the expression usually meant “on condition that,” but this does not seem to represent its NT usage. Compare its use in 2 Cor. 5:4; Phil. 3:12; 4:10.

All have sinned. Literally, “all sinned.” The form of the verb is the same as in ch. 3:23. Paul is not here primarily emphasizing the fact that all men individually have “transgressed” and that for this reason death has been shared by all (see on ch. 5:13). Such an interpretation does not suit the context, since in v. 14 Paul adds that, until Moses, men “had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they not only lost their right to the tree of life, which resulted inevitably in their death and in the passing on of death to their descendants, but by sin also became depraved in nature, thus lessening their strength to resist evil (see PP 61). Thus Adam and Eve passed on to their posterity a tendency to sin and a liability to its punishment, death. By their transgression, sin was introduced as an infectious power in human nature antagonistic to God, and this infection has continued ever since. It is because of this infection of nature, traceable to Adam’s sin, that men must be born again (see on chs. 3:23; 5:1).

On the transmission of a sinful nature from father to son the following should be kept in mind: “It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrong-doing, but they are not punished for the parents’ guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents. By inheritance and example the sons become partakers of the father’s sin. Wrong tendencies, perverted appetites, and debased morals, as well as physical disease and degeneracy, are transmitted as a legacy from father to son, to the third and fourth generation” (PP 306).

13. Until the law. Literally, “until law” (see on ch. 2:12). That is, during the period between Adam and Moses (ch. 5:14). Though in this context “law” clearly refers to the law given in the time of Moses, the article “the” is omitted. All are equally involved in death. Paul seeks to show that there is something else at work besides the guilt of individuals for personal sins. That something is the result and effect of Adam’s fall. All of the descendants of Adam share in the effect of Adam’s fall, because death and the tendency to sin are inherited evils.

Sin was in the world. Paul here states a truth that his readers will not challenge.

Imputed. Gr. *ellogēō*, a different word from the one translated “reckoned,” “counted,” “imputeth” (see on ch. 4:4–6; etc.). In the NT it occurs only here and in Philemon 18, and means, “to set to one’s account.” Its meaning is illustrated in the papyri where two women write to their steward, “Put down to our account everything you expend on the cultivation of the holding.”

Paul does not mean that the Gentiles, who did not possess the written law, were without sin. He has already noted that all, Jew and Gentile, “have sinned, and come short

of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23); and again, in ch. 5:12, that “all have sinned.” Thus the Gentiles were not without sin. They were under obligation to obey the law so far as it had been revealed to them (see on chs. 1:20; 2:14, 15). Sin has been in the world ever since the original transgression of Adam. It may be defined as lack of conformity with the will of God whether in act, disposition, or state.

Paul’s point in this present passage is that whether or not men have had an explicit knowledge of God’s will (ch. 5:14), “all have sinned” and all are involved in the inheritance of death (cf. v. 12). The one act of Adam’s transgression caused sin as a principle and a power to enter this world. Even in the absence of personal transgressions, as in the case of infants, men are subject to death. Paul is emphasizing the universality of sin and death so that by contrast he may emphasize the universality of grace.

14. Death reigned. Paul personifies death as he has previously personified sin (see on v. 12). He points to the universal reign of death as evidence of the sweeping effect of Adam’s sin. And this tyranny of death would have been eternal had it not been for the gospel.

After the similitude. That is, in the same manner as Adam sinned—in the face of an express command. Even though men had but a dim knowledge of God’s will, as revealed to them through nature and conscience (ch. 1:20; see on ch. 2:15), they were under some measure of guilt (Matt. 10:15). But apart from possible degrees of individual guilt, death reigned equally over all. Even infants were under its dominion.

Figure. Gr. *tupos*, “type.” This word is common in the NT, but has been variously translated “form” (Rom. 6:17), “print” (John 20:25), “fashion” (Acts 7:44), “manner” (Acts 23:25), “ensample” (Phil. 3:17), “pattern” (Heb. 8:5). It means basically the impression made by a die. Hence it has come to mean “copy,” “figure,” also “a pattern,” “an example.”

Paul does not go into all the possible implications of what he has said, but focuses simply on his central point, namely, that the effects of Adam’s sin have been passed upon all men. The principle and power of sin and death have been transmitted to all the descendants of Adam. Because his deed affected the whole race, he is a type of the One whose act of righteousness has resulted in the transmission of the principle and power of righteousness and life to all those who are born again into His family (John 1:12, 13).

Was to come. Compare “he that should come” of Matt. 11:3; Luke 7:19. Adam was a type of Christ in that both were representatives of the entire human family. He was the representative and author of fallen humanity. Christ was the representative and author of restored humanity. In view of this, Christ is called “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45), “the second man” (see v. 47; cf. GC 647). However, there is not only a resemblance but also a great difference between the work of the two Adams, as Paul proceeds to explain.

15. Offence. Gr. *paraptōma*. Literally, “a slip sideways,” “a false step,” “a blunder.” It is an appropriate word to use for Adam’s fall from righteousness.

Free gift. Gr. *charisma*, derived from *charis*, “grace” (see on ch. 3:24), and means “an act of grace,” “a gift of grace.” *Charisma* is used for the supernatural powers that are given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:4, 31). Paul is drawing his first contrast between the effect of the sin of Adam and that of the work of Christ. There is no comparison between the fall from righteousness and the gift of grace.

Of one. Literally, “of the one,” that is, of Adam.

Many. Literally, “the many,” which is equivalent to “all,” as shown by the phrase “all men” in v. 18.

Grace. See on ch. 3:24. To Paul, God’s grace is not only His unmerited favor but also the saving power of His love through Jesus Christ.

Gift. Defined as “the gift of righteousness” in v. 17.

By one man. Literally, “by the one man.”

Abounded. Gr. *perisseuō*, “to be over and above.” Compare the use of the word in Rom. 3:7; 1 Cor. 14:12 (“excel”); 2 Cor. 1:5; etc.

Unto many. Literally, “unto the many.” Christ died for the whole human race (2 Cor. 5:14, 15; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). The offer of salvation is made to all men (Matt. 11:28, 29; Mark 16:15; John 7:37; Rev. 22:17). Thus provision has been made to meet all the evils of Adam’s fall, a provision as extensive in its applicability as is the ruin caused by sin.

However, this gift of righteousness is of no avail unless it is accepted by faith (John 3:16), and not all men choose to believe. Though ample provision has been made for the salvation of all, only comparatively few accept the proffered grace (Matt. 22:14). There is no limit in the gift itself but only in man’s willingness to accept it.

16. By one that sinned. Literally, “through one having sinned.” Paul is saying that there is no comparison between “the gift” of Christ and the results of Adam’s sin.

Judgment. Gr. *krima*, “the decision rendered,” “the sentence.” Adam’s sin resulted in the sentence of condemnation.

By one. Literally, “from one.” “One” may be understood as meaning “one man,” thus referring to “the one having sinned,” or it may be understood as referring to “one trespass,” in view of the parallel with “many offences.” Paul’s line of reasoning is clear either way.

Condemnation. Adam had received a specific law: “Thou shalt not eat.” And that law had a penalty attached: “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). His sin, therefore, was a distinct transgression of law, and it was immediately “imputed,” or taken into account (see on Rom. 5:13). The sentence of condemnation was justly pronounced upon him. But the sentence there pronounced upon the first man has extended, in its effects, to all his descendants.

Free gift. Gr. *charisma* “a gift of favor or grace,” from *charis*, “grace” (see on ch. 3:24). The free gift is defined in ch. 5:17 as “the gift of righteousness.”

Of many offences. Literally, “from many offenses.” Adam’s one offense was followed by many offenses, of his and of those who followed him, and each of these offenses was deserving of condemnation. But each was an occasion for a revelation of God’s unmerited favor and forgiveness, and thus the free gift was “from many offenses unto justification,” for those who accepted the gift.

Justification. Gr. *dikaiōma*, generally “an act of righteousness,” “a requirement,” “a decree” (see on ch. 2:26). However, here Paul seems to be using *dikaiōma* for *dikaiōsis*, “justification” (see on ch. 4:25). A possible reason for the use of *dikaiōma* is suggested by the Greek. The words for “gift,” “judgment,” “condemnation,” “free gift,” “offences,” all end in *ma*. It is not unlikely that Paul used *dikaiōma* simply as a literary device.

17. Death reigned. See on v. 14.

Much more. The contrast in this verse is between transgression and grace, death and life, the one Adam and the one Christ.

Receive. Righteousness is a gift of God, and whether it is imputed in justification, or imparted in sanctification, it is a gift to be received through the experience of faith in Jesus Christ. Only those who are willing to acknowledge their own helplessness and need, and in all humility and gratitude to accept righteousness as a gift, shall reign in life.

Shall reign. Having twice mentioned the reign of death, Paul now contrasts reigning in life. The Bible often describes the saints as reigning in the hereafter. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him” (2 Tim. 2:12; cf. Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21; 20:6; 22:5). The plan of redemption restores all that has been lost by sin. When the earth is made new and becomes the eternal home of the saved, God’s original purpose in the creation of the world will have been fulfilled (see GC 674). Man’s lost dominion will have been regained (see PK 682). “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever” (Ps. 37:29).

In life by one. These words emphasize the position that Christ holds as the mediator in the work for man’s redemption. Through His death the believer is justified, and through union with Him from then onward the Christian receives that vitalizing and sanctifying power that transforms his present life and assures him of eternal life to come.

18. Therefore. Gr. *ara oun*, “so then,” indicating the conclusion of the argument. The same Greek phrase occurs in chs. 7:3, 25; 8:12. Paul sums up the comparisons and contrasts of the preceding verses.

The offence of one. Or, “one offense.” Similarly “the righteousness of one” may be translated “one righteousness.”

Judgment came. These words are supplied in the KJV. So also are the words “the free gift came.” In Greek the construction of the verse is extremely concise, boldly stating the parallel and contrasts. The verse may literally be translated, “So then, as through one offense, unto all men, unto condemnation, so also, through one act of righteousness, unto all men, unto justification of life.”

Righteousness. Gr. *dikaiōma*, the same word that is translated “justification” in v. 16 (see comment there). However, here it probably has the meaning, “an act of righteousness,” and is probably equivalent to “the obedience” mentioned in v. 19. The perfect life of Jesus, the obedience even unto death (Phil. 2:8), provided for the justification of all who look to Jesus in faith (see on Rom. 4:8).

Justification of life. Probably meaning justification resulting in life. Compare, “so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life” (v. 21).

19. Disobedience. Gr. *parakoē*, literally, “a hearing amiss.” The word occurs only twice elsewhere in the NT (2 Cor. 10:6; Heb. 2:2). The verb “to disobey” (*parakouō*), occurs in Matt. 18:17 and is translated “neglect to hear.” The suggestion of carelessness implied in this word may point out the first step in Adam’s fall.

Many. Literally, “the many” (see on v. 15).

Were made. Gr. *kathistēmi*. In Titus 1:5 *kathistēmi* is used in the sense of “to appoint,” that is, to an office or position (KJV, “ordain”). This is the most common usage in the NT (see Matt. 24:45; Acts 6:3; 7:10; Heb. 5:1). The basic meaning is “to set down,” and the word is used in classical Greek with the meaning, “to bring to,” such as a

ship to land or a person to another person or to some place. This is its meaning in Acts 17:15. From this comes the meaning “to set down as,” “to make to be,” “to constitute.”

In what sense were men constituted sinners by Adam’s disobedience? The parallelism suggests that they were constituted sinners by Adam’s transgression in a way similar to that by which they are constituted righteous by the obedience of Christ. Since the emphasis in this context is on justification rather than sanctification (Rom. 5:16, 18), Paul’s primary emphasis seems to be that men are constituted righteous by the results of Christ’s redeeming act apart from their own personal efforts (see on ch. 3:28). Likewise, as a result of Adam’s disobedience they became sinners (see on ch. 5:12–14).

However, this thought cannot be separated from the fact that just as Adam’s disobedience resulted in his descendants living lives of transgression (v. 16), so the obedience of Christ results in lives of obedience on the part of all those who live in union with Him by faith. This is Paul’s emphasis in ch. 6.

Obedience. Gr. *hupakoē*. The idea of this word is “submission to what one hears.”

Contrast the word for “disobedience” (*parakoē*), “a neglecting to hear,” or “a refusing to hear” (see above under “disobedience”). For the obedience of Christ see on v. 18.

20. The law. Literally, “law” (see on chs. 2:12; 5:13). It is clear from ch. 5:13, 14 that Paul is thinking of the time of Moses as the occasion when “law” entered. It was at Sinai that God’s laws for the guidance of His people were formally stated, though His moral law of ten commandments was written in Adam’s heart at creation.

Entered. Gr. *pareiserchomai*, literally, “to come in beside.” The word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Gal. 2:4, where it is translated “came in privily.”

Might abound. This was not the primary purpose of law, which was to reveal the standard of righteousness. But because of men’s inherited and cultivated tendency to evil, the effect of law was actually to multiply transgression. Law had this effect because it prohibited certain sinful acts which up to that time had not been recognized as sinful. But when the law was formally stated, to continue these acts became premeditated transgression. Since the law is spiritual and holy and prohibits sinful indulgence, it inevitably excites opposition in rebellious hearts and thus becomes the occasion of stirring up sin and multiplying transgression. If man’s heart were holy, and there were a disposition to do right, law would have no such tendency.

Much more abound. Gr. *hyperperisseuō*, “to abound over and above.” The word occurs only here and in 2 Cor. 7:4. “Abound” and “abounded” earlier in the verse are from the Gr. *pleonazō*, “to be many,” “to multiply.” God permitted sin and allowed it to abound, and then overruled it to bring about the most wonderful display of His glory and grace, so that the benefits of redemption infinitely transcend the evils of the rebellion.

21. Unto death. Rather, “in death,” death being, as it were, the sphere or dominion in which the sovereignty of sin is exercised (cf. vs. 14, 17). Sin reigns over a kingdom of death.

Grace reign. Grace (see on ch. 3:24) is here personified as were sin (see on ch. 5:12) and death (see on v. 14).

Righteousness. That is, Christ’s righteousness imputed in justification and imparted in sanctification (see on chs. 3:31; 4:8).

By Jesus Christ. Paul began this chapter by describing the joy and assurance that come to the believer who has accepted justification by faith in Jesus Christ. This led him to speak of the greatness of God's love and grace in making possible so generous a plan to save undeserving sinners. Then, to magnify God's love and grace as the basis of the Christian's hope and confidence, Paul proceeded to contrast the exceeding abundance and power of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ with the sinfulness and degeneracy of man resulting from Adam's fall. God has made ample provision to meet all the dire results of man's great apostasy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 476; DA 337; MB 27; PP 373; 4T 386

1, 2 2T 509

1-21TM 94

3, 4 3T 416

3-52T 510, 514

5 ML 185; 4T 93; 6T 171; 8T 139

8 MB 76; MH 66, 161; TM 246

9, 10 MB 20

12 GC 533; MYP 69

19 ML 323

20 DA 26; GW 157

3

CHAPTER 6

1 *We may not live in sin, 2 for we are dead unto it, 3 as appeareth by our baptism. 12 Let not sin reign any more, 18 because we have yielded ourselves to the service of righteousness, 23 and for that death is the wages of sin.*

1. What shall we say then? For the use of this clause see on ch. 4:1. In the previous chapter Paul has spoken of the universal degeneracy of man resulting from Adam's fall. But he has assured the believer that, despite man's inherited and cultivated tendencies to do evil, the grace of God is more than sufficient to save him from his sin, to turn transgression into righteousness and death into eternal life. The more sin has abounded, the more God's grace has abounded. Does this imply, Paul inquires, that men might as well go on sinning, so that grace may abound all the more?

Shall we continue? Gr. *epimenō*, meaning primarily, "to remain," "to abide at," or "to abide with" (see 1 Cor. 16:8; Phil. 1:24). It also means "to persevere" (see Rom. 11:23; Col. 1:23). Paul's question is, "Are we to persist in sinning?"

Paul has already alluded to the fact that the doctrine of justification by faith apart from works of law was being misrepresented by enemies as an encouragement to do evil that good may come (see on Rom. 3:8). There was also a danger that even believers might abuse their new-found freedom (Gal. 5:13). Therefore, since such a misunderstanding of righteousness by faith involves so complete a failure to realize God's purpose in His plan for the restoration of man, Paul carefully and vigorously

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 4:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

explains the experience that must follow a genuine experience of justification, namely, sanctification.

2. God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

That are dead to sin. Rather, “who died to sin.” The Greek points to a particular time or event, in this case the believer’s surrender to Christ and his consequent rebirth and justification. Paul’s argument is that to live in sin is inconsistent with having once died to it.

Live any longer therein. It is one thing, because of the weakness of the flesh, to commit an occasional sin. It is quite another to live in sin. To live in sin means that sin is the element in which we live, the moral atmosphere that our souls breathe. Such a life is absolutely incompatible with faith. The faith in Christ that makes possible the justification of the sinner implies an unreserved willingness to do His will and a hatred of all that caused the Saviour such great suffering (see on ch. 3:28, 31). The faith that claims justification but at the same time permits a persistence in the old ways of sin is not faith at all. The evidence that a man is justified, born again, and passed from death unto life is that he now finds delight in obeying God’s law (1 John 2:1–6; cf. Rom. 13:8). “In the new birth the heart is brought into harmony with God, as it is brought into accord with His law. When this mighty change has taken place in the sinner, he has passed from death unto life” (GC 468). It is true that the believer may at times fall into some sin (see 1 John 2:1), but the evidence that a man has been really born of God is that he no longer continues practicing sin (1 John 3:9), or, as Paul describes it, he no longer lives in sin.

3. Know ye not? Literally, “Or are you ignorant?” In other words, “Do you admit the truth of what I am saying, or is it possible that you do not realize all that your baptism involves?”

Baptized into. The phrase thus translated occurs also in 1 Cor. 10:2 (there translated “baptized unto”) with reference to the experience of the Israelites with Moses. As a result of their being under the cloud and passing through the waters of the Red Sea the Israelites were brought into close union with their leader. They “believed the Lord, and his servant Moses” (Ex. 14:31). They had greater confidence in Moses from then on. They trusted him as their deliverer and followed him as their commander. The union of the Christian believer with his divine Saviour is, of course, of a higher order than this. It implies a relationship of such love and implicit trust that the believer is actually changed into the same likeness of goodness and mercy as his Redeemer (see 2 Cor. 3:18; cf. CT 249).

The phrase “into Jesus Christ” means into union with Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the ceremony of immersion alone actually effects this union; baptism is a public proclamation of a spiritual relation with Christ that is entered into before the outward ceremony takes place. Baptism represents the joining of the life of the believer in such close union with the life of Christ that the two become, as it were, one spiritual unity (see 1 Cor. 12:12, 13, 27; Gal. 3:27).

Paul’s conception of union with Christ reveals that his conversion was more than an intellectual change. His personal acceptance of Christ as his Redeemer and Lord led to such a close and absorbing spiritual fellowship that it came to mean little less than an actual identification of will (Gal. 2:20). It is not uncommon in the case of ordinary friendship for two persons to share such unity of purpose that they seem to think and act almost as if they were one. Friendship with Christ is on an even higher level and bound by forces not only human but divine.

Into his death. The meaning of this is given in the verses that follow, especially in vs. 10 and 11, where Paul explains that as Christ died to sin, so the Christian should regard himself as dead to sin. And if by baptism the believer has shown his participation in Christ's death unto sin (v. 10) in his behalf, then surely he cannot continue living in the sin that made that death necessary (v. 2).

In order for the sacrifice of Christ to accomplish salvation for the sinner, the individual believer must knowingly participate in the meaning and in the experience represented by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for his sake. As a public confession of this experience the believer submits to the ceremony of immersion in harmony with the command of Jesus (Matt. 28:19).

4. Are buried. Rather, "were buried." The Gr. *sunthaptō* means, literally, "to bury together." Paul's description of baptism as representing burial is evidence that it was the practice of the early Christians to baptize by immersion (see on Matt. 3:6). If Paul had been referring to one of the other forms of baptism that have become popular in more recent centuries, his symbolism in this verse would have been rather strained, if not pointless.

Baptism. Gr. *baptismos*, from *baptizō*, meaning "to dip," "to immerse" (see on Matt. 3:6).

Into death. This phrase may be connected either with "buried" or with "baptism" (cf. v. 3). The difference is not important. Paul's point is that immersion represents that the believer's death to sin is as real and complete as was Christ's death when He lay in the tomb. And if it is so complete, then surely it should mark the end of the old way of life and the beginning of the new. It is a denial of the meaning and purpose of baptism for the old life of sin to be continued thereafter. As burial (or total immersion) in the baptismal water is followed by total emergence, so death with Christ to sin, which that immersion symbolizes, is to be followed by resurrection with Him to a new way of life.

Was raised. It is important to recognize that baptism symbolizes not only death and burial but also resurrection. The rite points in two directions, back to our death to sin and forward to our new life in Christ. As the death of Christ had the resurrection in view (see ch. 4:25), so also the work of grace does not end with the believer's death to sin. Rather, this death to sin looks forward to a higher, holier, and brighter life. Justification anticipates the Christian's complete sanctification.

Glory. The glory of God represents all the divine perfection and excellence (see on ch. 3:23). It was the attribute of power that was especially manifested in the resurrection of Christ (see Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 1:19, 20). Concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus declared, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40).

Should walk. Literally, "should walk about," implying habitual conduct; hence, "should live" (see Rom. 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:7; 10:3; Eph. 2:10; 4:1).

Life. Gr. *zōē*. Note that Paul does not use the word *bios*, which signifies the manner of life, and is translated "life" or "living" in Mark 12:44; Luke 8:14; 1 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 2:16; etc. *Zōē* denotes the principle of life, and is the word used in Matt. 19:16; Luke 1:75; 12:15; John 1:4; 3:16; 5:26; Rom. 11:15; Rev. 22:1; etc. The conduct of day-by-day living has already been referred to as "walking." When the believer has been born again of the Holy Spirit, he is henceforward animated by a new vital element

(see Rom. 8:9–11). Thus, to “walk in newness of life” is to walk “after the Spirit” (v. 4). Hence, the daily conduct of the Christian will reveal the presence and effect of the Spirit of life (see Col. 3:1–3; 6T 98, 99).

5. *Planted together.* Gr. *sumphutoi*, “grown together.” “Planted together” is not a precise rendering of the Greek word. The idea is to be vitally connected. It is a picture of the vital union that exists between Christ and those who have entered into the intimate fellowship of faith with Him. Compare Christ’s parable of the Vine and the Branches (John 15:1–8). Unless the believer first enters by faith into this vital connection with Christ, it is impossible for him to walk in newness of life, no matter how much he may desire to do so.

We shall be also. The last part of this verse is much shorter in the Greek, as the words in italics in the KJV indicate. Translated literally, it reads, “but also we shall be of the resurrection.” Some have applied this passage primarily to the future resurrection, but this is not indicated by the context. Paul is emphasizing that as the believer shares in the likeness of Christ’s death by himself dying to sin, so he must share in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection by rising to a new life of righteousness. In both these experiences he is showing his vital union with the Saviour.

It is true, of course, that spiritual rebirth and life in the Spirit lead to final resurrection and eternal life. In fact, for those who walk in newness of life, eternal life has in a sense actually begun (see on John 8:51).

6. *Knowing this.* Contrast “Know ye not?” (v. 3). Recognition of the vital union referred to comes from an understanding of the meaning and purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection, as Paul now explains further.

Our old man. That is, our former self in the old corrupt and sinful condition. Paul’s use of this expression elsewhere illuminates his meaning here (see Eph. 4:22, 23; Col. 3:9).

Is crucified. Rather, “was crucified.” The reference is to the experience of the believer when he first accepted Christ, renounced his evil past, and died to sin. Contrasting his former with his present state, Paul felt that he was like another being and had undergone a change as complete as that of death. His old self had passed away. He now was a new man in Christ, and Christ dwelt in him (see 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20).

This passage emphasizes the fact that conversion and rebirth mean more than a mere change of profession and habits of life. They involve a radical change in the inner man, which can be wrought only by the regenerating Spirit of God. The plan for man’s salvation brings not only deliverance from condemnation through acceptance of the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice, it brings also the birth or creation of a new self free from the slavery of sin.

The profound significance of the rite of baptism as here explained is clear evidence that infant baptism in no way fulfills the Lord’s purpose in ordaining this rite. It is the intelligent participation in the meaning of the symbolism that brings to the believer the blessing that was intended. He meditates upon each step in the process and thinks to himself, “Now I am entering into fellowship with Christ in His death. As I am immersed, I am being buried with Christ. As I emerge from the water, I am rising to the new life in Christ.” The ceremony is thus no empty, outward form, but a confirming and transforming experience that is ever remembered as symbolic of the end of the old life of sin and the beginning of the new life of righteousness in union with Christ.

The body of sin. That is, the body as the seat of sin, the body belonging to and ruled by the power of sin, in which the members are instruments of unrighteousness (v. 13). Similar expressions elsewhere are “the body of this death” (ch. 7:24), meaning, “the body that is doomed to die”; “the body of the sins of the flesh” (Col. 2:11), meaning, “the body that is prone to serve its own carnal impulses.” Thus “the body of sin” is equivalent to “our old man.” It represents the body, so far as it is the seat and instrument of sin and the slave of sin. It must be crucified and “destroyed,” so that sin may no longer use it as a slave.

Destroyed. Gr. *katargeō*, the same word used in ch. 3:3, where it is translated “make ... without effect.” Compare the use of the word in chs. 3:31; 4:14. *Katargeō* implies bringing the body of sin to a state of inertness and disability. This does not mean, of course, that the physical body is to be destroyed, but that the body in its relation to sin is to be rendered as thoroughly inert and motionless as if it were dead.

Serve sin. Or, “be enslaved to sin” (see v. 17). To live in sin (v. 2) is to be in bondage to its power. Jesus taught that “whosoever committeth sin is the servant [slave] of sin” (John 8:34), but that the truth can set men free from its bondage (v. 32). It is through the impulses of the flesh that sin exercises its dominion and holds man under its control. Therefore, the old self must be “crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20), so that the believer may be freed from sin’s evil sway.

He that is dead. Literally, “he who has died.” In v. 6 (see comment there) the sinner is represented as a slave. Only death with Christ can release him from his bondage to sin. Paul now illustrates this by pointing to the obvious truth that when a slave dies, he ceases to be subject to the control of his master. So the Christian, when he dies to sin, is free from sin’s control (cf. 1 Peter 4:1).

Freed from sin. Literally, “justified from sin.”

8. If we be dead. Literally, “if we died” (cf. v. 7).

We believe. As Abraham believed that what God had promised “he was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:21; cf. 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:11).

We shall also live. This does not refer primarily to the future life in glory, though this is implied (see on v. 5). Paul is emphasizing that the death which delivers from the bondage of sin is followed by a new life of liberty (vs. 8–11) that is no longer under the dominion of sin but is devoted to the service of a new master (vs. 12–14). Paul is particularly referring to the “newness of life” (v. 4) to be enjoyed by the Christian here on this earth—the life of Christ in the believer (Gal. 2:20) and the life of the believer in Christ (Col. 3:3).

9. Knowing. Our belief that we shall live with Christ is based on our knowledge of the fact that He is alive forevermore (Heb. 7:25).

Dieth no more. Compare Rev. 1:18.

Hath no more dominion. Or, “is no longer master.” It was sin that made Christ subject to the dominion of death, not His own sin but ours. For our sake He voluntarily submitted Himself (see John 10:17, 18). Now that His experience of humiliation is over, He remains forever the conqueror and lord of death.

10. In that he died. Literally, “that which he died,” which may be translated, “the death he died.” Compare, “the life which I now live,” literally, “that which I live” (Gal. 2:20).

Died unto sin. He became “sin for us, who knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). The sin that He bore was not His, but ours (see 1 Peter 2:22, 24). But when Christ humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2:8), the claim upon Him as our sin bearer was satisfied. The purpose for which His voluntary submission was undertaken had been accomplished once for all (see Rom. 3:25, 26).

Once. Gr. *ephapax*, “once for all.” There is no need for the sacrifice to be repeated (see Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10).

In that he liveth. Literally, “that which He lives,” which may be rendered, “the life that He lives.” In the words “he liveth” we have the testimony of one who had seen the Lord. In the blinding light that shone around him on the road to Damascus, Paul recognized a divine presence and asked, “Who art thou, Lord?” Then came the astounding discovery that Jesus, whose followers he was persecuting, was alive (Acts 9:3–9).

Unto God. Christ’s life on earth was also, of course, “unto God.” But Paul seems to be drawing a distinction between Christ’s life on earth, a life of conflict with sin and subjection to death, and His present glorified life, exalted to the right hand of the Father (John 17:5; Acts 7:55). Because He was “made ... to be sin” for our sake (2 Cor. 5:21), Jesus felt “the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute” (DA 753). But now that He has triumphed over sin and death, He once again enjoys uninterrupted communion with the Father and lives “unto God.”

11. Reckon ye. For the purpose of explaining the Christian experience, Paul speaks of a believer as if he consisted of two selves. The old self is now dead, for it has been crucified with Christ (v. 6). The new self is alive, born again of the Holy Spirit (v. 4). Thus Paul can speak of a man as being at the same time dead in relation to sin and alive in relation to God. In addition to this, Paul seems to set a man’s consciousness apart from the old and new selves, so that the believer is able to decide consciously with reference to keeping the old self dead and the new self alive.

Dead. This suggests a continued state of death. As Christ died once for all to sin (see on v. 10), so the believer, once for all united to Christ, must consider himself dead to the dominion of sin forever.

Alive unto God. The believer’s new life belongs wholly to God and must be devoted entirely to His service. As Christ “liveth unto God” (v. 10), so also the Christian lives “unto God” a life that begins on earth in holiness and will continue in heaven in glory and honor and immortality.

Through Jesus Christ. Or, “in Jesus Christ.” The believer’s conformity to the likeness of Christ’s death to sin and His life to God are attained, not merely “through” but “in” Christ Jesus. This experience has been made available to the Christian “through” Christ, but only the believer who is “in” Christ can participate in it.

Our Lord. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this phrase. The meaning is not affected by the omission.

12. Reign. Rather, “go on reigning,” as it has in the past. By using the word “reign” Paul is not implying a comparison between reigning and merely existing, but between reigning and being completely deposed. Believers die with Christ so that sin may no longer have any dominion over them.

Obey it in the lusts. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for omitting the words “it in.” However, the sense is not materially affected. Though our “old man” is

described as crucified with Christ (v. 6), we are still in our “mortal body,” with its earthly desires and cravings. Sin is still a power. If we so allow, sin may still have dominion over us. Being born again of the Holy Spirit does not eradicate the earthly desires of the flesh. However, the experience places us in touch with a higher power by which we may ever successfully resist the attempted domination of sin. But it still rests with us to decide whether we will give our continued allegiance to sin or to Christ.

It is for this reason that we must experience a “fresh conversion” every day (see 1T 699; 7T 44). Our experience of yesterday is not sufficient for today. Though we may have died to sin yesterday, our “old man” may rear his ugly head again today. Only by keeping our old selves continually and completely dead to sin, as represented by our baptism, are we able to live daily unto God. And this experience is possible only through union with Jesus Christ, by a faith in Him that is so real and so constant that like Him we hate sin and love righteousness. Compare COL 331. For Paul’s experience of daily consecration see 1 Cor. 15:31; MH 452, 453; cf. 1 Cor. 9:27.

13. Yield ye. The word “yield” occurs twice in this verse, but the forms in Greek are different. The first implies continuous action, “do not go on yielding,” or “stop yielding.” The second means, “yield yourself once for all” (see also ch. 12:1).

Members. That is, the organs and faculties of the body (see also Rom. 7:5, 23; 6:15; 12:12, 18, 20).

Instruments. Gr. *hopla*. The same word is translated “armour,” or “weapons,” in John 18:3; Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:4. In the NT it seems to be used particularly of weapons of war. Some commentators have seen in this verse a picture of sin and righteousness at war with each other and enlisting supporters in their armies. As sin struggles for the mastery, it calls out an army of the lusts of the flesh and seeks to use the organs and faculties of the body as weapons by which the lusts may re-establish the tyranny of unrighteousness. Others, however, prefer to understand that Paul is simply stating that our members should never be submitted to the direction of sinful desires to accomplish any kind of unrighteous purpose. Compare 2T 454.

Yield yourselves. That is, once for all (see above under “yield ye”).

That are alive. That is, as men raised to new life in Christ (v. 11).

Instruments of righteousness. In thus dedicating his members unto God, the Christian commits himself to strive, by the empowering of God’s Spirit, for the greatest possible perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind, that he may know, love, and serve his Redeemer acceptably (see COL 330).

14. Not have dominion. Or, “not be master.” It is true that sin will tempt and annoy. Nevertheless, it will not have mastery over the true Christian. Therefore, the believer should yield himself with courage to the service of God, for victory over sin is promised him.

Not under the law. Literally, “not under law.” The definite article “the” is not used with either “law” or “grace” (see on ch. 2:12). Paul is not referring here primarily to any law in particular but to law as a principle. His point is that Christians are not under law as a way of salvation, but under grace. Law cannot save a sinner, nor can law put an end to sin or its dominion. Law reveals sin (ch. 3:20), and because of the sinfulness of man, law, as it were, causes transgression to increase (ch. 5:20). Law cannot forgive sin, nor can law provide any power to overcome it. The sinner who seeks to be saved under law will find only condemnation and deeper enslavement to sin. Wherever the principle is held

that man can save himself by his own works, there is no effective barrier against sin (DA 35, 36).

But the Christian does not look for salvation legalistically, as if he could be saved by his own works of obedience (ch. 3:20, 28). He acknowledges that he is a transgressor of the divine law, that in his own strength he is wholly incapable of fulfilling its requirements, that he justly deserves to be under its condemnation, and surrenders himself through faith in Christ to the grace and mercy of God. Then, by the grace of God (see on v. 24), his sinful past is forgiven and he receives divine power to walk in newness of life. When a man is “under law,” despite his best efforts sin continues to have dominion over him, because the law cannot set him free from the power of sin. Under grace, however, the struggle against sin is no longer a forlorn hope, but a certain triumph.

The offer to be under grace, thus to have victory over sin, and the enabling power for the attainment of every virtue, have been extended to every one of the descendants of Adam (John 3:16). But many have blindly or stubbornly chosen to remain under law. Even many who profess an earnest desire to be saved prefer to remain under law, as if they could commend themselves to God and earn salvation by their own obedience to law. Such was the experience of the Jews, and such is the experience of many professed Christians today, who in their pride of self-righteousness are not willing to acknowledge their own helplessness and to surrender themselves wholly to the mercy and transforming grace of God.

Paul is saying that as long as a man is under law he remains also under the dominion of sin, for law cannot save one from either the condemnation or the power of sin. But those who are under grace receive not only release from condemnation (Rom. 8:1) but also power to overcome (ch. 6:4). Thus sin no longer will have dominion over them.

15. *Shall we sin?* See on v. 1. The form of the Greek verb may suggest the occasional act of sin, as compared with the continuing in a life of sin of v. 1. May we indulge ourselves in sin once in a while now that we are not under law but under grace? Paul’s answer is that any indulgence in sin is a return to that bondage to sin from which grace has released the sinner.

To suppose that being under grace means that the believer is now at liberty to disobey the moral law of God with impunity is to misunderstand completely God’s whole purpose in the plan of salvation. It was man’s violation of God’s law in the first place that caused God in His love to offer grace to the sinner. By the grace of God man is released from sin’s rule. How then can anyone conceive it to be right or reasonable deliberately to place himself back in the old bondage? To disobey God’s law is to become once again the servant of sin, for disobedience to divine law is sin (1 John 3:4), and whoever goes on sinning is the servant of sin (John 8:34). To continue in the indulgence of sin after accepting the pardoning and transforming grace of God is to deny the very purpose of that grace. Whoever refuses to allow the grace of God to bring him into more and more perfect obedience to divine law is rejecting grace itself and thereby turning his back on freedom and salvation.

Under the law. Literally, “under law,” as in v. 14 (see comment there).

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

16. *Know ye not?* Paul illustrates his answer to the question raised in v. 15 by referring to the customs of slavery, with which his readers could not but be familiar.

Servants. Gr. *douloi*, “slaves,” “bond servants.” Among the Greeks and Romans a slave was regarded as his master’s property, and his owner could dispose of him as he pleased. Under a cruel master the lot of the slave was most oppressive, and he was sometimes treated worse than a beast. Such is the condition of every miserable sinner. He is the slave of Satan, and his own evil desires and appetites are his relentless taskmasters (v. 12).

Paul uses the same word “slave” to describe the servants of Christ (see on ch. 1:1). By this he makes it clear that they are indeed their Master’s property. But since Christ is infinitely good and benevolent, His service is actually perfect freedom, for He requires no obedience that He does not turn to the eternal advantage of His servants.

His servants ye are. We show by our conduct which master we are serving. No man can serve two masters at the same time (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; cf. John 8:34).

Unto death. That is, leading to death.

Obedience. That is, of course, obedience to God, as implied by the context. Such obedience is the obedience of faith (see on ch. 1:5; cf. ch. 16:26).

Righteousness. Here, perhaps, meaning right character. Acts of obedience lead to habits of obedience, and such habits make up a right character.

17. God be thanked. Literally, “thanks to God.” Compare ch. 7:25, where the Greek phrase is the same.

Ye were the servants. This very literal translation of the Greek makes it appear that Paul is thanking God that the Roman Christians had been in slavery to sin. This is obviously not the case. Rather, the apostle is thankful that *although* they had once been slaves of sin, they have now become obedient. It should be an occasion of great joy and thanksgiving when sinners are won to obedience (see Luke 15:7, 23, 24). If we placed as high a value on the human soul as Heaven does, there would be more rejoicing among us when the lost are found and brought to Christ.

Ye have obeyed. Or, “you became obedient,” or “you have become obedient.”

From the heart. This is the type of obedience that springs from faith in Christ. It is the response of love and trust. It is obedience under grace as opposed to legalistic obedience. It is not forced, but willing and sincere.

Form of doctrine. Literally, “type of teaching.” For a definition of “form,” or “type” (*tupos*), see on ch. 5:14. The meaning that seems most appropriate in this context is that of “pattern,” “example” (cf. Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7). Paul is speaking of the standard, or pattern, of Christian faith and duty in which the believers had been instructed.

Which was delivered you. Literally, “to which you were delivered.” It might seem more normal to speak of a form of doctrine being delivered to the believers (see 2 Peter 2:21; Jude 3). But Paul may be continuing his picture of the transference of the sinner to a new master. Believers, who were once slaves of sin, have now become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which they were committed.

18. Being ... made free. Literally, “having been freed,” or “having been set free,” that is, delivered from the dominion of sin.

Became the servants. Or, “were enslaved.” Conversion means a change of masters. The believer is released from slavery to the tyrant sin and becomes a slave of righteousness. But slavery to righteousness is actually real freedom. Those who serve sin and Satan are the slaves of their own impulses and passions, which in turn are under the

control of the wicked one. In calling men to serve righteousness, God is offering them freedom. “Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse” (MH 131).

19. Manner of men. That is, in familiar human terms. Compare Rom. 3:5; Gal. 3:15. He evidently felt that the figures of slavery and bondage were unworthy to describe the relation of a Christian to his Master, for they might suggest a forced, mechanical service.

Infirmity of your flesh. Or, “your human frailty.” “Infirmity” means “weakness,” “feebleness.” “Flesh” represents human nature in its physical, mental, and spiritual weakness. Paul seems to be explaining that he chose to draw his illustration from common life out of consideration for a lack of spiritual discernment on the part of the believers (cf. Heb. 5:11–14). He would perhaps have preferred to describe the Christian’s relation to Christ in a more abstract and strictly spiritual way, but like any good teacher, he used the illustration that was best adapted to the background and abilities of his students.

Servants to uncleanness. That is, slaves to impurity. The apparently free pleasure that came with sin was in actuality a hard bondage.

Iniquity. Gr. *anomia*, “lawlessness.” This is John’s definition of sin (see on 1 John 3:4). “Impurity” and “lawlessness” appropriately describe the characteristic features of paganism (see Rom. 1:24–32; 1 Peter 4:3, 4).

Unto iniquity. Subjecting the members of the body to “impurity” and “lawlessness” results in the habitual practice of “lawlessness.” Indulgence in sin is punished by abandonment to sin (see ch. 1:24, 26, 28). Contrast the effect of righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

Servants to righteousness. See on v. 18. Paul is urging the believers to devote themselves as fully to the life of righteousness as they had previously devoted themselves to the life of sin.

Holiness. Gr. *hagiasmos*, frequently translated “sanctification” (1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). *Hagiasmos* is used to describe both the process by which holiness is obtained and the resultant state of sanctification. The latter condition is also denoted by the Gr. *hagiōsunē*, used in Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 3:13. Both terms are based on the Gr. *hagios*, “holy.” Here *hagiasmos* probably denotes the progressive work of sanctification.

Sanctification is a continuous process of consecration (see Eph. 4:12–15; 2 Peter 1:5–10). It is the harmonious development day by day of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers, until the image of God, in which we were originally created, is restored in us (see Ed 15, 16; GC 470; CD 57). God’s purpose in the plan of salvation is not only our forgiveness, or justification, but our restoration, or sanctification. It is God’s purpose to people the new earth with transformed saints. And it is to this experience and process of transformation that the apostle Paul is urging the believers to devote themselves—body, mind, and soul.

20. Servants of sin. See on v. 6; cf. on vs. 17–19.

Free from righteousness. That is, free so far as righteousness was concerned. This does not mean that they were free from the claims of righteousness, but that they were entirely devoted to sin as were the antediluvians (Gen. 6:5).

21. Fruit. For the meaning and usage of this term see on ch. 1:13.

Had ye. Rather, “were you having.” The Greek denotes continuance.

Then. That is, at that time.

The Greek introduces the passage with “therefore,” which, however, is omitted in the KJV. The “therefore” refers back to the slavery to sin mentioned in the previous verse. The passage may be rendered: “Therefore, what fruit were you having at that time, namely, during your service of sin?”

It is possible to end the question with the word “then” and regard “those things whereof ye are now ashamed,” as the answer. The rendering of the KJV provides no stated answer, but clearly implies that they had no fruit, at least no good fruit. The latter construction is, perhaps, to be preferred.

Death. See on v. 23.

22. Free from sin. That is, from bondage to sin (see on v. 18).

Become servants. Or, “become enslaved.” The same Greek word being used as in v. 18 (see comment there). Paul was not ashamed to call himself the slave of Christ (see on ch. 1:1). However, in our service to God we do not obey Him because we are under bondage, but because we love Him (John 14:15), and God in turn does not actually treat us as slaves but as sons (Gal. 4:7).

Unto holiness. See on v. 19. He who is a “slave” of God brings forth permanent and highly desirable fruit, namely, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Such service means the development of all the powers of mind, body, and soul (Rom. 12:1, 2), and results in eternal life (see chs. 2:7; 5:21).

Everlasting life. See on Rom. 6:23; cf. Matt. 25:46.

23. Wages. Gr. *opsōnia*. This is not the common word in the NT for “pay,” “wages,” “reward,” which is *misthos* (see Luke 10:7; John 4:36; Rom. 4:4; etc., where *misthos* is used). *Opsōnia* comes from a word meaning “cooked food,” especially meat or fish, joined to another word meaning “to buy.” Hence it came to mean “provisions,” “allowance,” “ration money,” such as “rations” given to soldiers (see Luke 3:14; 1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Cor. 11:8). Later it was used for wages, or salary, generally. It is possible, though not certain, that Paul is continuing the figure of military service (see on Rom. 6:13).

Death. Sin pays its slaves exactly what they have earned. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Eze. 18:4). Since death is here contrasted with eternal life, Paul is referring particularly to eternal death, the “second death” (Rev. 20:6, 14, 15; cf. GC 544; EW 51). In the final destruction, sinners will be treated as they deserve. They have rejected God’s offer of grace and eternal life and will receive the results of their own deliberate choice (see on Rom. 2:6; see DA 763, 764).

Gift. Gr. *charisma*, the same word previously translated “free gift” (see on ch. 5:15). “Gift” stands in sharp contrast to “wages.” What the Christian receives is represented as a gift of God’s free grace. Even the service and obedience that the justified and reborn believer is able to render to God are not due to his own virtue but are the fruit of the Holy Spirit, whom God has sent to dwell in him. None of us can earn salvation. None of us deserves redemption. We are saved by grace through faith as “the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). See on Matt. 20:15.

Eternal life. The gift of everlasting life, which Adam and Eve forfeited by their transgression (see on ch. 5:12), will be restored to all those who are willing to receive it

and prepare themselves for it by devoting their lives to God's service (Rom. 2:7; 6:22; cf. Rev. 21:4; 22:2, 3).

Through Jesus Christ. Or, "in Jesus Christ" (see on Rom. 6:11; cf. 2 Tim. 1:1). Christ is the "resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). He is the author of life, who gives everlasting life to all who have faith in Him (John 6:40). God's gift of eternal life is not only bestowed through Christ, but it is in Christ, its abiding source, and can be received only through union with Him, who is "our life" (Col. 3:4; cf. DA 786, 787).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 2 GC 468
- 4 CT 258; Ev 307, 372; EW 217; GC 461; 1T 20; 3T 365; 9T 20
- 5 6T 98
- 11 TM 147; 5T 436
- 12 Te 183; 2T 381; 4T 33
- 12, 13 2T 454
- 13 AH 128; MYP 55; 5T 116
- 15 4T 295
- 16 MYP 114; SL 92; 1T 404; 2T 442; 4T 105, 453, 607
- 16–183T 82
- 22 CT 329; 1T 289; 2T 239, 488, 551; 3T 538
- 23 AA 519; EW 220; FE 234, 376; GC 503, 540, 544; MM 180; PP 61, 70, 341, 741; 1T 543; 2T 210, 286, 289; 3T 365, 475; 4T 11, 31, 363; 5T 730

CHAPTER 7

1 *No law hath power over a man longer than he liveth. 4 But we are dead to the law. 7 Yet is not the law sin, 12 but holy, just, good, 16 as I acknowledge, who am grieved because I cannot keep it.*

1. Know ye not? Literally, "or are you ignorant?" (see on ch. 6:3). The "or" suggests an alternative. Paul says, in effect, "Either you admit the truth of my assertion that your death to sin [ch. 6:11] means that you are no longer under law [ch. 6:14], or else you must be ignorant of the nature of law, with which I had assumed you were well familiar." He presents another illustration to show how the transition from law to grace is effected and what the results of this change should be. Chapter 7 is based upon his fundamental statement, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (ch. 6:14). To explain this, he has already referred to baptism and to the relationship between slaves and their masters. Now he draws an illustration from the law of marriage.

Know the law. Literally, "know law." The absence of the article "the" before "law" suggests that Paul is referring to the principle of law in general (see on ch. 2:12). His point is simply that the law cannot prosecute or punish a man after he is dead. In the context of this chapter, however, it later becomes apparent that Paul is thinking especially of the law of the OT (see ch. 7:7).

Hath dominion. Paul has previously personified "death" and "sin" as "having dominion," or "ruling," over a sinner (chs. 5:14, 17; 6:12). To Paul, being under the dominion of law is equivalent to being under the dominion of sin (see on ch. 6:14). The reason for this is that law merely reveals the standard of right. It cannot remove the guilt or the dominion of sin. It requires complete obedience to its precepts, but offers the sinner no enabling power for obedience. Grace, on the other hand, does the things that law is powerless to perform. It both cancels the guilt of sin and imparts power to

overcome it. Thus Paul regards being under law as being under sin, and dying to law as the equivalent of dying to sin. His purpose in this chapter is to emphasize that, because of sin and the weakness of sinful flesh (ch. 8:3), law is wholly incapable of bringing salvation to the sinner.

Man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, “mankind” in general (see Matt. 8:20; Mark 2:27; etc.), or a person of either sex (see Matt. 15:11; John 3:4; 16:21; etc.). The word for “man” as distinguished from the word for “woman” is *anēr* (Mark 10:2; Luke 1:27; etc.).

He liveth. It is possible to translate the Greek “it lives,” thus meaning, “as long as the law is in force.” However, “he lives” is the more natural rendering and more appropriate to the context. Paul is preparing to apply to the law the principle that law can press its claim against a man only as long as he lives.

2. Which hath an husband. Gr. *hupandros*, literally, “under a husband,” that is, subject to a husband. This word occurs only here in the NT. It is found in the LXX in Num. 5:20, 29; Prov. 6:24, 29. It may be translated “a married woman.”

Is bound by the law. Literally, “has been bound by law.”

He liveth. The clause reads literally, “to the living husband.” Compare 1 Cor. 7:39.

If the husband be dead. Rather, “if the husband dies.”

