ROMANS

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION
OF THE SCRIPTURES

by

G. E. Mansfield

Printed by
Eureka Press Pty. Ltd., Kidman Park
for
Logos Publications
632 Burbridge Road, West Beach,
South Australia 5024
July, 1994

Introduction

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST

IN the canon of Scripture, the Epistle to the Romans has been placed first amongst the apostolic epistles. It is a masterly, divinely-inspired exposition devoted to vital matters concerned with fundamental doctrine. In this epistle, the apostle challenges and eliminates the basic arguments of the Judaizers who were promoting their destructive doctrines in ecclesias, thereby undermining true apostolic teaching. In opposing false philosophies, Paul set forth the Truth, demonstrating the power of God as seen in Christ, the true position of saints in the divine plan for redemption, and the Scriptural means whereby such righteousness might be found.

The letter to the Roman ecclesia was not the first inspired epistle to be written by Paul. It seems that the epistles to the Thessalonians, to the Galatians and the two epistles to the Corinthians, were written prior to the epistle to the saints at Rome. It is thus evident that the Spirit has seen fit to place this epistle first among all epistles, in the order of Scripture.

There must be a good reason why this has occurred. As believers commence to read through Paul's epistles, they first find themselves confronted with the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, as it represents the glory of Yahweh in His atoning-manifestation for the redemption of the human race that He might be glorified in all the redeemed (cp. Rom. 1:4, 16-17; 3:20-26).

Appropriately, the major theme of the first epistle to appear in Scripture shows the way whereby we might become justified before God. This basic theme is then developed and expanded to incorporate the relationship between the nation of Israel and its God, and demonstrates the way in which apostolic teaching upon the subject of justification should be applied by believers in the practical, every-day affairs of life.

The epistle contains much drama. The strong, personal feelings of the apostle are laid bare before all. His conviction concerning the Truth and wholehearted dedication to the cause of Christ are set forth as an example for all.

Paul was greatly encouraged by the way in which the ecclesia at Rome had received the Truth and acted upon it, although there remained numerous matters upon which they required clearer understanding. Revealing an intimate depth of feeling, Paul wrote: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (ch. 1:8). Implicit in this expression of heart-felt thankfulness is the clear message that Paul understood the faith which was required by these brethren and sisters to withstand the powerful, ungodly pressures and influences which were blatantly manifested in the city of Rome. A firm stand for the Truth would be necessary if it were to survive in the evil, pagan environment of that rich and profligate city. Paul emphasized this need by reminding them of his own uncompromising position: "I am not *ashamed* of the gospel of Christ..." (1:16). The power of the gospel had changed his own life entirely; and he gladly acknowledged the effect that the gospel had upon his brethren and sisters at Rome.

He was anxious to receive the co-operation of the Roman brethren in regard to his project for helping to meet the needs of the saints at Jerusalem. He asked of them: "Strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (15:30). Like other faithful brethren of all ages, Paul was a man of prayer. He recognized the power of prayer. He was ever-ready to supplicate the Throne of Grace, and to encourage his brethren to do likewise.

In the many personal glimpses we are given into the character of Paul in this epistle, we understand more clearly the godly disposition of this great man. Though especially commissioned as "the apostle to the Gentiles" (11:13), he was essentially a servant to all who would give ear to the message of salvation which he so readily conveyed.

The epistle to the Romans shows how Paul was enabled, under Spirit guidance, to present the pure message of the gospel in such a way as to silence those who endeavored to pervert the Truth with false and specious arguments. But, in so doing, his words may be read from a positive and encouraging point of view. Thus, his objective was not merely to demolish philosophies which contradicted the Truth, but also to build up the brethren in their "holy calling" (2Tim. 1:9).

Hence, Paul's appeal to the brethren was convincing and resolute, as he demonstrated, by his own unwavering example, the way which leads to eternal salvation: "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Cor.11:1).

Paul's Epistles to the Seven Ecclesias

Paul wrote nine epistles to seven ecclesias, a parallel to the letters directed to seven ecclesias by the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 2, 3). As with all Scripture, they were designed to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction (or "restoration," as the word is better rendered), for instruction in righteousness;

that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2Tim. 3:16-17).

These nine ecclesial epistles of Paul can be divided into a quartette, a trio, and a pair. The quartette (Romans to Galatians) expounds Christ in relation to doctrine. The trio (Ephesians to Colossians) expounds Christ in relation to conduct. The pair (1 and 2Thessalonians) expounds Christ in relation to hope.

Doctrine (teaching) must come first, for it provides a foundation for conduct, and that assures our hope. Doctrine, conduct, hope are the natural developments in Christ, and it is significant that divine inspiration arranged for the epistles to be set out in that order: for they are not arranged in chronological sequence.

In *Romans* there is set forth *doctrine*, for the epistle is the most systematic presentation of the gospel extant. In *1Corinthians* there is *reproof*, as the apostle rebukes the brethren for their misdemeanors. In *2Corinthians* there is *restoration* (see ch. 2:4-8) as he commends them for implementing the reforms he had earlier suggested. In *Galatians* there is *instruction in righteousness*, as Paul points to failings in their teachings..

Now consider the order set forth in the trio of epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. In *Ephesians* Christ is set forth as *the head* (ch.1:22; 4:15; 5:23); the ecclesia is *the body* (ch.1:23;4:16); and individual brethren are the *members* thereof (ch. 5:30). In *Philippians*, however, Paul warned of the *disjointedness of the members* (ch.1:27; 2:3,14; 4:2). But in *Colossians* the problem was even worse, for the brethren were guilty of *"not holding the head"* (ch. 2:1-19). Ephesians thus sets forth the ideal; Philippians, a minor fault; Colossians, a serious decline.

The final division suggested above: that of the pair (1 and 2Thessalonians), presents Christ as the *Hope*, and then as the *Victory*. Before he can become our *Victory*, he must be our *Hope*. So, here again, there is a proper development of ideas.

The remarkable order in which the epistles are placed reveals that the Bible is the work of inspiration; not only in what it says, but in the very manner in which the various books are arranged.

The Epistle in Outline

The Ecclesia in Rome

No record is given regarding the founding of the ecclesia in Rome. It probably came into being by Jews converted at Pentecost and returning to the metropolis. At the time Paul wrote, it was made up of both Jews (Rom. 2:17-19; 4:1; 7:1) and Gentiles (ch. 1:13; 15:15-16), though it seems that Gentiles predominated. Some two-thirds of the names mentioned in Chapter 16 are Greek in origin.

Though Paul had never visited the ecclesia in Rome to the time of writing the epistle, he knew of its members personally as is shown by the terms of his greetings. Some of them had been his close associates in the work of the Truth elsewhere, such as his familiar friends, Aquila and Priscilla (ch. 16:3).

The ecclesia in Rome, like that in Corinth, existed in an environment of great immorality, corruption and evil. According to the Roman historian, Tacitus, into that city flowed "all things that are vile and abominable, and there they are encouraged." The first chapter of Paul's epistle lists some of these evils; and it speaks well of the brethren that they maintained a consistent standard of behavior in spite of their surroundings. Indeed, the faith of its members was spoken of throughout the world (ch. 1:8), but Paul recognized a need to strengthen that faith. His epistle was designed to that end.

The epistle witnesses to three significant paradoxes:

(1) It is significant that this epistle, which outlines the restoration of Israel more than any other (see Romans 9, 10, 11), was written to the ecclesia in the very city that was to bring about the destruction of the Jewish State.

(2) It is significant that in all the personal greetings that Paul sent (and there are many — see Romans 16), not a mention is made of Peter, falsely claimed by Roman Catholics to have been bishop at the time.

(3) It is significant, that not one distinguishing doctrine or practice of Rome is referred to therein — no pope, exclusive churchship, dispensations, pardons, indulgences, canonisations, pilgrimages, confessions, purgatories, masses, holy water, christening, rosaries and so forth. Instead, we find doctrines and instructions that are diametrically opposed to those of the modern Church of Rome. Thus, whilst the epistle was sent to the ecclesia and accepted by it, the church has rejected it.

Outline of the Epistle

The epistle is divided into three main sections, to which can be added two further minor ones: the introduction and the epilogue. These three sections are:

DOCTRINAL: How the Gospel relates to Salvation;
NATIONAL: How the Gospel relates to Israel;
PRACTICAL: How the Gospel relates to Conduct.

Doctrinal: How the Gospel Relates to Salvation

Paul commences by revealing the vital need of a gospel of salvation. The unrighteousness of man has resulted in the widespread manifestation of God's wrath. Gentile blasphemy and immorality (perhaps revealed in their worst forms in Rome to where the epistle was addressed, and in Corinth from where it was written) demanded and received the outpouring of the righteous judgments of God (ch. 1:18-32).

But Jewish formalism likewise failed to measure up to the requirements of Yahweh, and earned similar judgment (ch. 2; cp: v. 24). Despite the great privileges granted to Israel, the nation as a whole, failed to adequately respond, and generally the people sought justification by deeds of the Law, not considering that the Law cursed sinners (ch. 3:1-18). Therefore, there was no promise of life in the Law to those who broke it: no basis for forgiveness in the absence of the Redeemer who had come, and whose sacrifice was foreshadowed by those under the Law. Justification, real forgiveness, was only possible by faith. Further, as God was God of Gentiles as well as of Jews, justification was possible to both on this common basis (ch. 3:19-21). Without Christ, it is impossible for man to be justified in God's sight (Psa. 143:3; Ecc. 7:20; 1Cor. 1:30).

Paul's proposition as stated in this first portion of the epistle, therefore, is this: Seeing that God's wrath is revealed against both Jews and Gentiles because of unrighteousness, where is righteousness to be found? It is not found in hypocritical Judaism (Rom. 2:1-6); it is not set forth in a formalized ritual of religion, nor in striving for justification from a law it was impossible to keep (ch. 2:17-22; 3:20); but only in the recognition of the reality of sin, man's dire need for forgiveness and redemption, and the seeking of such through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. He shows that righteousness is first IMPUTED (ch. 3:21-7:6), and then IMPARTED (ch. 8).

As a skilful advocate, Paul argues and proves that Gentiles believing and accepting Christ, have just as solid a title to the blessings of God's covenant and gospel as have the Jews.

He shows that the racial plight is twofold. Firstly, both Jew and Gentile have sinned (ch. 2:12); secondly, they are both "in sin," both subject to a state of things brought about by sin — and that leads to sin, and are therefore "under sin" (ch. 3:9-10).

"Sins" (actual transgressions) are dealt with first judicially then experimentally. First (see ch. 3:21-4:25) Christ is set forth as the propitiation (or mercy seat) only through which forgiveness can be obtained (ch. 3:21-31). Paul shows, by reference to Abraham and David, that the principle of justification by faith is clearly set forth in the Old Testament (ch. 4). Next, he shows the effect experimentally on the believer. Such a believer receives peace with God, access to Him by faith, and love poured into the heart so that he responds back to God in love (ch. 5:1-11). He learns to love God because God has revealed love to him in drawing him to the Truth and providing a cover for sins.

"Sin" (singular as relating to the lusts of the flesh found in human nature) is also dealt with: first judicially then experimentally. Judicially, in ch. 5:12-7:6, where reference is made to the federal headship of Adam, the change of allegiance

to a new master in baptism, the new "marriage" by which one is joined to Christ. Experimentally, in the actual impact of "sin" in life ("for what I would that I do not" — see ch. 7:7-24), and then the ultimate deliverance from this state culminating in a physical change (ch. 7:24; ch. 8).

National: How the Gospel Relates to Israel

Paul expounds upon the standing of Israel in the sight of Yahweh: Past, Present and Future. These are set forth as *Selection* (ch. 9), *Rejection* (ch. 10), and *Restoration* (ch. 11). The apostle explains that the temporary setting aside of Israel as a nation in favor of Gentiles does not annul God's purpose with the former, for it is but an extension of the very principle by which Yahweh originally selected Israel. That was on the basis of God's will, and not personal merit (ch. 9:11). Israel was not greater than other nations so as to justify such a selection, but it was "beloved for the father's sake." Therefore, God could extend the same privilege to Gentiles without setting aside principle (ch. 9:14-15). Jacob was selected at the expense of Esau before either had done good or ill, though the record of history reveals that choice to be a wise one based upon divine knowledge. In view of that fact, faith should accept that a similar choice of Gentiles by God would likewise be both wise and good. In a masterly fashion, the apostle shows that this is accomplished by God without setting aside His purpose with Israel, which is not subject to change (ch. 11:29). Therefore, ultimately, "all Israel" (i.e., all the tribes) shall be saved, for the Deliverer shall come to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (ch. 11:26).

Practical: How the Gospel Relates to Conduct

There is systematic development in this epistle. The doctrine of salvation which comprises its first section, lays the foundation for acceptable living in Christ. God's treatment of Israel which comprises the second section, reveals that there must be a practical outworking of right conduct. The instruction that follows in the third section, sets down the practical principles which believers should follow in their manifestation of the Truth.

This section of the epistle, like the former, is divided into clearly defined parts. *Social, Civil* and *Ecclesial* responsibilities are set forth in that order. Chapter 12 lists the first, calling upon believers to "be not conformed to this world" (v. 2). Chapter 13 sets forth the second, commencing: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (v. 1). Chapter 14 treats with the third: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (v. 1).

This section reveals how closely each member of an ecclesia should be bound to the other. It reveals the ecclesia as a living organism rather than a dead organisation: each member drawn together as one in Christ. It constitutes the multitudinous Christ, and as such, each member must assume the responsibilities of his or her call.

Thus Paul taught the brethren in Rome that the doctrine of salvation in Christ is more than a legalistic theory. It is a way of life that must be reflected in action in a transformed character, before it can be really claimed that one has found the Truth.

Analysis

The Book of Romans

Christ, The Power of God to Us (Justification)

KEY PASSAGE: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17).

1. INTRODUCTION— Ch. 1:1-15

Salutation ch.1:1-7
Paul's deep interest in the welfare of the ecclesia ch.1:8-12
His desire to fulfil his debt to all ..... ch. 1:13-18

2. DOCTRINAL: HOW THE GOSPEL RELATES TO SALVATION — Ch. 1:16-8:39

Condemnation: Ch. 1:16-3:20

The Gospel's transforming power ..... ch. 1:16-17
God's wrath manifested against blasphemy and immorality ..... ch. 1:18-32
Jewish condemnation of Gentiles illogical if the same principle is followed ..... ch. 2:1-5
A day of judgment impending for those in light ch.2:6-16
Mere Jewish formalism will not save in that day ch.2:17-29
The proof of Scripture advanced ..... ch. 3:1-20

Justification: Ch. 3:21-5:21

The Law condemned, therefore justification must be sought elsewhere ch.3:21-31
Abraham received justification by faith not law ..... ch. 4:1-5
David described the benefits of justification by faith ..... ch. 4:6-8
Abraham's case proves that formal circumcision is not necessary ..... ch. 4:9-12
Abraham's justification came before the Law ..... ch. 4:13-17
Abraham's life provides an example of faith to be emulated ..... ch. 4:18-25
The benefits of justification ..... ch. 5:1-11
God made it effective for all mankind ..... ch. 5:12-21

Sanctification: Ch. 6:1-8:17

Manifested by a new way of life ..... ch. 6:1-14
Manifested by a change of masters ..... ch. 6:15-23
Likened to a new marriage ..... ch. 7:1-6
Not that the Law is evil ..... ch. 7:7-12
Nor itself responsible for death ..... ch. 7:13-23
But because of the weakness of flesh deliverance can only come through Christ ..... ch. 7:24-8:4
The triumph of the Spirit over the flesh ..... ch. 8:5-11
The manifestation of the spirit-life leads to the maturity of sonship ..... ch. 8:12-17

Glorification: Ch. 8:18-39

The ultimate manifestation of the Sons of God by a change of nature ch.8:18-25
What Christ is now, we can become ..... ch. 8:26-30
Victory can be ours for God is on our side ..... ch. 8:32-39

3. NATIONAL: HOW THE GOSPEL RELATES TO ISRAEL: Ch. 9:1-11:36

Selection — Ch. 9.

Paul's love of Israel ..... ch. 9:1-5
Israel's disbelief does not frustrate God's purpose of election ..... ch. 9:6-13
Nor does election imply unrighteousness on God's part ..... ch. 9:14-18
There is always wisdom and purpose behind God's choice ..... ch. 9:19-24
Gentiles as well as Jews are the subjects of His choice ..... ch. 9:25-29
Selection demands the manifestation of faith ..... ch. 9:30-33

Rejection — Ch. 10.

The cause of Israel's failure ..... ch. 10:1-4
The Law revealed faith is necessary ..... ch. 10:5-10
The Scriptures predict opportunity would be given to Gentiles as well as Jews ..... ch. 10:11-15
Scripture shows that some would harden themselves against God's mercy ..... ch. 10:16-18
Israel rejected the message, so God turned to the Gentiles ..... ch. 10:19-21

Restoration — Ch. 11

Israel's rejection never absolute, for a remnant is saved.....ch. 11:1-10
Israel's rejection only temporary .....ch. 11:11-24
The secret of the restoration revealed .....ch. 11:25-32
The depths of God's wisdom revealed in God's plan of national redemption .....ch. 11:33-36

4. PRACTICAL: HOW THE GOSPEL RELATES TO CONDUCT — Ch. 12:1-15:13

Social Responsibilities — Ch. 12

The root:consecration and renewal .....ch. 12:1-2
The fruit: service and love to others.....ch. 12:3-21

Civil Responsibilities — Ch. 13

Its expression: conscientious submission.....ch. 13:1-7
Its foundation: love to one's neighbor .....ch. 13:1-10
Its urgency: the times demand observance of these principles.....ch. 13:11-14

Ecclesial Responsibilities — Ch. 14:1–15:13

The principle: mutual consideration .....ch. 14:1-3
The incentive: Christ's example .....ch. 15:1-13

5. EPILOGUE: PERSONAL MATTERS — Ch.15:14-15:13

Paul's confidence in the brethren.....ch. 15:14-21
His desire and intention of visiting them .....ch. 15:22-24
His prior mission to Jerusalem.....ch. 15:25-29
His plea for their prayers.....ch. 15:30-33
Personal greetings .....ch. 16:1-6
Final warning and encouragement .....ch. 16:21-24
Greetings from fellow-workers.....ch. 16:21-24
Final benediction.....ch. 16:25-27

The main divisions suggested above are established by Paul who rounded off each section with appropriate words of praise to Yahweh. See ch. 8:38-39; 11:33-36; 15:13; 16:25-27.

Background

The Roman World

IN writing to the ecclesia in Rome, Paul considered the difficulties it faced, for it was situated in the greatest metropolis of the times. The ecclesia comprised both Jews and Gentiles, and one design of the epistle was to reconcile their jarring opinions, particularly about the obligations of the Jewish law, and the way of justification. At the same time, the Gentile element faced peculiar problems in life in the Capital, and there was a need to combat the insidious influences of society about them.

The Roman Empire straddled the civilized world, as the standard of discipline and justice. It was protected by the iron regimentation of its legions, supported by slaves from the conquered nations, and financed by heavy taxes drawn from its subjects. It sprawled across three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa, its boundaries touched the extremities of the civilized world. Within its borders, hundreds of different nationalities, religions, cultures and languages intermingled. Thousands of miles of strongly-built roads criss-crossed the empire, linking all the major cities.

The jewel at the centre of the empire was Rome itself, the Queen enthroned upon seven hills, the mistress of the nations. Rome was a large city with a population estimated at about two or three millions. Every language, culture and religion could be found within its streets. The free-born Roman was proud of his traditions of justice and morality, but his boasts were hollow! The historian Tacitus, writing at the time, described the epoch as "rich in disasters, savage with battles, rent with factions, cruel even in peace; the swallowing up or overthrow of cities, the pollution of sacred functions, the prevalence of adulteries, the corruption of slaves against their masters, of freedmen against their patrons, and when there was no open enemy, the ruin of friends by friends."

Paul summarizes the evil state of Roman society in the first chapter of his epistle. The people had been "given up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" (v. 24). Against this background the ecclesia in Rome had steadfastly maintained their faith and upright way of life, and for this Paul commends them, thanking God that their faith "is spoken of throughout the whole world" (v. 8). By this time many Gentiles had joined the ecclesia, for in chapter sixteen a long list of Greek names is recorded.

Did the Apostle Peter Visit Rome?

At the time the epistle was written, there was a large number of Jews at Rome. For this reason, the roman Catholic Church has maintained that the ecclesia at Rome was founded by Peter, and has thence drawn an argument for its high claims and infallibility.

But there is strong evidence in the epistle itself, and from the Acts, that Paul did not regard Peter as having any such primacy and ascendancy in the Roman Ecclesia, as is claimed for him by Papists. In the whole epistle his name does not appear at all — yet, in other epistles, Paul mentions the important work and authority of Peter in different areas: 1Cor. 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal.1:18; 2:7, 8, 9, 14. Thus it is incredible that if Peter had been then at Rome, and had founded the ecclesia there, and was regarded as invested with any peculiar authority over it, that Paul should not once have even suggested his name.

Certainly, if Peter was in Rome when the letter was forwarded, we might expect Paul to have included a salutation amid those mentioned in chapter 16. In Acts of the Apostles no mention of Peter having been at Rome, but the presumption from history is almost conclusive that he had not. Certainly, when Paul was taken as a prisoner to the city, the ecclesia was well established (Acts 28:15; Rom. 1:8), but again no mention is made of Peter. If he had been in Rome until that time, it could hardly fail to be recorded. During Paul's imprisonment a number of epistles were written (including Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2Timothy — and perhaps also Hebrews), but there is no hint in any of them that Peter had ever been in Rome: a fact that cannot be accounted for if he was regarded as the founder of the Ecclesia in Rome.

Therefore, if Peter ever visited Rome, it was certainly after Paul's activities in that centre.

The Author

Paul the Determined!

The proclamation of the Truth and the establishment of ecclesias on the foundation of the risen Christ, received their greatest opposition from formalized Judaism. Paul was well aware of such traditions, for he had formerly been "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6), declaring himself to be "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; a touching the law, a Pharisee" (Phil. 3:5). Thus, he realized the impact of Christian teaching upon the Jewish heritage. The doctrine of the resurrection affronted the Sadducees; the suggestion that the Law was abrogated antagonized the Pharisees (Acts 6:9-15). The result was bitter and ruthless persecution.

Former Zeal and Education

Amongst the Pharisees, the young man Saul was outstanding in his determination and religious zeal to crush the hated new teaching (Phil. 3:6). He was a strict Pharisee (Acts 26:5), fresh from the school of the noted rabbi Gamaliel (ch. 22:3-5), and in his blind zeal called upon the authority and the forces of the State to aid him in persecuting the ecclesia (ch. 8:1-4). He was a Jew of Tarsus (ch. 22:3), a freeborn Roman citizen (vv. 27-28), and therefore a man of considerable influence.

But the great theophany on the road to Damascus blinded him physically, whilst it opened his eyes to the Truth in Christ Jesus (Acts 9). His life was changed for ever, and from a previous persecutor he became the persecuted. But he never regretted his decision, and was prepared to count his previous credentials and opportunities a valueless when compared with his new-found conviction (Phil. 3:8).

A Preacher to the Gentiles

Now the same energy, zeal and determination as previously had been devoted to destroying were now used to extend a knowledge of the Truth. But in this he found vigorous opposition and frustration. He returned to Jerusalem, anxious to make amends and preach the Gospel in the city from whence he had left to persecute the Christians — but he was ordered by the Lord Jesus to avoid that city in his activities, for he was to concentrate his teaching on the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21). To preach to Gentiles demanded that Paul cast away the last remnants of any Pharisaism he may have retained. Determined to serve his Lord, he willingly did so, and set himself the task of carrying the Truth where others had not ventured (Rom. 15:20).

Paul constantly found himself being opposed by Judaising Christians. They resented the widespread conversion of Gentiles (1Thes. 2:14-16), teaching that the Law was still the basis of justification (Gal. 6:12), and urged that all converts should come to Christ through its channel alone (Acts 15). This was a burden that Paul claimed neither Jews nor Gentiles should carry; it was not required of them. He vigorously opposed the Judaisers, and refused to give way to their

demands. Antagonism flared up into open verbal warfare, and Paul became a marked man amongst those who desired that the Law should be retained in all its ritual.

The Problem Faced

The successful preaching to Gentiles aggravated the division of thought. The problem was considered at length at the Jerusalem conference, and a moderate decision was achieved (Acts 15). Paul was appointed to visit the Gentile ecclesias and express the results of the deliberations to the believers. The Judaisers tried to undermine his influence, claiming that he had no authority for his expositions, even openly ridiculing him personally. The verbal warfare became so extreme, the apostle's language so vigorous (Phil 3:2-3; Gal. 1:6-8), that it was deemed advisable to take special precautions in is case to demonstrate that he was not fundamentally opposed to the Law (Acts 21:17-31: 22:19-23). In view of the attitude of the Judaisers, the position of privilege that Israel nationally stood in the purpose of Yahweh, and the importance of the Law itself, there was a need to show that Gentiles, as individuals, were as acceptable to God as Jews; that the Law, important, good and true as it was, had its limitations; and that, nevertheless, the nation of Israel still had an important future in the Divine purpose.

This is the task Paul set himself in this epistle.

He shows that no man is justified by the Law for one other than Christ, had perfectly performed it. Therefore another medium of salvation was required, found in justification by faith. He points out that the nation of Israel had failed to fulfil the Divine purpose, and therefore the Gentiles were now to be involved. But he also argues that faith must be revealed in an individual commitment, and that this would ultimately lead to the salvation of Israel nationally.

Paul's Qualifications

These are admirably described in the following comment:

"Many apparently opposite qualities went to make up the special fitness of Paul for his great lifework. He combined in his own unique experience a personal connection of the closest kind with the three principal social spheres of his age. He was called out of the very heart of Judaism. Jewish legalism he knew from end to end. He was called out of the heart of Greek culture, for he lived his early life from infancy in one of the great centres of Hellenic life, and was familiar with all that was considered great and noble in Greek literature. He had, moreover, enjoyed from birth all the varied privileges of a Roman citizen. He was thus a Hebrew to the backbone: he was a Greek in education: and he was a Roman citizen by privilege of birth.

"But besides all this, he united in his rare personality, an unusual vigor of of intellect, strength of will, depth of feeling and sympathy. Intensity was the mark of his character, whether intellectually or morally. Yet the one thing which surpassed all else in preparing him for his apostleship has yet to be mentioned. His sudden and miraculous conversion and call by the direct interposition of Christ himself, beyond all else, fitted him to compare together Judaism and Christianity with perfect fairness, and enabled him to set the two systems side by side in vivid, startling contrast, as well as empowered him to testify how Christianity,

instead of being a violent antagonism and outrage upon pure Judaism was the legitimate outcome, development and completion of Old Testament truth."

His Outstanding Knowledge

Paul was not ignorant of the finest points of the Law. He clearly understood the system of religion he taught, for he was instructed by revelation (Gal. 1:11; Eph. 3:3; 1Cor. 11:23). He could discern a Divine overshadowing of his life (Gal. 1:15), guiding and equipping him for the work he was ultimately to perform. A basic doctrine (but one which was imperfectly appreciated in the early days of the ecclesia) is that Gentiles and Jews in Christ have equal privileges. It was necessary to set this clearly before the brethren, to demonstrate plainly, once and for all, the principle of justification by faith and grace.

Paul's knowledge and training qualified him for the task. "There was only one man equal to this crisis, capable of grasping in all its breadth the situation. With his Pharisaic training, with his strict and delicate conscience, and his intense faith in the religion of Israel, Paul realized even more than his opponents, the force and difficulty of these questions; and we can see that it cost him, both before and during the controversy, a prolonged struggle, and the most strenuous mental effort to arrive at the solution he has given us. We must not suppose that inspiration superseded study on the part of teachers of Scripture, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit served as a contrivance for saving labor. On the contrary, it was with severe toil, and by the unsparing exertion of his spiritual and intellectual powers that Paul composed his great doctrinal epistles: and the Holy Spirit prompted, sustained, and crowned the travail of his human will and reason."

His Contact with the Ecclesia in Rome

At the time of writing this epistle Paul had not visited Rome (Rom. 1:15), although he had a keen desire so to do (v.13;15:23). Now, as soon as he completed certain work in hand, he hoped to fulfil his desire (ch. 15:24,28). In the meantime, the epistle was written during his three months stay in Achaia (Greece) after being ejected from Ephesus (Acts 20:3). It was dictated to Tertius (Rom. 16:22) and sent in the care of Phoebe from Cenchrea (the port of Corinth — Rom. 16:1-2).

But Paul's desire to visit Rome was not fulfilled as a free-man. Through the antagonism of Jews in Jerusalem he was apprehended and brought to trial. This was, however, the means by which Paul would achieve his intentions — for, seeing that he faced imprisonment, he "appealed to Caesar" as was his right, and this resulted in his enshipment to Rome as prisoner. Nevertheless, whether in ease or difficulty, the divine purpose was realized. Paul had commenced his spiritual life with the instruction: "...bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel...for great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15). With his arrival in Rome and testimony before Caesar, his commitment was completed.

ROMANS:
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Section One:

INTRODUCTION

Ch. 1:1-15

FROM *Corinth, Paul wrote to the ecclesia at Rome to encourage them in the fight of faith, to explain certain doctrinal principles which were being challenged by the Judaisers in many places, and to convey his greetings and desire to personally visit the brethren. He wrote because of the difficulties of the era. Christ had risen, and brought to an end the jurisdiction of the Mosaic ritual. It was now time to recognize the changing circumstances, and to confess the power of faith in the resurrected Lord. This was difficult to the Jewish mind, and thus the principles of justification by faith had to be carefully and comprehensively set forth. At the same time, pressure was being felt in Gentile circles by the insidious life-style of the Roman Empire. Liberties and licentiousness were common-place. The society had degenerated to the state where every evil practice was accepted, every gratification was indulged, and sin no longer appeared sinful.*

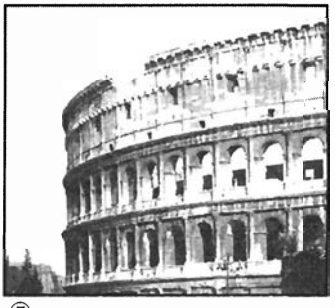
Under such conditions, the ecclesia had to be strengthened in its exclusive position. It had to recognize not only the privileges of justification, but the obligations that follow. It had to see the purpose of Yahweh in Israel, and not reject its national destiny, though, for a time, Israel had "stumbled" (ch. 11:11). It had to see that belief in the gospel message brought a responsibility to fulfil a code of conduct which was appropriate.

Paul's opening comments are designed to draw author and reader together in a mutual contemplation of the high and holy things of divine revelation. He lays the foundation for his exposition, by showing his personal desire for the ecclesia's spiritual development (ch. 1:9), his fervent commitment to the Truth believed (v.15), and his concern at the environment in which the brethren in Rome found themselves (v.18).

It is, therefore, an epistle appropriate to our times as to Paul's, and will demonstrate how readers today need the sound application of doctrinal principles in a way of life.

①

②



⑤

③

⑥

④

⑦

The Rome of the First Century

① The fine representation of Marcus Aurelius is the only bronze equestrian statue surviving from classic times.

② Trajan's market is the name given to the multistoried complex of buildings overlooking the forum of Trajan and occupying a space which was carved out of the SW slopes of Quirinal. The market consists of a great vaulted hall surrounded by shops and commercial premises; these stand behind a grandiose brick exedra which forms the eastern side of Trajan's forum. Like the forum and baths of Trajan, the whole complex was designed by the architect Apollodrus of Damascus.

③ Trajan's column was erected in the emperor's new forum in AD113 to commemorate his conquest of Dacia.

④ The temple of Antoninus and Faustina, built by Antoninus Pius in the Forum in AD141, was converted into a church in the Middle Ages: the baroque facade was added in 1602.

⑤ The Flavian amphitheatre ("the Colosseum") was begun by Vespasian and completed by his sons, Titus and Domitian. Over 50 metres high, it covered an elliptical area 188 by 156 metres. Officially opened in 80 AD, it could hold 70,000 spectators.

⑥ The Aqua Claudia, begun in AD38 by Caligula and completed by Claudius in 52, brought water to the city from a source near Subiaco, 68 kilometres away.

⑦ Detail of the model of ancient Rome in the Museo della Civilta Romana, Rome. In the foreground is the Circus Maximus; beyond it are the imperial palaces on the Palatine. At the top of the picture, from left to right, are the Forum, the Basilica of Maxentius, the Temple of Venus and Roma, the Colosseum and the Temple of the Divine Claudius.

CHAPTER ONE

Paul's Authority & Salutation — vv. 1-7.

Paul claims a divine appointment on the basis of the risen Christ. He had received a specific commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and now does that in this epistle. The ecclesia in Rome was asked to recognize Paul's claim and to respond in a careful examination of his exposition.

VERSE 1

"Paul" — His Gentile name. His Hebrew name was Saul. Thus the first word in the epistle would impress the Roman disciples with the truth that now, through the blood of Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek" in the eyes of God. Here was a Jewish-born apostle addressing himself to the Roman Ecclesia by the Gentile name of "Paul." As Saul, his name signified *Appointed of God*, which was certainly true. Yet, it had been under this name that he had persecuted the ecclesia (Acts 9:1). Wishing to repudiate that period of his life in which he had denied the Lord Jesus Christ, and to clearly identify his ministry to the Gentiles (Gal 2:9), he preferred to be known as "Paul," meaning "little." His adoption of this name testified to his attitude of self-denial and humility as a bond-slave of Christ. He may too have been "small" in stature (2Cor 10:1, 10); and certainly considered himself to be "small" in his own estimation (1Cor 15:9, 2Tim 1:15). This name became prominent on his first missionary journey when he inflicted punishment on Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:8-10) on the island of Cyprus.

"A servant of Jesus Christ" — Gk., *doulos*, "a bond-slave." He considered himself to be "owned" by Christ (1Cor. 6:20, 7:22), and was dedicated to the service of his Master. A bond-slave was without rights or privileges. His entire life was devoted to fulfilling without question every demand his master made upon him. Paul's Master however, was wise, loving and kind: "of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. 3:24).

This word *doulos* indicated that Paul was more than a mere "supporter" of the cause of Christ. He was "branded" on his "body" with the mark of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:17). As a bond-slave, he labored as a "chosen vessel" to "bear" the "name" of the one to whom he was bound (Acts 9:15).

"Called to be an apostle" — Eliminate the words in italics "to be," which are not in the Greek. Paul was a "called apostle," and the terms of his appointment were dedication to the gospel. Thus his words were authoritative. The Greek word for "called" is *kletos*, which is found in the word ecclesia: "called out ones." His authority was from heaven, for he was called not by the will of men, but of God (Gal. 1:1; Col. 1:1). The word "apostle" means "one sent," thus a messenger or ambassador with credentials to speak and act of behalf of his employer. His calling was to "go forth" with a message of salvation (Acts 22:21).

"Separated" — Diag.: "set apart." Paul recognized the presence of God in the circumstances of his life. At birth (Gal. 1:15), by conversion (Acts 9:15), and by specific call (Acts 13:2), he had been "set aside" by God for a special work in the preaching of the gospel. Paul had previously followed Pharisaism (a word which means "a separatist") but now acknowledged that God had "separated" him to His service.

"Unto the gospel of God" — This was the reason for Paul's separation. His selection and dedication on the road to Damascus was that the gospel might be preached to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17) for their salvation. As such, his reason for writing the epistle to the Roman Ecclesia, was that the gospel of God in the atoning work of Christ might be expounded.

VERSE 2

"Which he had promised afore" — In parenthesis, this explains that the gospel of God was not a new revelation, not a new religion detached from the original Hebrew faith, but was based firmly upon it (Acts 28:20). He never deviated from the exposition of the Law, but showed its fulfilment in Christ (Rom. 15:8). This gospel was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and became "the hope of Israel" (Heb 11:13; Acts 28:20). This is the same as "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (Acts 26:6). For a summary of the faith which had been made known by Yahweh up to the time of Joseph's death, see *Elpis Israel*, pp. 283-284.

"By his prophets in the holy scriptures" — Those who wrote and spoke, and whose testimony is found in the Inspired Oracles (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2) — thus Paul would advance nothing new. He satisfied the Jewish brethren in Rome, whilst serving the Gentile brethren by expounding the Scriptures in the light of present circumstances. Therefore, in its treatment of justification, this epistle is an exposition of the Old Testament.

VERSE 3

"Concerning his Son (Jesus Christ our Lord)" — The bracketed phrase is interpolated, and is excluded by the R.V. The Diaglott has: "Concerning that Son of

The Authority of Paul's Epistle

Jewish believers had a deeper concept of the Old Testament Scriptures than the Gentiles. However, both Jew and Gentile in Christ had now to learn reverence for the Scriptures upon the basis of a correct understanding. They were to appreciate that "the gospel" did not depend upon "tradition" (with which Jews, in apostolic times, associated so much of their religious philosophy), but upon the immovable foundation of the inspired, written oracles of God. "God spake *by* the prophets..." (Heb 1:1; cp.Neh 9:30, etc.). In the opening words of this epistle, Paul clearly states that the *basis* of his exposition would be *the Word of God itself.* This placed him in an unassailable position insofar as his critics were concerned. These words, therefore, represent a challenge: his readers should prove themselves that every line of argument in this epistle is substantiated by an appeal to the highest authority, the inspired and infallible Scriptures. This is a call for all, friend and foe alike, to meet Paul upon the foundation of all Truth. "Search the Scriptures" was to be his dictum, as it had been with the Lord (John 5:39; cp. Acts 17:11; 2Tim. 3:14-17). These words also guard against two errors: that the O.T was only *partly* a divine revelation: the other, that the O.T was the *completion* of God's revelation to man. Establishing the indisputable authority of the Scriptures, Paul then declared Vv. 3-4: "Jesus Christ... made of the seed of David according to the flesh... and declared to be the Son of God with power." In one statement, Jesus of Nazareth is shown to be both son of David and Son of God; thereby declaring that "the gospel"(v. 1) is harmonious with "the hope of Israel" and the "promises made of God" to the "fathers" of the Jewish nation. This affirms that the *foundation* of the gospel had been clearly rooted and grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures.

His," emphasizing that divine relationship. The Greek word for "son" is *huios*, which signified "offspring," thus one who inherits the characteristics of the father. It is used of believers in Mat. 5:9, for they reflect the qualities of Yahweh in themselves. Paul's epistle is designed to demonstrate how Jesus developed and manifested the divine attributes in his life and work.

"Which was made of the seed of David" — Expressive of his regal inheritance as recipient and fulfiller of the Davidic Covenant. The TCNT renders it: "who, as to his human nature, was descended from David." Christ is the "root and offspring of David" (Rev. 22:16), and confirmed the ancient promise of 2Sam. 7. An essential element in this verse is Christ's royal descent in relation to the throne of Israel. He alone has the "right" to David's throne (Eze. 21:27; Lk. 1:30-33).

The Saviour of humanity had to be both Son of Man and Son of God, that he might become "the Word made flesh" and bring to fruition God's atoning work for the salvation of mankind. The *man* known as Jesus of Nazareth stood, in relation to the Deity, as no other man has stood; thus making him unique, unmatched, unparalleled.

"According to the flesh" — Linking Jesus with humanity in his birth through Mary (Lk. 3:23), by which he is called "the Son of man." He descended in a direct line from David (cp. Mat. 1:16; Lk. 3:23). The covenants of promise gave assurance that the Saviour would be "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4) and thus a "partaker" of "flesh and blood" fallen human nature. Therefore, "in his being caused to bow down," Yahweh would "chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men" (2Sam. 7:14, J. Thomas' translation. See also Heb. 2:14; Gen. 3:15). Thus Christ came in sin's flesh, that sin might be overcome. This fact becomes a vital element in Paul's exposition concerning the means whereby we obtain justification with God.

VERSE 4

"And declared" — The word "declared" is from the Greek *horizo* which means "to appoint, determine, decree." It has the idea of "to be bound, to fix limits as to a field, to determine proper boundaries." The English word "horizon" is derived from this original word. The sonship of Christ was absolutely established by his resurrection to immortality. Before that occurred, many disputed his claim (Jn. 8:41) in spite of his personal holiness, his manifestation of miraculous spirit-power. But the empty tomb, and the risen Lord, set aside all doubts (Jn. 20:28; Acts 2:32). "Limits" were set upon contention, so that his exaltation could no longer be disputed; it was the "determinate counsel" (Acts 2:23), the constituted will, or design, of God that overshadowed the life of Jesus.

"(To be) the Son of God" — This significant title relates to Jesus' exalted position as the Second Adam (1Cor. 15:45), the "beginning of the new creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). It was the use of this title that secured his crucifixion on the grounds of blasphemy (Mat. 26:63; Jn. 19:7), a "secret" that was given to the High Priest by Judas, who heard it expounded on a previous occasion (Mat. 16:16). By use of that title to obtain his crucifixion, the Jews actually effected the divine purpose (Acts 2:23-24), whereby his resurrection confirmed his true sonship. The title occurs in Romans as follows: 1:3, 4, 9; 5:10; 8:3, 29, 32 (see plural use in 8:14, 19; 9:26).

"With power" — Possession of the Holy Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34; Mat. 28:18) manifested by the miracles he performed, authenticated his claim of being the Son of God (John 5:36). The word is from the Gr. *dunamis* (from which we get our word "dynamo": that which generates power), and expresses the sort of power that continues to develop further.

It is a word commonly used in Romans: 1:4,16,20; 8:38; 9:17; 15:13,19. The power was of God (Jn. 5:19-20), and after the Lord's crucifixion, that same "power" continued to operate, to produce

a physical phenomena: the resurrection to life eternal of a man who had been dead! The Lord Jesus is thus shown to be a manifestation of his Father: mentally, morally, and physically after the resurrection (Phil. 2:8-11; Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 12:2, etc.).

The grand message of Romans is that this same power is able to operate upon all men and women who receive the gospel "in spirit and in truth" and who allow its message to transform their lives for an eternal inheritance in the kingdom — even though, in this present life, they never attain to the perfection of character manifested by their Lord and Master.

"According to the (a) spirit of holiness" — His righteous character demonstrated his divine parentage (Jn. 14:9). The word "spirit" refers to character or disposition, as in the phrases: "the spirit of meekness" (1Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1), and "spirit of fear" (2Tim. 1:7). Jesus was governed by a holiness of mind; he did not reveal "the carnal mind" (Rom. 8:7), for he had the mind of God, made possible through his unique birth of the Holy Spirit, acting upon Mary (Lk. 1:35). In this he was different from his fellows, though "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" (Heb. 4:15), and was thereby able to say: "he that hath seen me hath seen the father" (John 14:9).

"By the resurrection from the dead" — Lit. " a resurrection out of (*ek*) dead ones." Of all the apostles, Paul had "*seen* him last of all" (1Cor. 15:8). By implementing the process of resurrection, Yahweh proved beyond all doubt that Jesus was His Son, in accordance with the Scriptures. The disciples had earlier concluded that, in dying, the Lord had failed them (Lk. 24:21). But once they were assured of the reality of his resurrection they became convinced of his identity, state and purpose (cp. Jn. 20:28; 1Cor. 15:3-8, etc.).

In the three "declarations" of this verse, three essential stages in the ministry of Christ are presented. His unique birth was the means of his "power" (Lk. 1:35); his life was an unfailing demonstration of his "holiness" (Jn. 8:46); his sacrificial offering in death was the means of his resurrection (2:19).

VERSE 5

"By whom we" — The apostles, on behalf of whom Paul presents his epistle. Thus, he asserts a consistency within the group of apostles, for his message is the same as theirs. Though not numbered amongst the original apostles who were commissioned by Christ in Mat. 28:19-20, Paul specifically received his authority directly from the Lord: Gal. 1:12.

"Have received grace and apostleship" — The two qualities are related. The apostles were appointed because of divine favor (grace), not because of any deserving merit on their part. Whilst this was a confession of humility on Paul's part, there is also a hint of the reasoning that is to be presented more fully in the epistle — that salvation is dependent upon the "grace" which can come only from God, and not through any achievement on man's part (cp. Eph. 2:8).

"For obedience to the faith" — The word "for" is the Gr. *eis*, meaning *towards, leading into.* The conferment of the privileges of grace and apostleship was not for personal gratification or benefit, but for the development of the divine qualities seen firstly and perfectly, in the Son of God. The apostles would be the means by which many would be called to "obey the faith." The word "faith" (Gr. *pistis*) means "belief, conviction" and is developed by "hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17) through means of a proclaimer (v. 18).

"Among all nations" — Saul, the Pharisee, would have found this proposition impossible to accept! But very early in his epistle Paul reminds the Jewish readers at Rome that the Jewish "exclusiveness" was no longer valid. The Greek word for "nations" *(ethnos)*, was commonly understood as meaning Gentiles in contrast to Jews. The apostles were required to preach the gospel to all people, that they might become "in the name" (Acts 15:14; Jn. 17:20), and manifest the qualities seen first in His Son. Yahweh's purpose is to

reveal Himself in a Son (2Cor. 5:19; Jn. 17:6, 11, 26), in a society, the ecclesial body of Christ (Acts 15:14; Rev. 14:1), and finally, universally in all creation (1Cor. 15:28; Num. 14:21). The commission to Paul was fulfilled in his final preaching work in Rome (Acts 28:31), and he said to the Ephesian Ecclesia: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

"For his name" — This word "for" is different from its former use in the same verse. Here it is the Gr. *huper*, meaning *for the sake of*, or, *in behalf of*. The "obedience to the faith" was to elevate "his name" amongst mankind.

His name, *Yahshua*, incorporates the name of Deity: Yahweh. It is the One Name of "the Father" and of "the Son" and the "Holy Spirit." The Father is the source; the Son is the medium through whom the Father manifested Himself in flesh; and the spirit is the power by which the purpose of the Father in the Son was achieved. Because of the divine purpose, that "all the earth shall be filled with the *glory* of *Yahweh*" (Num. 14:21), God is visiting the "Gentiles, to take *out* of them a people for *His Name*" (Acts 15:14). Thus, there is "none other *Name* under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The meaning of the name *Jesus* reveals that "Yah saves," and that He will do this through His Son.

VERSE 6

"Among whom are ye also (the) called of Jesus Christ" — Paul now addresses the Gentiles who had become obedient to the faith. "The" is not in the original and should be eliminated. For "called" see notes on v.1; here the verb expresses the action of the Master who, as a shepherd, calls his flock (Jn. 10:16) to his side. This privilege is affirmed by Paul in other letters: "his calling" (Eph. 1:18), "high calling" (Phil. 3:14), "your calling" (Eph. 4:4; 1Cor. 1:26), "holy calling" (2Tim. 1:9), "heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), "the calling (RSV) wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1), "calling of God" (Rom. 11:29).

VERSE 7

"To all that be in Rome" — Those of the ecclesia in Rome, including visitors — for the city was a vast concourse for travellers. This epistle is a general exposition, and not restricted to certain problems, as was the 1Corinthians.

"Beloved of God" — An exclusive community in the great metropolis of Rome! God loves those who revere Him and obey His commands (1Jn. 4:8, 10, 16). Whilst it is true that God's love was revealed to us as sinners and enemies (Rom. 5:8), that love is to be found only in the means He established for salvation. His love is experienced when we respond. There is no love for those who deny Him (cp. Rev. 2:15).

"Called (to be) saints" — As in v. 1, eliminate the words indicated. As Paul was an appointed apostle, the believers were "appointed saints." This was their status, not a description of their individual spiritual condition. The term "saints" does not denote a state of morality, but a position in God's sight. The word *hagios* signifies "set apart ones," for saints are those who have been selected for God's exclusive use. The Diaglott renders the phrase: "constituted holy ones." The word in the N.T. is always plural, except in Phil. 4:21 (where however, it is in a plural context). Saintship is not an attainment to morality, but a state to which God calls believers (Jn. 17:17), and is common to all baptised, not merely to those of exceptional godliness (Col. 3:12; Heb. 3:1). Whether or not believers grace this calling depends upon their reaction to God's commands. They disgrace their holy calling if they treat divine precepts lightly (1Cor. 11:29).

Continual self-examination in the light of the Word is the only means to every individual, of ensuring that he remain true to his calling (2Cor. 13:5).

"Grace to you" — In this context, grace is divine favor manifested in many ways: in the knowledge of the Truth, the forgiveness of sins, the overshadowing control of circumstances. See notes on verse 5.

"And peace" — The word comes

The Spiritual Oasis in a Barren World

Rome was, at this time, the universal capital of paganism. It was the place where "Satan's throne" was situated (Rev. 2:13), whose inhabitants were devoted to the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, vice and depravity. The city environment was antagonistic toward a spirit of true holiness. Yet, there existed in that city a group of people who were "beloved of God" (*agapetos;* Rom. 1:7). They had been brought into covenant relationship with Israel's God, and were dedicated to a new way of life in Christ, through the power of His Word (v. 16).

Though a relatively small community, struggling for their spiritual survival, they were to understand that they were not alone; that so long as men and women honor Yahweh according to His Word, they will remain the recipients of His love. Paul's message here is quite clear: the Father was deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of His sons and daughters at Rome. Love — especially sacrificial love, *agape* — does not result from compulsion. It generates its greatest power for good when it is reciprocated: emanating from God, and reflected back to Him by those who have become the objects of His love (cp. Mat. 22:37).

We need to recognize a comparison with our own times (see Luke 17:26-30). The world today is at least as evil and ungodly as was Rome in the days of the apostles. In some respects it is far more so, for degenerate humanity has devised many more advanced and sophisticated ways of perpetrating wickedness (Ecc. 7:29). Yet, the Truth can survive. And not only so, it may be as strong and as virile as the faith which motivates Christ's brethren, no matter how evil their environment may be. Those today, who are "beloved of God," need not capitulate to the world. The Truth can remain a power in their lives to transform them for the kingdom, and to act as a testimony *against* an ungodly world (Matt. 10:18). That which is required today is that Christ's brethren, as in past ages, remain strong in "faith" (which is according to knowledge — contrast ch. 10:2) that they might receive the "grace" of God.

— J. Ullman.

from *eirene*, meaning "to join." It speaks of unity of outlook and purpose, thus fellowship. It occurs constantly throughout the epistle: 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 10:15; 14:17, 19; 15:13, 33; 16:20. The design of the gospel is to secure a unity between God and man (1Tim. 2:5), and for this Jesus prayed: Jn. 17:23. Peace only follows purity (Jas. 3:17), and produces "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). This is true unity and brings real contentment, notwithstanding the circumstances of life (Phil. 4:11). Christ offered his disciples a peace which the world could not give: Jn. 14:27 — this quality he possessed though he faced great tribulation and trial at the hands of the "seed of the serpent," whose moment of triumph saw the distress of the Master on the cross. Anticipating this, he claimed, he had "peace" — and it was that unity with the Father that sustained him throughout (Jn. 16:32).

"From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" — Paul concludes his introduction with a prayer for divine benevolence upon the ecclesia. As "Father," God is begetting children, and

the agency is through the Lord Jesus' atoning work (Jn. 17:21). Notice the titles: Father; Lord. The Father is supreme; the Lord is exalted to a position of eminence — and through that means we are brought unto a "lively hope" (1Pet. 1:3).

Paul's Fervent Desire to Visit the Ecclesia — vv. 8-12.

The apostle expresses his great love for the members of the ecclesia, and acknowledges their example of faithfulness. He supplicates the Father for their continuing welfare, and desires to personally share with them the strengthening power of the One True Faith.

VERSE 8

"First" — In the first place; not in point of importance, but before speaking of other things, or proceeding to the main thrust of the epistle.

"I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all" — An expression of gratitude based upon the appropriate positions of the Father and Son. God is approached "through" (Gr. *dia*, a *channel*, or *act*) the Son as mediator (1Tim. 2:5). Paul often commenced his epistles with thanksgiving (1Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col.1:3; 1Thes. 1:2; 2Thes. 1:3; Phile. 4).

"That your faith is spoken of" — Their faith was demonstrated by the obedience developed therefrom. Faith is a power that motivates action (see Heb. 11). The manner in which they maintained their integrity in spite of their difficult circumstances, and the trials and tribulations incidental to life in Rome, were approvingly commented upon by others. Their faithfulness was a source of encouragement to brethren and sisters in other places. Yet, though they understood the meaning and significance of "faith," it becomes evident as the epistle unfolds that brethren of influence were expounding a perverted form of teaching involving the principles of "faith" and "law." The arguments of the Judaizers were being widely discussed and promoted in the ecclesia. Being the centre of the empire, Rome was a city which received a continuous flow of visitors. Among the Brotherhood, travellers from far and wide, might bring with them various views and philosophies causing many mixed and varied beliefs on a wide range of Biblical subjects. Paul was aware of problems in this regard, and understood the needs of the ecclesias. He wrote according to those needs.

"Throughout the whole world" — That is, throughout the entire Brotherhood. The word "world" is Gr. *kosmos; order, arrangement of things;* and relates to the area of the Roman empire, in which the ecclesias were established. The ecclesia in the Capital set a pattern for others, for it existed in an evil, immoral, vicious city, whose inhabitants looked with contempt on the restraints of religion (v. 16). According to the historian Tacitus, into Rome from the empire "flowed all things that are vile and abominable, and there they are encouraged." That saints should maintain the purity of their calling in the midst of such a polluting environment was, indeed, a triumph for the gospel they had espoused. Similarly, ecclesias today should note the importance of maintaining standards of conduct and attitude, that their "faith might be spoken of" throughout the Brotherhood.

VERSE 9

"For God is my witness" — Paul had never personally met the brethren in Rome, so that the ecclesia there would not realise the extent of his feeling for them. But God could testify of the apostle's secret prayers on their behalf, and of his love for them because of their faithful testimony. Paul was greatly uplifted by their loyal witness to God in the face of prevailing wickedness, and longed to see them that he might help strengthen them in their determination.

The word "witness" is from the Gr. *martus* (from which comes "martyr") and expresses one who is prepared to testify even to the death! Its usage in regard to the Immortal Deity indicates the fervor of the evidence that could be advanced (see also 2Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; 1Thes. 2:5, 10).

"Whom I serve" — The previous phrase suggests that God was of service (as a martyr) to Paul; now the apostle reverses the claim, for Paul was in fact in the service of Yahweh.

Paul was devoted to the cause of Yahweh and His Son (Mat. 22:39). The "first and greatest commandment," together with the second, which was "like unto it," were the dominant influences directing Paul's life. The word rendered "serve" is not *doulos* as in v.1, but *latreluo*, "a hired, menial servant, with or without pay, especially with reference to sacrificial service." Thus Paul could counsel others: "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Cor. 11:1, RV).