Loosed. Gr. *katargeō* (see on ch. 3:3). Here the definition “to discharge from” is appropriate. On the death of her husband the woman’s status as a wife is annulled and abolished.

The law of her husband. That is, the law concerning the husband, the rules of law that deal with marriage. Compare the phrase “the law of the leper” (Lev. 14:2). When the husband dies, the wife is released from “the law of the husband,” which defines her legal connection with him and forbids her marriage to another so long as the husband is living.

3. Called. Gr. *chrēmatizō*, which may suggest that the woman is formally named or regarded as an adulteress. Thus she would be subject to the most severe punishment under OT law (see Lev. 20:10).

That law. That is, the law of her husband (see on v. 2).

4. Wherefore. Paul now applies the illustration from marriage law to the experience of the Christian. His major point is that death dissolves legal obligation. Therefore, as death frees the wife from the claims of the marriage law, so that she may properly marry another, so the Christian’s crucifixion with Christ releases him from the dominion of sin and law, so that he may enter into a new spiritual union with the risen Saviour.

Are become dead. Literally, “were put to death,” referring to the crucifixion of the “old man” with Christ (ch. 6:6). In the illustration it was the death of the husband that freed the wife from the law. In the application it is the death of the old sinful self that releases the believer from the condemnation and dominion of the law and frees him to be joined to Christ. As in ch. 6, Paul is viewing the Christian as if he had a double life, the old sin-condemned life, which he lays down with Christ, and the new life of acceptance and holiness, to which he rises with Christ (see on v. 11).

To the law. The death of the old man results in release from the self-imposed bondage of attempting to secure salvation by works of law (see on ch. 6:14).

By the body of Christ. Literally, “through the body of Christ,” that is, through the sacrificial death of Christ (see Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:22; 1 Peter 2:24). Into this death the

believer is baptized (Rom. 6:4), and by thus participating in Christ's death to sin and law, as explained in ch. 6, the believer may regard his old self as dead to the things to which he once was captive. The one accepting Christ takes his place, as it were, with Christ upon the cross, and there has his old self crucified.

Be married to another. Literally, "be to another," though "be married" is evidently the correct meaning in this context. The comparison of the union between Christ and believers, to a marriage, is not unfamiliar to Paul (see 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25, 28, 29; cf. Jer. 3:14).

Even to him. That is, to Christ.

Bring forth fruit. The symbolism of this chapter closely parallels that of ch. 6. The "old man" is the first husband. The crucifixion of the "old man" (ch. 6:6) is the death of the husband. The resurrection to new life (ch. 6:5, 11) is the remarriage. In each case the final outcome is the bearing of fruit unto God, the fruit of a reformed life (ch. 6:22).

5. In the flesh. That is, united to the old self, in the body of sin (ch. 6:6), obeying the impulses of the lower nature. The phrase describes the unregenerate life, of which the chief object is the gratification of the appetites and senses. It is to be contrasted with life "in the Spirit" (ch. 8:9).

The motions of sins. Rather, "the passions of sins." In earlier English, "motions" was sometimes used for "impulses" or "emotions."

By the law. Literally, "through the law." What Paul means by this he explains in the verses to follow. His point is not that the law is the source of these sinful passions, but that, because of man's sinful and rebellious nature, the law has served to reveal (v. 7) such passions, identifying them *as* sin. In doing this, the law performs a vital service preliminary to the salvation of sinners, and it is a great mistake to blame or condemn the law for accomplishing this necessary purpose.

Paul does not in any way minimize the need or importance of the moral law. On the contrary, his gospel actually serves to exalt the law. One of his chief concerns is that men shall understand the correct relationship that exists between the law and the gospel, and his great message is that sinners must not rely on law—not even on the law of God—to accomplish for them what can be performed only by the justifying and sanctifying grace of God through Jesus Christ. An understanding of this fundamental truth of salvation does not lessen respect for God's law; rather, it has precisely the opposite effect upon those who have faith (see on ch. 3:31).

Did work. Or, "were active." Contrast their state of inactivity in the reborn Christian (see ch. 6:6).

In our members. That is, in the organs and faculties of our bodies (see on ch. 6:13).

Bring forth fruit. Compare James 1:15.

6. Delivered. Gr. *katargeō* (see on ch. 3:3). The word is used in ch. 7:2 to describe the loosing of the wife from the law of her husband. "Delivered from the law" is equivalent to not being "under the law," for the meaning of which see on ch. 6:14.

That being dead. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the following reading of the passage: "having died [to that] wherein we were held." The reading of the KJV is found in the Textus Receptus (see Vol. V, p. 142) but not in any manuscript. This reading has seemed to give support to the idea that under the gospel the law is dead. Paul is simply restating the means by which we are discharged from the law. It is accomplished by the death of the old sinful man (v. 4), in the same way as the death of the husband gave

freedom to the wife (v. 2). When our old man is crucified with Christ (ch. 6:6), we ourselves, like the wife in the figure, die to the law (ch. 7:4), which formerly exercised oppressive dominion over us because of the unhappy union between ourselves and our old sinful nature (see on ch. 6:14).

That we should serve. Or, “so that we serve.” The clause may be understood as expressing either purpose (cf. v. 4) or result (cf. ch. 6:22).

In newness of spirit. Believers who have died to sin and risen to newness of life (ch. 6:2, 4) now render a service that is new and spiritual. Their obedience to God’s law is no longer legalistic and mechanical, as if righteousness consisted merely of compliance with a set of external rules of conduct, without any reference to the condition of the heart. Through union with the risen Saviour believers have learned a new way of true, heartfelt, spiritual obedience. Such service and worship is possible only to those who have been born again of the Holy Spirit and live under His influence. Paul explains this further in ch. 8.

In the oldness of the letter. Literally, “in oldness of letter.” This describes the legalistic obedience of those who attempt to secure salvation by works of law. Such was the service of the Pharisees, who were careful to “pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin” but at the same time omitted the “weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith” (see on Matt. 23:23). These “weightier matters” were matters of the heart and spirit. Service “in oldness of letter” can lead only to sin and death (Rom. 7:5). But the gospel brings God’s offer to make men capable of spiritual service from the heart. To be born again of the Holy Spirit means the creation of a clean heart and the renewal of a right spirit (see Ps. 51:10), so that from henceforth the believer no longer serves God from a sense of legal bondage and fear, but in a new spirit of freedom and love (see John 4:23; 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6).

7. *What shall we say then?* A characteristic phrase (see on ch. 4:1). Paul prepares to meet another possible misunderstanding regarding what he has said about the relationship between law and sin.

Is the law sin? Paul has stated (v. 5) that sin makes use of the law to bring about the destruction of the sinner. Does this mean that the law itself is a sinful thing, whose only purpose is to make men worse than they were before? Paul replies by explaining that the evil is not in the law but in man. Though it is true that the law is the “occasion” of sin (v. 8), nevertheless the law itself is “holy, and just, and good” (v. 12).

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

Nay. Gr. *alla*, generally translated “but,” here possibly the equivalent of “on the contrary” (see 1 Cor. 12:22). That is, far from the law being sin, on the contrary, it exposes sin. *Alla* may also be understood to mean “yet,” “nevertheless” (see Rom. 5:14). That is, even though it be emphatically denied that the law is sin, nevertheless, but for the law, I would not have known sin. Either interpretation is appropriate to Paul’s argument.

I had not known sin. Since sin is “lawlessness,” or “disobedience to law” (see on 1 John 3:4), it is only logical that the effect of law in a man’s experience should be to reveal his sin to him in its true nature. The illogical attitude toward law is to regard it as an enemy for having made this truthful exposure. A mirror is not an enemy to a homely person because it reveals to him his homeliness. Nor is a physician an enemy to someone who is sick because he discloses to him his sickness. The doctor is not the cause of the sickness, nor is the mirror the cause of the homeliness. Likewise God is not the cause of

the sickness and ugliness of our sin because He shows it to us in the mirror of His holy law and by the divine Physician, who came to reveal and to heal our sinfulness.

By the law. Literally, “through law” (see on ch. 2:12).

Lust. Gr. *epithumia*, “desire,” “longing,” sometimes, for proper things (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), but usually for forbidden things (Rom. 13:14; James 1:14, 15; etc.). The word for “covet” later in the verse is *epithumeō*, the verb form of *epithumia*. The relationship between the two words may be illustrated by the following translation: “I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet.” See further on Rom. 7:8, where *epithumia* is translated “concupiscence.”

The law had said. A reference to the tenth commandment (Ex. 20:17).

Thou shalt not covet. It is significant that Paul selected the tenth commandment, for it is not merely a sample of the rest, it contains the principle that underlies all sin (see PP 309). His use of this commandment in such a context reveals a deeper meaning to it than the mere words literally express. He saw in it the prohibition not only of desire for the certain things specifically mentioned in the commandment but also of desire for anything divinely forbidden. In other words, the law prohibits any kind of selfish and sinful desire, and it was this that Paul would not have known “but by the law.” He discovered that true obedience to the commandments of God was not a mere outward conformity to the letter of law but a matter of the mind, heart, and spirit (v. 14; cf. ch. 2:29). Conversely, sin is not the mere external breach of the letter of the law, but is a deep-seated condition of mind, mood, habit, and character, from which spring the sinful acts (see Matt. 5:28; 1 John 3:15). However, the initial effect of this profound discovery on Paul’s unregenerate heart was to stir up his corrupt nature to sinful opposition (Rom. 7:8).

8. Sin. Paul personifies sin as a principle and power antagonistic to the law of God (see on ch. 5:12). Sin is represented in the NT as an enemy that is ever seeking to bring about our ruin and takes every occasion to accomplish it. It is described as surrounding and besetting us (Heb. 12:1), bringing us into bondage (Rom. 6:12), enticing us, and thus working our death (James 1:14, 15). In other words, sin is represented as doing all that Satan, the archenemy of mankind, is trying to accomplish by tempting us to commit sin. For the manner in which Satan uses the law as an occasion for tempting and alluring mankind to disobedience, so that men may thereby become subject to condemnation and death, see on Rom. 7:11.

Occasion. Gr. *aphormē*, “opportunity,” “incentive.” The word is used only by Paul in the NT (Rom. 7:11; 2 Cor. 5:12; 11:12; Gal. 5:13; 1 Tim. 5:14).

Commandment. A single precept, in this case the tenth commandment as contrasted with “law,” which refers to the entire code.

The phrase “by the commandment” may be connected with “taking occasion,” meaning that sin took advantage of the commandment (as in KJV). Or it may be connected with “wrought in me,” meaning that sin wrought in me by the help of the commandment. The second may be compared with “working death in me by that which is good” (v. 13). In either case, the meaning is much the same.

Wrought. Gr. *katergazomai*, “to work out to a finish,” “to accomplish” (see also Rom. 2:9; 1 Cor. 5:3; 2 Cor. 7:10). It is used of working out both evil and good (see Rom. 7:15, 17, 18, 20).

Concupiscence. Gr. *epithumia*, translated “lust” in v. 7 (see comment there). Paul is saying that the command not to covet made him covet all the more. Such is the natural reaction of the unregenerate heart to the express will of God. The fact that something has been forbidden often seems to make it appear all the more desirable, and provokes the evil passions of a rebellious heart (see Prov. 9:17).

A sinner may often appear to be calm and tranquil, at peace with himself and the world, but when the law of God is brought home to his conscience, he not infrequently becomes irritated and even enraged. He spurns its authority, yet his conscience tells him it is right. He attempts to throw it off, yet he trembles at its power. And to show his independence and his determination to sin, he plunges into iniquity and becomes a more wicked and obstinate sinner. It becomes a struggle for victory, and in the controversy with God he resolves not to be overcome. Accordingly it often happens that a man is more profane, blasphemous, and desperate when under conviction of sin than at other times. Thus it may sometimes be a clear indication that a man is under such conviction when he becomes particularly violent and abusive in his opposition to God.

Compare Paul’s own former experience in resisting the will of God as revealed to him. After the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul was angered by his secret conviction that Stephen was in the right, and in order to quench the growing conviction, he plunged himself with frenzied zeal into a campaign of persecution, terror, and death (see AA 112, 113). He sought to “kick against the pricks” of conviction and enlightened conscience (Acts 26:14). His prejudice and his pride of popularity caused him to rebel against God until he became an instrument in the hands of Satan (see AA 101, 102). Thus did the revelation of the will of God stir up Paul’s sinful nature to still greater sin, until at last he was brought to the place where he was willing to acknowledge his sinfulness and his need of a Saviour (Acts 9:6; see AA 119).

Paul’s experience is a clear illustration of the fact that the law is not able to root out rebelliousness and sin. Its effect may be quite the contrary. It was only when Paul came face to face with Christ that he found freedom from sin’s power and condemnation.

Without the law. Literally, “without law,” or “apart from law” (see on ch. 2:12).

Sin was dead. The supplied verb should probably be “is” rather than “was,” since Paul is apparently stating a general principle. He has already implied the idea that sin is “dead” apart from law (chs. 4:15; 5:13). By “dead” he evidently does not mean nonexistent, but inactive, lifeless. Compare “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). Sin has reigned ever since Adam’s transgression (Rom. 5:12, 21), but the complete virulence and power of sin stand exposed only when the law enters with its restrictions and prohibitions. Then sin is shown to be rebellion against the will of God, and unregenerate human nature is stirred to sinful opposition and activity.

9. For I was alive. Paul refers to his own past experience, but in this he represents the experience of all who are unconverted and are depending on their own righteousness.

Without the law once. The period in his earlier life to which Paul is here referring has been the subject of much discussion. It seems evident from the context, however, that he is speaking of the time before he became aware of the real nature and spirituality and extent of the divine law. It was a period during which he deemed himself to be righteous, and, as far as outward acts were concerned, he appeared to be obeying the law. But it was a legalistic righteousness, such as the rich young ruler boasted of, when brought face to face with the commandments: “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack

I yet?" (Matt. 19:20). Likewise, Paul could claim that as "touching the righteousness which is in the law" he was "blameless" (Phil. 3:6; cf. Acts 26:5). Compare the boastful, self-righteous prayer of the Pharisee (Luke 18:11, 12). But when Paul discerned the spiritual character of the law, sin appeared in its true hideousness. He saw himself a transgressor, and his self-esteem was gone (see SC 29, 30).

When the commandment came. That is, when the spiritual significance of the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet" (v. 7), was brought home to his mind and conscience. Paul saw in this prohibition of all sinful desire the spirit of the whole law, and when it came to him as the word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12), his self-righteous complacency was suddenly shattered.

Sin revived. Literally, "sin came back to life." Paul does not mean that prior to the time "when the commandment came," sin—here personified as a loathsome creature—had been inactive in his life, but that he had not realized either its true nature or its fatal consequences (v. 13). In fact, sin had been unopposed in its control over his life (v. 5). But the coming of "the commandment" challenged the presence of sin and its right to control his life. Sin now roused itself to maintain its disputed authority. In all its malignancy and strength it appeared in its true character—that of a deceiver, an enemy, and a murderer.

When or how Paul first began to feel the condemning power of the law he does not say. However, we know enough about his earlier years to have some knowledge of his experience with the law prior to his conversion. As a well-trained Pharisee, living according to the strictest sect of his religion, he had attempted with intense but unavailing effort to satisfy by outward observance the demands of a holy and heart-searching law. But the serenity and forgiving love displayed by Stephen at his martyrdom deeply stirred Paul's mind and awakened his conscience to some awareness that obedience to the law was more than a matter of the letter only (see on v. 8).

I died. When Paul came to understand the spiritual nature of the law, the new knowledge served only to accuse him as a transgressor and to provoke him to all kinds of evil desire (v. 8). Thus Paul became consciously and in the fullest sense a sinner, and discovered that he had no hope of life (see ch. 6:21, 23).

10. And the commandment. This verse reads literally, "The commandment the one for life, this was found for me unto death."

Ordained to life. The promise of life accompanied the giving of God's laws to Israel (Lev. 18:5; Deut. 5:33; Eze. 18:9, 21; 20:11, 13, 21; cf. Matt. 19:17). There is nothing arbitrary about this. God's laws for our physical, mental, and spiritual welfare are all given for our best good. Life and prosperity, both in the present age and in the ages to come, depend upon perfect compliance with God's immutable laws.

I found. Literally, "this was found for me." That is, the commandment was found. The repetition of the subject by the word "this," omitted in the KJV, adds emphasis to the strange inconsistency expressed in this verse. The very commandment, on the observance of which Paul was relying for salvation, he at last learned could only condemn him to death.

This is a key verse in Paul's argument that sinners must not depend on law for salvation. Paul has clearly explained, and is now illustrating from his own experience, that self-righteous reliance upon the law is a serious misunderstanding of the law itself and can lead only to the surprising discovery expressed in this verse. The law of God

presents a high spiritual standard to which no sinful mortal can possibly attain by his own unaided efforts. He stands before it only in guilt and condemnation. But happy is the man who, thus realizing his helplessness and need, turns to the Saviour, in whom alone can righteousness and salvation be found (Gal. 3:24).

The great error of many Jews was their misconception of the function of law in a sinful world. In their pride of self-righteousness they were unwilling to acknowledge their guilt before the law and their inability to live up to its precepts. Consequently, they saw no need of the Saviour. They devoted themselves to the diligent study of the Scriptures, believing that in the law they would find life—not condemnation. They would not come to Christ that they might have righteousness and life (see John 5:39, 40). See on Eze. 16:60.

Unto death. By the law Paul gained a knowledge of sin (vs. 7–9; cf. ch. 3:20), and “the wages of sin is death” (ch. 6:23).

11. For sin. The “for” introduces an explanation of v. 10. The first part of the verse is similar to v. 8, but a different word order in Greek gives emphasis to the fact that it was not the commandment but sin that deceived and “slew me.” Sin is again personified, and is represented as exercising the power to tempt and destroy that is normally attributed to Satan.

By the commandment. These words may be connected with “taking occasion,” or with “deceived me” (cf. on v. 8). The following “and by it slew me” may indicate that the second connection is to be preferred. The passage would then read, “For sin, taking occasion, deceived me by the commandment.” The barrier that the law erects against sin is made the occasion for suggesting the commission of sin.

Deceived. Gr. *exapataō*, meaning basically, “to make one lose his way.” It is used in the NT only by Paul (see Rom. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Thess. 2:3). In the Garden of Eden sin took advantage of the commandment, “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Gen. 3:3), to inspire evil desire. As Eve stood before the forbidden tree she questioned why God had withheld its fruit from her (see PP 54). This was Satan’s opportunity, and he used the divine prohibition to beguile Eve into transgression. Sin’s deceit consists in presenting the object of sinful desire as a good thing. However, when obtained, it later proves to be evil (James 1:14, 15; cf. Heb. 3:13, 17). Satan urged that, by partaking of the forbidden fruit, Eve would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and obtain a wider knowledge (see PP 54). In this deceitful manner Satan used the commandment as a provocation to sin. And when his evil purpose had been accomplished, he used the same commandment as a means of condemnation. For not only is Satan man’s tempter; he is also his accuser (Rev. 12:10; cf. Job 1:9–11; 2:4, 5). Thus Eve discovered to her bitter sorrow that what she had once desired as a thing of delight brought her only condemnation and death.

No being in the universe is more deluded than a sinner in indulging in forbidden desire (see Prov. 7:21–23).

By it. That is, by the commandment.

Slew me. Compare “I died” (v. 9). The commandment, though in itself holy and designed to bring life, became the occasion not only of sin but also of death as its consequence. And all this came about through delusion. The thing desired was not really good, but the lust and covetousness inspired by the tempter caused it to seem so. One

great purpose of the transforming power of God's grace is to dispel this destroying delusion, to bring men back to the true view of things, and so to life and peace with God.

12. Wherefore. This introduces a conclusion based on the discussion of vs. 7–11 and an answer to the question in v. 7, “Is the law sin?”

The law. The article appears also in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). As in ch. 7:9, Paul may be using the term “the law” to refer to the whole code, and the term “the commandment” to refer to a specific precept in the law.

Is holy. Far from the law being sin (v. 7), it is holy and pure. As a revelation of the character of its Author and an expression of His mind and will, the law of God could be nothing other than true, righteous, and holy.

The commandment holy. Paul has first asserted the holiness of the whole law. Now he emphasizes more specifically the holiness, justice, and goodness of the commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” The emphasis is probably based on the fact that this particular commandment has been described in vs. 7–11 as being the special occasion for the increased knowledge and activity of sin.

The tenth commandment is holy, for it is an utterance of God's holy will, forbidding all impure and unholy desire. Its holiness is in no way lessened by the fact that it has revealed sin (v. 7) and that it has been used by sin to provoke sinners to still greater transgression (vs. 8, 9), and thus to bring upon them condemnation and death. The fault lies, not with the holy commandment, but with unholy men, who in their weakness and sinfulness are unable to live up to the exalted standard of purity and holiness that the law rightfully demands.

Just. Or, “righteous.” The commandment is just and righteous in its requirements. It sets forth the standard of a righteous character. And, despite the charges of Satan to the contrary, it demands no obedience but such as may be rendered by human beings (see on Matt. 5:48; see AA 531; DA 24, 309). Jesus' own life of obedience maintained the righteousness of the claims of God's law. It proved that the law could be kept, and demonstrated the excellence of character that obedience would develop. All who obey as Jesus did likewise declare that the law is “holy, and just, and good.” On the other hand, all who violate the commandments are sustaining Satan's claim that the law is unjust and cannot be obeyed (see on Rom. 3:26; see DA 29).

Good. Gr. *agathos*, good in a moral sense (cf. on v. 16). The commandment is designed to bring man nothing but life and blessing, both now and throughout eternity (see on v. 10). If obeyed, it will bring righteousness and happiness everywhere (see Ps. 19:7–11).

13. Made death. The first part of the verse reads literally, “Did that which is good, then, become death to me?” In other words, does the blame for my death lie with the good law? Paul answers the question by repeating that the fault was not in the law but in himself and in his sinful inclinations.

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4. The law no more brings death than it brings sin.

But sin. After this phrase the words, “became death to me,” need to be supplied. Paul's argument is clear in the RSV rendering, “Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means It was sin ...”

That it might appear sin. Or, “that it might be manifested as sin,” that is, that it might be seen in its true light as sin.

Working death in me. Or, “working death to me.” The real nature of sin becomes apparent as sin uses that which is good to work evil and death. It takes that which is the revelation of the character and will of God, which is designed to serve as a standard of holiness, and uses it to increase the sin and condemnation of men (vs. 8–11). The purpose of God in allowing sin to work death through the law was that sin, in perverting what is good, should disclose and exhibit itself in all its sinfulness and deceit (see PP 42, 43).

Exceeding sinful. Literally, “sinful according to excess.” The Greek term for “excess” is *hyperbolē*, from which is derived the English word “hyperbole.” Compare Paul’s uses of the term in 1 Cor. 12:31; 2 Cor. 1:8; 4:7, 17; 12:7; Gal. 1:13. The apostle has already explained how the law has served to reveal the enormity of sin.

In Rom. 7:7–13 the law of God is clearly vindicated of any charges that it is responsible for the sin and death that reign so universally among mankind (cf. ch. 5:14, 17). The blame is rightly fixed on sin. And to the extent that men persist in identifying themselves with sin, they share in its guilt and condemnation.

These verses also emphasize Paul’s doctrine that salvation cannot come by the law. The important function of the law is to unmask sin and convict the sinner of the error of his ways, but it cannot weed out a rebellious spirit or pardon a transgression. “The law reveals to man his sins, but it provides no remedy” (GC 467).

These verses further serve to clarify the relationship that exists between the law and the gospel. It is ever the continuing function of the commandments to reveal the standard of righteousness, to convict of sin, and to show the need of a Saviour. If there were no law to convict of sin, the gospel would be powerless, for unless the sinner is convicted of his sin, he feels no need of repentance and of faith in Christ. Thus, to claim that the gospel has abolished the law is not only to misrepresent the place and importance of the law but also to undermine the very purpose and necessity of the gospel and the plan of salvation (see on ch. 3:31).

14. For. Paul now confirms his vindication of the law and his disclosure of the true nature of sin, by a profound analysis of the operation of sin in a man’s personal experience. The meaning of vs. 14–25 has been one of the most discussed problems in the whole epistle. The main questions have been as to whether the description of such intense moral struggle could be autobiographical, and, if so, whether the passage refers to Paul’s experience before or after his conversion. That Paul is speaking of his own personal struggle with sin seems apparent from the simplest meaning of his words (cf. vs. 7–11; SC 19; 3T 475). It is surely also true that he is describing a conflict that is more or less experienced by every soul confronted by and awakened to the spiritual claims of God’s holy law.

More important is the question as to which period in his experience Paul is depicting. Some commentators hold that the description is of Paul’s current experience as a converted Christian. They emphasize the present tense of the verbs and point to expressions that reveal a hatred of sin (vs. 15, 19) and an earnest desire to do good (vs. 15, 19, 21). They argue that an unconverted person would not be capable of saying “I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (v. 22), and “I myself serve the law of God” (v. 25). Other commentators believe that the struggle must have been before his conversion. They argue that such expressions as “I am carnal, sold under sin” (v. 14), “sin that dwelleth in me” (v. 17), “how to perform that which is good I find not” (v. 18), “O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me?” (v. 24), could not possibly refer to

Paul's condition after rebirth. They point out, however, that Paul is not describing his experience at the time he "was alive without the law once," but at the time "the commandment came," "sin revived," and he "died" (see on v. 9). The experience thus described would then be, not that of unregenerate man generally, but of a sinner under deep conviction who is wretched under his load of guilt, and who strives earnestly, but by his own efforts, to bring his life into conformity with the divine requirements. His best efforts end in miserable failure until he finds Christ and experiences the enabling power of the gospel. Such is also the experience of one who, though once converted, fails to take advantage of the provisions of the gospel and strives for purity of life in his own strength, or of the nominal Christian who has never made a full surrender to Christ.

Paul's main purpose in the passage seems to be to show the relationship that exists between the law, the gospel, and the person who has been awakened to earnest struggles against sin in preparation for salvation. Paul's message is that, although the law may serve to precipitate and intensify the struggle, only the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring victory and relief (v. 25; ch. 8). The intensity of the struggle and the time of its beginning vary in the experience of each individual who is brought by the law to a knowledge of sin, and surely every Christian can acknowledge from his own experience that an intense struggle continues on after conversion and rebirth. The life of the apostle Paul himself was "a constant conflict with self. ... His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God" (MH 452, 453). The reality of Paul's struggle is revealed by his words: "I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27, RSV). Likewise, for every converted, reborn, and justified Christian, the process of sanctification involves hard, stern battles with self (COL 331; AA 560, 561). The nearer we come to Christ, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the more earnestly we shall confess the sinfulness of our own nature (see on Eze. 20:43; see Eze. 16:62, 63; COL 160, 161).

Although it is often true that intense moral struggles continue after conversion as day by day the Christian consecrates himself anew (see Luke 9:23–25; 2 Cor. 4:16; 5T 200; 7T 44), we cannot be certain that the apostle here refers to such a struggle. His purpose in his thesis thus far in the epistle has been to show the inadequacy of man in his own strength, by works of law, to attain to righteousness. Those who are under the law he has shown to be in bondage to sin (see on Rom. 6:14). Despite their best efforts, they are unable to perform that which the law requires. They are wretched and miserable until they find Christ. Then the condemnation ceases (ch. 8:1). That which before they were unable to accomplish they can now achieve through the enabling power of Christ (ch. 8:3, 4). They no longer mind the things of the flesh (ch. 8:5), but walk after the Spirit (ch. 8:1).

We know. Paul assumes that the spirituality of the law is acknowledged by his readers (cf. chs. 2:2; 3:19).

The law is spiritual. Paul is summing up and repeating what he has already said in v. 12. He is re-emphasizing the fact that the law is not responsible for the evils of which he has been speaking. The law is spiritual in origin, for it was given by God Himself, and "God is spirit" (John 4:24, RSV). It is spiritual in nature in that it is "holy, and just, and good," and in that it requires an obedience that can be rendered only by those who are spiritual and have the fruits of the Spirit (Matt. 22:37–39; John 15:2; Rom. 13:8, 10; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 3:9).

I am. The change from the past tense in vs. 7–11 to the present tense here and in the remaining verses of the chapter has been regarded by some as evidence that Paul is describing his current experience. Others see in it a simple historical or dramatic present such as occurs in Mark 14:17; Luke 8:49. See above under “for.”

Carnal. That is, made of flesh and blood, denoting human nature in its creaturely weakness (see also 2 Cor. 3:3). This is Paul’s mode of expressing, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). His equivalent of “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6) follows in Rom. 8. In contrast with the spirituality and holiness of the divine law, Paul finds himself a creature of flesh, and hence prone to all the sinfulness and self-indulgence to which his corrupt nature is inclined. Thus, in his desire to obey the spiritual law, he finds himself involved in a continuous warfare with his inherited and cultivated tendencies to sin (ch. 7:23). He calls on believers to crucify the flesh, and declares that he himself kept his body in subjection (1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:24). He also calls on them to live temperately (1 Cor. 10:31) and to offer their bodies to God as holy, living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). He describes the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and calls upon Christians to glorify God in the body (v. 20). He includes the flesh along with the spirit as requiring cleansing (2 Cor. 7:1) and looks forward to the redemption and glorification of the body (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:51–53).

Sold under sin. That is, sold so as to be under the power of sin. Compare “Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness” (1 Kings 21:25; cf. 1 Kings 21:20; Isa. 50:1). The dominion of sin over the flesh may be as complete as that of a master over his purchased slave. There are those who, in view of Paul’s previous statements that the converted Christian is now free from bondage to sin (Rom. 6:18, 22), regard this expression as evidence that the apostle is speaking of his preconversion days, that is, of the time he was under deep conviction but had not yet fully yielded himself to Christ (see on ch. 7:9). Others hold that Paul may be using such emphatic language to express the strength of that depravity against which he was struggling after conversion; that he is trying to show that in obeying the impulses of his carnal nature, he was acting as the slave of another will. He adds later that sin is still dwelling in his flesh (vs. 17, 18) and that even though he has come to the place where he delights in the law of God, he still sees an evil power at work in his members, bringing him into captivity to sin (vs. 22, 23).

In comparison with the spirituality of the law the holiest of men are carnal. His discernment of the holy character of God’s commandments made Paul all the more conscious of his own imperfection. And when he describes himself as “sold under sin,” this intimates how deep his conviction was. Compare the experience of Job, who, though described by the Lord Himself as a perfect and upright man (Job 1:1; 2:3), later confessed, “I am vile,” “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (chs. 40:4; 42:6).

15. For. Paul now explains his experience during the period when he was “sold under sin” (v. 14).

Which I do. The word “do” occurs three times in this verse and is the translation of three different Greek words. In the first instance Paul uses *katēgazomai*, the same word as in v. 8, meaning “to carry into effect,” “to achieve,” “to accomplish.” See below for a discussion of the other words translated “do.”

Allow. Gr. *ginōskō*, “to know,” “to come to know,” “to perceive,” “to recognize.” Compare the translation, “I do not understand my own actions” (RSV).

Would. Gr. *thelō*, “to desire,” “to wish.”

Do I not. Gr. *ou prassō*. *Prassō* means “to practice.” The word occurs also in chs. 1:32; 2:1–3, 25; etc.

That do I. In this case, the word for “do” (*poieō*) implies rather the performance or completion of an act, as in ch. 4:21. Martin Luther had evidently learned the meaning of this experience when he said, “I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals.”

Those who hold that Paul is describing his experience when under conviction prior to yielding himself to Jesus Christ (see on ch. 7:14) believe that the apostle is further emphasizing the impotence of anything but the gospel to provide the power to enable him to perform works of righteousness. Compare the experience of Charles Wesley (see GC 254–256). Complete frustration will be the experience of all who seek salvation without a complete surrender to Jesus Christ. Those who hold that Paul is describing the continuing struggle with self and sin, even after conversion, point out that even after conversion Christians are still conscious of imperfection and sin in their lives, and this is a continuing source of uneasiness and concern. In unguarded moments the strength of natural passion may at times overcome them. The power of long-cultivated habits still annoys them. Evil thoughts of self-indulgence still spring up in their minds with the speed of lightning. The man who was an infidel before his conversion, and whose mind was once filled with skepticism, may find the effect of his former habits of thinking still lingering in his mind and annoying his peace for years. Such are the effects of habit. The very passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it, and where sin has been long indulged, it leaves a searing scar on the soul, even after conversion, producing that state of tension with which every Christian is familiar.

As he sees these former desires and feelings, which he disapproves and hates, day by day clamoring to reassert their power over him, the Christian struggles against their influence, and longs to be filled with all the fruits of the Spirit of God. But he finds that neither of himself nor by the aid of the law can he effect his freedom from what he hates, or succeed in performing those deeds that he approves and desires to do. Every evening witnesses his penitent confession of helplessness, and his longing desire for aid from above (see 4T 429).

16. Consent. Gr. *sumphēmī*, literally, “to speak together with”; hence, “to concur,” “to agree.” This is the only occurrence of this word in the NT. The fact that Paul disapproves of his sinful acts is in itself evidence that he regards God’s law as good.

Good. Gr. *kalos*, “beautiful,” “excellent,” here probably implying the moral beauty and excellence of the law, which qualities Paul is here admitting. In v. 12 the word translated “good” is *agathos*, meaning good in a moral sense. *Kalos* is related to *agathos*, as the appearance is to the essence.

17. Now then. Gr. *nūnī*, which may be understood either in a temporal sense, meaning “at the present time,” or in a logical sense, “this being the case.” The latter seems more appropriate here (cf. Rom. 7:20; 1 Cor. 14:6).

No more I. The “I” is emphatic in the Greek. By “I” Paul here refers to the “inward man” (v. 22), which is distinguished from another “me” in which sin dwells and which is defined in v. 18 as “my flesh” and in v. 23 as “my members.” Paul does not say this to

deny man's responsibility for sinful acts, but to show the great power of indwelling sin, which asserts itself against his most earnest efforts, and which, if the Christian is off guard, may gain the upper hand. When, in speaking of his labors, Paul says, "not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10), he does not mean that he did not perform the works, but that he performed them under the influence of the grace of God. Likewise, when he says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), he means that he was dependent on Christ for the origin and maintenance of his new and better life. So here, he does not excuse himself for violations of the law, but asserts that he did such things under an influence that was no longer the dominant one in his mind.

18. No good thing. It is impossible for man of himself to resist the power of evil. A higher power must take possession of the soul before the evil passions can be subdued. Paul experienced the painful frustration that comes to all who seek to attain to righteousness in their own strength.

Present with me. Literally, "lies beside me," that is, is at hand.

I find not. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the phrase, "I find." The passage would then read, "but to perform the good, not." Paul's spirit was willing, but his flesh was weak.

19. I do not. This verse is substantially a repetition of v. 15, giving added emphasis to the reality and strength of the struggle of the will against sin (see on v. 15).

20. Now if I. This verse is substantially a repetition of what has been said in vs. 16, 17 (see comment there).

21. I find then a law. Literally, "I find then the law." The definite article "the" is present in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). By the term "law" Paul here refers to the malign force that once operated upon him, creating problems in his experience, as have been described in vs. 18, 19.

22. I delight in. Gr. *sunēdomai*, literally, "I rejoice with," the only occurrence of this Greek word in the NT. It is perhaps stronger than "I consent unto" in v. 16 (cf. Ps. 1:2; 119:97).

The law of God. The article is present also in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). Paul may be referring to the whole of God's will revealed to man.

After the inward man. See on v. 17.

23. Another. Gr. *heteros*, "another of a different kind." *Heteros* not only distinguishes but often contrasts (see on Gal. 1:6, 7). This different "law" stands opposed to the law that the inward man approves. The "law of sin" (Rom. 7:23, 25)—the malign force of v. 21 (see comment there)—takes advantage of every fleshly impulse.

In my members. That is, in the organs and faculties of my body (see also Rom. 3:13–15; 7:5; 1 Cor. 6:15; 12:12, 18, 20).

Warring against. Gr. *antistrateuomai*, the only occurrence of this word in the NT. The form of the verb implies the carrying on of a military campaign. The law in the members is on a campaign against the law of the mind (see also Gal. 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11).

The law of my mind. By "mind" Paul means the contemplative intelligence, the "inward man" (v. 22). It is this higher self that agrees that the law of God is good (vs. 12, 16, 22). And the law of God revealed to and approved by the mind becomes the law of the mind. On the other hand, Paul sees another law working through the impulses of the

body and desires of the flesh, the law “which is in my members,” “the law of sin” (see on v. 21).

Bringing me into captivity. Or, “making me a prisoner.” The word *aichmalōtizō* occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 21:24 and 2 Cor. 10:5. Paul has employed very strong expressions in this verse to describe the severity of the conflict with sin. He represents himself as engaged in a life-and-death struggle to escape from the captivating power of his evil inclinations.

24. Wretched. Gr. *talaipōros* may also be translated “distressed,” “miserable.” The only other occurrence in the NT is in Rev. 3:17, where *talaipōros* describes the condition of the Laodicean church. The distress resulting from the inner conflict, and sometimes agonizing struggle, between good and evil causes Paul to utter this apparently despairing cry and call for help. But he knows the source of deliverance from his troubles and hastens to declare it (Rom. 7:25).

Who shall deliver me? Or, “Who will rescue me?” The question provides Paul with an opportunity to express the good news that is the theme of his whole epistle. Does deliverance come through law? Can a man win release and freedom by the strength of his own will and intellect? In vain have these methods been tried, and the disastrous results have been clearly seen. There is only one way, “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 25).

The body of this death. Or, “this body of death.” The Greek construction is inconclusive as to whether “this” is to be connected with “body” or with “death,” though the latter connection seems more natural. The meaning of this passage has been much disputed. It at least seems to be generally agreed that there is no evidence that Paul is alluding to an ancient custom of chaining a living prisoner to a corpse, though this horrible practice affords a striking illustration of the spiritual predicament Paul is describing.

Paul regards the body, the flesh, as the seat of sin, the dwelling place of the law of sin that works in the members to bring forth death (vs. 5, 13, 23, 25). He does not mean by this that the physical body is evil (see on v. 5). His cry for deliverance is for release from bondage to the law of sin, so that his body shall no longer serve as the seat of sin and death, but rather may be offered to God as a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (ch. 12:1).

25. I thank God. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading, “Thanks be to God.” Paul does not give a direct answer to his question, “Who shall deliver me?” Nor does he state for what he is thanking God. But this is plainly indicated by the context. What the law cannot do, what the conscience cannot do, what unaided human strength cannot do, can be accomplished by the plan of the gospel. Complete deliverance is available through Jesus Christ, and through Him alone. Compare “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

This is the climax toward which Paul’s reasoning in this chapter has been pointing. It is not enough to be convinced of the excellence of the law or to acknowledge the wisdom and justice of its obligations. It is not enough to consent unto it as good or even to delight in its precepts. No amount of earnest striving after obedience will avail against the law of sin in the members, until the struggling sinner surrenders in faith to Christ. Then surrender to a person takes the place of legalistic obedience to a law. And since it is

surrender to a person dearly loved, it is felt as perfect freedom (see SC 19; MH 131; DA 466).

I myself serve. Some have wondered why, after reaching the glorious climax in the expression “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” Paul should refer once more to the struggles of the soul from what he apparently had been delivered. Some understand the expression of thanksgiving as a parenthetical exclamation. They believe that such an exclamation follows naturally the cry, “Who shall deliver?” They hold that before proceeding with an extended discussion of the glorious deliverance (ch. 8) Paul summarizes what he has said in the preceding verses and confesses once again to the conflict against the forces of sin.

Others suggest that by “I myself” Paul means, “left to myself, leaving Christ out of the picture.” They believe that Paul is here stating a general truth that is valid at any point in the Christian experience. Hence they consider Paul’s exclamation to be not parenthetical, but in good logical sequence. Anytime a man tries to find victory over sin, of himself, apart from the power of Christ, he is doomed to failure.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 7 2T 512
9 SC 30; 3T 475
12 DA 309; Ev 372; EW 66; FE 238; GC 467, 469; PK 15, 625; PP 123, 365; SC 19; 2T 513
13 GC 507; SL 81; 3T 476
14 SC 19; 3T 475
16 SC 19
18 AA 561; COL 161
24 COL 201; DA 203; GC 461; MH 84; SC 19; 6T 53
4

CHAPTER 8

- 1 *They that are in Christ, and live according to the Spirit, are free from condemnation. 5, 13 What harm cometh of the flesh, 6, 14 and what good of the Spirit: 17 and what of being God’s child, 19 whose glorious deliverance all things long for, 29 was beforehand decreed from God. 38 What can sever us from his love?*

1. There is therefore. This introductory phrase indicates the close connection between chs. 7 and 8. Chapter 8 is an expansion of Paul’s thankful exclamation in ch. 7:25, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” He passes on now from his analysis of the painful struggle with sin to an explanation of the life of peace and freedom that is offered to those who live “in Christ Jesus.”

No condemnation. The good news of the gospel is that Christ came to condemn sin, not sinners (John 3:17; Rom. 8:3). To those who believe and accept the generous provisions of the gospel and who in faith commit themselves to lives of loving obedience, Christ offers justification and freedom. There may yet be deficiencies in the believer’s character, but “when it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man’s best service, and He makes up for the

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 6:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

deficiency with His own divine merit” (EGW ST June 16, 1890). For such there is no condemnation (John 3:18).

In Christ Jesus. This frequently occurring NT expression intimates the closeness of the personal connection that exists between the Christian and Christ. It means more than to be dependent on Him or merely to be His follower or disciple. It implies a daily, living union with Christ (John 14:20; 15:4–7). John describes this union as being “in him” (1 John 2:5, 6, 28; 3:24; 5:20). Peter also speaks of being in Christ (1 Peter 3:16; 5:14). But the idea is especially characteristic of Paul. He applies it to churches (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:1) as well as to individuals (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:1; etc.). Jesus emphasized the closeness of this union by His parable of the Vine and the Branches (John 15:1–7).

Unless a person is experiencing this transforming union with Christ, he cannot claim freedom from condemnation. The saving faith that brings reconciliation and justification (Rom. 3:22–26) implies an experience Paul speaks of as being “in Christ” (see on v. 28).

Who walk not. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the clause, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is generally regarded as having been added here from v. 4.

2. Spirit of life. That is, the Spirit giving life. He is so called because He exercises life-giving power (see v. 11). The law of the Spirit of life is the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, ruling as a law in the life. The phrase “of life” expresses the effect accomplished, as in “justification of life” (see on ch. 5:18) and “the bread of life” (John 6:35). The Spirit brings life and freedom, in contrast with the law of sin, which produces only death and condemnation (see on Rom. 7:21–24).

In Christ Jesus. Some translators connect these words with “the Spirit of life.” Others connect them with “hath made me free.” The latter seems to be the more natural interpretation. Paul is emphasizing the fact that the Spirit exercises His life-giving power through the union with Christ. It is in the experience of close fellowship and union with Christ that the believer receives this power to overcome in the battle against sin.

Hath made me free. Or, “freed me.” Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between the reading “me” and “thee.” The difference is inconsequential. Paul is doubtless referring back to his experience of rebirth and baptism, when he began to “walk in newness of life” (ch. 6:4) and to “serve in newness of spirit” (ch. 7:6).

The law of sin and death. That is, the authority exercised by sin and ending in death. Sin is no longer the predominating and controlling influence in his life. The indwelling Spirit of life inspires obedience and gives power to “mortify the deeds of the body” (v. 13). Thus the law of the Spirit of life works directly contrary to the law of sin and death in the members, empowering the believer to overcome sin’s destroying influence and freeing him from sin’s bondage and condemnation.

3. What the law could not do. Literally, “the impossible thing of the law.” The article is present with “law” in the Greek also (see on ch. 2:12). The Greek construction is difficult and has been much discussed. However, Paul’s meaning in this verse seems clear. God has accomplished what the law has been unable to do. He has condemned sin, and thus it is possible for the Christian to overcome its power, and to live a triumphant life in Christ.

Weak through the flesh. This cause of failure has already been explained in ch. 7:14–25. The law can point out the right way, but it cannot enable weak, fallen man to walk in

it. Paul continues to vindicate the law (see ch. 7:7, 10, 13, 14), ascribing its apparent weakness not to any defect inherent in the law itself but rather to the impotence of man's nature, corrupted and enfeebled by sin. It is not the function of law to pardon and to restore to obedience. Law can only reveal transgression and righteousness and command obedience (chs. 3:20; 7:7). Therefore, the law of God cannot be blamed or despised for not accomplishing results for which it never was designed. Our failure to render perfect obedience must be blamed upon ourselves.

His own Son. The word "own" emphasizes the close relationship between the Father and the Son (see v. 32). In Col. 1:13 Christ is described as "his dear Son," literally, "the Son of His love." There is sometimes a tendency to attribute greater love and self-sacrifice to Christ than to the Father. It is well to remember that it was because God so loved the world that He gave His only Son (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9). In order to save fallen man, He sacrificed Himself in His Son (see 2 Cor. 5:19; cf. DA 762). Christ came to reveal the limitless love of His Father (John 14:9; cf. Matt. 5:43–48).

Sinful flesh. The Son of God came to this earth with His divinity veiled in humanity, so that He could reach the fallen race and commune with us in our weakened, sinful state. If He had come clothed with His heavenly brightness, we could not have endured the glory of His presence (see PP 330). Therefore, in His great love and His divine purpose to save man, Jesus "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, 7, RSV; see DA 22, 23). See Vol. V, pp. 917, 918.

It was also Christ's purpose in assuming our humanity to demonstrate to men and to the whole universe that sin and Satan may be successfully resisted and that obedience to the will of God may be rendered by human beings in this life (see AA 531; DA 761, 762). Ever since the fall of Adam, Satan had pointed to man's sin as proof that God's law was unjust and could not be obeyed. Then Christ came to redeem Adam's failure. He was made like unto His brethren in all things, He suffered and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He did not sin (see Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15). For the human nature of Jesus in relationship to temptation and sin see on Matt. 4:1; 26:38, 41; Heb. 2:17; 4:15; see Additional Note on John 1.

And for sin. Or, "and concerning sin." The "and" indicates the connection with the preceding phrase. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin. "For sin" is from the Gr. *peri hamartias*, which may also be rendered "as a sin offering."

Peri hamartias is frequently used with this sense in the LXX. In Leviticus alone there are more than 50 such occurrences (see Lev. 4:33; 5:6, 7, 8, 9; 7:37; etc.; cf. Ps. 40:6). The phrase also occurs with this meaning in the NT in Heb. 10:6–8, where Ps. 40:6–8 is quoted. Consequently, a number of English versions have favored the translation "as an offering for sin" (see RV; Moulton; Goodspeed; RSV, footnote).

On the other hand, however, the context may indicate that the phrase should be understood in a more general sense. Paul's purpose in this passage is to explain that the Christian may now have victory over sin. The law was powerless to give him such victory, but God, by sending His Son, has now made the necessary power available. Christ came not only to bear the penalty of sin in His death but also to destroy its dominion and to remove it from the lives of His followers. This entire purpose of His mission may be included in the words "and for sin." He came to deal with sin and to

provide its remedy. He came to atone for sin, to destroy sin, and to sanctify and save its victims.

Condemned sin. Christ's sinless humanity was a living condemnation of sin. For this sense of condemnation by contrast see also Matt. 12:41, 42; Heb. 11:7. Moreover, Christ's sacrificial death to sin (Rom. 6:10) forever revealed and proved the exceeding sinfulness of sin, for it was sin that caused the death of the Son of God. This condemnation of sin, effected by the life and death of Christ, means also the destruction of sin's evil power for the believer who is united with Christ in His death and who rises with Him to newness of life in the Spirit (vs. 1–13).

In the flesh. Christ met, overcame, and condemned sin in the sphere in which it had previously exercised its dominion and mastery. The flesh, the scene of sin's former triumphs, now became the scene of its defeat and expulsion.

4. The righteousness. Gr. *dikaiōma*. This is not the usual word for "righteousness," which is *dikaio sunē*, used often by Paul in this epistle (chs. 1:17; 3:5; 4:3; etc.).

Dikaiōma expresses the thought of "that which is laid down as right" (see Rom. 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; cf. Luke 1:6; Heb. 9:1, where *dikaiōma* is translated "ordinances"). Hence Paul is here referring to the righteous demands of the law, obedience to its just requirements.

The law. The article is present also in the Greek (see on ch. 2:12). In this context Paul is still speaking of the law, of which he approved (ch. 7:16) and in which he delighted (v. 22) but which he found himself unable to obey apart from Christ (vs. 15–25).