"With my spirit in the gospel of His Son" — Paul's service was not feigned, or paraded. The Greek word translated "with" is *en*, "in," and expresses the inmost feelings and emotions of the apostle. His service was thus "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 6:63), and not merely an external display. The word for "spirit" is *pneuma: wind, breath, spirit;* thus indicates the *action* of his emotions.

"That without ceasing I make mention of you always" — Paul's constant concern was for the "care of all the ecclesias" (2Cor. 11:28). His life was committed to the development of his brethren, as he daily bore up to heaven his petition on their behalf. Here is evidenced his great concern for an ecclesia he had never seen.

"In my prayers" — Similar words were written to other ecclesias and individual brethren (Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:9), indicating how important prayer was in his life. His prayers were powerful because they related to real needs and concerns. They were not attended by "much repetition" (Mat. 6:7), but were concise, specific and appropriate.

Paul must have occupied much time in communion with God, bearing up the individual needs of brethren and ecclesias, as he knew them from personal experience, or heard of them by repute. This time had to be taken out of an extremely busy life, but was most profitably employed.

Without prayer and the help and cooperation of God, we labor in vain (Psa. 127). Prayer must be "without ceasing" (1Thes. 5:17), a constant communion with the Father (Jas. 5:16).

VERSE 10

"Making request" — Paul recognized that his life was governed by divine Providence. Rather than initiating a visit to Rome, notwithstanding the circumstances facing him, he preferred to submit to the divine Will. He was in service to God (v. 9), and awaited His decision. He thus presented his request before God, not only that the way may be opened for him to visit the Capital, but that the work he proposed to accomplish in that city might have the divine blessing, and thereby prosper.

All God's saints must learn to yield to the Hand of Providence in regard to their daily affairs and future plans. "Not my will, but *thine* be done... *If the Lord will*, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Lk. 22:42; Jas. 4:15).

"If by any means" — Perhaps circumstances had hindered him previously. He would therefore await the "means" that might be revealed in the providence of God, calmly accepting the Father's will and whatever guidance and direction He might provide. It is important that we place child-like confidence in the wisdom and power of Yahweh, and seek His guidance and blessing in all the affairs of life.

"Now at length" — For some time he had cherished a desire to visit Rome, but events had not provided for it. He therefore hoped that this long-desired purpose might soon be accomplished.

"I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you" — This prayer was granted, but in a remarkable way. He was persecuted by the Jews (Acts 20-24), arraigned before the governor Festus (ch. 25), and king Agrippa (ch. 26), and appealed to the Roman Emperor (ch. 25:11). He was taken in chains as a prisoner, bundled into a cargo-ship, tossed about by storm and shipwreck, and eventually hailed into Rome on trial! By human standards this would hardly be "a

prosperous journey," but the apostle was happy to fulfil "the will of God" whatever the circumstances (Acts 23:11). The word rendered "prosperous" (Gr. *uodoumai*) signifies "to be led in a good way." Rotherham suggests: "If, by some means, even now, at any time, I may have a way opened, in the will of God, to come unto you." Paul's prayer, was not only that God might see fit to permit such a visit, but that He might grant His full blessing upon Paul's efforts towards and amongst the brethren at Rome.

VERSE 11

"For I long to see you" — Notice the fervency of this expression. The Greek *epipotheo* means "to yearn; intensely crave" (cp. ch. 15:23, 32). His whole life was based upon his service to, and association with, his brethren. To the Philippians, he declared: "how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:8), thus expressing the tremendous affection he felt for them. The word is used on numerous occasions to describe earnest desire: Phil. 2:26; 2Tim. 1:4; 1Thes. 3:6, etc. A similar ardent feeling should characterise our devotion for the Brotherhood.

"That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift" — This was the mutual comfort based upon a common faith. It was a gift of spiritual benefit, for it drew them both together in a shared appreciation of the advantages of the Truth.

Paul's life was filled with the Truth, and his desire to fulfil the commission he had received from Christ. The Truth dominated his thoughts and actions. He would therefore delight to "impart" the Word of Life to his brethren and sisters at Rome for their mutual benefit, and for the glory of God.

"To the end ye may be established" — Paul recognized that a benefit would be conferred upon the brethren at Rome by his presence among them. But he is also careful to show, in the next verse, that he does not imply by this that they were unstable or weak, for he emphasized that the strengthening would be "mutual," helping himself as well as them. Nevertheless, he knew that the ecclesia could benefit from the valuable ministry of a teacher such as himself (see 1Cor. 10:33; 11:2).

VERSE 12

"That is, that I may be comforted together with you" — The benefits of the Truth are mutually enjoyed, so that the "special effort" that Paul contemplated in Rome would assist him as well as the local brethren. The words "comforted together" come from the Greek *sumparakaleo*, which is compounded of *sum*, "together," *para*, "beside," and *kaleo*, "to call." This word signifies a mutual calling to each other's side for strengthening or comforting. How tactful and considerate, and yet humble also, was the apostle! He felt that he would benefit from his contact with the brethren in Rome, as they would from his ministrations among them. Paul was not flattering them, nor trying to persuade them with pleasant, polite platitudes of diplomacy (the "enticing words of a man's wisdom," 1Cor. 2:4), but he was writing from the heart, using expressions that he really felt. Paul's nature was warm and all-absorbing. He was capable of great depths of self-sacrificing love; but when the need arose, he could use stern, forthright words of rebuke, such as when he publicly rebuked Peter before the ecclesia of Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14. See also ch. 1:8-10; 3:1).

"By the mutual faith both of you and me" — Gk. *en allelois;* in the dative, thereby indicating the personal aspect of the subject. Though Paul and the ecclesia at Rome were separated by distance, they were *bound together*, by a mutual reverence for the One True Faith. This expression should also have been received by the brethren as a gentle exhortation: Paul expected to see their faith in action manifested towards *him*, in addition to that which *they* might anticipate receiving from him, to their spiritual advantage.

His Desire to Visit Rome to Fulfil His Debt to All — vv. 13-15.

Paul emphasizes that the ecclesia at

Rome had occupied his mind constantly, and he had a strong desire to visit the brethren to encourage and strengthen them. He was conscious of his responsibilities in this regard, and wished to discharge them, so far as Rome was concerned. If it was God's will, he would fulfil this obligation both to the "wise" and the "unwise"; that is, the weak and the strong; the converted and the unconverted.

VERSE 13

"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren" — He uses a characteristic expression. The word *agnoeo* occurs sixteen times in Paul's epistles, including a further five times in Romans (2:4; 6:3; 7:1; 10:3; 11:25). In this instance, it indicates that Paul did not wish there to be any misunderstanding as to the reason for his interest in them. His desire was to share with them the Truth that bound them together.

"That oftentimes I purposed to come unto you" — See ch. 15:23. One such occasion is recorded in Acts 19:21. His commission required that he witness to "Gentiles and kings" (Acts 9:15) and, notwithstanding the difficulties of such an endeavor, he maintained an intense longing to fulfil those terms.

"But I was let hitherto" — The word rendered "let" (Gr. *koluo* means "to hinder, or prevent") hence: "but have been hindered until the present" (Roth.); "though until now I have always been prevented" (Jerusalem Bible). Paul consistently placed himself humbly under the Hand of Providence: and there were times when Yahweh, with immeasurable wisdom, opposed Paul's intentions (Acts 16:7). Paul was content to await the unfolding of the divine purpose, insofar as the ecclesia at Rome was concerned, as in all other matters. In due course, if Paul's purpose was in harmony with the will of Yahweh, the apostle would indeed come to Rome (cp. 15:22). As the "bond-slave," he would patiently await the Master's bidding. It is not until the conclusion of his recorded missionary journeys that he actually did so.

"That I might have some fruit among you also" — He yearned to strengthen the gospel proclamation activities in Rome, as Peter had earlier undertaken in Jerusalem (Acts 2). To "have fruit" means to obtain success in bringing people to the knowledge of Christ, as he had instructed: "I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (Jn. 15:16). The importance of presenting the gospel should always stimulate our actions, so that we "give an answer to every man that asketh concerning the hope that is within us" (1Pet. 3:15).

"Fruit" is produced in men and women when the Truth is received in its purity and power, and then manifested through intellectual understanding and the moral qualities of the Christ-life. "Fruit" produced in this way is different from natural fruit, which, after a time, decays and rots. Fruit produced through the Spirit-Word will last throughout eternity, for "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1Pet. 1:25; cp. Isa. 40:8). The "fruit" of which the Lord Jesus and Paul spoke is "dry and ripe," as the word *karpos* means. Paul desired to witness the development of the full cycle of the "ripening fruit," in the spiritual growth which he hoped would occur within the ecclesia at Rome. Special Efforts, Bible Classes and other spiritual activities within ecclesias, are of little real worth, unless the desired fruit is produced.

Bro. H. P. Mansfield wrote: "The main business of ecclesias is not to cater for the social welfare or comfort of members, but to draw them close to God..." (*Logos*, Dec. 1969). With the pace of life in this modern age, and its many distractions and wide-ranging diversions, we may tend to lose sight of the main objective of ecclesial life. Paul understood the issues clearly. We should endeavour to set our priorities in order, so that we place first in our lives — individually and ecclesially — those things which will draw us, and our brethren "close to God." The paramount importance of producing the "fruit" of the gospel in our lives should stimulate us to

thoughtfulness and action, so that we "give an answer to every man that asketh, concerning the hope that is within us" (1Pet. 3:15).

"Even as among other Gentiles" — From this Greek word (*ethnos*) is derived the English "ethnic". It occurs twenty-nine times in Romans. Note especially the way it is used in 4:17-18; 9:24, etc. (cp. Lk. 7:5; 23:2; Jn. 11:48,50-52, where this same word is used of the *Jewish* nation).

VERSE 14

"I am a debtor" — Paul was conscious of his responsibility to preach the gospel. He regarded it as an obligation, as though it was a debt, no matter how difficult the circumstances might be (see 1Cor. 9:16). His debt was due to the tremendous privilege given him by Jesus of Nazareth on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). A previous persecutor of the ecclesias, Paul now wanted to exert himself in establishing and extending the ecclesias, in the way God permitted and directed. His gratitude for his salvation was reflected in his intense determination to "preach the Truth" (cp. Acts 14:19-20). As a specially "chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:13) he did not feel that he had discharged his obligation until he had made the gospel known as far as possible throughout the empire. Paul's attitude provides an example for God's servants in every age, to continue unceasing labor in His service.

"Both to the Greeks" — The cultured people by the world's standards. The term came to be synonymous with the refined, superior class of person; the intelligentsia, such as those to whom Paul spoke in Acts 17:18.

"And to the Barbarians" — The other division of mankind, as far as the Greeks were concerned. In classical Greek, the word *barbaroi* came to mean anyone who did not speak the Greek tongue. After Rome conquered Greece and claimed its art and culture for itself, the Romans adopted the same outlook as the Greeks, and designated as "barbarians" all who, in manners, customs and language differed from the Greco-Roman world. Thus, they represented the illiterate and rough peasant class, or those who spoke a foreign tongue (1Cor. 14:11). Paul expended himself to preach to such: Acts 28:2.

Thus Paul determined to gain hearers from the refined, superior classes of society, and from simple, uncultured folk (Acts 17:18; 28:2; 1Cor. 24:11). In harmony with Peter, he perceived "that God is no respecter of persons... (that) in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him (Acts 10:34-35).

"Both to the wise" — The educated. The Greek word *sophos* signifies "to be mentally disciplined, skilled," and refers to those who practise self-restraint. It is related to "the Greeks" who "seek after wisdom (*sophia*)" (1Cor. 1:22). The word represents the qualities of sober-mindedness, self-control, and respectability. But such a wisdom does not naturally develop a Spirit-mind, as Paul argued in 1Cor. 1:20): "Where is the wise *[who can understand the Truth by their own ability]*? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Paul's message to the "wise" was that they reject worldly knowledge, and submit to the humbling influence of the Truth.

"And to the unwise" — The ignorant. But the Greek word *anoetos* implies an *unworthy* ignorance bearing a moral reproach, as of one who is unable to govern his desires because of unawareness. Paul also preached to these, becoming "the servant of all" that he might win them for Christ (1Cor. 9:19-20). At one time, some of the Corinthians could be numbered among such unwise, but they had been "washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1Cor. 6:11).There are different classes which are affected by the gospel message, as the Lord described in his parable of the sower (Mat. 13), and each must be treated according to their respective needs. At the same time, though we must give all an answer for our hope, a discriminating care must be observed that

we do not cast our pearls before "swine" (Mat. 7:6), who refuse to respond, ridicule the Truth, and only "tread them under their feet, and turn around and rend you" (cp. also: 1Cor. 6:9-11; 9:16-23).

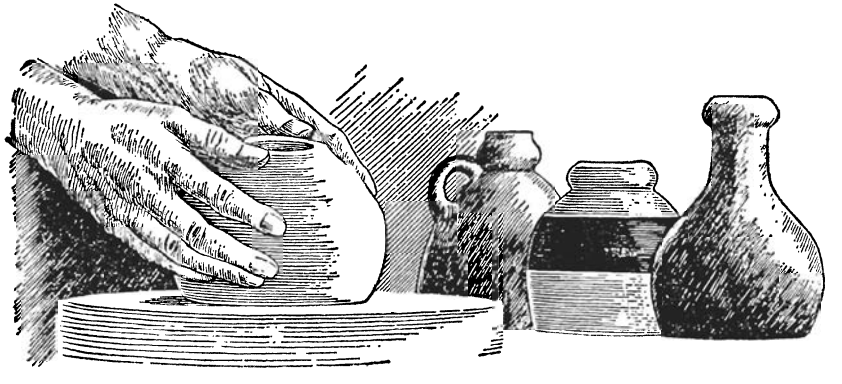
VERSE 15

"So, as much as in me is" — The Diaglott renders: "So that according to my ability." Paul declares that he will exert himself to use all his abilities to achieve his goal of preaching in Rome. He knew that the Hand of Providence might alter his course, or bring him to the consummation of his desires.

"I am ready to preach the gospel" —The word for "ready" is from *prothumos*, "predisposed, willing, eager, zealous." Paul's wholehearted keenness and devotion to the Truth and its work is evident in all that he writes. Difficulties attended the preaching of the gospel in Rome. There were the "unwise" swarming in that evil, immoral city; there were the "wise" who threw ridicule upon the "simple things of truth." But Paul was ready to grapple with the powers of darkness (Eph. 6:12).

Courage and perseverance are essential ingredients of a good proclamation effort. We can easily become discouraged by lack of interest, or by actual opposition — but the consistent example of such as Noah (Heb. 11:7) and Paul will fortify our labors.

"To you that are at Rome also" — His visit to Rome was only for the extension of the gospel that he had preached elsewhere. Paul was aware of their needs. He was not deterred by any fear, nor was he indifferent to their welfare, but, being under the direction of God, he awaited His determination. When Paul's wish was ultimately realized, it was perhaps quite different from his expectations! Instead of arriving in Rome as a normal traveller, he suffered a nightmare journey from Caesarea as a manacled prisoner of Rome, with his life at stake, to appear before the Emperor as a criminal. How unfathomable are the ways of Providence! Life's circumstances are often quite different from our expectations. Yet the sublime wisdom and superior intelligence of Yahweh must be acknowledged in all matters. Paul's service to Christ determined his goal. So long as he continued under God's direction, his faith remained resolute.



Consistent and Thorough

Paul did not allow his work to cease by bringing people into the Truth. Having enlightened them, he still toiled on their behalf, to root and establish them in all things pertaining to their new position. To this end, he gave his brethren and sisters "much exhortation." He put himself about to warn, encourage and instruct. The extent of his concern for them is shown in his earnest prayers (Phil. 1:4; Col.1:3, 9); his loving, parent-like ministrations (1Thes. 2:9, 11); and the many sleepless and tearful nights and days he experienced on their behalf (Acts 20:19, 31; 2Cor. 2:4). To ensure success he was careful in his general behaviour — he was courteous, patient, tactful — never rude, haughty, or aggressive. He was ever ready to "spend and be spent" for the wellbeing of his brethren and sisters, and this even when his services were cruelly despised (2Cor. 12:14-15).

To imitate the apostle is our duty. Are we trying to fulfil it? For more reasons than one, we cannot reach Paul's degree of excellence, but we can push forward in the path of his noble example. According to our abilities and opportunities we shall be judged. What made Paul the man he was? — so warm, so unselfish, so untiring? Many things. His deep-down convictions (he allowed the Truth to grip him, and was positive that he was following not will-o'-the wisp), his unbounded appreciation of the promised reward (he sensibly appraised this reward as of greater worth than the present life, and all that it can give), his stern and studied resolve to be faithful to Christ (taking wise measures to prevent failure, by indulging in close and constant communion with God and the Scriptures).

— A. T. Jannaway.

ROMANS:
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Section Two:

PAUL'S DOCTRINAL

EXPOSITION

How the Gospel

Relates to Salvation

Chs. 1:16 to 8:39

THIS section lays the foundation for the apostle's theme of God's provision for mankind's salvation. It is divided into four parts, showing the process by which God proposes to redeem a race suffering from the effects of Adam's transgression: Condemnation, Justification, Sanctification and Glorification. Paul reveals the proper procedure whereby these principles are established.

Because of the physical and moral deformities in mankind's nature and character through sin, the whole world lies in wickedness (1Jn. 5:19), as is evident in the conduct of society in both the Gentile and Jewish worlds. God's wrath is manifested against the wickedness and depravity of civilisation, and all have been alienated from Him by their ignorance and wicked works (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). Humanity generally opposes His ways and rejects His precepts, but God could not allow such a state to continue forever. It was necessary that He intervene to reverse the character of life for perishing humanity and provide hope for their eternal redemption from sin and its effects

If mankind continues to dishonorably ignore God, His judgments will be felt; and He will invoke His laws for punishment against an evil society.

• *Thus the first part of this section (chs. 1:16 to 3:20) concerns God's* **CONDEMNATION** *against a world that rejects its Creator.*

• *But if Yahweh were merely to condemn and destroy, His purpose would be entirely negative and not productive of any glory to His Name. Sin would remain triumphant, and Yahweh's purpose frustrated: a hopeless situation for humanity, and demeaning to the Creator. In such a case it would seem that the divine qualities could not overcome the power of the serpent (but cp. Gen. 3:15). Therefore, a system of* **JUSTIFICATION** *was designed (see chs. 3:21 to 5:21) to save a sinning race and, at the same time, to uphold the righteousness of God. Against the Judaisers, Paul argues that the Law of Moses could never of itself, provide that justification. It required something that the Law could not supply, although it did*

point to the means of that justification (Gal. 3:24).

• *The doctrine of Justification by Faith, seen particularly in the lives of godly men and women, requires its adherents to manifest a way of life different from that current in society. By justification, people can be brought into harmony with the mental outlook and moral principles of God, as revealed in His Word. This demands the principle of* **SANCTIFICATION** *by which individuals come into relationship with spiritual principles and by which a victory over the serpent-influence is achieved (chs. 6:1 to 8:17).*

• *Finally (ch. 8:18-39), the ultimate purpose of Yahweh is achieved:* **GLORIFICATION.** *This is the reason for the Divine Word expressed in both the Law and its greater antitype: the Lord Jesus Christ —for the Law was a "schoolmaster" (lit. "a child-leader") to show Israel, by types, shadows and ritual, the way to justification and glorification. Everything in the Law pointed forward to the Lord Jesus, who has, by his perfect obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8), achieved glorification in nature. Through that which was accomplished in Christ, God will be revealed in His creatures, and receive the praise and honor of His subjects. Brother Thomas expressed this in "Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come" (April, 1855): "Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God-manifestation, not human salvation, was the grand purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but it was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone Himself on the earth, and in so doing, to develop a divine family from among men, every one of whom shall be spirit because born of the Spirit; and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood." It is to this great objective, that salvation is proposed.*

PART ONE: CONDEMNATION — Chs. 1:16 to 3:20

Man's Hopeless State Revealed

Humanity faces many problems caused through the inherent weakness of the flesh and man's own folly in allowing himself to be governed by his fleshly lusts. Humanity is under a curse through transgression, and is unable to recover from that strait, or to provide for a better life. Paul describes the wickedness of man in contrast to the righteousness of God, and declares that the power of the gospel is the only means by which it is possible to obtain salvation out of death. If God's counsel is heeded, men and women may learn to live in hope of eternal redemption from all that plagues humanity — a situation which leaves the unenlightened or disinterested in a state of hopelessness, with death and the grave being their ultimate and everlasting end.

In commencing this section, Paul presents his own steadfast conviction in the gospel (vv. 16-17). He reveals his boundless enthusiasm for the Truth that he desires to share with those at Rome. The power of the gospel had caused some, who were previously alienated from God through ignorance and wicked works, to separate themselves from the worldly environment of Rome and to rejoice in the gospel of Christ. Paul shared their elation. He commended them because they understood that the gospel revealed "the righteousness of God" and the way whereby "the just" might "live by faith."

The Gospel's Transforming Power — vv. 16-17.

Since his conversion, Paul had been sublimely impressed with the power of the gospel. He now defines its importance and effect upon those who would embrace it. The gospel is the means by which both Jews and Gentiles might develop the principles of faith and find salvation. The apostle draws upon the prophecy of Habakkuk to illustrate the ultimate purpose of the Truth extended throughout the world, and by which the characteristics of godliness would be achieved. These two verses present a summary of the divine principles upon which the balance of his exposition is based.

VERSE 16

"For I am not ashamed" — To preach the gospel in an evil environment as that of Rome would present great challenges to such as the apostle, but that did not deter him. He was not ashamed of the message he wished to set before men, for he knew that it was Yahweh's will that it should be preached (Zec. 8:16); that Christ had given an outstanding example of submitting to the will of God in spite of the consequences (Psa. 40:9-10); that the Lord urged his disciples to proclaim the Word notwithstanding the objection and opposition of others (Mk. 8:38). Instead of shame, Paul gloried in the tribulation that the gospel brought (Rom. 5:3). His exam-

ple is worthy to imitate in present circumstances, when our beliefs might be mocked and our standards scorned by those who enjoy the foibles of flesh. Courage and conviction will give strength to our stand, and enable us to repeat the intrepid attitude of the apostle (2Tim. 1:8,9).

"Of the gospel" — The word means *good message; good news; glad tidings*, to which Bullinger adds: "always in a special sense." It presents the glorious revelation that sin will not forever reign supreme; that God has a purpose with mankind; that His glory will ultimately be reflected throughout His creation. This "good news" outlines the way in which individuals might become related to His purpose. But it is necessary to know the true gospel, for there are pseudo-gospels which are false or deficient, and consequently have no power to save (Gal. 1:6). Therefore the subject of the "gospel" needs to be defined. It concerns both "the *things* concerning the kingdom of God" and "the *things* concerning the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12). It is termed "the gospel of the kingdom" (Mat. 4:23), "of Jesus Christ" (Mk. 1:1), "of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), "of God" (Rom. 1:1), "of His Son" (v. 9), "of peace" (10:15), etc. It comprises the principles of redemption through Christ, by which the kingdom is established; it speaks of the means to victory over sin and death; it embraces the sacrifice and exaltation of the multitudinous Christ in whom ultimately the glory of God will extend throughout the earth. Only a correct understanding of the true gospel can provide individuals with the means for salvation.

"Of Christ" — These words do not

Ignoring The Stigma of Preaching!

Preaching the gospel in Rome could be hazardous. The stigma of contempt and ridicule might affect the work of the Truth in speaking tc the citizens of Rome concerning Christ. How would this preaching be received in that mighty city — that city of wealth and trade, pleasure and profligacy? Paul could offer no splendid temple nor gorgeous apparel; no breathtaking rituals, pomp or ceremony; no venerable priesthood. He would offer them nothing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Nothing in Paul's gospel could delight the natural man in Rome, and right to the end of the apostle's life his understanding of these issues never changed (2Tim. 1:8, 12). Paul was well aware of the great difficulties which would confront him at Rome. To the Corinthians he wrote: "We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks */Gentiles/* foolishness" (1Cor. 1:23; cp. 2:14). But such thoughts of antagonism deterred him not in the least. He felt no sense of shame in setting the gospel before men. The word rendered "ashamed" in Rom. 1:16 occurs only eleven times. All occurrences (note Mk. 8:38 twice, 2Tim. 1:8, 12, 16; Heb. 2:11; 11:16) provide a sobering, yet encouraging, exhortation to spiritual laborers. So far as Paul was concerned, preaching the gospel was both an honor and a necessity: therefore he would fulfil his commission with courage and determination (Zec. 8:16; Psa. 40:9-10; Isa. 52:7; cp. Rom. 10:15). The Lord Jesus required that the gospel be preached, despite the possible consequences of ridicule and contempt (Mk. 8:38). Rather than shame, Paul gloried in the tribulation occasioned by the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 5:3, etc.). His example is worthy of emulation by brethren and sisters, whatever their circumstances. — ***J. Ullman.***

appear in the original texts, and are omitted from most versions. They are not vital to the apostle's argument, as his emphasis here is on the work of God and His "promise" (v. 2; cp. Eph. 2:8). The gospel's news is that it was God manifested in His Son who provided for the atonement of the human race (2Cor. 5:19) and thus divided mankind into two classes: the justified and the condemned — depending on their attitude and response to this gospel. Though it was "to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness" (1Cor. 1:23), yet Paul regarded it as the only hope of salvation and was ready to preach it even in the rich and splendid capital of the world.

"For it is the power of God" — The phrase is better rendered: "God's power for salvation." The power belongs to God and comes from Him. The gospel is therefore a manifestation of God's power. The word "power" (see v. 4) is the Gr. *dunamis*, from whence are derived the words "dynamo," "dynamics," etc. It occurs eight times in this epistle and signifies the *development* of power, which originates from God and propels a person along a course of life. It is used in Phil. 3:10 to describe the quickening principle of resurrection that sets a man upon a new path. In Eph. 3:20, it expresses a power that "works" in the actions that result from the imprint of the Father. Thus, the gospel is a dynamo that will constantly recharge a believer with the will to conquer.

"Unto salvation" — The direction of the power. The word "unto" is from the Gr. *eis* better rendered "for" in some versions. The gospel is God's power *for* salvation. It is therefore more than a creed or theory about which we might question or argue; it is a way of life which must be reflected in action (Rom. 6:17; Jn. 13:35; Mat. 5:16). A person must recognize his or her need of salvation and seek the power of the Truth that will reveal the means to achieve it.

"To everyone that believeth" — Whilst God is unwilling that any should perish (2Peter 3:9), salvation is not unconditional. It is only available upon "belief". The Greek word translated "believeth" is *pisteuo*, meaning "to have faith," thus to understand and apply the principles of faith. Faith (Gr. *pistis*) is a quality that reveals the future as a reality (Heb. 11:1), comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17) and convinces a person that God will provide that hope. A knowledge of God's will is essential to salvation (Jn. 3:16; 1Cor. 15:2; 2Thes. 2:13), for, in the absence of this, the gospel lacks real power.Without a correct understanding and application of the gospel, men walk in the darkness of their minds, "being alienated from God through the *ignorance* that is in them" (Eph. 4:18; cp. Mat. 6:23). It is therefore important to perceive a sound understanding of its message, but "belief" implies more than mere academic knowledge. The Greek form of the word suggests a conviction that will be expressed in action.

"To the Jew first" — The Jew had certain privileges as the custodian of the Holy Oracles (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2) and the Master had commanded that his mission should be presented to Israel (Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8; 3:26). Therefore it was appropriate that Paul should preach first to them. The precedent established at Pentecost (Acts 2) was followed by Paul in his preaching campaigns elsewhere, but when the Jews rejected the opportunity, the apostle turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). When the preaching of the gospel "in all the world" (Mat. 24:14) was accomplished by the activities of Paul in Rome (Col 1:23), he declared that the time had arrived for the Truth to be taken to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). No longer was it necessary to preach "to the Jew first," for "blindness in part " had fallen upon Israel "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). That has remained the case, and preaching today has its greatest influence among Gentiles.

"And also to the Greek" — To all non-Jews. Paul's choice of words is not to separate mankind into two classes, but to show that both could be drawn together into one (Eph. 2:14) through a common acceptance of the "power" of the gospel.

In accordance with Christ's commandment, the "key" to the unlocking of the gospel to Gentiles had been discharged by Peter with the preaching of the Truth to Cornelius (Mat. 16:18-19; Acts 10:35, 46-48). Later, when the Jews rejected the gospel in Rome, Paul declared that it would now go freely to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). So he extended himself to preach to "all who came in unto him" (v. 30), as people assembled in the capital from all parts of the Roman world.

VERSE 17

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed" — This is the fundamental doctrine of this epistle (see ch. 3:25-26). The word "revealed" is from the Gr. *apokalupto* which signifies *to uncover; unveil; expose to open view what was before hidden.* This is the first allusion in the epistle to the bloodsprinkled mercy seat which typified the sacrifice of Christ. Christ's death was to declare the righteousness of God; that God alone is the source of righteousness; that all flesh is rightly related to death. This theme is expounded further in ch. 3:21-26. The righteousness of God is the cardinal principle of Scripture, and every teaching must be understood with that in mind. It expresses the absolute acknowledgement that God's standards of right are supreme; that whatever He does is just and appropriate, even if sometimes its purpose is not fully understood (cp. Job 42:2-6). The righteousness of God requires that we accept in faith that, in all circumstances, He knows best, submitting to whatever He requires of us. By so doing, we justify all His actions and demands, even though we may fall short of their requirements. Flesh unaided cannot manifest the righteousness of God, for, as the Law revealed, it is "weak" because of the nature we bear. Christ, however, declared the Father's righteousness through the strength he derived from Him (Psa. 80:17; Rom. 8:3). He exhibited the righteousness of God by revealing in his sacrificial death the means to salvation through the declaration of the divine judgment upon sin and the elevation of a life of obedience.

"From faith" — The word "from" is *ek* in Greek, and signifies "out of." Recognition of the righteousness of God springs "out of" faith which "cometh by hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Out of such faith or belief, comes a realisation of the inevitability of sin, a knowledge that the Law cannot save, and the revelation that forgiveness of sins is possible only through the Lord Jesus. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6); thus this is the characteristic upon which we are enabled to develop the righteousness of God.

"To faith" — The word "to" is *eis* in Greek, and signifies *towards; unto.* Declaring that the righteousness of God is "out of faith *towards* faith" suggests a steady progression along the path of faith towards the "measure of the stature of the *fulness* of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). A recognition of the gospel message must develop into "works of faith" — so that knowledge becomes action. As a constituted sinner (Rom. 5:19) man is first justified "by (*ek,* out of) faith" (Rom. 3:28) through understanding and confession, so that with his sins covered he is, in God's sight, constituted "a saint" (ch. 5:19). Saints, however, are justified by their "works of faith" (Jas. 2:17, 20, 21), which is their obedience to the divine commands. Hence the righteousness of God, being His power for salvation, is revealed "out of faith (that which changes a sinner into a saint) unto faith (that which reveals the obedience of the saint)".

"As it is written" — By quoting the Old Testament Scriptures, Paul challenged those who might be tinged with the error of Judaism, that the doctrine of justification by faith was no new thing. It had been taught under the Law, which thus witnessed to the need of faith. Paul cites Hab. 2:4, which also becomes the basic principle of his epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 10:38-39), and in Gal. 3:11, he uses that same verse to show the importance of justification.

One of the remarkable features of this epistle is that it is difficult to find an

exclusively apostolic argument. The apostle constantly refers to the Old Testament and introduces every new phase of revelation concerning the gospel with a direct quotation from the ancient Scriptures. In showing that his teachings were not original, but soundly based upon Moses and the prophets, he stood on the soundest ground. How could his Judaistic opponents refute the teaching of the Word of God, other than by manifesting their ignorance or rejection of Scripture? Thus he maintains throughout, the basis of his introduction in v. 2: "which was promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures."

"The just shall live by faith" — Hab. 2:4 is now expounded to emphasize the process of faith by which justification operates. Habakkuk had complained to God about the wickedness and lawlessness of his people, and received a response that Yahweh would punish Israel by bringing the Chaldean power against them. But the prophet saw this as a vengeful destruction, and urged Yahweh to reconsider the matter upon the basis of His righteousness. After all, the Babylonians were more wicked than Israel; the Jews were God's chosen people, and rested upon their relationship with Him. Upon that premise, Yahweh declared: "The just shall live by faith" — salvation did not depend upon a national identity, but upon an individual manifestation of divine attributes. Those of Israel who revealed the ungodly characteristics of the Chaldeans would be treated similarly, whilst those whose lives were based upon the righteousness of God, would find salvation.

God's Wrath Manifested Against Blasphemy And Immorality — vv. 18-32.

The arena in which faith is developed

The Important Principle of Righteousness: "dikaiosune"

In Rom. 1:17, Paul did not say of the gospel that "therein is the *glory* of God revealed." Nor did he mention the *love* of God. Though both are important principles, and whilst the word "glory" is sometimes used of moral perfection (cp. Jn. 1:14), Paul points his readers to the *righteousness* of God. Thus he directs the full weight of argument upon the fact that the gospel reveals the *intellectual* and *moral* perfection of Yahweh. Of this word, *dikaiosune* W. E. Vine says: "the character or quality of being right or just." Thus, in setting forth the cornerstone of his exposition, Paul does not place the glory or love of God foremost. That which comes first, and is pre-eminent, is the "righteousness" of God. This is not to demean the former two qualities, but to show that apart from the foundation of righteousness, there can be no love of God demonstrated, nor glory revealed.

Once having introduced this term, Paul does not discard it. It occurs eight times in this epistle — a number which symbolizes the cutting off of flesh; and also represents the mystical number of Christ (see Rom. 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 10:3 twice).

The sublime and glorious message of the gospel revealed in this epistle is that God, in His love and mercy, offers to raise us up from the depths of hopelessness found in mere flesh, and elevate us to the standard of the perfection of His own righteousness. This is to be on His terms, not ours. For this purpose He has provided and revealed the perfection to be seen in His Son: the veil having been drawn aside we are enabled to gaze upon the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. And thereby find mercy. ***—J. Ullman.***

The Just Shall Live By Faith

This verse from Hab. 2:4 is used three times in the epistle of Paul, to expound three principles of Truth. Each time the apostle carefully emphasizes a different key word to demonstrate the importance of each principle.

• In Gal. 3:11 Paul contrasts the curse of the Law with the spirit of the Abrahamic gospel. Since sin has entered the dominion of man, it holds him in its grip, so that mere actions of obedience to any ritual law could not accomplish salvation. Thus he argues: "The ***JUST*** (those who seek for reconciliation with God) shall live by faith," emphasizing the CHARACTER of the saved.

• In Heb. 10:38 he shows the value of a faith developed under trial. The opposition and persecution that comes from the world against those who reveal faith are often sore ordeals. What value is there in suffering such trauma? There is much, says Paul, as he looked beyond the present to the future. Thus: "The just shall ***LIVE*** (emphasizing the REWARD of the saved) by faith."

• In Rom. 1:17 it is the motivating principle of faith itself that is under consideration. Paul uses the background of Habakkuk's day to enforce his point. Israel faced the punishing advance of the Chaldeans, and needed divine protection. But upon what basis would that protection be provided? Only that of faith! Now, in his letter to the Romans, Paul faced a similar situation. In a world given over to the gratification of self, and the destruction of godly principles, how could salvation be achieved? The power of the flesh appeared so strong, as to capture and hold mankind within its lustful grasp. Like the Chaldean army of Habakkuk's era, sin was a great conqueror. But there is a basis upon which salvation was possible. So Paul quotes: "The just shall live by ***FAITH***." It emphasizes the MOTIVATION of the saved.

is a world encased in sin. The transgression of Adam resulted in a cured earth in which thorns and thistles multiplied upon the ground (Gen. 3:18). The natural environment is also typical of the social environment of the human race. Though creation clearly reveals the existence of God, humanity refuses to accept His revelation in humility. Sin abounds because mankind has rejected the divine principles, becoming morally degenerate, and suffering the consequences of its folly (1Jn. 5:19; Gal. 1:4).

Notice, also, a similarity between Rom. 1:18-32 and Hosea 4. Hos. 4:7 states (see Comp. Bible and Roth): "My glory have they changed into shame." Compare vv. 12-13 with Rom. 1:21-23; v.6 with Rom. 1:19-21; v. 14 with Rom. 1:26-29. Yahweh's existence and power have been evidenced since creation, but man in his so-called "wisdom" has been blind to it and turned to idols. Therefore he has been left to reap his own rewards!

VERSE 18

"For" — This introductory word is carefully selected. It appears often in the epistle, and each occurrence is important. The word *qar* is a contraction of *qe*,"verily,"and *ara*, "therefore, further, moreover." It connects that which has just been stated to that which is about to be said. That which follows is a frightful indictment against humanity, for, not only does Paul preach the gospel "unashamedly" (v. 16), he also fearlessly denounces evil and ungodliness.

"The wrath of God is revealed" — Paul sets this phrase in contrast to the "righteousness of God" which is revealed in the gospel of salvation, and in a godly way of life (v. 17). The divine reaction to man's sinfulness is seen in the natural cir-

Two Great Contrasts in Character

The character of a true servant of Christ seen in Paul, a man whose life was motivated by the power (*dunamis*) of the gospel, is seen in the first seventeen verses of Rom. 1. In Paul's life, the power of the Word had produced:

* A tender affection and love for his brethren.
* A sense of solemn duty towards God and man.
* An uncomplaining attitude of self-sacrifice.
* An awareness of his responsibilities in the Truth.
* Mutual rejoicing with others of like mind, in appreciation of the saving power of the gospel.
* Total and uncompromising dedication and loyalty to the cause of Christ.

Verses 17-32 display the very opposite characteristics which are produced in those whose lives are not motivated by the power of the gospel. Instead of love and tender affection, comes cruel ruthlessness. Instead of solemn duty there is a reckless, immoral demand for freedom and a scant respect for moral discipline. Instead of a sense of mutual rejoicing with others in the Truth, there is a satisfaction gained by joining in godless depravity. Instead of total, uncompromising loyalty to Christ, there is gross dedication to serving the unbridled appetites of the flesh.

How dramatic and fearful is the contrast in disposition and way of life between the man whose life is God-centred and he whose life is only flesh-dominated. The former knows God and is known of Him; the latter knows only the grovellings of the dust. We see such contrast in the ways of the household of faith, and those of the world. Indeed, "blessed are the people who know the joyful sound" of the gospel message, by which they might "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," for such "an entrance shall be ministered" unto them into the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Psa. 89:15; 2Pet. 1:4, 11). — ***J. Ullman.***

cumstances that fall upon the world of the ungodly. Many catastrophes and diseases occur because mankind rejects the divine principles of life and permits deviations of conduct which bring increasing problems. These are an expression of the "wrath of God" in natural causes, for God cannot be mocked with impunity. If His righteous laws are ignored, He does not discount man's rebellion, even though it sometimes seems that judgment is delayed.

The word "wrath" is the Greek *orge*, signifying "the tumults of passion." Bullinger comments that the word expresses: "the heat of the fire, less sudden in its rise (than a bursting forth of flame), but more lasting." It is a slow, consuming anger that will not be assuaged. The word appears eleven times in the epistle (1:18; 2:5 twice, 8; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22 twice; 12:19; 13:4, 5). It expresses the divine attitude to humanity's rejection of God's natural laws, such as is obvious today in the uncontrolled perversion of life by many indulgents. Yahweh's wrath will be manifested visibly in the "day of Yahweh" that will pour down upon the ungodly (Zeph. 1:17; Mal. 4:1-3) in sacrificial judgments to purge this world of such evil (Zeph. 1:7). Then His wrath will be "revealed" (Rom. 1:18).

The word "revealed" is from the Greek *apokalupto*, meaning "to uncover, unveil." Previously, in verse 17, righteousness was opened to view in the principle of faith, but in this verse judgment is also demonstrated. Thus Paul expresses "the goodness and severity of God" (Rom.

11:22), and both principles are properly balanced in the divine work amongst men.

"From heaven against all ungodliness" — God looks down from the purity of His heavenly abode to judge the folly of the earthy creation as He did in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah: "because their sin is very grievous, *I will go down now* and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it" (Gen. 18:20-21; cp. 11:6-7). That judgment will be repeated because of the iniquitous present generation, when the Lord Jesus "shall be revealed *from heaven* with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance" (2Thes. 1:7-8; cp. Isa. 55:11).Whenever Yahweh displays His wrath against evil, He is upholding His own righteousness.

"Ungodliness" is in the Greek: *asebeia,* meaning "that which is undevout, impious" and expresses a mental disharmony with God. It reveals the carnal mind, which is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7) and "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Mankind has failed to honor Him, and neglects His worship; the word, therefore, emphasizes the default of humanity.

"And unrighteousness of men" — The word is *adikia:* "that which does not conform to right." Whereas "ungodliness" defines a mental rejection of the ways of God, this word describes the physical actions of wicked men: the works of sin evident in all the arenas of man's influence. It is the opposite of the "righteousness (lit. *righteous actions)* of saints" (Rev. 19:8).

The word rendered "men" is *anthropos* (also in v. 23) and refers to humanity as a whole, both male and female; whilst in v. 27 it is the word *arsen* indicating a male person.

"Who hold" — Gr. *katecho,* signifying "to hold down, to restrain," and is translated "withholdeth" in 2Thes. 2:6. The RV renders it here as "hinder." Paul refers to men who hindered and suppressed God's ways by their unrighteousness, both in attitude and actions. The *Jerusalem Bible* gives a graphic construction to the phrase: "The anger of God is being revealed from heaven against all the impiety and depravity of men who keep the truth imprisoned in their wickedness."

"The truth in unrighteousness" — Their fleshly thinking dominates their life, therefore they ignore or ridicule the righteousness of God. Their iniquity hinders the dissemination of the Truth and encourages people to ignore or ridicule divine standards. They prefer to enjoy "lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19).

VERSE 19

"Because that which may be known of God" — His natural creation testifies to the divine wisdom, logic and reason. It was by the Word of God that the heavens and earth were constructed, and humanity stands in awe of the greatness and glory of creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." Therefore mankind should similarly extol the majesty of the One who created such wonders, though they do not declare Yahweh's purpose, the "things known" reveal His existence. Yahweh is seen to be omnipotent (Psa. 19:1), omnipresent (Psa. 39), omniscient (Acts 17:23-27). Since creation plainly reveals that God exists, reasoning intelligence should cause His creatures to seek His will and purpose. It is only the "fool" who says, "there is no God" (Psa. 14:1; 53:1).

"Is manifest in them" — Gr. *phaneros: that which is revealed, or open.* There is no excuse for the willing ignorance of humanity (2Pet. 3:5). The creation itself testifies to two irrefutable realities: Design and Order. Logic indicates that even the wonder of man's natural characteristics and abilities implies a divine Creator. Man has an innate need to venerate or worship an object (Rom. 1:25), but instead of directing that to the true God of heaven, those of Paul's day sought to revere and elevate "the creature rather than the Creator." Unfortunately society repeats that stupidity today, in elevating the worship of flesh.

"For God has showed it unto them" — From this phrase to the word "God-

head" in verse 20. Paul's comments are parenthetical, injected into the statement: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest to them (AV mg.), so that they are without excuse.." Man has the ability to observe, reason and understand. He can discern the physical miracle of life. He has access to the historical evidence of judgments in which God has exercised His power — by flood (Noah's day), by sword (the downfall of Jerusalem), and by earthquake (natural disasters). God has endowed men with reason and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15), and made them capable of seeing and investigating His works. He has spread before them proofs of His wisdom, goodness and power, and has provided the means of learning His will.

VERSE 20

"For the invisible things of Him" — God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1Tim. 6:16). Whilst man is not able to comprehend the magnificence of the universe, nor the way in which the Eternal Spirit performed His wondrous works, he is quite competent to see and believe the Truth concerning the Creator. Mankind is capable of perceiving His righteousness, His divine characteristics (Exo. 34:6), and His manifestation in flesh (Jn. 14:8-9).

"From the creation of the world" — Better rendered: "by means of the creation of the world." By the work of God in the formation of man from the ground, and the establishment of His glory in Eden, His purpose is typified. Yahweh's righteousness is evident even in the subsequent events brought about by the introduction of sin and death and the divine condemnation declared.

"Are clearly seen" — Made manifest. The basic structure and laws of nature, space and time, can be perceived, and indicate the work of a Master Designer. Thus men are without excuse if they do not seek Him; for if they seek Him, He will reveal Himself to them (2Pet. 3:9; Jas. 1:5; Acts 17:27). Whilst God has worked from the beginning of time in a manner invisible to the eye of flesh, He can still be known and understood, His righteousness recognized, and His purpose comprehended.

"Being understood by the things that are made" — The reality of a living God has been written, as it were, into the works of creation. Every act of the divine hands testifies to His power and glory: from the intricacies of atomic structure to the measureless wonder of the universe. A greater power than that of mere "chance" governs and controls all things. Even the ages have been made, or "framed," by the instruction and direction of God (Heb. 11:3). Yahweh "works" daily, maintaining His great creation and providing clear evidence of His existence to those whose intelligence is exercised thereby (Jn. 5:17). He revealed those "works" to Israel (Jos. 24:31; Jud. 2:7, 10), but they failed to "understand" them.

"(Even) His eternal power and Godhead" — Rotherham has: "His eternal power and Divine Being," describing Yahweh's awesome attributes and perfection of character, enshrined in a nature which is eternal. His "power" (*dunamis*, see v.4) "generates" (as a dynamo) activity according to His will, and will continue to do so unto eternity. His spirit cannot be destroyed, and His ultimate plan cannot be prevented. He is thus the Creator and Sustainer. The term "godhead" is from the word *theiotes*, which only occurs here, signifies the completeness of the divine attributes including His characteristics, purpose (Col. 2:9) and physical existence (Acts 17:29).

"So that they are without excuse" — Gr. *anapologetos:* "without apology or defence" (Bullinger). God has given clear evidence of His existence and designs, so that men have no excuse for idolatry nor for hindering truth by their iniquity (v. 18). Yahweh will not hold the world guiltless for rejecting Him (Acts 17:30-31).

VERSE 21

"Because that, when they knew God" — Again, an introductory word is used: "because" (cp. v. 19). The Gr. *dioti*

signifies "for this reason: on this account." The word occurs in ch. 1:19, 21; 3:20 ("therefore"); 8:7. In each case it draws attention to the words just stated, and identifies inevitable conclusions, as a result.

The word "knew" is *ginosko*, which Bullinger defines as: "to perceive, observe, obtain a knowledge of, or insight into. It denotes a personal and true relation between the person knowing and the object known", and describes a knowledge that develops into action: i.e. an experimental (rather than intellectual) knowing. It is to be understood in the sense of "Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived," in which such intimate knowledge resulted in fruit (children) from the "knowing."

The word is again used by the Lord Jesus: "this is life eternal that they might *know Thee*, the only true God" (Jn. 17:3), in which case, the knowledge that brings immortality is one which first reflects the results of us "knowing God" in actions of faith. When we come to "know Him" intellectually (the Greek word *oida* signifies this) through His Word, we must manifest that information in a demonstration of action, and then we can claim to "know Him" (*ginosko*) experimentally. The fruits that come from the implantation of the divine Seed of Truth within our hearts (1Pet. 1:23) are those of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

In the verse before us Paul claims that mankind was invited to share their lives in active co-operation with God (*ginosko*), but shows that they refused to do so. The reference is back to v. 18: those who "hold down" the Truth in their unrighteousness. Paul is not referring to the ignorant savage who has never heard of the Truth, but to those who, knowing it, willingly turn from it and defame and deny it.

"They glorified Him not as God" — To glorify God is to regard His laws and principles with proper respect; to venerate His Name, power, holiness and purpose; to acknowledge His goodness by living a transformed life. But since they were not inclined to do that, they were given over to their vain and wicked desires. Moses desired to see Yahweh's glory (Exo. 33:18), and his request was answered by the angelic brightness of divine nature (v. 22) and the voice which revealed Yahweh's character. The glory he saw was a limited view of divine nature, for he was taught that mankind should look for God's glory in the perfect attributes of His character (ch. 34:6-7). Without that knowledge men remain ignorant of the Creator (Jer. 9:24). Christ sought for the fulness of the divine glory and the completion of the Father's original intention in him (Jn. 17:5). The glory of God is reflected in union with Him, by which ultimately a family of immortals will be developed (Rom. 15:6-7). Were such an attitude and ideal generally accepted, it would effectually restrain men from sin.

"Neither were thankful" — Thanksgiving is a necessary part of worship, and an acknowledgement of benefits received (Psa. 106:1; 1Chr. 16:4, 7; 23:30). Thanksgiving also testifies to the existence of God and mankind's dependence on Him (Jas. 1:17).

It will be an essential part of the program of worship in the kingdom, for the "voice of thanksgiving" will accompany melody and joy (Isa. 51:3) as Zion recovers its former greatness. Those who enter into the courts of the temple will do so with thanksgiving and praise (Psa. 100:4). Therefore it is appropriate that thanksgiving should be a consistent part of present life. It begins with baptism (Rom. 6:17), becomes a daily experience as we recognize acts of divine goodness, and will be manifested at the resurrection (1Cor. 15:57). Paul exhorts us to "watch (in prayer) with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2), which is the expression of gratitude when the constant benefits of God are recognized. The act of thanksgiving can be one of sacrifice: it demands an acknowledgement of advantages received, and therefore confers a responsibility to act accordingly (Psa. 116:17; Jonah 2:9). However, a mere verbal expression can be deceptive. Amos ironically invited Israel to "offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven" (ch.

Who Is Responsible?

There is every reason why all mankind should "know" and acknowledge their Creator, as Paul shows in Rom. 1:20-21. The evidence of their eyes should convince all that there is a power far greater than any human agency. It should then follow that they ought to acknowledge their dependence upon that power for their very existence. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psa. 19:1). There is no convincing argument against this declaration.

Yet people blindly ignore the repercussions! Obviously, someone must be responsible for the great creation that continues under remarkable inbuilt laws. Who is He? How should mankind respond to His work? It is as though every day the evidence of creation says to all mankind: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve..." To which there can be only one answer: "As for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh" (Josh. 24:15).

Paul's reasoning is beyond dispute. Mankind has been invited to offer their lives in active co-operation with the Word and Will of God, but decline to do so. Therefore, they "hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (v. 18). Examples of this abound. Aristotle wrote: "God, having become unseen to every mortal nature, through His works is seen." Plato said that the world must have a cause, and described that cause as "the Eternal Maker and Father of all." Cicero (BC106-143) wrote: "What can be so clear, when we look at the sky and heavenly bodies, as that there is some deity of surpassing mind by whom these are governed? ...If anyone doubts this, I cannot see why he should not doubt whether the sun exists."

Why, then, does mankind ignore their responsibilities to the Creator? Because they prefer their own ideology, and are unwilling to submit to the sacrificial demands of His Will. Wisdom dictates otherwise. Thus, we follow Paul's exposition, as he leads us past the folly of human thinking to grandeur of the spirit-mind revealed in this epistle. — ***J. Ullman.***

4:5). Thanksgiving must be an "offering" unto God, the "giver of every good and perfect gift," but it must be sincere and wholehearted.

"But became vain in their imaginations" — "Vain" is from *mataioo* and signifies *to be void of result.* So-called intelligent men in Paul's day, like the scientists of today, saw the glory of God in creation, but failed to apply the lessons of this knowledge. Thus their studies were "void of result" for they did not produce a proper reaction. They became "absorbed in useless discussions" (Weymouth); their "speculations about Him ended in nothing" (TCNT); "their thinking became futile" (NIV). Similarly, today's education ignores the existence of God, refuses to acknowledge the facts, and therefore its knowledge in the main is sterile.

The word "imaginations" is the Greek *dialogismos* which means "the reasonings of the heart," emphasizing those which are promoted from the mind and emotions of the flesh. These are not the real, concrete and meaningful expressions of the Truth, but the empty, fruitless and frivolous meanderings of the human heart. It is "out of the heart of man" that flow the impressions and actions that "defile" (Mat. 15:18-20). It was the excitations of flesh and disregard for God's law that caused Eve to "imagine" she could avoid the consequences of death: those same principles

brought the devastation of the Flood upon a world in which "every imagination of the thoughts of his *[man's]* heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Jer. 10:23 declares that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," for he is unable to see beyond his own environment.

"And their foolish heart was darkened" — A heart unguided by the divine ways. The heart stands for the intelligence and driving force of a person. "Hearts" in the days of Noah were evil (Gen. 6:5), and Moses warned against hearts "turning away" from right (Deu. 29:18). The "heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness" (Pro. 12:23) because they cannot resist voicing aloud their folly. Similarly haughtiness is within the heart (Pro. 18:12). As the root of a person's feelings and motivation, Yahweh examines the heart (1Sam. 16:7; Jer. 17:10). Those with a foolish heart are irrational and without discernment, and "darkness" is its only environment. It is only Truth that brings "light," or understanding, for Christ declared himself to be the "the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12), and John urged his readers to "walk in the light" (1Jn. 1:7). Any other condition is "darkness" (Psa. 119:130; Mat. 6:23)

VERSE 22

"Professing themselves to be wise" — The common boast of the philosophers, a word that means "lovers of wisdom." The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "The more they called themselves philosophers, the more stupid they grew." These people were puffed up with pride in their intellectual ability, and could not humble themselves to accept the power of God in His gospel. Their claim was well known: v. 14; 1Cor. 1:19-22; 3:19; 2Cor. 11:19.

"They became fools" — A pungent and cutting description! The way they did this is described in the following verses.

The word *moraino* means "to become insipid; a simpleton," from a root meaning "dull, stupid." It is used of tasteless salt (Mat. 5:13; Lk. 14:34) from which the value has been removed. These worldly-wise had the ability to understand divine ways, but destroyed their taste for spiritual principles by the influences of philosophy.

Such a failing is possible for believers! Loving this present world (2Tim. 4:10) is a severe form of folly, as is the teaching of unsound doctrine (Eze. 13:3). Wisdom is only found in complete and wholesome association with the Truth (Eph. 5:15; Gal. 3:3; Jas. 3:13). The extent to which the mind of the flesh can lead men to becoming extreme "fools" is illustrated in the following verses.

VERSE 23

"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God" — Not literally achieved, for none can affect the actual glory of God. The word "changed" should be "exchanged." In their hearts they exchanged the glory of immortality for images of flesh and corruption, and consequently reaped what they sowed: eternity in the grave! God created mankind that it might reflect to His glory, and honor His power (Gen. 1:27), but Adam fell from that high estate. Nevertheless, the opportunity for redemption was extended on the basis of personal sacrifice (3:15), but men have repeatedly refused such standards (6:11-12) and turned their backs upon the glory of God as revealed in His Word, seeking gratification in things wicked and ungodly. They forsook Him of whom they had knowledge (Rom. 1:28) and offered to images the homage which was due to Him.