Might be fulfilled. Or, "might be realized," or "might be met." God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that men might be enabled fully to comply with the righteous requirements of His holy law. To bring man's life into harmony with the divine will is the purpose of the plan of salvation. God did not give His Son in order to change or abolish His law, or to release men from the necessity of perfect obedience. The law has always stood as an expression of the unchangeable will and character of God. Fallen man has been unable to obey its requirements, and the law has possessed no power to strengthen him to obey. But now Christ has come to make it possible for man to render perfect obedience. These verses clearly indicate the continuing place and authority of the law of God in the gospel and the plan of salvation (see on ch. 3:31).

Paul does not say, "might be partially fulfilled." The Bible consistently speaks of entire transformation, perfect obedience (see Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:12, 13; Col. 1:28; 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 6:1; 13:21). God requires perfection of His children, and the perfect life of Christ in His humanity is God's assurance to us that by His power we too may attain to perfection of character (see COL 315; AA 531).

Walk. Literally, "walk about," implying habitual conduct. Hence, it may be translated "live" (see Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:7; 10:3; Eph. 2:10; 4:1).

Not after the flesh. That is, not according to the flesh. Those in whom the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled, no longer live according to the dictates and impulses of the flesh. The gratification of carnal desires is no longer the guiding principle in their lives.

After the Spirit. That is, they regulate their conduct according to the dictates and guidance of the Spirit, the indwelling Spirit of Christ (v. 9). The just requirement of the law is being fulfilled in them. What the law requires is summed up in Christian love, for

“love is the fulfilling of the law” (ch. 13:10). Likewise, the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life is love, for “the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal. 5:22).

Consequently, life according to the Spirit means a life in which the righteous demands of the law are fulfilled—a life of love and loving obedience. That such a life might be made possible for believers was the great purpose for which God sent His Son into the world.

Some commentators prefer to interpret this phrase as referring particularly to the renewed spirit of man, through which the Holy Spirit works. They understand Paul to be emphasizing that our lives are no longer ruled by our lower, but by our higher, spiritual natures. This interpretation is reflected in a number of versions by the spelling of “spirit” without a capital letter (see RV).

5. *They that are.* This may express a different aspect from “walk” (v. 4). To be “according to the flesh” means to have the flesh for the ruling principle of our being. “To walk according to the flesh” is to follow this principle in the actual life. “Walk” expresses the manifestation of the condition expressed by “are.” See on v. 4.

Do mind. Gr. *phroneō*, “to think of,” “to care for,” “to set the mind and heart on,” “to strive after.” The word denotes the whole action of the affections and of the will as well as of the reason. Compare the use of *phroneō* in Matt. 16:23; Rom. 12:16; Phil. 3:19; Col. 3:2. The whole mental and moral activity of those who are “after the flesh” is set upon the selfish gratification of unspiritual desires.

The things of the flesh. We are under the predominating influence of one or the other of the two principles contrasted in this verse. According as one or the other has the mastery, so will be the complexion of our lives and the character of our actions. Paul describes the absolute contrast between the things of the flesh and the things of the Spirit in Gal. 5:16–24.

6. *To be carnally minded.* Literally, “the mind [or “minding”] of the flesh.” In this case, “mind” means “thought,” “purpose,” “intention,” “inclination,” as in the clause, “he ... knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit” (v. 27).

Death. To think of nothing but the gratification of fleshly desires is death. The one who lives for this selfish purpose is dead while he lives (1 Tim. 5:6; see also Eph. 2:1, 5), and the present condition of spiritual death can lead only to final eternal death. The reason for this is explained in Rom. 8:7.

To be spiritually minded. Literally, “the mind [or “minding”] of the Spirit.”

Life and peace. To set the mind on the things of the Spirit, and to have the thoughts and desires governed solely by the Spirit of God, result in that healthful, life-giving harmony of all the functions of the soul that is a sure pledge and foretaste of the life to come (see Eph. 1:13, 14). The presence of the Holy Spirit brings love, joy, and peace in the life (Gal. 5:22), the beginning within us of the kingdom of God, which is “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17).

Those who are “spiritually minded” and “walk ... after the Spirit” (ch. 8:1) enjoy the peace of forgiveness and reconciliation (ch. 5:1). The love of God is “shed abroad” in their hearts (ch. 5:5), and they have the joy and encouragement of seeing the righteous requirement of the law fulfilled in their lives (ch. 8:4). They look forward to final salvation and eternal life. On the contrary, those who are “carnally minded” and “walk ... after the flesh” (vs. 4, 6) know only the destroying experience of bondage and condemnation (vs. 1, 15, 21) and can look forward only to judgment and death (chs. 1:32; 2:5, 6; 6:21, 22).

7. *Because.* Paul now explains why the mind of the flesh is death.

Carnal mind. Gr. *phronēma tēs sarkos*, translated “to be carnally minded” in v. 6 (see comment there).

Enmity against God. To set the mind on the things of the flesh and thus to live a life of self-assertion and self-indulgence means inevitably a life that is hostile to God and out of harmony with His will (see James 4:4). Such a course leads to estrangement from God and separation from the source of life—a separation that means death. This hostility against God is the opposite of the peace that comes to those who live in the Spirit (Rom. 8:6).

Is not subject. Or, “does not subject itself.” In military terminology the verb means subjection to orders. The present tense suggests continued insubordination. The mind that is set on the flesh reveals its hostility against God by continued disobedience to His law.

Neither indeed can be. The carnal mind is wholly incapable of submitting to the law of God. Only by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is obedience again made possible.

When man was first created, his mind and life were in perfect harmony with the will of God. The principles of God’s law were written on his heart. But sin brought alienation from God, and man’s heart came to be filled with enmity and rebellion. Consequently, ever since man’s fall under the power of sin, he has followed the inclinations of the flesh, which have led inevitably to disobedience to God’s law. This is why it is impossible for a man to attain to righteousness and salvation by his own legalistic attempts at obedience. Unless he dies to self and sin and is born again to a new life in the Spirit (ch. 6), he is incapable of subjection to the will of God (see PP 64).

8. *So then.* Gr. *de*, here simply “and.” The word does not introduce a conclusion or consequence from v. 7, but merely repeats the substance of v. 7 in a somewhat different and perhaps more personal form. The connection may be paraphrased thus, “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God ... and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

In the flesh. This may be a stronger expression than “after the flesh” (vs. 4, 5). It means to be absorbed in and governed by the things of the flesh.

Cannot please God. God is pleased by faithfulness and obedience. He was well pleased with His Son (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; John 8:29). He looks with pleasure on acts of faith and love (Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20; Heb. 13:16, 21). But such lives of faith, obedience, and love are possible only to those who are living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Those who are in the flesh cannot do the things that please God. Their natural course is one of hostility and disobedience.

This verse adds further emphasis and explanation to Paul’s earnest contention in this epistle that legalistic attempts at obedience are doomed to failure (Rom. 3:20; 7:14–25). Those who rely for salvation on the false hope that their own works of obedience are pleasing God and meriting His saving favor are warned in this verse that they cannot win God’s pleasure in this way. So long as they are in the flesh they cannot please God, they cannot obey His law.

9. *But ye.* In his characteristic way Paul expresses his confidence in his readers. But he then qualifies his assertion by adding the condition upon which his statement concerning them necessarily depends.

In the Spirit. That is, you are spiritually-minded and under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit.

If so be that. The old life in the flesh ceases only as the new life in the Spirit begins. The ruling power of the flesh can be expelled from the life only when the Spirit is invited to come and exercise full control. When the Spirit really dwells within, the life after the flesh has ended.

This verse is an invitation to self-examination. We are spiritually-minded and live in the Spirit “if so be that” the Spirit of God dwells in us. We may know whether the Spirit dwells in us by the presence or absence of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) in our lives. Absence of the fruit is evidence that we are yet living in the flesh.

Dwell. This indicates the continuing and permanent presence of the Spirit, not just occasional raptures of enthusiasm and zeal. Paul elsewhere represents the Holy Spirit as dwelling in the hearts of Christians (see 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). The expression “in you” denotes the closeness of the personal connection between the believer and the Spirit. It implies the complete submission of the Christian’s will to the will of God.

Spirit of Christ. Compare the terms “Spirit of God,” “Spirit of Christ.” The Holy Spirit is elsewhere called the “Spirit of Christ” (1 Peter 1:11; cf. 2 Peter 1:21), “Spirit of his Son” (Gal. 4:6), and “Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19). For the relation of the Holy Spirit to Christ see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, 13, 14.

Is none of his. Or, “does not belong to him.” It is not enough to be intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity. The Spirit of Christ must dwell within. A profession of Christianity does not in itself make a man a true follower of Christ. We may know that we really belong to Him, if He has given us of His Spirit (1 John 4:13). When the daily life reveals love, joy, peace, and the other graces of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), there is evidence of true Christianity. But if, on the contrary, our lives are marred with unkindness, selfishness, and vanity, then we are none of His.

This verse is fraught with serious warning. A professed Christian may appear to subscribe to all the doctrines and conform to all the practices of the church. He may be active in the cause of God. He may be willing to give away all his goods to feed the poor or even to give up his own body to be burned, but if the Spirit does not dwell in him, and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) is not evident in his life, he is none of His (1 Cor. 13:3). He who is proud, vain, frivolous, worldly-minded, avaricious, unkind, censorious, holds communion, not with the Spirit of Christ, but with another spirit (5T 225).

10. And if Christ. Or, “but if Christ.” This shows that to have the Spirit of Christ (v. 9) is to have Christ dwelling in the heart as the principle of life (see also John 6:56; 15:4; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:16, 17; Col. 1:27).

The body is dead. Commentators have interpreted this text in a number of ways. However, the evident reference in v. 11 to the resurrection of the mortal body indicates that Paul is speaking here of physical death on account of sin (see ch. 5:12). Even those who are born again to newness of life in the Spirit are still subject to death, the death that has been passed from Adam upon all men. But because the Spirit dwells in them, they look forward to resurrection and eternal life (ch. 8:11).

The Spirit. Or, “the spirit.” The context, especially the direct contrast between “the body” and “the spirit” (cf. 1 Cor. 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1; James 2:26), seems to indicate that Paul is here referring to the human spirit.

Is life. Paul does not say that the spirit “is alive,” but that it “is life,” though many recent versions give the translation “is alive” or “has life.” The human spirit that is

pervaded by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit possesses a God-sustained life. It is in the spirit of man that the Spirit of God performs His quickening, transforming work.

Because of righteousness. Throughout the Scriptures righteousness is consistently associated with life, as sin is with death. When there is righteousness in the life, there is evidence of the presence and power of the Spirit of God, and this means life.

Some commentators prefer to limit the meaning of righteousness in this passage to the righteousness of Christ imputed to the believer for life-giving justification (ch. 5:18). But the context does not seem to indicate such a limitation. Taking righteousness in the widest sense, Paul's meaning seems to be that, although the body is dead because of Adam's sin, in which we have all participated (see on ch. 5:12), the spirit is life because of Christ's righteousness, which has first been imputed in justification and is later imparted in sanctification. This gift of righteousness is accompanied by the gift of eternal life (ch. 5:17, 18, 21). And the evidence that we have received the gift of righteousness and acceptance with God is the presence of the ever-living, ever-active Spirit of God (Eph. 1:13).

11. Shall also quicken. That is, shall also make alive. Paul frequently represents the resurrection of Christ as the pledge of the believer's resurrection (1 Cor. 6:14; 15:20–23; 2 Cor. 4:14; Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:14).

By his Spirit. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading, “because of his Spirit.” According to the reading of the KJV, the Holy Spirit is the power by which the dead are raised. According to the other reading, the Holy Spirit is the reason for their being raised. Both ideas are true, and either is appropriate in this context. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life (v. 2), and it is natural that where the Spirit is present there should also be life. Therefore, it would be correct to say that both “by the power of the Spirit” and “because of the presence of the Spirit” God will raise up those in whom the life-giving Spirit dwells.

12. We are debtors. In view of the saving presence of the Holy Spirit, we are under solemn moral obligations—but certainly not to the flesh—to live according to its dictates. Paul has been explaining that the rule of the flesh results only in death (v. 6). Therefore, the believer need feel under no obligation to his carnal nature. On the other hand, the Spirit of God has brought freedom from the bondage and condemnation of sin (v. 2; ch. 6:22) and now promises eternal life to come (ch. 8:11). This places the ones for whom the Spirit is performing this saving and transforming work, in the position of debtors. They owe everything to the Spirit, and their allegiance and obedience should be wholeheartedly given to this higher power that has entered their lives.

This verse is an answer to those who misunderstand the liberty of the gospel. The gospel frees us from the condemnation of the law and from the destroying error of attempting to keep the law by our own efforts, but it does not free us from obedience to the will of God. It is God's eternal and unchangeable ordinance that all His creatures should obey Him (see on ch. 3:31). Far from the gospel being the end of obedience, it is but the beginning of real obedience, and Paul describes it as placing us under obligation to obey. If we allow the Spirit of God to have His full way in us, this obligation to obey will not bring any sense of bondage or subservience, rather, we shall ever continue to delight in the law of God (cf. ch. 7:22) as the Holy Spirit gives us power to obey it.

After the flesh. See on vs. 4, 5.

13. *Ye shall die.* The Greek is more emphatic than the simple future of the verb in English expresses it. For those who live after the flesh death is inevitable. Compare ch. 6:21.

Mortify. That is, put to death. The tense is present, indicating a continuous process of putting to death.

The deeds of the body. Or, “the practices of the body.” Paul is referring to the actions of the body considered in their moral tendency, which in this case are toward evil. In this verse Paul seems to be restating his whole argument developed in the two preceding chapters, that living carnally means death, but crucifying the flesh means life. See especially chs. 6:6; 8:6. The Christian must not yield to bodily impulses and appetites, except to the extent that they conform to the law of God. His eating and drinking and everything that he does must be performed with a regard for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

Ye shall live. This is the simple future of the verb and thus differs somewhat from the form of the expression “ye shall die” (see above on this phrase). The distinction may reflect the fact that, whereas death is the inevitable consequence of a life after the flesh, yet eternal life is not exactly the inevitable consequence of mortifying the deeds of the body. It is rather the gift of God through Christ (see on ch. 6:23).

Whatever professions of spiritual life we may make, it remains forever true that, if we live according to the flesh, we shall die (see Gal. 6:7, 8; Eph. 5:5, 6; Phil. 3:18, 19; 1 John 3:7, 8). Either our sins must die or we must. If they are allowed to live, we shall die. If they are put to death, we shall be saved. No man can be saved in his sins.

14. *Are led.* Or, “are being led.” The present tense indicates continuous action. The leading of the Spirit does not mean a momentary impulse but a steady, habitual influence. It is not those whose hearts are occasionally touched by the Spirit, or those who now and then yield to His power, who are the sons of God. God recognizes as His sons only those who are continually led by His Spirit.

It is important to notice that the guiding and transforming power of the Holy Spirit is described as leading, not forcing. There is no coercion in the plan of salvation. The Spirit dwells only in the hearts of those who accept Him in faith. And faith implies a loving and willing submission to the will of God and the directing influence of the Holy Spirit.

Sons of God. Paul may be drawing some distinction between “sons” (*huioi*) and “children” (*tekna*) (v. 16). If so, “children” denotes the natural relationship that children have to their parents, whereas “son” implies, in addition to this, the recognized status and privileges reserved for sons. In v. 15 the position of sonship is being contrasted with that of servants or slaves. Paul explains this contrast in more detail in Gal. 3:26; 4:1–7.

As long as a man lives under law, he is a slave (see on Rom. 6:14), and seeks by his own works to earn for himself reward. But despite his best efforts to establish his own righteousness, he reaps only condemnation and wrath and stands before his Lord and Judge with fear and trembling. As a slave he has no part in the inheritance. Not life but death awaits him. But then, when by faith he is justified and born again of the Holy Spirit, he passes from a state of slavery to sonship. Instead of the Judge’s wrath, the Father’s love now rests upon him. Instead of the fear of a slave, he now has the trust and confidence of a son. To be a son of God is truly to live (cf. ch. 8:13).

The privilege of sonship is only for those who are being led by the Spirit. They have been born again of the Spirit (John 1:12, 13; 3:3–8) and, whether Jew or Gentile, are the true sons of Abraham, the children of faith (Gal. 3:7).

15. *Ye have not received.* Or, “you did not receive.” The Greek may be understood as referring particularly to the beginning of the Christian life, when the believer is reconciled, justified, and reborn. At that time God sends His Spirit into the heart (Gal. 4:5, 6).

The spirit of bondage. It is evident that Paul is referring neither to the human spirit nor to the divine Spirit. He is making a more general use of the term “spirit” to express a mood, habit, or state of feeling. Hence, the expression may be translated “a consciousness of bondage,” “a sense of servitude,” “a slavish spirit.” Compare “the spirit of jealousy” (Num. 5:14, 30), “the spirit of heaviness” (Isa. 61:3), “the spirit of whoredoms” (Hosea 4:12), “a spirit of infirmity” (Luke 13:11), “the spirit of meekness” (1 Cor. 4:21), “the spirit of fear” (2 Tim. 1:7), “the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6).

The bondage, or slavery, which throughout this epistle is contrasted with the liberty of the sons of God, is the bondage of sin (Rom. 6:6, 16, 17, 20; Rom. 7:25) and of death as the consequence of sin (ch. 5:21).

Again to fear. This implies a relapse into the state of fear in which the Christian lived before he became a believer. The person who is still under law and in bondage to sin (ch. 6:14) is haunted by forebodings under a sense of unpardoned sin (see Rom. 1:32; cf. Heb. 2:14, 15). When the Holy Spirit is received this wretched state terminates. The Spirit brings life and love and freedom from fear (1 John 4:18), with the assurance that instead of being slaves we are sons and heirs.

Adoption. Gr. *huiothesia*, literally, “placing as a son.” There is some difference of opinion as to whether the phrase “the Spirit of adoption” is a reference to the Holy Spirit as producing the condition of adoption, or to the spirit that is characteristic of those who are admitted into this relation of sonship. Compare the phrase “the spirit of bondage.” If Paul is speaking here of the consciousness, or sense, of adoption, “spirit” should be spelled without a capital, which is the case in a number of versions. The Holy Spirit is, of course, the One who brings about this awareness of sonship. The consciousness of adoption brings the feeling of affection, love, and confidence such as children have toward their parents, not the servile, fearful spirit of slaves toward their masters.

It seems that the Jews did not have the practice of adoption, but it was not uncommon among the Greeks and Romans. Paul’s use of this term would therefore be clearly understandable to his readers in Rome. He uses this expression elsewhere in his epistles to describe the typical adoption of the Jewish nation (ch. 9:4), the actual adoption of Jewish and Gentile believers as the children of God (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), and the perfected adoption of believers in the future state of glory (Rom. 8:23).

Adoption is the taking and treating of a stranger as one’s own child, and Paul applies the term to Christians because God treats them as His own sons, even though by nature they were strangers and enemies (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21). This implies that, since we by nature had no claim on God, His act of adopting us is one of pure sovereign love (John 3:16). It also implies that, as adopted sons, we are now under His protection and care and that, in loving gratitude, we ought to manifest the spirit of children in willingly obeying Him in all things (see on Rom. 8:12).

Whereby we cry. Literally, “in which we cry.” It may also be translated, “when we cry,” in which case the words would be connected with the following verse, as they are in some versions (see RSV). If the other connection is followed, Paul is saying that the cry is prompted by the consciousness of adoption as God’s sons. The word translated “cry” usually means a loud cry expressive of deep emotion.

Abba, Father. The first word is a transliteration of the Aramaic, the language commonly spoken by the Jews in Palestine. The second is translated from the Greek, a language also understood by many Palestinian Jews. The giving of the word “Father,” first from Aramaic and then from Greek, reflects the bilingual character of the people to whom Christianity came. But there seems to be no definite explanation of the reason for the repetition. It appears once in Mark (ch. 14:36), and Paul uses it again in Gal. 4:6. Some have suggested that the Greek was added by Paul and Mark simply to explain the meaning of the Aramaic term to their Greek-speaking readers. However, other commentators point out that all three of the passages where this repetition occurs are strongly emotional and that therefore the repetition may indicate intensity of feeling.

16. The Spirit itself. Or, “the Spirit Himself,” as in many versions (see RSV). The grammatical gender of the word for “Spirit,” Gr. *pneuma*, is neuter. Consequently, the pronoun “itself” must likewise be neuter in the Greek. When the Holy Spirit is referred to by the masculine name *paraklētos*, “Comforter,” the masculine pronoun is used (see John 15:26; 16:7, 13). It is obvious that the personality of the Holy Spirit cannot be argued by the gender of the pronouns that may be used (cf. AA 53; TM 64). The office and work of the Holy Spirit have been declared to us in the Scriptures (see John 14:26; 16:8, 13–15; Rom 8:26; etc.), but the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. “Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden” (AA 52).

With our spirit. The witness of the believer’s own spirit that he is a child of God depends upon the witness of the Holy Spirit that he is such. Compare the passage, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. 12:3). It is likewise true that no one can truly call God Father, but by the same Spirit (Gal. 4:6). The following rendering makes this passage closely parallel to Gal. 4:6: “When we cry, ‘Abba Father’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (RSV).

Children of God. In the same way as we become the children of God through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 13; 3:5), the continuing assurance that we are yet God’s children comes through the indwelling of God’s Spirit (Rom. 8:14). That He is dwelling in us may be known by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22). If there is love in our hearts toward God and toward our fellow men, we may know that we have passed from death unto life (1 John 3:14) and have become the children of our heavenly Father (Matt. 5:44, 45), adopted into the heavenly family.

17. Then heirs. Literally, “also heirs.” In God’s plan for the complete restoration of man, sonship and heirship go together (cf. Gal. 4:7). If we are born again as His children and are adopted as His sons, God will also treat us as His heirs. The inheritance is the kingdom of glory (Matt. 25:34; 1 Peter 1:4, 5) and eternal life (Rom. 2:7). The full possession of this inheritance is longingly awaited by the children of God (Rom. 8:18–25; cf. 1 John 3:1–3).

Joint-heirs. Jesus described Himself as “the heir” in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. 21:38). As the “first-born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29), Christ

admits His brethren to share alike in the inheritance that He has won, not for Himself but for them (see John 17:22–24; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Rev. 3:21).

Suffer with him. Or, “suffer together.” In the Greek Paul uses three compound words prefixed by the preposition *sun*, “with.” Christians are “joint-heirs with,” or heirs together (*sugklēronomoi*), we “suffer with,” or together (*sumpaschō*), and we are “glorified together” (*sundōxazō*). If we suffer with Christ, God will treat us as heirs together with His own Son. Mere suffering does not meet the condition here implied. It must be suffering *with Christ* (cf. 2 Tim. 2:11, 12).

Christ’s life is an example for the believer. Jesus went through pain to peace and through suffering to glory; so also will all who love Him (see Matt. 10:38; 16:24; 20:22; 2 Cor. 1:5; Col. 1:24; 1 Thess. 3:3). To suffer with Him means to suffer for His sake and the gospel’s. When the early Christians were faced with cruel persecution for Christ’s sake, Peter encouraged them with the words, “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4:13).

To suffer with Christ may also mean to struggle with the powers of temptation as He did, so that as He was made “perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:9, 10, 18), we may be also.

The plan of salvation does not offer believers a life free from suffering and trial this side of the kingdom. On the contrary, it calls upon them to follow Christ in the same path of self-denial and reproach. As Jesus was constantly opposed by Satan and persecuted by the world, so will be all those who are being transformed into His likeness. Their increasing unlikeness to the world will provoke ever greater hostility. But it is through such trial and persecution that the character of Christ is reproduced and revealed in His people. “Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried” (Dan. 12:10). By sharing in the sufferings of Christ we are educated and disciplined and made ready to share in the glories of the hereafter.

18. Reckon. Gr. *logizomai*. The same word is elsewhere translated “thinkest” (ch. 2:3), “conclude” (ch. 3:28), “suppose” (2 Cor. 11:5), “count” (Phil. 3:13). It does not denote mere opinion or supposition, but considered judgment.

The sufferings. Paul could speak of these from much painful experience. He had already suffered much for Christ and the gospel by the time he wrote this epistle, and much suffering was yet in store for him before his execution (see Acts 19:23–41; 20:23; 21:27–36; 2 Cor. 1:3–11; 6:4–10; 11:23–33; Col. 1:24).

This present time. In the light of eternity the present is but a brief and transitory period. “Our light affliction ... is but for a moment” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Compared. Compared with the coming glory, all the sufferings of this present life sink into insignificance (see EW 17).

Shall be revealed. Paul represents the future revelation of glory as something that is certain to take place. Compare Gal. 3:23, where the same words are used in the same emphatic order.

The glory that is about to be revealed includes the heavenly brightness of the second coming and the manifestation of Christ in all His divine perfection and power (see Titus 2:13). This glory will be shared by the faithful followers of Christ (Col. 3:4), for they will be like Him when they see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). They will reflect Him as a mirror

and will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). The revelation of glory will also include the splendor and beauty of heaven, the throne of God (Acts 7:49), a bright and glorious place (Rev. 21:10, 11, 23, 24; 22:5).

The anticipation of this future glory should sustain Christians in their afflictions here below. The sufferings may seem great, but they are “light” compared with that “eternal weight of glory” which the afflictions are working out (2 Cor. 4:17). They are for only a moment, but the glory will be eternal. They will soon pass away, but the glory will never dim or diminish forever and ever (1 Peter 1:4).

In us. Or, “to us.” The preposition *eis*, which Paul uses, suggests the idea that the glory extends to us in its transfiguring radiance.

19. Earnest expectation. Gr. *apokaradokia*. This highly expressive Greek word is made up of three parts, *apo*, “away,” *kara*, “head,” *dokeō*, here “to await.” The literal meaning is “awaiting with the head outstretched,” the prefixed *apo*, “away,” implying a turning away from all else and a fixing of the eyes upon a single object. It suggests waiting with the head raised and the eye fixed on that point of the horizon from which the expected object is to come.

The creature. Gr. *ktisis*, “the creation.” The word *ktisis* may signify either the creative act (see ch. 1:20) or the thing created (see Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:25; 8:22; Col. 1:23; Heb. 4:13). Here it is used in the latter sense. The meaning of this passage has been debated at great length, and commentators have sought to draw fine lines of distinction between that which is and that which is not to be included under the term “creation.” Some understand “the creation” to refer to the whole world of nature, both animate and inanimate, exclusive of man. Others include also the world of humanity. Some think that humanity alone is under discussion. It is perhaps best not to limit the application, for certainly all nature, figuratively, and mankind, literally, groan under the curse and await a brighter day. It is not unusual in the Scriptures for the world of nature to be described as if capable of human consciousness (see Deut. 32:1; Isa. 35:1; Hosea 2:21, 22).

Waiteth for. Gr. *apekdechomai*, a rare word in the NT, used almost exclusively by Paul (Rom. 8:23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28; see 1 Peter 3:20, where textual evidence attests the reading *apexedecheto*). Like the word translated “earnest expectation,” this also is highly expressive. It denotes waiting for something with concentrated longing and expectancy, with the attention completely withdrawn from all else.

Manifestation. Gr. *apokalupsis*, “revelation.” The same word is used in the title of the last book in the NT. *Apokalupsis* is related to the verb translated “revealed”

(*apokaluptō*) in v. 18. The revelation of the sons of God will be the public manifestation of the entire work of redeeming grace in all its fullness. This will take place at the second coming of Christ (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2), when the righteous dead are raised, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Paul describes the creation as longingly awaiting this revelation.

20. Creature. Or, “creation,” as in v. 19.

Was made subject. The tense of the Greek verb indicates that the event took place at a particular time. This would be at the fall of Adam and Eve. The sin of man produced consequences that pervaded the whole world about him. When man, the center of creation, was turned from his true course, the entire sphere of which he was the center was affected and came under the divine sentence (Gen. 3:17–19).

Vanity. Gr. *mataiotēs*. This word expresses aimlessness, frustration, that which disappoints expectations. The only other occurrences of *mataiotēs* in the NT are Eph. 4:17; 2 Peter 2:18. Compare the related verb *mataioō*, “became vain” (Rom. 1:21), and the related adjective, *mataios*, “vain” (1 Cor. 3:20; 1 Peter 1:18). The book of Ecclesiastes is a commentary on “vanity” (see Eccl. 1:2; etc.). Though in the beginning God created everything “very good” (Gen. 1:31), we now see everywhere the marks of decay and death. The fury of the elements and the destructive instincts of beasts are evidence of the vanity and aimlessness to which the creation has been subjected. And everything imperfect, depraved, corrupt, and vile is the shadow that Adam by his sin cast upon his posterity, the elements, animals, plants, and all his domain.

Not willingly. Or, “not of its own will,” “not of its own choice.” It was Adam who had the choice between the service of God and that of vanity, and because of his rebellious decision, mankind and the world of nature have together been subjected to vanity. His posterity had no choice in the matter. Nature itself is entirely blameless. However, God has provided a way of escape (see on Eze. 18:2).

By reason. The clause reads literally, “on account of the one who subjected.” Some have referred this to mankind as a whole, or to Adam in particular, whereas others refer it to God. The latter is perhaps the simplest interpretation. For the reason why the curse was permitted see on Eze. 18:2; see GC 497–499.

In hope. Many commentators and versions transfer these words to the beginning of v. 21 and translate, “in hope that the creature. . . .” Whichever connection is made, the meaning is clear that the subjection to vanity was not the end of God’s purpose. The creation was subjected in the hope of attaining to the goal toward which God was working in so subjecting it (see above under “by reason”). The world of nature was made for man, and in its original state it was adapted to minister to the joys and blessedness of sinless men and women. But when man fell nature also changed, and was adapted to meet man’s changed condition and to serve the plan of redemption. Paradise was lost, and under the curse of sin all nature witnessed to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. But the “vanity” of nature became an incentive to the exertion of man’s moral and physical powers. The life of toil and care that was henceforth to be his lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin (see PP 59, 60). Furthermore, the history of the terrible experiment of rebellion would serve to warn against future transgression (see GC 499).

21. Because. Gr. *hoti*, which should be translated “that,” if “in hope” (see on v. 20) is connected with v. 21.

The creature. Rather, “the creation” (see on v. 19).

The bondage of corruption. That is, the state of subjection resulting in dissolution and decay. Unwilling subjection to a condition that results in corruption is well termed “bondage.”

The glorious liberty. Literally, “the liberty of the glory.” Liberty is one of the elements of the state of glory mentioned in v. 18. In the emancipation that will take place at the appearance of Christ the whole creation hopes to share.

For the children of God “the liberty of the glory” will mean complete freedom from the presence and power of sin, freedom from temptation, from calamity, from death. In the future state of glory they will be free to exercise all their powers in perfect harmony with the will and purposes of God. The highest form of liberty is to be under the sovereignty and government of the all-wise Creator. In the new earth it will ever be our joy and desire to do only those things that please God. Such a life of eternal obedience is true freedom. The long history of sin has proved that all is slavery but the service of God, all is bondage but submission to the divine commands.

22. We know. Paul appeals to the experience of his readers in their observations of the world about them.

Creation. Gr. *ktisis*. This is the same word that is translated “creature” in vs. 19, 20, and 21 (see on v. 19).

Groaneth. These pains indicate hope as well as suffering. Paul pictures the creation in the pangs of childbirth, as it looks forward to joyful deliverance (cf. John 16:21).

Only the Christian believer, with the Scriptures in his hands, can explain the mystery of suffering and sorrow. Through the revelation of God’s Word he knows the cause and the source of the suffering that he sees in “the whole creation.” He senses that the pangs of a world in travail point forward to a time of deliverance, when there shall be “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).

Until now. Creation’s travail has continued ever since the time of the entrance of sin, nor will the suffering cease until the coming of Christ.

23. Not only they. Literally, “not only.” It is better to supply the words “the creation.” Christians, along with the rest of creation, sigh for the time when their adoption as the sons of God will be complete and their mortal bodies will be changed. All that they have received so far only makes them long for something more.

Ourselves also. The repetition is doubtless for emphasis. Even we Christians, who already enjoy so much of heavenly blessing, are groaning along with the rest of creation. Though we have the first fruits of the Spirit, our sanctification has only begun, and we long for perfection and complete redemption. Each gift of God’s grace calls forth a corresponding sigh for what is still lacking.

Which have. Or, “though we have.”

Firstfruits. Gr. *aparchē*. This word is used in the LXX for the first fruits of the harvest, the portion that was first gathered and consecrated to God as an offering of gratitude (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:10; Deut. 26:2). The “firstfruits of the Spirit” may be understood as the early, initial gifts of the Holy Spirit, the earnest of the full outpouring of divine power. The Holy Spirit had come in special measure on the day of Pentecost, and His blessings continued, as evidenced by the various spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12 to 14) and by the transformation of character that distinguished the Christian from other men (Gal. 5:22, 23). The acquisition of these early gifts only increased the desire for a larger bestowal later, especially the gift of immortality, when the earthly body is transformed into a heavenly body (see 1 Cor. 15:44–53; cf. 2 Cor. 5:1–5).

The Greek of this passage may also be taken to mean that the Spirit Himself is the first fruits, as a pledge or foretaste of good things to come (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22).

Waiting for. Gr. *apekdechomai* (see on v. 19).

Adoption. Gr. *huiiothesia* (see on v. 15). The Christian who has received the gift of the Spirit is already an adopted son of God (Rom. 8:15, 16; Gal. 4:6). But the final and complete realization of this adoption will take place in “the manifestation of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19) at the coming of Christ.

Redemption of our body. The full realization of adoption takes place when our bodies are redeemed. Paul evidently uses the word “redemption” (*apolutrōsis*), not to emphasize the idea of ransom (see on ch. 3:24), but only to express release from bondage. At the second coming of Christ our bodies will be delivered from our present condition of weakness, sinfulness, decay, and death (see 1 Cor. 15:49–53; Phil. 3:21; cf. 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

24. We are saved. Rather, “we were saved.” It is significant to notice that sometimes Paul says literally, “you have been saved” (Eph. 2:5, 8), sometimes literally, “you are being saved” (1 Cor. 15:2), and sometimes “thou shalt be saved” (Rom. 10:9; cf. v. 13). For the Christian believer, salvation is an experience or condition that has already begun. But it must also be presently maintained in the daily experience. And it does not reach complete fulfillment until the coming of Christ.

When by faith a man becomes a child of God, he may be said to be saved. Compare “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved [literally, “were being saved”]” (Acts 2:47). However, when the Christian is newborn, salvation has only begun. He must look forward to a life of continual growth and transformation and to the future complete deliverance. For the Christian who may be tempted to suppose that his salvation has become a certainty and that he may therefore relax his watchfulness and self-examination, it is well to remember the testimony of the saintly apostle Paul himself, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27).

By hope. The Greek may also be rendered “in hope.” Usually Paul represents faith rather than hope as the channel of salvation (see ch. 3:28; etc.). Consequently, many commentators and versions favor the translation “in hope,” which may well have been Paul’s intention. However, either translation makes good sense in this particular context. Hope, though distinguished from faith (1 Cor. 13:13), is yet inseparable from it. It is hope that sets salvation vividly before the believer and so leads him to strive, by faith, to obtain it.

Hope that is seen. In this case Paul is not referring to hope as a feeling, but to the object of hope, that is, the thing hoped for (cf. Acts 28:20; Col. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:1). When the thing hoped for is already present before the eyes, it ceases to be an object of hope. It is of the essence of hope that it does not look at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen (cf. Heb. 11:1).

Hope for. A man does not go on hoping for something that he now sees and possesses.

25. Patience. Gr. *hupomonē*, a word denoting perseverance amid obstacles. Paul is doubtless pointing to the sufferings mentioned in v. 18. We cannot as yet see ultimate salvation, but we do hope for it. Therefore, we are willing patiently to endure the sufferings that lie on the road to it.

Wait for. Gr. *apekdechomai* (see on v. 19; cf. v. 23).

26. Likewise. Or, “in the same way.” Some connect the section thus introduced with the immediately preceding words to mean that the help of the Spirit is a second ground of encouragement to wait patiently amid present suffering for the glory that is to be revealed. As hope sustains us, so also does the Holy Spirit sustain us. The one source of encouragement is human, the other, divine.

However, others prefer to make the connection with the whole preceding argument. In this case the meaning is that, as we who believe are groaning in ourselves, so also the Spirit intercedes for us with inexpressible groans. The words “groaneth” (v. 22), “groan” (v. 23), and “groanings” (v. 26) seem to indicate that the second connection is to be preferred. The Spirit of God joins with us and with the world of nature in longing for the completion of our salvation.

Helpeth. Gr. *sunantilambanomai*, literally, “to take hold of together, facing,” hence, “to help [someone],” “to stand by [someone].” The only other NT occurrence of this double compound verb is in Luke 10:40, where Martha asks Jesus to send Mary to help her in her work. Paul does not say that the Spirit removes our infirmity, but that He helps us and gives us strength to overcome (cf. 2 Cor. 12:8, 9).

Infirmities. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “infirmity.” The word may refer to general spiritual weakness as we wait for final redemption. But the particular weakness Paul mentions is that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

Should pray for. The phrase may be translated, “should pray,” or “how to pray.”

As we ought. Literally, “as it is necessary.” Because of the dimness of our limited human vision, we do not know whether the blessing we request will be best for us. Only God knows the end from the beginning. Therefore, in our prayers we should always express our complete submission to His will for us. Jesus set the example in this when He prayed, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39; cf. John 12:27, 28).

The Spirit itself. Or, “the Spirit himself” (see on v. 16).

Maketh intercession. Gr. *huperentugchanō*. This is the only occurrence of this double compound verb in the NT. The simpler form (*entugchanō*) occurs five times (see Acts 25:24; Rom. 8:27, 34; 11:2; Heb. 7:25) and means “to happen upon,” “to fall in with,” and hence, “to entreat.” The longer, more picturesque word *huperentugchanō* emphasizes the idea “in his behalf.” It is the work of the Holy Spirit to move us to pray, to teach us what to say, and even to speak through us (see Matt. 10:19, 20; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; COL 147).

Groanings. Gr. *stenagmoi*, a word occurring in the NT only here and in Acts 7:34.

The verb *stenazō*, “to groan,” is used of the sighing of Jesus on the occasion of the healing of the deaf-mute (Mark 7:34), and of the internal feeling of longing of the Christian who yearns for the day of redemption (Rom. 8:23).

27. He that searcheth. That is, God (see 1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; Jer. 17:10; Acts 1:24; Rev. 2:23).

The mind. That is, the thought, the intention, the purpose (see on v. 6). God knows the desires the Holy Spirit inspires in our hearts. He does not need to have these deep emotions expressed in words. He does not need the eloquence of language to induce Him to hear. He understands the anxious longings of the heart and is ready to aid and to bless.

Because. Gr. *hoti*, which may also be rendered “that.” Some prefer “that,” their preference being based on the understanding that the remaining words of this verse do not give a reason why God knows the intention of the Spirit but rather a description of the nature of the Spirit’s intercession. The majority, however, retain the “because.”

Maketh intercession. Gr. *entugchanō* (see on v. 26). The Holy Spirit is the other “Comforter” (*paraklētos*, see on John 14:16), who pleads God’s cause with us, as Christ is our “advocate” (*paraklētos*) with the Father (1 John 2:1).

For the saints. Literally, “for saints.”

According to the will of God. Literally, “according to God,” meaning according to His will. Compare 2 Cor. 7:9–11, where the same phrase is translated “godly.” In the Greek these words are placed in a position of emphasis before the verb “maketh intercession.”

The second half of this verse offers two reasons combined in one why God knows the mind of the Spirit. In the first place the Spirit intercedes in accordance with God’s own will and purpose, “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). Second, the Spirit’s intercession is for “saints,” and saints are the special objects of the divine purpose in accordance with which the Spirit intercedes. God’s purpose for saints is the theme of the following verses.

28. And we know. Paul now adds another ground for looking confidently to the future. It is our knowledge that, according to the eternal purpose of God, all things contribute to the welfare of those who love Him. Even the troubles and suffering of this life, far from hindering our salvation, may help it forward. At every step the Christian may be in the hands of God and be carrying out the divine purpose.

All things. Evidently Paul intended this to be understood in the widest possible sense, to include everything mentioned in vs. 35, 38, 39. But he may be referring especially to “the sufferings of this present time” (v. 18).

Work together. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between the reading, “all things work together for good,” and, “God works all things for good.” Whether or not the word “God” is introduced, this is Paul’s meaning anyway. It is God who causes all things to work together in our lives for ultimate good.

For good. Nothing can touch the Christian except by our Lord’s permission (see Job 1:12; 2:6), and all things that are permitted work together for good to those who love God. If God permits suffering and perplexity to come upon us, it is not to destroy us but to refine and sanctify us (see on Rom. 8:17). The troubles and disappointments of this life take our affections from the world and lead us to look to heaven for our home. They teach us the truth about our frail and dying condition and cause us to rely upon God for support and for salvation. They also produce in us a more humble and subdued spirit, a more patient and tender disposition. This has been the experience of God’s people throughout history, and at the end of their lives they have been able to say that it was good for them to have been so afflicted (see Ps. 119:67, 71; cf. Heb. 12:11). At the end of his life Joseph was able to say to his brothers, “Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Gen. 50:20).

To them that love God. In the Greek this phrase is placed in a position of emphasis. The words describe the true followers of God, those who have real faith and who trust in God’s leading. Their love for God is in response to God’s love for them and His divine

working in all things for their salvation. The love of God must first come to a man and enter his heart before he in turn can love God (1 John 4:19), as the Holy Spirit must first enlighten a man if he himself is to pray as he ought (Rom. 8:26).

Paul has already spoken of God's love toward us (ch. 5:5, 8), and he mentions it again in this chapter (ch. 8:39). He also speaks a number of times about our love for our fellow men (chs. 12:9, 10; 13:8, 9). But this is the most specific reference in the epistle to our love toward God. Faith has been frequently mentioned, and hope has been the subject of the preceding verses in this chapter (see ch. 8:24, 25). Now Paul adds to the list by mentioning love to God. Of course, every reference to faith throughout the epistle implies also love, for Christian faith is based upon love and admiration for God and for all that He is. For those who have such love, God is ever working for their good (see 1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 6:24; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12).

The called. The context implies that the call has been accepted (see Rom. 1:6, 7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 24; Jude 1; Rev. 17:14). Christians are termed "called" because God, through the gospel, has invited them to be saved. Salvation is never forced upon an unwilling sinner, but comes as the result of his freely accepting an invitation. Along with the call God sends into the heart the influence of the Holy Spirit to make the call effectual. Those who "love God" have in their own experience the evidence that they have been "called according to his purpose," for the call has produced the intended effect (see Rom. 8:16).

Purpose. Gr. *prothesis*, meaning basically, a "proposition," a setting forth of something in the sight of others. It is thus applied to the bread that was laid on the table of shewbread (Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4). In Rom. 3:25 the verb from which this term is derived (*protithēmi*) is used to describe God's act in "setting forth" His Son. When applied to the mind, the term means a "plan," or a "purpose."

It is God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11) to save sinners by grace (2 Tim. 1:9). And since it is "the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11), it follows that "all things" must "work together for good" to the "called" according to that purpose.

Paul fully recognizes the freedom of the human will. The large part that exhortation plays in his epistles is clear evidence of this. But behind it all he ever sees the sovereignty and purpose of God. And there is no contradiction in this. For God's purpose to save man is realized through the proper exercise of man's freedom.

29. For. Or, "because." The confidence expressed in v. 28 is now justified and confirmed by an explanation of the way in which God's purpose for those who love Him is developed. That purpose includes all the stages in the process of salvation (vs. 29, 30). Thus those who accept God's call and submit to His purpose are here assured that He will complete for them each stage in His plan to save them. Afflictions are nothing else but the means by which they are "to be conformed to the image of his Son."

The meaning of v. 29 has been the subject of prolonged discussion. When finite human minds attempt to look into the eternal purposes of the infinite God, it is well to heed this advice offered by one commentator on this passage: "On a path so high and slippery for human reason our safety lies in planting our steps only where the inspired Apostle has already planted his: if we venture, as too many have ventured, beyond the limits of his track, there are precipices and chasms on every side, which the most wary can hardly escape" (E. H. Gifford, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, p. 160).

Foreknow. Gr. *proginōskō*, “to know beforehand.” This word occurs elsewhere in the NT in Acts 26:5; Rom. 11:2; 1 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 3:17. God foreknows because He is omniscient, that is, He knows all things. Of Him the Scriptures affirm: “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13); “declaring the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10); “known unto God are all his works from the beginning” (Acts 15:18). The past, present, and future are all equally known to Him. Nothing short of absolute knowledge would satisfy our fundamental concept of God’s perfection. Because He knows the future, He is never taken by surprise. The apostasy of Satan and the fall of man were both foreseen by Him and provision was made to meet the emergency (1 Peter 1:20; Rev. 13:8; DA 22). Predictive prophecy is the supreme evidence of His foreknowledge. Prophecy predicts what God’s foreknowledge has seen will be (see EGW RH Nov. 13, 1900). The forecasted events do not take place because they are foreseen; they are foreseen because they will take place. This truth has been well stated by Milton, who, in commenting on the fall of Satan and his angels, makes God declare:

“If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
They trespass”

(*Paradise Lost*, Book III, lines 117 ff.).

Predestinate. Gr. *proorizō*, “to mark off beforehand.” The word is translated “determined before” in Acts 4:28, and “ordained” in 1 Cor. 2:7. God predestinated those whom He foreknew. To use human language, as God foresaw, and thus foreknew, each generation of men that would come upon the stage of this world’s action, He coupled immediately with His foreknowledge the decision to predestinate them all to be saved. God never had any other purpose than salvation for the members of the human family. For God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Eze. 33:11). Christ Himself said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Salvation is offered freely to all. But not all accept the gospel invitation. “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14; cf. ch. 20:16). Salvation is not forced upon us against our will. If we choose to oppose and resist God’s purpose, we shall be lost. Divine foreknowledge and divine predestination in no way exclude human liberty. Nowhere does Paul, or any other Bible writer, suggest that God has predestined certain men to be saved and certain others to be lost, regardless of their own choice in the matter.

The purpose of this verse seems to be a practical one. Paul is trying to comfort and assure the afflicted people of God that their salvation rests in His hands and that it is in process of being accomplished in accordance with His eternal and changeless purpose for

them. Salvation is, of course, dependent also upon their perseverance (Heb. 3:14; cf. 1 Cor. 9:27), but this is not Paul's point of emphasis now.

Conformed. Gr. *summorphos*. The only other NT occurrence of this Greek adjective is in Phil. 3:21, where it is translated “fashioned like unto,” and refers to the changing of our vile bodies into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. The companion verb (*summorphoō*) is used in Phil. 3:10 in the phrase “being made conformable unto his death.” Our conformity is to be, not merely an outward and superficial resemblance, but an inward and essential likeness.

Image of his Son. Christ is the image of the Father, the visible manifestation of the invisible God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). It is the glorious destiny of every Christian to be changed into the likeness of Christ, the Son of God (1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10). How such a marvelous transformation may take place is the good news of the gospel, the message of forgiveness, rebirth, sanctification, and final glorification. The change is effected by the union of the human with the divine. As the Son of God took upon Himself our human nature, so Christians may become the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), and Christ will dwell in them (John 14:23). Thus the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Then, under the influence of the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:13, 14), and inspired by the example of Christ (John 15:12; Phil. 2:5), he is led to a new holiness of life. By patient endurance of suffering his character is continually made more and more like that of the Saviour (Rom. 5:3, 4; 1 Peter 2:21–24), until the day of final glorification, when the likeness will be made complete (1 John 3:2).

Firstborn. Gr. *prōtotokos*, used elsewhere of Christ in Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5. Paul's emphasis here is upon Christ's position as the Eldest Brother in the family of the redeemed. The ultimate purpose of the plan of salvation is the restoration of unity in the family of God's kingdom, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). In this family, Christ as the Eldest Brother has traveled the way before us and set the example. And though He is perfect and divine, He is not ashamed to call us who follow in His footsteps, “brethren” (Heb. 2:11). See Vol. V, p. 917; see on John 1:14.

Many brethren. Christ makes us His brethren by a new creation (see 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), and thereby brings “many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10).

Being “born of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5), we are adopted into the heavenly family (Eph. 1:5), enrolled in the “church of the firstborn [ones]” (see on Heb. 12:23), and “written” in the family register “in heaven” (Heb. 12:23)—the book of life.

30. Moreover. Gr. *de*, here perhaps better, “and.”

Predestinate. See on v. 29.

Called. This call is given by the preaching of the gospel, as in 2 Thess. 2:14, “Whereunto he called you by our gospel.” The usage of the verb “called,” like that of the adjective “called” (see on Rom. 8:28), seems here to be limited to effectual calling. The context clearly indicates that the reference is to those who have responded to God's call. This divine call is the first great step in personal salvation, and response to the call constitutes the experience of conversion. The “calling” expresses the divine authorship of that experience and the sovereign power by which we are summoned.

Justified. See on chs. 3:20, 28; 4:25; 5:1.