"Into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" — Notice the decline in worship from man (who was originally portrayed as "upright": Ecc. 7:29), to birds (which soar in the heavens), to beasts (which dwell on earth), finally to reptiles (which grovel in dust). Although in the beginning mankind was taught the truth concerning the uncorruptible God, subsequent ages depict them as becoming fools in their vain imaginations, until they likened God to themselves and to other areas of the created world — all of which were worshipped in a steadily declining form of religion.

Empty Heads and Useless Lives — Rom. 1:21

It is difficult to imagine a sadder situation than that of a human being, blessed with a sagacious intellect, fruitlessly pursuing the hollow emptiness of mere fleshly existence. For those who have accepted the power of the gospel into their lives, there is a vital exhortation in the expression of verse 21. They must continue to daily absorb the Word of God and the things of the spirit. They must discipline their lives to keep themselves in "the way" of salvation, not permitting the influence of the flesh nor the attractions of the world to cause their thinking to become "futile" (v. 21). And what of the next generation? It is necessary to constantly educate our children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4, RSV), that they should not be affected by ungodly influences and become lost to the Truth with "minds that are darkened" (cp. Gen. 6:5; Jer. 10:23; Mat. 15:18-20). — ***J. Ullman.***

Today, men have degenerated further, for, discarding even the false worship of animals and idols, they worship the flesh in all its lustful manifestations (Rom. 1:24). Paul described the bestial attitude of false brethren in similar terms: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3:19). The worship of self had replaced the privileged position that was due only to God.

In contrast to the claims of evolutionists who assert that man has developed from original brutality and crudity, this statement, supported by historical evidence, shows a decline in mankind from a "very good" condition (Gen. 1:31) to the vileness seen in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:5), which is repeated (and, perhaps, exceeded) by this present generation (Lk. 17:26)!

VERSE 24

"Wherefore God also gave them up" — The Greek word *paradidomai* signifies "to surrender; to yield." Gesenius comments: "God caused them to become." The phrase reappears in vv. 26, 28. Because the people were unwilling to retain Him in their knowledge and chose to worship idols, God judicially abandoned them, allowing them to act out their sentiments and manifest them in their lives (Psa. 81:12). God does not force mankind to conform to His ways and respect His Word, but if they follow their own self-will, He withdraws His protection and care (cp. Hos. 4:17). To "exchange" (v. 23) Him for that which is inferior, causes people to become morally degenerated. Paul implies that man has a tendency to such an attitude, and the devices and desires of the human heart will inevitably cause sin. Having discarded true religion, God delivered them up to the results of their own folly (Eph. 4:17-19; 5:5-6). This was a judicial action against sin, for, allowing it free reign in their lives, it eventually destroyed them in the grave (Rom. 6:23).

"To uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts" — The inflamed passions of their carnal mind resulted in a corrupt way of life. This commenced with an ignoring of divine teaching (v. 19), continued into a lack of thankfulness to God (v. 21) and completed itself in degrading evil (vv. 26-32). The human heart is inherently evil (Gen. 8:21; Psa. 81:10-12; Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:21; Jas. 1:13; 4:1), and can only be cured by purifying it of its carnality (Jas. 4:8). The power of the gospel is able to begin the process of cleansing and purifying, mentally and morally. The ultimate triumph of spirit over flesh will be when the redeemed are clothed upon with the glory of divine nature (Jas. 4:8; Jn. 15:3, 14; Phil. 3:19-21).

"To dishonor their own bodies between themselves" — The lusts of the

The Sad State of Deterioration in Worship

"An Image Made like unto Man"

In debasing God to the level of sinful humanity, a further decline was inevitable. Worship became degraded to the point where society represented Deity at the level of "birds, fourfooted beasts and creeping things." The Psalmist declared that "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God" (Psa. 14:1), and his next statement indicates the result of such folly: "they are corrupt, they have done abominable works." In the days of Noah "all flesh had *corrupted* His way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12).

The first reference to idols was a divine warning to Israel not to become involved in the worship of apostate Gentiles: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exo. 20:4-5). The commandment prohibited the making of any object for worship, because to do so would reflect against the sovereignty of Yahweh, and turn the hearts of men from the true respect that was due to the Father. "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am Yahweh your God" (Lev. 19:4). The word "idols" is from the Hebrew *elilim* ("nothings; vain; empty") in contrast to the angels, *elohim*. Paul states: "we know that an idol is *nothing* in the world, and that there is none other God but one" (1Cor. 8:4).

But mankind has consistently perverted the truth established in the beginning, and has heaped to himself idols of all descriptions. Many of the images and idols of the ancients were in the forms of men and women. Heroes and benefactors were deified, and temples, altars and statues were erected to their honor. Such were Jupiter, Hercules and Romulus, etc, whose personalities were figured in human form and worshipped. It demonstrated the degradation of civilisation that mankind sought to idolize men with like passions as themselves and attempted to dethrone the true God, and to substitute in His place an idol in the likeness of men.

"And to Birds"

The *ibis* was adored with peculiar reverence among the Egyptians because it was believed to protect the nation from the serpents which threatened to overrun the country. The *hawk* was also revered in Egypt, and the *eagle* in Rome. Very likely every bird that rendered service in the destruction of noxious animals came in for a share of pagan worship. Additionally, the ability to soar across the heavens attracted the admiration of men, and caused them to respect the birds as superior.

"And to Four-footed Beasts"

The ox, under the name *Apis* was adored in Egypt, and even the dog

and the monkey. In imitation of the Egyptian ox, the children of Israel made their golden calf (Exo. 32:4). Two of the most sacred objects of worship in Hindostan are the cow and the monkey.

"And Creeping Things"

Reptiles excite the curiosity and interest of men. *Lizards, serpents,* etc., as dwellers in the darkness of the earth, find their place in idolatry. The *crocodile* in Egypt was also an object of admiration. In the second century AD, a "christian" sect in Egypt was called *Ophites* from their worshipping a serpent *(ophis).* There was scarcely an object, animal or vegetable, which the Egyptians did not adore. Thus the *leek,* the *onion,* etc., were all objects of worship.

Notice the deterioration in worship: from people's reverence for the sun and moon, they degenerated to animals, to vegetables, and finally to reptiles. Egypt was the source of the views of religion that pervaded other nations, whose worship partook of the same wretched and degrading character. The worship of Egypt finds frequent mention in the Scriptures because of its attraction to the baser minds of people, and finds its place alongside Sodom in the symbolism of the Apocalypse (ch. 11:8) as descriptive of the apostasy that would flood the earth. No wonder Yahweh set His high ideals before the nation of "called out ones" in the commandments He established at Sinai.

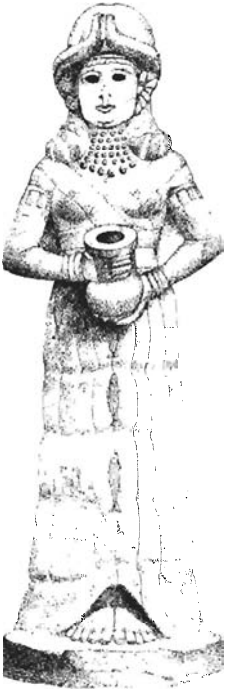
The Sumerian god of water, Enki (at the right of the display) is portrayed in this seal impression with fish streaming about his shoulders. Because the Sumerians lived in fear of both prolonged droughts and severe floods, Enki was one of the most important of all deities, often glorified in sculpture and sacred verses. In one poem the god states: "When I draw near unto the yellowing fields, grain piles are heaped at my command." Also shown are the winged Inanna, goddess of love and war, and the sun god, Utu, whose torso can be seen rising from behind a mountain range.

Heathen Deities are Derived from Created Beings

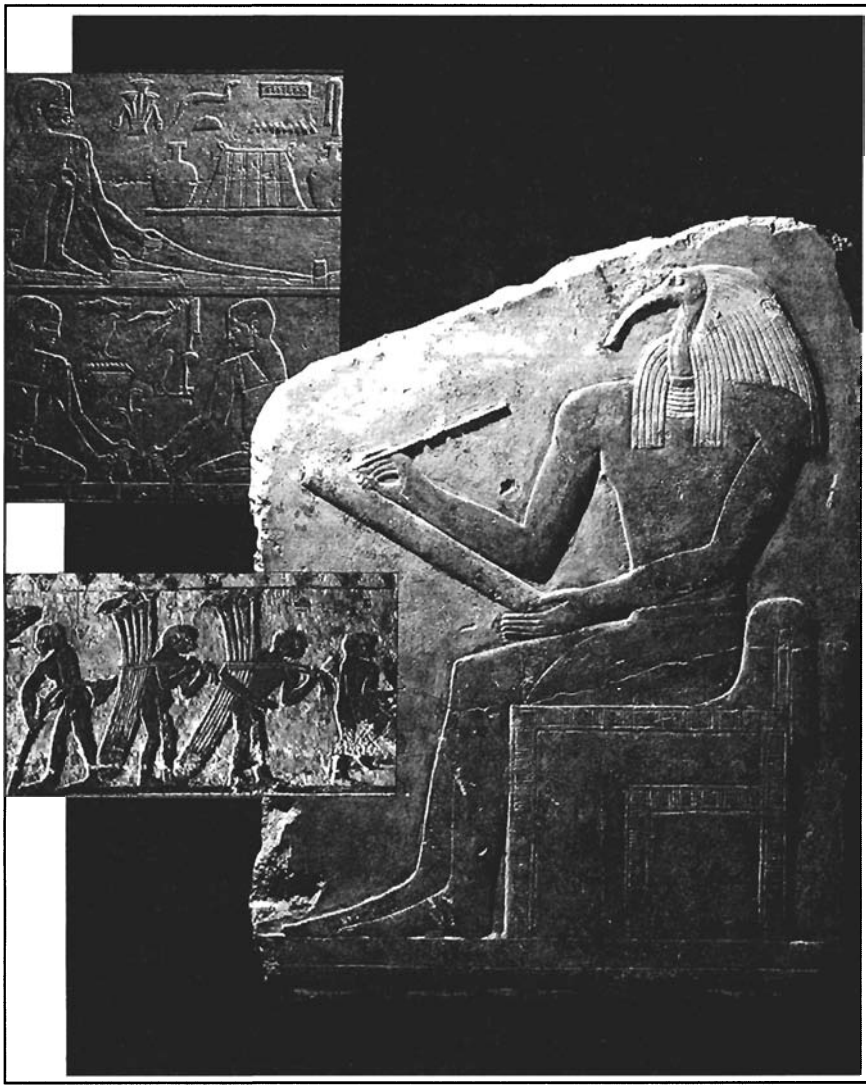
Left: The god Amon glistens in an eight-inch gold statuette of the 22nd Dynasty. Regarded as the most powerful of Egyptian gods, he is shown holding the scimitar, symbol of conquest, and the hieroglyph for "life."

Below: A goddess worshipped by the Mesopotamians wears a skirt decorated with fish swimming amid the undulating lines of a flowing river. Installed in the palace at Mari, a city-state on the upper Euphrates, this statuette served as a fountain. Water carried by pipes from a raised tank spouted from the vessel held in the goddess' hands.

Thus worshippers were impressed with the "life-giving" characteristics of the goddess as they saw the waters gushing forth.



Below: This ibis-headed deity, *Thoth*, demonstrates the art of writing, a skill he was said to have imparted to the Egyptians at the dawn of time. In applying their talent, Egyptian scribes relied on the papyrus plant: as early as BC3100 papyrus reeds were harvested along the Nile (left, below). The reeds were then stretched out in layers on a frame and pounded together to produce a parchment-like writing surface.



heart are now manifested in the actions of the body. The word "dishonor" (*atimazo*) means "to disgrace; bring ignominy, reproach, insult." The Greek is in the middle voice which indicates what is done to oneself. They dishonored that which Yahweh created that He might be manifested therein. Having been "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139:14) the human body will produce a struggle to mentally and morally manifest godliness (cp. 1Cor. 6:20; Phil. 1:20), or can prove capable of producing extreme evil and wickedness.

The words "between themselves" are better rendered: "among themselves," or "with one another." The expression denotes immorality by unlawful and impure associations. The fleshly-minded enjoy the degrading actions that gratify the lower senses, and encourage others to similar ways. The history of the Roman Empire in apostolic times, illustrates the truth of the apostle's description. Of Nero it is recorded: "He revived the laws against treason, using them to kill people for their wealth because his riotous life and expensive wars in Britain had drained the treasury and depreciated the coinage." Peter speaks of those who "walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1Pet. 4:3), describing the indulgent society of the times. It represents a Sodomic attitude (Gen. 19:5-7) that would reoccur in the last days (Lk. 17:29).

Today censorship is largely ignored and restraints on conduct, either public or private, are removed. The world has developed so many new ideas and opportunities, and encourages a lowering of standards, that make it difficult for the saints to remain entirely separate therefrom. Standards of the past are put aside to accommodate a more "realistic" attitude to society. In contrast to the more sombre attitude of our pioneer brethren, who, like Abraham, preferred to remain in the "mountains of Judea," some nowadays prefer to enjoy the pleasurable environs of modern Sodom and become subtly affected by the comforts and enjoyments of the world. Great care needs to be exercised on such matters.

VERSE 25

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie" — The word "changed" (Gr. *allasso*) occurred in v. 23, and means "exchanged," although here it is in its stronger form: *metallasso.* Weymouth renders the statement, "They have bartered the reality of God for what is unreal." These were pseudo-believers who repeated the sin of Eve (Gen. 3:4-6). The literal Greek has "*the* lie." Not totally discounting the reality of a Divine Being initially, they nevertheless preferred the animal reasonings to the gospel truth. The lie soon became an active way of life. God was deposed from His rightful position, and idols were erected instead. Idols are frequently called falsehood and lies because they are not true representations of God (Isa. 44:20; 28:15; Psa. 40:4; Jer. 10:14; 13:25). Reverence to idols repeated the original lie and turned the worshipper from his proper obligation to conform to the moral standards which God's justice requires. Anything that removes God from first place in a person's respect is accounted as an idol (cp. 1Jn. 5:21; Col. 3:5).

"And worshipped and served the creature " — "Creature" is from the Gr. *krisis: created things,* as the sun, moon, animals, etc. This was the source and cause of the moral degradation found in the society of Rome (vv. 26-31). It caused continual sin in Israel's history (Acts 7:42-43), and the same concept is repeated in today's civilisation which worships the ideals and principles of the flesh. Such theories as evolution and humanism remove the principle of responsibility to a Creator, claiming that man is the originator of life and master of his own destiny. Thus flesh is elevated and worshipped, so that its desires are fully served (1Jn. 2:15-16; cp. Gen. 3:6).

"More than the Creator" — The Creator deserves respect. He only should be worshipped, as He established in the basic laws of Israel (Exo. 20:2-5). The Master reminded the Jewish leaders that they had failed to fulfil that Law (Mat. 4:10; Lk. 4:8). Yahweh demands first place in the respect of His creatures. We

allow our own desires to superimpose themselves on our duty to Yahweh at our peril.

"Who is blessed for ever" — A fervent expression, as though Paul turns from considering the debasing circumstances of mankind's indulgence and the shocking things he has had to outline, to the refreshing and elevating principles of the eternal God. The word "blessed" is *eulogetos*, from whence comes the word "eulogise."

Bullinger claims that this word is always applied to God, never to man. Though men reject God and mock at His Word, though schools endeavour to destroy His influence by indoctrinating children with such fallacies as evolution, though His principles of righteousness are ridiculed today, the Lord's followers can be encouraged by the knowledge that very soon this will be changed, and Yahweh will be "eulogized" throughout the earth with respect and honor (Isa. 54:5; Hab. 2:14, 20).

The words "for ever" are from the Greek *eis tous aionas*, signifying: "unto the ages" and refer to the millennial period and beyond.

"Amen" — A Hebrew word denoting strong affirmation: "so let it be," or "it is the truth." The word is found in Isa. 65:16 as "the Elohim of truth (*amen*)" where it implies the principle of faithfulness and certainty, that what God declares will assuredly occur. Thus the appellation of *amen* on the end of Paul's statement confirms the veracity of what was said. The Master took the word as one of his titles of office: "These things saith the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14). He declared to the Laodicean ecclesia that he could fulfil their needs (v. 18), but also warned that he would complete his judgments against them if they did not repent (v. 19). The title *Amen* reinforced his words.

The affirmation occurs in 2Cor. 1:20 where emphasis is given to the dependability of the promises of God.

When we use the word *amen* to conclude prayer, we are not merely "signing off," indicating that we have finished! *Amen* is our personal conviction that we believe that God will grant our requests according to His wisdom, and that we will perform the vows declared before Him. In this context, *amen* gives credibility to our prayer, and is the declaration of our belief in it. It is not a word to be used lightly, or without understanding its solemn import.

VERSE 26

"For this cause" — Because mankind failed to glorify Him as God, were unthankful, and became idolators, Paul now continues to show the practical results of their conduct.

"God gave them up unto vile affections" — Depraved passions or desires. Instead of manifesting the perfection of character desired by the Creator, mankind lowered themselves to the level of brute beasts. The sins Paul now proceeds to specify are the most indelicate, vile and degrading which can be charged on man. Such blatant and public, unashamed conduct was associated with the religious activities of the Canaanites. There was no hesitation in using vice and immorality to destroy others (cp. Num. 25:1-3), and stemming from this evil example in religion, the same sordid practices became the standard of behavior in life for many in later times. Adultery became commonplace, and faithlessness was encouraged. Yet, without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and the adulterer in Israel was not only unfaithful to his spouse but also to Yahweh (Gen. 39:9; Psa. 51:4), since it brought His commandments into disrepute. Sexual malpractice will exclude from the kingdom (1Cor. 6:9; cp. v. 11) and represents a way of life to be totally repudiated by God's servants. Frequently adultery had a religious significance, being a rite associated with heathen worship and particularly condemned on that account. Yahweh looks upon association of His saints with the world with similar displeasure. Addressing the ecclesia as an "adulteress," James reminds them that "friendship of the world is enmity with God" (ch. 4:4). The religious system of Jezebel was outright adultery (Rev. 2:20),

and represents the attitude of brethren and sisters who encourage worldliness within the Brotherhood.

"For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature" — "Change" is the same word as occurs in v. 25. The degradation of the female sex, traditionally associated with modesty in Biblical values, is mentioned first as the clearest indication of national or individual depravity. The impurity of the Greeks and Romans was a feature of their national way of life. Lesbianism is named after the island of Lesbos, a place notorious for this type of depravity, situated in the East Aegean Sea. Greek and Roman writings make copious references to the acceptance of shameful homosexuality among women. Such things, "which ought not to be named amongst saints" (Eph. 5:3), were commonplace. Note that Paul describes this scandalous behavior as "against nature" and "unnatural." He regarded the lawful union between a man and a woman as "natural." Eve was created as a "complement" to Adam, and as his "counterpart." They were to co-operate together, so that the divine glory might be reflected in their lives. In the marriage union, the woman is to typify the bride of Christ: the natural becoming a symbol for the spiritual (Eph. 5:22-23). But when the spiritual principles of the Truth are perverted, a gross disfigurement results, and that which is "naturally" divine becomes distorted. The tragic consequences from the perversion of life seen in current society is a sombre warning to preserve the beauty and sanctity of the spiritual.

VERSE 27

"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another" — Both sexes were guilty of monstrous perversions. This was the shameful sin of Sodom, against which Lot "vexed his righteous soul" (2Pet. 2:8). Homosexuality was so prevalent and commonly accepted in that city, that the sin became known as "sodomy." It was a familiar practice of the depraved heathen and pagan religions. Temple prostitutes of both sexes were a common feature of the vile worship of the times. The prevalence in our times of such sin, commonly allowed in the community, is evidence of the accuracy and fulfilment of the Lord's words: "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Lk. 17:28-30). Today, organisations exist, including governmental legislation in many countries, to "protect the rights" of homosexuals, and their so-called "alternate lifestyle" is blatantly pursued.

The word "burned" is the Greek *ekkaio,* which has the idea to "consume in flames," illustrative of the devouring nature of such unrestrained lust. It describes an eagerness devoid of any pangs of conscience or consideration of moral principle. This symptom results particularly from a materialistic society which is cynical and godless. Those who engage in such lust degenerate into bestial attitudes and destroy any sense of morality. They destroy one another, and the only solution revealed in the days of Lot was to destroy the whole society (Gen. 19:25) and remove all evidence of its existence.

The word "lust"is from the Gr. *orexis,* a "reaching or stretching after." Such a picture is presented in Eve lusting after the fruit of the tree (ct. Phil. 2:5-6), and stretching forth to obtain that which was forbidden. It is the attitude of humanism, which urges its adherents to reach out for whatever they desire. It ridicules the restraints of religious beliefs and Biblical teaching, and will consequently reap the results of iniquity, as did Eve (Gen. 3:19).

"Men with men working that which is unseemly" — These wicked practices produced their own terrible fruit: venereal disease and other attendant, incurable evils became rife, as mankind suffered the consequences of its own folly. Such conditions have been highlighted by medical revelations of associated illnesses that have erupted in recent years. The word "unseemly" is from *aschemosune,* meaning "without fashion, figure, mien or

deportment of body or person; hence, deformity." It speaks of the moral deformity (which is often accompanied by physical disability and deterioration) of twisted and warped perversions of that which God originally created. Its only other occurrence is in Rev. 16:15, rendered "shame," and appropriated to the saints of God who, because of their way of life and general disposition, are not watching for their Lord's return. They discard the holiness of their garment-covering, preferring to indulge in the "pleasures" of this world.

"And receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" — TCNT renders: "received in their own bodies the inevitable punishment of their perverseness." These sad results are evident in today's society. Such wicked practices as promiscuous or homosexual conduct, produce their own fruit in the proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases. When a society demands, and is given, complete freedom from restraint, it digs its own grave through the iniquity it produces.

VERSE 28

"And even as they did not like" — The Greek word, *adokimazo,* signifies to "refuse to test to see if a person or thing answers to the required specifications." Mankind refused Yahweh and would not put Him to the test. They looked for a god which would answer their own specifications; the religion they wanted was a means of satisfying lust, not a medium of self-sacrificing devotion in loving service to the Creator. When the requirements of God demanded the sacrifice of self, they rejected His worship and turned to their own images. The International Greek Text translates this verse: "And according as they did not approve to have God in their knowledge."

"To retain God in their knowledge" — With a conscience "seared with a hot iron" (1Tim. 4:2), they rejected His presence and control over their minds. The knowledge of His ways was ignored as they set about life believing that they were the masters of their own destiny. By removing divine restrictions and discipline from their conscience, they were relieved of any feeling of guilt. In this attitude they manifested "lawlessness" (1Jn. 3:4), a sin which leads to death (ch. 5:16), and which rejects any responsibility to divine law. Thus, John declares: "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (v. 19).

"God gave them over" — The third occurrence of this phrase (see vv. 24, 26). In Bible numerology, "3" represents completion (as the third line completes a triangle). Yahweh concluded His purpose with mankind in completely releasing them to the natural result of their chosen way of life. The Roman world disintegrated under an avalanche of lawlessness, horror, disease, ruthlessness and utter immorality. Today, history is being repeated!

"To a reprobate mind" — A mind destitute of sense. Paul uses a play upon words by re-employing the Greek word *adokimos* (see the first note upon this verse) as "reprobate." Since mankind refused to put God to the test, He now refused to exercise Himself on their account. God gave them over to a mind incapable of testing and determining matters in respect to salvation; an attitude only intent upon satisfying the flesh, and therefore "a mind void of judgment" (see margin). The word signifies "disapprove; not stand the test" (Barnes), thus: "As they did not *approve* to retain God, He gave them up to a mind *disapproved.*" The word is also rendered *castaway* in 1Cor. 9:27, and *rejected* in Heb. 6:8. The Septuagint version uses it in Pro. 25:4 as *dross,* and in Isa. 1:22 as *worthless.* It has specific reference to the useless part of metals. A "reprobate mind" is described in Rom. 8:7 as a "carnal mind," incapable of spiritual impression. That is the state of most people today, and the reason why the Truth makes but little impact upon the majority of mankind. In spiritual matters they have a mind "void of judgment," being unable to determine right from wrong.

"To do those things which are not convenient" — Better: "which are not becoming, or fitting" (from Gr. *katheko,*

found only here and in Acts 22:22, as "fit"). Such actions which are disgraceful and shameful, unfortunately so much in evidence in today's society, are now identified by the apostle in the following verses. The purpose for which mankind was created is not manifested in the actions of Adam's descendants; their actions do not "fit" the original design, for God "made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Ecc. 7:29) which dishonor their position.

VERSE 29

"Being filled with all unrighteousness" — Minds and hearts completely dominated by carnal depravities. In Paul's catalogue of vices the first five refer to injustices with respect to the wellbeing and property of others. The Greek for "filled" is *pleroo*, an emphatic word, meaning "to fill to the full." Their iniquity knew no bounds for they had become utterly lacking in even a fundamental understanding of the principles of righteousness. Their general disposition produced only "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21). The word for "unrighteousness" is *adikia*, a general term for wrongfulness perpetrated against others.

"Fornication" — Gr. *porneia*, signifying unlawful sexual lust; permissive behavior of every kind. This includes the denial of loyalty and love towards one's legitimate and true spouse, and, consequently, towards God's principles (cp. Psa. 51:4. Christ applies it to members of his ecclesia who transfer their affection to other idols: Rev. 2:21). Some texts omit this word.

"Wickedness" — Gr: *poneria*, contains the idea of active mischief, depravity. The Master charged his opponents with manifesting such an attitude (Mat. 22:18) and warned that it was a reflection of the sinful heart of mankind (Mk. 7:22). It can be a destructive influence in ecclesial gatherings (1Cor. 5:8). Bullinger defines it as "the wicked acting of the evil nature" which can only be overcome by the development of spiritual protection (Eph. 6:12-17).

"Covetousness" — Gr: *pleonexia*, a desire for possessions, avarice, greed, to have more. It expresses the ruthless pursuit of one's own interest to the deprivation of others. It replaces God as the object of worship (Col. 3:5), and was therefore not to be found in men of faith (Exo. 18:21). It is the dangerous sin of the present generation, when the desire for possessions can replace subjection to Yahweh (cp. Eze. 33:31).

"Maliciousness" — Gr: *kakia*, licentiousness, and general depravity, the vicious disposition and desires, with an inclination to injure others. Bullinger defines it as "every form of evil, physical and moral." Thus, antagonism to others. 1Pet. 2:16 warns against allowing this attitude to express itself within the ecclesia.

"Full of" — The beginning of the second set comprising five characteristics by which harm is occasioned to the person of another.

The word *mestous* literally means: "stuffed with;" thus disallowing a place for any other emotion. Instead of the fleshly qualities now considered, Paul urged his readers to be "filled to the utmost" with knowledge and practice of Truth (ch. 15:14).

"Envy" — Gr: *phthonou*, jealousy, the characteristic manifested by those who delivered Christ for trial (Mat. 27:18), and to be avoided by his servants (1Pet. 2:1). It has the idea of being jealous of another's success or excellence. Envy and jealousy are two of the most evil human characteristics; they invariably lead to bitterness and hatred.

"Murder" — Gr: *phonou*, "to slay." Note the similarity in sound between this and the previous word, the two words being often combined by classical Greek writers, "besides, envy leads to murder, as is shown by the example of Cain." Murder (whether mentally or physically expressed) can be the result of envy at another's achievements or possessions (Jas. 4:2).

"Debate" — Gr: *eridos*, "strife" (RSV), "quarrelsome," thus an attitude of rivalry and contention (2Cor. 12:20). Paul

warns against such a demonstration of human wrangling: 1Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:9; Phil. 1:15. This contention and strife would naturally follow from malice and covetousness.

"Deceit" — Gr: *dolos,* to *bait or snare,* hence "craft, deceit, guile." Elymas was accused by Paul of being "full of subtilty" (Acts 13:10) when he tried to "snare" the "deputy from the faith." The word occurs twelve times and has been rendered "guile" (7), "subtility" (2), "deceit" (2), "craft" (1).

"Malignity" — Gr: *kakoetheia,* a disposition for mischief and spite, by which a neighbor's life is rendered miserable. The word has the idea of misinterpreting the words or actions of others, or putting the worst construction on their conduct.

"Whisperers" — Introducing a group of six dispositions of the mind which are based upon personal pride. These crimes are of a particularly deadly nature, destroying the good name of another against whom they are directed.

The Greek word is *psithuristus: secret slanderers, calumniators,* who pour poison into a listening ear against their neighbor. This is done secretly, and in a sly manner, by hints and innuendo, to detract from others, or to excite suspicion of them. It is the more dangerous class of those who spread hints of evil in others.

VERSE 30

"Backbiters" — Gr: *katalalous: open slanderers,* who blacken reputations publicly. Some translate the word as "stabbers in the back." Whisperers (v. 29) speak of the supposed faults of others secretly and with great reserve; backbiters proclaim them publicly and avowedly.

"Haters of God" — Gr: *theostygeis,* those who consider that His justice and principles stand in the way of their own wickedness. They see His teachings as a judgment against them and therefore despise their Creator. Compare Jn. 7:7; 15:18, 24, 25; 3:19, 20. This is a form of blasphemy reflecting a totally rebellious rejection of divine truth and ways. It represents a mind which is completely lacking in every godly virtue.

"Despiteful" — Gr: *hybristas,* is from *hybris,* the cruelest of all sins in the eyes of the Greeks. It is mingled pride and cruelty. W. Barclay defines it as "the pride which makes a man defy God, and the arrogant contempt which makes him trample on the hearts of his fellow man." Such a person is insulting and insolent. The only other occurrence of the word is 1Tim. 1:13, translated as "injurious."

"Proud" — Gr: *huperephanos,* to be superior to another, thus arrogant (2Tim. 3:2; Jas. 4:6; 1Pet. 5:5). Men are proud where they suppose none is superior to them, and it is only the Truth that destroys pride and replaces it with humility (1Pet. 5:6; Phil. 2:3).

"Boasters" — Gr: *alazonas,* who seek to attract admiration by claiming advantages they do not really possess. The only other occurrence is 2Tim. 3:2, describing a sign of the last days. A man who has an inordinate conceit will readily proclaim his own merits to those who might listen. The word can signify "a wanderer;" one who spreads his fame far and wide!

"Inventors of evil things" — The final seven terms relate to the destruction of all natural sentiments and affections. Particular concern is given to the family relationships, upon which the Truth and society should be formed.

The Greek word is *epheuretes,* a contriver (Thayer). This class spends its life thinking of the evil to be done to others, striving to achieve new means of exciting lust and desire, and seeking different ways to gratify its passions. The TCNT has: "they invented new sins," whilst Rotherham renders it: "inventors of vices." In ancient cities, especially Rome at this time, there was constant competition in these matters.

"Disobedient to parents" — It is no surprise that evil parents produce evil children. Paul uses this word elsewhere to designate a symptom of "the last days" (2Tim. 3:2; cp. Tit. 1:16; 3:3). The foundation of life should be established in the home, by respect for authority. Such teaching forms the basis for the honor to

be given to the eternal Father ("from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth derives its name" — Eph. 6:2). Failure to appreciate this in youth, will be reflected in adulthood and society.

Note that Rom. 1:30 is describing the conduct of the Roman community of the times, and *adults* were no longer obedient to parents! The Roman laws enjoined the duty of honoring parents, but it is probable that the duty was often violated, and parents were treated with great neglect and even contempt. In an affluent society this attitude is often repeated. Parents are confined to "old age homes" and care for them is relegated to others. The Biblical example requires children to maintain concern and respect for parents.

VERSE 31

"Without understanding" — Gr: *asynetos,* a person who refuses to listen to counsel or heed advice. They expand the previous characteristic to all people. The word means "dull of apprehension" (translated "foolish" in v. 21), and was used as a question by the Lord to his disciples (Mk. 7:18). This class of person becomes dull through disuse of their faculties; they avoid the benefit of constant reading of the Word and mental application to the Truth, by which our "understanding" and wisdom is enlarged.

"Covenant-breakers" — Gr: *asynthetous,* translated "faithless" (RSV) and "untrustworthy" (NASB). Such people refuse to abide by covenants and agreements undertaken. Vows are considered inviolate by God (Ecc. 5:4-5), and include the covenant transacted through baptism by means of the "covenant-victim" (Heb. 9:16). Marriage contracts similarly are covenants for the lifetime of the parties involved. The breakdown of marriage, from which this generation particularly suffers, can be attributed to a careless disregard for promises made. God expects His children to be honest with Him and with others — and honesty is demonstrated in the maintaining of one's word.

Without natural affection" — Gr: *astorgos,* to neglect to cherish, foster or caress. Bullinger defines it as "void of natural affection, particularly of that love and affection which parents ought to bear to children, and children to parents." It indicates the destruction of all feelings of natural tenderness, especially in family relationships. Based upon the previous characteristic of covenant-breakers, this one now indicates the ease with which the basic foundation of family life was disrupted and destroyed in the apostolic times. The attachment between parents and children is one of the strongest in nature, and nothing can overcome it but the most confirmed and established wickedness. Carelessness with human matters is a precursor to disregard for the spiritual. The attitude is one of Canaanism (Psa. 106:37-38), whose rites Manasseh imitated by introducing the horrid custom of sacrificing children to Moloch in the sacrifice of his own (2Chr. 33:6).

"Implacable" — Gr: *aspondous,* those who will not be reconciled, or pursue others with unyielding revenge. It denotes an unforgiving temperament. This is a development of the former traits, although some texts omit this word.

"Unmerciful" — Gr: *aneleemonas: pitiless, without compassion.* A general term, which concludes this list of infamous human qualities. It refers not only to a lack of tender feelings within the family circle, but also the kind of hardness of heart familiar in Jewish society (cp. Mat. 19:8).

VERSE 32

"Who knowing the judgment of God" — In concluding his treatise on the moral condition of society, Paul emphasizes their guilt. The word "knowing" is *epiginosko: complete knowledge,* a full recognition of where their actions were leading. The RV translates "judgment" (Gr: *dikaioma: a just deed, statute, decision*) as "ordinance," so rendered in Lk. 1:6. It is self-evident that sinful actions bring disaster. Man knows that God does not approve of the things he does, and yet he becomes completely indifferent to the divine ordinances, or rules, and aims only

The Challenge of the Truth

Paul reminds his readers of the great contrast between the ecclesia and the world; between the Word of God and the expression of flesh. In vv. 16-17 he laid a thesis that, apart from the indwelling power of the gospel, all mankind are spiritually destitute and prey to every form of evil inherent in the flesh. In following the dictates of their natural impulses, they leave themselves open to the judgments of God. Paul demonstrates this by showing (in v. 18) that God is wrathful against all forms of sin, because sin is opposition to His revealed Truth. He provides three unshakeable proofs that Yahweh has grounds for animosity against sin:

(1) That because of His works, mankind should acknowledge the reality of God's existence, and therefore they are culpable;

(2) That instead of rendering unto Him honor and thanksgiving, mankind gave themselves over to the worship of images;

(3) That, in addition to pagan religion which dishonors both God and man, they are guilty of the most shameful and abominable immorality.

God has revealed His Power, Purpose and Perfection. For whom did He provide such revelations? Was it for the philosophers of this world (v. 22)? By no means. He made Himself known so that men and women from all walks of life and from all nations might learn of Him — and, having learnt, to humbly bow before His almighty presence. His revelation could have no impact upon the "wise" of this world, for they are "vain" (1Cor. 1:19-21; 3:19-20). His revelation is open to all, who with humility of spirit, seek after His Truth. His Word is within reach of all who do not shut their eyes to the reality of His existence and the power of the gospel (Acts 14:17; 17:24-28).

For those of humanity who will not receive the three points of divine revelation, God is left with only one course of action: He "gives them up..." (v. 24). When this occurs it becomes a tragedy for both God and man; for God "is not willing that any should perish" (2Pet. 3:9), and man is completely dependent upon Yahweh for eternal salvation! Whether mankind accepts or rejects it, the fact remains that Yahweh is Sovereign over all His creation. God manifestation has been His continuing purpose throughout the ages, so that "*all* the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh" (Num. 14:21), and not remain the arena for the unbridled glory of flesh.

Therefore the ungodly must inevitably perish: the result of their own pride and folly. But for those who recognize that "the gospel" is "the power of God unto salvation," and who surrender themselves to its governing influence in their lives, there is great comfort. "Wherefore, he (Christ) is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Society in Disgrace

The *Jerusalem Bible* renders Rom.1:29-31 with a degree of chilling horror that highlights the squalor of the human condition when individuals hideously besmirch the ways of godliness: "And so they are steeped in all

sorts of depravity, rottenness, greed and malice, and addicted to envy, murder, wrangling, treachery and spite. Libellers, slanderers, enemies of God, rude, arrogant and boastful, enterprising in sin, rebellious to parents, without brains, honor, love or pity..." Such was the pattern of conduct of society in apostolic times. A similar picture presents itself as civilisation struggles turbulently towards the final dissolute years of the twentieth century. This age is moving steadily towards expiry, the social atmosphere filled with the stench of vileness and corruption. The only hope for those who have been called to receive an entrance into God's kingdom, is to "hold fast" till Christ comes, "keeping his words unto the end" thereby making their "calling and election sure" (2Pet. 1:9-10; Rev. 2:25, 26). — ***J. Ullman.***

to satisfy the flesh. Thus there is conflict between the flesh and spirit (Gal. 5:19-21), between those in the way of death and those in the way of life (Gal. 6:7-8).

"That they which commit such things are worthy of death" — Being evil and offensive to God, they were deserving of punishment at His hand. All such characteristics will ultimately disappear in the destruction of the flesh (Mat. 13:31; Rev. 20:14).

"Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" — They encourage their companions in the same sins, and excite them to greater errors. They "join hand in hand" (Pro. 16:5) and become confederate in iniquity. Flesh delights to embrace all within its gratifying influence (Eph. 5:11; Psa. 50:21). The power of example should never be underrated. Good works encourage the spiritually-minded; evil actions strengthen the carnal. Our attitudes to the opportunities of life can lead others to life or death. Paul thus summarizes this section of the terrible characteristics of society by reminding his readers of their own responsibility in the example shown to others.

The words "commit" and "do (them)" in this verse are from the Gr. *prasso,* which has the implication of a continuing habit, while "do (the same)" is from *poieo,* indicating a single act. The populace had become so accustomed to the excesses practised around them that they became almost immune to the depravity, and were even prepared to follow such example when occasion or convenience presented itself. The word "pleasure" (Gr. *suneuocheo*) means "to assent to; to consent with" as in the AV margin. They tolerated the baser conduct of their contemporaries. How like our present society! Many might disagree with the increasing perversions, but such evils have become so prevalent that they are now tolerated with little complaint. Therefore, in chapter 2 Paul points out the dangers for the ecclesia in such a morally bankrupt society.

The Inventory of Human Folly

The vices catalogued by Paul in Rom. 1:29-31 are familiar to the modern world, and all stem from a "mind void of judgment," a mind that rejects God because He does not measure up to what flesh requires of Him. Consequently such people are given over to the worship of flesh with all its resultant evils and unhappiness. Every vile, wicked vice stems from such a mind, destroying natural affection, and bringing in its train juvenile delinquency, broken

homes, hatred, violence, immorality, frustration, misery and disturbances both of mind and body. An unhappy world results from the basic sin of rejecting a God who will not stoop to cater to the flesh, but demands a standard of righteousness that requires the sacrifice of self.

The seeds of true happiness, contentment of heart, and peace in life are found in the service of the Truth and the cultivation of qualities that honor the One who has created us. — ***H.P. Mansfield.***

The Folly of the Flesh

The flesh is an evil thing. It is corrupt and corrupting. Through Adam's transgression, sin entered it and brought it under the doom of death. Concerning this there ought to be no contention amongst brethren. How angry Paul would be, if, after all he has said, he were to come and find us wrangling over this question. "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). What world? The world, manifestly, that is related to death — the world of all flesh. "In my flesh," said Paul in another place, "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:17-20). Let us not allow ourselves to be misled by the statements (seemingly harmless, but in reality destructive of the Truth concerning the putting away of sin) that the flesh to which these texts refer is that of sinning adults and not of innocent babes or the righteous Christ. Paul makes no distinction in the quality of human flesh. Its tendencies, according to him, are always sinwards — a fact which is corroborated by Peter, James, and John (Eph. 2:3; 2Pet. 2:18; Jas. 1:14-15; 1John 2:16). Paul even goes to the length of enumerating the ugly and odious workings of Adamic flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Then again, the sum and substance of all Scripture exhortation is based on the supposition that our nature (since the Fall) is prone to evil. If our flesh is not now inherently bad and unclean, how are we to understand the commands (given without qualification or reservation) to sow not to the flesh (Gal. 6:8), to walk not and to live not after the flesh (Rom. 8:4, 13), to make not provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14), but to crucify it (Gal.5:24)?

— ***A. T. Jannaway.***

CHAPTER TWO

In ch. 1:16-17, Paul revealed that faith in the saving truths of the gospel is necessary for salvation. The unbelieving world of Gentilism does not reveal this, and therefore lies under the shadow of God's wrath (vv. 18-32). The believing world exists under the same shadow if it does not act upon the truth it acknowledges (ch. 2:1-16), and this applies equally to Jew and Gentile (v. 1). The mere formalism of Judaism did not reveal a saving faith (vv. 17-25), but a true conversion of the heart, manifested in obeying the spirit of the law did so (vv. 26-29).

Hypocrisy Condemned — vv. 1-5.

Having shown that the gross wickedness of the Gentile world condemns it before God, the apostle now considers the Jewish community and finds that, though they stand in judgment against their contemporaries, they perform similar activities themselves. Paul declares that those who criticize others must closely examine their own motives and actions.

VERSE 1

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man" — Paul writes as though he faces a heckler who interrupts his arguments from time to time with an objection, which he now proceeds to answer. The Greek word for "inexcusable" is *anapologetos: without apology or defence.* The word only occurs elsewhere in ch. 1:20, rendered "without excuse." A believer lacks any defence when he condemns a certain course of action and yet manifests similar inconsistency. He has no excuse for his sins before God.

Whilst the term "O man" applies generally to anyone who should so act (he here uses the word *anthropos: a human being*), Paul's accusation is particularly against the Jews, who considered the Gentiles to be completely wanting of a moral code. However, Paul skilfully employs this word in his argument. If he had openly named the Jews at the beginning of his statement, it would most likely have excited opposition from them. He therefore approaches the subject gradually, affirms it of man in general, and then makes a particular application to the Jews in verse 17.

"Whosoever thou art that judgest" — The Greek word for "judgest" (*krino)* has the sense of condemning. The Jew was accustomed to expressing himself freely and severely about the character and destiny of the Gentiles (cp. Lk. 22:25; Rom. 11:11; Gal. 2:15). Gentiles were considered to be mere animals (Mat. 7:6; 15:26-27; Phil. 3:2), to be viewed with abhorrence as those shut out from the favor of God. But those who so judged, were acting in similar fashion!

"For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things" — They were guilty of offences corresponding to those practised by Gentiles: Mat. 12:39; 3:7; 12:34, 45). When we judge others we should make it a rule to examine ourselves on that very point, for the measure of the judgment that will be directed against ourselves is that which we now exact against others (Mat. 7:2; 25:40, 45). The word "condemnest" is from the stronger word *katakrino* — to judge down, to condemn completely.

VERSE 2

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth" — God's judgment will be poured out impartially, adequately, and in accordance with the facts. It does not depend upon race or position, but is according to the divine standard of truth. The word for "judgment" is the Greek *krina*, which signifies a decision determined; a sentence pronounced. The Greek word for "truth" is *alethia*, which signifies that which is true, genuine, guaranteed. The word appears again in v.8 and v.20. It signifies the reality of things expressed. The measure of judgment God has proclaimed will be expressed in reality against those who despise His goodness, and will be poured out impartially, without consideration of race, upon all those found despising what they know is truth. Since the reaction of Yahweh is based upon His character of righteousness and justice, we can have confidence in the outcome: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 Jn. 4:17). There will be no perverting of the facts, for God is consistent in all His ways. He will judge according to the real nature of their conduct, and not as their conduct may appear to others (1 Sam. 16:7).

"Against them which commit such things" — The crimes mentioned in Chapter 1. The objector's premise is here considered: "We know that the doom of God falls justly upon those who practise such vices" (Moffatt). The evidence of

such a judgment is embedded in history. Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the vengeance of judgment (Gen. 19; 2 Pet. 2:6); Korah and his company were enveloped in divine destruction (v. 4), as was the world of Noah's day (v. 5). Thus Paul establishes a basis for later comments concerning the need for believers to carefully and continually examine their own motives and actions – an appeal which continues throughout this chapter.

VERSE 3

"And thinkest thou this, O man" — The apostle now appeals to their common sense and conviction of what is right. The word for "thinkest" is *logizomai*, from *logos*, signifying, "to take an inventory, to consider", thus: "an outward expression of an inward reasoning". The word occurs 19 times in Romans, as Paul "reasons" the expositions to challenge their intelligence. He asks his readers to consider deeply the propositions advanced.

"That judgest them which do such things" — That is, condemn others for doing what they do themselves. The argument is turned upon the objector, for, by tradition, the Jew thought that the mere privilege of birth would ensure him an entrance into the kingdom (Mat. 3:8-9; Jn. 8:33-45); but if, in fact, they do the very things that they condemn in others, divine justice demands their condemnation. God is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). If men condemned their fellow-men, how much more would a pure and holy God condemn iniquity! A crime is a crime wherever committed: sin does not lose its essentially evil character by being committed within the environment of religious privileges. Those who profess to be the people of God have no peculiar licence to sin (cp. ch. 6:1-2, 15). Israel was condemned because their sacrifices were not complemented by purity of action (Isa. 1:11-17; 65:2-5; Rev. 3:16).

"That thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" — The answer is a decisive, No, you will not! The Jewish objector supposed that since he had not been delivered over to "a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28-32, the sign of God's wrath upon the Gentiles), he was exempt from the consistent judgment of God. But the divine judgment will embrace all classes of those responsible: the saints (the "house of God", Heb. 10:21; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17), Israel (the "house of David", Isa. 7:2,13; 22:22; Jer. 21:12; Zech. 12:7-12), and the Gentiles (1 Pet. 4:17; Zech. 14:2). It was for this reason that Paul so earnestly pleaded with the Gentile, Felix, who despised that which he knew was truth. He had a "more perfect knowledge of that way" (Acts 24:22), and yet, though he knew what he should do in the sight of God, he refused to submit. Paul reasoned with him of "righteousness, temperance, and *judgment to come*" (v. 25), as he now does to the Romans. How many are prepared to consider these truths, and having learned, to submit to the divine Will? Paul wished to be certain that the believers at Rome did not misunderstand the important issues which were at stake for every one of them.

VERSE 4

"Or despisest thou" — "Do you treat with contempt the goodness of God by 6refusing to change your way of life?" Paul here uses a stronger term than the previous "judgest" (v. 1) or "thinkest" (v. 3). The word *kataphroneo* signifies "to contemn or treat with neglect" and has the idea of perverting or abusing a privilege. The Jews thought that because immediate judgment had not flowed forth from God to cut them off, but blessings had continued to follow them, God therefore did not regard them as sinners. Considering themselves as innocent and safe (Lk. 13:1-5; 18:9-12), they ignored the true goodness and mercy of God.

Similarly, the term applies to those within the Body who deny the thesis of ch.1:16-17. They may do this either by open rebellion against vital principles of the Truth, especially in relation to the doctrine of the atonement, or through careless misunderstanding. The condition develops in those who do not value the "power" of

the gospel, and therefore do not permit its transforming power to change their lives. Whichever reason might be the cause, the result is the perverting and neglecting of the greatest privilege known to mankind.

"The riches of His goodness" — Yahweh has indignation against sin, but will extend goodness and mercy in forgiveness of sins rather than in punishment. This principle is expressed in the gospel (Rom. 11:22). The Jews imagined that only they were recipients of the divine goodness. True, they were selected as the children of Abraham, but acting inconsistent with that profession would exclude them from the goodness (cp. Luke 3:8). These riches are beyond comparison with the wealth of the world, but it requires spiritual sight to recognise their value: Eph. 1:18. The gospel brings "an abundance" of life (1 Tim. 4:8), and Paul now shows those riches in different aspects of the divine mercy.

The word for "goodness" appears twice in this verse, from two different words with a subtle difference. Here it is *krestotes*, defining a moral excellence in character or demeanor, kindness, graciousness. It is used again three times in ch. 11:22. The second word is from *krestos* meaning pleasantness; useful in manner or morals.

"And forbearance" — The Greek word *anoche* signifies "a holding back", and denotes a delay of punishment, a suspense of wrath which must eventually be exercised unless the sinner accepts God's conditions. Men generally despise this characteristic as being a sign of weakness. But on the contrary, it is a divine characteristic.

"Longsuffering" — Greek: *makrothumia* signifies "patience, slowness in avenging wrongs". Some see divine longsuffering as an apparent immunity (cp. 2 Pet. 3:9), and ignore the opportunities it provides (Eccl. 8:11). However, it is consistent with Yahweh's desire that all should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). He is not willing that any should perish, but His longsuffering must end when "the wickedness" of mankind is "great" (1Tim. 2:4; Joel 3:13). These three attributes (Goodness, Forbearance, Longsuffering) are vital aspects of the divine character as revealed in Exod. 34.

"Not knowing" — Not considering. The word *agnoeo* means not merely "to be ignorant of" (used in ch. 1:13), but denotes such a degree of inattention as to result in ignorance. Compare Hos. 2:8. In this sense it denotes a voluntary, and therefore a criminal ignorance. Having once known the power of the gospel, some can become loose and vague in understanding, finally forgetting the life-saving principles of the Truth. This is a form of living death (moral leprosy).

"That the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" — They were ignorant of the fact that the purpose of the gospel (the "goodness of God") is to lead to repentance. By using the term "leadeth thee", Paul shows that the design of the gospel is to induce men to repent of sin, and not to lead them to deeper and more aggravated iniquity (Isa. 30:18). He also points to the divine care in "leading" to repentance, as a shepherd caringly guides his sheep to better pastures. God does not drive, as would a ruthless slave-master. Some suggest that the word indicates: "aims and seeks to lead thee": thus expressive of active effort by God to do that which He has no obligation to do.

"Repentance" is from the Greek word *metanoia*, which is derived from *meta*, "after", and *noeo*, "to perceive" (from *nous*, the mind), and therefore suggests an action that takes place after a person has come to understanding. The word thus signifies a change of mind and action, not mere sorrow of mind for wrongs committed. The O.T. uses such phrases as "it *repented* God..." meaning that God changed His purpose in relation to the particular subject under consideration. The same principle of change of action is expressed in the N.T. Peter called upon the sorrowing Jews of Jerusalem to "repent and be baptised" (Acts 2:38). They had already recognised their guilt, and expressed their deep contrition, and therefore Peter explained that something more

than sorrow for sins is required. There must be a change of mind and action (repentance) that would lead to baptism. Acts 11:18 records that the disciples rejoiced that God had "granted repentance to Gentiles unto life". He had not "granted" them sorrow, but the opportunity for them to change their beliefs and way of life, such as would lead them unto immortality. Paul rejoiced because the brethren had "sorrowed unto repentance" (2 Cor. 7:9-10): that is, they revealed a change of mind to such a degree as caused them to perform what he required of them, for, as he declared, "godly sorrow worketh repentance (a change of mind and purpose) to salvation" (v. 10).

VERSE 5

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart" — The word "after" (Gr. *kata*) means "in respect to"; i.e. to act according to a hard heart. They allowed the natural feelings of flesh to develop, and this resulted in a refusal to acknowledge the divine will. When the flesh reigns, the spirit of the Truth is disregarded or even repudiated. The word "hardness" (Gr. *sklerotes*, dryness, callousness; stubbornness) is used to denote insensibility of mind: that which is insensitive to the touch, upon which no impression can be made. It is a characteristic generated by the carnal mind (Rom. 8:7) so that the mind becomes seared by sin (1 Tim. 4:2) and hardened as an adamant stone (Zech. 7:12). Without the "water of life" running through the mind of such people, the Truth dries up within them. So the goodness and forbearance of God have no effect, and the man remains obdurate (Mat. 19:8; Acts 19:9). An "impenitent heart" is that which is not prepared to acknowledge its inherent failings, nor to express sorrow for sin. The word *ametanoetos* literally means "without change; unrepentant", and expresses a stubborn refusal to conform to what God requires. Mere sorrow for sin is insufficient. Esau was sorry that he was excluded from the blessing of Jacob, but his selfish sorrow only demonstrated a changeless heart. God requires not only a humble state of mind in the individual because of confessed wrong, but also an accompanying determination to change one's actions in accordance with the divine will.

Both characteristics were the hallmarks of the Judaistic spirit which was ever-ready to criticise "motes" in others, whilst ignoring "beams" in themselves (Matt. 7:3)!

"Treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath" — Treasure is usually stored away, hidden in a secret place, to be revealed at the appropriate time. So it is with those who deny the principles of the atonement in their daily lives, and appear to continue through life, unimpeded and without impeachment. But in due course the judgment will be meted out to those who, having received divine favor, continue to "despise God's goodness". Wrath is here invoked upon the Jewish critic as it had been upon mankind in general in ch. 1:18. The only difference between them is that wrath against the Gentiles is now being revealed in the distresses they face, whereas the storm is still gathering for the Jews (Jer. 30:5-7). Though today they seem to ignore God's ways with impunity, the future will reveal the reality of wrath (2 Thess. 1:8). Like the treasure that is revealed and displayed for all to see, so judgment will be manifested against the world in the day decreed (v. 16). A lesson is seen in the past judgments levelled against the nation of Israel for its hardness of heart (cp Ezek. 3:7-9; Rom. 11:7,20), and should provide a salutary warning (Zech. 1:4-5). Some seek to lay up treasure of material benefits (Lk. 12:21), but these will prove to be a basket of "wrath" in the end.

On the other hand, the faithful store up treasure of wisdom and truth (Mat. 6:20) and will receive honor and glory in the day of revelation (2 Thess. 1:10).

"And revelation of the righteous judgment of God" — This day of judgment will be for the responsible whether Jew or Gentile, baptised or unrepentant. The word "revelation" is *apokalupsis*, and means to unfold or unveil. The uncovering

of God's judgments will also mean the "uncovering" of the unforgiven sins of mankind. The true character of flesh will be accurately displayed for all to understand. This will come from God's "righteous judgment" (Gr. *dikaiokrisia*), which signifies the process of investigation with a just sentence resulting.

The Impending Day of Judgment — vv. 6-16.

Humanity closes its eyes to the fact that God will not forever tolerate the conditions that today exist on the earth. Judgment is impending, and will commence at the household of faith (1 Pet. 4:17) and thereafter extend to the world in general. The judgment will effectively discriminate between three main classes of people, all of which, in some way or another, have had the Word of God set before them, and been granted the opportunity to adhere to it.