Glorified. Jesus said, “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them” (John 17:22), but the experience of full glorification is yet to come (Rom. 8:18). Although this

event is still future, Paul uses the past tense “glorified,” as he does for all the other verbs in this sentence, “did predestinate,” “called,” “justified.” This may reflect the fact that in God’s eternal counsel the whole process, with all its stages, stands complete (see Eph. 1:4–6). Another explanation may be found in the timelessness of the Greek tense here employed. Regarding the verbs as timeless permits the following translation, “Those whom He predestines He also calls; those whom He calls He also justifies; those whom He justifies He also glorifies.”

Whichever explanation is adopted, Paul’s purpose in this verse is to express the certainty of the progressive stages in the process of being conformed to Christ. The first step is the call. If this is obeyed, it brings with it justification and all that that experience implies. Then, if the Christian continues to allow God to work out His good purpose for him (see Rom. 11:22), the inevitable result will be glorification. One might expect Paul to have mentioned sanctification as one of the stages, but it is sufficiently implied as a consequence of justification and a necessary condition for glorification.

31. *What shall we then say?* Compare chs. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 9:14, where this common phrase introduces a contrary conclusion. Here and in ch. 9:30 it introduces one in harmony with the preceding argument.

These things. That is, the things mentioned in the preceding verses, the revealed purpose of God and all the steps in its fulfillment. In view of these things, what conclusion should we draw in regard to the power of the Christian religion to sustain us in our trials?

If God be for us. Or, “if God is for us.” There is no uncertainty about this, as the Greek construction clearly shows. Paul has already shown how God is on our side. God regards us as His sons (vs. 15–17) and has sent His Spirit to help us (v. 26), for it is His purpose to save us (vs. 28–30).

Who can be against us? Or, “who is against us?” though in this case it seems more appropriate to supply the words “can be.” It is encouraging to recognize that, since God has purposed and is actively engaged in accomplishing salvation for believers, all our enemies are also His enemies (see Ps. 27:1; 118:6).

32. *He that.* The expression is emphatic in the Greek and might be translated “even He,” meaning that the same God who did not spare His own Son will surely give us everything besides.

Spared. Gr. *pheidomai*, Paul uses this verb a number of times in his epistles (Rom. 11:21; 1 Cor. 7:28; 2 Cor. 1:23; etc.). Outside of Paul’s letters it occurs only in Acts 20:29 and 2 Peter 2:4, 5. The same word is used in the LXX concerning Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:12, 16), and it is not unlikely that Paul is alluding to the record of that experience. The Lord’s touching commendation of Abraham’s conduct in offering up his son Isaac gives us a glimpse into the spirit of God’s act in surrendering His own Son Jesus. This greatest of all gifts is the strongest of all proofs that God is “for us” (Rom. 8:31). The argument of this passage is similar to that of ch. 5:6–10.

His own Son. This expression is emphatic in the Greek, and denotes something that is personally and distinctly one’s own (cf. ch. 14:4).

Delivered ... up. Gr. *paradidōmi*. This is the same verb that Paul used in ch. 4:25 to state that Jesus “was delivered for our offences.”

With him. Paul is arguing from the greater to the lesser. If God would not spare even His own Son, what is there that He would withhold?

Freely give. Gr. *charizomai*, “to give as a favor.” Compare the use of the word in Luke 7:21; Acts 3:14; 1 Cor. 2:12. The verb is related to the nouns “grace” (*charis*; see on Rom. 3:24) and “free gift” (*charisma*; see on Rom. 6:23).

All things. Compare Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:21–23; Phil. 4:19. The Christian could ask for no greater ground for confidence and patient endurance than is given in this verse. When God gave His Son, He also gave Himself (2 Cor. 5:19; cf. DA 762), and thereby revealed to the universe how far He was willing to go to save repentant sinners. Surely, then, no matter what trials may come, we should never doubt that God is ever working for us and that He will give us all that is necessary for our present and future good.

33. Shall lay ... to the charge. Gr. *egkaleō*, a legal term meaning literally, “to call in,” hence, “to call to account,” “to bring a charge against,” “to accuse” (see Acts 19:38, 40; 23:28, 29; 26:2, 7). Satan is the great accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10).

The punctuation and arrangement of Rom. 8:33–35 involve some difficulty, and the commentaries and versions have offered a number of solutions. Some recommend that the last clause of v. 33 and the first clause of v. 34 be so punctuated as to indicate a closer connection between them. Thus the RV, and some editions of the KJV, render, “It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn?”

Other commentators have argued that all the clauses in vs. 33 and 34 should be regarded as a series of questions (see Weymouth). The RSV represents still another viewpoint by connecting vs. 33 and 34 as in the RV, but punctuating the rest of v. 34 as a question.

Whichever arrangement is followed, the encouraging meaning of Paul’s argument stands out clearly. God is declaring His people righteous. Christ, who died for them, is at God’s right hand pleading for them. Who, then, can accuse God’s chosen people? Who can condemn them? Who can ever separate them from Christ’s love? It seems evident that Paul has in mind Isa. 50:8, 9, “He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? ... Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?”

Elect. Gr. *eklektoi*, “chosen,” “picked out,” from the verb *eklegomai*, used to describe Christ’s picking out of His disciples (Luke 6:13; John 6:70; 13:18), and God’s choosing of persons (Mark 13:20; Acts 1:24; 13:17) or things (1 Cor. 1:27, 28). In Matt. 22:14 Jesus makes a distinction between those who are called and those who are chosen. But Paul seems to identify the two groups by reading into the term “called” the implication that the call is accepted (see on Rom. 8:30). For Paul, God’s elect are those who have not only heard but also heeded the divine call to find salvation in Christ.

God that justifieth. God’s elect need fear no accuser. It is God Himself, the Judge of all, who pronounces them upright according to His plan of justification (ch. 3:20–26). “Justify” is the opposite of “lay any thing to the charge.”

34. Condemneth. Or, “shall condemn.” Satan has an accurate knowledge of all the sins that he has succeeded in tempting men to commit, and he presents these to God as evidence that men deserve only destruction (see GC 618). But God answers the charges brought against His chosen people. Christ has paid for their sins with His own life (ch. 4:25). God’s elect are free from condemnation (ch. 8:1).

Is risen again. Rather, “was raised” (see chs. 4:24, 25; 6:4, 9; 7:4). We do not worship a dead Christ, but rather a living Christ. This does not imply that the resurrection

was of more saving value than the crucifixion, but it emphasizes the fact that Christ not only died but also now lives to complete the purpose of His death in our behalf (see on ch. 4:25).

Right hand of God. The right hand was regarded as the position of honor (see 1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 45:9) and denoted participation in the royal power and glory (Matt. 20:21). That Christ should occupy this position with His Father was predicted in Ps. 110:1; cf. Mark 16:19; Acts 7:56; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22. His position at the right hand signifies, not only the glory, but also the power, of the exalted Son of man (see Heb. 1:3; cf. Matt. 26:64).

Maketh intercession. Gr. *entugchanō*. This is the word used of the Holy Spirit's pleading in v. 27 (see on v. 26). That Christ is our intercessor and advocate with the Father is clearly stated in Scripture (Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1; cf. Heb. 4:14–16; 9:11, 12). This must not be taken to mean that God needs to be persuaded to do good things for His people, for it was He who so loved the world that He gave His only Son. The nature of this divine intercession may, perhaps, be illustrated by Christ's intercessory prayer for His disciples (John 17:11, 12, 24).

In this verse Paul has added reason upon reason for the assurance that nothing can separate the Christian from the love of Christ. It is not a dead but a living Christ upon whom he depends. It is not only a living Christ but a Christ enthroned in power. It is not only a Christ in power but a Christ of saving love, who ever lives to make intercession for His struggling people (cf. Heb. 7:25).

The Bible pictures all of heaven constantly at work to save the elect. In this chapter Paul has spoken of the work of the Father in calling, justifying, and glorifying. He has described the leading and intercession of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere the angels are represented as ministering spirits, who are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Heaven could do nothing more. If a man is eternally lost, it can only be the result of his own decision to resist and reject God's loving purpose and power to save.

35. Shall separate. Gr. *chōrizō*, literally, "to put a space between." Can anyone put a distance between us and Christ's love? Can anyone cause Him to stop loving us? All the things that Paul now lists will not make Christ love us any less.

The love of Christ. This is evidently Christ's love for us rather than our love for Christ (cf. on ch. 5:5).

Tribulation. See on ch. 5:3. Paul is well able to speak on this subject in view of his own experiences (see 1 Cor. 4:10–13; 2 Cor. 11:23–33).

Distress. Gr. *stenochōria* (see on ch. 2:9). The evils listed in this verse were all exceedingly real to the early Christians.

36. As it is written. The quotation is from Ps. 44:22. Paul refers to the sufferings of God's people in an earlier age as typical of the persecutions to which the Christians were being exposed in his day. Ever since the entrance of sin, the hatred of the wicked against the righteous has been strong (see Gal. 4:29; 1 John 3:12).

Are killed. Or, "are being killed."

Accounted. Or, "regarded."

37. Nay. Gr. *alla*, literally, "but." Notwithstanding the afflictions, we keep on conquering (cf. 2 Cor. 12:10).

Are more than conquerors. Gr. *hupernikaō*, from *huper*, “above,” and *nikaō*, “to conquer,” hence, “to surpass in conquering,” or “to conquer gloriously.” This compound word occurs nowhere else in the NT. Paul uses a word that depicts the excess of God’s blessing over man’s need (ch. 5:20).

Him that loved us. The reference is evidently to Christ, through whose incomparable love (v. 35) we become conquerors. The past tense of the verb “loved” may point to the special revelation of that love in His death for sinners (ch. 5:6). Instead of troubles separating us from the love of Christ (ch. 8:35), on the contrary, “through him that loved us” we are victorious over them. There is no affliction so heavy, no temptation so strong, that it cannot be overcome through Christ. For the One who loved us enough to give Himself for us is even now living in us to continue the work of our salvation (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, we can do all things through Him who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). Paul experienced and acknowledged this saving power, and it led him to exclaim, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

38. I am persuaded. Or, “I am convinced.” Paul now expresses his own personal conviction that no power in heaven or earth, in time or in eternity, can separate us from the divine love. Paul does not mean by this that it is therefore impossible for a believer to fall away and be lost (see Col. 1:23; cf. 1 Cor. 9:27). Paul means that nothing can pluck us out of Christ’s arms against our will (see on John 10:28).

Neither death, nor life. Compare “whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (ch. 14:8).

Angels. The angels mentioned in the NT are usually good rather than evil. However, the word itself does not indicate the particular quality. The distinction must be either expressed or implied by the context (see Matt. 1:20; 25:41; 1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). It is inconceivable that the angels of God, who are sent forth to minister to the saints (Heb. 1:14), should seek to alienate the minds of Christians from their Saviour, or that their influence could have any such tendency. However, Paul may be emphasizing his point by speaking hypothetically, as he does in Gal. 1:8. Even though the good angels should attempt, which of course they would not, to divert the love of Christ from His people, they could not do it!

Principalities. Gr. *archai*. This word refers to civil rulers as well as to supernatural powers that attempt to exercise evil dominion over men (see Eph. 6:12). Some commentators suggest that Paul’s reference to “angels,” “principalities,” and “powers” may reflect the Jewish designation for the hierarchy of angels (see the apocryphal work Enoch 61:10; cf. 1 Cor. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15).

Powers. Gr. *dunameis*. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the placing of this word after the phrase, “things to come,” though one might more naturally expect it to be associated with “principalities,” as in Eph. 1:21. In 1 Peter 3:22 “powers” are mentioned along with “angels” and “authorities” as having been made subject to Christ upon His ascension to heaven.

Things present. Compare 1 Cor. 3:22. The experiences of the present time were already trying enough to Paul and to the early Christians (Rom. 8:18, 23; 2 Cor. 1:4–10; 2 Cor. 6:4–10; 1 Peter 4:12). But the future held still further trials of deception and affliction, for the coming of Christ was to be preceded by the apostasy and the appearance of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2). And this appearance would be accompanied by

“the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9). Nevertheless, Paul’s confidence remained unshaken.

39. Height, nor depth. It is possible that in this rhetorical passage Paul did not intend that each of these expressions should be too closely defined. “Height” and “depth” may have been used to express simply dimensions of space, as “things present” and “things to come” express dimensions of time. Such a use of these terms brings out all the more emphatically the idea of universality, which seems to be Paul’s purpose in these verses. Compare his description of “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of the love of Christ (Eph. 3:18, 19).

Any other creature. Or, “any other creation” (see on v. 19; cf. vs. 19, 22).

Paul lists ten items that cannot separate us from the love of God. The tenth is broad enough to include anything that may have been omitted. All the terms are perhaps to be taken in their most general sense. Their very indefiniteness serves to emphasize Paul’s point that there is nothing that one can think of in all the created universe that can put a distance between a Christian and his loving Saviour.

Separate. Gr. *chōrizō* (see on v. 35).

Love of God. “The love of Christ” (v. 35) is no other than “the love of God” revealed to us and working in our behalf in the person of Christ (see on ch. 5:8). In this epistle Paul has pictured the supreme cooperation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of the divine love. For example, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (ch. 5:5); “God commendeth his love toward us, in that ... Christ died for us” (v. 8); the Spirit, whose will and purpose is our salvation (ch. 8:29, 30), intercedes for us “according to the will of God” (vs. 26, 27); Christ died for us, and is even now interceding for us at the right hand of the Father (v. 34).

With this expression of unlimited confidence in the saving love of God (vs. 31–39), Paul reaches the climax of his explanation of God’s plan for the restoration of man. Righteousness and salvation come by faith. And this faith is to be placed in a person whose love is so great and whose purpose to save is so strong that He has made every conceivable provision for our salvation. Surely, then, we too should join with the apostle in giving Him our unreserved trust and obedience.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 CH 69; GC 477; PP 517; SC 51, 64; SL 30; 2T 170
- 2 DA 210, 466
- 3 DA 116, 175, 312; PP 330
- 3, 4 PP 373
- 4 GC 263, 468; MB 78
- 6 5T 267
- 7 AA 84; DA 172; EW 69; GC 467; MYP 68; SC 18, 63; 1T 161, 440; 2T 454; 3T 442; 4T 13; 5T 341
- 9 COL 251; MB 28; 3T 538; 5T 223, 386
- 11 DA 320; FE 332
- 14 MB 28, 149
- 14–178T 126
- 15 GC 468; 5T 739
- 16 Ev 616

- 17 AA 590; CE 34; CM 37; COL 154; Ev 199; EW 115; FE 251; MB 104; MH 169; SL 17; Te 111; 1T 287; 3T 45, 458; 4T 16, 33; 5T 230, 316; 6T 60; 7T 229; WM 93
- 18 AA 577; GC 351; MB 30; ML 326; PP 127; SL 95; 1T 432; 8T 125
- 22 CH 579; Ed 263; GC 673; PP 443, 542; SC 33
- 24 MH 165
- 26 COL 147; CT 509; Ed 263; FE 242; GW 217; MH 229
- 28 AA 481, 574; Ed 154; MB 71; MH 474, 487, 489; ML 185; 3T 67; 8T 123; 9T 286
- 29 DA 341, 827; MB 61; 6T 175
- 30 COL 163
- 31 PK 645
- 31, 32 ChS 240; MH 66
- 31–392T 517; 7T 245
- 32 COL 174; CT 184; GC 477; MB 111; PP 154; SC 95, 118; TM 246; 2T 319; 5T 316; 7T 29; 9T 59
- 33, 34 DA 568; MH 90
- 34 AA 36; CSW 124; CT 14; DA 833; Ed 95, 132; FE 262; GC 350; GW 259; MH 419, 424; PP 517; SC 74; TM 95, 157, 391; 2T 319; 8T 177, 287
- 35 ML 326; 2T 288
- 35–39AA 85; Ed 69; SL 96; 2T 345
- 36, 37 AA 468
- 37 CG 467; CS 21; CT 183; GC 633; ML 313, 326; MM 144; MYP 348; SC 72; Te 216; TM 104, 328, 456; 2T 320, 409; 3T 476, 483, 540; 4T 36, 214, 368; 5T 82, 309, 741; 8T 131; 9T 22, 188
- 37–39GC 350
- 38, 39 AA 553; EW 30; MH 66; 2T 288

CHAPTER 9

5

1 *Paul is sorry for the Jews. 7 All the seed of Abraham were not the children of the promise. 18 God hath mercy upon whom he will. 21 The potter may do with his clay what he list. 25 The calling of the Gentiles and rejecting of the Jews were foretold. 32 The cause why so few Jews embraced the righteousness of faith.*

1. I say the truth. Paul now turns from the triumphant and joyful climax of ch. 8 to consider a problem that fills him with “great heaviness and continual sorrow” (ch. 9:2). Why is it that the Jews, God’s chosen people, have so largely rejected the gospel? If the gospel brings sure salvation to God’s elect, why are His chosen people Israel not found among the heirs of this salvation? If the good news of salvation is the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel, then surely it should meet with the approval of those for whom it was especially intended. But instead, it has stirred most of them to bitter opposition.

Paul has been preparing the way for his discussion of this difficult and delicate question by stressing the fact that, though the gospel is for both Jew and Gentile, it is for the Jew first (chs. 1:16; 2:10). He has also emphasized that God is no respecter of persons (ch. 2:11) and that the Jews, especially, have been guilty of sin (vs. 17–24). He has

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 8:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

devoted a whole chapter to proving that the gospel of salvation by faith is well supported by the OT (ch. 4). In ch. 3:1 he even began to consider the problem directly, but his full discussion of the question has been reserved for chs. 9; 10; 11.

First, Paul affirms his love and sorrow for his own people (ch. 9:1–3). He then declares that the cause of their rejection is not the failure of God’s promises to them (vs. 6–13). Nor is there any injustice on the part of God in this matter (vs. 14–29). The fault lies in their own rejection of “the righteousness which is of faith” (chs. 9:30 to 10:21). But Paul does not describe their condition as hopeless. He goes on to speak of the salvation of “a remnant according to the election of grace” (ch. 11:1–10), and of the acceptance of the Gentiles (vs. 11–22), all of which is evidence of the wisdom and glory of God (vs. 33–36).

In Christ. Paul appeals to his experience as one united with Christ, as evidence of the truthfulness of what he is about to say (cf. 2 Cor. 2:17).

I lie not. Compare 2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:7. Paul was well aware that many of his fellow Jews regarded him as a traitor (Acts 21:28; 22:22; 25:24). His frequent conflicts with Jews and Judaizers naturally cast doubt upon his love for his own nation. Therefore, he expresses the sincerity of his concern for his people in these strong terms.

Conscience. See on Rom. 2:15; cf. Acts 23:1; 24:16.

Bearing me witness. The same verb is used in chs. 2:15; 8:16.

In the Holy Ghost. That is, in the Holy Spirit (see on ch. 5:5). Paul has spoken of the union of the believer with the Spirit of God (ch. 8:9, 11, 16). The Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), and the witness of a conscience enlightened by Him and acting under His influence must be a true and safe guide.

2. Heaviness. Gr. *lupē*, “sorrow,” “grief.”

Continual. Gr. *adialeiptos*, literally, “without leaving off.” The only other NT occurrence of this word is in 2 Tim. 1:3.

Sorrow. Gr. *odunē*, “pain,” “anguish.” This word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in 1 Tim. 6:10.

Heart. See on ch. 1:21.

3. For. This verse does not give the reason for Paul’s sorrow but rather the proof of his sincerity.

I could wish. Literally, “I was wishing,” or “I was praying.” The Greek phrase is an idiomatic expression implying a real but passing wish which has already been resigned as impracticable. The wish was in his mind, the prayer was in his heart, but there were conditions that made the fulfillment impossible. Compare the same idiom in Gal. 4:20.

Accursed. There has been a great deal of discussion as to Paul’s meaning in this strong expression. The simplest solution seems to lie in comparing Paul’s wish with Moses’ prayer, “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Ex. 32:32). God’s reply to Moses shows that such a prayer could not be granted. “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Ex. 32:33).

From. Gr. *apo*, a preposition implying separation.

According to the flesh. That is, the Jews, who were Paul's brethren by racial relationship. According to the spirit Paul was a member of spiritual Israel, and his spiritual kinsmen were the brethren of the Christian church (cf. Mark 3:33–35).

4. Israelites. Paul does not call them "Hebrews," which would distinguish them by language, nor "Jews," which would mark them by race. He uses, instead, the title that designates their position as the chosen people of God. As descendants of Jacob, who received from God the name "Israel," they are heirs of the promises given to the fathers (Eph. 2:12). In the NT the title is transferred to the Christian church, which Paul speaks of as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

Adoption. See on ch. 8:15. Here the term implies the relationship between God and Israel announced in Ex. 4:22, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (cf. Deut. 14:1; Deut. 32:6; Jer. 31:9; Hosea 11:1). The call of Abraham and his seed to be God's peculiar people marked the beginning of this "adoption." See Vol. IV, pp. 25–27.

The glory. See on ch. 3:23. In this case the reference seems to be to the visible token of the presence of God. This was seen in the pillar of cloud and fire, the blazing light on Mt. Sinai, the Shekinah in the tabernacle and in the first Temple (see Ex. 16:10; 24:16; 40:34, 35; 1 Sam. 4:22; 1 Kings 8:10, 11; Heb. 9:5). Only Israel among all the nations had been privileged to have such a manifestation of God's presence. See on John 1:14.

Covenants. These are "the covenants of promise" to which the Gentiles were "strangers" (Eph. 2:12, 13; see also Gen. 17:2, 7, 9; Ex. 2:24). The Jews seemed to regard these covenants as placing God under obligation to favor them with divine protection and blessing. At the same time they ignored their own obligations and failed to fulfill the conditions upon which the covenants were based.

Giving of the law. The reference is doubtless to the laws given at Sinai. Israel, above all other nations, had been favored with a revelation of God's will (Deut. 4:8; Neh. 9:13, 14). Paul has already rebuked the Jews for assuming that the mere possession of the law, without obedience, would bring blessing (see Rom. 2:17–29).

Service of God. Gr. *latreia*, translated "divine service" in Heb. 9:1. The reference is doubtless to the service of the sanctuary (see Heb. 9:6, where *latreia* is again translated "service of God"). Since the whole purpose of the ceremonial system was to develop a holy people and to teach them the provisions of God's plan of righteousness by faith in the coming Redeemer, the Israelites had been highly favored by being entrusted with the "service of God." But this privilege had been seriously abused (see Matt. 21:13; John 2:14–16).

Promises. These are especially the OT promises concerning the Messiah and His kingdom and Israel's glorious future (see also Acts 26:6; Gal. 3:16, 21; Heb. 7:6).

5. Fathers. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were particularly regarded as the "fathers" (Acts 3:13; 7:32). The Jews considered it a matter of great merit to be descended from such noble ancestors (see on Matt. 3:9; cf. John 8:39, 53; 2 Cor. 11:22). Later in this epistle Paul speaks of God's love for Israel "for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28).

Of whom. Rather, "from whom," or "out of whom." The last and greatest of all the privileges granted to the Israelites was that the Messiah sprang from their race. It was toward this most exalted privilege that all the other blessings had pointed.

As concerning the flesh. Paul limits the Jewish origin of Jesus to His human nature, as in ch. 1:3.

Christ. Literally, "the Christ," referring to His title and position as "the Messiah."

Who is. The interpretation of the last half of v. 5 has been debated at great length. The discussions reached a climax after the appearance of the NT of the RV in 1881. Considerable space was devoted to the question in the religious journals of the day. The problem is one of punctuation, and since the original Greek manuscripts were written without any form of punctuation, the solution becomes a matter of interpretation (cf. on Luke 23:43).

With various changes of punctuation, four possible interpretations of this passage have been advanced (see RV text and margin). One is to place either no punctuation, or a comma, after “flesh” and refer the whole passage to Christ as an assertion of His divinity. This has been the traditional view and is the interpretation offered by the KJV and most other versions. A second possibility is to place a comma after “flesh” and a period after “all.” The passage would then read, “Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all. God be [is] blessed for ever.”

A third possibility is to place a period after “flesh” and translate the rest of the verse, “He who is God over all be blessed for ever,” or “God who is over all be blessed for ever.” This is the reading preferred by the RSV and a few other versions. A fourth possibility is to use the same punctuation as in the third solution and to translate, “He who is over all is God blessed for ever.” For a more detailed discussion of the problem see Sanday and Headlam, *The International Critical Commentary*, on Romans, pp. 233–238.

The basic question is whether the passage should be interpreted as a statement of the deity of Christ. To regard it thus is the simplest and most natural interpretation of the grammatical construction of the verse. It is the one best suited to the context. Paul has been recounting the many benefits and privileges God had entrusted to Israel as His chosen people. As the climax of these blessings Paul mentions the descent of the Messiah from their own race. But this descent is limited to His physical nature. The Messiah has another nature that is not flesh, and Paul now gives the further description of Christ, “who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Paul’s expression of Christ’s humanity seems to require as an antithesis this clear statement of His divinity (cf. Rom. 1:3, 4). That Christ is indeed divine and the One who is “over all” is taught in many NT passages (see John 1:1–3; Eph. 1:20–22; Phil. 2:10, 11; Col. 1:16, 17; 2:9; Additional Note on John 1). For a further discussion of this text see *The Ministry*, Sept., 1954, pp. 19–21; *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 218–222.

Over all. Compare ch. 11:36. This description of the supreme power and dignity of Him who was an Israelite by human descent serves to intensify the privileged character of the Jewish race. What greater blessings, what greater opportunities, could the Lord have granted to any people than those listed in these two verses?

By enumerating these privileges, Paul has given the reason for his “continual sorrow.” Each privilege listed reminds him of God’s original purpose for Israel and of the glorious destiny promised to them (see Vol. IV, pp. 25–38). But how greatly this contrasts with their present rejected condition!

6. Not as though. Paul’s point is that his grief for his fellow countrymen must not be understood as meaning the failure of God’s promise to Israel.

Word of God. That is, God’s declared will and purpose.

Hath taken none effect. Gr. *ekpiptō*, literally, “to fall out,” hence, “to fail.”

Not all Israel. The passage reads literally, “for not all who are of Israel, these are Israel.” Paul’s meaning is that not all who are descended from Israel really belong to Israel in the full spiritual significance of that name. His purpose in making this statement is to explain how the word of God to Israel has not failed. The fulfillment of God’s promise is limited to those who meet the conditions of the covenant relation. For this faithful and obedient remnant the word of God will not fail.

Of Israel. This refers to the offspring of Israel according to the flesh, Jacob’s physical descendants. The divine promise was indeed given to Israel, but that did not include everyone who could claim descent from Jacob without any further limitation. Paul has already explained that those who have faith are the true sons of Abraham (Rom. 4; Gal. 3:7–9; cf. Rom. 2:28, 29).

7. Seed. Compare Gal. 3:29.

Children. That is, children in the fullest sense, as in ch. 8:17, “if children, then heirs.” The descendants of Abraham do not have the rights of inheritance simply because they can trace their physical descent back to him.

In Isaac. Or, “through Isaac.” The same Greek word translated “in” (*en*) is rendered “through” in Matt. 9:34, and “by” in 1 Cor. 6:2 and Col. 1:16. The words “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” are a quotation from the LXX of Gen. 21:12 (cf. Heb. 11:18).

Called. Isaac and Ishmael, according to the flesh, were both sons of Abraham. However, to Isaac and his descendants were the promises made. Ishmael was not included. This does not mean that Ishmael and his descendants were outside the pale of salvation, but simply that God had chosen the descendants of Isaac to be His missionaries to the world. They were to reveal the principles of His kingdom before the nations, that men might be drawn to Him (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30; see on Eze. 25:1). God reserves the right to assign various responsibilities to men and nations (see on Dan. 4:17).

8. Children of the flesh. These are the merely physical descendants, who are born in the natural course of events, as was Ishmael (see Gal. 4:23). But spiritual blessings are not inherited by natural descent.

Children of God. This refers historically to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. They were the ones who stood in covenant relation with God, inherited the promises, and received the privileges of the chosen people. From this distinction made between Isaac and Ishmael, Paul is drawing the principle that to be true sons of Abraham, and true sons of God, does not depend on physical descent alone. This was hard doctrine for the Jews, for their most cherished belief was that merely being a Jew constituted one a child of God. But how encouraging this message must have been to the Gentiles!

Children of the promise. The case of Isaac is doubtless referred to. Isaac was born when Abraham and Sarah had passed the time of life when they could naturally expect to have a child. But the promise of God and their acceptance of it by faith made it possible for them to become the parents of Isaac (see on ch. 4:18–21). Likewise, as Paul explains in Gal. 4:21–31, it is by supernatural rebirth that Gentiles may become children of Abraham, children of the promise (v. 28).

9. Word of promise. The clause may be translated “this word is one of promise.” In the Greek the emphasis is upon the word “promise.” Paul’s point is that when God said, “At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son,” He uttered a word of promise. The birth of Isaac depended upon the promise. The promise did not depend upon the birth. Had it not been for the divine promise and intervention, Isaac would not have been born.

From this Paul continues to deduce the principle that a mere connection with the Jewish race “according to the flesh” does not necessarily imply a share in the promise any more than it did in the days of Isaac and Ishmael.

At this time. Literally, “according to this season.” The quotation is from Gen. 18:10, 14.

10. And not only. Paul now gives a still clearer illustration of the same principle. It might be objected that the election of Isaac and the rejection of Ishmael are easily understood on the basis that Sarah was Abraham’s wife, whereas Hagar was but a bondswoman (Gen. 16:1). But the choice of Jacob over Esau could not be explained this way, for their origins were identical.

But when Rebecca also. The sentence beginning with these words is interrupted by the parenthesis in v. 11 and then continued in v. 12. The meaning, however, is clear. Rebecca is mentioned, rather than Isaac, since it was to her that the prophecy quoted in v. 12 was addressed.

By one. These words emphasize that there was only one father. Yet, though Jacob and Esau had the same father and the same mother, the peculiar stations appointed them in life were different.

Our father Isaac. The twins had for their father the patriarch of the chosen race. However, Jacob was the one chosen to be the progenitor of the nation through which God planned to spread abroad a knowledge of His will.

11. Not yet born. The fact that the younger would have pre-eminence over the older was foretold to Rebecca before their birth (see on v. 12).

Election. Gr. *eklogē*, “the process of choice,” “selection” (see Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:5, 7, 28; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Peter 1:10). It is from the verb *eklegomai*, “to pick out,” “to choose” (see on Rom. 8:33). For a discussion of election as related to salvation see on ch. 8:29; see PP 207, 208; TM 453, 454.

Might stand. Or, “might remain,” “might continue.” This is the opposite of “hath taken none effect” (v. 6).

Not of works. That is, not because of any merit gained by works.

Him that calleth. God reserves the right to assign to men and nations various responsibilities (see on v. 7). Men may “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Cor. 12:31), but it is God who through the Spirit distributes the gifts “as he [the Spirit] will” (vs. 7–11). Simply because Jacob was chosen as the progenitor of the nation that was to be God’s evangelizing agency, by no means meant that his brother was elected to be lost. Such a deduction is wholly unwarranted. This passage has been used to support the doctrine that God predestines some to salvation and some to eternal damnation, regardless of character. But such a doctrine is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture (see on Rom. 8:29), and therefore it cannot be Paul’s meaning in this verse. Paul is trying to emphasize to the Jews, by referring to the well-known history of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, the vital fact that mere works and mere physical membership in the chosen race do not bind or obligate God to bless with favor and privilege. It was necessary for Paul to emphasize this point strongly because the Jews were misunderstanding and abusing their covenant relation.

12. Unto her. As Paul described the election of Isaac by quoting the Lord’s prediction to Abraham (v. 7), so he now describes the election of Jacob by repeating the divine prediction to Rebecca. The quotation is from Gen. 25:23.

Serve the younger. This prediction was not literally fulfilled in the case of Jacob and Esau themselves, but it was in the later history of their descendants (see on Gen. 25:23). That God's election of Jacob over Esau also included the nations that descended from them is clear from the original prediction.

13. As it is written. The quotation is from Mal. 1:2, 3.

Jacob have I loved. This verse does not explain the reason for God's choice of Jacob and His rejection of Esau. Rather, it describes the history of the two sons and of the two peoples descended from them, Israel and Edom. That the descendants as well as the ancestors are included is quite apparent from the context of Mal. 1:2, 3.

Esau have I hated. This strong expression does not imply positive hatred, as the term is used today, but that God had preferred Jacob above Esau in His choice of the progenitor of the chosen race (see on vs. 10, 11). It seems to have been common in Biblical times to use the term "hate" in this sense. Thus Jacob's preference for Rachel is compared with his "hatred" for Leah (Gen. 29:30, 31). Similarly Jesus speaks about "hating" one's father and mother (Luke 14:26) and "hating" one's life (John 12:25). Compare Matt. 6:24; see on Mal. 1:3.

By referring to the history of the patriarchs Paul shows that God's choice of spiritual Israel (see on Matt. 21:33–43), in view of the failure of the Jews to fulfill the divine purpose, is fully consistent with His past dealings. God is not being untrue to any. In calling upon the Christian church to accomplish His purposes for the world, God is following the same principle He originally employed when He selected the Israelites and rejected the Edomites and the Ishmaelites. Now Paul proceeds to prove that neither does the present rejection imply that God is unjust.

14. What shall we say then? This introduces the first of two possible objections that a Jew might raise to Paul's argument. The second is in v. 19. The selection of Israel and the rejection of Ishmael and Esau were examples of God's choices that a Jew would heartily approve. But Paul has argued that these examples involve a principle that would justify the exclusion of the unbelieving nation of the Jews. To such a conclusion he expects that objection will at once be made.

Is there unrighteousness? The Greek construction implies a negative answer. Paul answers this by appealing to an authority that could not be questioned by a Jew. God cannot be charged with being unjust, for in the OT Scriptures God expressly claims for Himself the freedom to deal with men according to His own divine purposes.

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

15. I will have mercy. The quotation is from Ex. 33:19. The words were spoken to Moses in connection with his request to see God's glory. The issue is not one of personal salvation, but one of God's right to show certain favors to whom He will. The fact that God does not reveal to us His glory in the remarkable way He did to Moses is no evidence of injustice. "God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly" (SC 96; see Ps. 84:11).

Whom. Rather, "whomsoever." Paul is quoting these words from Ex. 33:19 to emphasize his point that it is for God to decide who are to be the recipients of certain favors. It is not for man to dictate to Him.

16. So then. The inference drawn from God's words to Moses is that the bestowal of certain privileges does not depend on man's will or exertion but on the wisdom of God,

who knows what is best and who “silently, patiently” works “out the counsels of His own will” (Ed 173).

Runneth. This denotes strenuous effort. The metaphor, doubtless taken from the foot races, is a favorite one with Paul (1 Cor. 9:24, 26; Gal. 2:2; 5:7; Phil. 2:16).

But of God. God seeks the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2:4). None need fear that they are outside the pale of salvation. But God in His wisdom chooses the agencies by whom He accomplishes His purposes. If those whom He selects to perform a certain office fail, He chooses others to take their place. Men are admonished to cooperate with Heaven’s plans, and not to run if the Lord has not called them (see Jer. 23:21).

17. The scripture saith. The Scriptures are personified in this common formula of quotation (see also Gal. 3:8, 22). In Rom. 9:15 Paul used the words “he saith,” that is, God saith, to introduce the quotation of God’s words to Moses.

Even for this same purpose. Rather, “for this very purpose.” What the purpose was is stated in the rest of the verse. The quotation is from Ex. 9:16, with some variations, and is part of the words addressed through Moses to Pharaoh after the plague of boils.

Raised ... up. Gr. *exegeirō*. The only other NT occurrence of this verb is in 1 Cor. 6:14, where it is used to describe the raising of the dead. From an examination of the context of Ex. 9:16 some consider the passage to mean “I have raised you from sickness,” that is, Pharaoh had not perished in the plagues thus far. Though because of his rebellious character the king probably deserved to be destroyed, God preserved his life and through him accomplished His purpose. Others see a more general reference to God’s bringing Pharaoh upon the stage of history (cf. Hab. 1:6; Zech. 11:16), and through him accomplishing a specific purpose. See on Ex. 9:16.

One thing this passage definitely does not mean is that God had predestined Pharaoh to a life of rebellion and final destruction. Such an interpretation would be wholly contrary to the rest of Scripture (see on Rom. 8:29; see PP 267). The question under consideration is not Pharaoh’s personal salvation but Pharaoh’s position as leader of one of the greatest nations of his time. God works through nations and their leaders to accomplish His purposes on earth (see on Dan. 4:17).

Shew my power in thee. A literal translation of Ex. 9:16 reads, “show you my power” Paul’s reading agrees with the LXX. The continued stubbornness of Pharaoh led to ever greater manifestations of divine power, until finally even the haughty monarch himself was forced to admit the superior power of God (Ex. 9:27). The Greek word *dunamis*, used here for “power,” means “might,” or “strength.”

Might be declared. Or, “might be published abroad.” This purpose of God is still being fulfilled wherever the book of Exodus is read.

18. Therefore. Again, as in v. 16, Paul states the general inference to be drawn from the examples cited.

Hath he mercy. See on v. 15.

Will. Gr. *thelō*, “to wish,” or “to desire.”

He hardeneth. Gr. *sklērunō*. The only other NT occurrences of this word are in Acts 19:9; Heb. 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7. In Exodus the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart is sometimes described as self-produced (Ex. 8:15, 32; etc.) and sometimes as produced by God (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; etc.). In the Bible God is often represented as doing that which He does not prevent (see on 2 Chron. 18:18). Paul here chooses the latter representation as better

suiting to his purpose in this context. The hardening of a man's heart is the result of rebellion against the divine revelation and rejection of the Divine Spirit. Paul has spoken earlier in this epistle of how God turns a man over to the inevitable consequences of his stubborn disobedience (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). For a discussion of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart see on Ex. 4:21.

19. *Thou wilt say then.* This introduces the second possible objection that might be raised to Paul's argument (see v. 14).

Find fault. The objector's question may be paraphrased thus: If God Himself hardens a man's heart, how can He go on finding fault with him? Is it just for God to blame sinners if their conduct is in accordance with His purpose and is the result of His irresistible will? Historically this objection may recall God's rebuke to Pharaoh, "As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?" (Ex. 9:17) and, "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" (ch. 10:3). In the case of Pharaoh the objector would say, "If God had chosen to harden the king's heart, why did He yet find fault with him?" Compare on Ex. 9:15, 16.

Paul does not here attempt to give a full answer to this objection. His sole emphasis in this context is upon the fact that in His government of the world God reserves to Himself perfect freedom to deal with men on His own conditions, and not on theirs, without, of course, interfering with their opportunity for personal salvation.

By failing to recognize Paul's emphasis, some theologians have been led to read into these verses ideas that Paul never intended. Calvin understood them to mean that God arbitrarily created some men for salvation and others for destruction. Such a concept of God's purpose is not in agreement with Paul's explanation elsewhere in this same epistle that God shows not partiality (Rom. 2:11) but judges each man according to his works (ch. 2:6–10; cf. ch. 3:22, 23) and will save everyone who calls upon Him (ch. 10:12, 13).

Hath resisted. The question means, "Who is there that is resisting God's will?" implying that no one can resist Him.

Will. Gr. *boulēma*. This is not the common NT word for "will," which is *thelēma* (chs. 2:18; 12:2; 15:32). The only other NT occurrences of *boulēma* are in Acts 27:43; 1 Peter 4:3. *Boulēma* implies more definitely the idea of conscious and deliberate purpose.

20. *Nay but.* The Greek word order and literal meaning of the clause is, "O man, but indeed you, who are you?" An emphatic contrast is suggested between mere man and God. Paul reminds man that his real relation to God is that of a creature to his Creator. Therefore, what man has any right to complain or to question God's dealings? Instead of answering the questions raised in the previous verse, Paul addresses himself to the spirit that prompted them.

Repliest. Gr. *antapokrinomai*, literally, "to answer by contradicting." The only other NT occurrence of this verb is in Luke 14:6, where it is used to describe the inability of the Pharisees to "answer" Jesus. Likewise, in this verse the word may suggest contradiction to an answer that God has already given.

Thing formed. Gr. *plasma*. The related verb, *plassō*, means "to mold," or "to shape," as with clay or wax. Comparing God's power to the control of a potter over his clay was a familiar OT idea. Paul here cites from Isa. 29:16; 45:9 (cf. Isa. 64:8; Jer. 18:6). It is particularly appropriate for Paul to make use of these words of Isaiah, since both writers

are considering the same subject—God’s formation of Israel as a nation and His consequent unquestionable right to deal with the nation as He deems best.

Why hast thou? The presumptuousness of lodging a complaint against God is forcefully illustrated. As Creator, God has the right to distribute gifts according to His will (see on v. 11).

21. Power. Gr. *exousia*, “right,” “authority.” The argument is that to deny that God has the right to do with man as He will is equivalent to denying that the potter has complete control over his clay, which is obviously absurd. Paul may be alluding to Jer. 18:6. It is important to notice that in this declaration in Jeremiah the conditional nature of God’s promises is clearly set forth (Jer. 18:7–10). God is working for the good of men and nations, but they by their stubbornness and perverseness bring ruin upon themselves.

The same lump. From the same lump of clay the potter, at his own discretion, may choose to make one vessel for a noble purpose and another for a humbler use. Similarly, God has authority over all mankind, and will deal with men according to His own benevolent purposes. In working for the salvation of mankind God sees fit to permit men and nations to suffer the consequences of their own rebellion. That which He thus permits is often represented in the Bible as though directly done by Him (see on 2 Chron. 18:18).

22. What if God? Literally, “but if God.” The sentence is incomplete, but the construction is not unusual (see Luke 19:41, 42; John 6:61, 62). Paul’s meaning is, “But if God, notwithstanding His unquestionable right to deal with His creatures in whatever way seems best to Him, has in actual fact shown much long-suffering, what further objection can you make against His justice?”

Willing. Some commentators interpret the sense here to be “because God wishes,” others, “while willing,” or “although God wishes.” If the first, Paul would be saying that God patiently endures the vessels of wrath because He wishes to reveal His wrath and power in a final more terrible judgment. Thus God spared the life of Pharaoh (v. 17), patiently enduring the stubborn monarch, so that He might give still greater manifestations of His power and determination to punish cruelty and oppression (see PP 268). But if the second or third translation is correct, Paul’s meaning would be that although God wishes to make known His power and His hatred of sin, yet in patience He restrains His wrath and endures the vessels fit for destruction. The latter interpretation seems to accord better with the context and with the theme of the epistle (see, for example, ch. 2:4, where it is explicitly stated that the purpose of God’s “forbearance and longsuffering” is to lead sinners “to repentance”). It is true that God’s long-suffering may be “despised” and thus may result in hardness of heart and greater severity of judgment, as in the case of Pharaoh. But the primary object of God’s patience is to give men opportunity to repent.

Wrath. See on ch. 1:18.

His power. Literally, “that which is possible for Him” (cf. v. 17).

Longsuffering. See on ch. 2:4.

Vessels. Paul continues the figure of the potter and the clay from the previous verse.

Of wrath. That is, deserving wrath, or experiencing wrath, as in the phrase “the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3).

Fitted. Gr. *katartizō*, which, in the form here found, may be rendered “ready for destruction.” The Greek construction is different from the one translated “he had afore

prepared” in v. 23. Paul does not mean that God had prepared the vessels of wrath for destruction, but only that they were “ripe,” or “ready,” for it.

23. That he might make known. The grammatical connection between vs. 22 and 23 is defective, but the sense is clear. God’s patient endurance of those fit for destruction is also for the purpose of showing mercy to those willing to undertake the program of God. Though the Jews had deserved God’s wrath, He had borne with them with much patience, both for their own sakes and also for the ultimate good of His entire church.

Riches of his glory. See Eph. 1:18; 3:16; Col. 1:27. For the comprehensive meaning of the phrase “glory of God” see on Rom. 3:23.

Vessels of mercy. That is, vessels receiving and experiencing mercy. This could hardly be interpreted to mean “vessels deserving mercy,” as in the case of the “vessels of wrath” (see on v. 22), inasmuch as God’s mercy is not deserved.

He had afore prepared. Gr. *proetoimazō*. The only other NT occurrence of this verb is in Eph. 2:10. Paul distinctly states that it is God who prepares the vessels of mercy for glory, though he does not describe God as fitting the vessels of wrath for destruction (see on Rom. 9:22). The way in which God prepares His people beforehand for glory is outlined by Paul in ch. 8:28–30 (cf. 2 Tim. 1:9).

24. Even us. That is, the Christian church, to whom have been accorded the privileges anciently granted to Israel. “That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth to-day” (PK 713, 714; see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

Not of the Jews only. The Christian church is constituted of both Jews and Gentiles. Again Paul emphasizes his theme of the universality of divine grace (cf. ch. 3:29, 30). No one is called and saved simply because he is a Jew. Salvation is offered to Jew and Gentile alike, and on the same terms (chs. 3:22; 10:12, 13).

Gentiles. With this reference to the Gentiles, Paul introduces the subject to be discussed to the end of ch. 11.

25. As he saith. Paul always seeks to confirm his conclusions from the OT Scriptures, especially when they might appear to be disputable. Thus he now shows that both the calling of the Gentiles and the saving of only a remnant of Israel had been predicted by the prophets.

Osee. This is a transliteration of the Greek rendering of the Hebrew name “Hosea.”

I will call them. The quotation is from Hosea 2:23, though not identical with either the Hebrew or the LXX rendering. As quoted by Paul, the Greek words read literally, “I will call the not my people, my people and the not beloved, beloved.” For the meaning of Hosea’s statement in its original context see on Hosea 2:23; cf. on ch. 1:6, 9.

26. It shall come to pass. This second OT quotation is from Hosea 1:10. In its original context it is a prediction of the recalling of the scattered tribes. Paul shows how the promise will be fulfilled with respect to the Christian church (see on Hosea 1:10).

In the place. This seems to mean that in the place where the tribes, or later the Gentiles, had endured the reproach of being told that they were not God’s people, they would be called His sons.

27. Esaias. This is a transliteration of the Greek spelling of the Hebrew name Isaiah. Paul now passes from prophecies applicable to the calling of the Gentiles to others concerning the rejection of all but a remnant of Israel.

Crieth. Gr. *krazō*. The word indicates intense earnestness (see John 1:15; 7:28, 37; 12:44; Acts 23:6).

Though the number. The quotation is from Isa. 10:22, 23, not identical in wording with either the Hebrew or the LXX. However, the variations in form do not change the essential meaning of the prophecy.

Sand of the sea. Isaiah's words reflect those of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 22:17).

A remnant. Literally, "the remnant," meaning in this context "only a remnant." The doctrine of the remnant was an important part of Isaiah's teaching. It was included in his divine commission to be a messenger to Israel (Isa. 6:13), and he emphasizes it repeatedly in his writing (chs. 1:9; 10:20–22; 11:11–16; 37:4, 31, 32; 46:3). He was even instructed by the Lord to name one of his sons Shear-jashub, literally, "a remnant shall return." Other OT prophets also frequently mention the "remnant" (see Jer. 6:9; 23:3; 31:7; Eze. 6:8; 14:22; Joel 2:32; Amos 5:15; Micah 2:12; 4:7; 5:7, 8; 7:18; Zeph. 2:7, 9; 3:13; Haggai 1:12, 14; Zech. 8:6, 12).

Shall be saved. The Hebrew reads, "shall return." This return was not supposed to be merely from exile but "unto the mighty God" (Isa. 10:21). Hence the Greek translation "shall be saved" correctly represents the intent of the prophecy.

28. He will finish. The verse may be translated literally, "For a word, finishing [it] and cutting [it] short in righteousness, because a short word will the Lord make upon the earth." However, textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) omitting the words "in righteousness, because a short word." The longer reading is that of the LXX. For the meaning of the Hebrew text see on Isa. 10:22.

The work. Gr. *logos*, generally translated "word." However, *logos* is used in the NT with a great variety of meanings. For example, it is translated "matter" (Mark 1:45), "question" (Mark 11:29), "thing" (Luke 20:3), "account" (Heb. 13:17). *Logos* occurs than 300 times in the NT, but is translated "work" only here. However, the idea is approached in the translation "matter" and in *dabar*, the Hebrew equivalent of *logos*. Several meanings are possible in this particular context. One is suggested by the KJV translation of *logos* in Rom. 14:12, "So then every one of us shall give account [*logos*] of himself to God." Such a meaning is behind the following translation of the passage under consideration: "For the Lord will execute his sentence upon the earth with rigor and dispatch" (RSV). Another interpretation makes *logos* refer to the promises of God concerning Israel which were fulfilled in only a limited degree in the remnant. Or the "cutting short" may refer to Israel itself whose numbers would be greatly reduced in the selection of the remnant.