VERSE 6

"Who will render to every man" — There will be no exclusions, nor avoidance of the consequences of our actions. The category is of those who are responsible through an understanding of the divine will (John 12:48). The judgment will be upon the basis of God's righteousness and mercy: Psa. 62:12; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Job 34:11. "Man" in this place (and in Rom. 12:3; 14:5,12; 15:2) is from *hekastos*, meaning "each one", and includes men and women who are equally amenable to the judgment.

"According to his deeds" — The Greek for "according to" is the same word rendered "after" in v. 5: *kata*. Notice it is not "on account of his deeds", but "according to"! It is not understanding of mind, nor brilliance of expression that is required. Nor will mere works commend a man to God. The judgment will examine how the principles of faith are displayed in works: Matt. 25:40,44. James described works which arose out of a conviction: ch. 2:21-26. Without such a demonstration, faith (a personal expression) is dead (v. 20). The judgment will not be upon what we know, but what we do with what we know!

VERSE 7

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing" — The words "patient continuance" is *hupomone*, signifying "an abiding under" (Vine), "cheerful and in a life of holiness (Rev. 2:10; Mat. 10:22; Heb. 10:38-39).

"Seek for" — An active endeavour to find that which is not possessed. The word *zeteo* means "metaphorically, to seek by thinking, to seek *how* to do something" (Vine). This defines those who are actively engaged in the ways of Truth, their minds constantly exercised upon the Word to understand what they should be doing and how they should be thinking. Truth requires a diligent application of effort in order to achieve a future reward. Noah *found grace* (Gen. 6:8); Ruth *sought* for grace (Ruth 2:2); Mary *found* favor (Luke 1:30); as did David (Acts 7:46). Disciples are urged to "seek" the kingdom of God (Mat. 6:33). This is the manifesting of an earnest and intense desire to obtain it. In an age when absorbing interests and life's cares predominate in the vision of so many, the duty to "seek" for divine glory must become a personal challenge.

"Glory and honor and immortality" — Three divine gifts will be granted to the favoured. The first word (Gr. *doxa*) denotes that which is distinguished for its beauty, ornament and majesty: that which is altogether splendid and grand. It was this for which man was first created (Isa. 45:18); but which Israel rejected (Jer. 13:11); and which will yet be achieved (Rev. 21:11,23-24).

The second word ("honor", Gr. *time*) signifies a reward, in contrast to that which is in contempt, in poverty or lacking. Today we might be despised by men; in the kingdom we will be honoured by God: that great objective should drive us to the patient continuance necessary.

The final word (Gr. *aphtharsia*) describes an incorruptible state; an unending existence; the release from this "vile body" we now possess (Phil. 3:21) which

has its inherent weaknesses, illnesses and deathfulness, causing us to constantly "groan" (Rom. 8:18-22). We "seek for" a state of things beyond the grave. Immortality is vested in divine nature (1Tim. 6:16), and is only possible when the corruption of mortality is removed (2Pet. 1:4).

"Eternal life" — The gift of God (Rom. 6:23), which comes from obedience (Mat. 19:16) and by the sacrifice of present gains (Mk. 10:30), through belief (Jn. 3:15) and hope (Tit. 3:7). The Greek is *aionios zoe*: "life of the age", referring to the millennial Age of immortality.

VERSE 8

"But unto them that are contentious" — Those who are argumentative, rejecting the force of Truth, and refusing to obey it. They have enlightenment, but will not act in accordance therewith. The word comes from *erithos*, which signifies "a hired labourer"; thus, to work for wages or gain, to canvass, to intrigue. Such "work" at wickedness, deliberately forging a pathway of opposition to the divine way. The NEB renders it: "those who are governed by selfish ambition", whilst the NASB has: "those who are selfishly ambitious". Their presence in the Brotherhood is for personal aggrandisement and honor, and, "serving their own bellies (the flesh)" (Rom.16:18; Phil. 3:19) they reject the principle of "patient continuance" (Rom. 2:7).

"And do not obey the truth" — This describes the class of enlightened rebels. They know the Truth but refuse to submit to it. The word "obey" (Gr. *peitho*) signifies "an actual and outward result of the inward persuasion" (Vine), but in its negative form as here (*apeitheo*), it signifies not to allow oneself to be persuaded, to withhold the results of belief. Such will be resurrected to condemnation, for, having rejected the Word (John 12:48) they will have nothing to commend them to the righteous Judge. The Jews of apostolic times knowingly refused to accept the clear evidence of the resurrection, and willingly opposed its preaching. Paul and Barnabas declared to them: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the gospel message to respond to its privilege. To do otherwise is to spurn the divine gift, and to return to the beggarly elements of the world.

"But obey unrighteousness" — Here is the positive word, *peitho*. A refusal to accept baptism constitutes their position, for it is by this act of faith that a person is justified (i.e., "made righteous") by faith (Rom. 5:1). Conversely those who responded to the call of Truth manifest in action their conviction: "Ye have obeyed (i.e., in baptism) from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (ch. 6:17). To "obey unrighteousness" is to set oneself upon a course of life, in disobedience to the gracious wisdom of God. Sin dominates their vision, and rules their conduct, so that they "yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (ch. 6:13) by being committed to wickedness. Iniquity thus rules over men as they follow the dictates of evil, make no resistance to it, and implicitly obey all its demands.

"Indignation and wrath" — The divine answer to human wickedness; a punishment reserved for those who repudiate the divine goodness, and wittingly and wilfully refuse to enter into a covenant relationship with God. There is no reference to any formal investigation of the character or works of those who "do not obey the truth" for this will be unnecessary. Their very refusal to submit to the first act of obedience in baptism, brings its own condemnation. In the Greek text the two words appear in the reverse order: "*orge* (wrath) and *thumos* (indignation)". *Orge* is less sudden in its rise than *thumos* but more lasting in its nature. *Orge* is the more active emotion; *thumos* expresses more the inward feeling (Vine). This will be the fate of those who "obey not the truth" and who cannot escape the result of

At the Judgment Seat

Paul was anxious to impress his brethren with the fact that there is an impending day of judgment to correct the anomalies that are today permitted. To this many scripture passages bear witness: Psa. 50:4-5; Eccl. 3:17; 11:9; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:32; John 5:22-27; Rom. 14:10. The purpose of the judgment is expressed in 2 Cor. 5:10, where the word "appear" is *phaneroo*, signifying "to make manifest", to "publicly reveal". The judgment will make manifest, or reveal, the true worth of all those recognised in the sight of God as responsible. All sham and pretence will be removed, all veneers stripped away, and each person will appear in his or her true character. Just and unjust will both find a place there: Acts 24:15-16; Matt. 12:36-37; Luke 13:28. The fundamental basis of judgment will be the individual's attitude to the Word (John 12:48) as manifested in action. Both those who have embraced the Truth in baptism, and those who have comprehended it, yet rejected obedience to it, will be gathered for judgment.

Three Classes At The Judgment

Romans 2:6-16 reveals the different classes of both Jews and Gentiles who will appear at the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ. They will be:

1. Those who know the will of God but do not obey it;
2. Those who obey it in baptism but do not manifest its power in a changed life;
3. Those who obey its requirements and reveal its power in works of faith.

These three classes are referred to by Paul in the following manner:

CLASS 1. They "obey not the Truth" (v. 8) being indifferent to God's requirements, and despising His Word (v. 4). They know what is required of them, but refuse to submit to the first act of obedience in baptism, let alone practise the Truth. Upon them judgment will be poured (vv. 4-5). There will be no formal investigation of their case, no assessment of deeds good or bad, for they are openly rebellious, completely repudiating Christ's sacrifice and the divine mercy. They stand self-condemned by that very attitude and action. They will receive "wrath and indignation" (v. 8, RV). These two words are translated from the Greek *thumos* and *orge*. The first, *thumos*, expresses a sudden blaze of anger that settles down to *orge*, the pronouncement of doom. Paul implies that they are condemned out of hand because of their refusal to obey the first requirement of Christ in baptism. They are the counterpart of the man in the parable who was found without a wedding garment (Mat. 22:12). The sole question to him was: "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" The word "not" is from the Greek *me*, implying a refusal, a determination not to wear the garment. The man "was speechless", with nothing to say. Described as being "without law", they consequently "perish without law" (v. 12). They have wilfully rejected the gracious invitation of the Master to "come unto me". Paul contrasts them in ch. 6:17 with those who have accepted "that form of doctrine which was delivered you".

CLASS 2: These are in covenant relationship with God (whether Jew or

Gentile) and therefore "under law", but who habitually practise evil (v. 9). They will be "judged" (v. 12), so that their deeds are formally investigated. When it is revealed that they do not measure up to what is required, they will experience "tribulation and anguish" (v. 9) as condemnation is pronounced against them. Notice that Class 1 receives indignation and wrath, whereas Class 2 experiences tribulation and anguish — an increased punishment, for added responsibility.

CLASS 3: This class constitutes the righteous whose actions will be vindicated. They are the "doers of the law" (v. 13), whether Jew or Gentile (v. 14). They receive glory (praise for their conduct), honor (elevation with Christ), and immortality (the prize of life for the Age).

A careful examination of Paul's words will clearly show that these three classes will be represented at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and receive "in body" according to that which they have performed in life (2 Cor. 5:10).

Verse 12 also speaks of these three classes: (1) Those who have sinned without law — shall perish. (2) Those who have sinned in law — judged by the law. (3) Those who are doers of law (i.e. by works of faith) — shall be justified. See further notes on verse 13.

their folly. They will be raised from the dead to experience divine wrath followed by the pronouncement of their complete and utter rejection. No wonder Felix "trembled" as Paul reasoned "of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25). Felix apparently refused to conform to the restrictions of baptism, but realised the implications of Paul's warning words.

VERSE 9

"Tribulation and anguish" — This condemnation relates to the second of the three classes: those who have been baptised, but whose way of life does not conform to the principles they claim to have embraced. They are the "doers" of evil, for, having committed themselves to a vow of righteousness in baptism, they thereafter deny the very principles contained in that action. They "deny the Lord that bought them" (2Pet. 2:1), and "bring upon themselves swift destruction". They will be compelled to "give account of themselves" before the Judge as to the way they have treated with the high and holy things delivered into their care, and in this they will experience "tribulation and anguish" as their wickedness will be clearly brought home to them.

The word "tribulation" (Gr. *thlipsis*) denotes pressure; affliction; the situation of being "pressed down" by a burden, such as trials, tragedies, etc. It refers to the pressure of the calamities that will face the foolish as the just reward of their sins. It is used in 2Thes. 1:6 to describe the tribulation that will be "pressed upon" the adversaries of the faithful. In Mat. 24:21 it refers to the literal tribulation that fell upon the nation in AD70: a type of the greater tribulation of the judgment seat.

"Anguish" comes from *stenochoria*, which signifies "a narrow place" such as those who are hemmed in without the possibility of escape; thus a condition of distress. Knowing that they have fulfilled Yahweh's instruction of baptism, but have failed to maintain that way of life, they now realise that they have no means of mercy or forgiveness. They did not seek forgiveness from God formerly, nor did they honor their baptismal commitment in a sacrificial way of life. Now there is no means of redemption. Those who are "filthy (despoiled by sin) remain filthy still" (Rev. 22:11), for the moment of restoration has passed. The "narrow place" is of their own making, and the walls of

judgment now close in upon them. Sin hems in, whilst righteousness expands the vision and provides a grand hope. Thus Psa. 118:5 and 2Sam. 22:20 speak of the "wide space" of freedom and liberty that is available to those who trust Yahweh – they will not experience the anguish of failure and rejection.

"Upon every soul of man" — Upon all men. None of those who have received the Inspired Word, and thus form "the responsible", will be excluded nor escape the just examination and condemnation of evil.

"That doeth evil" — The word "doeth" is *katergazomai*, "to work out, achieve, effect by toil". "Ev. is from *kakos*, embracing "every form of evil whether moral or physical". The term does not relate to a sin that is committed and then repented of (called, "a sin not unto death" in 1Jn. 5:16), but to the continual, habitual practising of sin in a way that disgraces the privileges of the Truth. It refers to the "sin unto death" of 1Jn. 5:16, for which there is no recognition of the sins committed, nor any forgiveness sought. It speaks of bad habits, a way of life that does not conform to the actions of the Master. The same word is found in 1Jn. 3:4,9 and Jn. 3:20-21; 5:29.

"Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" — The Holy Oracles were first given to the Jew, and he is set forth as being the first to be answerable at the Judgment Seat. But the Gentiles are not exempt, for the Word has been delivered to both (Acts 17:30). All mankind stands on equal footing at the bar of eternal equity. The principle here established is that of responsibility: to whom much is given, of him much will be expected (Lk. 12:48).

VERSE 10

"But" — A change in thought! The apostle considers the third class: those who will find approval by Christ.

"Glory" — Gr. *doxa*, as in v. 7: the recognition due to a person (Bullinger). It primarily signifies an opinion, estimate; and hence, the honor of resulting from a good opinion (Vine). This comes as the result of the investigation of lives at the judgment seat, revealing a character and way of life in conformity with the example of Christ. The glory that is his by his obedient sacrifice is to become theirs (Jn. 17:1,4-5,22).

"Honor" — Gr. *time*, the payment of a reward (see notes on verse 7). After a favorable opinion has been established (the glory) concerning a person, he will be exalted by divine reward.

"And peace" — The third quality of recognition. The word *eirene* comes from a root signifying "to make as one"; thus complete unity with God and Christ (Jn. 17:21). Such peace brings freedom from the demands and restrictions of the flesh, liberty from the weaknesses and injuries of life, and release from anxiety and care. It is an extension of the character of God, who is One (thus, a unity). Yahweh declares Himself as the God of Peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 1Thess 5:23; Heb. 13:20). The Hebrew word is *shalom*, which signifies "to be whole" (Josh. 8:31), "full" (Ruth 2:12); "finished" (Neh. 6:15) and "perfect" (Isa. 42:19). It is in direct contrast to the state of "tribulation and anguish" to be experienced by the habitually evil.

For disciples who have withstood the pressures mounted against their faith, the day will come when their warfare will be accomplished. Their faith will result in victory. Their oft-uttered cry in times of trial and distress will not have gone unheard by the Father (Psa. 73:26-28), and the joy of "glory, honor and peace" will far transcend the tribulations of the present (2Cor. 4:15-18).

"To every man that worketh good" — That which is produced in the lives of faithful saints will be revealed as a complete contrast to the workers of iniquity (v. 9). "Worketh" is *ergazomai*, signifying, "to bring to pass; to work out to a finish". It implies the completion of the principles of Truth in a way of life.

"To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" — See verse 9. The principles of salvation apply to both classes, as did the burden of condemnation.

VERSE 11

"For" — The word commences each verse: 11, 12, 13, 14. Paul presents four developments of thought: God's impartiality in judgment; God's law dictates the terms of judgment; Response to the law is required; The extension of the law in the lives of Gentiles.

"There is no respect of persons with God" — The one Greek word translated "respect of persons" is *prosopolempsia* (from *pros*, "towards" and *ops*, "an eye".) The word suggests "to direct an eye towards an individual"; thus signifies "to receive face", to establish an opinion upon face value. There will be no such thing with God. He will carefully scrutinize heart and motives (Psa. 51:10); there will be no partiality in His judgment (Jas. 1:17). He is not governed by race, background nor profession (cp Ezek. 33:12-13). Peter learned this principle in the experiences of his vision (Acts 10:11-16, 34-35), and later expounded it to others (1Pet. 1:17). The exercise of partiality was strictly forbidden under the Mosaic statutes: Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; Pro. 24:23). Yahweh's children must manifest the same characteristic, revealing a depth of wisdom of such matters lodged in the heart (Deut. 10:16-19; Joel 2:12-13), not judging the issues of life through the "face" of the flesh.

VERSE 12

"For" — Paul now introduces a reason for what has just been said, and to show on what principles God would treat man in an impartial way.

"As many as have sinned without law" — Those who are outside covenant relationship. They have knowledge of the revealed divine law, but refuse to submit to it in baptism (as in v. 8; see also vv. 2-3). They "perish" without investigation (i.e., "without law" – Gr. *anomos*) for they have openly repudiated the basis of God's goodness. It is important to note that those who "sin without law" will perish, whilst those who sin "in the law" are judged. Why are they treated differently? Because the former, having refused baptism perish without the need of an examination – their refusal to be baptised is sin enough. An examination of their lives and actions would avail nothing, since they do not qualify even for that. The divine judgment upon them is to satisfy the requirements of God's righteousness and opposition to sin.

"Shall also perish without law" — They will be entirely dismissed from the divine presence, and are destroyed – no investigation of their denial of the Truth being necessary. The word "perish" (Gr. *apollumi*) indicates a finality about their case. The Greek word is in the Middle Voice, indicating that these individuals are responsible for their own destruction. They bring it upon themselves by rejecting God's goodness, and their folly and neglect of the law that was available to them for salvation is thus made evident.

"And as many as have sinned in (the) law" — This relates to those who have come under the influence, or the bounds, of divine law (Note that the definite article does not occur in the Greek). They have accepted its terms of life. The Jews were subject to the Mosaic statutes by inheritance, and obedient Gentile believers have the law "written in their hearts"; but both Jewish and Gentile believers "miss the mark" if they do not fully obey the precepts of God. Failure in any respect brings a person under the full judgment of the Mosaic law (Jas. 2:10). The Diaglott translates "in" as "under": those who come "under" the scope of its privileges, responsibilities and judgments. The law of God emphasizes the weakness of the flesh, for none (apart from the Lord Jesus) reveals the perfection it requires. Inasmuch as we fall short of the standard seen in Christ (Phil. 3:14), by that much we have "sinned" – even after we have tried to achieve a measure of obedience – and require the continual forgiveness of God.

"Shall be judged by (the) law" — In contrast to those who have not submitted to baptism and therefore perish without formal investigation, these shall be examined before the judgment seat of Christ and sentence passed on them in accor-

dance with how they have handled the Truth in their lives. Having embraced the privileges of the divine law, their responsibility is to honor it by "lawful" actions. None can ignore God's law with impunity. The mere possession of the law does not confer any position of advantage at the judgment seat; it only determines the standard by which a person shall be judged.

Paul's exposition continues at verse 16, as vv. 13-15 are in parenthesis.

VERSE 13

"(For not the hearers of the law are just before God" — Mere hearing of the law read does not constitute righteousness in the sight of God. See Mat. 7:21; Acts 10:35; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:7,10. The word for "hearers" in the Greek (*akroates*) signifies a pupil who is constantly learning but never properly applies the lessons. The word only occurs elsewhere in Jas. 1:22,23,25, where it is related to the word "forgetful": unresponsive hearers. The Jews constantly heard the law taught in their synagogues, and flocked to the Temple to listen to the "wisdom of the elders", but they did not apply its principles (cp. Mat. 23:3). Only doers of the law will be justified, declared Paul, and in doing so, he taught that justification is a process commencing in faith and developing in works (Rom. 5:1). There is no conflict between him and James on this doctrine, as is sometimes alleged.

"But the doers of the law shall be justified" — The word for "doers" is *poietes*, signifying "to perform, to make or create". It also appears in Acts 17:26; Jas. 1:22,23,25; 4:11. Paul teaches that both faith and works are necessary: cp Rom. 5:1; Jas. 2:14-26. Justification by faith through baptism is experienced now, after the type of Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees and entering into a walk of probation "over the river" (Josh. 24:2-3). Justification by works awaits the judgment seat of Christ – prefigured in the typical death and resurrection of Isaac by which Abraham was assured of immortality (Gen. 22:16-18). In both circumstances faith commenced a process of works.

Thus justification by faith must be followed by "works" of faith, in a manifestation of the righteousness of God as seen in the perfect character of Christ. Peter declared: "in every nation, he that feareth Him (God) and *worketh* righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:35). In *Elpis Israel* Brother Thomas drew on the life of Abraham to expound on justification: "Abraham was the subject of a two-fold justification, as it were; first, of a *justification by faith*; and secondly, of a *justification by works*. Paul says he was justified by faith; whilst James declares that he was justified by works. They are both right. As a sinner, he was justified from his *past sins* when his faith was counted to him for righteousness; and as a saint, he was justified by *works* when he offered up Isaac" (page 260). The Lord explained this two-stage process to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3-5) as "except a man be begotten again (through the water of baptism by the implantation of the "incorruptible seed": 1Pet. 1:23), he cannot ***SEE*** the kingdom of God" – the first stage of justification which is by faith. Then, "except a man be begotten of water *and of the Spirit*, he cannot ***ENTER*** the kingdom of God" – whereby justification by works completes the development.

VERSE 14

"For when the Gentiles" — In v. 13 Paul stated a general principle that to those who have known divine law, justification can only come if they fulfil God's purpose in their lives. In vv. 14-15 he proceeds to show that the same principle is applied to Gentiles, who, though not having received the Mosaic Code as had the Jews, were, nevertheless, still required to manifest works of faith for salvation.

"Which have not (the) law" — Omit the word "the" which does not appear in the Greek text. The Gentiles were not specifically born under a commitment to the divine law.

"Do by nature the things contained in the law" — The word for "nature" is *phusis*, meaning "growth, expansion". The Diaglott defines this word: "an infused disposition, which has become, as it were,

natural". A man does not obey God according to nature, and the apostle does not teach that Gentiles did the things contained in the law through natural desire. He is referring to those who have the "work of the law written in their hearts" (v. 15), who have been so impressed with the things of God that they intuitively obey the precepts of Christ and thus manifest the requirements of the law (see ch. 3:31). Paul later taught that, naturally, in the flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18), so that the "good thing" must be placed there from without. That "good thing" is the Truth, the Spirit-Word, and when that takes hold of a person's mind, it creates within him a process of thought in harmony with its teaching (Rom. 8:6). Gradually, the constant exercise of the Word on the mind creates such instinctive thinking which produces actions in harmony with its teaching. Thus "their conscience will bear witness" to the work of the law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:15).

"These, having not the law" — They did not receive the revelation of God

Justification Through Faith or Law?

Is Paul teaching justification through Mosaic statutes when he declares: "the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13)? By no means (cp. ch. 3:10,20, etc; Gal. 3:10-11). On the contrary, he establishes a basic principle which, in due course, he will turn against the Judaiser. Certainly, the commandments of Christ and the teaching of the Word will provide the basis for judgment for all who have knowledge of the Truth, as Christ himself so clearly taught (Jn. 12:48). However, this principle of divine judgment must be understood in the light of all apostolic teaching. For example: "Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God..." (Rom. 5:1). To say, as some allege, that faith *is* the keeping of law, is absurd. This view demands that faith becomes defective unless perfect obedience is given to the keeping of the law, and promotes the thesis that salvation can only be attained through keeping the Mosaic statutes.

In some measure, this epistle was written to counter this Judaistic myth. Throughout the epistle, Paul teaches that salvation may be attained "through faith" and the "works" which are the product of faith. Faith must predominate. If godly works are not performed upon the basis of faith, and through a love for Yahweh rather than through the compulsion of law, then such works are vain and empty. God is glorified when hearts and minds are turned to Him in love and faith, seeking His guidance and direction for the honor and glory of His Name.

The mere mechanics of keeping Mosaic statutes provides a stark and profitless contrast to the religion which is motivated by faith. When the mind is centred upon law rather than upon the love and mercy of Yahweh, the result is a Judaistic philosophy. This becomes a form of religion which is powerless to save, because its foundation is wrong. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that, not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8). Early in the epistle, the apostle laid the foundation that he would develop throughout: "the just shall live by faith". Therefore those who seek justification must seek the "righteousness which is of faith" (ch. 1:17; 10:6).

directly. The Greek omits the definite article: "having not law".

"Are a law unto themselves" — Their own reason and conscience, developed from an understanding of the Spirit-Word, becomes a rule of life. They see the benefits of the divine way, and desire to live under its influence.

VERSE 15

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts" — Paul contrasts the revealed law of God originally written on tables of stone, then recorded in the Old Testament scriptures, which is found written in the minds of believers. The Gentiles had not received the written law as had the Jews, but having obtained the knowledge of its principles, they had made that law the seat of their affections.

Paul does not say that the law itself was written in men's hearts (the word means the mind, intellect), but that the *work*, or effect, of the law was there. The law left its stamp upon the minds and hearts of Gentile believers, so that their new outlook in action was demonstrated to others. It was the design, purpose and object of the law to so affect these believers that the law was no longer merely a set of precepts and instructions, but became their way of life. The word "shew" (Gr. *endeiknumi* is in the Middle Voice (which has to do with oneself) and indicates "to shew forth, prove" – thus to give evidence of the power of the law in their lives. The "work of the law" is to reveal the divine principles and the development of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22), and this must become inscribed in the mind (2Cor. 4:6).

"Their conscience also bearing witness" — The mind trained by the Spirit-Word becomes a discerner of actions, and will direct a proper way of life. Vine defines the Greek word *suneidesis* as "that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives: hence that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good and condemning the bad, and prompting to do the former and avoid the latter". The word literally means "co-knowledge" or "knowing with". It is the mind's interpretation and application of the academic knowledge of right and wrong in the circumstances of life. The conscience can be either guided by the flesh (for which see Rom. 8:6-8) or the Spirit (see v. 9). The flesh-conscience will drive a person to seek its gratification in all issues presented to it; whereas the spirit-conscience will refer those issues to its gained knowledge of the divine mind and make a decision upon that basis. Paul's conscience drove him to sacrifice on behalf of his people, based upon his knowledge of the divine will in them: Rom. 9:1-3.

"And their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)" — Thus the mind, generated by the Spirit-Word, battles with that which is governed by the propensities of the flesh. When made sensitive to the Word, the mind will act as a judge of actions and will either condemn an action or allow it, according to the Spirit. This statement concludes the parenthesis (vv. 13-15) in which Paul has explained the principle of judging by the law. Verse 16 continues the argument from v. 12.

VERSE 16

"In the day" — This verse is to be connected with v. 12, and teaches that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, will be arraigned before the bar of judgment. Then God will judge all in righteousness: the Jew by the law which he had (v. 3,12), and the Gentile by the law which he accepted (v. 14). This is a specific day designated for the purpose of Christ's Judgment Seat: Psa. 75:2 (mg.). Compare Eccl. 12:14; Mat. 12:36; John 12:48; Acts 24:25; 1Cor. 4:5; Heb. 9:27; 2Tim. 4:1. That there is a "day" indicates a limit to God's longsuffering (2Pet. 3:9-10); that He has predetermined the date (Acts 17:31); and therefore, the development of a conscience based upon the Spirit-law (Rom. 2:15) is an urgent need. We cannot put off the "day" until a "more convenient

season" (Acts 24:25), for it will come as a thief to those who neglect the warning signs (compare the "day" of Noah and Lot: Luke 17:26-31 – note how often the word "day" and "days" appears in that section).

"When God shall judge the secrets of men" — That which is hidden from external view. See 1Cor. 4:5; Heb. 4:13. The word "judge" is from the Greek *krino*, signifying the entire process whereby judgment is made and a verdict pronounced. It will not only be the obvious which will come under scrutiny. The "secrets" are contained within the heart, and are known only to those who possess them. How important that we open up now to God any failings we might have, seeking for forgiveness, rather than hiding them in our hearts to be brought out at the judgment seat. Paul states that "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it" (1Cor. 3:13) as the basis for his exhortation: "Let no man deceive himself" (v. 18). He deceives himself by thinking that he can easily hide his evil heart from the discerning Judge!

"By Jesus Christ" — The word "by" is the Gr. *dia*, meaning in this context, "through". Jesus Anointed will be the personage through whom Yahweh will reveal Himself on the day of judgment. The Master declared that he will return as Judge of mankind, appointed on God's behalf (Mat. 7:21-23; 25:31-46; John 5:27. See also Acts 17:31; 2Cor. 5:10). He condemned the empty formalism of the spiritual hierarchy of his day (Mat. 23), and will again expose the parade of external righteousness by those who make professions of righteousness, but fail to manifest it in a way of life. The Judge will demand a holiness in accordance with the teachings he declared. Paul reinforces the basis of Christ's judgment since, in consequence of his own personal experience, he clearly saw the contrast between the "works of the law" which are legal and external, and the "fruits of faith" which work by love (Gal. 5:6; Eph. 2:9-10; Phil. 3:9).

"According to my gospel" — This declaration is one of the foundations of the apostle's gospel, and he condemned any who suggested "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). The word means: "good news" or "glad tidings", which was delivered to the people through the preaching of Paul.

Mere Formalism Will Not Save In That Day — vv. 17-29.

Paul reveals the inconsistency of Jews who sought justification through the deeds of the Law, and yet sinned by breaking its precepts. The Lord similarly revealed the fickleness of the religious leaders of his day who "made the word of God of none effect through their traditions" (Mark 7:13). The Law condemned the very ones who placed their confidence in it.

VERSE 17

"Behold" — An invitation to carefully consider what is to follow. Having shown that God would judge the world, and that Gentiles are condemned if they ignore or repudiate divine principles, Paul now proceeds to show how those principles applied to the Jews. Some manuscripts render this word from the Greek *ide* which denotes a pointed instruction to give attention. Others render is from *ei de*, which is in the form of a pleading question: "If now thou art.." The J.B. rendering of this passage continues this form: "*If* you call yourself a Jew, *if* you really trust in the Law and are proud of your God, *if* you know God's will through the law and can tell what is right, *if* you can teach the ignorant and instruct the unlearned because your law embodies all knowledge and truth, then why not teach yourself as well as others?" Paul's comments constitute a direct challenge to Jews who stood by the exclusiveness of their Jewishness.

"Thou art called a Jew" — Implying that this name was one of very high honor. It is the first thing mentioned on which the Jew would be likely to pride himself. The RV has: "But if thou bearest the name of a Jew and restest upon the law". The Jew was chosen of God, drawn out of Egyptian slavery, and given the Law as proof of his special position in the eyes of God. He prided himself in his standing and peculiar

The Law and Justification

It is important to consider the relations of a believer to the Law, particularly in the light of such statements of the apostle as "we are delivered from the law", "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross", etc (Col. 2:14).

To what is the apostle referring? Is he alleging that Yahweh first established a law, demanded that Israelites live according to it, and then removed it from them for the benefit of the Gentiles so that they might more easily conform to what is required of them? And, how are these expressions which imply that the Law was taken away to be considered in the light of Paul's definite statement that "doers of the law shall be justified"?

Two facts must be recognized:

1. The Judaizers had distorted the meaning and application of the Law;
2. The Law proclaimed a curse upon all those who broke it.

Paul's statements must be considered with these two facts in mind. Sometimes he is rejecting the Judaistic concept of the Law, showing that this imposed an impossible burden. Judaism looked for justification from the Law, and Paul revealed that such was wrong. In view of the weakness of human nature and the fact of sin, justification could only come from forgiveness of sins, or grace in Christ Jesus.

On other occasions, the apostle clearly shows that Christ did away with the curse of the Law, though not the principles of the Law itself. The grace that is available in Christ for the forgiveness of sins through our faith accomplishes our justification. Recognizing that axiom and acknowledging that the Law was "just and good" Gentile believers are empowered by the Word to perform "the things contained in the law", and, though not being brought under the covenant established by the Law, nevertheless permit it to become "a law unto themselves". They "did not make void the law through faith" but, on the contrary, they "established it" (Rom. 2:14; 3:31).

In writing to the Galatians, Paul showed that Christ had redeemed both Jewish and Gentile believers from the curse of the law, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:13-14).

Paul's relationship to the Law was clearly set before the Corinthian brethren: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law". He defines three classes: (1) The natural Jews who are under the law; (2) The proselytes to Judaism, who have put themselves under the law; (3) The Gentiles, who were "lawless".

To gain the full meaning of Paul's words, consider the prepositions he uses. When he wrote "the Jews that are under the law" (1Cor. 9:20), Paul used the preposition *hupo* (under) with the accusative case, signifying "in the power of". Thus the Jews (both natural and proselyte) today still remain under the domination and curse of the Law if they reject the freedom in Christ, who alone can remove that curse by forgiveness of sins. Paul wrote: "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law", that is, of

course, if he sought "justification by the law" (Gal. 5:3-4; see also Rom. 3:19).

In contrast to the Jews, Paul described Gentiles as "without law" (1Cor. 9:21), and therefore without hope (Gen. 17:14; Rom. 1:24). However, true believers are not without hope, nor without law, for they accept the first and endeavor to live according to the spirit of the second (Rom. 2:13-15; 3:31; 13:10). To the Corinthians, Paul described true believers as "being not without law to God, but under law to Christ" (1Cor. 9:21). Here, the words "under law" is *ennomos* (within law) which can only be asserted of those who fulfil the requirements of the law in Christ (Rom. 2:14-15). The words "without law" are from *anomos* (lawless), and relate to those not under the Mosaic Code.

A true believer therefore finds that the Law which was once a relentless master (the Jews being under, or in the power of, the law) becomes in the gospel a beneficent friend directing the way to Christ and righteousness, so that Paul delighted in fulfilling its requirements in Christ. It enabled him to take his stand with either Jews or Gentiles – comprehending the full meaning of the rites and ceremonies of the Law with regard to the former, or ignoring such regulations when treating with Gentiles. He could thus reason effectively with each group from its own particular standpoint.

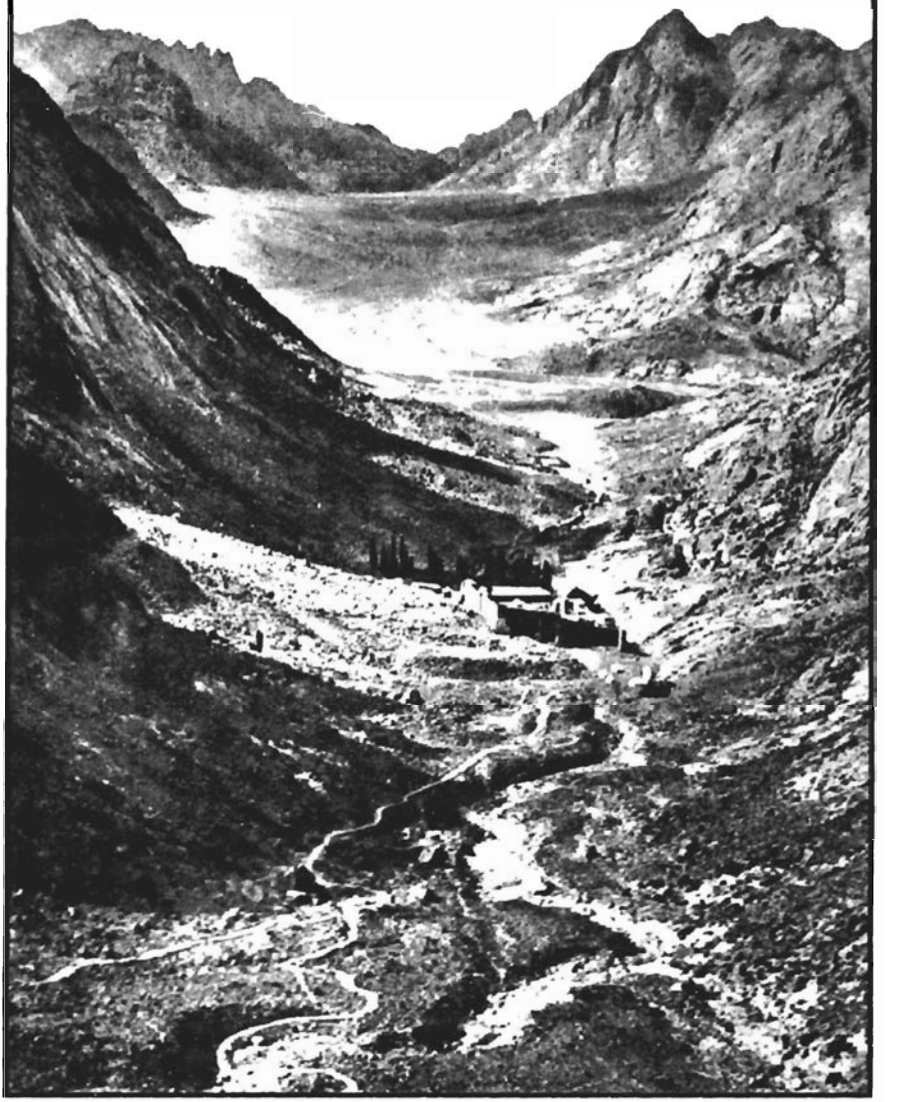
The Law was designed for life (Rom. 7:10), but through the weakness of flesh it was revealed to be unto death. It set forth eternal principles that find their expression in Christ, so that a believer fulfils the Law in him. Thus, the Law was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). The Law directed the worshipper to the perfection to be found in Christ, since of itself it could not solve the problem of sin.

The Judaizing concept introduced a yoke that was impossible for flesh to bear (Mat. 23:4-5), and which Christ condemned, whilst, at the same time, he "magnified the Law and made it honorable" (Isa. 42:21). Thus Christ taught: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Mat. 5:17).

As he fulfilled it, and delivered believers from its curse, so we fulfil it in Christ. As it was designed unto life, so it reveals the way to life which is through faith. It is therefore of the greatest significance, that when Paul wished to expound the principles of righteousness through faith, he quoted from the Law to do so (Rom. 10:6-8). In fact, as it is impossible to attain unto life apart from faith, so it is impossible to fulfil the requirements of the Law without faith. The basic principle of the Law was that a person must die to live. Thus Jesus, on the stake, fulfilled the requirements of the Law as they were expressed in the sacrifices set forth therein, and, apart from such obedience unto death, the Law could not have been fulfilled, nor could Christ have entered into life.

Thus the Law was fully realised in the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus, by which the extending principle of divine love was manifested, for "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14). The justification thus received was to be revealed in a practical expression of the underlying principles of the Law, and in so doing, the believer sacrificed himself for others.

The large Sinai Valley in which the nation of Israel assembled in the days of Moses to receive the Law. It was the scene of the people's enthusiastic covenant with Yahweh – a covenant that they failed to maintain in the days that followed.



privileges, and therefore Paul draws him before the bar of judgment to examine whether that claim is justified. Paul was "called" an apostle (ch. 1:1); believers are "called" of Jesus Christ (v. 6), to be saints (v. 7). But such a label does not guarantee the status (cp. Eph. 4:1; 1Thess. 4:7; 2Tim. 1:9).

"And restest in the law" — There is no definite article in the Greek: "restest on law". The phrase defines the endeavor to attain salvation by means of law. The Jew reposed in it and relied upon it to give him a secure standing before God. But mere possession of law does not indicate a proper understanding of it nor is any man capable of rendering perfect obedience to law. Similarly, the comfortable status of being a member of the Christadelphian Brotherhood gives no right to assume that our standing before God is such that we are virtually already "saved". The scribes of Jesus' day were scrupulous in their application of the minor restrictions of the law, but negligent in the spiritual understanding and application of its spiritual significance (cp. Mat. 23:23). Thus, the very basis upon which they made their claims would condemn them: John 5:45 – the law itself would condemn the failure to maintain its spirit as well as its ritual.

This statement is the first of eight points of a Jew's pride: he rested in the law, boasted of God (v. 17), knew His will, approved things excellent (v. 18), was confident as a guide, a light in darkness (v. 19), an instructor of foolish, and a teacher of babes (v. 20). But he failed to recognise that the very law which he had been given was intended to lead him to Christ.

"And makest thy boast of God" — The word "boast" is *kauchaomai*, which signifies "to speak loud, be loud tongued, to boast or vaunt one's self" (Bullinger). They gloried in their boasting. This attitude is opposite to Godly humility which is dependent upon His grace and mercy. "They call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel" (Isa. 48:2), but it was "not in truth, nor in righteousness" (v. 1). The Jew elevated himself above others, and despised them. It was true that only the Jew had the true knowledge of God, and that He had declared Himself to be their God (Deut. 4:7; Psa. 147:19-20), but this was not a ground for boasting, but for gratitude. Privileges bring obligations and responsibilities, which, in turn, should result in humble submission to the will and purpose of Almighty God (see 1Cor. 10:11-12).

VERSE 18

"And knowest His will" — The Jew claimed to do this, and with God's oracles before him (ch. 3:2) he should have known His will. "Knowest" is the Greek *ginosko*, signifying "to know by experience", thus it denotes a personal and true relationship between the person knowing and the object known. Such a knowledge is evidenced in action resulting from the experience. When our life is influenced by the divine principles, and our activities regulated by God's laws, it can be said we "know God" (see use of the same word in Gal. 4:9, 1 Jn. 4:6,7). Having possession of the inspired Word brought to the Jew a solemn responsibility to apply its precepts in a life compatible with the divine Will. Unfortunately "they did not hear" (Isa. 66:4; Zech. 1:4; Jer. 13:11). That same responsibility devolves upon all who claim to understand and practise the supreme "will" of Yahweh.

"And approvest the things that are more excellent" — The margin gives an alternate rendering: "triest the things that differ". The Berkeley Version has: "approve the things that really matter, because you have been instructed from the Law". Divine instruction enabled the Jew to determine right from wrong and to reject the foolish speculations of Grecian philosophers and others (Phil. 1:10). He prided himself in his ability to distinguish the meaning of the rites and customs of daily living, of meats and holy days, etc, while the Gentiles had been left in ignorance. He made these things his religion, and failed to apply them as the means of absorbing spiritual lessons for the development of a Godly character. Certainly

there was great benefit in the knowledge of the Law, providing it was directed to personal spiritual development in the holy things of the Law. But the religion of the Jew, based upon ritual rather than revelation, was of no great advantage to him.

"Being instructed out of the law" — The Law was a daily experience. The young Jewish child was instructed in its precepts, so that it might become the motivating power of his heart (Deut. 6:6-9). The Greek word for "instructed" is *katecheo*, to catechise, thus, to have regular and disciplined instruction. Israel was parabolically taught this principle in the daily provision of manna, for the Master explained that it represented the divine instruction by which "a man may not die" (Jn. 6:50). The daily Bible reading forms an important habit in the lives of disciples, and allows the Spirit-Word to become implanted in the mind – for those who are "led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Such instruction formed part of the development of the young Timothy (2Tim. 3:15), resulting from the consistent environment which had existed within his home (ch. 1:5).

Yahweh's covenant with Israel was based upon His Law given at Sinai. The nation assembled before the awesome mount, and received a code of instructions at the hands of the angels. This memorial remained with the Jew, as he relied upon the ritual formalism of that which is represented by Sinai (Gal. 4:25).

VERSE 19

"And art confident" — Gr. *pepoithas*, to be fully persuaded; to "suffer one's self to be persuaded or convinced" (Bullinger). Perhaps Paul adds a touch of irony, as suggested by Weymouth: "And have persuaded yourself". The Jew not only rested upon his performance of the works of the law as the means of justification (v. 17), but was also persuaded that he was set to lead mankind to God by its means. The law, however, was designed to lead the Jew to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

That thou thyself art a guide of the blind" — He set himself to lead the "blind" Gentiles to the light of Israel's knowledge. Indeed, that privilege will be achieved after the veil on Jewish eyes has been lifted, and when "light" will come to Israel (Isa. 60:3). But because of their rejection of the Lord Jesus, "blindness in part is happened to Israel" (Rom. 11:25), and the Jewish teaching of justification by law will only result in distress to those who follow it (cp. Matt. 15:14). That was the point made by Jesus following his healing of the blind man: John 9. He condemned the Pharisees for claiming to "see" the principles of Truth, when, in fact, they could not. Therefore their "sin", or responsibility, remained (v. 41). Before a person can become a guide of the blind, he must be trained in spiritual truths and principles, and understand the divine purpose in Christ – otherwise he multiplies the deception (Mat. 23:15).

"A light of them which are in darkness" — Paul now invokes Isa. 42:6-7 to demonstrate the contrast between faith in Christ on the one hand, and justification by law on the other. The passage cited speaks of Yahweh's servant who would be given "for a covenant of the people" (v. 6). Those "in darkness" are the Gentiles, who are ignorant of the divine light of Truth. A "light" is a figurative expression to denote "a teacher". Since the Jews possessed the Holy Oracles, they had the "lamp" and "light" of divine knowledge (Psa. 119:105), but, instead of using that ability to bring Gentiles to Christ, they extinguished that flame, and left themselves in the darkness of Gentilism (Acts 28:26-28). The time is coming when Israel will perform their destined function: Isa. 49:6,9,10; 60:3.

VERSE 20

"An instructor of the foolish" — The Jew prided himself upon being such, instead of acknowledging that he was himself in need of instruction. If he had clearly seen this, it would have led him to Christ (see Gal. 3:24). The RV renders this: "a corrector of the foolish". The word "instructor" (Gr. *paideutes*) signifies a teacher and disciplinarian of children. The word "foolish" is used with two significations in scripture: to denote those who lack understanding, and those who are wicked. Here it relates to the former sense.

"A teacher of babes" — Not merely those who are ignorant, as suggested in the former phrase, but now those young in understanding (1Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:13; 1Pet. 2:2). Wisdom and sound knowledge are prerequisites to becoming a guide and teacher of others. In Paul's day there were many instructors, but few "fathers" (1Cor. 4:15) — those with the capacity to appreciate the care needed in education of the young and the ability to provide it. Those who set themselves up to perform such duties need to recognise their solemn responsibilities to provide proper spiritual diet, exercise, and development. To the Jew, the Gentiles appeared as infants in religious knowledge.

"Which hast the form of knowledge" — The word "form" (Gr. *morphosis*, an image, impress or outward semblance) describes the Law which was the expression of the divine purpose, designed to be a "schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24) that the true "knowledge" (Gr. *gnosis*) might be recognised in Christ. The law was thus a "shadow of good things to come" (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1), giving the outline of the substance which was found in the atoning work of Christ (Heb. 8:5). The Jew whose mental gaze was fixed upon the law, and who accepted Christ only as a supplement to the law, was seeing the outline and being diverted from the substance! In this

case the law would not influence his thinking, and he would never be a true "instructor" or "teacher". Those who today rest in the mere ritual of worship (even as far as ecclesial fellowship is concerned) without perceiving the reality in sacrificial service for Christ, have such a "form of godliness" but lack the power thereof (2Tim. 3:5).

"And of the truth in the law" — The Jew possessed this privilege, and the law is by no means disparaged because the Jew presumed on it without keeping it. Paul later described the law as being "holy, just and good" (ch. 7:12), for it contained all the elements of truth, although in shadow form. Because of this privilege, the apostle now presents in vv. 21-24 a scathing exposure of the inconsistency of the Jew. It is phrased in a series of five pungent questions, founded on the claims already made, but put in startling contrast with the true facts!

VERSE 21

"Thou therefore" — A pointed address! Because the Judaiser had such an exalted concept of his own standing before God, he was unable to see that his pretentiousness should have been tempered by a more considerate attitude towards Gentiles, aware of greater obligations and heavier responsibilities (cp. Lk. 11:46).

"Which teachest another" — Paul implies that he who is a teacher of others is expected to be learned himself. He should have superior knowledge, and by this question Paul draws attention to their lack of true understanding.

"Teachest thou not thyself?" — If you are an instructor, apply the lessons of the law to yourself, and thus be an example to your students! The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "then why not teach yourself as well as others?" Thus the hypocrisy of the Judaiser is brought to light. He claimed that the law was the standard by which he himself would be saved, and demanded acceptance of that ideal from others — yet failed to keep the law himself! Inconsistency on the part of a teacher is no recommendation to his pupils. The Lord highlighted this same weakness in his adversaries, who "say and do not" (Mat. 23:3). Those who purport to teach and exhort must follow their exhortations themselves, if they expect others to respect their teachings.

"Thou that preachest a man should not steal" — The word "preachest" is from the Gr. *kerusso,* which means "to herald, or proclaim", a technical term used of those who were an advocate for another. Weymouth translates this: "You who *cry out* against stealing, do you steal?" This is a reference to the Eighth Commandment (Exod. 20:15), but there was a significant spiritual application of this commandment which the Judaiser failed to consider: Mal. 3:8. A self-righteous attitude can lead to the greatest injustices.

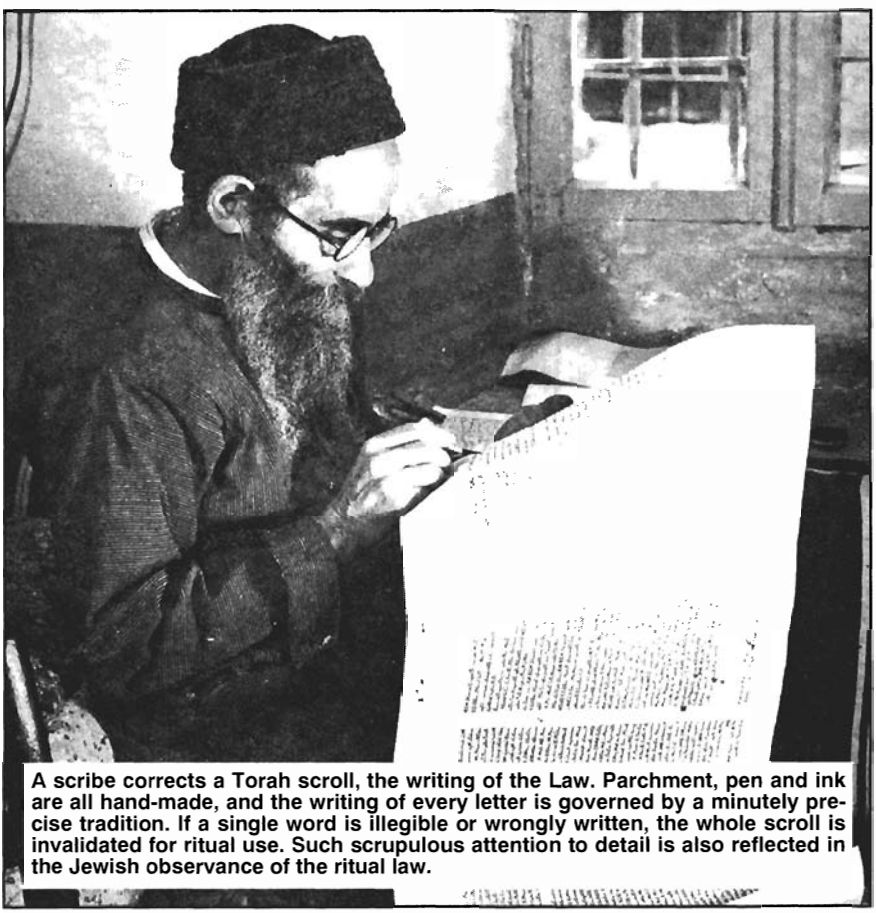
"Dost thou steal?" — If a man becomes dominated by pride, his sense of morality will be weakened. True humility before Yahweh is one of the great safeguards against moral weakness. The question of stealing is not restricted to human relationships. The prophets accused Israel of robbing Yahweh of His proper portions (see Mal. 3:8). To say one thing and commit another is the trait of a hypocrite (Mat. 7:3; 23:3). The Jews turned the Temple into a place of thieves (Mark 11:17), and thus "robbed God". Such an attitude may creep into the life of an individual in an insidious way. Time, effort and material goods which should be devoted to the service of God can be frittered away on selfish, valueless things.

VERSE 22

"Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery" — The question subtly changes from "preaching" (v. 21) to "saying". The word is the Greek *lego*, signifying to relate, discourse. It was not merely the extensive preaching of principles, but the daily quiet, private comment that provided evidence concerning the Judaiser's inconsistency. They were quick to condemn a woman taken in such an offence (Jn. 8:3-11), and yet hard-heartedly committed the same sin with a feeling of impunity (Mat. 5:27-28; Jn. 8:3-11; Mat.

19:8). Adultery results from giving free reign to the fleshly mind and a lack of understanding of divine principles (Prov. 6:32). It was a breach of the Seventh Commandment (Exod. 20:14), but also had a spiritual as well as literal significance: Mat. 5:28. Morally it is a physical intimacy committed outside the marriage covenant; religiously it is found in the doctrines of the apostasy, and in the association of those outside the Covenant of Truth (cp Jas. 4:4; Rev. 2:20,22; 18:9; Jer. 3:8). Israel committed adultery by their compromising actions with the nations from whom Yahweh had separated them (Jer. 3:8). Adultery comes from a lack of understanding (Prov. 6:32) and a failure to appreciate the principles of Yahweh. The constant danger of mental adultery was emphasized by the Lord (Mat. 5:28), whilst Paul describes it as one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). In such matters the profession of the Truth must first be firmly based upon the clear teachings of the Word and its application in life must follow, as Paul now directs.

"Dost thou commit adultery?" — Israel's history was one of social and reli-



A scribe corrects a Torah scroll, the writing of the Law. Parchment, pen and ink are all hand-made, and the writing of every letter is governed by a minutely precise tradition. If a single word is illegible or wrongly written, the whole scroll is invalidated for ritual use. Such scrupulous attention to detail is also reflected in the Jewish observance of the ritual law.

gious adultery. The prophets constantly accused the nation: Mal. 2:11; Jer. 3:1-2. The Jewish Talmud accuses by name some of the most celebrated rabbis of this vice, and Josephus gives a similar account.

"Thou that abhorrest idols" — Their attitude was based upon the second Command (Exod. 20:4), for an idol is a representation that displaced Yahweh of His rightful position.

"Dost thou commit sacrilege?" — The word is *hierosuleo* and is rendered by the ERV as "rob temples". This related to the First and Second Commandments (Exod. 20:3-4).Whilst theoretically acknowledging the Mosaic instruction, the Jews developed idols innumerable (Jer. 2:11; Mal. 1:8. cp. Mark 11:17). However, after the Babylonian captivity, the Jews did not return to their former idolatry. But then, though they had not the *form*, they might have the *spirit* of idolatry. In posing this question Paul shows remarkable tact and skill. He does not accuse them of actual idolatry, but asks whether they used the presence of Gentile idols to their own benefit! Temple-robbing was practised at the time of Paul as is indicated in Acts 19:37, and in the words of Josephus (*Ant.* 4:8:10), "Let none steal what belongs to strange temples; nor take away the gifts that are dedicated to any god".

Malachi complained that Israel "robbed God" (ch. 1:8; 3:8), inasmuch as their offerings were deficient. They contrived to avoid the full expense of tithes and offerings, and were therefore guilty of sacrilege. The Godly need to remember their responsibilities. Yahweh seeks for our tithes, offered in the form of time, interest and energy in the things of the Truth. Taking for ourselves time which should properly be given to God is stealing. We cannot neglect the daily readings on account of "no time", nor cheat God out of the respect and honor that is His due, by a dilatory and spasmodic service to Him. In professing our belief that we have "kept ourselves from idols" (1Jn. 5:21), we need to demonstrate in action a full response to the divine Presence.