29. Said before. Some take this to mean "foretold," or "predicted" (cf. Matt. 24:25; Acts 1:16). Others understand it to mean simply "said at an earlier time" (cf. 2 Cor. 7:3; Gal. 1:9). The decision rests upon whether Isaiah's words are to be regarded as a prediction or as a description of the state of Israel in his time. In the latter case Paul would simply be making Isaiah's words his own and using them as a description applicable to the similar condition of Israel in his day. In either case the quotation is suitable to Paul's argument. Still a third interpretation takes "before" to mean "in an earlier passage." The statement referred to is from an earlier part of Isaiah's writings (Isa. 1:9).

Except the Lord. The quotation is from Isa. 1:9.

Sabaoth. Gr. *Sabaoth*, a transliteration of the Heb. *šeba'oth*, “hosts,” “armies.” The KJV translates this Hebrew word in the OT as “host” but leaves *šeba'oth* untranslated in the NT (cf. James 5:4). For the significance of the title “Lord of hosts” see on Jer. 7:3.

A seed. Or, “children,” “descendants.” These are the “remnant” of v. 27. The Hebrew of Isa. 1:9 reads “a little remnant.” The LXX. like Paul, represents these as “seed,” from which the nation shall spring up again (cf. Isa. 6:13; Hosea 2:23). The point of the quotation is that except for this remnant the rejection of Israel would be as utter and complete as was that of Sodom and Gomorrah. But throughout the centuries a little remnant had maintained its integrity. Despite the prevailing unfaithfulness and apostasy, this unbroken line of witnesses has remained true to God and to conditions of His promises to Abraham (Rom. 11:4, 5; cf. Ps. 22:30, 31; Isa. 6:12, 13).

As Sodoma. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is frequently mentioned in the OT as an example of a violent overthrow (see also Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Lam. 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9). Jesus also refers to these cities when speaking of the divine judgment (Matt. 11:23, 24; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12).

30. What shall? Having emphasized the side of divine authority and justice in the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, Paul now turns to emphasize the side of human responsibility.

The Gentiles. Rather, “Gentiles.” Some Gentiles, not all, have attained to righteousness. The conclusion that Paul draws from his discussion so far is this: God’s promise has not failed, but while Gentiles have obtained righteousness, Jews have failed to find it, because they have sought for it in the wrong way. This naturally raises the question, Why? (v. 32). And that introduces the next point in Paul’s discussion—the failure and guilt of the Jews. From this point on through ch. 10:21 Paul discusses this subject.

Followed. Gr. *diōkō*, “to pursue.”

Attained. Gr. *katalambanō*, “to overtake,” “to obtain.” Both *diōkō* (see above under “followed”) and *katalambanō* are used in connection with the racecourse (cf. “runneth”; see on Rom. 9:16; cf. 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12). Paul is saying that Gentiles, who were not even striving to obtain righteousness, have grasped it. He does not mean by this that there was no desire or longing for righteousness among the Gentiles, but that, as contrasted with the legalistic Jews, they were not ostensibly seeking for it. Yet when salvation was offered to them in the gospel, they welcomed it. Compare Paul’s earlier description of Gentiles fulfilling the requirements of the law, even though they did not have any revealed code such as the Jews were privileged to possess (see on Rom. 2:14).

Of faith. This definition of the kind of righteousness that the Gentiles have obtained explains the apparent paradox of their having attained to righteousness though they were not striving for it.

31. The law of righteousness. Literally, “a law of righteousness,” meaning, a law producing righteousness. What the Gentiles are described as not seeking, yet obtaining, is “righteousness.” But what the Jews are described as following after, yet not attaining, is “a law of righteousness.” This phrase has been variously interpreted. Some regard it as a specific reference to the law of the OT. Others understand the phrase to mean that the

Jews were seeking for a principle and rule of moral and religious life that would make them righteous (compare the use of the word “law” in the expression “the law of faith”; see on ch. 3:27; cf. ch. 7:23). This principle the Jews thought they had found in their system of moral and religious laws. But since they were never able to live up to the requirements of those laws, their principle of righteousness could not produce the righteousness for which they sought. This drove them to still further multiplication of religious laws in their legalistic quest for a principle of life that would make them righteous in the sight of God.

Another interpretation, and one well suited to the context, is to regard the phrase “a law of righteousness” as the equivalent of “the righteousness which is based on law.” Paul’s emphasis in these verses is upon the legalistic nature of Israel’s pursuit of righteousness.

To the law. Literally, “to a law.” Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the word “righteousness” in this second phrase. Israel followed after “a law of righteousness” but did not succeed in arriving at that law. The reason for this failure is that righteousness based on law demands the perfect fulfillment of that law, and this obedience men in their own strength are not able to give. Consequently, in depending for righteousness upon a law which, in their own strength, they could not obey, the Jews failed to arrive either at the ideals prescribed by the law or at the righteousness they were pursuing.

32. Wherefore? Or, “why?”

Because. The first part of the answer reads literally, “because not of faith, but as of works of law.” Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the phrase “of law.” The KJV supplies the words “they sought it,” which seem to give Paul’s sense correctly.

As it were by the works. Literally, “as if it were by works.” By this qualifying phrase Paul indicates that it was the opinion of the Jews that righteousness could be obtained in this way. They thought they could become righteous by works, whereas actually they were attempting the impossible (see chs. 2:25 to 3:20). Righteousness is attainable only by faith (ch. 3:21, 22).

They stumbled. Gr. *proskoptō*. This verb means, literally, “to strike against” (Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:11), hence, “to stumble” (John 11:9, 10), and metaphorically “to take offense at,” “to show irritation at” (Peter 2:8). Christ came to bring righteousness to all who would accept it by faith. But the Jews, who were seeking it in another way, took offense at Him and at His message. So deep seated was their erroneous belief that righteousness could be obtained by works, that it led them openly to oppose the Saviour and finally even to murder Him. If Paul is using the verb in its more literal sense of “to stumble,” these verses give a picture of the Jews earnestly pursuing after the goal of righteousness, but stumbling over the very One who had come to help them reach it.

That stumblingstone. Literally, “the stone of stumbling.” The offense was, of course, not in the stone but in the attitude of those to whom it became a cause of stumbling. “Christ crucified” was a “stumblingblock” to the Jews, but the “power” and “wisdom of God” to those who are called (1 Cor. 1:23, 24). He is a stumbling stone to those who are faithless and disobedient, but precious to those who believe (1 Peter 2:7, 8).

33. It is written. The quotation is from Isa. 28:16 and 8:14 but is not identical with the Hebrew or the LXX. Peter applies these two verses to Christ (1 Peter 2:6–8). The prediction brings together the two classes Paul is describing—those to whom Christ is a

cause of offense, and those to whom He is the cornerstone of their faith (see Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11).

On him. These words are not in the LXX or the Hebrew of Isa. 28:16. Their use here by Paul emphasizes the personal reference to Christ.

Shall not be ashamed. This is the reading of the LXX. The Hebrew reads, “shall not make haste.” However, the Hebrew may be rendered “shall not be confounded.”

Understood in this sense the meaning is not essentially different. In either case the emphasis is upon the sure confidence that comes to the one who puts his faith in Christ and presses forward to the mark of God’s high calling.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5AA 374

2, 3 AA 129

11 GC 261; PP 207

20, 21 8T 187

21–26AA 376

27–29AA 379

28 EW 50, 75; 6T 19, 233; 8T 49

CHAPTER 10

5 *The scripture sheweth the difference betwixt the righteousness of the law, and this of faith, 11 and that all, both Jew and Gentile, that believe, shall not be confounded, 18 and that the Gentiles shall receive the word and believe. 19 Israel was not ignorant of these things.*

I. Brethren. Paul frequently uses this expression when he wishes to be specially emphatic (see Rom. 7:1; 8:12; 12:1; 1 Cor. 14:20; Gal. 3:15). The subject he discusses in this chapter is the fact asserted in Rom. 9:31–33, that Israel had failed to attain to righteousness because they had been seeking for a righteousness based upon the merits of their own works. But before entering upon the painful task of pointing out the failure and guilt of his own people, Paul renews his assurance of heartfelt concern for their salvation (cf. ch. 9:1–3).

Desire. Gr. *eudokia*, “good will,” “good pleasure,” “approval.” Compare the use of the word in Matt. 11:26; Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 1:15; 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11. Paul sincerely longed for the salvation of his fellow Jews.

Prayer. Gr. *deēsis*, “petition,” “supplication” (see Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1; 5:5), from the word *deomai*, “to want,” “to beg,” “to pray.” *Deēsis* is distinguished from *proseuchē*, the word for prayer in general (Rom. 1:10), in that *deēsis* describes a request for a particular benefit.

For Israel. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “for them,” that is, those who have been mentioned in ch. 9:31–33. The pronoun indicates the close connection between the two chapters. Chapter 10 is an unbroken continuation of Paul’s argument concerning the rejection of Israel, which was his subject in ch. 9.

Might be saved. It is significant that immediately after his discussion of the Jews’ rejection of Christ, Paul should pray for their salvation. This shows that he did not regard their case as hopeless, despite their sinful conduct. Moreover, if Paul had considered their rejection as the predetermined will of God for their destruction, as some have understood

the doctrine of predestination, he would not have prayed that they might yet be saved. The gospel teaches that “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (v. 13). The gospel is for all men, including the Jews (chs. 1:16; 3:29, 30; 10:12).

2. I bear them record. Or, “I bear them witness.” Paul was well able to do this from his own sad experience. He himself had once been “more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (Gal. 1:14), and thus was well acquainted with their misguided zeal (see Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:6).

Zeal of God. That is, zeal for God. Compare the phrase “the zeal of thine house,” meaning “the zeal for thy house” (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17). The Jews prided themselves upon their zeal for God and for His law (Acts 21:20; 22:3; cf. Gal. 1:14), and Paul has well described their ardor in matters pertaining to religion during that period.

The sad history of the Jews is that, in spite of their great religious zeal, they did not attain to righteousness (Rom. 9:30–32). Their religion was legal and formal to the last degree. Their outward show of scrupulous obedience was a cloak for inward corruption (ch. 2:17–29). Yet Paul seems to be speaking of their zeal for God as something which in itself is commendable, and, as in ch. 1:8, he points to a good quality first before going on to discuss their failures. He appears to find in this misplaced zeal some ground for encouragement, some hope that if such zeal could be directed toward the true way of righteousness, they might yet be saved.

Knowledge. Gr. *epignōsis*. This word denotes a full and thorough knowledge (cf. chs. 1:28; 3:20). The Jews were not without knowledge as such (*gnōsis*), but they lacked the true knowledge that could have led them to serve God in the right way. They had been specially favored with knowledge about God (ch. 3:1, 2), but their zeal for Him had not been intelligent. Though they knew the writings of the law and the prophets, they had no true insight into the meaning of God’s words and works. Their unenlightened ardor became mere fanaticism, and they showed more zeal for the form and the letter than for God.

3. For. This verse explains why the zeal of the Jews was “not according to knowledge.” Had they been willing to obey God’s will, they would have come to an understanding of the truth (see John 7:17). But they refused to submit.

Being ignorant of. Paul later shows that this ignorance was inexcusable, for the Jews had had every opportunity to become enlightened (Rom. 10:14–21; cf. John 5:39, 40).

God’s righteousness. See on ch. 1:17.

Going about. Gr. *zēteō*, literally, “to seek,” “to strive.”

To establish. Gr. *histēmi*, “to set up.” The word suggests the element of pride in the endeavor the Jews put forth to set up their own righteousness. In their professed zeal for God the Jews were really working for self. Compare Hosea’s description, “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself” (Hosea 10:1). Instead of seeking for God’s righteousness in God’s way, the Jews self-righteously relied on their own works (cf. Phil. 3:9). They came to regard the mere performance of the sacrifices and ordinances as righteousness in itself, instead of looking to the righteousness of the One to whom all these things pointed. Thus their religion degenerated into a self-sufficient, self-glorifying formalism. And the more the Jews lost sight of God’s righteousness, the more rigorous they became in the observance of these forms for establishing their own righteousness.

Submitted. Gr. *hupotassō*, a common verb meaning “to put oneself under orders,” “to obey” (cf. James 4:7; 1 Peter 2:13; 5:5). The form of the verb here found is better translated “did submit.” The passage would then read “did not submit themselves.” The Jews prided themselves upon their knowledge of God and the divine law (Rom. 2:17–20) but in actuality they were refusing to conform to God’s will. Confident in their own righteousness, they would not yield their hearts to a plan that required them to come confessing that they had no acceptable righteousness of their own (Isa. 64:6) and that their salvation depended upon the merits of another. No obstacle to salvation by grace is so great as the self-righteousness of a sinner. By their unwillingness to submit to God’s commandment “that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 3:23), the Jews revealed that their professed faith in God was but empty lip service, for the essence of faith is trusting obedience. This unwillingness to submit was the cause, not only of their ignorance, but also of their rejection as the chosen people.

4. Christ is the end of the law. In the Greek the word for “end,” *telos*, is in the position of emphasis. This passage has been variously interpreted to mean that Christ is the termination of the law as such, Christ is the goal, or aim, of the law (cf. Gal. 3:24), Christ is the fulfillment of the law (cf. Matt. 5:17), or Christ is the termination of the law as a means of salvation (cf. Rom. 6:14). The first interpretation is that of the antinomians and is a perversion of Scripture (see on ch. 3:31). The last three interpretations all set forth propositions that are true, but the third of these seems best to fit the context of this verse. Paul is contrasting God’s way of righteousness by faith with man’s attempt at righteousness by law. The message of the gospel is that Christ is the end of law as a way of righteousness to everyone who has faith. It is perhaps significant that the definite article “the” is omitted with “law” (see on ch. 2:12), indicating that Paul is referring to the principle of law in general rather than to any law in particular. Moreover, the drift of the whole argument shows that Paul is speaking of law in a general sense.

This verse does not imply that righteousness actually could be obtained by law in OT times and that with the coming of Christ faith has been substituted for law as the way of righteousness. Since the fall of Adam, God has revealed only one way by which men may be saved—by faith in the coming Messiah (Gen. 3:15; 4:3–5; Heb. 11:4; cf. Rom. 4). Nor may the passage be taken to mean that Christ is the termination of law as such and that hence men are no longer under obligation to obey God’s law. It is law as a method of obtaining righteousness that has been brought to an end by Christ. God’s purpose in proclaiming His laws to Israel was to reveal to them their sinfulness (Rom. 3:20) and their need of a Saviour (Gal. 3:24). But the Jews had perverted God’s purpose and had used the laws, both moral and ceremonial, as the means of establishing their own righteousness by their own attempts at legalistic obedience. Christ came to bring this mistaken abuse of law to an end and to point the way back to faith. Such faith does not abolish law but rather establishes it (see on Rom. 3:31) and makes it possible for men to fulfill its requirements (see on ch. 8:4).

5. For Moses. Paul now describes the contrast between righteousness by law and righteousness by faith in language drawn from the OT. By so doing he also shows that there is no contradiction between the OT and the NT on this subject.

Describeth. Gr. *graphō*. Literally, “to write.” Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the following reading of v. 5: “Moses writes that the man who performs the

righteousness which is based on law shall live by it.” The quotation is from Lev. 18:5, which reads, “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them” (cf. Gal. 3:12). Paul quotes these words with the implication, based on Jewish concepts, that righteousness by law demands the perfect fulfillment of the law. It must be kept to the very letter. There is no grace or mercy. All that the law demands must be done, or there is no salvation (see Gal. 3:10–13). But this is a condition that has never been fulfilled by fallen man, as Paul has clearly shown in Rom. 1–3, and which never can be fulfilled by unregenerate sinners (ch. 8:5–8). Consequently, there can be only condemnation for those who depend upon their own fulfillment of the law for justification before God (ch. 3:20).

It is significant that in the context of Lev. 18:5, the law of God is described as consisting of statutes and judgments which actually could be kept and by the keeping of which the people would enter into life. The references to this same passage by Ezekiel (ch. 20:11, 13, 21) and Nehemiah (ch. 9:13, 29) also show that the condition could be fulfilled and the promise attained. With the greater revelation of God’s plan in the NT we see that the assumption underlying these OT passages is that Christians should fix their faith in the Redeemer to come and thus obtain forgiveness of sins and enabling grace for obedience (see on Eze. 16:60; 20:11; 36:26). These Scriptures must not be taken to imply that righteousness may be obtained by the keeping of the law apart from faith. But the Pharisees and, under their guidance, the mass of the Jewish people entertained this erroneous view. They asked for righteousness and life as a reward for their own strict observance of the law. Their relationship with God was purely legalistic. Their covenant with Him was one of works rather than of faith and grace. God sought to lead them to a higher experience, but they refused to progress (see on Eze. 16:60).

It is to expose the error of such a position that Paul quotes Lev. 18:5. He uses the words of Moses himself to remind the legalistic Jews that righteousness comes only to those who obey. But such obedience man is not able to render unaided. Compare Jesus’ reply to the lawyer seeking “the righteousness which is of the law,” “This do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:28).

6. Which is of faith. Paul personifies righteousness by faith as if it were itself speaking. Compare the personification of wisdom (Prov. 1:20; Luke 11:49) and of exhortation (Heb. 12:5). The apostle might have said, “Moses speaks thus concerning righteousness by faith.” Thus both parts of Rom. 10:4 are proved by the testimony of Moses, namely the impossibility of obtaining righteousness by law (v. 5) and the assurance that we may obtain righteousness by faith (vs. 6–8).

Many commentators have found difficulty in the fact that Paul uses words of Moses which seem to pertain only to the law, to describe righteousness by faith. But the difficulty lies in the mistaken assumption, so widely held, that the law and the gospel are diametrically opposed to each other. The problem is resolved by recognizing that righteousness by faith has always been God’s method for saving man and that the giving of the law through Moses was in an integral part of this plan. Moreover, Moses was especially used by God to set up the great system of types and ceremonies that symbolized the whole plan of righteousness by faith in Christ. Consequently, it is quite unreasonable to assume that Moses was ignorant of the proper relationship between the law and the gospel and that whenever he spoke so strongly of obedience to God’s commandments he was commending righteousness by law rather than by faith.

Speaketh on this wise. That is, speaks in this manner. The quotation is from Deut. 30:11–14. In that chapter Moses lists the blessings that would come to Israel if they were obedient to God’s law. It is important to observe that Moses is speaking to those to whom he has previously said: “God will circumcise thine heart, ... to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deut. 30:6). Moses is here describing the experience of truly penitent and faithful Israelites. He is speaking of the law from the point of view of Israelites circumcised in heart. It is not necessary to suppose, as have many commentators, that Paul is merely appropriating the words of Moses about the law, and thus applying them to something that Moses did not have in mind. As Paul found righteousness by faith in Abraham, who believed and obeyed God, so here he finds the essence of righteousness by faith in the experience of those who turn in repentance to God and love and obey Him with all their heart and soul. The words of Moses, understood in their true spiritual sense, describe a righteousness which is, indeed, righteousness by faith.

Say not in thine heart. This expression is found in Deut. 9:4 and is used by Paul to introduce his quotation from Deut. 30:12–14. “To say in the heart” represents a Hebrew idiom meaning “to think,” usually of an evil thought (see also Deut. 15:9; 18:21; Ps. 14:1; Matt. 3:9; 24:48; Rev. 18:7; cf. 1 Cor. 7:37).

Who shall ascend? Moses spoke these words to point out that God’s word is not far off and beyond man’s reach, but that it has already been revealed and has been made plain to him. Paul uses the same words concerning the gospel, the still clearer revelation of God’s word that has been given in Christ.

To bring Christ down. As though He had not yet come. Righteousness by faith says, “Do not doubt that Christ has already come. The Son of God has already become man and dwelt among us. Faith is not so difficult a matter, for Christ has come.”

7. *Who shall descend?* Instead of “Who shall go over the sea for us?” (Deut. 30:13), Paul says, “Who shall descend into the deep?” As there was no need for the Israelites to search beyond the sea to bring back God’s commandments, so there is no need for anyone to descend into the deep to bring up Christ. He has already risen.

The deep. Gr. *abussos*, “the abyss” (see on Mark 5:10). Paul apparently applies the term to the place of the dead, to which Christ had “descended.”

8. *What saith it?* That is, What does righteousness by faith say? Paul continues to personify righteousness by faith (see on v. 6).

The word is nigh thee. The purpose of the OT passage was to assure Israel that God had made provision whereby the requirements of the law could be fulfilled. The everlasting covenant made with Adam in Eden provided pardon for transgression and enabling grace for obedience through faith in the Messiah to come. Men revealed their faith in the Redeemer by presenting their animal sacrifices and by observing the other requirements of the ritual law. This covenant, given to Adam and renewed to Abraham, the Israelites were reticent to receive (see on Eze. 16:60). They chose, instead, to seek righteousness through their own efforts toward obedience. The OT prophets sought repeatedly to lead the people to accept the provisions of God’s eternal plan, but without success. The Lord, through Jeremiah, offered them the new covenant (see on Jer. 31:31–34). Ezekiel stressed the need of a “new heart” and a “new spirit” (see on Eze. 36:26). Thus righteousness by faith was offered to them, “but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2; cf. Gal. 3:8). The word

was “nigh” them. All that was required of them was belief with the heart and confession with the mouth. Thus Paul contrasts the simplicity of righteousness by faith with the laborious and hopeless task of legalistically attempting to set up one’s own righteousness (Rom. 10:2, 3, 5).

The word of faith. That is, the gospel message concerning faith. This is the only occurrence of this expression in the NT. The word which Moses describes as “very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deut. 30:14) is essentially the same as “the word of faith” preached by Paul—the gospel, which announces faith as the principle of righteousness.

Which we preach. Paul adds this to emphasize that the truth of righteousness by faith is not unknown but may be understood by all who are willing to listen. That the Jews cannot excuse themselves on the ground of ignorance is more fully stated in vs. 14–21.

9. That. Or, “because.” If the translation “that” is retained, Paul is stating the contents of the message about faith. If “because” is preferred, Paul is giving proof that the word of faith is nigh. In either case the contents of the message of faith are shown to correspond with Moses’ teaching in Deuteronomy.

Confess. Gr. *homologeō*. The same word is often translated “profess,” and the related noun, “profession” (Matt. 7:23; Titus 1:16; Heb. 3:1). It means, literally, “to agree with,” “to say the same thing as someone else.” Thus the confession of a believer is the expression of his agreement with all that God has declared to be true. This includes all that God has revealed about His law, our sin, and our need of a Saviour. It includes all that God has stated about the only means of salvation—faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus. Or, “that Jesus is Lord” (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11). The Jews attributed lordship solely to God the Father. The Gentiles worshipped the emperor as their lord. But the Christians recognized Christ as “the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47), the only Son of God (John 3:16), who is the exalted head of the church (Eph. 5:23) and Lord of all (Acts 10:36). Confession of His lordship implies a willingness to follow His leading and obey His commandments (John 14:21; 1 John 2:3, 4).

Believe. Belief normally precedes confession, but Paul is following the order of v. 8, where mouth is mentioned before heart. In v. 10 Paul gives the normal order of faith, then confession.

God hath raised him. See on v. 7. The resurrection was the confirmation of Christ’s claims, the divine seal on His sacrifice (see on ch. 1:4). By believing that God raised Jesus from the dead, the Christian acknowledges Christ’s triumph over sin and death and His power to justify and save sinners (see on ch. 4:25). As contrasted with righteousness by law (ch. 10:5), righteousness by faith depends upon what Christ has done and can do rather than upon what we are able to do.

10. The heart. See on ch. 1:21. The Jews regarded the heart as the seat of the inner life of thought and feeling. To them the heart did not represent the affections as distinguished from the intellect. By referring to belief “with the heart” Paul implies that faith involves a complete inward change. And this change results in justification and righteousness (chs. 3:22; 5:1).

Confession. The outward evidence of the inward change is the confession of the mouth, the decided standing up for what is believed to be true. A willingness to confess Christ in word and deed has always been the test of true discipleship (Matt. 10:32; Luke

12:8; cf. Rev. 3:5). A good confession before the world, maintained to the end, will result in salvation (cf. Rev. 2:10).

11. The scripture saith. The quotation is from Isa. 28:16 (see on Rom. 9:33).

Whosoever. This word is not in the text of Isaiah. Paul desired to emphasize the fact that the gospel was for all.

12. For. This introduces Paul's explanation of "whosoever" in v. 11.

Difference. Or, "distinction" (cf. ch. 3:22). Jews and Gentiles alike have sinned and stand in need of salvation (see on ch. 3:23). God has provided only one means whereby men may be saved. He does not have one provision for the Jew and another for the Gentile. Hence all national, class, social, and individual distinctions vanish.

The Greek. That is, the Gentile (see on ch. 1:16).

The same Lord over all. Or, "the same Lord is Lord of all" (RV; RSV). Jews and Gentiles alike have the same Lord (cf. ch. 3:29, 30), who has redeemed all mankind (John 3:16). A comparison with vs. 9, 11 of Rom. 10 indicates that "Lord" here refers to Christ. In Acts 10:36 Christ is called "Lord of all" (cf. Rom. 14:9; Phil. 2:10, 11).

Rich unto all. There is no limit to the Lord's resources (see Rom. 8:32; 11:33; Eph. 1:7; 2:7; 3:8).

Call upon him. Calling upon the Lord or calling upon the name of the Lord is a customary expression almost equivalent to worshipping the Lord. It probably arose from the habit of beginning an address to a deity by first mentioning his name. The Hebrews were known as those who called upon Jehovah. The Christians were those who called upon Christ (1 Cor. 1:2). It is significant to see this expression used of Christ in the NT, for since worship is due to God alone, this is clear recognition of Christ's divinity (see Acts 7:59, 60; 9:14, 21; 22:16; 2 Tim. 2:22). On the deity of Christ see Additional Note on John 1.

13. Whosoever shall call. The quotation is from Joel 2:32. The passage was also quoted by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21). The Jews understood the passage in Joel to mean that all true worshipers of Jehovah would be delivered in the day of God's judgment. Paul applies the passage to Christ. The words "all flesh" (Joel 2:28) show that the Gentiles are included in the prophecy.

14. How then shall they call? Having stated the universality of salvation by faith, Paul now discusses the conditions that must be fulfilled in order for all to have the opportunity to accept it. He lists these conditions as a series of questions. Each question in the chain is an argument, the conclusion of which is tacitly assumed and forms the basis of the next question. For example, "How can they call on the Lord unless they believe in Him? They cannot; therefore, they must first believe. But how can they believe if they have not heard? They cannot." And so on.

Some connect vs. 14 and 15 with the preceding passage and relate them to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. If the gospel is intended for everyone, as implied in the "whosoever" of v. 13, then it should be preached to everyone. Others connect vs. 14 and 15 more closely with the remaining verses of the chapter. They argue that Paul is not dealing in this section with the mission to the Gentiles but with the unbelief of the Jews. The Jews, as Paul has already explained, have been "ignorant" of the right way to obtain righteousness. To convince them of their very great guilt in this matter, Paul seeks to show that they have had ample opportunity to know and understand God's plan. He begins by asking what conditions are necessary for "calling on the Lord," and then shows

that these conditions have been fulfilled. Therefore the Jews are without excuse for their unbelief.

The argument in vs. 14–21 may be summarized as follows: Have the preachers of the gospel been sent, so that all may have opportunity to believe (v. 14)? Yes, the gospel has been preached, as Isaiah foretold (v. 15). Does the fact that all have not believed prove that they have not heard (v. 16)? No, for Isaiah also foretold that some would not receive the message (vs. 16, 17). Is it possible that some of the Jews may not have heard (v. 18)? This could not be, for the gospel message has gone everywhere. Even if it is true that Israel heard the gospel, is it possible that they did not grasp its significance (v. 19)? This also could not be, for, as Moses and Isaiah have described, the less privileged and less enlightened Gentiles have been able to understand (vs. 19, 20). Therefore, the Jews cannot plead ignorance of the gospel as an excuse for their unbelief. The real fact is that, as Isaiah has said, they are a disobedient, self-willed people (v. 21).

Of whom. To hear the gospel from a preacher sent of Christ is to hear Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). The Lord is heard speaking through His chosen representatives.

15. They be sent. Gr. *apostellō*, from which is derived the word *apostolos*, “apostle.” As the Father sent His Son, so the Son sent His apostles, and they in turn, under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, sent out others (see Luke 9:2; 10:1, 3; John 4:38; 17:18; Acts 26:17; 1 Cor. 1:17). The proclamation of a divine message must be made by one who has been commissioned by God for that purpose (cf. Jer. 1:7; 7:25; 14:14, 15; 23:21).

As it is written. The quotation is from Isa. 52:7. Paul quotes the passage freely and briefly, omitting “upon the mountains,” as having perhaps only local or poetic significance, changing the singular “him that bringeth” into the plural, and omitting “that publisheth salvation.”

How beautiful are the feet. That is, how welcome is the coming (see on Isa. 52:7).

That preach the gospel of peace. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this clause.

By using this quotation Paul implies that the commissioned messengers have been sent. For the meaning of the passage in the original context see on Isa. 52:7. This section of Isaiah was regarded by both Jews and Christians as pointing forward to the work of the Messiah. The glad tidings of deliverance from Babylonian captivity symbolize the good news of salvation.

Bring glad tidings. Gr. *euaggelizō*, from which is derived the word for “gospel,” *euaggelion* (see on ch. 1:1).

16. Obeyed. Gr. *hupakouō*, “to obey as the result of listening,” “to hearken,” “to heed” (see on ch. 5:19). The word is especially appropriate in this context, where Paul is describing the unbelief with which the message of the gospel has been received. The Jews heard, but they did not heed.

The gospel. Or, “glad tidings,” “good news” (see on ch. 1:1).

Esaias saith. The quotation is from Isa. 53:1. The Hebrew text does not have the word “Lord,” but it occurs in the LXX. The disobedience of the Jews was also foreseen by the prophet. Immediately after his description of the messengers of good news (Isa. 52), Isaiah predicts the failure of the people to receive the message. Compare the statement of the fulfillment of this prophecy in John 12:37, 38. This quotation also carries

the implication (cf. Rom. 10:15) that the message had been given, or else it could not have been heard and disbelieved.

17. Faith. Or, “belief.” In order to appreciate the close connection between vs. 16, 17, one must observe that the Greek language does not have two separate words for “belief” and “faith.” The Gr. *pistis*, “faith,” or “belief,” is the noun derived from *pisteuō*, the verb translated “hath believed” in v. 16 (see on ch. 3:3).

Hearing. Gr. *akoē*, appearing twice in this verse. In v. 16 *akoē* is rendered “report,” there meaning, literally, “what is heard.” If the same meaning is assigned to *akoē* here, the following translation is possible: “Who has believed what he has heard from us? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the word of God.” This translation makes more apparent the connection between vs. 16, 17.

The word of God. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “the word of Christ.” This could mean “the message about Christ,” as “the word of faith” (v. 8) means “the message about faith” (see on v. 8). This verse is an important statement of the nature and source of true faith. Genuine faith is not a blind confidence to be exercised in the absence of adequate evidence. Faith is our conviction about things that we cannot see (Heb. 11:1), and this conviction must be founded upon knowledge, a knowledge based upon the Word of God, the message about Christ. As a means of developing a transforming and enduring faith, there is no substitute for the regular and earnest study of the Bible.

18. But I say. The Jews might claim that they had not had opportunity to hear, and hence had not accepted the gospel. Paul proceeds to disprove this claim.

Have they not heard? Or, “Is it that they did not hear?” or “Did they fail to hear?” The Greek construction of this question indicates that a negative answer is expected and that the excuse cannot be admitted. “They” refers to the “not all” of v. 16, meaning particularly the unbelieving Jews.

Yes verily. This is Paul’s emphatic correction to the suggestion that they had not heard the message. He asserts, on the contrary, that the gospel has gone to all the world, and he makes his assertion in the words of Ps. 19:4.

Sound. Gr. *phthoggos*, an onomatopoeic word (pronounced “phthongos”), imitating the sound made by the vibration of a musical instrument or the human voice (cf. 1 Cor. 14:7). In the OT this verse reads “measuring line” rather than “sound” (see on Ps. 19:4). According to the psalmist, “their sound” is the voice of nature, the silent witness with which “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Ps. 19:1). The psalmist compares the revelation of God in His works (Ps. 19:1–6) with the special revelation of Himself through His word (Ps. 19:7–11). Paul sees in this a representation of the worldwide preaching of the gospel, and he uses the words of the psalmist to describe how the “sound” of the preachers of the word of faith has gone out “into all the earth.”

The world. Gr. *oikoumenē*, “the inhabited world” (see on Luke 2:1). At the time of the writing of this epistle, the gospel had apparently not been preached literally everywhere, for it had evidently not yet been taken to Spain (see Rom. 15:20, 24, 28). However, the message of faith had already been spread so widely throughout the world that Paul is justified in making such a broad general statement. In fact, within his

generation the gospel was carried “to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23; cf. Ed 96). Moreover, the message was always taken “to the Jew first” (Acts 9:20; 11:19; 13:5; 14:1; 17:1, 2, 10; 18:4, 19; 28:17; Rom. 1:16), and it is probably Paul’s primary purpose in this chapter to show that no Israelite can excuse himself upon the plea that he had never heard the gospel.

19. Did not Israel know? More precisely, “Is it that Israel did not know?” or “Did Israel fail to understand?” As in v. 18, the Greek construction expects a negative answer. Despite the revelation of God through Moses, and through the prophets, Israel remained ignorant of God’s way of righteousness.

First. That is, first in order, first in prophetic line.

Moses saith. The quotation is from Deut. 32:21. The same Moses who had communicated to Israel their special favors and advantages over the Gentiles had also set up the rule of faith by which this position of favor could possibly, and would in fact, be reversed at some time in the future (see Deut. 32:18, 20).

I will provoke you. By showing mercy to the Gentiles, God hoped to stir up His own people to jealousy and to inspire them with zeal for Him. Compare Hosea 2:23; Rom. 9:25.

By them that are no people. Literally, “upon a no-nation” (cf. Deut. 32:21). The Gentiles are called a “no-nation” because they did not stand in the recognized relation with God in which Israel stood (see Deut. 4:5–8). They were a “foolish nation” because they had not received the same revelation of God, but, instead, worshiped idols of wood and stone (see on Rom. 1:21). Paul aimed to provoke his countrymen to jealousy by pointing out to them that, as Moses had predicted, God had now taken into His special favor people whom the Jews were accustomed to regard as inferior (see ch. 11:14). In doing this the apostle purposed to make clear by his earnest prayers that his people might repent and find salvation in Jesus Christ (chs. 9:1–3; 10:1).

20. But Esaias. Or, “then Isaiah,” or “and Isaiah.”

I was found. The quotation is from Isa. 65:1. The unexpected faith of the Gentiles should be a rebuke to the privileged and enlightened yet unbelieving Jews (cf. ch. 9:30–33).

21. To Israel. That is, with regard to Israel, or of Israel.

He saith. That is, Isaiah saith. The prophet is speaking in God’s name. The quotation is from Isa. 65:2 and agrees with the LXX more than with the Hebrew.

All day long. Isaiah thus expresses God’s patience and long-suffering toward His people, even though they persist in disobeying Him and refusing His invitations. God’s dealings, even with rebellious sinners, are full of tenderness and pity. All day long He extends the arm of His mercy to the disobedient and gainsaying. That God has always been so gracious and long-suffering will at last be acknowledged by those who have spurned Him (Rev. 15:4; GC 670, 671).

Gainsaying. Literally, “talking back,” “contradictory.” In refusing and resisting the gospel, the Jews were revealing a characteristic that had long been pointed out and condemned by the prophets. Before his martyrdom Stephen made the same charge (Acts 7:51–53; see also Luke 13:34).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 374

2 1T 165; 2T 110, 147, 232; 3T 109; 4T 489; 5T 343

3 MB 55; PK 709; PP 372
6–9DA 184
10 AH 401; CT 242; 5T 536
11, 12 MM 251
11–13DA 403
12 DA 249
14 GW 19; TM 399; 6T 21; 9T 52
14, 15 7T 224
17 COL 100
20 PK 367
20, 21 AA 375; DA 458

CHAPTER 11

6

1 *God hath not cast off all Israel. 7 Some were elected, though the rest were hardened. 16 There is hope of their conversion. 18 The Gentiles may not insult upon them: 26 for there is a promise of their salvation. 33 God's judgments are unsearchable.*

1. I say then. These words mark the beginning of a new stage in Paul's argument concerning the condition of the Jews. "Then," or "therefore" (*oun*), may refer back to Isaiah's description of Israel's disobedience (ch. 10:21), or perhaps to the entire previous discussion of Israel's rejection. So far, in chs. 9 and 10, Paul has explained that God, as sovereign Creator, is free to reject Israel from their position as the chosen people, and that, since the Jews have refused to follow God's way of righteousness, they deserve to be thus rejected. The rejection, however, is of the nation of Israel from its privileged position (see Vol. IV, pp. 30–35), not of the faithful remnant.

Cast away. Gr. *apōtheō*, literally, "to repel," "to push away from oneself" (cf. Acts 7:27). The form of the question in the Greek implies a negative answer. "God has not disowned His people, has He?" This question is one that might naturally arise from what has been already said about Israel's faithlessness and disobedience. But Paul raises the question in order to answer it emphatically in the negative.

His people. Paul may have had in mind the OT passage, "For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance" (Ps. 94:14; cf. 1 Sam. 12:22), and thus have anticipated the emphatic denial he was about to make.

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

For I also. Paul sets forth evidence that not all the Jews had been rejected. He himself is an Israelite, and has been accepted by God. He knows from experience that the promised blessings belong to him and that therefore, even though he is a Jew, he has not been rejected. Many other Jewish Christians could testify to the same experience of which Paul here speaks.

Seed of Abraham. See on Matt. 3:9.

Tribe of Benjamin. By this reference Paul affirms that he came from the very core of the Jewish nation. The tribes of Benjamin and Judah were closely connected at the time

⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 9:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

of the revolt of the ten northern tribes (1 Kings 12:21), and they maintained the theocratic continuity of the Jewish race after the Babylonian exile (Ezra 4:1; 10:9). Thus a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin was indeed a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil. 3:5; cf. 2 Cor. 11:22).

2. Not cast away. Paul emphatically negates the question he has raised in v. 1.

His people. Even though Israel, as a nation, had rejected prophet after prophet and had finally sealed their rejection of the gospel by crucifying the Son of God, yet God did not reject them as individuals (see AA 375). It is true that God had forsaken Israel “as a nation” (EW 213; GC 615). “Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven’s purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God” (AA 377). Nevertheless, this did not mean that God had withdrawn the possibility of salvation from those Jews who might wish to accept Christ. The message of ch. 11 is one of hope for the Jews. God is still calling after them as well as after the Gentiles. See Vol. IV, pp. 30–34; see on ch. 9:6.

Foreknew. See on ch. 8:29.

Of Elias. Literally, “in Elias,” meaning, probably, “in the passage of Scripture that contains the story of Elijah.” Or, the phrase may be rendered “by Elijah,” that is, Elijah was the speaker of the passage quoted. This latter usage can be demonstrated from rabbinical literature (see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3, p. 288).

Maketh intercession. Gr. *entugchanō*, “to meet with,” “to converse with,” hence, “to plead with,” “to appeal to” (see on ch. 8:26). The pleading may be for someone (ch. 8:27, 34) or against someone, as in this case.

3. Lord, they have killed. The quotation is from 1 Kings 19:10, 14. The words were spoken by Elijah when he had fled from Jezebel to the cave in Mount Horeb (see on 1 Kings 19). At that time the prophet believed that the entire nation of Israel had apostatized and that he alone remained faithful. But God replied that, although it was true that the nation as a whole had deserted Him, nevertheless there was still a remnant of faithful worshippers.

4. Answer of God. Gr. *chrēmatismos*, “the divine response,” the only occurrence of this word in the NT. It comes from the verb *chrēmatizō*, used in the NT to describe a divine communication or warning (see Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7).

Reserved to myself. Or, “left for myself.” The quotation is from 1 Kings 19:18.

To the image of Baal. Gr. *tē Baal*, literally, “to Baal.” At times in the LXX (see Hosea 2:8; Zeph. 1:4) the name “Baal” in the Greek is preceded by the feminine definite article (*tē*), though Baal was regarded as a male. One explanation is that even though Baal was a masculine deity, heathen images to the gods were often designated by the feminine, hence the translation “image of Baal.” Another possible explanation of Paul’s use of the feminine article is that the Jews, who came to have a strong aversion to pronouncing the name Baal, developed the custom of reading in its place the feminine word for “shame,” Heb. *bosheth*, Gr. *aischunē* (see the LXX of 1 Kings 18:19, 25). Such a substitution may have been in Paul’s mind when he chose to use the feminine article.

5. Even so then. As in Elijah’s time the apostasy of Israel was not so universal as it seemed to be, and as the prophet in his despondency believed it to be, so now the

rejection of Christ by the Jews was not so complete in extent as some might suppose. There was now, as there was then, a faithful remnant. God was still dealing with His people upon the same principles.

Remnant. Gr. *leimma*, from the verb *leipō*, “to leave.” *Leimma* occurs nowhere else in the NT “remnant” is from *kataleimma* (Rom. 9:27), and from *loipos* (Rev. 11:13; 12:17; 19:21). However, the meaning is not substantially different.

Election of grace. God chooses those to constitute His remnant who accept His provisions of grace. They have not earned their membership by their works, but they have accepted freely the grace proffered them (v. 6). The reason why there was only a remnant of faithful ones left in Israel is that the mass of the Jews obstinately trusted to their own works instead of relying on God’s grace. Therefore, God withdrew His rejected Spirit of grace and left the unrepentant to the hardness of their hearts (vs. 7–10). The faithful remnant in Paul’s day was constituted of those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah and who became members of the Christian church (see AA 376, 377).

6. If by grace. That is, if the election of the remnant is by grace. In this verse Paul seeks to make clear, against all possible misunderstanding, the doctrine of justification by faith through the grace of God. If salvation is by grace, then it is no longer on the basis of what men have done. Otherwise grace would no longer be grace. If the remnant had deserved to be elected, then there was no grace in God’s dealing with them. The idea of unmerited and freely given grace is absolutely contrary to that of wages earned or reward deserved. If the gift of God’s grace could be earned or deserved, then grace would lose its specific character and meaning. However, all but the remnant of Israel have failed to understand this.

Is no more grace. Literally, “becomes no longer grace.” That is, grace ceases to be what it once was.

If it be of works. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the remaining words of this verse. However, their meaning has already been implied in the first half of the verse.

7. What then? What conclusion is to be drawn from the truths just stated? Since God has not cast away His people Israel, what exactly is their position? Paul now shows that the statement of ch. 9:31 must be understood to mean that, while it is true that Israel as a nation has failed to reach its aim, nevertheless the failure is not total. A part of Israel, the elect, have succeeded.

Obtained. Gr. *epitugchanō*, “to hit the mark,” hence, “to attain to,” “to obtain.”

Seeketh for. The present tense indicates that the search is still in progress. Israel, as a people, have been and still are seeking after righteousness, the very thing they have failed to obtain. The object of Israel’s search, together with the fact that they were seeking for it in the wrong way, has already been explained in chs. 9:31, 32; 10:2, 3. The basic principle asserted in these passages has been emphatically repeated in ch. 11:6.

The election. That is, those who have been elected. Compare the expression, “the circumcision,” meaning those who have been circumcised (chs. 3:30; 4:9). Paul is stressing the fact that those who are saved owe their position entirely to God’s grace and election.

Were blinded. Gr. *pōroō*, “to harden,” “to become callous,” “to become insensible” (cf. 2 Cor. 3:14). The OT quotation in Rom. 11:8 speaks of God as the One responsible

for the hardening. In the nontechnical language of the Bible, God is often said to do that which He does not prevent (see on 2 Chron. 18:18).

It has thus been made clear that the believing Jews, like the believing Gentiles, are saved only by grace (Rom. 11:6; cf. Eph. 2:8). As for the rest of Israel, they have been hardened, not because God has cast them away, for He has not (Rom. 11:1, 2), but because they have sought to establish their own righteousness by their own works and have not submitted to the righteousness of God (ch. 10:3).

8. As it is written. The quotation consists of a combination of phrases from Deut. 29:4; Isa. 6:9, 10; 29:10. Israel's condition of spiritual stupor was nothing new in the history of the nation.

Spirit. Here, a condition of mind. Compare "the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61:3), "the spirit of meekness" (1 Cor. 4:21), "the spirit of bondage" (Rom. 8:15).

Slumber. Gr. *katanuxis*, derived from a verb meaning, literally, "to prick violently" (see Acts 2:37) and hence, "to stun," as by a blow or an overpowering emotion (see Gen. 34:7 and Dan. 10:15 in the LXX). However, the Hebrew word in Isa. 29:10 means "a deep sleep," such as fell upon Adam (Gen. 2:21), Abraham (ch. 15:12), and Saul's attendants (1 Sam. 26:12).

That God is the One who gives this spirit of stupor must be understood in the same sense as God's hardening of men's hearts (see on Rom. 9:18; cf. on ch. 11:7). Since the fall of Adam, man's natural condition has been one of spiritual insensibility (1 Cor. 2:14). By His grace God seeks to change this condition and to reawaken the powers of spiritual perception, while at the same time He presents to man the truths that pertain to his salvation. But when man persistently resists this grace, God, who will not force anyone against his will, withdraws His rejected grace and leaves man to the natural consequences of his stubborn resistance.

Should not see. A refusal to accept divine grace results in the lack of spiritual capacity to discern spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14).

Unto this day. Compare Stephen's detailed account of Israel's history to prove the same point (Acts 7:2–53).

9. David saith. The quotation is from Ps. 69:22, 23, not agreeing exactly with either the Hebrew or the LXX. In the original context the psalmist is invoking the wrath of God upon his own enemies, whom he regards as also the enemies of God (see on Imprecatory Psalms, Vol. III, p. 624). Several passages in this psalm are employed by NT writers as prophetic reference to the Messiah, the sinless Sufferer (see on Ps. 69), and these words quoted by Paul are fittingly applied to the rejectors of Christ.

Table. Gr. *trapeza*, which may represent also what is on the table, hence the translation "feast" (RSV). The Targums interpret this table as one spread before the Lord, such as the sacrificial feasts. The blessings the Jews enjoyed became a curse to them. Likewise, the divinely given Scriptures and laws and religious institutions, in which they trusted for life and salvation (John 5:39, 40; Rom. 2:17; AA 99, 100; DA 212), became a snare and a trap. God's gift to them, having been misunderstood and misused, became the cause of their failure and their persistence in unbelief. Heaven's choicest gifts, when improperly used, bring only injury to the recipient.

10. Eyes be darkened. For the darkening of eyes as a figure of the spiritual blindness to come upon Israel see on Isa. 6:9, 10. Thus the Jews, though they possessed clear

revelations of God's will, remained ignorant of the real meaning and purpose of these revelations, whereas the less favored but teachable Gentiles were able to understand.

Bow down. Gr. *sugkamptō*, literally, "to bend together," as of captives whose backs have been bent under burdens. In the OT this psalm reads, "make their loins continually to shake." Paul's statement agrees with the LXX. The picture suggested is that of servile fear and dejection. This verse well describes the condition of the unbelieving Jews. So long had they devoted their attention to external forms and trivial details of ritual and ceremony that they were destitute of all spiritual discernment and of the capacity to appreciate essential moral and spiritual truths (see Matt. 23:23–25; Mark 7:2–9). In their continued attempts to establish their own righteousness in this manner, they had ever increased the burden of legal requirements (see Matt. 23:4).

By using these quotations from the OT Paul has shown that the serious picture he has been compelled to draw of the condition of his fellow Jews is clearly supported by the Scriptures which they believe. Moreover, their sinful condition is no new development, but has distinguished them since the days of Moses and the prophets.

11. Have they stumbled? The Greek construction of the question implies a negative answer (cf. v. 1), as if he had said: "They have not stumbled so as to fall, have they?" The Jews have indeed stumbled, for "they stumbled at that stumblingstone" (ch. 9:32, 33). Many were offended at Christ. But their stumbling resulted in the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles. This, in turn, was to react as an incentive upon the Jews.

That they should fall. Or, "so as to fall." The Greek construction may be interpreted as expressing either purpose or result. The latter is the appropriate meaning in this context.

God forbid. See on ch. 3:4.

Fall. Gr. *paraptōma*, literally, "a slip [or fall] sideways," "a false step." In ch. 5:15–20 *paraptōma* is translated "offense."

Unto the Gentiles. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews, and the increasing violence of their opposition, had greatly promoted the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles and their consequent acceptance of it (see Acts 8:4; Acts 11:19–21). This was the case in Paul's own experience at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:45–49).

Provoke them. That is, the Jews. Their privileges had made them negligent and apathetic. Now the sight of others stepping into their privileges was to rouse them from their apathy and awaken a desire to share in the blessings now being enjoyed by the Gentiles.