Note that in verses 21-22 Paul highlights three transgressions of the Law: Stealing, Adultery and Idolatry. He thus

Young boys reading from the Torah on the occasion of their "Bar Mitzvah". From a tender age, Jewish children are instructed in the Law, and taught respect for its influence in their lives.

identifies three basic principles of fleshly action: Dishonesty, Sensuality, and Ungodliness.

VERSE 23

"Thou that makest thy boast of (the) law" — They were proud in their standing as custodians of law. There is no definite article in this phrase, which is rendered in the Diaglott: "Thou who doest boast in a law". The word "of" is the Gr. *en* which means "remaining within" — the Jews relished in the traditions of their rabbis and scribes (Mat. 15:2; Mk. 7:3), and Paul testified to his own performance of such laws (Gal. 1:14). The Jews saw the law as a means of justification, and prided themselves in its possession (cp v.17; Jer. 8:8).

"Through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" — Their boast was in the Law not recognising that its curse rested on them because they broke it. But, as the Lord so graphically declared in his Temple discourse, their very treatment of the Law was dishonoring to God. See Mat. 23. The Jews argued heatedly about the doctrine of Christ and trampled on it by the way they twisted the teachings of the Law to achieve his crucifixion (cp. Jn. 7:51; 18:31). Paul may have had in mind Jeremiah's words: "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of Yahweh is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made He it; the pen of the scribes is in vain. The wise are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of Yahweh; and what wisdom is in them?" (ch. 8:8-9); "for the law shall not perish from the

The Principle of Rights and Privileges

In the Mosaic Law, the Jew possessed the "form or outline of all knowledge and truth" (Rom. 2:20). Should he not, then, have done something worthwhile and profitable with those advantages? This is Paul's pointed question: "Thou therefore that art called a Jew..." How could the Judaiser answer? Paul's reasoning could not be contradicted by Scripture. The formative outline of the divine purpose was to be seen in the very law in which the Judaiser boasted. But he failed to either appreciate or acknowledge this truth.

For believers today, Paul's words express an important exhortation: Are we lulled into a state of mind wherein we are confident that "we have the Truth" and therefore rest satisfied in such an exalted state, without adequately appreciating that, together with the privileges of the Truth, we must also acknowledge our obligations and responsibilities?

Do we permit our children to grow up, as did the Jews, accepting that they have "rights" and "privileges" associated with the Truth as a matter of course, treating the Truth with a light and easy familiarity?

Such an attitude is fraught with spiritual danger. We do not wish to see ourselves, nor members of our families, found guilty of the same indifferent complacency as evidenced in the attitude of the Jews in the times of Paul. If the Jew failed to see the true purpose of the Law, and rested merely in a mechanical form of worship, the Law availed him nothing. He remained uninfluenced by it in his thinking, and could not therefore receive the true "schoolmaster" nor become such an instructor himself.

What of ourselves? If we do not perceive the real power of the gospel, nor understand the concept of sacrificial service to Christ, we may have "a form of Godliness" but be lacking in the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5).

priest, nor counsel from the wise" (ch. 18:18) was their empty boast. By their foolish attitude to Yahweh's judgment, they dishonored the very law they professed to uphold, and thereby disgraced the giver of that law.

VERSE 24

"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" — The Jew was so careful to avoid blaspheming the Name of Yahweh that he would not even use it. But, says Paul, even without using the divine Name, the Jews were guilty of dishonoring Him, and therefore, in fact, blasphemed the Name they professed to uphold (cp. Ezek. 36:20). The Jews' conduct prompted the Gentile world to reproach their religion and its Author. God's Name is synonymous with His character and purpose. "Yahweh" signifies "He who will be", for He has declared Himself to be reflected in a people of His selection. Israel were selected to grace the divine Name, "but they would not hear" (Isa. 65:12; Jer. 13:11). To bear the Name of God is a solemn responsibility. Since Israel failed to maintain their high privilege of Name-bearers by their rejection of the Son of God, the Name has been placed upon the Gentiles through the apostolic labors, for, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people *for His name*" (Acts 15:14), that those of faith might reflect the moral goodness of Yahweh in practice. We can bring similar dishonor upon that great and holy Name by our neglect of spiritual responsibility.

"As it is written" — Paul cites Isaiah 52:5 as evidence of Israel's action. The very scriptures in which they claimed to rest, testified against them. Ezek. 36:22 declares that they "profane the Name" of Yahweh among the Gentiles. The continual, blatant sins of the Jews brought the ridicule of the nations upon them until Yahweh punished His chosen nation with persecution and dispersion.

VERSE 25

"For circumcision verily profiteth" — Notice that Paul does not say it "justifieth", but only "profiteth". It is of advantage as a meaningful ritual if its significance is understood. Circumcision was the token of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:10-14) — a covenant based upon a man's *faith* (Rom. 4:3,5), and emphasised the responsibility of the individual to repudiate the flesh in obedience to God. But the Judaiser associated circumcision with the Law of Moses, and, since he failed to keep the Law perfectly, was no different to an uncircumcised Gentile!

The Hebrew word *mool* means "to cut short, curtail", and it was to be initiated on every son of Abraham. The foreskin of the male reproductive organ being cut (Gen. 17:11) was to emphasise that the product of man's works must be according to divine principles. The "works of the flesh" were to be rejected (Gal. 5:19-21) and replaced by the restrictions of the spirit. Bro Roberts stated: "Circumcision was a veritable disowning of flesh and fleshly descent. Far from establishing hereditary right, it did the very opposite — a ground not for pride, but for humility". As a mere outward mark in the flesh it was of no consequence. The value came when the principle of Yahweh's teaching was perceived. He declared that circumcision must be inward as well as external: "Circumcise therefore the *foreskin of your heart*, and be no more stiffnecked" (Deut. 10:16; 30:6. See Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Acts 7:51). The full meaning of the requirement pointed to the "cutting off" and repudiating the carnal "lusts and passions" by baptism into the death of Christ (Gal. 5:24), as "the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh (as the Greek) by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). When a person sees the ritual as emblematic of a way of life, then "profit" comes from the ritual. In this respect, both Jewish and Gentile believers are spiritually circumcised (Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11).

Similarly, the ritual of "bread and wine" only "profits" when the true signification is recognised. As a mere ordinance, undertaken "as oft" (1 Cor. 11:25) as pos-

sible, it is of little value. If it is undertaken "unworthily" (i.e. to treat as common; to give little respect) by not assimilating the principles involved, nor acting out in one's own life the sacrificial ethics it contains, the ritual (like that of circumcision) will only "mark the flesh", but give no further benefit.

"If thou keep the law" — The ritual of circumcision made a person a debtor to keep the law, and thus was incorporated into the Mosaic covenant (Gal. 5:3; Lev. 12:3). The great benefit of the ritual was that it provided accreditation as a "son of Abraham", and entrance into the privileged family of faith. The word "keep" (Gr. *prasses*) means to practise; to fully apply.

"But if thou be a breaker of the law" — Breaking the law was in direct contradistinction to the principle of circumcision. Circumcision symbolised the repudiation of the "works of the flesh", and was only "profitable" if the law were kept in its entirety and the divine righteousness upheld. Sin destroyed this position of privilege, and brought a person under the curse of the law. Since all have broken the law in some way (Rom. 3:23; 7:11,21,24) a means of justification outside of circumcision must be sought (Rom. 4:11-12).

"Thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" — In itself, the operation of circumcision is a mere cutting off of flesh; its value lay in its spiritual connotation as a token of obedience that a believer should render to God in repudiating the flesh to serve Him. In the absence of this spiritual application, circumcision became merely "concision", a mutilation of the body without spiritual significance — so that, in reality, such a Jew was uncircumcised. Thus Paul wrote: "Beware of the concision (mutilation in the flesh); for we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit... and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:2-3).

This applies with equal force to those who have been baptised, but fail to respect the principles of baptism in action. A profession of religion without the true manifestation of its teaching is a mere facade. Paul warned against "a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and *neglecting of the body*" seen in some who were disciplining themselves and restricting their pleasures, merely for their own gratification and pride. Similarly, to eat and drink of the Memorial Elements "unworthily" is a Gentilish attitude, and will bring "damnation" upon the practitioner because of his refusal to "discriminate (or separate) his body" (1Cor. 11:29).

VERSE 26

"Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law" — Notice Paul's emphasis upon the *righteousness* of the law, and not merely the written law. Paul earlier stated that Gentile believers "do the things contained in the law" (v. 14), for they observe its spirit and thus manifest the deeds of righteousness it inculcates. Though Gentiles by birth, they are the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:13), because they "keep (*teresis*, guard) the commandments of God" (1Jn. 5:3; Rev. 12:17).

"Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" — His spiritual circumcision "of the heart" (Deut. 30:6) is more real than the physical circumcision "in the flesh" of the natural Jew. The words rendered "shall be counted" (Gr. *logizomai*}) are elsewhere translated reckoned, to impute. This does not mean "to transfer", nor to charge with that which is not deserved, or not true. It means simply that a man shall be treated as if it were performed; that he would be considered as properly circumcised in accordance with the implication of the Abrahamic token. Brother Thomas comments: "circumcised of flesh by imputation, and circumcised of heart by faith".

VERSE 27

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature" — Paul refers to his previous expression in v. 14 concerning Gentiles who do "by nature" the principles of the Law. Thus Weymouth translates this verse: "if he in his natural state of uncir-

cumcision carries out the law, shall he not judge you who, for all your written law and circumcision, are yet a law-breaker?" Though uncircumcised, and therefore outside the Mosaic Covenant, the faithful Gentile obeys the spirit of the law, and therefore his very actions condemn the Jew who should have obeyed the law which was recognised in his flesh?

"If it fulfil the law" — If they who are naturally uncircumcised keep the law, and thus manifest a circumcision of the heart.

"Judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law" — The attitude of the faithful Gentile, who maintains the *spirit* of the law condemns the faithless Jew who, notwithstanding marks in his flesh, cannot completely fulfil its principles. The Diaglott illustrates the parallels of Paul's argument: "The uncircumcision, from a state of nature, perfecting the law, will condemn thee, who with the written law and circumcision art a violator of law".

VERSE 28

"For" — These two verses explain why the rite of circumcision can avail so little. God looks upon the heart and does not regard externalities. Verse 28 contains the negative, and v. 29 the affirmative statement of this general truth.

"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly" — He who is merely descended from Abraham, and is circumcised and externally conforms to the law only, does not possess the true character, nor manifest the right spirit contemplated by the separation of the Jewish race from all others. Their separation required much more. Thus, a true Jew is a person, of whatever race, who is spiritually moved by the divine principles to perform that which is honoring to the Father of the nation. Abraham was chosen because of his personal faithfulness (Heb. 11:8), and his true seed are those who manifest the same quality. Jesus told the fleshly Jews of his day that they were not the seed of Abraham (John 8:39), but of the devil (v. 44). Similar attitudes were found within the first century ecclesia, for some claimed to be Jews, "and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9). The "Israel of God" are those who have become "a new creation" (Gal. 6:15-16).

The word "outwardly" is from the Greek *en to phaneros*, signifying that which is apparent, revealed, "in the open" (Vine). Religion had become "second nature" to the Jew, and that was the root of his problem. Man is endangered by what he does naturally, or mechanically, in contrast to the spirit of the Truth. Outward professions of devotion and faithfulness will count for nothing in the day of decision, unless there is a corresponding sincere attitude of the heart. As mere circumcision (and a claim to possessing the law) could never save the Jew, so mere baptism and mechanical attendance at meetings will not automatically bring salvation.

"Neither (is that) circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" — It does not meet the full design of the spirit of circumcision. In the absence of true spiritual significance, Paul styles it "concision": a mere mutilation in the flesh (Phil. 3:2).

VERSE 29

"But he (is) a Jew, which is one inwardly" — The Diaglott has: "But the Jew is hidden within". The spiritual principles of his calling must come from the affections and understanding (Deut. 6:5-6; 30:6) if he is to meet the principles that God desires to see within His people (Exod. 19:6). When the Jews challenged his disciples because they ate with unwashen hands (in opposition to Jewish tradition), Jesus took the opportunity to remind them that mere tradition did not indicate an internal cleansing of character, and quoted Isaiah 29:13, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mat. 15:8. See also 1Pet. 3:4). External cleansing hid an internal defilement.

"And circumcision (is that) of the heart" — The mere rite in the flesh is but a token of its true significance, for circumcision is manifested in believing God and performing His will. It is revealed inward-

ly when a believer acknowledges God in his heart, and so repudiates the flesh. The Law taught that truth: Deut. 10:16; 30:6. Circumcision was the sign of separation from the heathen world, and of consecration to the holy Deity. It taught the renunciation and forsaking of all sins; the cutting off of all that was offensive to God. This was a work peculiarly of the affections and mind — and thus comes from the heart and not the flesh.

"In (the) spirit, (and) not in (the) letter" — Both nouns are without the definite article, thus the Diaglott has: "Spiritual not Literal". It means that the circumcising was to be an internal, spiritual work, and not a command of external appearance only. Paul does not mean that the "letter of the law" can be ignored, but rather that one's application of it is not limited by the letter, but goes beyond to what the Spirit might require (see the Lord's explanation: Mat. 5:21-22). The "spirit of the law" does not oppose the letter, but interprets the true meaning of the ritual, and identifies the proper application in the ways of life. David defines the "walking in the law of Yahweh" as "seeking him with the whole heart" (Psa. 119:1-2), and sought to understand the spirit of the law which he honored in action. Thus the spirit will ascertain what Yahweh really desires by a certain law, and endeavor to fulfil it.

"Whose praise is not of men but of God" — The word "Jew" is said to be derived from "Judah", which signifies *praise*, (note Gen. 29:35; 49:8), so that Paul here plays upon the words. In the days of Christ the Jews prided themselves in their supposed standing before God and on their regular performance of the precepts of the law of Moses: Mat. 3:9; 6:2,5; 23:23; Luke 18:10-12. However, God's praise can be bestowed only on those who conform *really*, and not externally only, to His requirements (cp. 1Sam. 16:7).

Thus the apostle concludes his indictment of the Jew who rests in the law. The disobedient Jew finds himself in precisely the same situation in regard to the wrath of God as the disobedient Gentile. In the sight of God, who judges the secrets of men, the Jew who trusts in the law only turns out to be a transgressor of that law (Rom. 2:17-24); for what the law requires is not the merely legal or ritual observance, but covenant love and fidelity, symbolized in the rite of circumcision (vv. 25-27). In placing confidence in the ritual of circumcision and legal righteousness the Jew fails to recognize that God's concern is not for such external matters, but for purity of heart and loving obedience, which is the true expression of circumcision (vv. 28-29).

CHAPTER THREE

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE CONCERNING GOD'S MEANS OF SALVATION

Paul continues his argument that mere Jewishness or the rituals of the law cannot of themselves save, but enters into a conversation as to whether any advantage is obtained from association with such things. He acknowledges that certain benefits accrue to the observer of law, shows how the law should be properly understood and applied, and concludes that in the divine process of justification, the law is established and elevated into a greater sphere of value. This section highlights the elementary pride of mankind, and the way in which Godly qualities can replace the thinking of the flesh. There are four propositions advanced to reflect Jewish superiority (vv. 1, 2, 5, 9), and in each case Paul effectively demonstrates the principles of his previous summary: "A Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God" (ch. 2:29).

Paul then points to the divine means of reconciliation. Salvation would not come from "deeds of law" (v. 20), but by "justification by grace" (v. 24), which would be achieved on the basis of a Mercy Seat provided by God, and appropriated for our use by the offering of Christ.

Scripture Confirms That All Are Under Condemnation — vv. 1-20.

Having shown that the law condemned both Jew and Gentile, since neither could perfectly fulfil all its obligations, and thereby revealed the need of a redeemer (ch. 2:25) Paul now answers four objections that could be advanced, and supports his reasonings with the evidence of scripture. Verses 1-9 are in the form of a debate as Paul poses certain questions which might be offered by a Jew to the statements of the last chapter, and then appends his answers. He discusses the advantages and privileges of the selection of Israel from among the nations.

VERSE 1

"What advantage then hath the Jew?" — PROPOSITION 1 (vv. 1-2). This arises from the statement in ch. 2:25-26 that if a Gentile should do the things required by the law, he would be considered as if he had been circumcised. One might then presume that the Old Covenant was of no use at all!

"Or what profit (is there) of circumcision?" — If breaking the law brought a Jew under condemnation, and all broke the law, where is there any benefit in the ritual undertaken by every male Jew? It seems to brings an obligation without any true benefits!

VERSE 2

"Much every way" — Paul immediately answers the first question. There are many important principles and advantages

established by belonging to the people of God, and submitting to the ritual of circumcision. Ritual is valuable in drawing attention to the typical significance of the action. Similarly, the ritual of the Memorial Table is powerful only when its spiritual meaning is perceived; but the ritual will bring condemnation if it is undertaken without true understanding (cp 1Cor. 11:27-28).

"Chiefly" — The Greek *proton* means "first, primary", thus foremost. Paul advances the principal advantage, implying that it might be followed by another, and another! The Diaglott has: "But first, indeed,..."

"Because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" — The Jew had a distinct advantage in that God's revelation was entrusted to him, an advantage clearly stated in Psa. 147:19-20 (see also Deut. 4:5-8; Jn. 4:22). Whereas a Gentile had to seek for that revelation through Israel, Jews were brought under its influence from birth and experienced a daily education as the Law was enacted in sacrifice and priestly activity (Deut. 4:5-8). God's Word should have enlightened them to the difference between right and wrong, and induced in them a desire to seek God's means of redemption in the Saviour He promised from the beginning to provide. A similar obligation rests upon the disciples of Christ, to whom he "has given Thy (God's) Word" (Jn. 17:14), and separated them to exclusiveness in his service.

VERSE 3

"For what if some did not believe?" — PROPOSITION 2 (vv. 3-4). The RV renders this: "What if some were without faith?" The history of Israel testified to their general unfaithfulness: Rom. 10:16-21; 1Cor. 10:5-10.

"Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" — Paul answers this second question by posing a question in reply. The RV clearly reveals Paul's play on words in this question, rendering "unbelief" as *"want of faith"*. Thus, it could be paraphrased: "Is the faithlessness of some Jews resulting in God destroying His promises to the nation?" "Is His faithfulness to prove ineffectual, because some Jews have been faithless?" Obviously not! God is not limited by the vagaries of humankind. Our own loyalty to, or opposition against, God does not affect His universal purpose, though it would adjust His purpose with us. He challenges mankind to alter His covenant with day and night, and to change the appointments of the planets (Jer. 33:24-26). If that cannot be met, how can the divine destiny of the seed of Jacob be frustrated?

VERSE 4

"God forbid" — This expression literally is "May it not be" (Gr. *me genoito*). Paul answers: Absolutely not, for God has given His word, and whatever men may or may not do, He will keep that word (cp. 2Tim. 2:13). The fact that Gentiles by faith can become true Jews (Rom. 2:29) does not mean that the faithlessness of some natural Jews can cause God to set aside His great promises in relation to the nation as a whole.

This subject is dealt with at length in Romans ch. 9-11, where Paul makes the point that God will be found true to His promise, though every man be found false. Though all Israel might turn from God, He will bring to pass what He has promised (see Jer. 51:9). By the exercise of mercy and forgiveness, by the education of the nation, this will be ultimately fulfilled as Paul shows in Romans 11:26.

"Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" — God will be verified notwithstanding the claims of men. His "gifts and calling are without repentance (i.e. without change)", Rom. 11:29. The unfaithfulness of men simply sets His truth in relief; His righteousness is always vindicated against their unrighteousness. The Psalmist expressed this principle in Psa. 116:11, when "in his alarm and fear" he declared "all men are liars". He could place no confidence in his contemporaries; it was a vain hope. Thus he places his reliance upon Yahweh alone. This was the experience of the Master as stated to his untried disci-

ples: "Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). Circumstances might seem grim at times; we may not be able to place confidence in any man – but Yahweh stands true to His word; He will deliver the person of faith from their troubles, and confirm His eternal promises.

The word "liar" is from the Greek *pseustes,* signifying "that which is false". Men's words (cp. 1Sam. 24:9) represent the expression of flesh, and comprise lies, unrighteousness and corruption (Mark 7:20-21).

"As it is written" — Paul cites Psa. 51:4 to show how God will be proven true to His promise though all Israel might forsake Him. He advances the case of David, who sinned grievously in a matter for which the Mosaic Law provided no sacrifice to cover his sin, but he found forgiveness because he manifested a proper attitude of mind. Israel has likewise sinned, and will similarly find forgiveness when their "heart of stone" becomes a "heart of flesh" and the nation responds as it will ultimately do under the treatment of the divine Physician (Zech. 12:10-14).

Psalm 51 was written by David to memorialize his penitent acknowledgement of his sin concerning Bathsheba: "Have mercy upon me, O God... for I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight" (vv. 1,3-4). David was overwhelmed with grief; he saw his crime to be awful; he feared the displeasure of God, and trembled before Him. Yet he held it as a fixed, indisputable principle that GOD WAS RIGHT. He never called that fact in question. The everlasting and consistent divine attitude is thus contrasted with the waywardness of this undoubtedly great man of faith. Since Paul's quotation of Psa. 51 is applied to the Ecclesia, so David stands as a type of the multitudinous Christ for whom the Master daily pleads, in whom the divine righteousness might be seen.

"That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings" — Rotherham has: "that Thou mightest be declared righteous in Thy words". Yahweh is declared righteous when sin and falsehood are removed, and when His words are vindicated. So Nathan was commissioned to bear Yahweh's reproof against David: "Thou art the man!" (2Sam. 12:7-13). The Judgment Seat of Christ will likewise register the same condemnation against all the responsible (Rom. 2:7-9), and God will be justified in all the terms of judgment made. Upon the basis of that perfect justification some will receive mercy and forgiveness, whilst others will bear their shame.

"And mightest overcome" — The Greek word *(nikao)* signifies "to prevail". God's mercy and righteousness will prevail in judgment. The Hebrew in Psa. 51:4 signifies "mightest be pure", thus seen to be faultless. The word which the Septuagint and the apostle have used, is sometimes related to litigations or trials in courts of justice. He that was accused and acquitted, or who was adjudged to be innocent, might be said to *overcome,* or to gain the cause. If there were a "trial" between David and God, God would overcome; that is, would be esteemed pure and righteous in his charge against the crime of David.

"When Thou art judged" — Rotherham renders this: "When thou art in judgment". The Hebrew is "when Thou judgest"; that is, in Thy judgment pronounced on this crime. Yahweh's righteousness will be vindicated and revealed when His judgments are examined thoroughly.

VERSE 5

"But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God" — PROPOSITION 3 (vv.5-6). Paul introduces a very beautiful thought. In v. 3 the sin of unbelief is introduced, but now it is widened to include all unrighteousness. Now he considers its relationship to the divine righteousness. The word "commend" is *sunistemi* in the Greek, signifying "to place together, to introduce one to another so as to commend". The know-

ledge of sin does that to a person whose mind is enlightened by God's Word; for by very contrast God's righteousness is introduced to him, and he is forced to commend and praise it. Thus human sin illustrates more clearly God's righteousness.

"What shall we say?" — What are we to infer by this? This is a mode of speech as if the objector hesitated about expressing a conclusion which would seem to follow, but which was abhorrent in its character.

"Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" — This is a hypothetical question Paul is advancing based upon a logical, but unscriptural, application of what he has already established. He has revealed that the wickedness and unfaithfulness of man serves to emphasize the righteousness and faithfulness of God who remains true to His promises, despite what man might do. Upon that it could be reasoned that God actually benefits by sin, in that His righteousness is placed in clearer focus. That being the case, and seeing that He suffers no harm, why should He exact vengeance? After all, he forgave David; why not the rest of the nation? That is the sense of the question now posed; probably one already advanced by the Judaisers against Paul's doctrine.

The word "vengeance" simply means *punishment,* and does not imply the repaying of an injury received.

"(I speak as a man)" — Paul acknowledges he is using human reasoning and philosophy — an implied rebuke to those Judaisers who might use such an argument.

VERSE 6

"God forbid" — "Away with the thought!" Greek: *me genoito;* there is no word for "God" in the original text. See notes on verse 4.

"For then how shall God judge the world?" — Divine judgment is to come upon *all* irrespective of race! What, then, of Jewish exclusiveness? Paul's argument shows that it is a myth.

God is frequently set forth in the Scriptures as such a Judge (see Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:36; Psa. 50:4), but how could He consistently judge the world if He really benefited from sin, or obtained pleasure therein? He forgives sin for clearly defined reasons. In the case of David, the king obtained mercy because he had extended it to others (such as Saul) when they were in his power — and therefore David was prepared to humble himself before his God. Israel as a nation will also experience mercy because it is "beloved for the fathers' sake" (Rom. 11:28), and ultimately "ungodliness" will be "turned away" from it (Rom. 11:26).

VERSE 7

"For if" — PROPOSITION 4 (vv. 7-8). Paul turns the argument back upon his opponents, and reveals their misrepresentation of his teaching. The *Jerusalem Bible* translates vv. 7-8 as "You might as well say that since my untruthfulness makes God demonstrate His truthfulness, and thus gives Him glory, I should not be judged to be a sinner at all. That would be the same as saying: Do evil as a means to good. Some slanderers have accused us of teaching this, but they are justly condemned!"

"The truth of God hath more abounded through my lie" — The words "more abounded" are *perisseuo,* signifying, to super abound; i.e. excessively so (ch. 5:15; 15:13). See notes on verse 5. The word "lie" (Gr. *pseusma*) signifies *faithlessness, falsehood, or deceitfulness,* and is rendered in the *TCNT* as "But, it is urged, if my falsehood brings honor to God by making His truthfulness more apparent, why am I, like others, still condemned as a sinner?" Human reasoning might suggest that as God's truth is brought into bold relief when contrasted with the faithlessness of men, such should not really be treated as sinners, for they are doing God a service! It would perhaps be a matter of "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1).

"Unto His glory" — That is, to His praise, so as to show His character in such a way that it might excite the admiration

and praise of His creatures.

"Why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" — This was the claim of his Judaistic accusers who claimed that he misrepresented the principles of the scriptures. In fact, the Judaising element misrepresented Paul by advancing their own interpretation of scripture, including Paul's own words, in such passages as Gal. 3:22.

VERSE 8

"And not (rather)" — The TCNT renders this as: "Why should we not say..." This is the answer of the apostle. He claims that if the foregoing reasoning truly represented his teaching, the slanders that were being circulated regarding his doctrine would be justified. Yet it was not true, and he hopes that his readers could see that the objection was not valid.

"(As we be slanderously reported" In the Greek the phrase means: "we are blasphemed" — i.e. spoken of in a reproachful and calumnious manner. One of the evils that Paul was called upon to bear, and reported by some who had visited the ecclesia in Corinth from whence this epistle was written, was the gross misrepresentation of his teaching. The Judaisers claimed that Paul's doctrine of liberty from the curse of the law was, in fact, licence to do as one liked, and therefore it amounted to "doing evil that good might come". Some, resting upon this false concept of Paul's teaching, proceeded to "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4).

"And as some affirm that we say)" — This is the first clear statement in the epistle that one of the main reasons for its writings was because true apostolic teaching on the doctrine of the atonement was being misrepresented. The grave danger was that those who gave heed to error would be led away from the Truth.

Paul was misrepresented and his teachings abused by those who sought to defame him before others. In this experience he fellowshipped the sufferings of Christ, who similarly was misreported by his enemies (Mat. 26:60-61), as was Stephen (Acts 6:11-13). Paul suffered many such attacks from those who would destroy his character (2Cor. 10:10-11). A man should not be held responsible for the inferences his enemies advance. Slander of another's reputation is one of the most unsavory actions, and is outrightly condemned by scripture (cp. Rom. 1:30; 1Tim. 5:13; Tit. 1:9-11). Brother Roberts noted: "There is nothing more stringently forbidden by the law of God, nothing more blighting to friendship, and nothing more common among men than back-biting — speaking evil of people behind their backs" (*Weapons of our Warfare*, p. 65).

"Let us do evil, that good may come?" — To do evil is to manifest a way that opposes God's Will; how then could evil be productive of righteousness. But some reasoned that if Paul taught that the presence of sin highlights the glory of God, we can transgress as much as possible so that the divine forgiveness might be exercised and experienced! The Judaisers maintained that Paul distorted the requirements of the law, and that in his contending that the "works of the law" could not justify a person and that "faith in Jesus Christ" alone could (Gal. 2:16), he rejected the need for acts of faith and allowed for the development of sins! Paul dispenses with this argument in Rom. 6:1-2. Thus Paul's teaching was twisted by his opponents until it was made to proclaim the very opposite to what was originally intended.

"Whose damnation is just" — Paul vigorously answers the proposition and defends his arguments, repudiating the false concept of his teaching. Those who reason that we should do evil that good may come are condemned out of their own mouths. There is no need for involved reasons as to the justness of such condemnation — it is patently obvious. The slanderous imputation against Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was as much misunderstood then as now. Those who so libelled the apostle were deserving of severe condemnation, which was quite "justified" because of the seriousness of their claims.

The word "damnation" is *krima,* from

The Justice of Yahweh's Judgment Against David

Paul tenders the case of David to illustrate his point in Rom. 4:6, and shows the absolute righteousness of God throughout that experience.

Yahweh was just in condemning David's sin, but also just in forgiving him, because David had shown mercy to others in their time of weakness, and he had manifested a right attitude of mind to God. Thus, when everything is brought into proper perspective, Yahweh stands forth as vindicated in His judgments, as having been tried and found as supremely righteous. Therefore no unrighteousness can be charged against God. He will not allow the folly or sin of man to defeat His unconditional promise made to the fathers. Israel sinned and was punished, and Gentiles are being incorporated into His purpose as spiritual Jews. But that does not mean that God has set aside His predetermined counsel in regard to the ultimate restoration of the nation. Israel will be converted and saved, and it will then be revealed that everything has been done for their good (Ezek. 14:23). Meanwhile, the unrighteousness of man only serves to emphasize the integrity and faithfulness of God, as well as His mercy, and by this means sinners are drawn unto Him (see Psa. 51:13; 32:6). The restoration of Israel will illustrate this to all mankind, and nations will confidently turn to God for help because His faithfulness and mercy will be plainly shown in His attitude to Israel (see Jer. 33:9; Zech. 8:13; Ezek. 36:22). Even today, God's mercy to Israel is indicative of His faithfulness, showing that we can place all confidence in His promises and His mercy.

a root meaning to decide, try, condemn, punish. It implies the examination of a case, and the proper judgment against error is reflective of the divine character against sin.

These words provide a fitting conclusion to this section. By his reference to Psa. 51 (see v. 4), Paul shows that in worthy cases Yahweh forgives and covers sins; in other cases He does not. It has been acknowledged that the Jew certainly had advantages over the Gentiles, but this blunt statement shows that whatever race, an abuse of privilege results in condemnation. The Jew possessed advantages, but on the matter of personal salvation he was without hope, unless he used his advantages in the right way.

VERSE 9

"What then?" — The previous objections having been raised and answered, the apostle now confirms his position that all mankind, Jew as well as Gentile, are under sin, by adducing the scriptures in his support. He anticipates the Jewish objector's interruption on the basis that there are obvious benefits in being a Jew, as the apostle indicated in verse 2.

The series of rapid-fire questions and answers which characterize the first eight verses of this chapter now conclude with a final question which is, in effect, the key that summarizes those previously given. The question is simply: "Are the Jews any better off than the people of other nations, when it comes to the matter of eternal

salvation?" The following verses positively answer that question, and also take the argument to the very ground upon which the Judaiser so confidently stood.

"Are we better (than they)?" — The question now turns from national superiority to that of individual salvation. Paul cleverly introduced the pronoun "we", for he set himself apart from the Judaisers, but is quite willing to be identified with the Jews on the matter of seeking eternal salvation. Like all other Jews, Paul was in need of redemption.

He now asks whether the Jews have preference and advantage as to character and prospects, over the Gentiles? Paul had admitted that the Jews had important advantages in *some* respects (v. 2). Therefore, "does it not follow that we are superior in every way to those Gentiles who have not our privileges?"

"No, in no wise" — Paul speaks concerning personal salvation, not of national regeneration in which Israel will have preference over other nations (Rom. 11:26; Mic. 4:8). The Jew certainly has advantages over Gentiles (see Rom. 3:2), but these increased his responsibility and added to his personal condemnation if he did not use them aright by seeking the God-given redemption in Christ. In the absence of that, the Jew risked greater punishment because of his greater responsibility (Amos 3:2; Lk. 12:48). Therefore both Jew and Gentile had to seek God through knowing and obeying His Truth; in this obligation, neither had advantage over the other.

"For we have before proved" — See margin: "have charged". W. E. Vine and E. W. Bullinger translate the Greek: "to accuse beforehand". Paul had made this point without equivocation in ch. 2:11-13.

"Both Jew and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" — The Gr. word for "under" is *hupo,* with the accusative: thus, under, and towards; or, in the power of. Both are equally in need of the forgiveness and redemption found alone in Christ Jesus. Both are of the same condemned nature (ch. 5:12); both are found to be transgressors of divine law (Jas. 2:10); both are under the control of sin (Rom. 6:19); both possess a "deceitful heart" (Jer. 17:9 — note that Jeremiah did not say "the heart of a Gentile", for he refers to the human condition, without reference to race). To be "under sin" signifies not only to be *under guilt* because of personal transgression, but also *under the power of sin* through their birth into the "constitution of sin" (*Elpis Israel,* pp. 126-131).

VERSE 10

"As it is written" — Having charged both Jews and Gentiles as being sinners (v. 9, mg.), Paul now proceeds to provide scriptural proof to substantiate what he said in v. 9, and to reveal the following principles:

(a) *Sin in human character:* vv. 10-12.
(b) *Sin in human speech:* vv. 13-14.
(c) *Sin in human conduct:* vv. 15-17.
(d) *The cause of all sin:* v. 18.
(e) *The application and conclusion:* vv. 19-20.

Paul quotes from a number of different passages. Firstly, he mentions Psalm 14:1-3 (recorded in Rom. 3:10-12) to demonstrate the condition of ungodliness which relates to both Jew and Gentile.

The Psalm describes the state of the man who repudiates the authority of God, but the Jews could claim that this related only to Gentiles. Hence Paul follows this quotation by citing other passages of Scripture that unmistakably apply to Israelites. Therefore we cannot relegate such expressions as are found in this Psalm merely to unbelievers, for a person professing allegiance to God can be found in a state of rejecting His authority. John describes this class as being in the position of "sinning unto death" (1John 5:16).

"There is none righteous, no, not one" — The Hebrew has: "There is none that doeth good" (Psa. 14:1), describing the general depravity of mankind, highlighted in the incidents of the Flood, Babel and Sodom (see vv. 2-3). This was reflected in Saul's oppression of Godly men and his indifference to Yahweh's covenant. The Psalm states: "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy".

Through transgression, man has a condemned, defiled nature, with an inherent proneness to sin, and therefore, naturally, performs deeds of wrong doing. He cannot of himself, be vindicated. Since personal righteousness is impossible for sinning mankind, it needs to find some means of justification, only possible through the divine means provided: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19). Apart from this, man remains both morally and physically condemned.

But a Jew might reason that this Psalm applies to Gentiles unenlightened in the truths of God (cp. verses 4,7), and therefore reject its application to himself. Paul answers this claim in his further comments from verse 19, showing that *all* have sinned.

VERSE 11

"There is none that understandeth" — Man is naturally ignorant of responsibility to the divine will. These words obviously could not relate to faithful Israelites who recognized the divine Will, but they do apply to Gentiles unilluminated in the Truth; so that Paul quotes from a Psalm (14:1-3) that testifies to the nature of flesh when ignorant of the Word. To "understand" is used in the sense of being wise; of recognizing a moral obligation to obey Almighty God. The word is not limited to a mere intellectual exercise, but to the inclining of the mind to seek after God.

The word "understand" is rendered "deal wisely" in the RV margin of Psa. 14:2. The verb denotes right action as well as correct understanding. In fact, the application of truth spells the difference between the wise and the fool. In Christ's parable (Mat. 7:24-27) the wise man hearkened and acted; the fool hearkened only to ignore.

"There is none that seeketh after God" — The Psalmist extends his previous thought, for "understanding" brings the responsibility to "seek" God and observe His ways. It is only by such "seeking" that the truth of God might be found (Acts 17:27). The Greek word is *ekzeteo*, and signifies to "seek out" (the preposition *ek* meaning "out of"), thus, to search for diligently. The same word is found in Heb. 11:6, where it is related to the quality of faith: that only those who "diligently seek Him" will find God's pleasure. Mere profession of truth, or association with scripture does not qualify a person to be a "seeker after God"; it demands the sort of determination found in Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of Yahweh", having sought for it (Gen. 6:8).

VERSE 12

"They are all gone out of the way" — The phrase, "gone out of the way" is one word in the Greek: *ekklino*, signifying, "turned aside" (as a deliberate action), and so rendered by *Roth., Diag., Jer. Bible* and *Weymouth*. Paul describes the universal depravity of mankind which he illustrated in Rom. 1:20-24, and reminds his readers that the flesh has a natural bias to be adverse. The words in Psa. 14:3 are "they are all gone astray", i.e. they have strayed like foolish sheep that have forgotten their master's voice (Psa. 119:176; Isa. 53:6). Mankind has not responded to the voice of the Great Shepherd (Psa. 23:3), and have walked in other ways. Gen. 6:12 reports of the time when "all flesh had corrupted His *way* upon the earth", as humanity declined from the true path of piety and virtue.

"They are together become unprofitable" — There is equal guilt upon mankind for their rejection of divine principles, and, as such, are "unprofitable" as far as God is concerned. His original design was that mankind should respond to His characteristics, and reflect His glory upon earth (Gen. 1:27), but transgression had temporarily thwarted God's purpose. The Greek word *achreioo* implies "to make useless", and this occurred to creation with the introduction of sin. Psa. 14:3 describes this state as "filthy"; the Hebrew word *neelachus*, signifies "putrid", like sour milk (the margin has "stinking"). This is the state of mankind in the absence of the Truth, as seen in the unclean nature that came as a result of sin. This condition is found upon all flesh, and

prevents a person from entering into the "most Holy" presence of Yahweh.

"There is none that doeth good, no, not one" — Paul emphasizes this point by repetition of the literal Hebrew in Psa. 14:3. It describes flesh in its state of natural unenlightenment.

But what about Israel, to whom had been given the oracles of God (Rom. 3:2)? Surely, Jews could not be classified with unenlightened Gentiles! In order to clarify this point, Paul brings a further Psalm into the witness box, to bring to the bar of judgment even those who profess association with heavenly things.

VERSE 13

"Their throat is an open sepulchre" — The previous quotation revealed Sin in human character (see vv. 10-12); this one shows Sin in human speech. Paul selects Psa. 5:9, which has relation to Israelites, not Gentiles! In that Psalm David describes his enemies, and, significantly, does so in similar terms to those in Psa. 14 which describe the Gentiles. It reveals that the mere possession of the Oracles of God is not sufficient; faith must be developed therefrom. In the absence of faith there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, as the Old Testament witnesses. The law condemned the Gentile because of his state of wilful ignorance, and the Jew for his lack of faith. Paul's skilful use of the Old Testament enables him to fully prove his charge (Rom. 3:9) that, apart from faith, both "Jews and Gentiles are under (the domination of) sin"

This principle is applicable to all the saints. It is not enough to "know" the Truth, faith must be developed which will find expression in deeds (Rom. 2:13). Thus, the Psalm here quoted draws attention to the sin of deceit, falsehood and slander, which emanates from "the throat". It is the *inward part* that is defiled (cp. Mark 7:21), and which is always wide open to receive the refuse of the flesh (as an "open sepulchre" continues to receive the bodies of the dead). Christ described the scribes and Pharisees as "whited sepulchres... full of dead men's bones" because of their hypocrisy and deceitfulness (Mat. 23:27).

An open sepulchre exudes offensive and pestilential vapor (compare the state of decomposition that Martha claimed had already affected Lazarus after four days: Jn. 11:39). Similarly, the evil "throat" both receives objects of death, and defiles others around about. As the vilest stench of death issues forth from open graves, so the utterance of people who practise deceit and slander is tainted and defiling.

Thus an open sepulchre is a yawning pit into which so many fall — not only literally, but spiritually. A burial place is therefore a fit symbol to apply here.

"With their tongues they have used deceit" — The figure changes from the open sepulchre, to the smooth words of the flatterer. The "sugared tongue, which charms like a melodious instrument" is now revealed. James describes the tongue as "a little member that boasts great things... a world of iniquity... which defileth the whole body" (ch. 3:5-6); whilst the Proverbs depict the duplicity of an enemy's kiss: "faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (ch. 27:6). The tongues of flatterers voice the smooth and specious language of the hypocrite, whilst their intent is evil. From the same source comes both blessing and cursing. This is not merely a Gentile characteristic, but is also found in all the enemies of David (Psa. 5:8), both then and since.

The word "deceit" (Gr. *dolioo*), signifies "to use as a bait, to deceive, especially by adulteration or false admixtures" (Bull.). The flesh naturally speaks dishonestly concerning matters of divine truth, sometimes to adulterate it, mixing truth with error to produce a religious philosophy which cannot save.

"The poison of asps is under their lips" — This is the literal Septuagint rendition of Psa. 140:3, and shows that those who speak such calumny and falsehood are like a serpent's tongue, infused with poison. The word "under" (Gr. *hupo*, with accusative) signifies "being in the power of" (see notes on v. 9), for the poison of

the asp is controlled by its mouth.

The asp, or adder, is a species of serpent whose poison is of such active operation that it kills almost the instant that it penetrates. It is small, and commonly lies concealed, often in the sand by a roadside, and strikes the traveller before it is seen. It is found mostly in Egypt and Libya. It is said by ancient writers that the celebrated Cleopatra, rather than be carried a captive to Rome by Augustus, suffered an asp to bite her in the arm, by which she soon died. The precise species of serpent which is here meant by the Psalmist cannot, however, be ascertained. Sufficient is it to notice that it refers to a serpent whose bite is deadly, and rapid in its execution.

It was the bite of a serpent that first brought sin into the world, and death therefrom (Gen. 3:1-5; Rom. 6:23). This principle was manifested in the evil-speaking and hypocritical multitude, described by John Baptist as "a generation of serpents" (Lk. 3:7). Similarly those who give voice to the flesh allow their tongue to express "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3:8), hidden in the honeyed words of compromise, "under their lips" (Rom. 3:13).

VERSE 14

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" — Paul now quotes from Psa. 10:7, where the Psalmist speaks of the ruthless conduct of those who indulge in "cursing and deceit and fraud" in order to destroy him. It is the language of violence, full of guile and extortion, typical of human corruption expressed in a complete rejection of the principles of truth and righteousness. When the mouth is full of evil, there remains no room for words of comfort and wisdom.

David felt the wrath of Shimei expressed in reproachful and opprobrious language (2Sam. 16:5,7,8). Such cursing is usually accompanied by "bitterness" in the severe and harsh attitude of those who oppose the divine principles.

VERSE 15

"Their feet are swift to shed blood" — The third manifestation of sin (cp. v. 10,13): *Sin in Human Conduct.* Paul turns to Isa. 59:7-8, where the prophet indicts the nation of Israel for its terrible corruption. Paul may well have in mind the words of Solomon in Prov. 1:16, who counsels avoidance of even the path of the evil, lest one is destroyed by that involvement (cp. v.18). Notice that Paul has described the various aspects of fleshly manifestation, moving from the heart (vv. 10-12), to the mouth (vv. 13-14), and now to the feet (v. 15), finally describing their way of life (vv. 16-17). The feet, as the emblem of walking, symbolize the direction of interest. In Israel, they led the nation to commit crime, particularly deeds of injustice and cruelty. They thirsted for the blood of innocence, and hasted to shed it in gratification of their malice, and to satisfy their vengeance. In this, they manifested the characteristic of Cain (Gen. 4:8), whose "murder" was repeated by the generation of the Lord (Jn. 8:44), and by those who, today, "hate their brethren" (1Jn. 3:15).

The horror of Paul's statement lies in the word "swift": Greek *oxus*, which denotes the sharpness of a sword (as in Rev. 1:16; 2:12; 19:15) or a sickle (Rev. 14:14,17,18). Those who would destroy their brethren show no compassion nor regret in their ways, but, like those of Noah's day, they act quickly and without concern (Gen. 6:11-13).

VERSE 16

"Destruction and misery are in their ways" — Isa. 59:7 has: "wasting and destruction are in their paths". Wherever they go the roadway is strewn with the abominable results of their evil heart; a trail of distress is left as they pass by. The tendency of their conduct is to destroy the virtue, happiness and peace of all with whom they come in contact.

VERSE 17

"And the way of peace have they not known" — Note the contrast between "their ways" (v. 16) and the "way of peace"; it is the distinction between

destruction and life. They do not consider the means to true happiness. Intent upon their plans of evil, they do not know nor regard that which promotes the welfare of themselves or others. This is the case with all who are selfish, and who seek to gain their own purposes through crime and ambition.

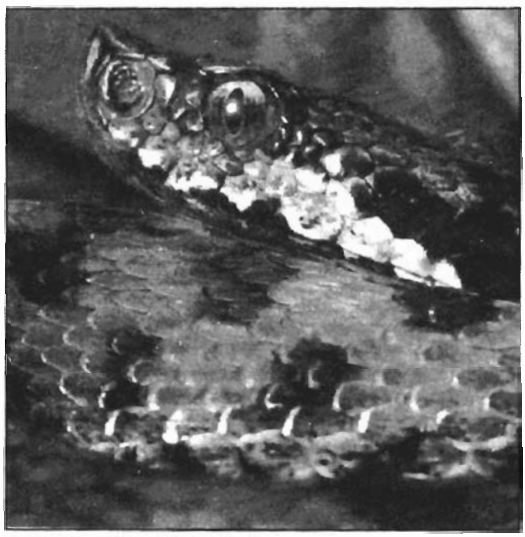
The word "known" is the Greek *ginosko,* which signifies a knowledge of experience. It is more than mere academic observation, and implies an emotional acknowledgement, a personal involvement. But such people as those here described by Paul have never been in the "way of peace". They have always been of the violent sort, and, as the wicked, are like "a raging sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no *peace,* saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21).

True peace only comes through personal sacrifice and individual commitment to the Truth. The Lord Jesus continued on this pathway as he left the upper room in Jerusalem to fulfil his sacrifice at Golgotha, telling his disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27). And, immediately: "Arise, let us go hence" (v. 31), as he walked along the *path* of sacrifice that would ultimately bring him unto ascension with his Father (ch. 20:17) — a path that must be also taken by those "in him" (Mat. 16:24).

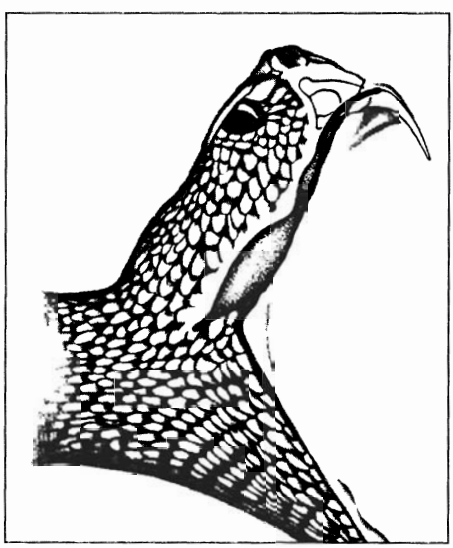
The burial tombs of the past, sometimes built out of the rock and earth; sometimes constructed of stone. It is said that the custom in the time of the Lord was to paint the sepulchres with a white coating, so that they would be distinguishable, to warn a passer-by of a burial place. This would prevent him mistakenly touching the area and thus becoming ceremonially defiled by contact with the dead. Thus, the custom endeavored to remove the clear teaching of the law, that mankind was associated with the defiling nature of flesh. It is not enough to "paint over" the place of defilement — it must be removed by application of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

VERSE 18

"There is no fear of God before their eyes" — This citation is from Psa. 36:1, and Paul advances this to show the *Characteristic of Sin* (see note on v. 10). It is found in unregenerated Israelites, who, though under the law, acted like Gentiles — as though God was not a living reality. This, of course, did not apply to those men and women who were of faith, thus establishing the principle that it was faith and not law that changed them, though the law revealed the channel along which works of faith should move. Men and women without the Truth are perverse — in what proceeds from their mouth (vv. 13-14), in their way of life (vv. 15-17), in their manner of thought (v. 18). Therefore these words of



The asp is common in many parts of southern Europe. Its habitat is in the warmer and drier climates, and it frequents rocks, waste land, hedges and scrub. Each individual has a small home range of several square yards which it rarely leaves. Asps are active by day and night, retiring at irregular intervals to a hole in the earth or between rocks. In winter they hibernate. The asp is a slow-moving snake, but it is aggressive and extremely dangerous to man. Accidents are fairly common especially in the south of France where the reptile is common, and bites have proved fatal. Although the asp is identified as the "vipera aspis", the name was given in the same way as "serpent" to describe any snake.



The venom apparatus of a rattlesnake. When it opens its mouth to strike, its long fangs, which have lain folded flat along the roof of its mouth, are swung into the position shown in the drawing left, and can be plunged into the victim's flesh with one swift jab of the snake's head. As the fangs sink in, muscles contract and squeeze a venom gland in each cheek, forcing the poison out through a narrow tube that runs from gland to fang. Created by God for their own existence and protection, they nevertheless provide examples of the fleshly-minded who bring destruction and death in their tracks.

condemnation (vv. 10-18) apply equally to both Jew and Gentile if they obey not the Word of God in spirit and truth.

The "fear of God" is a term descriptive of piety and understanding. It is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), and wisdom (Job 28:28). It must dominate and direct the issues of life. When God is recognized as sovereign Lord, there is found the basis for true religion, and the ability to restrain men from sin. But the wicked have repudiated this.

VERSE 19

"Now we know" — Notice Paul's continued use of the pronoun "we", as in v. 9; thus here is something acknowledged by the Jews. The word *oida* is emphatic. It signifies that "we know absolutely". The Greek word has the idea of perceiving accurately, and understanding particularly. Thus Paul advances an indisputable truth that can readily be recognized.

Paul concludes his listing of quotations, which have fully established the teaching of the apostle that the nation of Israel, as such, was far from being righteous, nor could they be justified by their own works. By quoting from no less than six portions of the O.T. Scriptures referring to different periods of their history, he shows the true character of the people. It followed that a Jew could not hope to be saved simply because he was a Jew. He needed, as much as the Gentile, the benefit of some other plan of salvation, and concerning this, Paul now proceeds to outline.

"That what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" — Since the law spoke to Israelites and to Gentile proselytes, Paul makes a most pointed allusion to the question of Jewish responsibility. The law did not speak to Gentiles who were considered beyond its scope and without hope (cp. Eph. 2:11-12). Thus the limitation of the law is here revealed. It could not go beyond the nation to whom it was committed; it was powerless to affect the lives of Gentiles unless they were prepared to submit to its ritual. Its purpose was to produce a conviction of guilt and the recognition of sin in those who submitted to it, and guide an Israelite to throw himself upon the mercy of God.

"That every mouth may be stopped" — The law effectively revealed that all are convicted sinners, and if the law convicted them, it could hardly save them! All men, whether Jews or Gentiles, must learn from the law to seek for eternal salvation upon a source entirely outside the law. Thus, everyone who considered the situation of mankind would be thoroughly convinced of the inability of flesh to reach perfect obedience to the divine will. Paul has made plain the depravity of the people to whom the divine Oracles were actually committed — those who had the benefit of the divine law — but who, nevertheless, failed to match its perfection. Thus Jew, and Gentile, are brought to a common level of failure! The only hope for either was from Yahweh Himself, and the means whereby He could effect deliverance was upon the principle of divine grace and mercy. Sins require forgiveness — but where is that principle provided for in the ideal of "salvation through law"? There was no such provision! Men and women must accept the reality of that situation, and, rather than argue their case before God upon the foundation of law, they should listen to the Creator as He sets forth His plan for man's redemption: see Job. 40:1-4. A realisation of these things should cause "every mouth" to be "closed" so that no voice of self-justification through law might be heard.

"And all the world may become guilty before God" — The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "lay the whole world open to God's judgment", whilst the *TCNT* says: "the whole world become liable to the judgment of God". The law established a code that flesh, through its very weakness, found impossible to keep (Rom. 8:3). It revealed that all were guilty, or, as the margin has it, "subject to the judgment of God". Thus it demonstrated the reality of sin (Rom. 7:13), and showed the need of a redeemer who could secure for them the means of forgiveness (Gal. 3:24).

The word "world" is *kosmos* and

refers to the current *order of things;* thus the world of flesh, comprising both Jew and Gentile. The phrase "guilty before God" (or, subject to the judgment of God: mg.) is taken from the courts of justice. It is applied to a man who has not vindicated or defended himself; against whom, therefore, the charge or indictment is found true, and who is in consequence subject to punishment. It thus relates to those classified as "children of wrath" in Eph. 2:3, who have disobeyed the divine Will, and have manifested the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

The word rendered "guilty" is found only here. It is the Greek *hupodikos*, from *hupo* (under, beneath) and *dike* (justice, right, a decision or execution). The idea in the Greek word is that of subjection to punishment because the man personally deserves it, and because, being unable to vindicate himself, he *ought* to be punished. It is never used to denote simply an obligation to punishment, but emphasized that the punishment was deserved. The law brought an examination of a person's actions and revealed the inevitability of transgression, making "sin exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13).

VERSE 20

"Therefore by the deeds of (the) law" — The R.V. has: "by the works of the law", for Paul is careful to define the ritualistic rules and laws of the Mosaic Code, as distinct from the spirit and principles that underline those commands. The word "by" is the Greek *ek,* which means "out of"; thus, more correctly it should be rendered: "*out of* deeds of law shall no flesh be justified.

"There shall no flesh be justified in his sight" — The ceremonial law could not constitute a person righteous; it could only condemn (vv. 21-25) the sinner. Paul quotes from Psa. 143:2, where the Psalmist has "no man" (although the Hebrew text reads: "no living") instead of "flesh" as in Romans. His use of "flesh" is significant, for it indicates why justification by works is impossible. The Greek word is *sarx* ("flesh") to embrace *all* humanity; thus emphasizing the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew. The very use of this word was a reminder to the Jew that he was flesh and not spirit. It speaks eloquently of the inherent weakness in man — and that weakness of the flesh was what the Judaiser was not prepared to acknowledge. Man is but flesh, and the flesh is weak (Rom. 8:3); therefore man invariably fails, showing that something more than flesh is required to succeed. To demand justification by perfect obedience to the law, is setting flesh an impossible target, for, as the Lord himself taught, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Mat. 26:41) and "profits nothing" (Jn. 6:63). It was God manifest in flesh that gained the victory as far as Christ is concerned (1Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor, 5:19; Rom. 8:3), as for all others (see 2 Cor. 4:7).

"For by (the) law is the knowledge of sin" — "By" is *dia*, signifying "through". The law made sin real, and, by bringing all under its power, made obvious the need of a redeemer. Men of faith clearly saw that justification in the absence of a redeemer was impossible (Psa. 143:2; Psa. 49:7-8). On the other hand Judaisers who claimed justification through the deeds of the law were without hope.

The word "knowledge" in this verse is *epignosis*, which describes "a full and accurate understanding". The law "entered that the offence might abound" (ch. 5:20), and by highlighting the presence of sin, provided a guide to righteousness in acting as a "schoolmaster" leading the faithful to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

God's Means of Salvation — Rom. 3:21 to 8:3

Paul has proved his charge that all the world is guilty before God. The Jew is guilty because the law in which he places his confidence curses him by showing that he is continually a sinner. The Gentile is guilty because he lives in complete ignorance of the requirements of God. Thus, all mankind is alienated from the life of God through ignorance and wicked works (Ephesians 4:18). That being so, there is an urgent need of salvation. But how and where is it to be effected? That is the theme to which the apostle now addresses himself; and he proceeds to set forth the most systematic outline of the doctrine of the atonement found in Scripture.

First, he makes a general statement declaring that to the condemned race "a righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed" (Rom. 3:21-26). It is a righteousness foreshadowed by the Law, predicted by the Prophets, publicly set forth in Christ, and at the disposal of all who desire to avail themselves of it.

He then proceeds to show that, as the weakness of flesh prevented the Law from revealing the righteousness of God, it was left to faith to do so (vv. 27-31). He advances the examples of Abraham and David to prove the efficacy of faith to that end (ch. 4:1-12), and states that the same justification by faith is available to all, both Jew and Gentile (vv. 23-25).

In chapter 5 Paul outlines its advantages, advancing seven immediate benefits: (1) *We have peace with God;* (2) *We have access by faith;* (3) *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;* (4) *We glory in tribulations;* (5) *The love of God is shed in our hearts;* (6) *We shall be saved from wrath;* (7) *We joy in God.* Finally, there is the ultimate benefit: *eternal life* (ch. 5:21).

Justification by faith, however, is but the first step to salvation. It represents a mental outlook, including the acknowledgement of divine authority and human responsibility. It must be manifested in action stemming from baptism, and reveal the continuing process of baptism in a daily experience. So justification must move on to sanctification, i.e. the application of the principles in action (ch. 6:1—8:17).

There are, therefore, three deaths (symbolized by baptism) —

(1) Dead to sin .....alive unto God (ch. 6:11);
(2) Dead to the law .....espoused to Christ (ch. 7:4);
(3) Dead to the flesh .....led by the spirit (ch. 8:13).

The final state of the process of salvation is glorification by a change of nature; and every believer is invited to seek the help that God will render to that end (Rom. 8:18-39). It will be attained only through suffering as we strive against the pressures that come from within and without. In this struggle we feel our weakness, but Paul reminds us of the strength available from heaven, and proclaims his confidence that through such means the weakest of humanity can attain unto the glory that will one day be revealed.

This section, therefore, is divided into:

JUSTIFICATION .....ch. 3:21 — 5:21
SANCTIFICATION .....ch. 6:1 — 8:17
GLORIFICATION .....ch. 8:18 — 8:39

PART TWO: JUSTIFICATION — Chs. 3:21 to 5:21

God's Salvation Manifested

THE first step towards salvation is justification by faith. This provides a basis for ultimate justification by works (Rom. 2:13; James 1:22; 2:17-24). But just what is "justification"? It is the proclaiming of a person to be just or righteous. The Scriptures reveal that this can be done upon two grounds: (1) Personal Vindication — by which a person is declared to be just, or righteous, because of his complete obedience to God's will; or (2) By Absolution — or acquittal from guilt, involving the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation. The first sense applies alone to Christ who defied his contemporaries to convict him of sin (John 8:46; 1Pet. 2:22; John 16:10), and whose resurrection to eternal life proclaimed the Father's pleasure in him (Rom. 1:4). The second sense applies to those sons of God who are overlaid by the sin-covering Name of Christ (Isa. 53:11; 1Cor. 1:30). Their belief justifies Yahweh in their hearts, for they acknowledge their sins and plead forgiveness, on the basis of the atonement, or "cover" He had provided. In His mercy, Yahweh is prepared to forgive sins through the blood of Christ.

Justification, however, is more than forgiveness, and the subtle difference should be realized. A law is promulgated: one disobeys it, but afterwards acknowledges this sin and is forgiven. Except for the natural consequences of disobedience the sinner is in the same moral position as before the transgression took place: a purely neutral condition. On the other hand, if, after forgiveness, he begins to obey that law, he is justified. Thus, justification does not come from mere absolution of guilt, but from the practice of righteousness (1John 3:7).

Justification by faith requires a state of mind that magnifies Yahweh, and recognizes both the weakness of flesh and the reality of sin. Thus, in expounding this doctrine, the apostle shows the gospel answer to sins (personal transgressions: Rom. 3:21—5:11) and then to "sin" (a condition of nature: ch. 5:12—21). It is important to notice the difference between these two conditions, and to understand the two-fold scriptural definition of sin: (1) active transgression and disobedience of divine law; and, (2) the evil propensities of the flesh. Paul's treatment of "sin" in contrast to "sins" continues in the next section of this exposition, dealing with Sanctification.

In chapter 4, Paul provides two examples of justification by faith in the cases of Abraham and David, whilst in chapter 5 he proceeds to outline the benefits that accrue to all those who avail themselves of the gracious provision that a merciful heavenly Father has provided through Christ.

The Law Condemned, Therefore Justification must be Sought Elsewhere — vv. 21-31.

Paul now reveals that God's means of justification has been publicly proclaimed. As the Law condemned those who lived under it, justification must come from beyond the scope of the Law. In Christ Jesus, the righteousness of God apart from the Law is found.

VERSE 21

"But now" — The apostle is not expressing a point of time, but a process of reasoning. "In view of the evidence before us, we reach this conclusion". Having shown the entire failure of all attempts to be justified by law, whether among Jews or Gentiles, Paul proceeds to explain the plan of justification through Jesus Christ, for this is the main design of the epistle: ch. 1:17.

"The righteousness of God without the law is manifested" — The Greek for "without" is *choris*, translated as "apart from" *(RV)*, "quite apart from" *(TCNT)*. Since man cannot perfectly obey the divine Will, God's method of justification was to be found in a different process than that bound by the ritual of law. It does not mean that God abandoned His law; or that Jesus Christ did not regard the law, for he came to "magnify" it (Isa. 42:21); or that we can therefore ignore law, for it is a "schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24) teaching divine principles. But it means that since justification cannot be achieved by obedience to law (Col. 2:20-23), because of the "weakness of flesh" (Rom. 8:3), it was to be accomplished beyond the ritual of the law.

The words "is manifested" comes from the Greek *phaneroo*, meaning, "to make apparent, make manifest, make openly known" (Bullinger).

"Being witnessed by the law and the prophets" — The words "being witnessed" is from the Greek *martureo*, which comes from a root signifying one who bears witness by his death (English, martyr). The Old Testament Scriptures testified beforehand of the manifestation of the divine system of righteousness. They were the shadow, of which Christ was the substance, and in him was justification to be found. It was not a new thing, but that which was fully declared in the sacred writings. Therefore, the O.T. Scriptures are not shown to be unnecessary, nor able to be dispensed with — but rather, to be accepted as revealing the continual evidence that was revealed in Christ. He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Mat. 5:17). What is said in the subsequent Scriptures is consistent with all that had gone before. Paul has revealed some of this evidence in citations found in preceding verses. It was evidence upon which the Lord also drew: John 5:46; Luke 24:27. See also Acts 26:22.

The principle was seen in "the law" (i.e. the five books of Moses) through the various representations, symbols and enactments of the Mosaic Code. God required of His people a recognition of His righteousness seen, for example, in the attributes of the Tabernacle, the Altar and the Sacrifices. These enactments made clear the relevance of sin and the need for personal righteousness, but since it could not be achieved by sinful man, the law pointed to one who should come.

Similarly "the prophets" (which comprise the remainder of the Old Testament), spoke of one born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), of one who would fulfil the terms of sacrifice (ch. 53:6), of one known as *Yahweh Tzidkenu* (Yahweh our Righteousness, Jer. 23:6), whose work would be a saving labor on his own behalf and for his people (Zech. 9:9; 8:3).

Paul's use of the term, "the law and the prophets" challenges his readers to consider the number of scriptures he has already brought to their attention. He has effectively taken the ground normally claimed by the Judaisers, to turn their defence against them.

VERSE 22

"Even the righteousness of God" — A similar word to that rendered elsewhere as "justification", and expressing the same

idea. Righteousness is the declaring of one to be "just" or "righteous". In the case of Jesus this was as the result of his perfect and sinless obedience; in those "in him" righteousness is achieved by being covered by his sacrifice, since they cannot claim sinlessness. The divine principle of righteousness is essential for the saving of the race. It enables God to remain perfectly just, whilst at the same time, being able to absolve sinners from their transgressions. It is the "righteousness of God" in the sense that He has instituted this scheme of reconciliation.

"(Which is) by faith of Jesus Christ" — Paul has introduced "the righteousness of God" as being manifested apart from law (v. 21); now, he takes this principle a stage further by stating that such righteousness can only be seen and attained through Jesus Christ upon the principle of "faith".

The word "by" is the Greek *dia,* better rendered "through". Thus the *Diaglott* has: "through faith of Christ"; i.e. by belief in the atoning work of Christ (Acts 3:16). Since all mankind have sinned and "fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), justification or righteousness cannot be found in obedience to the law, nor in mere ritual ordinances. It therefore could only be through forgiveness of sins upon the basis of an understanding of Truth.

"Unto all and upon all them that believe" — God's system of salvation is based upon a belief of His Truth and is restricted to those who have been called and who have accepted its disciplines. It is "unto all" *(eis pantas)* in the sense that He has made it known to those who have been called out "for His Name" (Acts 15:14). It is "upon all" *(epi pantas)* inasmuch as belief demands action on the part of the recipients. They must "put on" Christ through baptism, as the first step in the process of justification, and in the sense a garment is put "upon" the body (cp. Gal. 3:27; Rev. 19:8).

The *TCNT* has "upon all those who are in the process of trusting and having faith" emphasising the Greek present participle. The phrase defines those who make a total commitment to Christ as their saviour — not a spur-of-the-moment decision, but one based upon sound, clear knowledge, and treated as a "process" which continues undiminished throughout their lifetime.

"For there is no difference" — i.e. between Jew and Gentile, for *all* have sinned and must respond to the demands of the Truth in Christ Jesus as a principle of redemption. Thus, in Eph. 3:14-17, Paul shows that the gospel has achieved what the law could not: reconciliation for Jew and Gentile between themselves (Gal. 3:28), and the Father. Both have equal opportunities under the jurisdiction of grace. *Rotherham* and *Weymouth* translate the word as "distinction" emphasizing that God does not regard one above another in the matter of salvation.

VERSE 23

"For all have sinned" — A general description of believing Jews and Gentiles (v. 22), not intended to include Jesus, who "did no sin". It is rendered in the past tense, indicating the inevitability of sin due to the possession of "sin's flesh" (Rom. 8:3) by the seed of Adam. In the Greek form this statement is in the "collective aorist", which is represented in English by the perfect tense. This means that the sin of each offender is considered as a past fact. The Greek word for "sinned" is *hamartano,* which means to "miss the mark". It does not only refer to actual transgression, or disobedience to specific instruction, but classifies sin as the inability of the practiser to reach to the perfection in Christ. The sense of the word is indicated in Judges 20:16 describing the Benjamites as archers who could sling stones at a hair breadth and not miss (Heb. *chata,* elsewhere translated "sin"). They did not "sin" inasmuch as every arrow reached its target. Unless we can match the perfection of Christ in every respect, we "miss" the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), and therefore are "sinners". Perfect obedience, therefore, is not avoiding transgression so much, as achieving the perfection of Christ — a thing impossible to sons of

Adam because of the weakness of flesh.

"And come short of the glory of God" — The verb "come short" (Gr. *hysterountai,* lack — translated "fall short" by *TCNT, Weymouth, Rotherham,* etc.) suggests having a deficit; of having failed to reach the measure of divine perfection. Like an arrow which has fallen short of its mark, humankind has been unable to achieve the glory for which it was originally created. As possessors of a condemned nature, we cannot manifest the fulness of divine glory until the day of full redemption has come.

Moses sought to see the divine glory (Exod. 33:18), but was not permitted the full manifestation (v. 23) for that was beyond the ability of man to bear. The glory was then revealed in a Covenant Name (ch. 34:6-7), which demonstrated that divine glory was seen in a perfect character as well as in perfection of nature. Moses later saw a representation of that glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and spoke of the means by which that glory would be realized: in "the exodus (translated "decease" in Lk. 9:31)" which was the atoning sacrifice of the Lord. Christ manifested the Yahweh Name perfectly (Jn. 17:6), and as such demonstrated His glory (ch. 12:28). We "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2) to be obtained when this "vile body" becomes like Christ's "glorious body" (Phil. 3:21) through the process of immortalisation. Meanwhile, the glory of God must firstly be seen in the moral perfection of character (Exod. 33:18; Jn. 1:14), which must be developed through the imprint of the Inspired Word.

VERSE 24

"Being justified freely" — The process of justification (or, being declared righteous) through the covering of Christ, is without price; thus given "freely" (the Greek word *doreau* means, gratuitously). Salvation cannot be purchased; it is a divine gift to those of mankind's race whom Yahweh selects. All are able to obtain it; it does not depend upon personal ability, wealth, or achievements (cp. Jas. 2:1). In his use of the word "freely" Paul stresses the total absence of any attainment or merit on the part of man. Justification, or righteousness, cannot be "bought" with any price that man can pay, such as obedience to law. There is no way whereby the human race may *earn* eternal salvation, since it is God's "gift" (Rom. 6:23).

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which, though relying upon the grace of God, a believer must sacrifice something: he must "buy" (Isa. 55:1) without money or price. What he must give is himself! Then, the justification of God comes freely and without restriction.

"By his grace" — The word *charis* means *unmerited favor* (see notes, ch. 1:7). It has been extended in generosity without expectation of adequate payment. The achievement of justification has come through the sacrifice of the "precious blood" of Christ (1Pet. 1:19), given that "enemies" might be redeemed (Rom. 5:10).

"Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" — The word for "redemption" is the Greek *apolutroseos,* from the verb *apolutroo,* which signifies to redeem by paying the full *(apo)* ransom *(lutron)* price. It has the idea of a release from captivity through the purchase of freedom. This has been obtained by the sacrifice of Christ in which he has abrogated the law of condemnation for himself and those who believe and obey him (*BASF,* clause 8). Thus, the redemption from sin's flesh seen accomplished in the Lord, is also available to his people. Christ is the author and procurer of salvation (Jn. 3:16).

Three Greek words rendered "redeemed" are used in relation to the principle of redemption:

(1) *agorazo* — To buy ***in*** the slave market. See 1Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2Pet. 2:1. Christ has entered the market of humanity, coming under the dominion of death himself (Rom. 6:9) through the nature he bore identically with us, that he might purchase from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14) those upon whom he places his Name.

(2) *ekkagorazo* — to buy ***out of*** (Gr,

ek) the slave market. See Gal. 3:13; 4:5. This has the idea of the freedom extended after being released from the former master. In this sense, Christ has acted as a deliverer by "bringing many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10), taking them out of the sphere of flesh to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (v. 15).

(3) *lutroo* — to set free by ***paying*** a price. See Tit. 2:14; 1Pet. 1:18. This includes the principle of payment involved in the transaction. The means of redemption is emphasized, it being accomplished through the death of Christ "with the precious blood" (1Pet. 1:19) that speaks of the sacrificial process undertaken by the Lord.

Thus, the process of redemption is demonstrated: In order to perform the will of Yahweh, that mankind be redeemed from the dominion of death into which they had fallen through transgression, it was necessary that Jesus enter into the "market place" *(agorazo)* which he did by being of the same nature as those he came to save (Heb. 2:14). Whilst in that arena, he paid the price necessary *(lutroo)* by freely giving of his "precious blood" (1Pet. 1:9) for himself (Heb. 13:20) and for those purchased (Lk. 22:20). By that means, as our great high priest (Heb. 4:14) he has led us out *(ekkagorazo)* of the market place of hopeless humanity, to bring us into full harmony with Yahweh (Heb. 6:20).

The totally wrong application of these three Greek words in scripture, has given rise to the most common beliefs which are held by "christians" concerning the atonement. They claim that Christ died to appease the wrath of a vengeful God. This is a monstrous assertion which would suggest the Creator to be a malicious, evil Being who rejoiced to witness the suffering of an innocent man, and gained great satisfaction therefrom.

It is also claimed that Christ died as a substitute, by suggesting that he was punished in the place of the sinner: the innocent suffering *instead* of the guilty. If this were so, we would not die, and Christ would still be dead!

These perverted concepts of the atonement are nowhere taught or implied in scripture. Instead, it clearly shows that there could be no deliverance from sin for the human race until sin had been conquered in a perfectly obedient man of Adam's race. This challenge to sin required obedience *unto* death, involving the shedding of sacrificial blood as a sign and proof that the life of an individual was being poured out to God in a declaration that the flesh could produce no good thing, and that only God is perfectly righteous.

The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished that which we could never do. He became a perfect sacrifice for sin through living a life of perfect obedience to his Father, "unto death, *even the death of the cross*" (Phil. 2:8).

We identify with that action, by partaking of bread and wine — symbols of the body and blood of the Lord "given" and "shed" in a sacrificial declaration that the "flesh profits nothing", and that the "spirit giveth life". But those rituals, necessary to fulfil the commandments of our Lord, are only of value when their significance is enacted in daily experiences.

VERSE 25

"Whom God hath set forth" — If the preceding verses speak of *what* God has accomplished through His Son, these verses explain *how* it was achieved. God desired to plainly reveal the process of His redemption provided through His Son. To "set forth" (mg. foreordained) properly means to place in public view, to exhibit in a conspicuous situation, as goods are exposed for sale or a lamp is set forth for light. The Greek word *protithemi* (from *pro*, before, and *tithemi*, to place; thus: to set before) is rendered "purposed" in Rom. 1:13; Eph. 1:9 (the only other occurrences). The Greek is in the middle voice, which "lays stress upon the personal interest which God had in so doing" *(Vine)*. It was something which God did because no man could do it: "Yahweh hath made bare *His* holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the

salvation *of our God*" (Isa. 52:10). Further, "He (Yahweh) saw that there was *no man*, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore *His* arm brought salvation unto *Him*" (Isa. 59:16). Because God only is righteous, He alone could become the means of man's reconciliation. Hence: "God was *in* Christ, reconciling the world *unto Himself*" (2Cor. 5:19).

This divine work, seen in Yahweh's only beloved Son, was not done in a corner (Acts 26:26). It was "plainly set forth" for the Lord's ministry was known throughout Judea, and his crucifixion was prominently displayed before all the people. Christ was put to an "open shame" (Heb. 6:6), so that none can be excused of ignorance.

"To be a propitiation" — The Greek word, *hilasterion*, is used in the *Septuagint* for "mercy seat" in Lev. 16:2,14 etc. Bullinger comments: "The Septuagint always uses it as the name of a *place*". The word in Rom. 3:25 and its other N.T. occurrence (Heb. 9:5) is similarly rendered "mercy seat" by the Diaglott and other translations. The Hebrew name for this is *kapphoreth*, from *kaphar*, to cover or conceal. It was from this place that God was represented as speaking to Israel: "And I will speak to thee from above the *kapphoreth* (or *hilasterion*, propitiatory, mercy seat)" (Exod. 25:22; Lev. 16:2). The mercy seat, as part of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle, was the appointed meeting place between Yahweh and man (Exod. 25:22). Being constructed of gold, and forming the base of the cherubim, it figured the ultimate glory of immortality to be enjoyed jointly by Christ and his Bride. It was the centre of God's scheme of redemption, and exhibited in the atonement it offered, the perfect blending of justness and mercy (see Rom. 3:26). It did this in the blood-sprinkling ceremony which took place on the Day of Atonement. The High Priest took the blood of the sacrificial victim past the Veil, and into the Most Holy Place, in order to sprinkle it seven times on the mercy seat and before it (Lev. 16:14-15). Thus there was an association between the principle of cere-monial cleansing by blood (Heb. 9:7,22), the atoning mercy thus provided, and the ultimate perfection illustrated by the gold of the Most Holy.

In the fullness of the antitype, Jesus' perfect obedience secured for himself a right to life, and the shedding of his covenant blood fulfilled the divine requirement of atonement. Thus his sacrifice and the resulting purging of his nature through death, resurrection and glorification, achieved all the principles seen in the Tabernacle elements. He was the fulfilment of the mercy seat, the "propitiation", and his atoning work is "set forth" by God that we might understand and associate therewith (Rom. 6:4). Thus, in 1John 2:2; 4:10 the word *hilasmos* (propitiation, mercy seat) is used to describe the presence of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by which our sins are "covered".

"Through faith in his blood" — The Diaglott reverses the phrase: "by his own blood, through the faith". Both principles are important. The blood of Jesus represents his life in sacrifice, and it is this feature that is celebrated on the Table of Remembrance: "this cup is the new

Law and "The" Law

In verses 21-31 Paul does not limit his comments to the Mosaic Law in particular, but argues for the ineffectiveness of ritual law of any kind to provide the character being sought by Yahweh. Although the A.V. has "the law" generally throughout this section, the original text as in the Diaglott does not have the definite "the". Thus Paul shows that any endeavor to achieve righteousness by a mere observance to ritual and law will not accomplish salvation. Even Abraham, who lived before the Mosaic Law, was not justified by works, (i.e., obedience to law). Faith must be the motivating influence.

covenant *in my blood*" (1Cor. 11:25); "this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat. 26:28). Christ's "blood" was poured out in a dedicatory offering to illustrate the complete submission of his will to the divine requirements: "this commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn. 10:18). It was the means by which he purged his nature of the defilement of mortality, and ultimately entered into life. "Faith in his blood" demands an understanding of those principles, and an endeavor to imitate them in a disciple's own life: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink his blood*, ye have no life in you" (Jn. 6:53). This is achieved when we identify ourselves with his sacrifice, through baptism and a life of commitment, by which process we offer ourselves on the Christ-altar provided.

"To declare his righteousness" — Diag.: "For an exhibition of his righteousness". In this Christ accomplished what it was impossible for an animal sacrifice to achieve. He revealed the righteousness of God by his loyal obedience unto death, becoming a willing sacrifice, voluntarily laying down his life after a demonstration of perfect obedience to the divine law throughout his life, and thus ensured his resurrection to life (John 10:18; Acts 2:24). The animals were not such. They remained dead like the hope of those who put confidence in the ritual of the Law.

The death of Jesus exhibited the righteousness of God in that it revealed the only way whereby a person could render obedience: i.e., by becoming completely dead to sin (Rom. 6:2) and to the motions of the flesh (Rom. 7:17). But as man inevitably fails, he must obtain mercy and forgiveness if he would be saved. This is done by "faith in his blood", which represents an understanding of what was accomplished in the death and resurrection of the Lord. There was no more virtue in his blood as such, than there was in the brazen serpent when the significance of the symbol was not understood (see Num. 21:8; cp. 2Kings 18:4). It is what is represented in these things that count. The Lord gained his victory over the flesh by denying it and resting upon the strength that Yahweh provided. His death upon the cross was a dramatization of all that he had accomplished in a life of self-denial; and mercy and forgiveness will be extended to all who recognize the need for this and, acknowledging their own failings, seek to remedy them by the same Strength (cp. Phil. 4:13), and plead forgiveness when they fail.

"For the remission of sins that are past" — There is a strong sense of compassion in these words, which could have particularly affected the Jew who had sinned under the law. For, though the law provided no forgiveness for those sins, he could obtain that through Christ (see Heb. 9:15).

God's righteousness demands unequivocal judgment upon sin in all its forms. The divine mercy seat is the means by which this process is achieved. As transgression in Eden was first mental (when sin was considered by the human pair, and their minds defiled as a result) and then moral (when transgression against the divine law was committed), which brought a physical defilement, that process must be reversed, and the transgressions which have become an inevitable condi-

"Paul's explanation in Romans of how God's righteousness has become available for man is not expressed in the language of metaphor, although some of the words used are figurative. The sections 3:21-31 and 5:12-21 are, we believe, the most important in the whole of the Scriptures on the subject. They might well be the touchstone by which to test every theory. The best exposition of the subject in the Truth's literature is to be found, in our judgment, in the pamphlet, 'The Blood of Christ'." — J.Carter. The pamphlet referred to is now available in the Logos volume, *'The Atonement'* — ***Editor.***

tion of fallen mankind, must be first recognised mentally, then covered by prayer, and removed from sight.

Through faith and understanding of Christ's sacrifice, we accept God's judgment upon our sins and, dying to them, seek the divine forgiveness for past failings. Therefore when a person "puts on" Christ, he figuratively covers his personal failings by the obedient life of his Saviour, and will ultimately obtain physical cleansing in immortality.

The Diaglott translates this verse: "in passing by the sins formerly committed". The efficacy of Christ's offering pointed back to sins committed under the law as well as forward to the times of grace (Heb. 9:15; Acts 13:39). During the period before the coming of Christ, God had "passed over" the transgressions of His people, foreseeing a time when redemption would be achieved, and therefore the sins of those under the law were forgiven in anticipation of his offering. In Christ there was the proof of God's righteousness in so doing (cp. Psa. 103:11-17), so that in Christ's death was seen "the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

"Through the forbearance of God" — The Diaglott has: "during (Gr. *dia*) the forbearance of God", emphasizing that there is a limited opportunity for redemption. God offers a period of "longsuffering" (2Pet. 3:9) because He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". But there is a limit to that condition. A "day is appointed" for judgment (Acts 17:31), when there will be "time no longer" (Rev. 10:6). Concerning this, the Lord Jesus warns that "the day is at hand" when he will "come quickly" (ch. 22:10-12). Then, the time of the "remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:15) will have concluded, and the day of opportunity will be closed.

The word "forbearance" is the Greek *anoche*, which signifies "the holding back"; i.e. God exercises a suspension, or delay, of judgment in view of the exercise of faith in His Son's covenant sacrifice.

VERSE 26

"To declare (I say) at this time" — The word "declare" (Gr. *endeixis*) means "a pointing out, properly with the finger; a declaration, indication". Thus, it implies the open pointing out to men. The literal Greek *(Diag. text)* has: "for a pointing out of the righteousness of Himself". The offering of Christ, which had now occurred in answer to all the types and shadows of the past, revealed Yahweh's means of righteousness or justification for fallen man. It was an important "time" (cp. Gal. 4:4) for it opened the divine scheme of redemption to all mankind, and previous times of Gentile ignorance were no longer excusable (Acts 17:30).

"His righteousness" — This is the basis of God's dealings with mankind. The statement of v. 25 is repeated by way of emphasis.

"That he might be just" — All aspects of the atonement reveal God as just, or vindicated. It is important that believers realize this, and understand the principles that lead to the acknowledgement of divine righteousness.

Was God just in imposing law in the beginning? Certainly, because that was the method by which the divine characteristics of obedience and faithfulness would be developed in His creation. But mankind failed to obey, and fell in sin.

Was God just in punishing sin? Absolutely, for otherwise He would be seen to be partial in judgment, and negligent in enforcing His own law. But this left mankind in a desperate position, and in need of redemption.

Was God just in redeeming mankind? Undoubtedly, for it shows that He will reward those who seek Him, and His holy character is reflected and revealed in those who do so.

Was He just in appointing death as the means of redemption? Yes, for it is flesh that sins, and the lusts of the flesh must be put to death if God is to triumph in our lives. Thus, Paul speaks of himself in terms of daily crucifixion (Gal. 2:20; 6:14;

Principles of Righteousness

In a letter dedicated to portraying the inherent righteousness of God in His dealings with mankind on the one hand, and the means whereby faithful men and women might obtain salvation through that righteousness on the other hand, we might expect Paul to use words and language that emphasize and elaborate both of these aspects.

He does so, using words developed from the root word *dike*, which has the meaning of a judicial condemnation and its penalty (see its use in Acts 25:15; 28:4; 2Thess. 1:9; Jude 7).

One such word found in the Epistle to the Romans is ***Dikaios*** which means "to fulfil all claims which are right and becoming. A right state (of which God and His Word are the standard) so that no fault or defect can be charged". It is used in three ways: (1) Used of God, it refers to His doings answering to the rule which He has established for Himself. See 1Jn. 1:9; Jn. 17:25; Rev. 16:5; Rom. 3:26. (2) Used of Jesus Christ in Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 2Tim. 4:8; 1Jn. 2:1; 3:7, as the perfect embodiment of obedience to the divine rule, or standard: hence the "Just One"; the "righteous Judge". (3) Used of men, it "denotes their relation to the will and judgment of God. Hence it means virtuous, upright, pure in life, correct in thinking and feeling". See, for example, Galatians 3:11; Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:8; James 5:16; 2Peter 2:7-8.

In the epistle to the Romans, *dikaios* is found as an adjective in chs. 1:17; 2:13; 3:10,26; 5:7,19; 7:12. It occurs 81 times in the New Testament, and is translated "righteous" (41 times), "just" (33), "right" (5), "meet" (2). However, in Rom. 3:8 and Heb. 2:2 "just" is from *endikos*, meaning, "fair, just, equitable".

Next we have ***Dikaiosune***. It occurs 92 times in the N.T., 36 of the references being in Romans. It is always translated "righteousness" — the doing or being what is just and right; the character and acts of a man commanded by and approved of God, in virtue of which the man corresponds to Him and His will. It signifies the sum total of all that God commands and approves. As such it is not only what God demands, but what He gives to man, and which is appropriated by faith. The state of the justified man is due to God. The righteousness which becomes his is that which God declares to be righteous and ascribes to him. Righteousness thus denotes the relation of being right into which God puts the man who believes. Hence it is a state called forth by God's act of justification; viz., by a judicial deliverance from all that stands in the way of being *dikaios*.

No man can claim righteousness for himself apart from the grace and mercy of God — so says Paul in such passages as Rom. 4:3,5,6,9,11,13,22; 5:17,21. This word, then, is to be found in chs. 1:17; 3:5,21,22,25,26; 4:3,5,6,9,11 (twice), 13,22; 5:17,21; 6:13,16,18,19,20; 8:10; 9:28,30 (twice),31 (twice); 10:3 (twice),4,5,6,10; 14:17.

In chs. 2:26; 5:18 and 8:4, the word rendered "righteousness" is from the Greek *dikaioma*.

The word "righteousness" in Heb. 1:8 is from *enthutes* which is not found elsewhere, and implies "rectitude; straightness".

The noun ***DIKAIOMA*** means (1) a righteous ordinance, (2) a decree of acquittal, (3) a righteous act. In the N.T. it is found ten times, being rendered "righteousness" (4 times), "ordinance" (3), "judgment" (2), "justification" (1). In Romans it occurs in chs. 1:32; 2:26; 5:16,18; 8:4.

The verb ***DIKAIOO*** means "to render innocent: to justify; to pronounce righteous; to be justified; to be acquitted". It is found forty times in the N.T., being translated "justified" (31 times), "justify" (4), "justifieth" (2), "justifier" (1), "righteous" (1), "freed" (1). It is found 15 times in Romans: 2:13; 3:4,20,24,26,28,30; 4:2,5; 5:1,9; 6:7; 8:30 (twice), 33. It always relates to the grace and mercy of God which permits Him to grant "acquittal" to those who serve Him with a genuineness of mind and heart. It is never used of Jesus Christ, whose perfection of character and obedience in all things gave him a self-justification in Yahweh's eyes (Acts 2:24).

DIKAIOSIS is a noun-word meaning (as it is rendered) "justification" — the action which establishes right; i.e., a sentence in law; therefore also justification. It occurs only in Romans 4:25; 5:18 (Note: in ch. 5:16 the Greek word is *dikaioma*).

Rom. 2:5 has the combination noun-word ***DIKAIOKRISIA***, properly rendered "righteous judgment" as its meaning ("a just sentence") implies. There is another closely allied word, which, while not found in Romans, might be noted. It is *dikaios*, an adverb indicating "righteously; equitably", and found in Lk. 23:41; 1Cor. 15:34; 1Thess. 2:10; Tit. 2:12; 1Pet. 2:23, and translated: justly, righteousness, righteously. ***— E. Wilson***

1Cor. 15:31), by which he honors the divine requirement, and exalts God's justness.

Was God just in requiring Jesus to wear the condemned nature of humanity? Of course, for it was the only way to demonstrate the principle that only God manifest in flesh could conquer the flesh. Jesus had to be within the sphere of human weakness in order to redeem us therefrom. Thus, by God sending His Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, he condemned "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), and rose to become superior to it.

Was God just in bringing Jesus to the cross of sacrifice? It was for that very purpose that the Lord came into the world (1Tim. 1:15). He said that he would not avoid the sacrifice (John 10:18) for it was by the "blood of the everlasting covenant" that he was delivered from the grave (Heb. 13:20). The crucifixion illustrates to all true disciples that flesh must be figuratively put to death (Gal. 5:24), and Christ invited his apostles to "bear their cross" (Mat. 16:24) in conformity with his life. The conquest of sin by Christ was through God who gave the victory (2Cor. 5:19), teaching that we must seek a similar strength if we would overcome (Phil. 4:13).

The justness of God was vindicated in the resurrection of His sinless Son who had sacrificed his own will to conform to that of his Father (Acts 2:24).

"And the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus — The second stage of the redeeming process. God not only reveals justness in Himself, but confers that principle on others like Himself. He justifies believers by forgiving their sins, and thus exhibiting His forbearance; and He does this without any unrighteousness on His part because they, in belief,

A Ransom for All"

Incidental to the study of Romans, it is profitable to consider the statement made by Christ concerning his mission in comparison with that made by Paul.

The "Many" and the "All"

In Mark 10:45, the Lord declared that he had appeared to "give his life a ransom for *many*", but in 1Tim. 2:6, Paul sets it forth as a "ransom for *all*" and in Romans, he limits the "all" to those who believe. Paul's statement in 1Tim. 2:6 reveals that the ransom was provisionally universal, though all do not avail themselves of it by accepting the conditions associated with it. In 1Timothy 2:6, the proposition "for" is *huper,* and signifies "on behalf of", but in Mark 10:45, the word "for" is *anti,* which can mean "instead of" or "appropriate to". Thus the "many" of the latter verse are not the "all" of 1Tim. 2:6. The "many" of Mark 10:45 relate to the many forms of redemption that were found under the Law, all of which pointed forward to the "one offering" the Lord ultimately made. He came to give his life a ransom "in the place of" the many forms of redemption that were set down in the Law as typical of his own great offering.

The Meaning of the "Ransom"

The two words translated "ransom" are also different in the Greek. In Mark the word is *lutron,* and signifies "a means of loosing", from *luo,* to loose (see Gal. 1:4; John 10:17-18), but in Timothy it is *antilutron,* and signifies "the price paid" — *lutron,* "equivalent to" — *anti,* what is necessary. So the use of the word *antilutron* indicated that the price necessary to free all had been paid.

Under the law, ransom was the price paid for redemption, as, for example, the freeing of a slave (see Exod. 30:11-16, and compare with 1Pet. 1:7). The Scriptures set forward the hope of redemption (Job 19:25), the problem and price of redemption (Psa. 49:7-9), the result of redemption (Hos. 13:14; Isa. 35:10), the fact of redemption (1Cor. 6:20; 7:23).

The Representative Nature of Christ's Offering

Christ was a representative offering, not a substitutionary one. Yahweh denied the principle of substitution in Ezek. 18:20, and this is exhibited in the offering of Christ. If Jesus died as a substitute, there would be no room for forgiveness, for forgiveness is completely out of place in a debt that has been fully paid. But that forgiveness is required, is shown in Rom. 3:25. Christ offered ***for*** us, not instead of us (1Cor. 15:3; Jn. 10:15,18; Heb. 7:25). His resurrection was as necessary for justification as his death (Rom. 4:25; 8:34; 1Cor. 15:14-18) which demonstrates that the substitutionary idea is wrong, for did he rise ***instead*** of those who will be saved! The offering of Jesus reveals what is necessary for us to obtain life — to repudiate the flesh and live unto God. As he was crucified, so must we be (Gal. 5:24); as he rose to newness of life, so also must we (Rom. 6:4). He was as the good shepherd, leading his sheep through the dark defile of the valley of death onwards to the pastures beyond, and illustrating what they must do to obtain life (though

obviously not to the extent that he did it: namely, to die to sin and rise to newness of life (see Rom. 6:10,4). By this means, Christ, having obtained redemption for himself (Heb. 9:12; the words *"for us"* should be excluded; see Diaglott, Revised Version, etc) dramatized what we must do to obtain redemption. — ***H.P.Mansfield.***

acknowledge the principles set forth in Christ, and God recognizes the weakness of their nature (Psa. 103:11-17; Rom. 8:3).

The verb *pisteuo* has been rendered "believe" 233 times; the noun *pistis* appears as "faith" 239 times — thus, the ideas incorporated in the words "faith" and "believe" are very similar.

VERSE 27

"Where (is) boasting then" — This answers the question posed on behalf of the Jew in ch. 2:23. The word (Gr. *kauchesis,* vaunting) signifies "glorying" (and is always rendered "glory or "glorying" in the RV), and such a fleshly glory is inappropriate in face of the divine righteousness (1Cor. 1:29-31; Jer. 9:24). In what might a man glory? In the flesh? No, it is condemned! Perhaps, then, in works of the Law, such as suggested in ch. 2:17? But the Law only made sin more obvious, and was unable to provide forgiveness! Thus, the righteousness of God drove man to recognize his own weakness and failings: areas in which glorying is not befitting.

"It is excluded" — "It is shut out" (*Diag., Wey.*). The Greek is *ekklecioo.* It is a statement of absolute finality, expressive of a verdict that will never change. Man is humbled by the fact that all the works of flesh cannot obtain for him a right to life, and God is thereby shown not only to be just and merciful, but also supremely wise (cp. v.19). True holiness and righteousness is only manifested in flesh when men and women reveal the characteristics which are of God; thus, it is necessary to suppress self in humility — the very opposite of boasting.

"By what law?" — The TCNT has: "What sort of law forbids it? A law prescribing acts? No, a law prescribing faith. For we conclude that a man stands right with God through faith, quite apart from actions done in obedience to law".

The word *nomou* is here used in the sense of arrangement, rule or system. By what arrangement, or by the operation of what rule, is boasting excluded? Under what kind of a system is this result obtained?

"Of works?" — Did not the ceremonials required by the Law exclude the possibility of boasting? Yet, the Jews gloried in these as sufficient in themselves without the exercise of faith (Heb. 10:4), but the Truth reveals that such glorying was misplaced. There will be many at the Judg-

"There will I Meet with Thee"

Concerning the importance of the mercy seat in the divine process of salvation, Bro Roberts wrote in *Law of Moses* (p. 122):

" 'There will I meet with thee' is a revelation, and a prophecy — not anywhere. Not with wilful unhumbled man as he roams in his pride through the earth with a sense of misconceived rights — but *there;* over a blood-sprinkled ark, or through a God-vindicating slain lamb: over an ark containing the God-written law on indelible stone, the miraculously budded rod, and the golden pot of manna; or through men in the profoundest submission to the authority of God: conforming, in punctilious and reverential affection to His appointments, and rejoicing in everlasting life received from His hand as the reward of faith and obedience."

ment Seat who will rely upon their activities for ultimate glory (Mat. 7:22-23), but will receive the condemnation as being "workers of iniquity".

"Nay; but by the law of faith" — The literal Greek has "through *a* law of faith". The word "faith" (Gr. *pistis*) is frequently rendered "belief" which comes from "hearing the Word" (Rom. 10:17). Such faith will reveal that a blind reliance upon the ceremonial deeds of the law avails nothing, and so a "boasting" in personal deeds is excluded. At the same time note Paul's definition of the *law* of faith. Faith must be revealed in action, in a "means of operation", by which it becomes a way of life and not merely a theory espoused. This is a "law" which proclaims that we have no personal merit; that we are sinners; that we are justified only by the principle of faith.

VERSE 28

"Therefore we conclude" — "We now assemble the facts together with our line of reasoning, and summarize accordingly".

"That a man is justified by faith" — Notice that Paul uses the term "a man" and not "a Jew". Whether Jew or Gentile, justification could only be attained by one means. Neither can claim superiority over the other in this respect (cp. Rom. 4:5; 4:16; 5:1-2; Gal. 3:8-11).

"Without" — Diaglott: "apart from". See notes on v. 21. Paul does not imply that the law was of no value, and should be discarded. Rather, he emphasizes that it pointed to the justification which is found in Christ.

"The deeds of (the) law" — There is no definite article in vv. 28-31, as Paul follows his previous practice of not restricting himself to *the* Law, but to commenting concerning *all* law. Faith sees the ceremonials of law as types or figures (Heb. 9:9) pointing to the need of a redeemer, and thus acting as a schoolmaster, leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24). In this way, a worshipper is led beyond the law to obtain that which the law itself could not provide: personal justification.

VERSE 29

"(Is he) the God of the Jews only?" — By no means, for Paul has previously established this point. It is repeated here only to emphasize that the phrase "a man" in v. 28, includes both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews supposed that God was concerned only with their nation, and that they were the only ones to be admitted to His favor. It was a form of boasting (v. 27).

"(Is he) not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" — Paul does not leave his question with merely an implied answer. He states the answer clearly and absolutely, virtually challenging his opponents to disprove his unequivocal answer, re-asserting his previous contention that the divine plan of salvation was open to all creation (Acts 17:29) and that God desires all to participate (1Tim. 2:4).

VERSE 30

"Seeing (it is) one God" — This added trust would conclude any facetious argument from Judaisers that "Gentiles have their *own* gods, and worship as they like, but Jews must remain loyal to the Mosaic law..." There is only one God (1Cor. 8:6), and therefore it is impossible for Him to have two different methods of saving mankind: one for the Jew and another for the Gentile (Acts 28:26,28). The unity of God was clearly taught under the law (Deut. 6:4), and that same outlook must be developed in His people (cp. Eph. 4:4-6). The purpose of the gospel is to bind together both Jew and Gentile into one glorious, saved community (Eph. 2:13-17).

"Which shall justify the circumcision by faith" — "By faith" is *ek pisteos:* "out of faith". Such a faith is a development out of the national heritage given to the Jews: the oracles of God (v. 2). Within the compass of that Word, as Paul will clearly demonstrate in Rom. 4, justification was offered to Jews when faith motivated their works of law.

"And uncircumcision through faith" — The word "through" is *dia*, "across into", distinguished from the *ek* in regard

to the Jewish believers in the previous phrase. The Greek text has the definite article: "*the* faith". *Dia* indicates that Gentiles would have divine justification brought to their notice through the instrumentality of faith. It is the same faith, but in the case of the Jews they were born into it, in the sense that the scriptures, from whence it comes (Rom. 10:17) were their national heritage; whilst, in the case of the Gentiles, the knowledge had to be taken to them. So faith, in the case of the first, arose out of what the Jews inherited, for "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), and in the case of the second, was brought to the Gentiles so that they could come into the sphere of Abrahamic salvation (Gal. 3:7-9). Both came from the "one and same God".

VERSE 31

"Do we make void the law through faith?" —Has Paul now argued himself into a position from which he must admit that the law has become absolutely useless? Does the law become ineffective by the development of faith? By no means. He continues to assert that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (ch. 7:12). In fact, faith places the law in its proper perspective (see Mat. 5:17), and establishes its authority, as Paul expounds in the epistle to the Hebrews. Thus Gentiles who have not the law through faith perform the works of the law (Rom. 2:14), for though faith might bring liberty from sin, it never creates licence to sin.

"God forbid" — See notes Rom. 3:4.

"Yea, we establish the law" — The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "We are giving the law its true value". There is no contradiction between the gospel of grace and the principles of the Old Testament, and Paul never taught that the acquisition and exercise of faith replaced loyalty to divine commandments. The law itself directed its adherents to justification by faith (Rom. 4:3-8). It was introduced that "sin might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13), and that "all the world may become guilty" (ch. 3:19), for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (v. 20). Thus Paul described the law as "holy, just and good" (ch. 7:12), because it testified to Yahweh's righteousness, unto which man, of his own strength, could not attain.

But by creating a legalistic system the Pharisees had overlooked the undeniable fact that the old covenant was in reality a covenant of grace. In Christ, the law of God is fulfilled according to its original intent, but which was frustrated through the weakness of flesh (Rom. 8:3). Thus, the gospel established the law by showing the permanent validity of the O.T. and by disclosing the only way by which its true intention can be realised. So Christ came to "fulfil the law" (Mat. 5:17), and in doing so, removed its curse (Gal. 3:13), leaving its eternal principles to be developed by the spiritual mind.

Thus the law is established by (1) recognizing Christ as the subject of its rites and ceremonies (Lk. 24:44; Col. 2:14-17; Heb. chs. 8-10); (2) By Christ fulfilling it in his life and sacrifice (Mat. 5:17); (3) By believers seeing that the law must lead to Christ and not to self (Rom. 10:4).

Jesus lived to honor the precepts of the law; he died to satisfy its claims; he rose again to remove the curse of the law, that its wisdom and righteousness should remain in the lives of believers.

In the abstract, law is a rule of action made obligatory; but its value must depend not only upon its obligatoriness, but upon its nature. Unless a law is calculated to evoke results of well-being, its obligatoriness will be a calamity. Its enforcement will oppress — and destroy instead of blessing. Hence the importance of devising laws and rules that will work out for good. But who is able to do this? It evidently requires a very far-sighted acquaintance with human nature and its needs to be qualified to prescribe a law which in all points will work out individual and social well-being. The world knows much of law of one kind or another. That it has not attained to the law that it needs, is manifest from its evil state, and the ceaseless law-tinkering and agitation for law-tinkering going on in every country. ***— R. Roberts, Law of Moses.***

CHAPTER FOUR
EXAMPLES FROM THE PAST
OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The main object of this chapter is to show that the doctrine of justification by faith is founded in the Old Testament. The Apostle advances two powerful examples which no Jew could ignore: Abraham and David. The former was not justified by works of law, but through honoring God in accepting His Word. The latter was justified by the forgiveness of a grievous sin for which the law provided no atoning sacrifice. In the case of Abraham, his justification came before the Mosaic Law was given, and before he was circumcised, clearly showing that the law is not necessary for justification. In fact, it was his faith that made him pleasing to God (vv. 13-17), and it is this example of faith that Paul commends to his readers (vv. 18-25). The case of David brings to account a man who was held in high respect, manifesting a Godly attitude, but who found not remedy in the law for his fallen situation. But faith in the divine mercy, and reliance upon God's forgiveness, provided the means by which David was provisionally delivered from the curse of the law (vv. 6-8). Thus, in both cases, God is exalted in His method of salvation, and shown to be just in His handling of sin.

Abraham Received Justification by Faith, not Law — vv. 1-5.

The Apostle digresses from his argument on the principles of justification, to bring to notice two examples of outstanding Jewish patriarchs who sought for righteousness beyond that provided by the law. He first demonstrates the principles that brought personal justification to Abraham on the basis of his professed faith in God.

VERSE 1

"What shall we say then" — Paul anticipates an objection that might be advanced by the Jew (ch. 3:1), and brings to his attention some examples which reveal justification without the law.

"That Abraham our father" — Other translations have: "Abraham, our forefather..." Paul emphasizes the family relationship of Israel's great progenitor. Abraham was the father and founder of the Jewish nation, and its basis of divine favor is to be found in the exclusive call that he received whilst amongst idolaters in Ur of the Chaldees (Josh. 24:2). The Jews prided themselves on their genealogy dated from Abraham. They declared to Jesus: "Abraham is our father" (Jn. 8:39) as the grounds of their exalted status. The same attitude was evident in the days of John Baptist, who warned them: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mat. 3:9). Their confidence was in their own hearts, like the Pharisee who prayed "with himself" (Lk. 18:11) and rested confidently "in the flesh". But Paul's argument will demonstrate the fallacy of that which "pertains to the flesh".

"As pertaining to the flesh, hath

found?" — The Diaglott Greek text has: "... to have found according to flesh?" Abraham was recognized by the strictest Pharisee as the ideal righteous man, but what did he find in respect to natural matters? Did he find that the ability of the flesh provided the means to righteousness? Certainly not, for otherwise he would have occasion to glory in his achievements (cp. v.2). Paul therefore develops his powerful argument that the forefather of the Jewish race obtained divine justification by the work of God, rather than the work of Abraham. He shows that the experience of Abraham taught that the flesh profits nothing (Jn. 6:63), but belief and faith in God sets the basis for salvation.

VERSE 2

"For if Abraham were justified by works" — If the merit of his own actions brought justification, he might well rejoice in personal ability. Yet Abraham did many great works. He walked out of Ur in obedience to the angelic instruction (Gen. 12:4); he built an altar for worship (ch. 12:8; 13:4); he separated from the arena of wickedness (ch. 13:12); he fought to secure the safety of his family (ch. 14:14); he undertook the rite of circumcision (ch. 17:11); he endeavored to prevent the destruction of a righteous few in Sodom (ch. 18:23); he covenanted with Abimelech to preserve the rights of his servants (ch. 21:25-27); he sacrificed his son (ch. 22:10); he provided for the future of his family (ch. 24:9). Though these were all acts of outstanding faithfulness, courage and spiritual insight, and developed his godly character, Abraham's justification was based upon his acknowledgement of God's righteousness.

"He hath whereof to glory" — His works would have become the basis for personal honor and self-achievement. In this no glory would redound to God; instead, Abraham would be able to exalt his flesh, and in doing so, would deny Yahweh His rightful honor. However, "pertaining to the flesh" (v. 1) Abraham found no area for glory.

"But not before God" — i.e. in the sight of God, who does not allow sinful flesh to pre-empt His righteousness. His innate justness demands that flesh should not glory in His presence (1Cor. 1:29). Had Abraham boasted in "works" it would have gained him no advantage in the eyes of Yahweh; but Abraham did not have such an attitude nor disposition.

VERSE 3

"For what saith the scripture?" — The opinions of Jewish thought are now ignored, as Paul directs attention to the inspired account of Abraham's justi-fication. This appeal to the foundation of "the holy scriptures" (ch. 1:2) was final, and was to settle the question. The reference is to Gen. 15:6, which is also cited in Gal. 3:6.

"Abraham believed God" — The word "believed" is *pisteuo,* which signifies "to be persuaded of"; "to be reliant upon". What did Abraham believe? It was the promise of God. The scripture referred to says: "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:5-6). Faith, or belief, does not operate in a void; it is always based on God's promises (cf. Rom. 10:17). In Abraham's case, the belief in question was not mere detached acceptance of something that was true, not a blind faith (as Paul is careful to show in vv. 18-21), but implicit trust and confidence in God to perform what He promised, irrespective of the opinion of flesh or the difficulties involved (see Rom. 4:16-22). At the time Abraham, surrounded by enemies, deserted by Lot, had to seek the overshadowing protection of God. There is nothing meritorious in that except in the recognition of and implicit faith in God's power to save; and, in seeking the divine refuge, he conferred no benefit on God, so that he could not boast to God, but in abject weakness seek God's help.

As the context of Gen. 15 shows, Abraham's belief in God was associated

with a realization of his own impotence to effect that which he desired to see accomplished (cp. Gen. 15:2-5). Out of his personal weakness, therefore, came faith, and God was honored.

"And it was counted unto him for righteousness" — The act of believing in God's promise was the basis for his justification. The word "counted" (Gr. *logizomai*) signifies to put to the credit or debit of one's account; thus to reckon, impute. Bullinger defines the word as meaning "strictly of numerical calculation, to count, calculate, compute; then, take into account, consider". The word has been rendered "counted" in ch. 2:26; 4:3,5; 9:8; "reckoned" in ch. 4:4,9,10; "imputeth" in ch. 4:6,8,11,22,23,24. It describes the divine principle by which God is able to "add up" the evidence of Abraham's faith, and impute a condition of righteousness to him, so that, although previously a transgressor of the divine law, and thus alienated from God (cp. Col. 1:21), Abraham was now "covered" by forgiveness, and so considered in a righteous condition, no longer alienated from Him.

VERSE 4

"Now to him that worketh" — Those who seek for reward by works only; who believe that they can obtain their salvation by their own merits. The word *ergazomai* describes a labor from which something results, such as wages; or the settlement of a debt which is owing. Thus it does not describe a gift or grant, but rather something earned. Abraham had not "earned" justification before God, and God was therefore under no obligation to "pay" Abraham a wage — which, in this context, would have been eternal redemption. In one respect, the apostle's words in vv. 1-5 represent something of a challenge to his opponents: "If you base your claim to justification before God upon the basis of your works for which He is responsible to pay — then establish them!"

The idea of the word is the kind of action that earns salvation (v. 15: *katergazomai*; Rom. 6:23). But in the case of Abraham he could not produce the seed he desired (Gen. 15:2-5; compare with Rom. 4:18-20), and was absolutely dependent upon the grace and goodness of God. In that, his belief rested in Yahweh's grace.

"Is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" — Abraham was not able to achieve the reward (the promised seed) by his own works, for he "considered his own body now dead" (Rom. 4:19), and knew that God's promise of a seed was beyond his own ability. Notice the contrast between grace and debt. Align the words "works" and "due" as belonging together; whilst "faith" and "grace" similarly correspond — and it is to this latter pair that "reckoned" belongs.

The word "reckoned" (Gr. *logizomai*) means to add together as one's own possession (see note on v.3). If Abraham could claim the reward through his own ability it would not be seen as a gift of God (i.e. *grace*), but as that which was due to Abraham as a claim (i.e. *debt*), a fair compensation for his work.

VERSE 5

"But to him that worketh not" — Paul does not mean that he does no works, and ignores his responsibility to be obedient to the divine law, but that he does not see works only as justifying a reward, or commendation. He knows that works are only valuable when they follow (and not precede) the exercise of faith.

The *TCNT* has: "Whilst as for those who do not depend upon what they *do*, but have faith in Him who can make the godless stand right with Him, their faith is regarded by God as righteousness" (see also *Way., J.B., Roth.*). If men are to become justified in the eyes of God, God must do what mankind cannot accomplish. If such a great man of faith as Abraham found himself in such a position, what of the Jews of Paul's day! What of ourselves!