12. Fall of them. See on v. 11.

Riches of the world. The Jews had been called to be God's missionaries to the world (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–29). But they had failed in their task. The world had been left in ignorance. The rejection of the nation of Israel as the chosen ambassador to the world and the call of the Christian church to world evangelism (Matt. 28:18–20) had resulted in a mighty missionary movement. The Gentile world had heard of the "unsearchable riches" (Eph. 3:8), and many had accepted Christ.

Diminishing. Gr. *hēttēma*, "loss," "defeat," "failure." The word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in 1 Cor. 6:7, where it is translated "fault" (KJV) or "defeat" (RSV). It also occurs once in the LXX, in Isa. 31:8, in which case it clearly means "defeat." This may be Paul's meaning here. The unbelief of the Jews was not only a false step and

transgression; it was also a defeat. For by it they were rejected as the chosen nation; they failed to obtain what they sought. However, a number of commentators prefer to understand *hēttēma* as referring to the diminishing of Israel. They argue that this interpretation preserves a more exact antithesis to “fulness” at the end of the verse.

Riches of the Gentiles. Evidently to be understood as a literary variant of “riches of the world.”

Fulness. Gr. *plērōma*. This word may be understood in the passive sense, “that which has been filled,” “the totality,” or in the active sense, “that which fills up,” “fulfillment” (cf. John 1:16; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 10:26; Eph. 1:23; 3:19; Col. 1:19). Commentators disagree as to the exact meaning of this verse, but Paul’s main point seems to be clear. If the loss and defeat of the Jews was overruled by God to produce riches for the Gentiles, how much more would the repair of this loss mean riches for all.

13. For. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “and” or “but.” Paul has reached a place where his argument concerning the state of the Jews is also touching the position of the Gentiles (vs. 11, 12). Therefore he pauses to explain, parenthetically, that his love for his own countrymen and his zeal to carry out his commission to the Gentiles are both working toward the same end. His desire to save his fellow Jews makes him all the more zealous to work for the salvation of the Gentiles, for this will bring good to his countrymen. And this in turn will bring greater good to the Gentiles.

You Gentiles. Paul has been referring to the Jews in the third person, “they” (see v. 11; etc.), but he addresses the Gentiles in the second person, “you” (vs. 13–31). This verse provides further evidence that the church at Rome may have been made up largely of Gentiles (see on ch. 1:13).

Inasmuch as. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the addition of the word “therefore” after “inasmuch as.” The inclusion of this word separates this clause from the preceding clause, “for I speak to you Gentiles,” and connects the second clause more closely with the following, “I magnify mine office.” Consequently, a number of versions punctuate with a period after “you Gentiles” (RSV; RV; ASV; etc.).

Magnify. Gr. *doxazō*, “to glorify,” “to extol.”

Office. Gr. *diakonia*, “ministry,” as the word is translated in ch. 12:7. Paul magnified his ministry to the Gentiles by doing everything possible to bring the gospel to them. He is expressing the hope that the success of his ministry among the Gentiles will result in a favorable influence on the Jews (see on ch. 11:11). He glorified his ministry in order to make his fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them (v. 14).

14. Provoke to emulation. Gr. *parazēloō*, the word translated “provoke to jealousy” in v. 11 and in ch. 10:19. It is best to preserve the same translation in all three instances, in order not to obscure the connection with the original prophecy of Deut. 32:16, 21, quoted in Rom. 10:19.

My flesh. That is, my kinsmen, my countrymen (cf. ch. 9:3). Paul’s aim is to stir up in his kinsmen a desire to share in the blessings that were first offered to them but which are now being enjoyed in such a large measure by the Gentiles.

Save some. Compare 1 Cor. 9:22.

15. The casting away. Gr. *apobolē*. The word occurs in the NT only here and in Acts 27:22, where it is translated “loss.” Paul has previously denied that God has cast away His people (Rom. 11:1, 2), but here he affirms it. Both statements are true, however. The nation of Israel as the chosen agency for world evangelism was indeed cast away, but a faithful remnant had accepted the Messiah, and the missionary efforts of the early church were constantly adding to their number. See Vol. IV, p. 35.

In this verse the argument of v. 12 is repeated in different language. Though having to cast off the greater part of His ancient people because of their faithlessness, God overruled this to reconcile to Himself those who had “sought” Him not (ch. 10:20).

Reconciling of the world. Paul regarded his ministry as a work of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19, cf. Col. 1:20). Following the rejection of the nation of Israel (see on Rom. 11:2, 12), the gospel of Christ has been spread to the nations of the world, and believers everywhere have been reconciled to God.

Receiving. Gr. *proslēpsis*, “acceptance,” “reception.” The word occurs nowhere else in the NT, but its meaning is shown by the usage of the verb from which it is derived (see chs. 14:3; 15:7). Paul is here doubtless speaking of an influx into the Christian church of such Jews as accept Christ.

Life from the dead. Some commentators have taken this literally to mean that as soon as God’s purpose has been fulfilled in the “receiving of” Israel (see above under “receiving”), His purpose for the salvation of the world will also be completed, and the kingdom of Christ will be ushered in at the resurrection.

However, this commentary takes the position that Paul’s language is figurative (cf. Luke 15:24, 32). The phrase “life from the dead” is not used elsewhere in the NT for “the resurrection.” Paul was doubtless referring to the tremendous spiritual quickening that would sweep the world as a result of the preaching of the gospel. Many Jews who were before spiritually dead would accept Jesus Christ and unite in proclaiming the gospel. Compare AA 381.

“The receiving of them” must not be interpreted to mean that the privileges and blessings anciently accorded to the nation of Israel will be restored to them and that the literal nation of the Jews will again be God’s chosen nation. The rejection of them as a nation was final. Jesus made this abundantly clear in His parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (see on Matt. 21:33–43). The “kingdom of God” was taken from them and was “given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). However, as individuals they may be saved by uniting with the Christian church (see on Rom. 11:23, 24).

16. For. Gr. *de*. Rather, “and,” “now.”

Firstfruit. Here, of dough. Paul is alluding to the ceremony, described in Num. 15:19–21, of dedicating a portion of the dough to God. The offering of the first fruits hallowed the entire lump of dough. The first fruit represents the first of the gospel harvest among the Jews (see AA 377).

Lump. Gr. *phurama*, literally, “that which is mixed,” here, “dough.”

Also holy. That is, the entire lump—those who would subsequently become members of the Christian church.

Root. Paul uses a second metaphor to express the same idea. If the root is holy, so is the entire tree (see above under “also holy”). He pictures Israel as a tree.

17. Some of the branches. Jeremiah had represented Israel as an olive tree (see Jer. 11:16; cf. Hosea 14:6). Compare also the OT image of the vine (Ps. 80:8; Isa. 5:7). Jesus compared Himself to a vine and His disciples to the branches (John 15:1–6).

Be broken off. Rather, “were broken off.” The reference is to the unbelieving Jews, who, in rejecting Christ, sealed not only their own fate but also that of the nation. The kingdom of God was taken away from them and “given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (see on Matt. 21:43).

A wild olive tree. This may be understood as “a wild olive shoot” (see RSV). The figure fittingly represents the condition of the Gentiles, who had not been favored with the religious privileges of the Jews.

Wert grafted in. Rather, “were grafted in.” Paul is not speaking of a future possibility, but of something that had already happened in the experience of many Gentiles. The grafting of a branch from a wild tree into the stock of a cultivated tree is a process that is normally never performed. The common procedure is to graft a tame shoot onto a wild stock, such as, for example, the Persian or English walnut onto a black walnut stock, as is common in California. Paul expressly states in v. 24 that the grafting of the Gentiles into the stock of Israel is “contrary to nature.” The call and conversion of the Gentiles was contrary to Jewish expectation.

Among them. This is the simplest rendering, meaning, “among the good branches.” Some, however, render the phrase “in their place” (see RSV), meaning, “in the place of the severed branches.”

Partakest. Literally, “became a sharer” (cf. Eph. 3:6). The Gentile Christians became sharers of God’s eternal plan of salvation.

Root and fatness. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for omitting the words “root and.” The meaning is not essentially altered by the omission of these words. Evidence may also be cited for the reading “the fat-dispensing root.”

18. Boast not. It is altogether out of place for Gentile Christians, who owe everything to the blessings of salvation of which Israel had been called to be the herald, to boast over the Jews who have fallen.

19. Thou wilt say. Paul has previously explained that the rejection of the Jews has resulted in the enriching of the Gentiles (see on vs. 11–15). But it would be selfish and arrogant to assume, as in this supposed reply, that God had cast away some of His people for the sole and direct purpose of bringing the blessings of salvation to the Gentiles, as if they were of more value than the Jews. The selfishness is indicated in the Greek by the emphatic personal pronoun *egō*, “I,” in the phrase “that I might be grafted in.”

The branches. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the article. Not all the branches were broken off.

20. Well. Gr. *kalōs*, “that is true,” “granted” (cf. Mark 12:32). Paul admits the truth of the statement that branches were broken off, with the result that others were grafted in.

Unbelief. Gr. *apistia*, “lack of faith.” Compare the word *pistis*, translated “faith” in the next clause. The close relationship between these two words is clearly seen in the Greek.

Standest by faith. Paul goes on to correct the false inference expressed in the preceding verse, by reminding the Gentile Christians of *how* they had become members of spiritual Israel. The Jews had been cast off because of their unbelief. The Gentiles had

been accepted because of their faith. When the true cause of Israel's rejection is recognized, it leaves no occasion for the Gentile Christian to boast. It is, rather, a warning to hold fast to his faith as the sole condition on which he remains safe as a branch in the tree. Therefore, he should not be "highminded" because of his new privileges and position, but rather he should beware lest he fall as others have fallen. See on chs. 3:3; 10:17.

Be not highminded. Or, "Stop thinking high things," that is, Do not be conceited. The Gentile Christian has no more merit of his own than had the Jews, who were cut off. Therefore, he has no reason to be conceited. Moreover, faith cannot live in the man whose "soul ... is lifted up" (Hab. 2:4).

But fear. Overconfidence and a false sense of security would lead to the same disastrous results that the Jews had experienced. Compare Heb. 4:1.

21. Spared not. This verse explains the reason why Gentile converts should feel awed. Notwithstanding their greater privilege, God did not spare the natural branches when they sinned. Much more reason is there for the wild grafts to fear that God will not spare them if they commit the same sin.

Take heed. Textual evidence may be cited (see p. 10) for the reading, "neither will he spare you," instead of, "take heed lest he also spare not thee."

22. Goodness. Gr. *chrēstotēs*, "kindness," "gentleness" (see on ch. 3:12).

Severity. Gr. *apotomia*, literally, "that which cuts off," hence, "that which is inflexible in its rigor." This word does not occur elsewhere in the NT. It is derived from the verb *apotemnō*, "to cut off." The related adverb, *apotomōs*, "sharply," is used in 2 Cor. 13:10; Titus 1:13. God's dealings with the Gentiles show that He is full of kindness and long-suffering toward men (see Rom. 2:4). His goodness will always be shown toward those who trust in Him rather than in their own merits or the privileged position they enjoy. But on the other hand, God's treatment of the Jews reveals the severity He must exercise upon those who trust in themselves.

On them which fell. That is, the disobedient Jews.

Toward thee. That is, the Gentiles.

If thou continue. The way to continue in God's goodness, or in His grace (Acts 13:43), is to "continue in the faith" (Col. 1:23), not turning away in unbelief from the mercy bestowed. This verse clearly teaches the possibility of falling from grace. Men can despise and reject God's goodness and thus be cut off.

23. And they also. God has not only the will but also the power to restore those whom He has had to cut off. That God possesses such power to restore is illustrated by the power He has displayed in the conversion of the Gentiles, as described in the next verse.

24. How much more? The conversion from unenlightened heathenism experienced by the Gentiles gives reason to believe that God is well able to restore individual cast-off Israelites.

25. Ignorant. Compare Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:13.

Mystery. Gr. *mustērion*, in classical Greek meaning "a hidden thing," "a secret," related to *mustēs*, "one initiated." The verbal form *mueō* means "to initiate," and is related to *muō*, "to close [the eyes or the mouth]."

Among the pagans *mustērion*, usually in the plural *mustēria*, was used for secrets or secret doctrines, to be made known only to those who had been specially initiated. It was the technical term for their secret rites and celebrations, and also for the mystic implements and ornaments they used in their ceremonies. For the use of the term “mystery” in Qumran literature see Vol. V, p. 92.

In the NT, *mustērion* refers to something that God wills to make known to those who are willing to receive His revelation, rather than to something that He desires to keep secret. Throughout Paul’s writings the word carries the meaning of something which, though incapable of being fully understood by unassisted human reason, has now been made known by divine revelation (see ch. 16:25, 26; etc.) In Rev. 1:20; 17:5, 7 it has reference to a symbol that requires interpretation for its understanding.

Paul regarded it as his mission to make known the mystery “which was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25; cf. 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:3, 4). God’s eternal purpose to redeem man in Christ has now been declared in Christianity. Thus Paul describes the whole Christian revelation as a mystery (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7–10; Eph. 1:9; 6:19; Col. 1:26; 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:9). He applies the term to the incarnation of Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), to the union of Christ and His church as typified by marriage (Eph. 5:32), to the transformation of the saints at the second coming (1 Cor. 15:51), to the opposition of Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:7), and especially to the admission of the Gentiles to the kingdom of Christ (Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:1–6; Col. 1:26, 27).

The mystery that Paul is now declaring is the purpose of God to save both Jews and Gentiles in His kingdom. The hardening of Israel is somehow to be used, in a manner beyond the comprehension of men (Rom. 11:33), to bring about the accomplishment of this divine plan.

Wise in your own conceits. Literally, “wise in yourselves,” or “wise by yourselves.” Paul is concerned lest the Gentiles should become conceited by supposing that their acceptance of what the Jews had rejected was in some way due to their own merits. There was no cause for the believing Gentiles to despise the unbelieving Jews. This phrase indicates that the “brethren” Paul is here addressing are Gentile Christians in particular. He has been addressing such Christians since v. 13.

Blindness. Gr. *pōrōsis*, “hardening” (cf. Rom. 11:7; Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:18). Here it indicates “mental dullness,” “spiritual insensibility.”

In part. The hardening has not come upon all Israel, but only “in part.” The “remnant according to the election of grace” has not been so affected (v. 5). “Some of the branches,” not all, have been broken off (v. 17).

Until. To the very end of time hardness “in part” will be the spiritual state of the Jews. The two key phrases in this immediate passage are “the fullness of the Gentiles” and “all Israel” (v. 26). If, as some hold, Paul, in these phrases, literally encompasses the total Gentile population, and “all” of the Jewish race, according to the flesh, then, patently, he teaches universal salvation. But whatever Paul teaches in this difficult passage, it is certain that he does *not* teach universal salvation, for his writings contain numerous unequivocal statements in opposition to that doctrine (see Rom. 1:18, 32; 2:1–11; 2 Thess. 1:7–10; etc.).

God forces salvation upon no one. If men choose to steel their hearts against the gospel, He does not interfere with their choice. Their hardening is thus of their own

choosing and the responsibility for it must not be laid upon God (see on Rom. 9:18). It is possible for God to save out of a nation only as many as comply with the provisions of grace.

Fulness. See on v. 12, where Paul mentions the “fulness” of the Jews. “The fulness of the Gentiles” may most naturally be understood to refer to those Gentiles who throughout the gospel era accept the provisions of salvation.

Be come in. That is, into the kingdom of Christ, the community of the people of God that is represented by the good olive tree and into which some of the Gentiles have already been grafted.

26. And so. Gr. *kai houtōs*, “and thus,” “and in this way.” The adverb expresses manner, not conclusion, or time.

All Israel. That Paul is not teaching universal salvation for either Gentiles or Jews has already been shown (see on v. 25). Furthermore, why should only the generation of Jews living in the time of the end be assured of salvation by some kind of divine decree? Paul has expressed his hope that “some of them” (v. 14) might be saved. It seems evident from this that he believed that many would reject all efforts to save them, and that accordingly he never envisioned the conversion of the entire nation.

Some commentators hold that the faithful remnant (see on v. 5) to which are added those Jews who accept Christ during the Christian Era, constitute the “all Israel” who will be saved. This view is based on the observation that Paul’s burden in ch. 11 is the salvation of his fellow Israelites. He contrasts their salvation with that of the Gentiles. The two groups are distinguished throughout the chapter by the Jews’ being referred to in the third person and the Gentiles in the second. The salvation of the former is described by the expression “all Israel shall be saved”; that of the latter by “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

Other commentators hold that “all Israel” represents spiritual Israel. This view is based on the belief that Paul is here completing his illustration of the olive tree. He has shown how the branches representing the unbelieving Jews were broken off, and the wild olive shoots, representing the Gentiles, grafted in. He has shown, also, how the severed branches could be reunited with the parent stock. By the grafting in of these branches the tree representing spiritual Israel would again be made whole. “All Israel” would thus represent the totality of those saved, Jews and Gentiles, who together constitute “all” of true Israel (Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 6:15, 16).

As it is written. The quotation is from Isa. 59:20, 21; 27:9, agreeing more with the LXX than with the Hebrew. Instead of the LXX “for Zion’s sake,” Paul’s quotation reads, “out of Sion.” The modification may have been suggested by such passages as Ps. 14:7; 50:2; 53:6; Isa. 2:3; Micah 4:2.

Sion. Or, “Zion,” that is, Jerusalem (see on Ps. 48:2).

Deliverer. The Hebrew of Isa. 59:20 reads *go’el*, “redeemer” (see on Job 19:25; cf. Deut. 25:5–10; Ruth 3:12, 13; 4:7–10).

Ungodliness. Gr. *asebeia*, “ungodliness in thought and deed,” “impiety.” Isaiah’s prediction expressed the hope that a revival would sweep the ranks of apostate Israel and that the nation would at long last fulfill her divine destiny. Paul shows how the prophecy will meet its fulfillment not with the nation of the Jews, but with individual Jews accepting Jesus as the Messiah and being grafted into the stock of true Israel (see v. 23).

Jacob. That is, Israel (see Num. 23:21; Ps. 78:5; Micah 3:8).

27. For. Gr. *kai*, rather, “and.”

My covenant. Literally, “the covenant from me.” The basis of God’s new covenant with Israel was His forgiveness of their sin (see Jer. 31:31–34). When the Redeemer shall lead the remnant (Rom. 9:27) of the backslidden descendants of Abraham to turn from their transgression, then the broken covenant with them will be renewed and God will remember their sin no more. Compare Heb. 8:6–13.

28. Enemies. Perhaps a reference to the hostility of the Jews toward the gospel, or to the fact that their rejection of Christ made them truly enemies of God. This latter sense is reflected in the translation, “enemies of God” (RSV).

For your sakes. The result of their exclusion has been the calling of the Gentiles, as Paul has already explained (vs. 11, 12, 15, 19).

As touching the election. Literally, “according to the election,” here probably referring to the principle of election, that is, to the fact that God selected Israel to be His people, and will save the believing remnant among them.

Beloved. Compare ch. 9:25. Even in their state of rejection the Jews are still beloved of God.

For the fathers’ sakes. Compare Acts 3:25; Rom. 9:4, 5.

29. Gifts. Gr. *charismata*, “gifts of free grace” (see on chs. 5:15; 6:23).

Calling. For the nature of God’s call see on ch. 8:30.

Without repentance. Gr. *ametamelēta*, “unregretted.” The only other NT occurrence of this word is in 2 Cor. 7:10. God has not changed His mind about Israel. The nation failed and was rejected (see on Matt. 21:33–46), but a remnant will be saved. God is not sorry that He called and gave gifts to the seed of Abraham (see Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 89:34–36; Eze. 24:14; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; James 1:17). Men may fail, and God may vary His method, but He never abandons His purpose. Paul expresses this truth as a reason for believing that God still offers pardon and salvation to the people whom He called and chose and on whom He has showered so many blessings (Rom. 9:4, 5).

30. In times past. That is, prior to the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. The Jews, whom God had chosen to be His ambassadors to the world, had failed miserably in their task of world evangelism. Hence it was not until the time of the Christian church that the invitation to salvation was extended to the Gentiles.

Not believed. Gr. *apeitheō*, “to disobey.” Their former disobedience ought to repress any uncharitable feelings the Gentiles might be tempted to cherish concerning the present disobedience of the Jews (vs. 18–20).

Unbelief. Gr. *apeitheia*, “disobedience.” Compare *apeitheō* above. The disobedience of the Jews resulted in the gospel’s being carried to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

31. Even so have these. Paul is now speaking of the Jews. By their disobedience they have placed themselves on the same footing as the Gentiles.

Through your mercy. The Jews forfeited all the privileges of the covenant relation and can be received back into this relationship only in the same way as the Gentiles have been received. Some commentators regard this as an additional reference to the provoking of Israel to a godly jealousy by the sight of the Gentiles’ enjoying the mercy and blessing of God (v. 11). Thus God uses the disobedience of the Jews as an occasion

for bringing mercy to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). Then in turn He uses the revelation of His mercy upon the Gentiles to bring mercy again upon the Jews.

32. Hath concluded. Gr. *sugkleiō*, literally, “to shut up together,” like a net enclosing a multitude of fishes (Luke 5:6). *Sugkleiō* is translated “hath concluded” in Gal. 3:22, and “shut up” in Gal. 3:23. The meaning of the phrase “God has shut them up in disobedience” is clarified by the LXX rendering of Ps. 78:62, “He gave his people over also unto the sword,” literally, “He shut them up unto the sword.” Paul has already described how God has turned men over to their sins (see on Rom. 1:24; cf. on ch. 1:18).

In this verse Paul declares that all God’s dealings with mankind, though sometimes hard to understand, are in accordance with His great endeavor to save mankind. Even man’s opposition to God is turned by Him into an occasion for carrying out His plan. It is not that man’s sin of unbelief and disobedience is willed by God. But when sin is present, God knows how to arrange His scheme of world government in such a way as to overrule evil for good.

Thus by allowing man to become involved in the natural consequences of his own rebelliousness, God has sought to teach him the awfulness of sin and to reveal to him his utter weakness when cut off from divine power. By permitting those who have attempted to establish their own righteousness by their own works to reap the inevitable results of such folly, God has sought to make clear to all that salvation can be obtained only by faith in Him and by submission to the love, mercy, and transforming power revealed in Christ.

Them all. Literally, “the all,” meaning “all men,” including Jews and Gentiles.

Unbelief. Gr. *apeitheia*, “disobedience,” as in v. 31.

Mercy upon all. Not all will accept and submit to God’s mercy. Men are still free to resist and reject. But God is ready and willing to have mercy upon everyone (2 Peter 3:9). All His wise and patient dealings with fallen man have worked toward the fulfillment of this one purpose, the revelation of divine love in the saving of sinners.

33. The depth. That is, the immeasurable and inexhaustible fullness. Compare, “Thy judgments are a great deep” (Ps. 36:6). Paul has reached the climax of his argument. It began with the condemnation of all (Rom. 1; 2), but it has closed with mercy upon all. The wrath “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness” (ch. 1:18) has given place to the mercy that embraces all the peoples of the earth. This great truth, which Paul has summed up in ch. 11:32, leads him to break forth in acknowledgment of the infinite wisdom and goodness of God.

Riches. Compare Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 10:12; Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7; 3:16; Phil. 4:19. By means of these fathomless resources of glory and grace God has been able to bring good even out of evil.

Both of the wisdom. The first part of this verse may also be translated, “O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” God’s all-embracing wisdom has been displayed in the marvelous overruling of events for the accomplishment of His saving purposes (see 1 Cor. 1:21–24; Eph. 3:9–11).

Judgments. Or, “decisions,” such as those by which Israel was rejected and the Gentiles admitted. To man’s unaided human reason, these judgments are as unsearchable as the great deep (Ps. 36:6).

Past finding out. Gr. *anexichniastoi*, literally, “which cannot be traced out.” The only other NT occurrence of this word is in Eph. 3:8. The book of Job is a commentary on the inscrutable mystery of God’s ways (see Job 5:9; 9:10). Some of God’s wisdom may be known (Rom. 1:20), but not all (cf. Eccl. 8:17). Even Paul, with his great intellect and his keen insight into the things of God, is constrained to acknowledge that God’s decisions and ways are beyond man’s limited understanding. God reveals to us as much of His wisdom and purposes as is for our best good. Beyond that we must rely upon the ample evidences of His love, mercy, and power.

34. Who hath known? The quotation is from Isa. 40:13, agreeing with the reading of the LXX (cf. 1 Cor. 2:16). The Hebrew reads, “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him?” Paul now justifies the exclamations of Rom. 11:33 from OT passages that speak of the knowledge and wisdom and riches of God. The two parts of this verse speak of God’s knowledge and wisdom; v. 35, of His riches.

35. Who hath first given? The quotation is from Job 41:11. None of Heaven’s gifts can be regarded as the repayment of a favor or gift previously made to God. All His blessings are prompted by His own free grace. Once again Paul is touching the fundamental error of the self-righteous Jews, the mistaken idea that men may earn God’s favor by their meritorious works.

36. For of him. This verse gives the reason why no one can make God his debtor. For all things were created by Him (see Acts 17:24, 25; 1 Cor. 8:6). All created things owe their continuing existence and activity to Him who still “worketh all in all” (1 Cor. 12:6; cf. Acts 17:28; Heb. 2:10). And all things are directed toward the working out of His purposes and the glory of His name.

To whom be glory. Compare Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21. With this brief but sublime doxology Paul comes to the end of the more doctrinal and argumentative section of his epistle.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5, 11–15AA 375

16 7T 249

16–22 AA 377; 6T 239

17–21COL 306

23–36AA 378

33 CT 426; DA 48; Ed 172; FE 179; GC 527; MH 424, 438; ML 22, 26, 182, 290; SC 106; TM 376; 5T 266, 301, 699; 6T 238; 8T 261, 285, 287

34–36MH 433; 8T 282

CHAPTER 12

1 *God’s mercies must move us to please God. 3 No man must think too well of himself, 6 but attend every one on that calling wherein he is placed. 9 Love, and many other duties, are required of us. 19 Revenge is specially forbidden.*

1. I beseech you. Paul now turns to consider the practical application of the doctrine of righteousness by faith, which he has so carefully explained in chs. 1–11. Righteousness by faith means not only forgiveness of sin but also newness of life. It includes sanctification as well as justification, transformation as well as reconciliation. God’s purpose is to restore sinners completely, to make them fit to live in His presence.

Therefore. This may refer back particularly to the declaration of God’s all-embracing mercy (ch. 11:32–36), or in a more general way to the whole preceding argument of the

epistle, of which ch. 11:32–36 is the climax. Since the believer has been justified by faith in Christ and has been restored to a position of love and trust as an adopted son of God, he ought to lead a life of purity and holiness that befits his new status. Paul thus makes plain that the doctrine of righteousness by faith and salvation by grace does not encourage or permit lawlessness or a careless disregard of God's commandments. On the contrary, the believer who has been justified and is being sanctified becomes ever more willing to obey as "the righteousness of the law" is being fulfilled in him (ch. 8:4). In love and gratitude he seeks ever more earnestly to know, to understand, and to perform the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (ch. 12:2).

Mercies. Gr. *oiktirmoi*, a word that expresses the tenderest compassion (see 2 Cor. 1:3). It is a stronger word than *eleos*, the word translated "mercy" in Rom. 11:31. Paul presents these tender compassions as the motive for obedience. God has shown such great mercy in giving His Son to die for sinners, and in pardoning their rebellion, that they should gladly devote themselves to Him.

Present. Gr. *paristēmi*, literally, "to place [or "stand"] beside," hence, "to present." Compare the use of the word in Luke 2:22; Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:28.

Your bodies. Paul first appeals to Christians to consecrate their bodies to God. He then calls on them to dedicate their intellectual and spiritual faculties (v. 2). True sanctification is the dedication of the entire being—body, mind, and soul (1 Thess. 5:23); the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers, until the image of God, in which man was originally created, is perfectly restored (Col. 3:10).

To a large degree the condition of the mind and soul depends upon the condition of the body. Therefore, it is essential that the physical powers be kept in the best possible health and vigor. Any harmful practice or selfish indulgence that lessens physical strength makes it more difficult for us to develop mentally and spiritually. Of this principle the adversary of souls is well aware, and he accordingly directs his temptations to the enfeebling and degrading of the physical nature. The results of his evil work were all too apparent to Paul as he sought to win the heathen from their debasing practices (see Rom. 1:24, 26, 27; 6:19; Col. 3:5, 7) and to establish the new converts in lives of purity (see 1 Cor. 5:1, 9; 6:18; 11:21; 2 Cor. 12:21). Therefore, he appeals to them to yield their "members" to God as "instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:13; cf. 1 Cor. 6:15, 19; 7:34). The Christian must bring the tendencies of his physical nature under the dominion of the higher powers of his being, and these in turn must be submitted to the control of God. "The kingly power of reason, sanctified by divine grace, is to bear sway in the life" (PK 489). Only then can the believer become fitted to offer unto God "reasonable service" (see below under "reasonable" and "service").

A living sacrifice. The sacrifices of the OT ceremonial system were of slain animals. The Christian sacrifice is of the living man. The Christian worshiper presents himself alive with all his energies and powers dedicated to the service of God.

Holy. The Jews were expressly forbidden to offer any animal in sacrifice that was lame or blind or in any way deformed (Lev. 1:3, 10; 3:1; 22:20; Deut. 15:21; 17:1; Mal. 1:8). Every offering was carefully examined, and if any blemish was discovered, the animal was rejected. Likewise Christians are to present their bodies in the best condition possible. All their faculties and powers must be preserved pure and holy, or else their dedication of themselves to God cannot be acceptable to Him.

This is no arbitrary requirement. God's purpose for believers is their complete restoration. This necessarily includes the purification and strengthening of their physical as well as their mental and spiritual powers. Therefore, the Christian who by faith submits himself to God's way of saving man will gladly obey this command to regard the health of his body as a matter of the highest importance. To do otherwise is to hinder the divine work of restoration.

Acceptable. Literally, "well-pleasing" (see Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20; Titus 2:9). The God who so loved the world that He gave His Son to save sinners is "well pleased" when men turn from their self-destroying habits and give themselves wholly to Him. For thus they make it possible for Him to fulfill His gracious purpose to reclaim them and to bring them to the perfection in which man was originally created.

Reasonable. Gr. *logikos*, "rational," "spiritual," "logical." The only other NT occurrence of this word is in 1 Peter 2:2, where "spiritual" would be a preferred translation (see comment there).

Service. Gr. *latreia*. This term implies an act of religious service or worship. In Heb. 9:1 it is translated "divine service" (cf. Rom. 9:4). The English translation "reasonable service" is somewhat ambiguous. It might be taken to mean a service that is fitting or proper, an act of worship that is reasonable for one to perform. But this is not the sense of the Greek. Paul is speaking of a worship that pertains to the mind, the reason, the soul, as distinguished from that which is external and material. The Christian's dedication of himself to a life of purity and holiness is an act of spiritual worship. He no longer offers animals in sacrifice but rather himself as an act of religious service that pertains to his reason. Thus Peter describes believers as "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5; cf. 3T 162).

This verse attaches profound significance to the principles of healthful living. The believer performs an act of spiritual worship by offering to God a holy and healthy body, along with a consecrated mind and heart, because by so doing he submits all there is of him to God's will, and opens the way for the full restoration in him of the divine image. It is an act of religious service to preserve the physical powers in the best possible condition. The reason is that the Christian glorifies God in his body (1 Cor. 6:20; cf. 1 Cor. 10:31) by serving as a living example of God's saving grace and by participating with increased strength and vigor in the work of spreading the gospel. It was thus that the court of Babylon beheld in Daniel and his companions "an illustration of the goodness and beneficence of God, and of the love of Christ" (PK 489). Their pure lives and their outstanding development, physically, mentally, and spiritually, were a demonstration of what God will do for those who yield themselves to Him and who seek to accomplish His purpose. See on Dan. 1:12, 18.

2. Conformed. Gr. *suschēmatisō*, "to conform oneself to another's pattern." The word is translated with the meaning, "to fashion" in 1 Peter 1:14.

World. Gr. *aiōn*, literally, "age" (see on Matt. 13:39; 24:3). Thus "the children of this world" (Luke 16:8; 20:34) may be rendered "the children of this age." The Christian must not go on following the fashion of this age, as was formerly his habit when he lived according to the flesh (Rom. 8:12). On the contrary he must undergo a complete transformation by the renewing of his mind.

Transformed. Gr. *metamorphoō*, from which comes our English word “metamorphosis.” In Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2 it is used to describe the transfiguration of Christ. In 2 Cor. 3:18 it describes the transformation of the believer into the image of Christ. Paul is saying that the Christian should not copy the external and fleeting fashions of this world, but should be thoroughly changed in his inmost nature. Sanctification includes both an outward separation from all the unholy customs of this age and an inward transformation of the believer himself. Elsewhere in the NT this change is described as a new birth (John 3:3), a resurrection (Rom. 6:4, 11, 13), a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

Renewing of your mind. Before conversion, man’s power of reason, the faculty for discerning between right and wrong, is under the dominion of bodily impulses. The mind is described as a “fleshly mind” (Col. 2:18). But at the time of conversion the mind comes under the influence of the Spirit of God. The result is that “we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:13–16). “The words, ‘A new heart also will I give you,’ mean, ‘A new mind will I give you’” (EGW RH Dec. 18, 1913). The death of the old life in the flesh and the beginning of the new life in the Spirit (Rom 6:3–13) is described as “the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). This renewing change, which begins when the believer is converted and reborn, is a progressive and continuing transformation, for our “inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16) “in knowledge” (Col. 3:10). And as the inward man is being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, so the outward life is being progressively changed. The sanctification of the mind will reveal itself in a holier way of living, as the character of Christ is more and more perfectly reproduced in the believer (see COL 69).

Prove. Gr. *dokimazō*. This word implies testing and approving. It includes the double process of deciding what the will of God is and then of approving and acting upon it (cf. Rom. 2:18; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 1:10). by the renewing of his mind the believer is enabled to know what God would have him do. He is enlightened to choose between the many perplexing courses of conduct that are offered in this evil age. Since he no longer has a fleshly mind, but the mind of Christ, he is willing to do God’s will, and thus is able to recognize and understand truth (John 7:17). Only the mind that has been renewed by the Holy Spirit can correctly interpret God’s Word. The inspired Scriptures can be understood only by the illumination of the same Spirit by whom they were originally given (see John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; GW 297).

What is that good. It is possible to render the latter half of this verse, “that you may test and approve what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” According to the KJV translation, the characteristics of God’s will are described; according to the other rendering, the contents of His will. The essential difference in meaning is slight.

3. For I say. Paul now proceeds to demonstrate the practical results of a renewed and enlightened mind. He speaks first of the humility and sober-mindedness that befit a consecrated believer and of the proper use of spiritual gifts for the unified building up of the church.

Through the grace. Paul speaks by virtue of the authority conferred on him as an apostle to declare the will of God (see Rom. 1:5; 15:15, 16; 1 Cor. 3:10; 15:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:2, 7, 8).

To every man. With these emphatic words Paul expressly includes every individual member of the church at Rome, no matter how high his office or how great his influence. Perhaps Paul feared that the Christians in Rome might fall into the same condition of spiritual presumption as had the believers in Corinth, from which city he was writing this epistle (see 1 Cor. 1–5; 2 Cor. 10:13).

Not to think. In the Greek there is a play on words here that cannot be easily reproduced in good English. The literal translation would be, “not to be highminded beyond what one ought to be minded, but to be minded so as to be sober-minded.” This is a strong warning against overestimating oneself. A man needs to become acquainted with the weak as well as the strong points in his character, so that he may be constantly guarded against engaging in enterprises and assuming responsibilities for which God has never designed him (see GW 319).

Soberly. Gr. *sōproneō*, “to be of sound mind,” “to be in one’s right mind.” The person who is proud and conceited is not properly minded. Humility is the immediate effect of self-surrender to God and the consequent renewing of the mind. The consecrated believer recognizes his dependence upon God’s grace for every spiritual gift he may enjoy, and this leaves no room for undue self-esteem. The Christian estimates himself with enlightened discrimination and sober judgment.

The measure of faith. This is the true standard by which a man should measure himself. The person with an unrenewed, fleshly mind estimates himself by worldly standards, by wealth, position, or learning. He is ever striving to give the impression that he is actually greater than he really is. But when faith comes and the mind is renewed, the believer receives a power of discernment as to the actual limitations of his gifts. Faith introduces him to a new standard of measurement, according to which he accurately determines the nature and extent of his abilities, and so does not think of himself too highly. He realizes that the greater his faith, the greater will be his spiritual influence and power. But this will not be an occasion for pride, for the greater his measure of faith, the keener will be his realization of his entire dependence upon God.

4. One body. The reason why Christians must have humility and good judgment is that the church, like the human body, is made up of many members having different functions to perform. These functions are all necessary and important, but all do not seem to be equally glorious. The well-being and advancement of the whole group depend upon a spirit of love, cooperation, and mutual esteem among the members, each individual discharging his appointed duties. This figure of the body and its members is worked out more fully in 1 Cor. 12:12–27.

Office. Gr. *praxis*, “function,” “mode of acting.”

5. One body in Christ. As the many parts compose one body in the man, so the multitude of Christians are one body in Christ. Christ is the One who unites and energizes the whole company of believers. Compare Paul’s description of Christ as the head of the body and the members all subject to Him (Eph. 1:22; 4:15, 16; Col. 1:18). This unity of the Christian church implies the mutual dependence of its members. Since they all belong to one body, they individually belong to one another. Thus Paul enjoins believers to work together, each in his proper sphere, for the common welfare of the church.

6. Gifts. Gr. *charismata*, “gifts of grace” (see Rom. 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; 1 Cor. 7:7; 12:4, 9, 28). These are special qualities and powers imparted to believers by the

Holy Spirit for the service of the church. Often they seem to be natural talents which the Spirit appropriates, increasing their power and sanctifying their use. All such spiritual gifts are “gifts of grace” bestowed according to the will and purpose of God. Those who receive them have no ground for conceit. The source of their increasing strength and influence is not in themselves.

Differing. According to the grace given to him, Paul was appointed to be an apostle (see on v. 3). According to the grace given to them, other believers were appointed to be prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, healers of the sick, etc. (1 Cor. 12:28). By the grace of God the members of the Christian church were endowed with a wide variety of spiritual powers in order to meet the many different needs of their fellow believers and to spread the gospel to every nation, tongue, and people. Paul develops this subject in much more detail in 1 Cor. 12 (see comment there).

Prophecy. In the Scriptures this term applies to any inspired utterance and is not to be limited to the foretelling of future events. A prophet may speak of the past, the present, or the future (see Ex. 7:1; Luke 1:76, 77; Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:3, 24, 25).

Proportion. Gr. *analogia*, a word occurring only here in the NT. In classical Greek it was used as a mathematical term. It is the source of our English word “analogy.” The meaning of the expression “according to the proportion of faith” is indicated by the parallel phrase “according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” in v. 3. If his mind has been renewed (v. 2) and he has become capable of sober judgment (v. 3), the Christian will properly estimate his abilities and powers and will employ them well and humbly in the service of God, who endowed him with these gifts for this purpose (see on v. 3).

7. Ministry. Gr. *diakonia*. The term is often used in the NT in a general sense to include all ministration and office in the Christian church (see Acts 1:17, 25; 20:24; 21:19; Rom. 11:13; 1 Cor. 12:5; 2 Cor. 3:8, 9; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 11:8; Eph. 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:5, 11). Sometimes it is used in a special sense of the distribution of relief and attention to physical needs (Acts 6:1; 11:29, where it is translated “relief”; 12:25; Rom. 15:31; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1, 12, 13).

Since in this passage Paul is speaking of different special gifts and distinguishes “ministry” from prophecy, teaching, and exhortation, it seems evident that the word should be understood in the more limited sense of service in temporal and external matters, such as providing for the wants of the poor, the sick, and the stranger.

Let us wait. These words have been supplied, and apparently correctly so. The Greek of the first part of this verse reads literally, “Or ministry, in our ministering.” The evident meaning is that those of us who have been called to this kind of service should devote ourselves wholeheartedly to it. The work of attending to the more temporal business of the church is not to be lightly regarded. It is as much a gift of God’s grace as is prophecy. The spiritual significance of such service is emphasized by the fact that in the days of the apostles only men who were “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” were to be set over “the daily ministration” of alms (Acts 6:1, 3).

Teaching. In 1 Cor. 12:28 the teacher is ranked next after apostles and prophets. His work is to arrange, develop, impress upon the mind and apply to the life the truths that have already been revealed. His gift lies in an enlightened understanding and the faculty of clear exposition. These were the qualifications that gave Apollos great power (see Acts 18:24–28). Those who have been called by God’s grace to be teachers should not grieve

that they have not been deemed worthy to be prophets or apostles. Nor should they despise their work as of minor dignity and consequence. The Spirit of God appoints the individual believers to the kind of service for which they are best suited and according to His divine purpose for the church. Therefore, the Christian teacher who has faith in Christ's leadership of His church will absorb himself wholly in his teaching. Moreover, as Paul instructed Timothy (1 Tim. 5:17), the elders who labor at teaching (KJV, "doctrine") are worthy of "double honour."

8. Exhortation. Gr. *paraklēsis*, "appeal," "encouragement," "consolation" (compare its use in Rom. 15:5; 2 Cor. 8:4; Phil. 2:1). Teaching is addressed primarily to the understanding. Exhortation is aimed especially at the heart and will. Some have a special gift for stimulating men to action, or comforting them under affliction. This is a gift from God to be humbly and earnestly employed. See on Matt. 5:4.

Giveth. Gr. *metadidōmi*. The term means "to contribute," or "to share" one's own goods and wealth (compare its use in Luke 3:11; Eph. 4:28). Paul now passes from gifts that qualify one for special office in the church to others of a more general nature. The acceptance of Christianity brought poverty to many of the early believers, and it became necessary for them to be supported by the liberal gifts of their fellow Christians (see Acts 2:44, 45; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1; Gal. 2:10).

Simplicity. Gr. *haplotēs*, "sincerity," "singleness of purposes," hence, sometimes "liberality" (see 2 Cor. 8:2; 9:11, 13). The Christian who shares his possessions with others is to do so with singleness of heart (cf. Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22) and not with mixed motives. There must be no ostentation or selfish aim. Such sincerity and generosity are also a gift of the Spirit, whose guiding influence is required for the right use of riches (cf. Matt. 6:3; 19:21).

He that ruleth. Literally, "he that is placed in front." The word is used in the NT for those who are in any position of authority or influence, whether in the church (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17) or in the home (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12). Their special gift is that of "government" (1 Cor. 12:28).

Diligence. Gr. *spoudē*. Elsewhere in the NT the KJV translates this word "haste" (Mark 6:25; Luke 1:39), "carefulness" (2 Cor. 7:11), "care" (2 Cor. 7:12), "forwardness" (2 Cor. 8:8), "earnest care" (2 Cor. 8:16). Energy and earnest zeal are required of anyone in a position of leadership. These qualities are a gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian who has been so endowed should throw his whole soul into the work appointed him.

Sheweth mercy. In this list of gifts, Paul evidently draws some distinction between giving alms and performing acts of kindness. Perhaps he is referring here particularly to such forms of showing mercy as "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27), "to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isa. 61:1; cf. Luke 4:18), to visit those who are sick or in prison (Matt. 25:36, 39, 44).

Cheerfulness. Gr. *hilarotēs*, the source of our English words "hilarity," "exhilaration." This is the only occurrence of the word in the NT, though the adjective (*hilaros*) is used in 2 Cor. 9:7, "God loveth a cheerful giver." Whether he is comforting the mourner or relieving the sufferer, the one who is "showing mercy" should let it be apparent that his service is willingly and gladly rendered. Deeds of kindness performed brightly and cheerfully are of much greater value than those done from a sense of duty

alone. Jesus was constantly surrounded by the suffering and infirm. Yet He was always gentle, kind, and cheerful (see MH 24).

The various gifts that Paul has listed are to be exercised in the right spirit and for the common good of all. The Christian believer will not despise the particular rank or function the Lord has assigned to him. Nor will he think of himself more highly than he should. His aim and joy will be to discharge with fidelity the duties belonging to the sphere of life to which he has been divinely called.

9. Love. Gr. *agapē* (see on Matt. 5:44; 1 Cor. 13:1). From his discussion of the right use of special gifts, Paul now passes on to instruct believers in the exercise of the greatest gift of all and the basic principle of all true Christianity—love. As in 1 Cor. 12; 13 Paul follows his discussion of spiritual gifts by a reference to love. The virtues that he lists in Rom. 12:9–21 are but the outworking of genuine Christian love.

Without dissimulation. Gr. *anupokritos*, “without hypocrisy,” “unfeigned,” “genuine,” “sincere,” “real,” “true.” Only that love is genuine which hates what is evil and holds fast to what is good (see 1 Cor. 13:6).

Abhor. Gr. *apostugeō*, occurring only here in the NT, implies loathing something so much that one keeps oneself away from it. Sincere love cannot condone evil in another, no matter how greatly beloved. Its aim will ever be to combat what is evil and confirm what is good. The love of Eli for his rebellious sons did not reveal these marks of genuineness. Had his love been true, he would have corrected the evil tendencies of his sons. But the Scriptures record the disastrous results of blind indulgence instead of true love (see Lev. 10:1, 2; PP 360, 361; 1 Sam. 3:13; 4:11, 18–22; PP 575–579).

Cleave. Gr. *kollaō*, literally, “to glue [or “cement”] together,” hence, “to join oneself” to something (see Matt. 19:5; Acts 8:29).

10. Kindly affectioned. Gr. *philostorgoi*, a term that expresses the very tender love existing between near relatives. The word is thus appropriately applied to the brotherhood of the Christian family. Believers are to regard each other affectionately, as sons and daughters of the same Father (cf. Mark 3:35).

Brotherly love. Gr. *philadelphia*, a term describing the close bond that is to exist between the members of the Christian church (compare its use in 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:17). The literal word order of this part of the verse is, “in brotherly love, unto one another [be] kindly affectioned.” Paul’s meaning is that in their love for their Christian brethren, believers should feel that special, warm affection of close relatives.

Preferring. Gr. *proēgeomai*, literally, “to go before as a leader.” This is the only NT occurrence of the word. The Greek phrase here rendered, “in honour preferring one another,” is difficult to translate. It has been variously interpreted, “outdo one another in showing honor” (RSV), “eager to show one another honor” (Goodspeed), etc. The correct meaning is perhaps suggested by the somewhat parallel passage in Phil. 2:3, “in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” A result of true affection is that one does not seek his own honor or position but is willing to give honor to others. Christian brethren who are motivated by genuine love will be more forward to pay respect than to receive it. None will be ambitious to gather honor to himself, but each will be eager to show honor to his fellow believers.

11. Slothful. Gr. *oknēroi*, “slow,” “hesitating,” “timid,” “dilatory,” “careless,” “lazy.” The word occurs frequently in the LXX of Proverbs (see Prov. 20:4; etc.). It is used to describe the wicked servant in our Lord’s parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:26).

Business. Gr. *spoudē*, “zeal,” “ardor,” “fervor.” *Spoudē* is translated “diligence” in v. 8. Paul does not here refer to secular business but to spiritual zeal and energy. The Christian should not allow his zeal to flag, but should put his whole heart into the service of the Lord (Col. 3:23). Such enduring zeal is the result of genuine Christian love, for it is the love of Christ that “constrains,” or “controls,” His followers (2 Cor. 5:13, 14). There is no place for sluggards in the kingdom of God (see TM 183, 184), for their lack of zeal is a mark of their selfishness and lack of love. They have not been sufficiently stirred by Christ’s love and sacrifice to be willing to join their Master with all their strength in the urgent work of reclaiming sinners from the swift-flowing waters of sin.

Fervent. Gr. *zeō*, literally, “to boil.” Apollos is described as a man who was “fervent in the spirit” (Acts 18:25). The zealous Christian will always keep his interest in the cause of God at the boiling point, as it were. His fervor will give him power with men (Acts 18:25, 28) and bring him power from God. The apostle John was “a powerful preacher, fervent, and deeply in earnest,” and “the fervor that characterized his teachings gave him access to all classes” (AA 546).

In spirit. This may be understood as either the human spirit or the divine Spirit. Perhaps Paul is speaking of the human spirit inspired and energized by the Spirit of God. The consecrated, energetic believer will find the discharge of his Christian duties not a dull, uninteresting drudgery but rather a joyous, vitalizing experience. With his heart aglow he is ever hastening to wherever there is some good to be done. He shares Christ’s love for fallen humanity and so finds his deepest satisfaction in ministering to the needs of his fellow men. Like his Lord, he has nourishment to sustain him that other men “know not of,” for his food is to do the will of the One who called him and “to finish his work” (John 4:32–34).

Serving the Lord. Zeal and fervor arise naturally in the heart of the believer who recognizes that, in whatever sphere of labor he may be serving, he is working “as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23, 24; cf. Eph. 6:5–8).

12. Rejoicing in hope. The three brief injunctions in this verse seem even more pointed when the word order of the Greek is retained: “In hope rejoicing, in tribulation enduring, in prayer persevering.” Paul has already commended the spirit of cheerfulness (v. 8). In ch. 5:2 he spoke of the believer’s rejoicing “in hope of the glory of God.” This Christian hope, which is the cause of such cheerfulness, has been explained in ch. 8:20–25. This hope enables the Christian to look beyond the darkness and trouble of the present moment to the things that are unseen and eternal (2 Cor. 4:17, 18). The fact that hope, like so many of the Christian virtues, springs from the basic virtue of love is indicated by 1 Cor. 13:7, love “hopeth all things.”

Patient. Gr. *hupomenō*, “to endure” (cf. *hupomonē*, “patience”; see on ch. 5:3). Such zeal as has been described in the previous verse soon encounters opposition and trouble. But with the hope of God’s glory before him the Christian neither murmurs against God nor feels enmity against his persecutors. He calmly remains at his post of duty in spite of the trials it involves. Such patient endurance was perfectly exemplified by Christ, who, under more difficult circumstances, endured more than any of His followers will be

called upon to face. The virtue of endurance was especially needed in the troublous times through which the church was passing in Paul's day. The apostle knew from experience that sufferings for the cause of Christ would be intense (see Rom. 8:35; 2 Cor. 1:4; 1 Thess. 1:6; 3:3–7; 2 Thess. 1:4–6). The connection between love and endurance is also indicated in 1 Cor. 13:7, love “endureth all things.”

Continuing instant. Gr. *proskartereō*, “to persist,” “to continue steadfastly,” “to persevere.” The same word is translated elsewhere, “wait” (Mark 3:9), “waited ... continually” (Acts 10:7), “attending continually” (Rom. 13:6). Only by constant communion with God can the Christian maintain strength and courage to endure the troubles through which he will inevitably pass (see Acts 1:14; 6:4; Col. 4:2). Setting the mind continually on things that are above (cf. Col. 3:2) and measuring every act and impulse by contemplation of the glory and will of God are the sure remedy for impatience under provocation and opposition. Moreover, God gives His Spirit to those who earnestly and continually desire His presence (see John 16:23, 24; Acts 1:14; 2:4), and the same Spirit who brings “love” (cf. Rom. 12:9) and “rejoicing” (cf. v. 12) brings also “longsuffering” and “temperance,” literally, “self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

13. Distributing. Gr. *koinōneō*, “to share,” “to take part in,” “to act as a partner.” Compare the use of this word in Rom. 15:27; Phil. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 13:16; 1 Peter 4:13. Paul's meaning is that Christians should share in the needs of their fellow believers. They should treat the wants of their brethren as if they were their own and be willing to share with the unfortunate. This is far more than mere almsgiving; it is a concrete application of the principle of love (Rom. 12:9). That Paul practiced what he preached is apparent from his constant efforts to raise funds for the relief of poverty-stricken converts (see Rom. 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:1–7; 9:2–5; Gal. 2:10).

Saints. See on ch. 1:7. Those who are “of the household of faith” are to have special care (Gal. 6:10).

Given to. Gr. *diōkō*, literally, “to pursue,” “to follow after.” Compare the use of the word in 1 Cor. 14:1; 1 Thess. 5:15; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11. The term seems to imply that Christians are not only to furnish hospitality but also to be eager to practice it.

Hospitality. Gr. *philoxenia*, literally, “love of strangers,” hence, “entertainment of strangers.” Hospitality was early regarded as one of the important Christian virtues (see 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9). This was necessarily so in view of the large number of traveling and persecuted believers. Many Christians were driven from their homes and cities and compelled to seek shelter with those who held the same faith as themselves (see Acts 8:1; 26:11). The hospitality which believers practiced toward one another contributed much to the bond that held together the widely scattered members of the early Christian church.

14. Bless. Gr. *eulogeō*, “to speak well of,” “to invoke blessings on.” In v. 13 Paul has spoken of the Christian's treatment of his friends; in this verse he indicates the proper treatment of his enemies. We “bless” our persecutors when we pray and work for their good. Paul's words are similar to those of Jesus in Matt. 5:44; cf. Luke 6:28; 1 Peter 3:9.

Persecute. Gr. *diōkō*, “to pursue,” often with evil intent, as here. This is the same word that is translated “given to” in v. 13. The Christian is to “pursue” hospitality toward the brethren and bless the wicked who “pursue” him. With this injunction Paul anticipates

the thought, which he develops more fully in vs. 17–21, that it is a Christian's duty to love his enemies and to overcome evil with good. This duty can be performed only by a believer whose mind has been renewed by the Spirit (v. 2) and whose love is "without dissimulation" (v. 9).

15. Rejoice. Sympathy under all circumstances, whether good or bad, is sure evidence of the genuineness of love. Of the two forms of sympathy mentioned in this verse, the first is perhaps the more difficult. It seems easier and more natural to sympathize with sorrow, but it requires a noble soul to rejoice in the successes and joys of others. The opposites of these virtues are the envy that regards the good fortunes of others with pain and the malice that is gratified by others' misfortunes. Such manifestations of selfishness are the natural tendencies of the unregenerate heart. In 1 Cor. 12:26, 27 Paul compares the sympathy that should exist between members of the Christian church with that which is felt by one part of the body for another. Jesus wept in sympathy at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35; DA 533). He rejoices in the salvation of even the most unworthy sinner (see Luke 15:5–7, 10, 23, 24, 32; Jude 24).

16. Be of the same mind. Each Christian should so enter into the feelings and desires of his fellow believers as to be of one mind with them (see Rom. 15:5; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 2:2; 4:2). Among Christians there should always exist the harmony that results from a common purpose, common hopes, common desires.

Mind not high things. Or, "be not high-minded" (ch. 11:20), "do not be haughty" (RSV). "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4, RV). Pride may even be prompted by spiritual attainments (see 1 Cor. 12). Loving concord cannot continue where there are some whose minds are set on "high things," where there is personal ambition, conceit, or contempt for others.

Condescend. Gr. *sunapagō*, literally, "to carry away with," as by a flood; hence, "to yield to," "to submit to," "to give oneself up to." Compare the only two other NT occurrences of this verb in Gal. 2:13 and 2 Peter 3:17, where the unfavorable sense is indicated by the context, not by the verb.

Men of low estate. The Greek is ambiguous and may refer either to lowly men or to lowly things. The Greek word for "lowly" or "humble" (*tapeinos*) is consistently used of persons elsewhere in the NT, but it is not impossible that in this context Paul is speaking of "humble duties" or "lowly tasks." Whichever is his meaning, the emphasis is upon humility.

It seems that most of the members in the early Christian church were poor, and the few who were wealthy may have been tempted to look with some disdain upon their lowlier brethren (see James 2:1–9). But such a lack of love and sympathy would make it impossible for believers to "be of the same mind one toward another." Therefore Christians must have a mind such as Jesus had. Even though He was divine, He did not mind "high things." Rather, He "took upon him the form of a servant" and "humbled himself," so that He could associate with lowly, sinful people and work with them for their salvation (Phil. 2:5–8). If the son of God was willing to stoop so low through love for His corrupted creatures, surely grateful Christians should be willing to "condescend" to associate with any of their fellow mortals (see GW 330–336). See on James 1:9, 10.

Wise in your own conceits. Literally, "wise by yourselves," meaning "wise in your own opinions" (cf. on ch. 11:25). Such pride of opinion is an offense against Christian love, for it implies the despising of the opinions of others and ultimately of even the

counsels of God. Therefore Isaiah warns, “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isa. 5:21; cf. Prov. 3:7). The Christian whose mind has been renewed will not trust in the conceit of his own superior skill and understanding and refuse to listen to the advice of others. On the contrary, in love and humility he will respect the judgment of his fellow believers and keep his mind open and teachable. He will be ready to recognize and acknowledge his own limitations and errors and to learn from others.

17. Recompense. Or, “requite,” “pay back,” “repay.” For the principle here stated see on Matt. 5:38–48. Love returns good for evil and works to bring blessing, not destruction, to others (see Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 13:5, 6; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9).

Provide. Gr. *pronoeō*, “to take thought beforehand.”

Things honest. Gr. *kala*, “good things,” “noble things,” “right things.” Paul may be alluding to the LXX of Prov. 3:4. In order to disarm opposition, the Christian should use much forethought so that his conduct, because of its transparent goodness and justice, will not only be blameless in the sight of God but may also seem right in the sight of all men. Followers of an unpopular cause who wish to persuade others of the truth and excellence of their message, must see to it that their behavior is consistently above reproach. They must never give occasion for suspicion or offense. The Christian who wishes his light to shine before men so that they may see his good works and glorify his Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16) will never engage in activities or enterprises of a doubtful character that might bring not only himself but also the whole Christian body into disrepute.

Paul was never afraid to incur opposition when duty and conscience so required. Nevertheless, he is here advising and exhorting Christians to exercise caution and foresight, so as not to offend unnecessarily and thereby stir up the hostility of others. This is the course dictated not only by love but also by good, practical sense. It is impossible to persuade and antagonize people at the same time.

18. As much as lieth in you. Literally, “as to that which proceeds from you,” meaning, “so far as it depends on you.” The connection with the previous verse is quite apparent. So far as the Christian is concerned, he is to do everything he can to maintain peace. But there are times when fidelity to principle may necessitate his incurring the antagonism of others. Therefore Paul adds the qualification, “if it be possible.” The record of Paul’s own life, which was one of almost constant conflict, shows that it is not always possible to be at peace. In a world whose prince is Satan, soldiers of Christ must not expect that all will be peace. Nevertheless, the Christian must see to it that whenever the peace is broken, it is not his fault.

19. Dearly beloved. Gr. *agapētoi*. The KJV sometimes translates this word literally, “beloved” (see Rom. 1:7; 9:25; 11:28; 16:12; Eph. 1:6; etc.) and sometimes adds a qualifying “dearly” (see 1 Cor. 10:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; 12:19; Phil. 4:1; etc.).

Avenge not. The word order in the Greek is “do not avenge yourselves, beloved.”

Give place unto wrath. Literally, “give place unto the wrath.” The definite article before “wrath” indicates that the reference is to the wrath of God (cf. on ch. 5:9). This interpretation is confirmed by the following words, “vengeance is mine; I will repay.” “Give place” means “give room” for the avenging wrath of God to work. Christians are never to attempt to seek revenge upon those who treat them unjustly. They should leave

the matter with God. Only a perfect, all-knowing, all-loving God can rightly judge and justly punish evildoers. Both the language and the thought of this injunction are illustrated by Eph. 4:27, where Paul explains that by avenging ourselves we “give place to the devil.” Those who are filled with thoughts of revenge are giving opportunity for Satan to inspire anger, hatred, and bitterness, whereas they should be encouraging the growth of the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, and long-suffering (Gal. 5:22).

Two other interpretations of this passage have sometimes been held. One is, “Allow time or space for your own anger to cool.” The other is, “give room for, that is, yield to, the anger of your opponent.” However, neither of these interpretations suits the Greek or the context.

It is written. The quotation is from Deut. 32:35. Compare Heb. 10:30. In Deuteronomy this statement is a warning to God’s people. In Hebrews it is directed to apostates. But here in Romans it is used as a consolation to God’s unjustly persecuted people. God will avenge them in due time, for “shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?” (Luke 18:7; cf. Deut. 32:40–43; 2 Thess. 1:6–10; Rev. 6:9–11).

Vengeance. Gr. *ekdikēsis*, “vindication,” “retribution,” “punishment” (cf. Acts 7:24; 2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Peter 7:14). The idea of personal vindictiveness must be eliminated from the word as used here of God’s avenging justice. It means rather the full meting out of justice to all parties. In the day of God’s vengeance the wicked will receive the inevitable consequences of their own choice. By their lives of rebellion they have placed themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire (2 Thess. 1:6–10; Rev. 6:15–17). “The glory of Him who is love will destroy them” (DA 764).

20. If thine enemy. The quotation is from Prov. 25:21, 22.

Coals of fire. That is, live coals. See on Prov. 25:22. Kindness is the best vengeance that a Christian can take against an enemy. That heaping coals of fire on an opponent’s head must mean an act of love rather than of malice is clearly indicated by both the OT and NT contexts. The passage in Prov. 25:22 closes with these words, not quoted here by Paul, “and the Lord shall reward thee,” namely, for the good deeds done to your enemy. Similarly in the present context, the general meaning is summed up in the words, “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21).

21. Be not overcome of evil. The infliction of vengeance is a sign, not of strength, but of weakness. The one who allows his temper to be stirred up and his Christian principles of love and self-control to be abandoned suffers defeat. But the person who represses the desire for revenge and turns a wrong done to him into an opportunity for showing kindness gains a victory over himself and over the powers of evil. This is not only nobler in itself but will be much more effective. It may disarm an enemy (cf. Prov. 15:1) and win another soul. Thus God has not meted out to sinners the vengeance they have long deserved, but rather has overwhelmed them with love and mercy. And it is the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God that lead men to repentance (Rom. 2:4). The Christian who is being transformed into the image of God (ch. 12:2) will show by his treatment of his enemies that day by day his character is becoming more and more like the character of God, who is love (1 John 4:8)

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AH 301; CD 58, 165; CH 22, 42, 67, 121, 505; CT 301; DA 439; GC 473; MH 130; ML 6; MYP 244; PK 65, 489; PP 352; SL 27; Te 19, 62, 149, 191; TM 161; 1T 126; 2T 65, 70, 381; 3T 63, 83, 162, 164; 5T 441, 541; 6T 224
- 1, 2 CD 446; CH 49; FE 289, 351; Te 108; TM 448; 1T 694; 2T 492; 3T 157; 6T 143, 239; 7T 75; 9T 113
- 2 CH 23; CT 262; MH 404; ML 153, 318; 1T 240, 285, 479, 704; 2T 44, 56, 71, 82, 86, 174, 185, 194, 301, 678; 3T 126, 163; 4T 645; 5T 542
- 3 5T 289
- 4, 5 4T 16
- 8 ML 195
- 8–131T 692
- 9 4T 325
- 9, 10 3T 361; 5T 171
- 10 AA 275; AH 421, 423; MH 489; ML 119; PP 133; 2T 162
- 10, 11 2T 419; 5T 108, 178
- 10–13 3T 224
- 11 AA 351; AH 23; CG 123, 125; CM 77; COL 51, 346; CS 159, 165, 269; Ev 480, 654; FE 214, 316; ML 104, 243; MYP 72; TM 183; 1T 115, 317, 325; 2T 255, 500, 673, 701; 3T 400; 4T 191; 5T 276, 459; 6T 469; 7T 12, 196; 9T 150; WM 239
- 12 COL 172; ML 18; MYP 278; SC 97; 2T 48
- 13 AH 445; CS 29
- 15 MH 143, 157; 3T 186
- 16 TM 193; 4T 20
- 17 ML 330
- 18 ML 52; SL 20; 1T 356
- 19 EW 274
- 21 MH 486

CHAPTER 13

7

- 1 *Subjection, and many other duties, we owe to the magistrates.* 8 *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* 11 *Gluttony and drunkenness, and the works of darkness, are out of season in the time of the gospel.*

1. Every soul. That is, every person (see on Rom. 2:9; cf. on Ps. 16:10).

Be subject. Gr. *hupotassō*, “to submit oneself.” “to be in subjection,” “to obey.”

The higher powers. Literally, “authorities that have themselves over,” meaning “those who are set in authority over others.” See 1 Peter 2:13; cf. Luke 12:11; Titus 3:1. Throughout this section the word translated “power” (*exousia*) means “authority,” that is, power to rule or govern. It is to be distinguished from *dunamis*, also frequently translated “power” (see Rom. 1:16, 20; 1 Cor. 1:18), which means “strength,” “force,” “power [or “ability”] to perform.”

⁷Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 11:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

No power but of God. That is, no human authority exists except by God's permission and under His control. The OT often asserts that God sets up one and puts down another (see on Dan. 4:17; cf. ch. 2:21; 4:25, 34, 35).

The powers that be. Or, "the existing authorities."

Ordained of God. The Greek words in vs. 1, 2 that are translated "be subject," "ordained," "resisteth" (the first occurrence), and "ordinance" are all built on the same root *tassō*, "to order," "to arrange," "to set." This gives an antithetical force to the passage that cannot be fully represented in English.

Paul does not imply in these verses that God always approves the conduct of civil governments. Nor does Paul mean that it is the Christian's duty always to submit to them. The requirements of government may at times be contrary to the law of God, and under such circumstances the Christian is "to obey God rather than men" (Acts 4:19; 5:29). Paul's point is that the ruling power of human governments is entrusted to men by God, according to His own purposes for man's welfare. Their continuance in power, or their fall from authority, is in His hands. Therefore, the Christian will support the authority of the existing state. He will not presume to take it into his own hands to resist or to depose "the powers that be."

Such instruction was especially needful in Paul's day, for at that time the Jews were in a turbulent mood and had already stirred up rebellion in various parts of the Roman Empire. For Christians to reveal a similarly unsubmitive spirit would have been to incur the same displeasure that was beginning to fall upon the Jews. It would also have resulted in their forfeiting the protection of the Roman state, which had often been a blessing to the early Christians, as Paul could testify from his own experience (see Acts 22:24-30). Furthermore, it would have brought reproach upon the Christian church and its message of peace and brotherly love. Therefore, Paul elsewhere urges believers to pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1, 2) and to obey them (Titus 3:1). Likewise Peter commands Christians to submit "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13-17).

2. Resisteth the power. Literally, "lines himself up against the authority," "sets himself in array against the authority."

Ordinance. Gr. *diatagē*, literally, "that which is ordered," "that which is set." The only the NT occurrence of this word is in Acts 7:53, where it is translated "disposition." Paul's meaning might be rendered literally, "he sets himself against that which is divinely set."

Damnation. Gr. *krima*, "condemnation," "judgment" (see ch. 2:2; 5:16; 11:33). Paul here refers to the sentence passed by the ruling authorities, as God's ministers in this world (ch. 13:4), upon those who resist. Since disobeying "the powers that be" is resisting the ordinance of God, the penalty that the authorities execute represents also the judgment and wrath of God upon the rebellious citizen.

3. Not a terror. In general, rulers are not to be dreaded except when wrong is done. In actuality, of course, not all rulers belong to this class, for many of them have persecuted the good; for example, Nero, the Roman emperor at the time Paul wrote this epistle, who was later responsible for Paul's martyrdom. Nevertheless, it is generally true that those who are virtuous have nothing to fear from civil authorities. Governments as such are not a terror to good works. On the contrary, they exist for a beneficent purpose, and generally

speaking it is to the Christian's advantage to submit to their requirements (see 1 Tim. 2:1, 2).

Wilt thou? Gr. *thelō*, "to wish," "to will." The Christian who wishes to have no dread of the civil government should practice doing what is right, and then he will be commended for his good conduct (cf. 1 Peter 2:14, 15).

Of the same. Literally, "from it," meaning "from the ruling authority."

4. For. This introduces the reason for the previous declaration. Since the state exists as a servant of God for a good purpose, the Christian has no cause to fear its authority if he leads a peaceable life. Here again Paul is expressing a general truth, not tarrying to qualify his statement with specific exceptions.

He. Or, "it," referring to "the power," "the authority," in v. 3.

Minister. Gr. *diakonos*, "servant" (see ch. 15:8; 16:1). *Diakonos* is also the word used to describe the office of the deacon (1 Tim. 3:8, 12).

To thee. That is, for your advantage, in your interest.

For good. That is, to promote good. This is the true reason for the existence of civil government, as the servant and representative of God.

The sword. The symbol of the ruler's authority to inflict punishment.

A revenger. Gr. *ekdikos*, "an avenger." The only other NT occurrence of this word is in 1 Thess. 4:6. In the Greek papyri this term is generally used for "a legal representative."

To execute wrath. Literally, "for wrath." As "the minister of God" the state is to inflict punishment on evildoers (cf. v. 2; ch. 12:19).

5. Wherefore. This refers to the preceding four verses, in which Paul has presented the reasons for obedience.

For wrath. Literally, "on account of the wrath." Since the civil authorities exist by divine appointment, the Christian must obey, not only because he wants to avoid punishment, but because it is right to obey. The only exception is when the law of the state conflicts with the law of God.

6. Pay ye tribute. Better, "you pay tribute." The Greek may be translated either way. The context suggests that this is not a command but a statement of fact. Evidently the early Christians regarded it as a matter of principle to pay taxes, perhaps in obedience to the teaching of Christ (Luke 20:20–25), as reflected in Rom. 13:7. By thus supporting the civil government with their tribute, the Christians were acknowledging that they owed obedience to the state as ordained of God "for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (1 Peter 2:14).

Ministers. Gr. *leitourgoi*, "servants," "public servants," the source of our English word "liturgy." This is not the same word that is translated "minister" in v. 4 (see comment there). Both words are used of secular services, but this term is also specially applied to priestly ministry (see Rom. 15:16; Heb. 8:2). By the use of this term Paul may be emphasizing the propriety and necessity of obedience to civil powers by investing them with a certain sacredness of character as "God's public servants."

Attending continually. Or, "persevering." The word thus rendered is translated "continuing instant" in ch. 12:12.

This very thing. That is, the service of God described in vs. 3, 4.

7. Therefore. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. Some commentators regard this verse as the conclusion to Paul's argument regarding the duty of Christians to obey the state. In this case "all" is understood as referring to those in authority. Other commentators, however, interpret this verse as a statement of the broad principle that applies to both the preceding and the following sections. In this case "all" refers to all men, and Paul's maxim is, "Pay all men their dues."

Tribute. Gr. *phoros*, "tax," "duty." The meaning "rent" is found in the papyri. Compare Luke 20:22.

Custom. Gr. *telos* (see on Matt. 17:25).

Fear. Gr. *phobos*, here meaning the respect with which one in authority should be held, not fear in the sense of dread and terror. Compare 1 Peter 2:18; 3:2.

Honour. Compare 1 Peter 2:17. In Paul's time the agents of the Roman government who were empowered to collect taxes and customs were, to the Jews at least, the object of popular hatred and contempt. Therefore, Paul's counsel to the believers in Rome that they should not only submit to taxation but also give due honor and respect to their rulers was in striking contrast with the growing sentiment of rebellion that was being stirred up by fanatical Jews and that was soon to bring destruction upon their nation (see Josephus *War* ii. 13. 4–7 [258–270]).

8. Owe no man any thing. The Christian is to pay all he owes, but there is one debt he can never fully meet, namely, the debt of love to his fellow men.

Love one another. Mutual love is an infinite obligation. It is a debt that one should ever be seeking to discharge but that will never be fully paid so long as there remains an opportunity for doing good to one's fellow men.

Loveth another. Literally, "loveth the other." Hence the translation "his neighbor" (RSV).

Hath fulfilled. He who loves his fellow men has carried out the intent and purpose of the law. All the commandments of God are based upon the one principle of love (Matt. 22:34–40; cf. Rom. 13:9). Therefore, His law cannot be perfectly obeyed by mere outward conformity to the letter. True obedience is a matter of the heart and of the spirit (cf. Rom. 2:28, 29). Not external compliance but heartfelt love is the fulfillment of the law (ch. 13:10). This fundamental truth the Jews had been slow to believe and practice, despite the clear teachings of Moses on the subject (see Lev. 19:18, 34; Deut. 6:5; 10:12). They turned God's law of love into a rigid and loveless code of legal requirements. They were quick to tithe even the mint and anise and cummin, but passed over the weightier matters of the law, faith, judgment, mercy, and the love of God (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42). Therefore Jesus sought to reveal once again the true purpose of His Father's commandments. He taught that all the commands are summed up in love (Matt. 22:37–40; Mark 12:29–34; Luke 10:27, 28), and that the distinguishing mark of an obedient disciple is love for his fellow men (John 13:34, 35).

The law. Literally, "law" (see on ch. 2:12). Although his references to particular commands is the Decalogue (ch. 13:9) indicate that Paul has that law especially in mind, the absence of the article "the" with "law" suggests that he may be speaking of "law" as a principle. As sin is disobedience to law, or lawlessness (see on 1 John 3:4), so on the contrary love is, literally, "the fulfillment of law" (Rom. 13:10).

9. For this. That is, the commandments that Paul now cites. He who loves his neighbor will not steal from him or take his life or covet his goods or bear false witness concerning him or commit adultery with his wife.

Bear false witness. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission here of this command. It may have been added by a copyist in order to make the familiar list of the second table of the commandments more complete. However, that Paul was evidently making no attempt at completeness is indicated by his words, “and if there be any other commandment.” The order of the commandments differs from that of Ex. 20:13–15, the seventh being placed before the sixth. The same arrangement appears in Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; James 2:11. The regular order is found in Matt. 19:18. Paul was probably following the order in a manuscript of the LXX. The order he follows is that of the Codex Vaticanus in Deut. 5:17. In Ex. 20:13–15 the same manuscript places the seventh commandment first in the series of the last five, then the eight, then the sixth.

Briefly comprehended. Gr. *anakephalaioō*, “to sum up.”

Thou shalt love. The quotation is from Lev. 19:18 (see comment there).

10. Love worketh. See on 1 Cor. 13:4–6.

Fulfilling. Gr. *plērōma*, “fulfillment,” “filling up” (cf. v. 8).

The law. Literally, “law” (see on v. 8).

11. And that. Literally, “and this.” The expression recalls the preceding injunction to owe nothing but love, which is itself the summary of the Christian duties prescribed in chs. 12; 13. As an urgent motive for the fulfillment of these duties, Paul now appeals to what has always been one of the strongest incentives to Christian living—the belief in the nearness of the second coming of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 7:29; Heb. 10:25, 37; 1 Peter 4:7).

Time. Gr. *kairos*. This term does not apply to time in general but to a definite, measured, or fixed time, or to a critical period or season (see on Mark 1:15; cf. 1 Cor. 7:29; Rev. 1:3). The believers in Rome could not but be aware of the critical time in which they lived. Hence Paul urges them to shake off all lukewarmness and indolence, to put a stop to self-indulgence, and to put “on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now it is high time. Gr. *hōra ēdē*, “the hour is already” (cf. Matt. 24:44; 25:13).

To awake. Literally, “for us to awake.” Important textual evidence (cf. p. 10) may be cited for the reading “for you to awake.”

Sleep. The preparation needed for the great day of God demands of Christians a wakeful vigilance. Compare the parable of the Ten Virgins, who “all slumbered and slept” (Matt. 25:5; cf. 1 Thess. 5:6).

Salvation nearer. By “salvation” Paul evidently means the coming of Christ in power and glory, and all that he has already described as taking place at that time: “the manifestation of the sons of God” (ch. 8:19), “the redemption of our body” (v. 23), and the deliverance of nature “from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (v. 21).

We believed. That is, we first believed. The tense of this verb in the Greek points back to the first acceptance of the Christian faith (cf. Acts 19:2; 1 Cor. 3:5; 15:2). The constant expectation of the coming of the Lord is the attitude of mind that Christ Himself enjoined in His repeated warnings (see Matt. 24). This expectation had from the first been qualified by the caution, “of that day and hour knoweth no man” (Matt. 24:36), and Paul was not unmindful of this caution (see 1 Thess. 5:1, 2; 2 Thess. 2:1, 2). Nevertheless, his

anticipation of that great day was none the less vivid (see 1 Thess. 4:15, 17; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52). Other NT writers shared the same mood (see 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 22:12, 20; cf. Ev 695; AA 265).

The fact that time has continued longer than was expected does not mean that the word of God has failed. There is a work to be done and there are conditions to be met before Christ can come (see Ev 694–697). In the meantime, for the individual believer, a continuing and vital sense of the shortness of time and the imminence of the return of Christ is an indispensable motivation to complete the necessary work and meet the required conditions. For it remains ever true that for those who sleep in lukewarm self-indulgence the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and “they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).

12. Night. Having compared the present spiritual condition of his readers to “sleep,” Paul continues the figure by contrasting the present life with that which is to come, as night with day (cf. Heb. 10:25).

Cast off. Gr. *apotithēmi*, “to throw aside,” “to put off from oneself.” This word is used a number of times in the NT to describe the putting aside of evil habits (see Eph. 4:22, 25; Col. 3:8; Heb. 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1).

Works of darkness. Represented here as clothing that must be taken off. In their place the Christian is to put on the armor of truth and righteousness, that he may be ready for the light of the day of Christ’s appearing.

Armour. Gr. *hopla*, “arms,” or “weapons.” *Hopla* is translated “weapons” in John 18:3; 2 Cor. 10:4, and “instruments” in Rom. 6:13. Compare Paul’s description of the Christian’s armor in Eph. 6:11–18.

Of light. The “armour of light” is so designated to contrast it with the “works of darkness.” Christians are called “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). They are called “children of light” (1 Thess. 5:5) and consequently fight the spiritual battle with weapons of light.

13. Let us walk. That is, let us live, let us conduct ourselves.

Honestly. Gr. *euschēmonōs*, literally, “in good fashion,” hence, “gracefully,” “becomingly,” “honorably.” The English word “honest” originally meant “honorable.” Compare Wyclif’s translation of 1 Cor. 12:23, “and vpon those members of the body which we thinke moste vn timerly, put we more honestie on.” Compare Rom. 12:17, where “things honest” means “things honorable and good.” The word occurs also in 1 Cor. 14:40 and 1 Thess. 4:12, where it is translated, respectively, “decently,” “honestly.”

As in the day. Evil men seek to hide their deeds of violence and lust under cover of night (1 Thess. 5:7; Eph. 5:11, 12). But the Christian should conduct himself as if the world could see what he does. He is a child of the day, not of the night (1 Thess. 5:5), and he should live as a child of light (Eph. 5:8).

Rioting. Gr. *kōmoi*, “revelings,” “revelries,” “carousings” (cf. Gal. 5:21; 1 Peter 4:3).

Chambering. Gr. *koitai*, “debauchery,” “immorality.”

Wantonness. Gr. *aselgeiai*, “sensuality,” “licentiousness,” “indecentcy” (cf. 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19). The sins in this list were especially prevalent among the heathen in Paul’s day (Rom. 1:24–31), but were by no means limited to them (see ch. 2:3, 21–24).

Strife. Gr. *eris*, “quarreling.”

Envy*ing*. Gr. *zēlos*, “jealousy.”

14. Put ye on. In v. 12 the Christian is exhorted to put on “the armour of light.” Now Paul represents Christ Himself as the Christian’s panoply. But this life with which he has been clothed must be continually renewed in the day-by-day experience of growth in sanctification (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:12–14). Each new step in this development may be regarded as a new putting on of Christ, and the Christian who perseveres in this transforming experience will more and more perfectly imitate the life and character of Christ and reflect Him to the world (see Cor. 3:2, 3; COL 69; cf. Gal. 4:19).

The flesh. That is, the depraved physical nature (see ch. 8:1–13). Provision must be made for the needs of the body, but the Christian must take no thought for the excitement and gratification of unholy physical cravings. A life of luxury and self-indulgence stimulates those fleshly impulses that the Christian should seek rather to mortify (chs. 6:12, 13; 8:13). Therefore Paul warns believers not to give their thoughts to such things.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 13

Certain of the New Testament writers sometimes seem to speak of the coming of Christ as immediately due. The following texts are often cited as typical illustrations of this: Rom. 13:11, 12; 1 Cor. 7:29; Phil. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:15, 17; Heb. 10:25; James 5:8, 9; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 2:18.

Some would hasten to conclude that the Bible writers were hopelessly mistaken men, or at least, that nothing can be known regarding the time of Christ’s coming. But the evidence requires no such conclusion.

Certain facts stand out clearly in the repeated scriptural discussion of the end of the world, or the coming of Christ. And in the light of these facts it is possible, we believe, to reach a conclusion wholly consistent with belief in the inspiration of Scriptures, and the solemn fact of the advent. These facts are:

1. The Bible writers always speak of the certainty of the advent. This is true of both OT and NT writers. Any reader of the Bible who takes its words in their most evident meaning, concludes that “the day of the Lord *will come*” (2 Peter 3:10).

2. The Bible writers who speak on the subject seem to be so dominated by the grandeur, the glory, the climactic nature of the event for every man and for all creation that they often speak as if it were the one and only great even ahead. The blazing light of the day of God seems often to shut out all else from the prophet’s eye and mind. The reader gains the clear impression that the inspired writer considers all that may precede the advent as but of minor importance, a prologue to the grand climax “toward which the whole creation moves.” Indeed, he may often feel as if the great day were right upon him.

This vivid presentation of the advent evidently began with Enoch, “the seventh from Adam,” who declared to the wicked in his day: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all (Jude 14, 15). There is nothing in the context to suggest that Enoch explained that the coming was to be several thousand years later. Indeed, he may not even have known that. There was revealed to him that the Lord would come in judgment; nought else mattered.

3. The Bible writers emphasized that the day of the Lord would come suddenly, unexpectedly. Christ’s statements are the best exhibit of this. Said He: “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. 24:42). “And take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it

come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:34–36).

Paul echoes the words of our Lord: “The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thess. 5:2). Peter writes similarly: “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night” (2 Peter 3:10).

It is this fact of the suddenness and unexpectedness of the advent, coupled with the certainty of that great event, that inevitably gave to the preaching of the advent the quality of imminency, at least potentially so.

Now in view of the fact that the Lord did not see fit to reveal the “day and hour” (Matt. 24:36) of His coming, and urged constant watchfulness upon His followers lest that day come upon them as a “thief,” what else should we expect but that the NT writers would write of the advent with the overtone of imminency? This casts no shadow over their inspiration. By revelation, and by direct instruction from Christ, they knew that He would come again, that His coming would be preceded by tumultuous times, that it would be sudden, unexpected, and that they and those to whom they ministered should be in constant watchfulness. But there was not revealed to them the “day and hour.” Hence, with that one limitation on the revelation to them, they presented to the believers the constant exhortation and warning regarding the day of the Lord.

It was most evidently in the plan of God that His prophets should not possess certain knowledge concerning the temporal aspects of Christ’s advent. Our Lord, just before His ascension, silenced His disciples’ questioning as to the timing of His future actions by declaring: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7).

4. The Bible authors wrote not simply for the immediate day or the particular company to which a letter, for example, might be addressed. If that were true, then the relevancy of Scriptures would have ended with the generation that received the messages from God’s penmen. No, they wrote—with inspired pen, and doubtless often without being finitely conscious of it—for all the generations till the Lord should return. True, some things that they wrote—on circumcision, for example—had a particular relevancy for the generation in which the NT authors wrote, while other portions, on the contrary, had increasing relevancy as the climax of earthly history should approach.

This fact, that Bible writers wrote in exhortation, warning, and instruction for all who should live until the advent, throws further light on the matter of the NT statements that speak of its immediacy. True, the messages, viewed in historical context, are addressed to a particular group living at the time. Indeed, most of the spiritual counsel of the Scriptures is placed in a historical context of particular people and particular times of the long ago.

But though a statement is made to certain believers, it may apply not so much to them as to their spiritual descendants. When Christ described to His disciples certain key events that would precede His coming and serve as signs of it, He covered a period of about two millennia. When He began by describing the fall of Jerusalem, He said, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” (Matt. 24:15). The “ye” meant the disciples, to whom He was immediately speaking. But He continues, discussing the “great tribulation,” of which Daniel had spoken in prophecy, that sweeps on into the 18th century, and follows

that with the exhortation: “Then if any man shall say unto you ...” (v. 23). Now it may be said that Christ was here again warning His twelve disciples of threatening deceptions. But the whole context requires us to believe that He was speaking also, and even more pertinently, to His followers who would be living in the 18th century and onward.

This fact of Scripture, that the immediately present company may be the recipients of a message, not simply for themselves, but also, and perhaps more particularly, for a later generation, protects us against hurrying to unwarranted conclusions concerning the timing of certain coming events.

That immediately after the ascension “the brethren,” presumably including the apostles, thought that Christ might return in their day, seems evident: There “went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple [John] should not die” (John 21:23) but rather live to see his Lord return (cf. Acts 1:6, 7).

However, there is certain evidence in the NT that God did give a measure of light to His penmen regarding the time that would elapse before Christ’s coming. In his first letter to the Thessalonians Paul wrote of the advent and said, “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15). But did Paul wish the Thessalonians to conclude that the day of the Lord was virtually upon them? Evidently some thus concluded, for in his second letter he returns to the subject: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (2 Thess. 2:1, 2). Then he proceeds to describe developments that must take place before the advent (vs. 3–12). The key development would be a certain “falling away” (v. 3). But that “falling away,” Paul elsewhere explains, would take place largely after his death (Acts 20:28–30; 2 Tim. 4:6–8). Having outlined for them certain events preceding the advent, he exhorts them to steadfastness for the days ahead (2 Thess. 2:15–17).

In his death cell Paul wrote to his spiritual son Timothy: “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). It is clear that Paul was instructing Timothy that some period of time lay ahead ere Christ would come.

It is evident, therefore, that when Paul used “we” in 1 Thess. 4:15 he did not include himself, but was speaking of those of the Christian believers who would be living in the last days. The “we” simply indicated his belonging to the unbroken company of the faithful who span the centuries.

Peter wrote: “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7). Did those words apply, necessarily, to the immediate company to whom he wrote? The answer seems to be No, for we read in his second epistle—written how long after the first we know not—“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Peter 3:2–4). These words most reasonably suggest that Peter was looking forward to some *future* development that would produce a certain kind of scoffers.

Note particularly this, that Peter, in discussing the coming advent, calls upon the believers to “be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets.” Earlier in this same epistle he declared, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy;

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19). That Peter taught that some period of time must elapse ere the advent is evident from his words. The believers were to follow the prophetic light “until the day dawn.” In similar vein Paul declared to the Thessalonians: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thess. 5:1–4).

This appeal of the apostles to the writings of the prophets echoes the words of Christ concerning what “Daniel the prophet” had written of coming events: “Whoso readeth, let him understand” (Matt. 24:15).

5. In this setting of exhortation to the believers to guide their steps by the light of prophecy we come logically to a consideration of the fact that the Bible contains certain specific prophecies regarding the coming of the Lord, prophecies that deal with great time periods and that enable us to know when the advent is “near, even at the doors” (Matt. 24:33). We refer particularly to the books of Daniel and the Revelation. In the wisdom of God those books were at best but dimly understood in the early centuries of the Christian Era. Indeed, certain of Daniel’s prophecies were to be “closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (Dan. 12:9). They were largely *for* the time of the end.

Today we have the flood of added light that shines from the pages of Daniel, and the companion book, the Revelation. Their time prophecies enable us to know, in a way that it was not possible before to know, the prophetic “times and the seasons” (1 Thess. 5:1). Their prophecies enable us to speak with prophetic assurance that the end of all things is, indeed, at hand. It is on the strength of these now brightly lighted pages of prophecy that the Advent Movement today can justify proclaiming a most certain message concerning the nearness of the day of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 PP 719; 5T 712
- 7 4T 93
- 8 AH 393; CS 257; 1T 220; 2T 435; 5T 181
- 10 GC 467; MB 18
- 11 Ev 219; 5T 88, 162, 707; 8T 252
- 11–14CH 579
- 12 CS 231; 5T 382; 8T 18
- 14 CSW 95, 107; CT 103; FE 290, 465; TM 171; WM 49

CHAPTER 14

- 3 *Men may not condemn nor condemn one the other for things indifferent: 13 but take heed that they give no offence in them: 15 for that the apostle proveth unlawful by many reasons.*

1. Weak in the faith. That is, one who has but a limited grasp of the principles of righteousness. He is eager to be saved and is willing to do whatever he believes is required of him. But in the immaturity of his Christian experience (see Heb. 5:11 to 6:2), and probably also as the result of former education and belief, he attempts to make his salvation more certain by the observance of certain rules and regulations that are in

reality not binding upon him. To him these regulations assume great importance. He regards them as absolutely binding upon him for salvation, and he is distressed and confused when he sees other Christians about him, especially those who seem to be more experienced, who do not share his scruples.

Paul's statements in Rom. 14 have been variously interpreted, and have been used by some: (1) to disparage a vegetarian diet, (2) to abolish the distinction between clean and unclean meats, and (3) to remove all distinction between days, thus abolishing the seventh-day Sabbath. That Paul is doing none of these three becomes evident when this chapter is studied in the light of certain religious and related problems that troubled some of the 1st-century Christians.

Paul mentions various problems that are an occasion of misunderstanding between brethren: (1) those relating to diet (v. 2), and (2) those relating to the observance of certain days (vs. 5, 6). In 1 Cor. 8 the problem of the strong versus the weak brother, as regards diet, is also dealt with. The letter to the Corinthians was written less than a year before that to the Romans. It seems reasonable to conclude that in 1 Cor. 8 and Rom. 14 Paul is dealing with essentially the same problem. In Corinthians the problem is identified as the propriety of eating foods sacrificed to idols. According to the ancient practice pagan priests carried on an extensive merchandise of the animal sacrifices offered to idols. Paul told the Corinthian believers—converts both from Judaism and from paganism—that inasmuch as an idol was nothing there was no wrong, per se, in eating foods dedicated to it. However, he explains, because of earlier background and training, and differences in spiritual discernment, not all had this “knowledge” and could not with a free conscience eat such foods (see on 1 Cor. 8). Hence Paul urged those without scruples regarding these foods not to place a stumbling block in a brother's way by indulging in them (Rom. 14:13). His admonition is thus in harmony with the decision of the Jerusalem Council, and doubtless throws light on at least one reason why that council took the stand it did on this subject (see on Acts 15). Probably for fear of offending in this matter some Christians abstained from flesh foods entirely, which means that their food was restricted to “herbs,” that is, vegetables (see Rom. 14:2).

Paul is not speaking of foods hygienically harmful. He is not suggesting that the Christian of strong faith may eat anything, regardless of its effect upon his physical well-being. He has already made plain, in ch. 12:1, that the true believer will see to it that his body is preserved holy and acceptable to God as a living sacrifice. The man of strong faith will regard it as an act of spiritual worship to maintain good health (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 10:31).

A further fact throws light on the problems Paul is discussing. Only dimly, at first, did many Jewish Christians comprehend that the ceremonial law had met its fulfillment in Christ (see on Col. 2:14–16) and was henceforth no longer binding. Indeed, the first Christians were not called upon abruptly to cease attendance at the annual Jewish feasts or to repudiate at once all ceremonial rites. Under the ceremonial law the Jews were to keep seven annual sabbaths. Paul himself attended a number of the feasts after his conversion (Acts 18:21; etc.). Though he taught that circumcision was nothing (1 Cor. 7:19), he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), and agreed to fulfill a vow according to the stipulations of the ancient code (Acts 21:20–27). Under the circumstances it appeared best to allow the various elements of the Jewish ceremonial law gradually to disappear as the mind and conscience became enlightened. Thus, it was inevitable that among Jewish

Christians there would arise questions as to the propriety of keeping certain “days”—Jewish holydays, in connection with their annual feasts (see Lev. 23:1–44; see on Col. 2:14–17).

In view of these facts it becomes evident that Paul, in Rom. 14, is not (1) disparaging a diet of “herbs” (vegetables), or (2) doing away with the age-old Biblical distinction between clean and unclean meats, or (3) abolishing the seventh-day Sabbath of the moral law (see on ch. 3:31). The person who thus claims must read into Paul’s argument something that is not there.

That Paul does not teach or even imply the abolition of the seventh-day Sabbath has been recognized by such conservative commentators, for example, as Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their comment on ch. 14:5, 6: “From this passage about the observance of days, Alford unhappily infers that such language could not have been used if the *sabbath-law* had been in force under the Gospel in any form. Certainly it could not, if the sabbath were merely one of the Jewish festival days; but it will not do to take this for granted merely because it was observed *under* the Mosaic economy. And certainly if the sabbath was more ancient than Judaism; if, even under Judaism, it was enshrined amongst the eternal sanctities of the Decalogue, uttered, as no other parts of Judaism were, amidst the terrors of Sinai; and if the Lawgiver Himself said of it when on earth, ‘The Son of man is LORD EVEN OF THE SABBATH DAY’ (see Mark 2:28)—it will be hard to show that the apostle must have meant it to be ranked by his readers amongst those vanished Jewish festival days, which only ‘weakness’ could imagine to be still in force—a weakness which those who had more light ought, out of love, merely to bear with.”

In Rom. 14:1 to 15:14 Paul urges the stronger Christians to give sympathetic consideration to the problems of their weaker brethren. As in chs. 12 and 13, he shows that the source of unity and peace in the church is genuine Christian love. This same love and mutual respect will ensure continuing harmony among the body of believers, in spite of differing opinions and scruples in matters of religion.

Receive ye. Gr. *proslambanō*, “to take to oneself.” Those who are “weak in the faith” should nevertheless be received into Christian fellowship as brethren, because Christ has thus received and welcomed them (ch. 15:7).

Doubtful disputations. Or, “disputes over opinions” (RSV). The “weak” believers are to be welcomed into fellowship, but not for the purpose of drawing them into controversy. The stronger brethren are not called upon to settle or pass judgment on the scruples of those who may be weaker in the faith.

2. Believeth. Or, “has faith” (see on ch. 3:3). Paul’s point is that one man’s faith allows him to eat things that another man’s faith does not permit.

Herbs. Gr. *lachana*, “vegetables.” See on v. 1. Paul is not discussing the propriety of eating or abstaining from certain foods but rather urging patience and forbearance in such matters. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (v. 17). There fore, the man of strong faith will “follow after the things which make for peace” (v. 19) and will beware lest by his eating or drinking or any other personal practice he destroy the work of God (v. 20) and those for whom Christ died (v. 15).

3. Despise. Gr. *exoutheneō*, literally, “to throw out as nothing,” hence, “to look down on,” “to treat with contempt.” Those of stronger faith would naturally be inclined to look

with some contempt upon the narrowness of those “weak in the faith” (v. 1) as regards foods. This, of course, would reveal that the faith of those supposedly strong was still deficient, for pure faith works through love (Gal. 5:6).

Judge. Censoriousness is often characteristic of those whose religious experience is based largely upon the fulfillment of external requirements. Both parties are in the wrong. Both are revealing spiritual pride instead of Christian love.

Received. Gr. *proslambanō*, “to take to oneself.” This is the word translated “receive” in v. 1. The Christian is to “receive” his brother as God has received him (see ch. 15:7).

Him. That is, the stronger brother who has no scruples about eating “all things” (v. 2). Paul’s point is that the abstaining believer should not condemn, for his freedom, the man whom God has accepted and received into His church in this freedom (see 1 Cor. 10:29; Gal. 5:13). If God has forgiven his sins and accepted him as His child, and his life in other respects reveals the presence of the Holy Spirit, all such criticism is out of place.

4. Thou that judgest. Paul is addressing the weak brother, since “judgest” corresponds to “judge” in v. 3.

Another man’s servant. Rather, “another’s servant,” in this case God’s or Christ’s, depending on whether “God” or “the Lord” is accepted as the reading in the latter part of the verse (see below under “God”; cf. vs. 8, 9). The Greek word here used for “servant” (*oiketēs*) is rare in the NT, occurring only here and in Luke 16:13; Acts 10:7; 1 Peter 2:18. It denotes a “household servant,” distinguished from an ordinary slave, as being more closely connected with the family. The “weak” (Rom. 14:1) believer is condemning one of God’s servants, one who is responsible to God, not to the criticizing fellow servant.

Standeth. Some have understood this to mean moral and spiritual steadfastness (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13; Phil. 1:27); others, acquittal or approval in the sight of God (cf. Ps. 1:5).

Falleth. In contrast with “standeth” (see above). Some view this as moral and spiritual failure (cf. ch. 11:11, 22), others as condemnation or disapproval in the judgment. Both terms are used in the first of these two senses in 1 Cor. 10:12, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Holden up. Literally, “made to stand.” In spite of the criticisms of his censorious brethren, the believer who in faith exercises his Christian freedom in the matters under question will be strengthened and supported by his Master. The one whose faith is “weak” (v. 1) may even fear that the stronger brother is in great danger by not sharing his scruples. But Paul suggests that whatever the danger, the Master, who called His servant to freedom (Gal. 5:13), has power to preserve him from the perils that freedom involves, which perils the “weak” (v. 1) brother is seeking to avoid by other means. Some, however, interpret this phrase to refer to acquittal in the judgment.

God. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 10) may be cited for the reading “the Lord,” or “the Master,” maintaining the idea of the Master and His servant introduced in the first part of this verse.

5. Esteemeth. Gr. *krinō*, “to judge,” to estimate, “to approve of.” Paul now discusses the observance of special days, another cause of dissension and confusion among believers. See on v. 1. Compare a similar situation in the churches of Galatia (Gal. 4:10, 11), and in the Colossian church (Col. 2:16, 17).