"But believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly" — The word "ungodly" *(asebes)* signifies the impious. The word is used generally as characterizing mankind lying universally in sin. This was the condition of Abraham prior to his calling by God. Where faith is not exercised, men remain ungodly, and therefore exposed to

the wrath of God. As such they are completely without hope, and have not the means to gain salvation. They need forgiveness of sins, and who is to provide it? They are as helpless as was Abraham who needed the seed of promise, but through the deadness of his body (v. 19), was not able to obtain it without the help of God. In His grace, God has made it possible for even the "ungodly" (cp. Rom. 5:6) to find forgiveness if they recognize their need and turn to Him for help — as Paul explains in vv. 6-7.

"His faith is counted for righteousness" — For the word "counted" *(logizomai)*, see comments on v.3. Paul shows that God will overlook the natural failings and weakness of the flesh, and provide what is required for salvation: the forgiveness of sins upon the basis that a person recognizes his helplessness and acknowledges the ability of God to save, as did Abraham. This is provided within the atoning ("covering") work of Christ, whose righteousness is accredited to all those "in him" (Gal. 3:26-27) when they identify themselves with him in an expression of righteousness provided in baptism (Rom. 6:11), and followed by a walk of faith.

David Described the Benefits of Justification by Faith — vv. 6-8.

Having adduced the example of Abraham to show that the doctrine of justification by faith is found in God's treatment of man before the advent of the Mosaic Law, Paul now shows that even within the compass of that Law, justification had to be sought beyond it! This paradox is revealed in the dramatic case of David — who fell into a transgression for which the Law had no remedy, and had to seek forgiveness on the basis of faith, not works.

VERSE 6

"Even as" — Abraham is not an isolated instance demonstrating the principle of justification by faith. Another O.T. example lies ready to hand in the case of David.

"David also describeth" — David enjoys a similar honor to that of Abraham. Whereas the latter was the "forefather" (v. 1) of Israel, David was the patriarchal monarch (Acts 2:29). But this man, who "found favor before God" (ch. 7:46), fell into a sin for which the law could provide no atoning sacrifice (Psa. 51:16). Indeed, under the terms of the law, adultery and murder, both of which David was guilty, were punished by the death of the transgressors. Adultery was expressly forbidden (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18), and was punishable by death (Lev. 18:20; 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24). Murder was similarly punished (Exod. 21:12). Faced with the enormity of his crimes, David realized there was nothing he could do except confess his guilt in regard to the sinful association with Bathsheba, and plead forgiveness in humble recognition of his unworthy actions and his denial of the divine principles.

Having acknowledged his own inability to accomplish his salvation, and the need to seek for divine forgiveness, David received the great blessing expressed in Rom. 4:7, which is a citation from Psa. 32:1-2.

"The blessedness of the man" — It is significant that the Psalms commence by affirming the blessedness of the man who never sins (Psa. 1) — such as the Lord Jesus — and, later (in Psa. 32), the blessedness of the man who, having sinned, obtains a covering for his sin from Yahweh.

The word "blessedness" signifies to declare happy. Psalm 32 is set against the background of David's sin with Bathsheba, and the personal distress and mental conflict of that situation. But, following David's full and complete confession of his transgression, all indecision is removed, and forgiveness obtained (2Sam. 12:13). Peace of mind followed, although David's life was not to be necessarily free from trouble. The "blessedness" came from a harmonious co-operation with Yahweh based upon an acknowledgement of personal dependence on Him, a confession of sins in recognition of one's own unworthiness, and a forsaking of the way of wrongdoing. David had come to a realization of all this.

Now Paul takes the same principle, and applies Psa. 32 to the Multitudinous Christ, the seed of David. They, like David, have been associated with transgression and failure (1Pet. 2:24-25). Such blessedness is only possible after full confession of sin is made, and peace of mind achieved (Jn. 14:27; Acts 10:36; Rom. 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 1Cor. 7:15; Phil. 4:7).

"Unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" — Whom God treats as righteous, through forgiveness and the covering of sins. Thus, such a man returns to harmony with God. The Diaglott translates "imputeth" as "accounts", from the Greek word *logizomai* (see v. 3). This "imputing" or "reckoning" is "without works", for the Law provided no sacrifice that David could give to expiate his sin. See notes ch. 3:28.

"Without works" is rendered by the *RV* and *Rotherham* as "apart from works".

VERSE 7

"(Saying), Blessed (are) they whose iniquities are forgiven" — Paul cites Psa. 32:1, where David expresses the joyful relief at the assurance of divine pardon. The word "iniquities" is the Greek *anomia* (in Psa. 32:1, the Hebrew word translated "trangression" is *pesha,* signifying, to stride away, to rebel, to revolt), and is used in 1John 3:4: "transgression of law". In all cases it means to act without law, in a situation of lawlessness. Such iniquities are not merely disobedience to an established law, but actions in which God's law is entirely disregarded and ignored. John describes them as "sins unto death" (1Jn. 5:16) for which there is no forgiveness. Such an attitude of lawlessness must be entirely abandoned, and the divine righteousness acknowledged in a change of heart before such transgression can be turned around and covered.

The word "forgiven" is the Greek *aphiemi* (The Hebrew word found in Psa. 32:1 is *nesui,* to bear away), and means to send forth, send away, as the scapegoat of the Law was dispatched into the wilderness (Lev. 16:10) ceremonially bearing away the transgressions of the nation.

"And whose sins are covered" — "Covered" is from the Greek *epikalupto,* which means, to cover over, so that the object can no longer be seen. (The Hebrew word used in the Psalm is *kesui,* signifies, to hide as something foul). The word is expressive of the hiding, or concealing something not desirable. It is used in 1Pet. 2:16 as a cloke. Baptism is a ceremonial "covering" of sins (Acts 2:38), but before sins can be covered away from divine sight, there must be a full and honest acknowledgement of failure on the part of the sinner.

VERSE 8

"Blessed (is) the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" — Such a man is happy, for he enjoys harmony with God in a condition of "peace", or unity (John 14:27; 1Jn. 3:1). In the Greek the words "will not" are in the form of a double negative for emphasis. The word "impute" is an accounting term: *logizomai,* which occurs also in vv. 4-5 (see notes). It is translated "numbered" in Mk. 15:28, "accounted" in Rom. 8:36; Gal. 3:6, and "accounting" in Heb. 11:19. A person who is "born of God" "doth not commit sin" (1Jn. 3:9) and is therefore accounted as free from guilt, or "blameless" (Phil. 2:15; 1Thess. 5:23) Sins are not "accounted" in such a case.

The Lord Jesus is the supreme example of one to whom Yahweh "will not impute sin", for he was sinless, and without guile in every respect (see Psa. 32:2 and compare with 1Pet. 2:22). No man could condemn him of sin (Jn. 8:46); and Yahweh, who sees beyond the vision of men, was able to testify to the purity of the Master's character (Mat. 17:5), and did not "reckon" to him any guilt.

Abraham's Case Proves Ritual Circumcision is not Necessary — vv. 9-12.

Paul returns to the example of the Jewish "forefather" (v. 1), to examine the circumstances of his justification by faith, and shows that it did not depend upon mere ritual. The token of circumcision is seen to be an important part of his relationship with God, but was to be under-

stood as a token, or seal, of the faith that had already been demonstrated. If, therefore, Abraham received divine grace before circumcision, it remains similarly available to his children.

VERSE 9

"(Cometh) this blessedness then upon the circumcision (only)" — Paul has shown that David was rescued from iniquity by the covering of Yahweh. He had been granted blessedness through his personal approach to God, and subsequent forgiveness. But David was already circumcised, and it could be argued that his case proves the benefit of ritual. The apostle therefore now prepares the way to examine whether this came in consequence of obedience to ritual? or whether it was without obedience to ritual?

"Or upon the uncircumcision also?" — Does the circumcision of the Jew allow him to say his sin is forgiven, whilst the sin of the uncircumcised believing Gentile is not? David's case proves that Jews need forgiveness of sins, and can obtain it through faith; but what of others? Paul now returns to the case of Abraham to develop his argument.

"For we say" — We all admit, since it is evident that the example of Abraham shows the basis upon which he was "reckoned righteous". The word "for" is the Greek *gar*, signifying "for the reason that; because".

"That faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness" — Abraham's benefit was not on the grounds of ritual performance, but in the manifestation of faith, or belief, in God's promises (Gen. 15:6). Here, the word "for" is *eis*, which has the idea of "towards" — Abraham's faith was the basis of his "movement towards" ultimate and complete harmony with God. On confession of his faith the condition of righteousness was "reckoned", or added up, to him.

VERSE 10

"How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?" — Was the basis of that reckoning found in a state of circumcision or uncircumcision?

"Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision" — In the Greek the answer is more abrupt than appears in the *AV*. *Weymouth* has: "Before, not after". This is a clear statement of fact. Abraham was not circumcised until at least fourteen years later, after his departure from Haran, according to Gen. 17:10-27. Therefore he was a Gentile when God counted his faith as righteousness; circumcision and deeds of law were not necessary for his justification!

VERSE 11

"And he received the sign of circumcision" — The sign (Gr. *semeion*) was the physical mark in the flesh of the male Jew. It was inflicted on the reproductive organ of the Jewish men, as an indication of the attitude manifested by their "forefather", Abraham. The sign was a testimony that a person related to Abraham would restrict the desires of the flesh, and "cut off" the lusts that would otherwise manifest themselves in "children of wrath". But Abraham had already been justified by faith before the ritual of circumcision was introduced, thus indicating that spiritual harmony with Yahweh had already been achieved. The sign of circumcision was merely the evidence of that which already existed! It was therefore a mark in the flesh to indicate that the person already desired to shun the work of the flesh. and manifest the faith of Abraham. See notes on ch. 2:25.

"A seal of the righteousness of the faith" — Circumcision is the mark in the flesh, indicating the repudiation (cutting off) of fleshly desires, and is therefore the outward sign of a dedicated life. The word "seal" (Gr. *sphragis*) signifies an emblem of ownership and security. It was an impression, usually in wax or similar substance, placed upon a letter or commandment that confirmed, and ratified the document; thus making it a binding instrument. It was not applied until after the letter had been written, and therefore represented and confirmed something that already existed. What already existed in Abraham was the "righteousness of faith", acknowl-

edged by God upon the evidence of his outstanding belief (Gen. 17:11).

The Rabbis called circumcision "the seal of Abraham", for by it a man was constituted of the family of Abraham, and therefore was bound to manifest the same faith as did his forefather. The word is also used in 2Tim. 2:19 (RV), "the firm foundation of God standeth sure, having *this seal,* The Lord knoweth them that are His", indicating that the divine mark was thus placed upon them. They are those "sealed in the forehead" (Rev. 14:1. cp. Rev. 9:4) by the implantation of the godly seed of Truth. Similarly, Paul addressed the Corinthians testifying: "the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1Cor. 9:2); they were the evidence of his teaching in doctrine and practice, seen in changed lives.

In a spiritual sense (i.e., in the sense expressed in Rom. 2:29 where circumcision is described as being in heart and spirit) Abraham was circumcised long before the physical token was given him, and the token itself became merely a "seal" of the life of faith he had already revealed. God instituted the ritual as a public attestation to the fact that He had previously approved of Abraham, and had made important promises to him. Thus circumcision in a Jew was only a reminder of what he was called upon to reveal in life — the cutting off of fleshly desires that he might render obedience to God — and it was of no value apart from this spiritual application. Thus of Gentile believers, Paul wrote: "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). A changed life in a saint is the outward token of true circumcision, showing that he has embraced the Abrahamic covenant in fact.

How tragic that the Judaisers, who boasted in the assurance they believed circumcision gave them, were unable to understand its true significance. Instead of recognizing circumcision as a "seal" upon "faith", they saw it as providing an inalienable right to a special standing before Yahweh — just because they *had* been circumcised (ch. 2:28-29). But Abraham was not merely a Jew "outwardly" (i.e. by physical and hereditary evidence), but also "inwardly" (cp. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). To a spiritually minded Jew, circumcision in the flesh should have been a constant reminder as to what he should be inwardly (cp. Col. 2:10-11).

Like circumcision, baptism has no value unless it be an attestation of an individual's confession and conviction. It is sometimes claimed that baptism is the "first step to salvation", but this is not strictly true. It follows belief in the things of the Kingdom and the Name of Jesus Christ, and does not precede it. Baptism is therefore the outward manifestation of the inward conviction and determination to obey the Word of Truth understood, and as such, is as much a "seal of the righteousness of faith" as was circumcision under the law. If we disgrace that *seal,* we bring ridicule upon him whom it represents (Heb. 10:29).

"Which (he had yet) being uncircumcised" — Paul emphasizes the point made earlier, that the benefit to Abraham was received before the ritual of circumcision was introduced. This is seen in the fact that *before* Abraham was circumcised, he had believed God (Gen. 15:6); was accepted and justified; was admitted to the divine favor, and given clear and remarkable promises (vv. 18-21; 17:1-9). Thus faith does not depend upon the ritual; its existence is acknowledged by it.

"That he might be the father of all them that believe" — Paul refers to Gen. 17:4-5 where the word rendered "nations" is from the Heb. *goyim,* which means, literally, "a *foreign* nation". Thus, whilst the Judaisers boasted in their supposed exclusiveness, right from the beginning of the nation Yahweh promised that many people from many nations would become the children of Abraham!

Sons of Abraham are those motivated by his principles and identified by the same attitude towards God's instructions as revealed to the patriarch. The Hebrew term "son of" signifies "one filled with", and thus describes a son whose father can be recognised in his son's attitude and actions. Believers are regarded as Abra-

ham's children when they imitate his example, and honour his qualities of faith and obedience to divine law. The Jews claimed to be Abraham's sons, but the Lord denounced this claim as invalid, for though they were circumcised in flesh, they were not responsive in heart and mind (Jn. 8:39).

"Though they be not circumcised" — As Abraham enjoyed the favor of God before he was circumcised, so others might on the same principle also. A mark in the flesh is irrelevant to one who is circumcised in heart and mind (Rom. 2:29) and has no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3,10). Contrast Deut. 10:16; 30:6 with Exod. 6:12,30; Lev. 26:41; Jer. 6:10; 9:26, and compare 1Cor. 7:18-19.

This does not mean that we can ignore the clear instructions of God with respect to rituals that He might command to be followed: such as the Memorial Emblems, baptism, etc. But it does mean that true faithfulness must commence before those rituals are undertaken; then they become the seal, or outward manifestation, of an inward conviction.

"That righteousness might be imputed unto them also" — In the same way that it was imputed to Abraham: by faith without works; that they also might be accepted and treated as righteous. The word "also" is significant, and the *Jerusalem Bible* translates it: "so that *they too* might be considered righteous". Paul makes the same point in Eph. 3:6, that Gentiles might become "fellowheirs". This destroys the Jewish concept of their national exclusiveness.

VERSE 12

"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only" — The name Abraham means *A Father of a Multitude*, which includes all believers, Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised. He is the exemplar of those who possess the same faith that he had. In this sense those who are uncircumcised in flesh are considered by faith to be companions to those circumcised in both flesh and heart: all such being true sons of "faithful Abraham". Mere circumcision would not avail in the matter of faith; but circumcision connected with a faith like his, shows that they are peculiarly his descendants. See note ch. 2:25.

"But who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" — The sign of circumcision which God gave Abraham, was the token of God's approval of his righteous behavior (Gen. 17:11), and when a Jewish child was circumcised it was a reminder that he "inherited" the status of his faithful father and must manifest the same principles. He was required to do the "works of Abraham" (Jn. 8:39).

Since Abraham had revealed those principles before circumcision was given him, this demonstrated that any who "walk in the steps of his faith" can acknowledge him as their father whether they be circumcised or not. Their deeds indicate the character of faith (James 2:14,17); therefore ritual must be matched by performance (ch. 4:17).

The word "walk" is from the Gr. *stoicheo*, of which Bullinger says: "to stand, or go in order, advance in rows or ranks". It emphasizes the order of their lives, their unity and oneness with Abraham, mutually sharing his faith, walking "with him", and exhibiting his characteristics in their way of life.

Abraham is not the spiritual father of those who bore only *external* marks of circumcision, but of those who walk according to the faith which he so readily exhibited. It is a powerful exhortation to professing believers in every generation.

"Which (he had), being (yet) uncircumcised" — The Jew had to admit that, prior to his circumcision, Abraham was still a Gentile (Rom. 2:14-15)! Yet he had been justified in the eyes of Yahweh! Paul's argument is, therefore, if it could have been so with the father of the nation, why could it not be so with others? Thus, again, the apostle stresses that the hope of eternal salvation is not lost to uncircumcised Gentiles.

The Jewish leaders described Zacchaeus as "a sinner" (i.e., an uncircumcised

Gentile), but his attitude and action caused the Lord to declare: "he is a son of Abraham" (Lk. 19:7-9).

Abraham's Justification Came Before the Law — vv. 13-17.

Paul advances a further stage. Having examined the relationship of Abraham's circumcision to the divine confirmation of his faith, the apostle compares the giving of the commandments to the case of Abraham. For the evidence shows that whereas circumcision was required of Abraham after his justification by faith, the operation was not imposed as a law on his seed until four centuries later.

VERSE 13

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world" — In Gen. 13:15 Abraham and his seed were promised all the land through which he had travelled. This virtually comprised the entire world, for his journeys embraced all the civilized habitable of the times. From the eastern border of the then-known world in Ur of the Chaldees he travelled to the northern extent of the empire; then, from Haran he crossed over the Euphrates to the western seaboard of Canaan, down southwards into Egypt, and returned back to establish himself in the Promised Land. Therefore the land embraced in the area "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18; including the catalogue of all the recognized nations listed in vv. 19-21) comprised the world.

This is the area described in Ezek. 48 as the possession of Israel in the Kingdom of God, in which the twelve tribes will be located, and over which the apostles will legislate (Mat. 19:28). It will be known as the "first dominion" which will be granted to the natural seed of Abraham (Mic. 4:8).

The word rendered "heir" (Gr. *kleronomos*) indicates "one who receives an inheritance", or "one who obtains a lot or portion". The word occurs numerous times, and is used of Christ (Heb. 1:2), of the patriarchs (Heb. 11:9), and of faithful saints (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 3:6).

The word "world" is the Gr. *kosmos* which defines the order, or arrangement of things. This implies not mere locality and area, but also legal jurisdiction and authority over the world. Abraham will obtain a glorious and prominent position in the Millennium, commensurate with his faithful example in life. Thus, the Abrahamic promise embraces the blessings upon all people, for God "preached before (in old time) the gospel unto Abraham, saying, *In thee* shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). Such blessings depend upon the demonstration of the trust of Abraham, and will be extended to those who are prepared to recognize and honor Abraham as their spiritual father of faith. Abraham's greater Son will become "king over *all* the earth" (Zech. 14:9), and "*all nations*" will flow to Yahweh's house for worship (Isa. 2:2-3). Then will be fulfilled the divine promise given at the beginning (Gen. 1:26, where the words, "have dominion" occur in the future tense) and demonstrated in the words of Psa. 8:6 (which is also in the future tense), "Thou madest him to *have dominion* over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put *all things* under his feet". Thus were the promises to Abraham understood by the prophets (cp. Dan. 7:14; Psa. 2:6-8; 110:1-2, etc.).

Paul points out that these things were "promised" to Abraham (Rom. 4:13), and the Greek word *epangelia* is a legal term denoting a summons, from *epi*, "upon", and *agello*, "to proclaim, declare, announce". It is not limited to being revealed to Abraham personally, but proclaimed loudly to the world at large. It has been plainly declared, and once stated, will not be reversed. This was confirmed at the time of Isaac's sacrifice (Gen. 22:16): "By Myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh". But though "announced" and "declared" plainly to Abraham, the promise is only recognized by those who have "ears to hear" the divine voice. Thus, it is only those of faith which are "blessed *with* faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:9).

"(Was) not to Abraham, or to his seed" — Abraham's children of faith are aligned with their father as beneficiaries of the divine promise. The seed are those "in

Christ" who, himself, is stated as the recipient of the promises (Gal. 3:16). Christ has obtained a right to the inheritance, manifesting the faith of Abraham to an even greater extent than the patriarch — i.e., perfectly (cp. Ezek. 21:27); therefore Paul acknowledges that, in fact, Christ is the "*only* seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3:16). All others find these benefits of the promises when they are "in him" (v. 28), walking in the steps of Abraham's faith, as Paul later shows (Rom. 4:23-24).

"Through the law" — Gr: "through law". This was not the medium by which the promises would be granted. That was made obvious in the example of Abraham, for his justification came not through obeying God's law as a ritual only, but because Abraham's obedience had stemmed from his implicit trust and faith in God. A person can attempt to obey law automatically without faith, and, as such, will not benefit from justification. Nahor, Abraham's brother, left Ur of the Chaldees as required by the divine command to the family of Terah (Gen. 11:27-31; 24:10), but that obedience to law did not profit him, not being founded on faith in God. Similarly, a promise of "entering into the land of rest" was given to Israel whilst they were suffering the bitter bondage of Egypt, and the terrible oppression of the wilderness. Thus: "the gospel was preached" to them; "but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2). The Judaisers similarly attempted to establish their righteousness and heirship on the basis of law, even though that law constantly condemned them for breaking it (Jas. 2:10). Relying only upon their obedience to law (which they did not perfectly fulfil), they put themselves beyond the realm of justification by faith, and were not pleasing to the God of Abraham (Isa. 1:9-15; Mark 12:26).

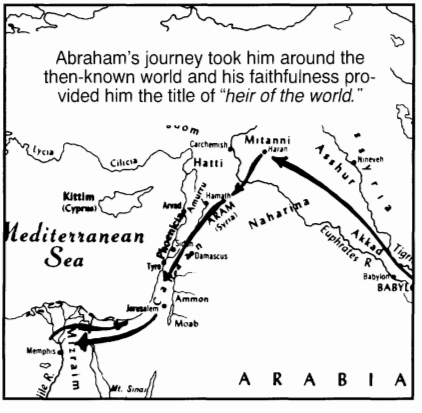
Ecclesial activities can be merely an expression of law, if undertaken as a duty and not out of love. They must be performed as the result of a godly character, by which we seek to please Yahweh. The principle laid down in the scripture is that man honours God in believing His Word and obeying His laws. This honour, however, consists not in a mechanical obedience, but God wills it through the willing services of free men (see *Elpis Israel,* p. 176).

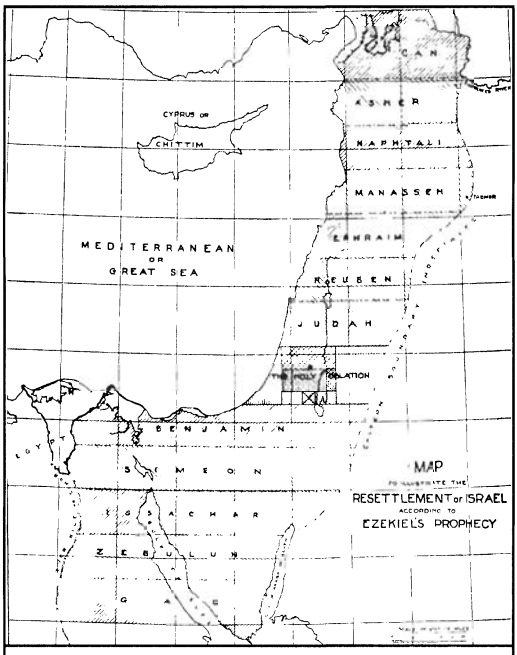
"But through the righteousness of faith" — This is clearly the medium of God's promise to the faithful. Faith implies implicit trust in God, not oneself. God accepts us as righteous on the basis of our faith (full persuasion in His promises: Heb. 11:1) in Him (Rom. 4:3; 3:21-22). The covenant to Abraham was one of grace and privilege, given by a Superior to His servant; the word should not be confused with present-day covenants where each contractor receives equally as he is given.

True faith will produce *acts* of righteousness in the lives of individuals. It is not a blind faith, but one which becomes the motivating power in their lives to develop both character and actions, as was the case with Abraham. Even when they fail to achieve perfect obedience to divine law, their faith remains the ground of their confidence in God and His Word.

VERSE 14

"For if they which are of the law (be) heirs" — The Greek text does not have the definite article, "the", and shows that Paul is making a clear distinction





Abraham's journey "around the world" provided the basis for the future inheritance of his Seed, so that the Holy Land becomes the *"centre"* of a worldwide government from Zion.

between "law" and "*the* law (of Moses)". If mere obedience to law in the absence of faith constitutes a person an heir of Abraham, then faith is rendered of little consequence, and the promise that was given because of faith, is made of none effect. At the same time it must be understood that Paul includes the Law of Moses in his exposition, although the definite article, *the*, might not be appended.

"Faith is made void" — *Weymouth:* "Then faith is useless, and the promise counts for nothing". Paul claims that the principles of salvation cannot be compromised. The two ideals — salvation by law, or salvation by faith — are diametrically opposed, and cannot be reconciled.

The Greek word for "void" is *kenoo*, signifying to empty, evacuate, or deprive of its proper functions (cp. 1Cor. 1:17; Phil. 2:7). The power of faith is neutralized if perfect obedience to law is demanded of mankind. For, since it is impossible to provide such obedience without the principle of faith, the race would be lost. Faith would have no place in the scheme of divine revelation; and consequently the promises bestowed on Abraham because of his faith, would be given without just cause. If men are justified by law, they cannot be by faith, and faith would therefore be without significance or value.

"And the promise made of none effect" — The Greek word *katargeo* ("none effect") gives greater emphasis: it means to render useless or powerless (see its use in Rom. 3:3,31, and the positive application in ch. 6:6). If individuals can be justified by their own merit or lawful obedience, then *faith* (which relies upon another for its effect) and *the promise* (which is given by favor and grace) are of no point.

If the Jews depended on the law for justification, they were cut off from all the promises made to Abraham; and if they could be justified by the law, then the promise was useless. This is as true now as it was then. If men seek to be justified by their morality or forms of religious devotion merely, they cannot depend on any promise of God; for He has made no promise to any such endeavor. They stand independently of any promise, covenant, or compact, and are relying on a scheme of their own — a scheme which would render God's plan of salvation vain and useless thus making His promises, the atonement of Christ, and the principle of faith, of no account.

VERSE 15

"Because the law worketh wrath" — This inevitable result is not because of any faultiness within the law itself, for Paul describes it as "holy, and just, and good" (ch. 7:12), but because of the inherent weakness of the flesh which makes law

ineffective as a means whereby man's redemption may be obtained (ch. 8:3). Law reveals sin, and therefore convicts man of transgression. But the law also reveals its own limitations, for it cannot cover sins, nor provide a remedy for failure. Only divine grace and mercy can meet these necessities, apart from which mankind has no hope of eternal redemption.

The word "worketh" (see note in v. 4). is *katergazomai,* which signifies to work fully, accomplish, to effect by toil, to achieve. The existence of law presupposes the probability of failure, and in this sense, brings about such a condition in the arena of sinners. This principle applies to all law, not just the Mosaic Code. Law requires obedience; thus disobedience frustrates law and brings its retribution into effect. In fact, in view of the universal sway of sin, the curse is more prominent than the blessing! Bro. J. Carter *(The Epistle to the Romans)* comments: "By law comes knowledge of sin and consciousness of guilt and liability to punishment. Under law, sinning man comes under wrath. And man cannot keep the law *[i.e., perfectly]*; so law works wrath upon all. Therefore the apostle concludes, 'For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace'. Because of the impossibility of it being by law, if the promise and the inheritance are received at all, it must be by grace, operative through faith."

Thus, if a person seeks justification by scrupulous obedience to law in every detail, he will only reap wrath, for human nature being what it is, he will inevitably fail. On the other hand, faith calls forth divine love which, when manifested in mercy, provides a covering for sins. See notes on Rom. 3:20.

The word "wrath" is *orge* (found previously in ch. 2:8 — see notes) and speaks of the extended judgment against disobedience to law. It is described as "the strongest of all passions" *(Vine's Expositionary Dictionary),* expressed upon the basis of a considered investigation of the case.

"For where no law is, (there is) no transgression" — Paul states a general principle that the presence of transgression implies the existence of law. Where no law is given, there can be no crime. The *TCNT* has: "But where no law exists, no breach of it is possible" — an unarguable principle. Law is a rule of conduct. It has always existed since the beginning of human affairs when sin brought the need of a covering. The law of Eden highlighted the deficiency of the human pair. Created "very good" (Gen. 1:31), and not "perfect", they were made "subject to vanity" (Rom. 8:20) inasmuch as there was, in their nature, the possibility of failure to produce the results originally designed. They were made subject to vanity "unwillingly", but became willingly vain in their minds (Rom. 1:21) through sin. Therefore, without law there could be no disobedience; but, also, there could be no development of character, since law demonstrates the presence of God, and draws the obedient to Him. Paul argues from experience that whereas law creates sin (Rom. 7:8-10), grace covers it.

The word "transgression" is the Gr. *parabasis,* which means to go aside, to step over. It refers to a conscious act of wilful disobedience, and is akin to *diabolos,* which signifies to cross over the line that God's law has established to separate right from wrong. The law in Eden was provided as a guide to Adam's conduct, but, resulting from the defiling words of the serpent, humanity "stepped over" the law of propriety, and found itself in the arena of sin and death (cp. 1Tim. 2:14).

The purpose of law was to show how exceedingly sinful sin is by actually showing up such transgression, which is naturally and rightly visited with God's wrath. Law, although good in itself (cp. ch. 7:12,14) is so closely bound up with sin (v. 5) and wrath (ch. 4:15) that it cannot of itself provide the redemption of mankind.

VERSE 16

"Therefore" — Because faith can do what law cannot (and that is to secure the forgiveness of sins) we can rest securely in the hope of the promise, notwithstanding

the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). Paul now shows that the combination of "grace" coming from God, and "faith" exercised by man, can result in that which could never be achieved through law. Thus: "God makes all things work in harmony for the good of those who love Him" (ch. 8:28, TCNT).

"(It is)" — The context shows that the subject is the "promise". It takes a believer further than law, and shows that by faith in that promise, a person can rise above the wrath of law.

"Of faith" — Gr. *ek pisteos:* out of faith; see ch. 1:17. The promise is the development from faith, and reaches to all the seed of Abraham, both Jew and Gentile. In Rom. 3:31 Paul explains that faith's achievement is the upholding of law; it shows law in its proper position of a teacher, rather than a judge.

"That (it might be) by grace" — A matter of undeserved mercy. But if men were justified by law, it would be to their own merit and ability, rather than the unmerited favor of God. As "faith" expresses the believer's need, "grace" reveals God's fulfilment of that need. Notice that the promise, faith and grace are set in bold relief against law, works and merit. Therefore the hope of eternal redemption develops "out of faith" and cannot be realised upon any other basis.

"To the end the promise might be sure to all the seed" — So that all mankind might be able to take advantage of it. The promise gives what the law could not, for if the promise had depended on absolute and perfect conformity to law, it could never have been achieved, for no mere man would have fulfilled the obedience it demanded. But now, by the exercise of faith, the promise may be secured by all the posterity of Abraham. However, the "seed" that obtains the promise must be found in "*the* seed" to whom it was given: Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).

"Not to that only which is of the law" — Not to that part of his descendants alone who were Jews, and who therefore possessed the law in its expressed form (Rom. 3:2).

"But to that also which is of the faith of Abraham" — Uncircumcised Gentiles, who had never been bound by the law of Moses, when converted to the Truth possessed nothing more than the faith of Abraham. And this, after all, was Abraham's position also, for he knew nothing of the law of Moses when he was justified by faith (v. 12). This applies to those who possess a similar faith to that which motivated Abraham; those who are prepared to believe God, to separate from their contemporaries, to lead a life of pilgrimage, and to be diligent in worship. It does not depend solely upon the profession of association (such as is possible through baptism; Gal. 3:29), but essentially upon the manifestation of the attitude and fervor of Abraham.

"Who is the father of us all" — Of all who *believe*, embracing both Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised, those associated with the Mosaic law and those who are not. There was only one characteristic: the development of a sincere love and trusting faith in Almighty God, such as is a family characteristic that develops from Abraham. See notes on verse 11.

Paul argues that Abraham is the father of Jewish believers, not because they are natural-born Jews, but because they have embraced the *faith* of Abraham. The Jews claimed a family relationship with Abraham: "We have Abraham to our father" (Lk. 3:8), but John Baptist responded that "God is able of these stones (i.e., those in the Jordan, washed by its baptismal waters) to raise up children unto Abraham". These are the children of faith, drawn out from the Jordan in the baptism of Jesus (Mat. 3:15; note "us"), as Abraham was brought out from Ur of the Chaldees. Zacchaeus was a "son of Abraham" (Lk. 19:9), for he was prepared to separate from the crowd at Jericho that he might see the Lord. Children of Abraham are in a raised state (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:3), for the "God (of Abraham) is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mat. 22:32); thus, his children live in newness of life, and in hope of the coming day of

glory. Yahweh has declared of the loyal children of Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Yahweh, to do justice and judgment; that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19). The day is approaching, when Abraham will see his seed, and rejoice in all those who have heeded the exhortation of Isa. 51:2, to "look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him".

VERSE 17

"(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations)" — Paul cites Gen. 17:5, to emphasize the fact that the past tense ("I *have made*") is used, although at the time Isaac had not been born. God spoke of that which He promised as being already done; and in regard to Abraham, He predetermined that mankind would find salvation upon the basis of faith that Abraham had manifested. This statement forms the basis of the gospel message (Gal. 3:8).

The Hebrew in Gen. 17:5 reads: "father of many *goyim* (foreigners)", and Paul uses the Greek *ethnos*, which Vine defines as "in the plural, the nations, *as distinct* from Israel".

"Before him whom he believed, (even) God" — Abraham stood in a special relationship with Yahweh. The patriarch, though uncircumcised at this stage, stood in the divine presence to receive the promise. God regarded him as a father, through whom the great purpose of Yahweh would be accomplished on earth. It was not law nor ritual that brought him to that position; it was faith.

"Who quickeneth the dead" — The barrenness of Sarah was to become the means of Yahweh's great power (cp. v. 19). The prerogative and power for this belonged to Yahweh alone, for Abraham was unable to accomplish this, as "his own body" was "now dead" through age (v. 19). Abraham exercised belief in the God who gives life as He pleases.

Likewise, the miracle of resurrection occurs whenever the faith of Abraham is revealed. Those previously "dead in trespasses and sins" (after the type of Abraham's "dead body") become subject to a quickening process through the power of the Truth (Eph. 2:1), which elevates them to a new raised position in life (vv. 4-6), ultimating in the physical regeneration of immortality (v. 7). Thus "dead works" (Heb. 6:1) which represent the response to law and ritual in the absence of faith, must be subjected to the renewing power of God that is available in the resurrected Christ (ch. 4:14). Just as God can energize the spiritually dead, so He will operate on those physically asleep (1Cor. 15:45), in fulfilment of the promise given to the "fathers".

"And calleth those things which be not as though they were" — When God makes an unconditional promise there is no doubt about its fulfilment, and in His mind it is as good as done. Therefore, the past tense is used for things that He has promised, even though the actual fulfilment still awaits the future. Paul obviously has in mind the particular circumstances of Gen. 17:5, "I *have* made thee a father of many nations". In ch. 15:18 God declares: "Unto thy seed *have I given* this land". Other examples are seen in Josh. 1:13; Isa. 46:9-10; 2Tim. 1:9-10; Lk. 1:54, etc. Thus God spoke of the resurrection as having occurred (Lk. 20:37), because there is not the slightest doubt that it will come to pass. It is not possible for humans to thus speak because of their limitations and fallibility; so that God's use of the past tense for events still in the future, demonstrates the certainty of His promises and His omnipotence to fulfil them. Realizing this, Abraham was able to say to his companions in regard to the sacrifice of Isaac: "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and *come again to you*"(Gen. 22:5). Though fully committed to performing the divine demand as an exercise of his faith, Abraham realized that the promise of God demanded the preservation of Isaac — though he did not know

The Faith Of Our Father Abraham

Abraham is the father of all them who believe, and who walk in the steps of *that faith* which he had while yet uncircumcised. This is the apostle's testimony. I think I need scarcely say, yet it may be useful to do so, that *no one can walk in the steps of Abraham's faith who does not believe the same things.* This is self-evident. It is to be to Abraham according to his faith; and this is the rule for everyone else. We shall inherit what we have faith in. If we have an understanding faith in the truth, we shall inherit the truth; but if we believe in what is not true, and therefore visionary, we shall inherit nothing but the whirlwind. Now, if it be asked, *What is the truth?* — the answer is, *the things which Abraham believed,* with the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Seed spoken of in the promises made to him. It is, therefore, essential to our salvation that we be familiar with the matters of his faith. To make this as easy as possible then, I shall here subjoin a summary of the faith which was counted to him for righteousness. I would just remind the reader here that Abraham was justified because *he believed in God.* This does not mean because he believed in the existence of God. This is implied. To believe on God in the scripture sense is the "being fully persuaded that what He has *promised,* He is also able to perform"; and because this was the case with Abraham, "therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness". Furthermore, this persuasion does not consist in saying, "Whatever it is God has promised I know not, but of this I am persuaded, He will perform it". This is not the sort of persuasion God accepts. *He requires men to acquaint themselves first with what He has promised, and then to consult the testimony He has given until they are fully persuaded, as Abraham was.* "Now", says the apostle, "it was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that his full persuasion of the divine promise was counted to him for righteousness; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed if we believe on God".

In studying the life of Abraham, his biography presents him —

1. As an idolater under condemnation with the world;
2. As a believer of the gospel preached by the angel of the Lord;
3. As justified from all past sins by faith in its promises; and
4. As justified by works unto eternal life.

These four particulars are affirmable of all Abraham's spiritual children. Born of the flesh, they are denizens of the world, and heirs of condemnation; then they believe the gospel; afterwards they are justified by faith from past sins; and subjected to a subsequent probation by which their faith is tried and made perfect. It is worthy of remark here, that *Abraham believed the gospel ten years before his faith was counted to him for righteousness.* This appears from the fact that the gospel was preached to him at Haran; and it was not until the occasion of the confirmation of the covenant at Hebron, that the Lord vouchsafed him an acquittal from all his past sins; which is implied in the testimony that "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness". This fact ought to teach the reader, that *it is not at the instant a man believes that he is justified.* A man may believe the truth for many years, and yet not be the subject of the righteousness of God. If so, it may then be asked, "When, or at what point of time, and how, is a man's faith in the truth counted to him for remis-

sion of sins?" As to the manner of its imputation, this must necessarily differ from the case of Abraham. The angel of the Lord announced to Abraham his justification *by word of mouth;* but under the present arrangement of things, this is not to be expected. The angel sent to Cornelius did not pronounce his justification; but simply put him in the way of attaining it. I trust the reader has not forgotten the use of the key in his case.

The scriptures say that through Jesus is now preached the remission of sins to those who believe the gospel of the kingdom; and that justification by faith is through his Name. That is, God has appointed an institution through which remission of sins is communicated to believers of the things of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus: so that instead of sending an angel to announce to each individual that his faith is counted to him for righteousness, as in the case of Abraham, He has caused a general proclamation to be made, that *"through Christ's name"* believers may obtain the remission of sins. Now, there is but one way for a believer of the gospel to get at this name, to wit, by being "baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". The answer to the question, then, is this, that *a man's faith in the gospel is counted to him for righteousness in the act of being baptized into the name.* There is no other way than this, and even a believer of the truth will die in his sins unless he submit to it.

The "articles", then, of Abraham's faith were these —

1. That God would multiply his descendants as the stars of heaven for multitude, and make them a great and mighty nation;

2. That at that time his own name would be great;

3. That out of his posterity should arise ONE, in whom and in himself all the nations of the earth should be blessed;

4. That he together with this personage should have actual possession of the land of Canaan for ever;

5. That they two, with all his adopted seed, should possess the world;

6. That the seed, or Christ, would be an only begotten and beloved son, even the seed of the woman only, and therefore of God; that he would fall a victim to his enemies; and in his death be accepted as an offering by being raised from the dead, after the example in the case of Isaac;

7. That after resurrection, or at "a second time", Christ would possess the gate of his enemies in triumph, and obtain the land of Canaan, and the dominion of the world according to the promise; and,

8. That, at that time, he and his adopted seed, would be made perfect, receive the promises, and "enter into the joy of their Lord".

Such was the faith of Abraham in outline and such must be the faith of all who would inherit with him. In conclusion, I would direct the reader's attention to the fact, that Abraham was the subject of a twofold justification, as it were; first, of a *justification by faith;* and secondly, of a *justification by works.* Paul says, he was justified by faith; and James, that he was "justified by works". They are both right. As a sinner he was justified from his *past sins* when his faith was counted to him for righteousness; and as a saint, he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Of his justification as a saint James writes,

"Abraham our father was justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar. Faith wrought with his works, and *by works was faith made perfect.* And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT *by faith alone*".

I have termed it a twofold justification by way of illustration; but it is, in fact, only one. The two stand related as cause and effect; faith being the motive principle it is a justification which *begins* with the remission of sins that are past, and is *perfected* in obedience unto death. The idea may be simplified thus. No exaltation without probation. If a man believe and obey the gospel *his past sins* are forgiven him in Christ; but, if after this he walk in the course of the world his faith is proved to be dead, and he forfeits his title to eternal life. But if, on the other hand, a man become an adopted son of Abraham, and "by a patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility", he will find everlasting life in the Paradise of God.

— J. Thomas, "Elpis Israel," pp.258-261.

how that would be achieved. Faith is a quality of belief when the evidence seems to present the impossible.

Abraham's Life Provides an Example of Faith to be Emulated — vv. 18-25.

Circumstances in Abraham's life demanded an outstanding faith. The great promises he was given as a result of his obedience in separating from the corrupting influence of Ur, could not be achieved by normal expectations. They depended upon a promised seed — but that was beyond the ability of Abraham and Sarah at their time of life. Yet his faith saw beyond his circumstances.

VERSE 18

"Who against hope believed in hope" — The promise that Abraham would become the "father of many nations" seemed beyond the realm of possibility, for it was made before Isaac, the seed of promise, was born. Therefore it was "contrary to hope" to believe in such a promise. But Abraham, as a great man of faith, believed in it for he had confidence in the ability of God to accomplish something beyond what one could normally anticipate. Paul teaches that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20); whilst Jesus declared concerning salvation: "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mk. 10:27). Faith energizes the quality of hope, and proves its attainment, though the means might not be evident. Abraham manifested this attitude throughout his life. He left the security of Ur, when the object of his journey was unknown ("a land that I will show thee", Gen. 12:1); he opposed the great warrior Chedorlaomer, even though his ability in warfare was minimal (ch. 14:14); he walked with Isaac to Moriah to offer his son in obedience to God's will, though his future depended upon Isaac's life (ch. 22:2,5). He had a living faith; a faith that energizes and directs a person in a way of life that ignores present convenience or safety, placing confidence in a greater power.

The words "believed in" come from the one Greek word, *epipistuo,* which indicates that upon which one might rest, or obtain support. Thus, although some situations seemed hopeless, Abraham rested upon a hope beyond experience, and

was supported by that vision.

"That he might become the father of many nations" — This was the ultimate anticipation of Abraham, and constitutes the gospel message (Gal. 3:8). There are two elements in this statement that must have concerned Abraham: first, that he would be a father, at a time of great age, and, second, that his progeny would develop into many nations. The first was accomplished in the miraculous birth of Isaac (concerning which, see the next verse); the second was achieved in the birth of his greater Son, the Lord Jesus, by which the medium of salvation through faith was opened to Gentile as well as Jew.

"According to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" — The promise of Gen. 15:5 was accompanied with an instruction to "tell the stars, if thou be able to number them". The God who created the brilliant heavenly bodies in such perfection of harmony and glory, could certainly fulfil His words, notwithstanding seeming difficulties. Not only is a multitudinous seed here indicated, but the status in which they would be found. It was to be a seed in the heavens, sparkling out from the surrounding darkness. They typify the person who, like Abraham, has separated from the darkness of apostasy, becoming a luminary of divine light (Phil. 2:15), and will ultimately become as spiritual stars in the ruling sphere (Dan. 12:3; Rev. 21:23-24).

It should also be observed that in this verse Paul links two separate verses from Genesis: "the father of many nations" (Gen. 17:4), and "so shall thy seed be" (ch. 15:5). The latter verse contains the promise that the *singular* seed should become a multitudinous seed: "tell the stars if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be". Gen. 17:4 adds that this multitudinous seed would develop out of "many *goyim* (foreigners)". Thus, apart from Israel, the rest of the multitudinous seed would *come from Gentiles!*

VERSE 19

"And being not weak in faith" — The Greek word *astheneo* signifies to lack strength. The word has been rendered "sick", "impotent", "diseased". But Abraham's faith was not in such a condition; it "did not fail him" (TCNT). In fact, Abraham considered the difficulties that faced him: the deadness of his own body and the barrenness of Sarah. But instead of becoming "weak in faith" thereby, his faith was strengthened! He maintained a strong and abiding faith which did not vacillate, nor change because of differing circumstances, even though he lacked the ability to produce his own seed. His faith came from a strong conviction in God's ability, not his own.

"He considered not his own body now dead" — The word "not" should be eliminated; it does not appear in the best manuscripts. The Diaglott has: "Not having grown weak in the faith, though he regarded his own body as deadened". Moffatt has: "His faith never quailed, even when he noted the utter impotence of his own body". Abraham was under no misunderstanding, nor was he a mere visionary. He considered the practical problems, but looked beyond them. The word "considered" is the Gr. *katanoeo,* signifying, to consider attentively; to fix the eye upon; to distinctly discern. Bullinger defines it as "to perceive or discern, distinctly or clearly", whilst Rotherham has: "he *attentively considered* his own body, already deadened". Abraham did not ignore the difficulties, but his faith convinced him that Yahweh would fulfil His declarations notwithstanding. In this Abraham presents a wonderful example, in being able to calmly view the tremendous obstacles facing the fulfilment of the promise, and yet remain completely confident that God could accomplish it.

Every "child of Abraham" must acknowledge and accept the "death" of their flesh in the waters of baptism (Rom. 6:6). We are impotent to give birth to spiritual virtues by our own natural abilities, for it is not in our own power to produce new life from the body of death we possess. We must look beyond that, to the power of God in us, gained by His Spirit-

Word: "that is life" (John 6:63). Thus, we must also "consider our own body now dead" that we might have "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22).

"When he was about an hundred years old" — At an age when it was highly unlikely that he would have a child. Even the suggestion seemed unreasonable to the natural mind (Gen. 17:17). At the time Abraham was in his hundredth year, having just turned ninety-nine (v. 1). Twelve months later he was the father of a son of promise (ch. 21:5). "Is anything too hard for Yahweh?" (ch. 18:14).

The birth of Isaac under such unexpected circumstances is proof that Yahweh can bring life to those hidden in obscurity and darkness. The advent of Christ sounded forth the voice of spiritual resurrection: "The hour now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (Jn. 5:25). It is the power of true faith that reveals not only the existence of Yahweh (of which Abraham was aware), but His ability to reward those who diligently seek Him (revealed to Abraham in the birth of Isaac) — Heb. 11:6.

"Neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb" — Abraham's impotence was due to old age, but Sarah had been barren throughout her life (Gen. 16:2), and had completed the period of menopause (ch. 18:11). This barrenness had brought them great distress, and they had sought for alternate means to achieve the divine promise (ch. 16:2; 17:18), but the miracle of resurrection was to be typically enacted within Sarah's womb — pointing to many nations of faithful children, who would come from obscurity to light, through the miraculous power of the Truth (Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 1:21,22; 2:13; 1John 1:7).

VERSE 20

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief" — A better rendition is: "In view of the promise of God he did not waver in unbelief". Notwithstanding the problems, he manifested quiet and complete confidence in the promise given. The word "staggered" is the Gr. *diakrino,* which means to waver, to be in doubt, hesitant. It comes from a root meaning "to judge between" and in the passive tense carries the significance of doubting or wavering. It appears twice in James 1:6 to describe the vacillator, whose faithlessness blocks his view of the horizon: "driven by the wind and tossed", he fails to keep a destination in sight, and drifts aimlessly through life. Abraham was not of that calibre, and his children must likewise remain firm and resolute in faith, knowing that the day of joy and gladness will come, notwithstanding the clouds of the moment.

If Abraham had disbelieved, he would have rejected not so much the promise made, but Yahweh Himself, and His ability to fulfil His Word. King Saul was rejected because his action was a disclaimer of the "Word of Yahweh": 1Sam. 15:22-23; 1Chron. 10:13.

"But was strong in faith" — The Greek has the definite article: "the faith", for it was not abstract belief, but a concrete reliance upon specific promises made. His faith was actually an acknowledgement of his own physical weakness (v. 19), and a dependence upon One stronger (v. 17). Thus, Abraham's faith was strengthened by Yahweh, since he had learned to place confidence in his God, and knew that He would fulfil His promises (cp. Gen. 22:14).

The Greek emphasizes this principle, using the word *endunamo* (from *en*, in, and *dunamis,* power). The English "dynamo" is derived from this word, expressing a power that generates energy. The Diaglott has: "but was *made* strong in *the* faith". Abraham's faith became the dynamo that energised his life. One of the major grounds upon which men establish their pride is in relation to their strength, whether it be physical, intellectual, financial, or in some other form. But "faith's strength" is entirely different. It requires the subjugation of the strengths associated with the flesh, and the dedication of all one's power to God. Faith's strength acknowledges the utter weakness of flesh, and all that it can achieve.

"Giving glory to God" — What

Abraham obtained was not due to his own abilities, but to God's goodness. Appropriately, he responded in praise and obedience (ch. 21:33; 22:3). Human boasting was thus excluded (1Cor. 1:28-31).

VERSE 21

"And being fully persuaded that what He had promised" — The words "being fully persuaded" are from the one Greek word: *plerophoreo,* which W. E. Vine defines as "a fulness, abundance, entire confidence". It implies something which is all-embracing. The word literally means a "full-carrying", from *pleros,* full, and *phero,* to carry. It is in the passive tense, indicating that Abraham willingly surrendered his own will that he might become strong in faith, submitting himself to the will of Yahweh.

Under this condition, there was no room left for doubt, since Abraham was so full of conviction, that he knew God would fulfil His word, notwithstanding obvious difficulties. Abraham carried this conviction throughout his life. The word occurs also in ch. 14:5 in regard to decisions concerning observance of ritual: everyone must be "fully persuaded", not leaving room for "doubtful disputations".

"He was able also to perform" — The Greek text is in the present form: "He *is* able (Gr. *dunatos*, see ch. 1:16) also to perform" *(Diaglott).* Abraham was convinced of the unlimited power of Yahweh, having experienced it in his life. God had guided him to the promised land, as He had promised (Gen. 12:1); he had been materially blessed (ch. 13:2); therefore, he believed, without doubt, in the unfailing protection and power of the Almighty (Heb. 11:8-11). The word "perform" (Gr. *poieo*) has the idea of "to show", i.e., not only to perform, but also to demonstrate. It appears also in Luke 1:72: "to *perform* the mercy promised to the fathers", which would be achieved by the manifestation of His Son for the deliverance of His people. In this Abraham "saw" the day of Christ (Jn. 8:56) and "was glad", for it revealed the satisfaction of all that he was promised.

On this verse Bro Thomas comments: "Such was the manner of Abram's faith; his *mode of thinking* upon the things reported to him in the word of the Lord; and his *disposition* in relation to them. So pleased was God with him that 'he counted it to him for righteousness'." (*Elpis Israel,* p. 231).

This quality of faith is not readily apparent in an age when materialism abounds, and when men trust in themselves (1Tim. 6:17), often not realizing that they thus put themselves outside the realm of divine mercy. The Master warned that there would be little evidence of a praying faith on the eve of his return (Lk. 18:8), for people would choose their own means of support rather than trusting in God.

VERSE 22

"And therefore" — His faith was so implicit, so unwavering, that it demonstrated that he was the firm friend of God (Jas. 2:23). Even in his trials, Abraham revealed such confidence in God, and showed that he was so attached to Him that he would serve and obey Him without question. This was reckoned as a full proof of his friendship; therefore God recognized and treated him as righteous.

"It was imputed to him for righteousness" — Abraham's record of faithful acknowledgement of God in his life, and his belief in God's providence, was the basis upon which God recognized Abraham's faith and treated him as righteous. See notes on v. 3 where the word "counted" is the same as "imputed" in this verse.

To "impute" means to put on one's account; to reckon as one's own. In this context it means that the status of righteousness was "placed to Abraham's account", so that he is *held* to be righteous in a legal sense, and therefore is *treated* accordingly. Consequently he stands in a position to receive the divine favor, being justified from past sins (Gen. 15:6).

VERSE 23

"Now it was not written for his sake

alone, that it was imputed to him" — Abraham's life is recorded as an example of the state of mind and faith expected in his spiritual offspring, revealing to them what is necessary for justification: not reliance on law which nobody could keep and was designed to reveal the sinfulness of flesh, but the manifestation of faith in action. The Scriptures are designed for the guidance of believers (2Tim. 3:15-17; Rom. 15:4).

VERSE 24

"But for us also" — Note the sudden and significant introduction of the personal "us". Justification is made available for all who receive it in faith and humility, and who, like Abraham, separate from the darkness of ignorance to follow the guidance of God (John 12:46). The example of Abraham is recorded for our encouragement and imitation, to show that we may in a similar manner be accepted and saved.

"To whom it shall be imputed" — i.e., the benefits of Abraham's justification may accrue to his children of faith, of whatever generation and race.

"If we believe on Him" — This is the basis for justification, whether *absolute* (as in the case of Christ), or *imputed* (as is possible for transgressors). Belief is the acknowledgement of the existence of God, and the assurance of His purpose (Heb. 11:6). There must be an unequivocal acceptance of the divine will, and a submission to its principles (cp. Rom. 4:20-22)

"That raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" — The risen Christ is a confirmation of that which Abraham hoped to see (v. 17; John 8:56). Abraham rejoiced in the birth of Isaac from the "dead" womb of Sarah (Gen. 21:2-3,8; cp. ch. 22:2) and in the subsequent deliverance of the son of promise from death (Gen. 22:13), seeing this as a token of the greater sacrifice to be seen in the Messiah. He declared: "In the mount of Yahweh it (i.e. the divine salvation from sin and death) shall be seen" (v. 14). Paul states that Abraham "offered up" Isaac, as a completed sacrificial act (Heb. 11:17; note also Jas. 2:21), and that he then "received him in a figure" (v. 19). The ram which was provided represented Isaac (and, ultimately Christ) — thus both the sacrifice and resurrection were portrayed figuratively in the enactment of Gen. 22.

However, we need not to look forward with the eye of faith to a future performance of God's saving work: it has been plainly set before us in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3:25), and therefore, in view of this partial fulfilment of the promise (Rom. 15:8), we have no excuse for faithlessness!