Those believers whose faith enables them immediately to leave behind all ceremonial holidays should not despise others whose faith is less strong. Nor, in turn, may the latter criticize those who seem to them lax. Each believer is responsible to God (Rom. 14:10–12). And what God expects of each of His servants is that he shall “be fully persuaded in his own mind” and conscientiously follow his convictions in accordance with the light he has received and understood so far. Among Christ’s followers there is to be no force, no compulsion. A spirit of love and sympathetic tolerance is to prevail at all times. Those who are stronger in faith are to “bear the infirmities of the weak” (ch. 15:1), as Christ has borne the weaknesses of us all. There is no room for self-righteous criticism of those whose views and practices may differ from our own, or scorn for those who may still be “babes” (Heb. 5:13).

Fully persuaded. Or, “fully convinced” (see on ch. 4:21). Paul does not suggest that Christians should have no convictions regarding these matters about which there may be disagreement. Rather, he urges believers to come to clear and definite conclusions. But at the same time they should do so with charity toward those who reach other conclusions. No attempt should be made to rob anyone of this freedom to make up his own mind with respect to personal duty. Compare DA 550; Ed 17.

6. *Regardeth.* The four occurrences of the word in this verse are from the Gr. *phroneō*, here meaning “to observe,” “to esteem.” Compare Phil. 3:19; Col. 3:2, where *phroneō* is translated respectively “mind,” “set ... affection on.”

Unto the Lord. The motive of both parties is the same, whether in the observance or neglect of a day, or in the use of, or abstinence from, food. The stronger brother thanks God for “all things” (v. 2) and partakes of his food to the glory of God (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31). His weaker brother thanks God for what he eats and to the glory of God abstains from foods that may have been sacrificed to idols (see on Rom. 14:1).

Regardeth not. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the clause, “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.” It is therefore omitted in modern versions. The meaning of the verse is left unchanged, for this clause simply presents, in the negative, the thought of the preceding clause.

Eateth not. See above under “unto the Lord.”

7. *Liveth to himself.* Paul now expands as a general rule of life the thought suggested by the phrase “unto the Lord” in v. 6. It is not only in the matter of food and special days that the Christian does all “unto the Lord.” It is the aim of his entire existence to live not “to himself,” for his own pleasure and according to his own desires, but “unto the Lord,” for His glory and according to His will (see 2 Cor. 5:14, 15). His whole life, to its very last moments, belongs to the Lord (Rom. 14:8), and in due time he must give an account of himself to God (v. 12). Therefore Christians should live as men who must someday “stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (v. 10).

The words of this verse have often been applied to the influence that a man exerts upon his fellow men. It should be remembered, however, that this is not the primary meaning, as the context makes evident. Paul is emphasizing the point that whatever the Christian does, he does with reference to the Lord.

8. *We are the Lord’s.* That is, we belong to Christ, for He is “Lord both of the dead and living” (v. 9). Whether weak in faith or strong, in life or death alike, we are responsible to the Lord, for we are His purchased possession (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:14). What right have we to sit in judgment on anyone who belongs to Christ?

9. To this end. That is, in order that Christ might become Lord of the dead and the living.

Died, and rose, and revived. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “died and came to life.” By His death Christ purchased a people. By His resurrection He delivers those whom He has purchased (see on ch. 4:25). After His death and resurrection Christ was enthroned at the Father’s right hand, and universal domination was given to Him (see Mark 14:62; 16:19; Eph. 1:20–22 Phil. 2:8–11 Heb. 1:3).

He might be Lord. Gr. *kurieuō*, “to rule over,” “to become lord of.”

The dead and living. The reversal of the usual order of these words is perhaps due to the order of the words about Christ in the first part of the sentence. Even in death the Christian belongs to Christ, because when he dies he falls asleep “in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:14 cf. Rev. 14:13). “The dead in Christ shall rise” and thenceforth “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Even those who reject Christ cannot escape their responsibility to Him by death. For *all* the dead shall rise again, either “unto the resurrection of life” or “unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29; cf. Rev. 20:12, 13). In that day “every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

This verse is used by some commentators as evidence that the soul is immortal and that death simply transfers the believer from one sphere of conscious service to another. The interpretation is out of harmony with the rest of Scripture. The question of whether the soul is immortal must be determined on the basis of other passages that deal with the condition of the soul in death, which Paul is not here discussing (see Job 14:21; Eccl. 9:5; John 11:11; etc.).

10. Why dost thou judge? The first part of this verse is emphatically expressed in the Greek: “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you also, why do you set at nought your brother?” The one judging his brother is the one who “eateth herbs,” and the one setting at nought is the one who conscientiously believes he “may eat all things” (v. 2).

We shall all stand. In the Greek the word for “all” is in the position of emphasis. All of us, both weak and strong, are to stand before the divine tribunal. Since all believers are alike subjects and servants of God, and must all stand before the same judgment seat, they have no right to sit in judgment on one another. Such judging usurps a prerogative of God (Rom. 14:10; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10).

Of Christ. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “of God.” The reading “of Christ” may have come in from the parallel passage in 2 Cor. 5:10. God the Father will judge the world through Christ (see Rom. 2:16; cf. Acts 17:31).

11. It is written. The quotation is from Isa. 45:23, though with some variations from the Hebrew.

Every knee. These words emphasize the universal character of the final judgment.

Shall confess. Gr. *exomologeō*, “to acknowledge,” “to give praise.” The latter meaning is common in the LXX (see 1 Chron. 29:13; etc.). Compare the use of this Greek word in Luke 10:21, where it is translated “to thank.” However, the alternative meaning “to confess,” “to acknowledge,” is also possible (cf. James 5:16, “Confess your faults”). Either meaning may be suitable in the context of Rom. 14:11. In the original quotation from Isaiah the oath of homage expressed by the phrase “shall swear” (cf. Joshua 23:7; 2 Chron. 15:14; Isa. 19:18) marks the submission of the whole world to Jehovah and the solemn confession of His sovereignty.

12. So then. The word order of this verse in the Greek adds emphasis to the individual responsibility of each believer: “So then each one of us concerning himself an account will give to God.”

Account. Gr. *logos* (see on ch. 9:28). In matters of conscience each man is personally responsible to God, and to Him alone.

13. Judge this rather. A second reason why believers should not criticize one another. Paul gives that reason with a play on the word “judge.” In this phrase he uses the word in the sense of “to decide,” “to determine” (see 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 2:1; Titus 3:12). If there is to be any judging at all, let it not be criticism of others but the determination not to cause a brother to fall. Paul’s first reason for not judging is that men are accountable, not to one another but to God, who is their Master and Judge. His second reason is his oft-repeated rule of Christian love. Believers who are strong in faith will, out of love, be considerate of the feelings and consciences of their weaker brethren, and will exercise every care to avoid offending or confusing them. Although it is true that in matters of conscience no man is accountable to another, nevertheless all Christians are responsible for one another’s welfare. And though a Christian is free to shake off all legalistic remains of a former day, yet love for others forbids any use of this freedom that might harm a fellow believer who is “weak in the faith” (Rom. 14:1).

14. I know. Paul expresses his own personal, Spirit-enlightened conviction about the Christian’s freedom and right to reject certain scruples to which others hold (cf. 1 Cor. 8:4). By this emphatic assertion he shows that consideration for the “weak” (Rom. 14:1) is to be based upon love and not upon a recognition that such scruples are justified.

By the Lord Jesus. Or, “in the Lord Jesus.” Paul’s conviction springs from a mind dwelling in communion with Christ and thus enlightened by His Spirit. Compare ch. 9:1.

Nothing. That is, in this context, those kinds of foods that Paul has been speaking about here (see on v. 1). The word “nothing” must not be understood in its absolute sense. Words often convey more than one meaning; therefore, the particular definition intended must in each case be determined by the context. For example, when Paul said, “All things are lawful unto me” (1 Cor. 6:12), his statement, when isolated from the context, could be interpreted as a declaration that the apostle was a libertine. The context, which is a warning against immorality, immediately prohibits such a deduction (see comment there). Similarly in Ex. 16:4 the expression “every day” could be interpreted as meaning every day of the week. However, the context shows that the Sabbath is excluded.

Unclean. Gr. *koinos*, literally, “common.” This term was used to describe those things which, though “common” to the world, were forbidden to the pious Jew (see on Mark 7:2).

Of itself. The foods that the “weak” (v. 1) brother refrains from eating, but which the strong brother allows, are not the kinds of foods that are unclean in their own nature, but owe their taint to conscientious scruples (see on v. 23). Paul is not here sweeping away all distinctions between foods. The interpretation must be limited to the particular foods under discussion and to the specific problem with which the apostle is dealing, namely, the sympathetic treatment of those whose partly-enlightened consciences prevent their eating certain foods.

It is unclean. The uncleanness does not lie in the nature of the food but in the believer’s view of it. The “weak” (v. 1) Christian believes he ought not to eat foods

offered to idols, for example, and makes it a matter of conscience to abstain from such foods. So long as he holds this conviction, it would be wrong for him to partake. He may be in error, judged from another's point of view, but it would not be proper for him to act in violation of what he conscientiously supposes God requires (see v. 23).

15. But. Rather, “for,” apparently connecting this verse with the preceding argument.

Be grieved. The weak brother is pained and troubled in conscience by seeing more experienced believers indulging in what he considers sinful. This grief may result in his destruction, for either he may be turned away from the Christian faith, which seems to be associated with practices he regards sinful, or he may be led by the example of his stronger brethren into a cowardly acquiescence in a course of action which to him appears to be sinful (see 1 Cor. 8:10–12).

Meat. Gr. *brōma*, a general term for “food.”

Walkest thou. That is, you live, you behave (cf. on ch. 13:13).

Not charitably. Literally, “not according to love.” Compare ch. 13.

Destroy not. Whatever tends to influence anyone to violate his conscience may result in the destruction of his soul. A conscience once violated has been greatly weakened. One violation may lead to another until the soul is destroyed. Therefore a Christian who, by selfish indulgence even in something he regards as perfectly proper, exerts such a destroying influence, is guilty of the loss of a soul for whom Christ died (cf. 1 Cor. 8).

With thy meat. Literally, “by your food.” See on Mark 7:19.

Christ died. Christ died to save the “weak” (v. 1) brother, and his fellow believers must not destroy him for the sake of indulgence in certain foods. A very small sacrifice is asked in comparison with what Christ gave. He gave His life. Surely Christians who are strong in faith will be willing to forgo the pleasure of some favorite item of food or drink for the sake of their weaker brother.

16. Your good. This probably refers to the stronger faith, greater knowledge, and fuller freedom enjoyed by the stronger believers (see 1 Cor. 8:9–11; 10:30).

Be evil spoken of. Gr. *blasphēmeō*, “to blaspheme.” Compare the use of this word in Rom. 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:30. The strong man should not let the selfish use of his liberty give occasion to those “weak in the faith” (Rom. 14:1) to condemn and speak evil of something that to him is a good thing and a blessing. He should beware lest he give any cause for others to reproach him for the harm his personal conduct may have brought to some overscrupulous brother. See on 1 Cor. 8:7–13.

17. The kingdom of God. This expression, standing alone, may refer either to the future kingdom of glory (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) or to the present kingdom of grace (see on Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:2, 3). The latter meaning is here obviously intended. The essence of the kingdom of God lies not in things external, but in the inward graces of the spiritual life.

Meat and drink. Or, “eating and drinking.” These matters are trifling and insignificant when compared with those of which the kingdom of God actually does consist. Presumably the Christian whose faith is strong is aware of the spiritual nature of God's kingdom. In fact, the knowledge of this vital truth is part of the “good” mentioned in v. 16. Surely then this knowledge will prevent him from grieving or destroying his weaker brother over matters that are so relatively inconsequential in themselves.

Righteousness. That is, a righteous way of life; right doing (see Rom. 6:19; Eph. 4:24).

Peace. This includes not only reconciliation to God (ch. 5:1) but also harmony and love in the church (cf. Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:14, 15).

Joy in the Holy Ghost. This is the holy gladness with which the Spirit of God suffuses those who “life in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25; cf. Rom. 15:13; Gal. 5:22; 1 Thess. 1:6). Those who are the strongest in faith understand best that the kingdom of God consists in such spiritual graces as these, and not in such material things as food and drink. Consequently as regards their Christian freedom in eating and drinking they would rather curtail their own personal liberty than to have their exercise of such freedom destroy the peace of the church (Rom. 14:13), or lead a weaker brother to do what, for him, would be unrighteous (v. 14), or rob him of his joy in the Spirit by grieving his conscience (v. 15).

18. In these things. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “in this,” meaning, perhaps, “in this way.” The believer who acts charitably wins the good will of his brother instead of putting a stumbling block in his way.

Approved. Gr. *dokimos*, “tested,” “able to stand the test of inspection and criticism.”

Compare the use of *dokimos* in 1 Cor. 11:19; 2 Cor. 10:18; 2 Tim. 2:15.

19. Let us. The verse reads literally, “So then let us pursue the things of peace and the things of upbuilding for one another” (cf. 1 Thess. 5:11; see also 1 Cor. 14:26).

20. Meat. Gr. *brōma*, food in general.

Destroy. Gr. *kataluō*, literally, “to loosen down.” The word is used to describe the pulling down of something that has been built up and thus carries on, by contrast, the figure begun by “edify,” literally, “build up,” in v. 19. For the sake of mere food Christians are not to fight against God by tearing down and destroying what He has built up.

The work of God. Compare 1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:10.

Pure. See v. 14; cf. 1 Cor. 10:23.

With offence. This may refer either to the strong brother who, by taking advantage of his own liberty, offends his “weak” brother, or to the “weak” (v. 1) brother who, by the example of his strong brother, is emboldened to eat that which his conscience does not allow (see 1 Cor. 8:10). Most commentators seem to prefer the first interpretation. If this is correct, Paul is saying that “it is wrong for a man to be a stumbling block to others by what he eats.”

21. It is good. The strong Christian should be willing to give up his freedom in these comparatively inconsequential matters rather than to offend a weaker brother (cf. 1 Cor. 8:13).

Flesh. Gr. *krea*, “flesh foods.” The word occurs only here and in 1 Cor. 8:13. In Rom. 14:15, 20; etc., *brōma*, the word for food in general, is used.

Wine. Flesh and wine were evidently the principal objects of the weaker brother’s religious scruples, probably because they were customarily used by the pagans in sacrifice to their idols.

Nor any thing. The words “any thing,” though supplied, are clearly implied in the Greek. Paul adds this general caution to cover any activity that, though legitimate in itself, may upset or confuse the brother who is not yet persuaded that such actions are

divinely permitted. The Christian who is contemplating a certain course of action will not only ask, Is this lawful? but also, How will this affect my brother's soul?

Stumbleth. Gr. *proskoptō*, “to strike against,” “to stumble,” “to beat against,” metaphorically, “to take offense at.”

Offended. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of “or is offended, or is made weak.” However, these ideas are implicit in “stumbleth.”

Is made weak. Literally, “is weak,” meaning that the stronger brother is to be careful in all matters about which his brother's unenlightened conscience may be easily grieved.

22. Hast thou faith? Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading, “The faith that you have.” The pronoun “you” is emphatic in the Greek. “Faith” in this context is the faith to “eat all things” (v. 2).

Have it to thyself. Such faith is not to be paraded openly to the offense of the “weak” (v. 1) brother, but is to be kept between yourself and God.

Happy. Gr. *makarios* (see on Matt. 5:3). This happiness is the blessedness of a clear and undoubting conscience.

Alloweth. Gr. *dokimazō* (see on ch. 12:2).

23. Doubteth. Or, “debates within himself.” Compare the description of the double-minded man (James 1:6; cf. Matt. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Rom. 4:20).

Is damned. Gr. *katakrinō*, “to condemn.” The man who eats, in spite of the doubts of his conscience, is condemned.

Faith. Here referring to a conviction of right and wrong, resulting in the determination to do whatever is believed to be God's will. Paul's meaning is that if a Christian does not act from strong personal conviction that what he does is right, but, instead, complies weakly with the judgment of others, then his action is sinful. The Christian should never violate his conscience. It may require educating. It may tell him that certain things are wrong that in themselves may not be wrong. But until convinced by the Word and the Spirit of God that a certain course is proper for him, he ought not to pursue it. He must not make others the criterion for his conduct; he must go to the Scriptures and learn for himself his duty in the matter (see 2T 119–124).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 4 MB 57
- 5 DA 550
- 7 CT 33; FE 191, 206; GW 396; ML 212; PK 94; SC 120; 4T 72, 339, 493, 562; 5T 386, 565; 6T 236, 242; 7T 50, 296
- 10 MH 166
- 12 DA 550; 4T 654; 5T 399
- 13 MH 166; 1T 420; 2T 87, 552; 5T 352
- 16 CT 257; Ev 680; EW 70; 5T 593
- 17 TM 422, 497; 2T 319
- 19 DA 356; 6T 460
- 23 GC 436; MYP 198; 5T 437

CHAPTER 15

1 *The strong must bear with the weak.* 2 *We may not please ourselves,* 3 *for Christ did not so,* 7 *but receive one the other, as Christ did us all,* 8 *both Jews* 9 *and Gentiles.* 15 *Paul excuseth his writing,* 28 *and promiseth to see them,* 30 *and requesteth their prayer.*

1. *We then that are strong.* Literally, “but we the strong.” The word translated “strong” means “able,” “powerful,” and describes those who are spiritually strong. Such believers are not only standing firm themselves but should also help others to stand.

Bear. Gr. *bastazō*, “to take up,” “to lift,” “to carry.” The word is sometimes used in the sense of “to bear with,” “to endure patiently” as possibly here (see Matt. 20:12; Rev. 2:2).

Infirmities. Or, “weakness,” “failings,” here specifically the acts that reveal weakness of faith, such as unnecessary scruples or erroneous judgments. These the strong are well able, and in fact duty bound, to bear with loving patience.

Please ourselves. Instead of insisting on our rights and desires, we should be willing to subordinate them to the welfare of our brother, no matter how weak and prejudiced he may seem to be (see 1 Cor. 9:19, 22; cf. 1 Cor. 10:24, 33; 13:5, 7; Phil. 2:4).

2. *Neighbour.* Probably intended to be a broader term than “weak” (v. 1), including also the strong.

To edification. That is, to benefit the neighbor spiritually and to help him in his growth to perfection. Paul does not mean that the strong should please the weak by agreeing with their opinions and practices or by feebly complying with what they may mistakenly think is good.

3. *Pleased not himself.* Paul illustrates and enforces the duty of sacrificing our own pleasure for the good of our brethren by referring to the one supreme example of self-sacrificing love. Christ was willing to give up even His heavenly glory for the sake of fallen man, and He expects corresponding self-denial and sacrifice on the part of those whom He came to save and bless (see 5T 204). Surely His servants (ch. 14:4) should not deem themselves too exalted to condescend as their Master has done (see Phil. 2:5–8; 1 Peter 2:21)

As it is written. The quotation is from Ps. 69:9 (see comment there).

4. *For our learning.* Rather, “for our instruction” (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16). Paul emphasized the permanent nature of the OT. Even with the further revelation of the NT now in the process of production, the OT would continue to hold its place as a moral instructor and guide.

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē*, “endurance,” “steadfastness” (see on ch. 5:3).

Comfort. Gr. *paraklēsis*, “encouragement,” “consolation.” It was to bring such blessings that “the God of patience and consolation” (v. 5) caused the Scriptures to be written.

Of the scriptures. Rather, “that the Scriptures bring [or “brings”],” or “derived from the Scriptures.” According to the construction of the Greek, it is possible that these words are to be connected only with “comfort.” Consequently it is possible to translate this part

⁸Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 13:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

of the verse, “so that by steadfastness and by the comfort that the Scriptures give we might have hope.”

Hope. The Scriptures inspire hope in those who endure suffering for God’s sake and for the sake of their fellow men. The endurance that the Christian is enabled to display, and the comfort that he receives in his affliction, confirm and strengthen this hope. For the connection between patience and hope see Rom. 5:3–5; 1 Thess. 1:3.

5. The God of patience. Compare the expressions, “the God of hope” (v. 13), “the God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20), “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3), “the God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10).

To be likeminded. Literally, “to think the same thing” (see on ch. 12:16). Paul is not praying for identity of opinion on inconsequential matters, but for a spirit of unity and harmony, in spite of differences of opinion.

According to Christ Jesus. Mere unity or unanimity is not what Paul desires for his fellow Christians, but a spirit of unity patterned after the perfect model of Him whose whole purpose was to do, not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him (John 6:38). This same mind that was in Christ Jesus must be in each of His followers (Phil. 2:5).

6. With one mind. Gr. *homothumadon*, “of one accord,” “unanimous.” Such unity was a characteristic of the early church (Acts 1:14; 2:46).

One mouth. Unity of mind and heart results in harmony of praise and worship.

God, even the Father. Or, “the God and Father” (cf. John 20:17; Eph. 1:17).

7. Receive. Or, “welcome” (cf. ch. 14:1). This is a general conclusion to the whole argument beginning in ch. 14. Believers are to acknowledge one another as Christians and to treat one another as such, even though they may have different opinions about minor matters. If Christ was willing to receive us, with all our weaknesses (Luke 5:32; 15:2), we should surely be ready to accept one another.

One another. Paul addresses this appeal to the strong and the weak alike.

Us. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading “you.”

To the glory of God. These words may refer grammatically either to Christ’s reception of sinners or to our acceptance of one another. Either act serves to promote the glory of God.

8. Was. Literally, “has become.” Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading “became.”

A minister. Gr. *diakonos*, “servant” (see on ch. 13:4).

Of the circumcision. Literally, “of circumcision.” This is understood by some commentators to mean that Jesus was “a minister of circumcision,” in the sense that He was a minister of the covenant of which circumcision was the sign and seal. Others interpret the passage to mean that Christ came to minister to “those who had been circumcised,” the Jews. For this meaning of “circumcision” see Rom. 3:30; 4:12; Gal. 2:7; Eph. 2:11. Christ came first of all to minister to the “house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24).

Paul’s purpose in Rom. 15:7–12 is to emphasize the universality of the grace of God in Christ, as exhibited toward Jews and Gentiles alike. Christ was willing to submit to whatever might be necessary to meet His fallen creatures where they were, to do everything possible to restore and save them. Therefore Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, strong or weak, should be willing to receive one another, as Christ has received

them (v. 7), to be considerate of one another's weaknesses and failings (v. 1), and to do whatever will build up and edify (v. 2).

9. *That the Gentiles.* The Greek construction is difficult. The meaning seems to be that Christ became "a minister of the circumcision" in order to confirm the promises and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God. Christ's manifestation of God's truthfulness by His fulfillment of the promises made to Israel is also the foundation of God's mercy to the Gentiles. He was "a minister of the circumcision" in order that not only Jews but also Gentiles might be saved. Therefore Jewish Christians should be willing to receive Gentile converts and treat them as brethren. Likewise Gentile Christians should be considerate of Jewish believers, realizing that God's mercy has come to them upon the rejection of the Jews as a nation (see on ch. 11:15).

As it is written. This quotation is from Ps. 18:49. The quotations in vs. 9–12 show that God's saving plan has from the very first included Gentiles as well as Jews.

Confess. Gr. *exomologeō*, here probably meaning, "to praise" (see on ch. 14:11).

10. *Rejoice, ye Gentiles.* A quotation from Deut. 32:43. For the purpose of the quotation see on Rom. 15:9.

11. *Praise the Lord.* A quotation from Ps. 117:1. For the purpose of the quotation see on Rom. 15:9.

12. *Esaias saith.* A quotation from Isa. 11:10 (see comment there).

A root. Literally, "the root," meaning in this case "the shoot that springs from the root" (cf. Rev. 5:5; 22:16). This verse shows explicitly that the Messiah of the Jews would be the desire and hope of the Gentiles.

Reign. As King of the kingdoms of grace and glory (see on Matt. 4:17; 5:3).

Trust. Gr. *elpizō*, "to hope." On the relation of hope to salvation see on ch. 8:24.

13. *Hope.* Gr. *elpis*, "trust," from *elpizō*, "to hope." The appellation "of hope" is suggested by the closing clause of v. 12, "in him shall the Gentiles trust."

Fill. The clause reads literally, "may the God of hope fill."

In believing. Paul prays that their faith may give them a life full of joy and peace and hope, which are all the results of true faith and of the presence of the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 5:1, 2; Gal. 5:22). Where these fruits of the Spirit are found, there will be love and harmony among believers. Jew and Gentile, strong and weak, all will live together in joy and peace in the common hope of sharing in the glory of God (Rom. 5:2).

14. *And I myself.* The argument of the epistle is now completed. Paul concludes with an explanation of his manner of writing to Rome (vs. 15–22), a statement concerning his future plans (vs. 23–33), and the usual personal greeting (ch. 16). Chapter 15:14–33 corresponds to the introduction in ch. 1:8–15.

Persuaded of you. That is, convinced about you.

Goodness. Compare Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9.

All knowledge. Here particularly the knowledge of spiritual truth, such as that possessed by those strong in faith (see 1 Cor. 8:1, 7, 10, 11). Paul had earlier warned the Corinthians that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Cor. 8:1). Fortunately the Roman Christians had the desirable combination of "goodness" and "knowledge."

Able also to admonish. Or, "qualified also to exhort," "competent also to counsel."

15. In some sort. Literally, “in part” (cf. ch. 11:25), that is, in some parts of his epistle. Paul may appear to have spoken more boldly than his expressed conviction of his readers’ “goodness” and “knowledge” (ch. 15:14) would seem to make necessary.

Putting ... in mind. Gr. *epanamimnēskō*, “to call back to mind again,” “to refresh one’s memory.” This verb occurs nowhere else in the NT. Paul sought to refresh the memories of the Roman Christians concerning the fundamental truths of the gospel.

The grace. Meaning here, the grace of his appointed office as an apostle (see on chs. 1:5; 12:3).

16. Minister. Gr. *leitourgos* (see on ch. 13:6).

To the Gentiles. See on Acts 9:15.

Ministering. Literally, “ministering as a priest.” The word occurs nowhere else in the NT.

Offering up. Gr. *prosphora*, literally, “a bringing to,” that is, to the altar, hence, “an offering” as the word is translated in Acts 21:26; Eph. 5:2; etc. Paul represents himself as a ministering priest. The preaching of the gospel is his priestly function. The believing Gentiles, purified and consecrated to God by the Holy Spirit, are his sacrifice. Such an offering is “acceptable” to God (see 1 Peter 2:5).

Holy Ghost. Rather, “Holy Spirit” (see on John 14:26). Only offerings sanctified by the Holy Spirit (see on Rom. 8:9) are acceptable with God.

17. I may glory. Paul’s glorying was not in himself but “through Christ Jesus,” literally, “in Christ Jesus.” He recognized that he has nothing whereof to boast (ch. 3:27) but that as a minister of the gospel he did all things in and through Christ (2 Cor. 10:17; Phil. 4:13). Nevertheless, he goes on to describe the success of his work, especially among the Gentiles. His purpose in mentioning them, as also his reason for referring to his high calling as an apostle Rom. 15:15, 16, seems to be to provide an adequate justification for the authority that he has presumed to exercise over the members of the church at Rome by writing this epistle to them.

Which pertain. Compare Heb. 2:17; 5:1, where the context shows that the expression, “things pertaining to God,” describes the duties of a priest before God. Paul limits his glorying to his ministry as a priest of the gospel, which service he regards as presenting an offering to the Lord.

18. I will not dare. Paul will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through him. Paul confines the recitation of his successes only to those in which he himself has been directly concerned, all of which successes, of course, are due to Christ. Christ has used other agents besides Paul, but he will not speak of the things accomplished through them.

Obedient. The obedience would be an “obedience of faith” (ch. 16:26; see on ch. 1:5).

By word and deed. That is, by speech and action, by preaching and life (see Luke 24:19; Acts 1:1; 7:22; 2 Cor. 10:11). These words qualify “wrought” and refer to Paul’s preaching and teaching of the gospel and to all that he had been enabled to do and to suffer in his ministry.

19. Through mighty signs and wonders. Literally, “in power of signs and wonders,” corresponding to “by the power of the Spirit of God,” literally, “in power of the Spirit of God.” “Signs and wonders” is a common phrase in the NT to describe Christian miracles (see 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4). The two words are similar in meaning. The word for “signs”

(*sēmeia*) emphasizes the significance of the miracles as means of revealing and confirming spiritual truth. The word for “wonders” (*terata*) expresses the effect of the miracles upon the witnesses as manifestations of supernatural power (cf. Vol. V, p. 208). The “power of signs and wonders” is the power that signs have to convince, and wonders, to overawe. Paul elsewhere appeals to miracles as “signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12; cf. Acts 14:3; 15:12; 19:11).

The Spirit of God. Paul’s labors as an apostle are ample evidence of the divine origin of his commission (ch. 1:1).

Round about. The meaning of this expression is not entirely clear. Some commentators have understood “round about” as referring to the regions round about Jerusalem. Others interpret the phrase as describing the extent of Paul’s missionary endeavors from Jerusalem as far “round” as Illyricum.

Illyricum. A Roman province lying north of Macedonia on the Adriatic Sea. This area evidently marked the limits of Paul’s journeys to the west, at least at the time he wrote this epistle. The Biblical record does not state specifically whether Paul entered this territory or simply worked up to its boundaries.

Fully preached. Literally, “fulfilled.” Paul had covered all the ground between the points named. He does not claim to have preached in every city in these regions, but he had established churches in all the main centers, from which the gospel could be taken to the surrounding country. The pioneering work had been completed.

20. Have I strived. Gr. *philotimeomai*, “to make it one’s ambition,” “to strive eagerly.” *Philotimeomai* is translated “labour” in 2 Cor. 5:9, and “study” in 1 Thess. 4:11.

Named. Paul sought to avoid preaching in places where men had already been taught to believe in Christ and to call upon His name in public confession and worship.

Another man’s foundation. Compare 1 Cor. 3:10; 2 Cor. 10:15, 16. Paul considered it his calling and duty to engage in pioneering work.

21. As it is written. The quotation is from Isa. 52:15. Paul defends his practice of preaching where Christ’s name was unknown by noting that the procedure was a fulfillment of OT prediction.

22. For which cause. The reason why Paul had so far been prevented from visiting Rome was his eagerness to complete his preaching of the gospel in the regions through which he had been traveling. At long last he now feels free to make the trip to Rome, since he has “no more place in these parts” (v. 23).

Much. Gr. *ta polla*, which may mean “many times.” Important textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading *pollakis*, “often.” Evidently Paul had frequently had the intention, or perhaps the opportunity, to go to Rome (see ch. 1:13), but the demands of his work and such time-consuming problems as he encountered in the districts where he was laboring, had hindered him.

23. Place. Gr. *topos*, here meaning “scope,” “opportunity,” “room for action.” Compare the use of *topos* in Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:27; Heb. 12:17.

Parts. Gr. *klimata*, “regions.” Paul felt that there was no longer opportunity in this part of the world for him to do the kind of work to which he had been commissioned.

A great desire. Gr. *epipothia*, “a longing.” Compare the use of the related verb *epipotheō* in Rom. 1:11; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 2:2.

24. Spain. There is no conclusive evidence, Biblical or historical, that Paul ever succeeded in reaching Spain. See p. 101.

I will come to you. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this clause, thus leaving the sentence somewhat incomplete but the sense unchanged. The same intention is expressed in v. 28.

To be brought on my way. Paul hoped that the Roman Christians would do all in their power to prosper his journey into Spain. Perhaps he felt that he might receive from them the same kindness and respect as from other churches that had sent companions to escort him on his journey (see Acts 15:3; 21:5; 1 Cor. 16:6, 11; 2 Cor. 1:16; Titus 3:13; 3 John 6). This ancient demonstration of hospitality is common in the Orient today.

Filled with your company. The clause reads literally, “If of you first in a measure I might be filled.” Paul desired to enjoy the company of the Roman Christians, but only briefly, so that he might hurry on to Spain.

25. I go unto Jerusalem. Despite his longing to see the believers in Rome, Paul feels it his duty first to go in the opposite direction to bring relief to the poor members in Jerusalem. This journey to Jerusalem and the intended journey to Rome are mentioned in Acts 19:21. That he fulfilled his plans to return to Jerusalem is recorded in his defense before Felix (Acts 24:17).

Saints. See on ch. 1:7.

26. Macedonia. Paul’s first scene of labor in Europe (see on Acts 16:9, 10). One of its principal cities was Philippi.

Achaia. Greece, including the Peloponnesus and a portion of continental Greece (see The Journeys of Paul). Its capital was Corinth, in which was located the principal church of the area.

Contribution. Gr. *koinōnia*, literally, “communion,” “fellowship.” The use of the term suggests the idea of sharing and fellowship that was represented by the gift. How this collection was gathered is recorded in 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:1–6; 9:1, 2, 4–7 (cf. Acts 24:17).

The poor saints. Rather, “the poor among the saints.” Not all the members of the Jerusalem church were poor, but that there were many poor among them is apparent from Acts 4:32 to 5:4; 6:1; 11:29, 30; Gal. 2:10; James 2:2.

27. Debtors they are. The congregation at Jerusalem was the mother church from which the gospel, with all its spiritual blessings, had been communicated to the Gentiles.

Carnal things. That is, material things, those things that pertain to man’s physical life, such as food and clothing. For this sense of “carnal” see 1 Cor. 9:11. In return for the great spiritual gifts the Gentiles had received from the saints at Jerusalem, surely they should “minister unto them in carnal things.”

28. Performed this. That is, deliver the contribution to the saints at Jerusalem (see on v. 25).

Sealed. Gr. *sphragizō*, “to make sure,” “to secure.” The meaning, according to a use illustrated in the papyri, is probably that all the proper steps with regard to the contribution had been taken (see Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek*

Testament). Elsewhere Paul speaks of his concern that the contribution be handled in a manner free from all suspicion (2 Cor. 8:14–23).

Into Spain. See on v. 24.

29. I am sure. Gr. *oida*, “to know.”

The fullness of the blessing. That is, the full blessing.

Of the gospel. Textual evidence favors (see p. 10) the omission of this phrase. Without it the passage reads, “in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.” However, the “blessing” is the gospel. Paul’s intentions to visit Rome were finally realized, but not in the manner he had anticipated (Acts 28:16). Nevertheless, judging by the account in Philippians (Phil. 1:12–20), his ministry in Rome was indeed “in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.”

30. Christ’s sake. The phrase may be translated, “by [or “through”] our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Love of the Spirit. That is, the love that the Spirit inspires.

Strive together. Gr. *sunagōnizomia*, literally, “to agonize with.” The term implies strenuous effort, here, earnestness in prayer (cf. Luke 22:44). Even though Paul is endowed with the special gifts of an apostle, he still needs and requests the prayers of fellow believers (see 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:18, 19; Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1, 2).

31. That do not believe. Or, “who are disobedient” (cf. ch. 11:30). Paul is justifiably apprehensive concerning the possibility of open hostility on the part of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem (see Acts 21:30, 31).

My service. That is, the gift he is planning to deliver (see on vs. 25, 26).

May be accepted. This suggests that Paul had certain misgivings as to whether or not the gift will be gratefully received. The Judaizing element in the church at Jerusalem, whom he has undoubtedly offended by his attitude toward Jewish ritual and toward the question of the admission of the Gentiles (see Acts 21:20–24), might find it impossible to accept cordially such a gift from people whom they had for so long been accustomed to despise.

32. With joy. Compare 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 2:1. The way in which Paul is received in Jerusalem will have much to do with whether he returns to the city of Rome “with joy.”

By the will of God. The necessity of always submitting to the will of God is here emphasized. He came to Rome indeed, but neither “with joy” nor to “be refreshed,” at least not in the manner anticipated (Acts 27; 28).

Be refreshed. Or, “find rest.” Paul evidently longs for a period of rest and peace in a friendly community of faithful believers, such as the church in Rome appears to have been.

33. The God of peace. The title is especially appropriate in view of what Paul has mentioned in vs. 31, 32. The benediction of peace mentioned in the opening of the letter appears again near the close (see on ch. 1:7).

Amen. Gr. *amēn*, here, “truly,” “faithfully” (see on Matt. 5:18).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 440; 5T 605

1–3GW 190; 2T 76, 674; 3T 229; 5T 245; 6T 398

3 MM 252; 2T 151, 157; 3T 18, 457, 566; 4T 418; 5T 204, 422; 6T 215

4 FE 394, 430, 445; GC 324; SR 152

5, 6 1T 324; 5T 248
5–7 4T 20
6 5T 388
10 Ev 578
11, 12 FE 430
13 ML 51; 2T 319
24 AA 373
27 1T 190

CHAPTER 16

3 *Paul willeth the brethren to greet many, 17 and adviseth them to take heed of those which cause dissension and offenses, 21 and after sundry salutations endeth with praise and thanks to God.*

1. Phebe. The name means “radiant,” or “bright.” Nothing is known about her other than what is stated here. She may have been the bearer of Paul’s epistle.

Our sister. That is, in a spiritual sense. She was a fellow Christian.

Servant. Gr. *diakonos*, “deaconess,” the only NT occurrence of this word in the feminine. The use of this term suggests that the office of “deaconess” may already have been established in the early Christian church. At least Phoebe was in some sense a servant or minister in the congregation at Cenchreae.

Cenchrea. Rather, “Cenchreae,” the eastern seaport of Corinth, about 7 mi. from the city.

2. As becometh saints. That is, in a manner worthy of saints.

Assist. Gr. *paristēmi*, literally, “to stand by.” Both this word and the one translated “business” (*pragma*; cf. 1 Cor. 6:1) are terms used in legal proceedings. It is possible that Phoebe had legal business in Rome, and that the members of the church there could be of some help to her. As a “succourer of many” it is evident that she was not in need of assistance on account of poverty.

Succourer. Gr. *prostatis*, “helper,” “protector.” The word occurs only here in the NT. Phoebe may have been a woman in a position to help her fellow believers not only financially but politically and socially as well.

3. Greet. Gr. *aspazomai*. The same word is also frequently translated “salute” in this chapter.

Priscilla. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “Prisca,” of which form “Priscilla” is the diminutive. Aquila, her husband, was a Jew of Pontus. When the Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius, Priscilla and Aquila came to Corinth, where Paul found them and where they were converted (Acts 18:1–3). Later they moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:18, 19, 26; 1 Cor. 16:19). At the time of the writing of this epistle they were back in Rome, but later they seem to have returned to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:19).

Helpers. Gr. *sunergoi*, “fellow workers.”

4. Their own necks. Evidently, on some otherwise unknown occasion, Priscilla and Aquila had risked their lives for Paul, perhaps during the attack of the Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:6–18) or again in the uproar in Ephesus (Acts 19).

Churches of the Gentiles. These would be especially grateful in view of Paul’s labors among them.

5. In their house. The early Christians, having no church buildings, were dependent for their meeting places upon the hospitality of members who made their homes available (cf. Acts 12:12; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). The believers at Rome may have had several such meeting places, as indicated by Rom. 16:14, 15.

Epaenetus. The name means “praiseworthy.” Nothing beyond what is mentioned here is known of him.

Achaia. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “Asia.” If “Achaia” be read, the statement seems to conflict with 1 Cor. 16:15. Epaenetus was thus doubtless one of the first converts—“firstfruits”—won in the province of Asia.

6. Mary. Probably not identical with any of the other Marys mentioned in the NT.

On us. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading “on you.”

7. Andronicus. The name means “conquering man.”

Junia. Or, “Junias.” This may be the name of either a man or woman.

Kinsmen. Gr. *suggeneis*, here probably meaning “fellow countrymen” as in ch. 9:3.

Fellowprisoners. Literally, “fellow captives.” Andronicus and Junia may have been incarcerated with Paul during one of his numerous imprisonments (see 2 Cor. 11:23), although such is not the necessary interpretation of the passage. They may simply at some time have been imprisoned as Paul was for the sake of the gospel.

Of note. Gr. *episēmoi*. Literally, “bearing a mark,” “stamped,” hence, “illustrious.”

Among the apostles. The meaning may be either that they were well known by the apostles or that they themselves were distinguished apostles.

Before me. That is, they had accepted Christianity before the conversion of Paul.

8. Amplias. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “Ampliatius,” of which “Amplias” is a shortened form. The name is Latin and means “enlarged.”

My beloved. Paul was evidently personally acquainted with him.

9. Urbane. Or, “Urbanus,” or “Urban,” a Latin name meaning “polite.”

Stachys. The name means “an ear of grain.” The phrase “my beloved” indicates that Paul knew him personally.

10. Apelles. Nothing more than that he was “approved in Christ” is known of him.

Approved in Christ. That is, a tested and true Christian.

Of Aristobulus’ household. Literally, “those of Aristobulus,” a term that could apply simply to his slaves. Paul does not make it clear whether or not Aristobulus himself was a Christian. A number of commentators consider it probable that this Aristobulus was the grandson of Herod the Great.

11. Herodion. A Jew as indicated by the phrase “my kinsman” (see on v. 7).

Narcissus. Perhaps the infamous favorite of Claudius, put to death after the accession of Nero.

Which are in the Lord. These words imply that others in the household were not believers.

12. Tryphena and Tryphosa. Probably two sisters. Nothing further is known of them.

Persis. The name of an active Christian woman. She is not named elsewhere in the NT.

13. Rufus. It cannot be definitely established that this Rufus is the one mentioned in Mark 15:21 as the son of Simon of Cyrene.

His mother and mine. She was not Paul’s real mother but had evidently been as a mother to him.

14. *Asyncritus*. The five persons mentioned in this verse are not elsewhere identified, nor is the reason for their grouping disclosed.

The brethren. This refers, perhaps, to another Christian congregation meeting somewhere in Rome (cf. vs. 5, 15). Many of the names in this chapter also occur more or less frequently in inscriptions relating to the membership of Caesar's household. The general coincidence of names is significant in the light of Paul's mention of the saints "of Caesar's household" in Phil. 4:22.

15. *Philologus*. The four names here mentioned are not elsewhere identified.

16. *An holy kiss*. A customary Eastern mode of greeting (see also 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; etc.; cf. on Matt. 26:48).

The churches of Christ. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "all the churches of Christ." This phrase does not occur elsewhere in the NT.

17. *Mark*. Gr. *skopeō*, "to pay attention to," "to be on the watch for," "keep the eye on." Paul interrupts his greetings to warn the Roman believers against false teachers who might attempt to disrupt their harmony and destroy their faith. The baneful results of such influences Paul had experienced in Galatia and Corinth.

Divisions. Gr. *dichostasiai*, "dissensions," "cleavages," "disunions." The same word is translated "divisions" in 1 Cor. 3:3 and "seditions" in Gal. 5:20, the only other NT occurrences.

Offences. Gr. *skandala*, "occasions of stumbling," "hindrances" (see on Matt. 5:29).

Doctrine. Gr. *didachē*, "teaching," "instruction," referring here to the fundamental truths of Christianity.

Avoid them. Compare 2 Thess. 3:14.

18. *Serve*. Gr. *douleuō*, "to serve as a slave" (see on chs. 1:1; 6:6, 18).

Their own belly. Their motives are base and their aims are selfish (cf. Phil. 3:17–19; Col. 2:20–23).

Good words. Gr. *chrēstologia*, "fair speaking in a bad sense."

Fair speeches. Gr. *eulogia*, "praise," here, "flattering speech."

Deceive. Gr. *exapataō*, "to deceive thoroughly."

Simple. Gr. *akakoi*, "innocent," "without guile." The word occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Heb. 7:26, where it is translated "harmless."

19. *Your obedience*. Evidently little harm has been done by the false teachers as yet, and Paul has confidence in the Roman believers (see ch. 15:14). Nevertheless he is anxious that they shall continue to be on their guard.

Wise. Compare Jesus' counsel to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

Simple. Gr. *akeraioi*, "unmixed," "pure," "uncontaminated," "guileless." This is not the same word as in v. 18 (see comment there).

20. *The God of peace*. It is appropriate for Paul to refer to God by this title, inasmuch as he has been warning of influences that endanger the peace of the church (cf. on ch. 15:33). It is the "God of peace" who destroys Satan, for it is Satan who seeks to destroy the peace of God's people.

Shall bruise. Gr. *suntribō*, “to crush.” Paul looks forward to the final victory predicted in Gen. 3:15, which is not far off. This ultimate triumph over the forces of evil is foreshadowed by every victory experienced by Christian believers over temptation and deception. Paul is thinking of the victory he hopes the Roman believers will enjoy by “avoiding” the false teachers who will seek to divide and confuse them.

Grace. See on ch. 1:7.

21. Timotheus. Paul mentions the name of this early convert and fellow worker in all his other epistles except Galatians, Ephesians, and Titus. In the opening address of this epistle to the Romans (ch. 1:1–7) Timothy’s name is not associated with the apostle’s as in other epistles (see 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon 1). Perhaps he was absent when the letter was begun and has now come to join Paul on the eve of his departure to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:1–4).

Lucius. Perhaps the Lucius of Cyrene mentioned in Acts 13:1.

Jason. Possibly the one who had previously been host to Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5–9).

Sosipater. Perhaps the same as the Sopater of Acts 20:4.

Kinsmen. Gr. *suggeneis*, here, “fellow countrymen,” as in ch. 9:3.

22. Tertius. Paul’s secretary, whom the apostle now permits to send a greeting in his own name. Paul seems generally to have dictated his letters to a scribe and to have added a salutation in his own hand (see 1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; see on Gal. 6:11).

In the Lord. This indicates the kind of assistants Paul employed. Tertius was no mere scribe but a fellow believer, and he must have followed with great interest Paul’s instructions to Christians at Rome.

23. Gaius. This name occurs in four other places in the NT (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 1 Cor. 1:14; 3 John 1). The person here mentioned could well be the Gaius who had earlier been baptized by Paul in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:14). He is called “host” “of the whole church,” perhaps because the church met at his house.

Erastus. See Acts 19:22.

Chamberlain. Gr. *oikonomos*, “manager,” equivalent to the Latin *aedilis*, a commissioner of streets and public buildings (see on Acts 19:22).

Quartus. Otherwise unknown.

A brother. Literally, “the brother,” meaning “our brother” (RSV), in a Christian sense.

24. The grace. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this verse. See on ch. 1:7.

25. Now to him. Paul concludes his letter to the Romans with the finest of all his doxologies (cf. Phil. 4:20; Heb. 13:20, 21).

That is of power. Or, “who is able,” as the same Greek phrase is translated in Eph. 3:20.

To stablish. Gr. *sterizō*, “to make stable,” “to strengthen,” “to confirm,” “to establish” (cf. ch. 1:11).

According to my gospel. Compare ch. 2:16. Paul’s gospel was the message of salvation that had been entrusted to him.

The preaching of Jesus Christ. This may mean either “what Jesus Christ preached” or “the preaching about Jesus.” The latter is the simpler rendering and better suited to the context. Jesus Christ is the subject of Paul’s gospel (see also Rom. 1:3; 2:16; 10:8–13; Gal. 1:6–8).

The mystery. See on ch. 11:25. This mystery is God’s eternal purpose to save His fallen creatures (see 1 Cor. 2:6, 7; Eph. 3:3–10; Col. 1:26).

Secret. Literally, “in silence.”

Since the world began. Literally, “in eternal times,” meaning “for ages past.” “Through times eternal” (RV) God’s plan to save man by faith in Christ had been shrouded in silence, but is now revealed.

There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 10) for inserting vs. 25–27 after ch. 14:23 or ch. 15:33.

26. Now is made manifest. That is, since the coming of Jesus (see DA 22, 23; cf. 2 Tim. 1:9, 10; Titus 1:2, 3).

The scriptures. It is through these that the mystery of God has been “made known to all nations.” God’s plan of saving men by faith in Jesus Christ has been predicted by and is in full accordance with the teachings of the OT (see chs. 1:1, 2; 3:21).

According to the commandment. The messengers of the gospel are called to their work by God’s command (see Acts 13:2; Rom. 10:15). Paul believed he had been directly commissioned to preach to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:1, 5).

For the obedience of faith. Or, “to bring about obedience to the faith,” or “to win them to the obedience that springs from faith” (see on ch. 1:5).

27. To God only wise. Compare 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 25. God’s divine wisdom has been especially displayed in the plan that has now been revealed (cf. Rom. 11:33, 34) and that has been the subject of this epistle.

Glory. See on ch. 3:23.

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18; Rom. 15:33.

The postscript following v. 27 appears in no ancient manuscript, though a number of the more ancient manuscripts do have the phrase “to the Romans.” The complete postscript dates back probably no earlier than the 9th century. It was a later editorial addition, not part of the original inspired record.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 6T 343

17 1T 334

17–198T 167

20 3T 526; 6T 52

25⁹ AA 159; DA 22; Ed 126; GW 58; 8T 270

⁹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ro 15:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.