Christ's resurrection demonstrates Yahweh's almighty power (1Pet. 1:21; Eph. 1:19-20), and is the foundation of the gospel (1Cor. 15:4, 12-18). We align ourselves with the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ by partaking of the memorials of Bread and Wine, as was seen figuratively foreshadowed in the drama of Isaac's sacrifice. Those elements of atonement must be translated into daily living, as a demonstration of a true belief, and not a mere ritual observance, for only then, will the principles of justification be available.

VERSE 25

"Who was delivered for our offences" — Paul quotes from the Sept. of Isa. 53:12, to take his readers to the kernel of doctrinal teaching concerning their hope of eternal salvation. Rotherham has: "who was delivered *up* on account of our offences".

Jesus was delivered (Gr. *paradidomi,* to surrender; yield up) to the death "of the cross" (Phil. 2:8) as part of the atonement divinely required for the salvation of the race. Though it was accomplished by "wicked hands" of Jew and Gentile, it was in accordance with "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) as the means by which offences could be forgiven. In this, the Lord represented those "in him" (Gal. 3:28). He was "delivered up for us all" (Rom. 8:32) in the sense that the crucified Jesus was a dramatization of what is required of all those who would come to God. As he was crucified literally, they must be so figura-

Verses 23-25:
Paul's Concluding Argument

The grand climax of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter is now presented. Throughout this chapter he has gradually turned from negative defence against Judaism to positively setting forth the Truth in a series of unassailable propositions. In these final verses Paul enthusiastically and joyfully asserts his absolute confidence in his true understanding of the doctrine of the atonement.

From v. 17, our attention has been directed towards Abraham. Now, abruptly and triumphantly (v. 23), Paul switches to consider the Father and His Son in a most positive manner. He shows how, through the Son's total cooperation with the Father, the way was opened for "bodies" that would otherwise be doomed to remain "dead", to become "quickened", even as God reawakened the "dead" body of Abraham. Of equal importance is the calculated change from the subject of Abraham as an individual to "us". In the last two verses, the words "us", "we", "our" occur no less than five times.

tively (Gal. 5:24). His sacrifice was a public demonstration that a person must restrain the lusts of the flesh, "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts" if he would live acceptably unto God.

The word "for" is the Greek *dia*, which relates to the *channel* of an act, thus "through" (ch. 5:1; *Expositor* p. 148). The word also means "on account of" (see ch. 4:23,24). Jesus was provided by God as the lamb of sacrifice because the race was afflicted with "offences"; it was therefore "on account of" that situation, that there was a necessity for the work of the redeemer.

The word "offences" is from the Greek *paraptoma,* indicating an error or transgression, sin, trespass or fault. This is the common lot of humanity, the experience of the sons of Adam who find a bias for wrongdoing is resident in their nature, and who inevitably (excepting the Lord Jesus) succumb to its power by actual transgression. Bearing the same nature, the Lord Jesus was able to experience the same emotions, and thus, in "his own self bare our sins *in his body*" (1Pet. 2:24), for if it were otherwise, he would be merely a substitutionary sacrifice, and therefore unsatisfactory for the divine purpose.

On this important matter, Bro. Thomas wrote: "In being made a sacrifice for sin by the pouring out of his blood upon the cross, he was set forth as *a blood-sprinkled mercy seat* to all believers of the gospel of the kingdom, who have faith in this remission of sins through the shedding of his blood. 'He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification'; that is, for the pardon of those *who believe the gospel;* as it is written, 'He that believeth the gospel and is baptized shall be saved'. Hence, *'the obedience of faith',* is made the condition of righteousness; and this obedience implies the existence of a *'law of faith'*, as attested by that of Moses, which is *'the law of works'* (Rom. 3:27,21)". (*Elpis Israel,* p. 133).

"And was raised again" — We must avoid any wooden interpretation of v. 25 which would suggest that Jesus' resurrection had nothing to do with the atonement *for our offences,* and his death nothing to do with *our justification.* His sacrificial death and resurrection to glory are two aspects of one divine event. Without the "blood-sprinkled" sacrificial offering of the Lord (Heb. 13:20), resurrection would have been impossible, and "our faith would be in vain" (1Cor. 15:17). Without the resurrection, the death of Jesus would have been as ineffective as the dead animals on the Mosaic altar, and we would "remain in our sins" (v. 17).

Thus, the process of sacrifice ("delivered up") and resurrection to immortality is integrated; we should not separate one from the other. The risen Christ is proof that his sacrifice is efficacious (Rom. 5:10; 1Pet. 1:21), and effective for salvation. He was "brought from the dead through (Gr.

en, within the sphere) the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20), and therefore his sacrifice was as necessary for him as for those "in him". He was completely a representative of those he came to save.

The word "raised again" is the Greek *egeiro,* to build up, rebuild (see 1Cor. 15:35-44), to raise (Rom. 4:24); thus means to excite, arouse or waken, to restore to health. It does not relate merely to a resurrection out of a grave (such as in the case of Lazarus), but to the complete refashioning of the Lord to immortality.

"For our justification" — The efficacy of the Lord's resurrection is seen in those whom he "draws unto himself" (John 12:32). Our deliverance from transgressions requires us to repress the fleshly lusts in personal sacrifice, thus imitating the Lord's action; our justification (or righteousness) depends upon the manifestation of a "walking in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), of revealing a "heavenly" attitude (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). As the resurrection of Christ was the ratification of God's acceptance of his sacrifice, so our spiritual walk is confirmation of our association with the death of Christ in baptism.

Ultimately that justification will be seen in physical perfection, as our "vile bodies (lit. *the bodies of our humiliation*)" are "fashioned anew" by a change to immortality, in which state we will be clothed upon with the nature of the Deity (Phil. 3:21).

Summary

Paul thus concludes this section by an outline of the marvellous work of God in Christ (2Cor. 5:19), by which we are able to enter into harmony with the Deity, and to anticipate the glories of the time when the promises to Abraham are consummated, and when the transgressions which afflict his seed (like those of David, vv. 6-8) will be for ever removed.

In these last three verses, Paul's mind has been lifted into the heavenlies. The Father had sent His Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, that He might condemn sin in the flesh. The Son, in fully recognizing and identifying with the Father's will, had, in his sacrifice, provided the means of eternal redemption for humanity whilst at the same time showing that the flesh is rightly related to death, and that only God is the source of all righteousness. Because the Father raised the Son from the dead, we can rest in the full assurance of faith. He has revealed the perfection of His character, purpose and power to faithfully perform all that He has promised.

Yahweh will, upon this basis, justify the sinner who becomes a true saint, after the pattern of His relationship with faithful Abraham.

A Sacrifice that Leads to Glory

"Who will go for us?"...The Spirit of Christ in the prophet answers, "Here am I; send me!"...He came, and was slain. He was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Unto him, then "the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests for the Deity and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for the aeons of the aeons, Amen" (Apoc. 1:5-6). This is the ascription of Isaiah's Seraphim, of Ezekiel's Cherubim, and of John's four Living Ones, and therefore of the 144,000, to the Lamb for what he has done for them. The question, "Who will go for us?" has been graciously responded to by the loving self-sacrifice of Christ for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6-8). But for this voluntary and disinterested sacrifice, there would be no redemption; and therefore no Seraphic 144,000 hereafter on Mount Zion, or anywhere else. But, the redemption price has been paid, and all the Seals will be thoroughly unloosed. As certainly as the Lamb was slain, so surely will he appear on the Mount Zion, with the 144,000; when the moon of the political firmament shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when "He who shall be hosts" (Yahweh Tz'vaoth) shall reign on Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his Ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23). —***Eureka,*** vol. 5, page17.

What Is Justification?

"Justification" and "grace" are two outstanding words in the epistle to the Romans. They are closely related, the following being examples: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ch. 3:24). "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (ch. 4:4-5). "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (v. 16).

Justification places us in a position of grace or favour with God, so that we experience the peace of God which passeth understanding, and are led to exclaim with the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

But what is justification? It is not merely forgiveness. We may forgive a thief seventy times seven, and though our forgiveness be absolute, the stain remains upon his character and conscience. Justification means to account "just" or "righteous" certain who have been previously "unjust" and "unrighteous". Romans 5 opens with these graciously consoling words: "Therefore

being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God". If we have experienced this "grace" we shall enter heartily into the next verse: "and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience".

The words "access by faith" suggest an introduction into the presence of an eastern monarch or king such as we read of in the book of Esther. Esther had no "access" to her king without first being called (ch. 4:11). Mordecai, also, who had been outside the gate clothed in sackcloth, received "grace" and "favour" embracing an "access" into the king's presence, and was clothed in "royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple" (ch. 8:15).

From this example we can perhaps reach a better understanding of the grace bestowed upon us who are justified by faith. Under sovereign law today, a criminal may apply for "the king's pardon" in certain cases of offence. This, if received, involves remittance of a sentence passed in the civil courts, and the criminal is liberated. In the case of a death sentence, the king, through his Home Secretary, may grant a reprieve which is generally commuted to life imprisonment. All who receive the king's pardon will undoubtedly be most thankful and relieved, but even then, the stain of the offence remains, and men have been known to go abroad and seek refuge in other lands where they can start life afresh, free from the prison blemish.

Supposing a king not only remits a death sentence, but taking the criminal out of prison, clothes him in royal robes, changes his name to that of his own, makes him heir to the throne providing he learns the etiquette of the court and walks becoming to the royal household? This would be an unheard of gesture of grace; yet it is exactly what the great king of the universe has done for us by His scheme of reconciliation (ch. 5:1-2). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (vv. 8-9). — ***W. G. Holton (Logos, 1954).***

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SUPERIORITY OF FAITH OVER LAW

Having shown that justification is only possible upon the principle of faith, the apostle now proceeds to outline the great benefits that are derived therefrom (vv. 1-11). Therefore, although our faith will be put to the test, as was Abraham's, we need not fear such trials. If the "love of God" is in our hearts, motivating our thoughts and actions, we can rest confident in our faith, waiting patiently "in hope of the glory of God" (vv. 1-5).

The apostolic thesis upon the atonement now begins to broaden and blossom forth into a revelation of the glorious and positive treasures to be seen in a true understanding of this doctrine. Paul urges us to consider the way Yahweh works in the life of the saint to bring about his total justification, by which "we have now received the reconciliation" (v. 11). He concludes this section of the epistle by demonstrating that this privilege is open to all mankind (vv. 12-21).

Notice the constant repetition of the phrase "much more" (vv. 9,10,15,17 — Gr. "mallon polus"; v. 20 — Gr. "huperperisseuo", to superabound), which emphasizes the superiority of faith over law, and demonstrates the great benefits that have come through the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this fifth chapter, we see the believer:

- *Manifesting his faith;*
- *Appreciating the grace of God;*
- *Rejoicing in hope of the glory of immortality;*
- *Bearing up under trials, and patiently enduring them through faith;*
- *Inspired by hope, seeing his reward before him;*
- *Exalting in his intimate calling, raised to the status of a son of God, reconciled to his Creator through the sacrificial death of the risen Christ.*

These godly attributes of faith reveal the power of God at work in man: an influence manifested through the gospel — informing, enlightening, developing, transforming. The first eleven verses, therefore, present a picture of the individual whose mind has been flooded with the light of

divine Truth, and who responds to God's great love by surrendering his will and life to the guidance of the Word, so that he might ultimately attain to perfect union with the Father and His Son.

The Great Benefits of Justification — vv. 1-11.

Paul now demonstrates the high standards of life and hope attainable through association with the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. He shows the merciful work of Yahweh in the provision of His Son, and the true measure of divine love.

VERSE 1

"Therefore" — Paul resumes his consideration of the effects of justification which he introduced in ch. 3:21-26. In the intervening exposition he shows that justification came not from *works* (ch. 4:1-8), nor through *ordinances* (vv. 9-12), nor by *obedience to law* (vv. 13-17), but by *faith* (vv. 18-25). Based upon his exposition of ch. 4:25, Paul now shows that the consequence of justification is found in peace.

The Greek *oun* implies a formal or logical inference to be deduced from the words previously spoken. This word provides the link with chapter 4, so that Paul continues the reasoning there commenced.

"Being justified by faith" — "By faith" is the Greek *ekpisteou:* "out of faith". It is not faith as an abstract principle that saves, but a justification that is based upon and springs out of a well-grounded faith.

"We have peace with God" — This must be our ultimate desire, involving removal of the enmity introduced by transgression in Eden. The word "peace" is from the Gr. *eirene,* from a verb *eiro,* which means, to bind together that which has been separated. This is the effect of true "religion" (a word that means, to restore back (from the Latin *religare,* to bind again). Bullinger defines it as "peace, rest; in contrast with strife, and denoting the absence or end of strife."

True peace is not merely the cessation of war, but the accomplishing of unity. It was offered by Jesus in the midst of tribulation and trial: "Peace I leave with you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27), and after counselling his disciples concerning the trauma of separation (ch. 16:32), he comforted them with the invitation: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace" (v. 33).

We have peace with God when we are reconciled from our previous ignorance and wickedness (Eph. 4:18), and, putting on the new man (v. 24) are approved in His sight. To be "spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6) bringing both a destiny (life) and status (peace) not possible under the reign of sin (ch. 6:18). Peace is part of the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22), and keeps us in an elevated relationship with the Deity (Eph. 3:14-17).

By associating with God's peace today, we lay a foundation for our millennial labors when we shall bring mankind back into harmony with God on the basis of righteousness (Isa. 32:17).

See also Luke 2:14; Jn. 14:27; Psa. 85:8; Phil. 4:6-7.

"Through our Lord Jesus Christ" — The program for peace is first seen in him (Jn. 14:27), then experienced by his disciples. "Through" is the Gr. *dia,* which has the idea of "the channel of an act" (*Strong*). Peace with God is only possible through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

VERSE 2

"By whom also" — The Greek word *dia* is again repeated: "through whom" (so rendered by Diag., Weymouth, Rotherham, etc). Christ is the medium for two benefits: "peace with God" (v. 1), and "grace wherein we stand" (v. 2). The first heals a rift caused by sin; the latter elevates us to a position of privilege.

"We have access" — i.e. an introducer. The TCNT has: "it is through him that,

by means of our faith, we have *obtained admission to the* place in God's favor, in which we now stand". The Greek word *prosagoge* (from *ago,* to bring, and *pros,* facing) has the idea of bringing together so as to present or introduce to another. It particularly applies to a subject being led into the reception room of a king, for the purpose of being introduced to the monarch. The word only occurs in two other places: Eph. 2:18, 3:12. If a subject desired to approach an eastern monarch without invitation he would face death, unless the king chose to exercise clemency (cp. Est. 4:11). Of ourselves we possess no right of entrance into the presence of Yahweh; only through Christ is this possible (1Pet. 3:18). He declared as part of his invitatory policy speech: "The pure in heart shall see God" (Mat. 5:8), the monarch of the earth.

As Gentiles, we are naturally outside the sphere of divine selection, but God's mercy has been extended to us on the basis of acceptance of "His Name" (Acts 15:14). This provides us with an invitation to a higher association, by which we can "bring ourselves to the face" of heaven, as Eve was brought to the first monarch of the earth (Adam — see Gen. 2:22. The word *meet* in v. 18 means "as before him; to his face").

"By faith into this grace wherein we stand" — A true belief is the basis of grace (unmerited favor, benevolence) granted to those who are presented to the "throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16).

The word "grace" *(charis)* has been used only five times to this point in the epistle, but from this verse to the end of ch. 6 it occurs ten times, and then not again until ch. 11. This suggests that the exposition concerning divine grace, must be more fully expounded for the believers.

The word "stand" (Gr. *histemi*) literally means, to set, to stand fast or firm. Most translations have the last phrase in the past tense: "in which we have stood". Paul is speaking of the position into which believers *had* already been brought through their acceptance of the Truth and baptism into Christ.

"And rejoice" — The *RSV* has: "let us rejoice", for the rejoicing comes as a result of our privileges in Christ. The Greek word *kauchaomai* signifies the shouting of excitement, to speak loudly, to exult oneself. The reasons for this joy are: (1) We have been justified and accounted righteous by God — Rom. 3:24. (2) We have been admitted into His favor, and abide there — Rom. 5:11. (3) We have the prospect of richer blessings in the fulness of glory when the sons of God are manifested — Rom. 8:19.

The verb of this word has been used twice (ch. 2:17,23) and the noun once (ch. 3:27) to describe the "boasting" of the Judaiser as he gloried in the principle of law. The noun also occurs in ch. 4:2 (rendered "glory") to show that none can boast or glory before God through his own attainments in keeping law. Paul here shows that the only form of glorying, or boasting, which is in harmony with the Truth, is a state of mind manifested outwardly in a humble, dedicated walk before Yahweh. The Judaiser "rejoiced" in what he *himself* had *done;* whereas the disciple of Christ makes his "rejoicing" (boast) in what *God* has done for *him!*

"In hope of the glory of God" — The great vision before us! Moses desired to see this glory (Exod. 33:18) and had revealed to him the divine character and Name (ch. 34:5-7). The glory of God was temporarily seen in the transfigured Christ (Mat. 17:2-5), and made permanent by his exaltation to immortality (Jn. 20:17). When he returns, he will manifest the majesty of Yahweh in the earth (Mic. 5:4).

Our present state is one of toil and sorrow (Psa. 90:10), of sin and death (Rom. 7:24). But the redemption of Christ has made our salvation possible, and allowed us to seek for honor and glory through undergoing a present trial of faith (1Pet. 1:7), that will be rewarded at his appearing (Rom. 8:17-18). Then all the earth will be "lightened with his glory" (Rev. 18:1), as the gospel of wisdom and light spreads throughout the millennium.

Therefore, our present attitude must demonstrate our future hope. The gospel

will not be seen as a boring and demanding set of doctrines to be believed; attendance at meetings will not become a tiresome obligation; the mind will not be dominated by the everyday affairs of life. The true believer will "rejoice" in his privileges, and the fact that Christ has given him access to the grace of God. Such a realisation will cause the disciple to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God".

VERSE 3

"And not only (so)" — But, since we are faced with many difficult and trying experiences, is our rejoicing to await the future day of glory? Not at all! That hope of coming glory can be displayed in present attitudes and circumstances, however painful and difficult. Then, the future glory will be a continuation of a godly way of life now, for characters built out of trial today are those which will be rewarded with glory then (Rom. 8:30). The joyful endurance of tribulations today is a fitting preparation for the ultimate glory.

"But we glory in tribulations also" — Tribulations can either destroy or develop the character. Some might turn aside from Truth in order to avoid persecutions or difficulties (Mat. 13:21; Jn. 6:60,66) There is a need for "endurance" under difficulty (2Tim. 2:3), recognizing that Yahweh has control over all our circumstances (Rev. 2:10). Such an attitude will recognize the purpose for tribulation: to develop a likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ, who faced opposition and persecution at the hands of both Jew and Gentile (Isa. 53:7-8; 1Pet. 2:23), that we might learn to "fellowship his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10).

The Greek word, *thlipsis*, signifies pressure, compression. The word appears in Acts 14:22: "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God". Christ teaches us that, if our faith is to be sufficiently developed, such pressure is unavoidable: "in the world ye shall have tribulation *(thlipsis)*" (Jn. 16:33). Such "pressure" comes from many directions: personal habits, the influence of the world, the challenge of employment, the entice-ment of society. Such things exert an oppressive force against the saints, but also constitute an evidence of faithfulness and loyalty to God when they are challenged, opposed and overcome by the power of the Truth believed (Rom. 8:31-39). Soon that which causes us *tribulation* will itself be engulfed in the tribulation of divine judgment (Rev. 18:4-6). Then, the days of tribulation will be seen as the process of salvation, by the purging of our lives, and our identification with the redemption of "the Lamb" (ch. 7:14). It is an axiom that, though there will be one in the kingdom who has never sinned (Christ himself), there will be none who have not gone through tribulation in the development of their faith.

"Knowing" — The basis of Paul's exulting was not in tribulation itself, but in what it produced. He recognized in it the divine purpose of cleansing from sin (Rev. 7:14), and viewed it as an opportunity to demonstrate unswerving loyalty to God. Paul speaks from personal experience, as he reviews his life of persecution and affliction. Though he faced many difficulties, he could see the merciful presence of God throughout. Therefore this moved him to reject the appeal of the ecclesia to avoid the tribulation that awaited him at Jerusalem: "for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem *for the name* of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). At a moment of extreme provocation by the Jews, Paul received a message of comfort: "Be of good cheer, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (ch. 23:11). Paul could cheerfully pursue a course to Rome that would be of the same character as his witness in Jerusalem! But he *knew* the purpose of it all. The "fellowshipping of Christ's sufferings" (a life of death, so to speak) would lead to a greater reward than this world could ever offer: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11).

The word "knowing" is from the Gr: *eida* (in the aorist, continuous tense), which signifies an intelligent understanding; a clear perception of a fact; to be fully

aware. It does not suggest a blind acceptance of tribulation, nor an ignorant stubbornness to accept opposition, but a conscious recognition of the real purpose of trial. By that means God is honored, and His purpose served.

"That tribulation worketh patience" — The word "worketh" is the Greek *katergazomai* (see ch. 1:27; 2:9) which signifies to work out, achieve, effect by toil. Patience is the end result of a conscious appreciation of the purpose of tribulation. A person who sees Yahweh's hand in the matter, will allow that process to work in his life, and effect the desired development.

"Patience" is the Greek *hupomone,* from *hupo* (under) and *meno* (to abide). It is rendered "endurance" (Diag., TCNT, Weymouth, Rotherham), and literally means to endure, as though under a great weight. It is developed from tribulation when it is understood by the eye of faith (Jas. 1:3). Job ultimately recognized that his great burden of trial came from Yahweh (Job 42:11), though he did not, at first, understand its purpose (ch. 6:8). Nevertheless, he maintained his integrity and hope in the redemption that would ultimately occur (ch. 19:25-27), and his example is presented for us to emulate (Jas. 5:11).

VERSE 4

"And patience, experience" — The Greek word for "experience" is *dokime,* meaning, full proof by trial, the process or effect of proving. The word conveys the idea of "putting to the proof under trial". It is a term used in the refining of metal. When intense heat is applied to the metal it is purified without any deterioration or loss of worth in the metal itself. In fact, the metal increases in purity, and therefore in value, as a result of the application of fire which removes the dross. The process also ascertains the genuineness and quality of the metal.

Paul uses the word metaphorically, to reveal the tested and genuine attitude that must be developed. He emphasizes the *result* of tribulation in a saint who recognizes its purpose, realizing that it provides him the opportunity to demonstrate endurance, or undivided loyalty to God, and acknowledges that such a process is essential to the purification of character. This knowledge will enable him to bear up with trials, and, instead of seeking to experience sudden raptures, or extraordinary emotional sensations, he will manifest a steady growth of endurance, leading to the successful proving of himself under trial, which is here called "experience".

The related word *dokimion* is also found in Jas. 1:3 (trans. "trying") and 1Pet. 1:7 ("trial"), in connection with the examination of the quality of faith. Notice the expression in Phil. 2:22, "But ye know the *proof* of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel". Timothy had proved his value through the "fire" of service in the apostle's ministry. See also 2Cor. 2:9.

"And experience, hope" — The tribulation that develops patience, puts us under test, and examines the quality of our association with God. The result is a conviction that confidence in God is not misplaced, and that His appraisal of us is acceptable (cp. Abraham in Gen. 17:19). If we can overcome tribulation by faith, then we have "full proof under trial" that faith is adequate to save; and, because faith is a resting on God's strength, we have "full proof" that our confidence in Him is not misplaced. Thus, having proved by experience that faith is adequate to every need, and that God will help us to conquer (see 1Cor. 10:13), this experience will lead to "hope". It will be seen in the realization that He who has sustained us in the past will continue to do so in the future, leading onwards to the kingdom.

Notice the development of Paul's argument: tribulation, endurance, full proof by trial, hope. It was because Paul could see this purpose in trials that he wrote: "we glory in tribulations". Far from being destroyed by such experiences, they should strengthen our hope. When we accept these *sufferings* as coming with the "all things" of ch. 8:28, they result in *patience,* fortitude, or disciplined

endurance. The enduring of hardship cheerfully and patiently brings *experience;* that is, it tests and hardens character, and this character in turn makes possible a more vigorous *hope* than we might otherwise have.

VERSE 5

"And hope maketh not ashamed" — The RSV has: "hope does not disappoint us". Hope does not prove illusory, for the testing and purifying process of experience develops a hope that will continue. It is like the pure gold which comes from the crucible of the assayer — a quality that reveals no imperfections, and sparkles with brightness and glory. The hope that comes from trial is no less glorious. It will not disappoint or deceive us, because the certainty of its fulfilment is guaranteed by God Himself. Paul looked for the confirmation of his hope, to be "magnified in his body" according to his "earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing (he) would be ashamed" (Phil. 1:20: compare also Psa. 22:4-5).

The phrase in Rom. 5:5 is taken from Isa. 28:16, "he that *believeth* shall not make haste (i.e., be put to shame)". Isaiah points to God's displeasure at the unteachableness of Israel. The identical problem faced the apostles, which Paul here addresses.

"Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" — The words "shed abroad" (Gr. *ekcheo,* to pour out abundantly) are often applied to water, or any other liquid that is poured out, or diffused. The RSV has "poured into", and the NEB "flooded". Note that Paul does not speak here of our love for God, but of His love for us! God's love, together with our faith, provides the basis of our hope. Such a love is abundantly showered upon those who respond to His calling (v. 2), and submit to His purifying process (vv. 3-4). It is revealed in the privileged position in which we stand, so that it fills our heart, as water fills a well.

The manner in which God has revealed His love for us is more fully elucidated in vv. 6-8.

The word "love" is *agape,* and God's love for us (cp. 1John 4:13,19) is seen in the sacrifice of His Son (Rom. 5:8) for our salvation. A correct understanding of the atonement work of God, and the involvement of the believer therein, is an essential constituent to the divine response to our needs. As we learn of Him, He responds by "filling our hearts" with an increasing understanding (cp. Jas. 1:5), and since the very nature of Yahweh is *agape* (1Jn. 4:8)

"Given Unto Us"

With these words, the exposition presented in the first five verses concludes. In this section, Paul has emphasized what God has done for us. This must always be the over-riding principle upon which faith is established. It should never be a question of what we have done for God (as would be the case if we sought justification upon the basis of law), but rather a wholehearted, humble acceptance of what God has provided for us. Faith takes root and begins to grow upon this foundation.

This same word *didomi* is used by the Lord to assure his disciples of God's fidelity. In emphasizing our need of divine wisdom, he said: "Ask, and it shall be *given* you" (Mat. 7:7). To those who are right-minded, God will give it; it is not some kind of inalienable right. He is under no obligation to grant blessings to sinful humanity. Yet, His goodness, love and mercy have been abundantly revealed. The faithful have been promised that Christ will *"give"* them "to eat of the tree of life" and will *"give"* them a "crown of life" (Rev. 2:7,10). He will *"give"* them the "morning star," and will *"give"* them to "sit with him in his throne" (Rev. 2:28; 3:21). In all these passages the word is the same as in Rom. 5:5.

How apt are the words of praise which ascend to the throne of grace from the lips of the inspired Psalmist: "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever... Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable... Yahweh is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth" (Psa. 145:1,3,18). ***— J.U.***

He imparts something of Himself (vv. 13, 19).

"By the Holy Spirit" — The literal Greek is *dia pneumatos hagios:* "through spirit holy" (note, there is no definite article: "a holy spirit"). The Word of God is spirit-power, which, when understood, believed and actively manifested, becomes the transforming power of life (see Jn. 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1Jn. 5:5; 1Cor. 2:11-16). This does not refer to the spirit gifts experienced by the first-century ecclesia, for not all believers received a gift (cp. Acts 8:8-21). Further, since the Holy Spirit rested within and filled the believer's heart, it represents the power of God which resides in all who understand the process of tribulation that Paul has explained in Rom. 5:3-4. In the apostolic days, this power was vested in spirit-endowed people who ministered the Word in the ecclesia (Eph. 4:11,12); whereas today, it is found in the completed scriptures, and can be obtained only from that source (2Tim. 3:16-17).

"Which is given unto us" — Obviously, the Holy Spirit does not relate to a second person of a Trinity, as is commonly taught by the Church. Paul's words signify that the believers were all under the sanctifying influence of the Truth and rejoiced in the wonderful experience of divine wisdom.

VERSE 6

"For" — i.e. "yet". Paul now explains what the Spirit-Word taught about the abounding love of God, and why actions based upon it will not bring "shame" (v. 5).

The Greek word, *gar,* has a deeper meaning than the English "for", expressing the "reason, cause, motive, principle, etc., of what has been previously said" (Bull.). In chapters 2 and 3, the apostle asserted that law could never be the basis for justification. In ch. 4 he used David and Abraham as example for justification by faith. Now, in ch. 5, he passes to the next stage of his thesis: that faith can only become operative as a means of salvation because of God's love in making available the *means* whereby we may develop faith.

Thus, Paul provides the following development:

Ch. 1 — The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Ch. 2 — Justification cannot come through mere obedience to law.

Ch. 3 — All have sinned and are in need of redemption.

Ch. 4 — Examples of men who have been justified by faith.

Ch. 5 — The manifestion of God's love by which reconciliation is effected.

"When we were yet without strength" — i.e. "weak" (RV), "helpless" (Wey., JB), "powerless" (NIV). The word *asthenes,* signifies impotent, feeble, sick; and is usually applied to those deprived of strength through disease (cp. Lk. 10:9; Acts 4:9). Being associated with the disease of a defiled nature, we are unable to achieve our own salvation. Justification by mere works is impossible, and the word is used in relation to the inability of law to justify a sinner (see Gal. 4:9; Heb. 7:18).

"In due time" — The margin correctly has: "according to the time". Jesus came at the time designated by God, for the demonstration of the process of faith (Gal. 4:4). Nothing prior to Christ's sacrifice could bring salvation (Rom. 8:3), and man's desperate condition was evident. It had been clearly revealed that the law was unable to bring salvation; that mankind could not rise above his innate sinful nature; that no scheme could meet the maladies of mortality, and save man from death. God "saw that there was no man, and wondered (viewed the condition) that there was no intercessor, therefore His arm brought salvation (Heb. *yasha,* the root word for *Yahoshua,* Jesus) unto him" (Isa. 59:16). A deliverer was promised, and, after four millennia of the demonstration of mankind's imperfection, it was time to reveal the salvation of God. Faithful saints had carefully noted the times, aligned them with the prophetic Word, and "awaited" the manifestation of Yahweh's Anointed (Lk. 2:26,38).

The "due time" for the second stage of Yahweh's saving purpose is imminent, when the Saviour will appear as Monarch

(see Acts 17:31; Luke 21:30-31). When the day of opportunity closes, there will be "time no longer" (Rev. 10:6).

"Christ died" — The determined purpose of God for the salvation of mankind required firstly, the sacrificial death of His Son (Acts 2:23). This was to demonstrate that, apart from a blood-sprinkled sacrifice, the remission of sins was impossible (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, Christ was "delivered for our offences" (Rom. 4:25), and his death became a figure that must be repeated in the life of the believer (Rom. 6:3-4).

But the two words speak of far more than the mere shedding of blood and the death of the victim. When "Christ died" it was not simply a ritualistic death, in which the innocent replaced the guilty. The two words must be understood in the light of a life of perfect obedience, culminating in a sacrificial death. Brother Roberts wrote: "Christ required redemption from Adamic nature equally with his brethren, and the mode of redemption which God had ordained was a perfect obedience culminating in a sacrificial death" (*The Christadelphian*, 1895, p. 262). Brother Thomas comments: "The Word made flesh was at once the victim, the altar and the priest. The Spirit-Word made his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10); and thus sanctified the Altar-Body on the tree; and all that touch it are holy; and without touching it none are holy" (*Patterns of Things in the Heavens*, p. 62).

"For" — Gr. *huper*, on account of, on behalf of, in the interests of. The Diaglott has "in behalf of". Paul does not use the Greek word *anti* (instead of), which he would if he taught the principle of substitution. Instead, he shows that the death of Christ was as essential "in the interests of" those he came to save, as it was for himself (Heb. 9:12 — where the words "for us" are not in the original and should be omitted).

"The ungodly" — The Diaglott Greek Text has "impious ones" without the emphatic "the". It describes the general condition of mankind, the irreverent who are without knowledge of God and outside the process of salvation (see Rom. 4:15). The Greek *asebes* describes those who have no reverence for sacred things. Even when mankind was in this condition, God acted in His foreknowledge to provide a "lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). Though this work was typified in the sacrifice of animals, it could only be effected in the death of Christ. And, although it was "in the behalf of" all the ungodly, it is only of benefit to those who repent of their ungodliness, and enjoy the benefits of justification. Paul may well have had his own circumstances in mind: see Phil. 3:6.

VERSE 7

"For scarcely" — With great difficulty; with labor and pain. The word *molis* is translated "scarce" in Acts 27:7, "hardly" v. 8, and "much work" (lit. "with difficulty") in v. 16.

Paul brings forward a comparison made between a *righteous man*, a *good man*, and *sinners*, to emphasize the wonder of God's great love, and the extent of the sacrifice He made in the atonement provided through His Son.

"For a righteous man will one die" — A "righteous" (Gr. *dikaios*) man is one "justified", and therefore not in need of such a sacrifice. A person would be foolish to offer his life for another who had no need of it. That would not be a sacrifice, but a suicide.

The word "righteous" is Gr. *dikaios*, "a right state, of which God is the standard" (Bull.). It is often rendered "just", whilst in this epistle is is three times rendered "righteous" and four times "just". For the distinction between "righteous" in v. 7 and "justified" in vv. 1,9, see *dikaios* and *dikaioo* on pp. 114-115.

"Yet peradventure for a good man" — The word "good" is from the Gr. *agathos*, "worthy of admiration, admirable" (Bull.). It describes a man who acts beneficially towards others, devoting himself to their welfare. He may well justify someone dying on his account, should he be in need. "Peradventure" implies "perhaps": this is an event which might be

expected to occur, as such a "good man" would be more likely to appeal to our feelings, and for whom, we may be prepared to sacrifice ourselves.

"Some would even dare to die" — Such would have the courage to give their lives to save a friend, or eminent personage. This was the attitude of Jonathan towards David (1Sam. 20:17).

VERSE 8

"But God commendeth His love toward us" — The word "commendeth" is *sunistemi,* which signifies, to give a proof (see its use in ch. 3:5). God's action for our benefit is proof of His care for the salvation of humanity (1Tim. 2:4; 2Pet. 3:9), notwithstanding our unworthiness through transgression. The love Paul considers is exclusive. The Gr. *heautou* signifies "His own" love; a specific quality found in the Deity. That love, being proved as of great benefit to us, must then be manifested by us to others: 1John 3:16. To do so is the mark of spiritual perfection and maturity (see Mat. 5:44-45).

The word "love" is from the Gr. *agape,* which does not refer to the fleshly or sentimental form of love so commonly expressed today. It is a divine love, involving self-denial and sacrifice. Such a form of love, which can result in the redemption of the human race, is not *in* man, nor can it emanate *from* man. It is entirely of God (1Jn. 4:16). Christ's sacrifice provides the example of the offering of our own lives in service to God (Rom. 12:1).

"In that, while we were yet sinners" — And, therefore aliens to God (Eph. 2:12) and enemies by transgression (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21). The Greek word *hamartolos* signifies one who has missed the mark (see notes on Rom. 4:7), and is in a state of rebellion against the law of God.

Notice that Paul does not repeat the word "ungodly" from v. 6, but introduces this word which describes those who "err from the divine law". He uses *hamartolos* to emphasize that even the "best" of us are convicted sinners, before we are brought into the way which can lead to justification. Once again, the position of the Judaiser who trusts in his ability to be justified through law, is shown to be wrong.

"Christ died for us" — The word "for" is *huper* (as in v. 6): in the behalf of us. The death spoken of is a sacrificial offering (Heb. 13:20), typically represented in the death of animals under the law (ch. 9:13), but perfectly fulfilled in the obedient, sinless Son of God by whom sin was "put away by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26). His death was the means to life, and through his death and resurrection to immortality he accomplished the removal of the Mosaic curse (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:13), and the physical condemnation that came upon mankind from the transgression of Adam (Rom. 5:19; Heb. 2:14-15). But his death is only efficacious if we are personally involved therein, and share in the same principle, as the repentant thief on the stake alongside the Lord (Luke 23:40-42). Thus, baptism ceremonially represents a person's relationship to, and identification with, the saving sacrifice of Christ — by the burial in water (a symbolic death), and rising to a newness of life. This is described as "his death" (Rom. 6:3), which provides the basis for life (v. 4). In what Christ achieved for his own salvation, we are inexorably involved, for he was given to save those who would come unto God, and to redeem the fallen condition into which humanity had entered through sin.

VERSE 9

"Much more then" — The fact of God's love in giving His own beloved Son for the salvation of His people being established, Paul returns to his main theme. Since God has already done so much for us, we have the expectation of ultimate salvation. Indeed, the most difficult work in salvation has been accomplished, in providing a sacrifice of such quality as can save from sin.

The TCNT emphasizes Paul's expression: "Much, much more then". How immeasurably great, far beyond anything we could hope to attain, are God's actions and accomplishments, that we might

become reconciled to Him!

This phrase "much more" occurs five times in this chapter (from two Greek words, see p. 147). In this verse it shows the contrast between the death of a sinner and justification by Christ's blood; v. 10 indicates the development from reconciliation by the death of Christ to salvation obtained by his life; v. 15 reveals the benefits of divine grace over divine law; v. 17 shows the power of death is greatly shadowed by the abundant reign of life; v.20 concludes the section with a contrast between the reign of sin and that of grace which leads to eternal life.

"Being now justified by his blood" — The TCNT has: "now, that by his sacrifice of himself we stand right with God, shall we be saved through him from God's judgment". Thus, we have now been brought into the *constitution* of righteousness (v. 19).

In verse 1 Paul claimed justification was "by faith". He now points out that belief is not sufficient; it must be allied to, and followed by, sacrifice. Faith in Christ will concentrate attention upon the work he accomplished, like the typical cherubic figures in the tabernacle which had their faces directed to and constantly gazing upon the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. We cannot be justified merely by belief and understanding; it must find a practical manifestation in action. The blood of the sacrifice was the means of forgiveness when the offerer identified himself with the animal, and saw reflected therein the perfect sacrifice God would provide (cp. Gen. 22:8,14).

The symbology of the Mosaic ordinances becomes centred upon the Table of the Lord, when the ceremonial wine is partaken "in his memory" — i.e., in understanding what Christ accomplished on Golgotha's hill. He declared: "this is my *blood* of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat. 26:28). The blood represents the life of a being (Lev. 17:11), and when shed it demonstrates the offering of a life dedicated to God. In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ the blood points to his life which culminated in his sacrificial offering poured out voluntarily (and yet in complete harmony with the commandment he had received from his Father: John 10:17-18) in confirmation of the covenants made with the fathers of Israel (Gen. 15; Rom. 15:8). Thus it speaks of a death that leads to life: the pouring out of a life in service and devotion to God, by which "mortality might put on immortality" (1Cor. 15:54).

That same principle of sacrifice will be re-established in the kingdom (Mat. 26:29; Ezek. 45:19) to remind mankind of the divine requirement of purging (cleansing) which is only possible through the "shedding of blood" (Heb. 9:22).

"We shall be saved" — The word *sozo* means to preserve from danger or destruction. Being by nature the children of Adam, we are afflicted with mortality and will inevitably perish. The purpose of Christ's sacrifice and glorification is to ultimately reverse that process, and to provide life to those previously in darkness (cp. Luke 4:18; Eph. 2:1; Heb. 9:28; 1Pet. 1:5).

"From wrath" — The wrath of God is levelled against those who fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Eph. 2:2-3), and who "hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18 — see further notes). Paul thus refers to the final evaluation of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Those who have neglected the opportunity to secure justification upon the basis of the "blood of Christ", will suffer the ignominy and disgrace of rejection (1Thes. 1:10; 5:9-10).

"Through him" — Christ is the only means of salvation, and that must be sought "through" him. The Greek word *dia* indicates "on account of" (see notes on ch. 4:25, p. 144), emphasizing the example of his sacrifice and resurrection that must be reflected and repeated in us.

VERSE 10

"For if" — Paul dwells on the subject, presenting it in a different parallel, and expanding the ideas of the previous verse.

"When we were enemies" — Greek, *echthros*, from a root, to hate. It expresses a hostility to God, developed because of

"Being Justified by His Blood" (Rom. 5:9)

FOUR hundred and thirty years* after the confirmation of the New Covenant (styled *new* because of its coming into force at a time when that of Moses had waxed old), and sixteen hundred and fifty-nine years before its incipient enforcement, Moses dedicated or initiated "the law ordained by angels". This he did with blood. "For when he had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both *the Book* and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament *[better, 'covenant']* which God hath enjoined upon you" (Heb. 9:18-20). Here was a solution of blood in water, into which a sprinkler of scarlet wool and hyssop was dipped, and the Book and people sprinkled by the hand of Moses. These materials were purification emblems. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission", or sending away, as if sin and uncleanness were sent away into a land not inhabited (Lev. 16:21,22). This is a first principle of God's religion under both covenants. Blood is therefore regarded as purging, purifying, or cleansing. The only answer that can be given to the question, why is there no expiation without blood-shedding?—is that Jehovah *[Yahweh]* wills it. The blood of the living creature is the life thereof; and as it has come under sentence of death, God wills that life shall make satisfaction for sin (Lev. 17:11,14). "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul". Water is also cleansing. Hence, "Wash you, make you clean" (Isa. 1:16). The water and the blood with which Moses sprinkled the Book of the Covenant and the people, find their antitypes in the blood and water that issued from the pierced side of Jesus, with which he sprinkled the new covenant... But the efficacy of a covenant depends on the virtue of the blood with which it is purged. This principle is fatal to the idea of perfectibility by the law of Moses; for "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Hence it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:18,19). This defectiveness of the law, which even faith in the unpurged Abrahamic covenant could not remedy (Heb. 9:15) was referable to the nature of the sacrifices with whose blood it was dedicated; and to the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3), which it could alone sanctify (Heb. 9:13) without reaching the inward man. Calves and goats were as destitute of righteousness as they were devoid of sin. Their blood therefore was a negative principle, and could impart no virtue to a covenant by which those who were sanctified under it could obtain a title or justification to eternal redemption. And furthermore let it be observed, that besides this defect, their blood was unprofitable for everlasting results, as being the blood of the dead, and not of the living. It was therefore ceremonially incommunicative of any kind of vitality. Even the blood of the innocent and righteous Jesus would have been as unprofitable for covenant purposes as the blood of Moses, Abel, or

* The 430 years actually date from Abraham's evacuation from Ur — so there is a slight error in the calculation of these years — Ed.

calves, if he had not been raised from the dead. This is the doctrine taught concerning him by David. The thirtieth Psalm is prophetic of Messiah's death and resurrection. "All things must be fulfilled that are written concerning me in the Psalms" (Luke 24:44), said Jesus. In the third verse of the Psalm quoted, the spirit which afterwards dwelt in him and spoke by him, says of him and for him, "O Jehovah *[Yahweh]*, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; Thou has kept me alive (or preserved from corruption), that I should not go down into the pit (or be reduced to dust)". In the eighth verse he says he "cried unto the Lord, and made supplication". This occurred before his soul went down into the grave. In view of its hypothetical continuance in that gloomy place, he inquires in his supplication, "what profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit (or become dust)? Can the dust praise Thee? Can it declare Thy truth?" This interrogative argument teaches the doctrine of the 15th of 1 Corinthians, that "if Christ be not raised" from the dead, or in other words, be mere dust in the pit, "faith is in vain"; sins are not remitted; and dead believers are perished; which is equivalent to saying "there is no profit in his blood"; for it was shed for the remission of sins, which, however, are not remitted, if he be not raised up, or "healed" of the "evil disease" which laid him in the tomb (Psa. 41:8). An unrisen Christ is an unprofitable sacrifice. His blood could purge nothing; and as to praising God and declaring His truth in heaven and earth, it would be impossible; for "the dead know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5), in the day of their return to the dust their thoughts perish (Psa. 146:4), and therefore the dead cannot praise Jehovah *[Yahweh]* (Psa. 115:17). Jesus was "delivered for our offences"; but if he had not been raised, we should have remained unjustified, and in our sins, and without any title to things everlasting; happily, however, for the faithful, God raised him from the dead; whereupon the apostle adds, "And was raised again for our justification". Thus, his blood was made profitable, and he is prepared to praise Jehovah *[Yahweh]*, and to declare His truth in the midst of Israel's congregation (Psa. 22:22,23,25) when the time comes.

...The blood of the New Covenant speaks better things than the blood of the Mosaic. It speaks of the "good things to come" of which Jesus is the high priest, and not Aaron. It speaks of the good things of the better hope, and of the eternal redemption he hath obtained for his people individually and nationally. It is Israel's hope emphatically; and no Gentile man or nation can partake of it that is not sprinkled with the blood of the covenant that it sets forth. Even Israel's own nation will partake of it in no sense until "all the people" are sprinkled by the covenant blood; for it is by virtue of that blood alone, that they possess the land to be expelled no more; and as for the righteous dead, it is "by the blood of Thy covenant, O Messiah, that Jehovah *[Yahweh]* sends forth thy prisoners out of the pit, in which there is no water" (Zech. 9:11).

But Moses sprinkled the Book and all the people, with a bunch of hyssop and scarlet wool. He had a vessel containing the water and the blood within convenient reach; but where is the blood of the better covenant? How can access be obtained to it? How can it be sprinkled upon all the people from

age to age, and generation to generation, who shall inherit the hope when the time of its development shall arrive? These are questions easily replied to from the testimony of God. The blood of the covenant was poured out of Jesus' side, bathing his body, and dripping on the dust of Palestine. Had anyone caught the blood in a vessel, and with a bunch of hyssop and scarlet wool sprinkled even believing people around, it would have availed them nothing. It would have been presumptive evidence that those upon whom it was found had been engaged in his murder; but it would have been no proof of their interest in the hope of the covenant which it dedicated. It was, when pouring out, the blood of an unrisen Christ; and therefore, of no then present efficacy.

After Jesus had come to life again, and ascended to the Father, the blood which was dried up was nowhere to be found here; nor, if to be found, was it then known to what use it was to be applied. It is evident, therefore, that the existence of, or accessibility to the material blood, is not a question needing to be entertained; and that it was not intended to be used ceremonially, as Moses used the blood of his will. Romish priests pretend to manufacture, or rather, incantate wine into material blood of Christ, which, like greedy cannibals they permit none to quaff but their impious selves. But the common use of the covenant blood in sprinkling or drinking was never intended. The blood of the covenant, which sanctifies, is no common or unholy thing. It is too precious to be dispensed indiscriminately in any sense; or to be placed at the disposal of ignorant and fleshly-minded priests. Save the drops that bedewed the dust, Christ took with him his blood to heaven*; for "with his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us". Standing there before the throne, he appeared as a lamb that had been slain, his wool of snowy white, dyed scarlet with his blood. There is the blood of the covenant; not on earth, but in the holiest of all. The blood of the covenant being in heaven, and we upon the earth, there must be some appointed thing as a medium of access to it. The blood is to justify and sanctify, or to cleanse and make holy those who are sprinkled by it. Such are said to stand in the grace of God, rejoicing in hope of His glory. If then we ascertain how access is obtained into this grace, we also learn how access is obtained to the blood of the covenant. Paul says, "We have access by faith"; a saying which agrees with that of the prophet, "the just *shall live* by his faith". "God", says Peter, "put no difference between Jew and Gentile, *purifying* their hearts by faith". "I send thee", said the Lord Jesus to Paul, to "open the eyes of the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and *inheritance* among them who are *sanctified* by faith which is in me". "A man is *justified* by faith without the deeds of the law". "There is one God who shall justify the Jews on account of faith, and the Gentiles, through the faith". Such is the testimony of Scripture on this all-important subject, which summarily amounts to this, that the sons of Adam are purified, sanctified, justified or pardoned, and obtain

* This is not to be considered literally, for a spirit body is not of blood (Lk. 24:39). In this figure, however, the Lord presented his dedicated and sacrificed life (described as "his precious blood", 1Pet. 1:19) in accordance with the Father's requirements. — Ed.

eternal life by faith; or, in other words, as the apostle says to those who have been delivered from their past sins, "in grace ye are, having been saved *(sesosmenoi)* through the faith; and this not of (or originating from) yourselves *(ex hymon);* but the gift of God". By faith in *the* faith the great salvation is obtained, when the better hope which is the subject of it is no longer unseen, but an eternal and accomplished reality.

To say that a man is purged, purified, or cleansed, is the same as to affirm that he is justified, or constituted righteous, and sanctified or made holy. It is sin that makes unclean — unclean by nature, because born of sinful flesh; and unclean by practice, because a transgressor in the sight of God. The cleansing process is, therefore, intellectual, moral, and physical.

The work begins by cleansing the intellect, casting out, as it were, all the devils that have established themselves there through the doctrines of fleshly men. This is done by the truth understood and believed. If the soil be good, the truth sown in the understanding will take root in the heart, or moral sentiments, and bring forth "fruit unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life". In this way the whole heart is cleansed by a faith yielding obedience, as the apostle saith, "ye have purified your souls (intellectual and moral faculties) *in the obedience of* the truth—*en tee hypakoee tees aleetheias*". The person so cleansed has no more conscience of past sins, but is able to stand in God's presence without shame or fear as Adam was before he fell. This is a *spiritual* cleansing, but no less real and literal for that. "Ye have purified your souls *in* the obedience of the truth, *through the Spirit—dia Pneumatos*". Spirit operating upon soul and spirit. How? By the word of truth evangelized enlightening the mind, and creating a right disposition. It is God's work, not man's; for the apostle saith, "Of His own will the Father of Lights begat us by the word of truth"; "and this", saith another, "is the word which is evangelized unto you".

But the cleansing of the soul needs to be followed by the cleansing of the body to make the purification of the man complete. If the spiritual cleansing be well done (and if the word of truth have done it, it will), the corporeal cleansing will be sure to follow. Not, however, as a physical effect of the truth diffusing itself over the body as nervous influence from the brain, and so annihilating evil in the flesh; but a corporeal purification effected by the Spirit at the believer's resurrection, or transformation, as a part of the reward promised to all such who "patiently continue in well-doing". A man so cleansed is every whit whole; and qualified to receive and enjoy the hope of the better covenant by the blood of which he had been "purged from his old sins". Justification and sanctification, therefore, are consequent upon cleansing; if a man refuse to be cleansed, or be not cleansed, it is folly for him to talk of being just, or holy, or righteous in the sight of God. — Bro. J. Thomas,

Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained

(reproduced in the *Logos* edition, *Contending for the Faith*, pp. 158-160, 162-165)

the presence of sin. At one time we were completely indifferent to the divine requirements, and ignorant of Yahweh's commandments (Acts 17:30). Our lives were a parade of ungodly works (Eph. 2:2-3), and as such, we stood opposed to the will of God.

"We were reconciled to God" — The Greek word, *katallasso,* means to change or exchange, especially from a condition of enmity to friendship. Being previously in a state of alienation (a moral estrangement from God) through ignorance and wicked works (Col. 1:21; Eph. 4:18), we have been brought nigh to God's salvation. Reconciliation "to" God is achieved also "by" Him (2Cor. 5:18) for the whole transaction is the work of God. When this is achieved, justification follows, and we stand approved before God.

"By the death of His Son" — The process of reconciliation is based upon the sacrifice of Christ. The "poured out blood" of his sacrifice represents a life devoted to God, and hence, provides for a symbolic purging of defilement and iniquity which is naturally found "within our members" (Rom. 6:13).

"Much more, being reconciled" — As indicated in v. 9, the word "more" signifies "very, very much, exceedingly" (Bull.). We have been brought into a state of acceptability with Yahweh, but there is yet more that He will do for us! Not only do the faithful stand justified, or accounted righteous in the sight of God, with moral blemishes covered through the redemptive work of Christ, but there are further advantages in this matter of reconciliation: the physical disabilities of the nature we bear will also be ultimately treated by the divine Physician, and healed completely, once and for all.

Notice the repetition of the words "much more": v. 9 — we stand in the privileged position of a moral deliverance from wrath; v. 10 — in a reconciled state, we are now able to anticipate a deliverance from mortality. Paul's exposition progressively rises in realisation of the great work of reconciliation, and in expectation of what will finally be accomplished in us.

"We shall be saved by his life" — Note the future tense. Paul speaks of the ultimate redemption "of our body" (Rom. 8:23), the change to spirit nature which will perfect God's work of salvation in us. But this is only possible because Christ's life revealed the saving work of God. The sacrifice of Christ would have been ineffective, and of little value, unless his perfect obedience throughout his life had ensured his resurrection. Thus, his exaltation to divine nature illustrates the virtue of a life completely devoted to the will of Yahweh, and the efficacy of Christ's work continues because he lives.

The living Christ reveals the effectiveness of his offering (Rom. 4:25), his ability to intercede (Heb. 7:25), to strengthen his servants (Phil. 4:13), to shed abroad the light of life (John 8:12), to elevate to sonship (John 1:12). To achieve this, God was "in Christ" to strengthen him (2Cor. 5:19; Psa. 80:15), and Christ in us now becomes the energising power of our lives (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4; 2Cor. 4:10-11). If we co-operate with Christ, as Christ co-operated with God to reveal His characteristics in his life, then we, like him, will also be similarly changed into the nature of the great Increate (2Pet. 1:4; Phil. 3:21). All this would be impossible in a dead Christ (1Cor. 15:17). Indeed, Paul, himself, was a living testimony of the influence and impact of the living Christ: see Acts 9:4-8.

"His life", however, must be repeated in ourselves, though imperfectly, because of the impossibility of the sons of Adam being able to render perfect obedience. But baptism is a figure of the "newness of life" to which a believer commits himself, and is therefore a token of the ultimate resurrection to divine nature, so that all "in Christ" (Rom. 6:11; Gal. 3:26) will then be identical with him in nature as the "multitudinous Christ" (Phil. 3:21; 1Jn. 3:2). To be "saved by his life" denotes salvation in the full and final sense — a process which begins "by his blood" and concludes with "the spirit" (1Jn. 5:8), and assures us of "the sanctification without

which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14, NASB).

VERSE 11

And not only (so)" — Paul has been speaking of future benefits, anticipating the ultimate salvation from the condemnation of sin and death, but now shows that there are present advantages that can be obtained.

"But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" — Paul's experience of *joy* in tribulation (v. 3) is found in the recognition of God Himself: i.e. in His existence, purpose, characteristics, and protection in the circumstances of life. That evidence is seen in the ministry of Jesus Christ: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Christ was the full manifestation of the character of Yahweh, and after his exaltation to immortality, became "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). Christ is now the medium for the believer's rejoicing (Phil. 4:4).

The word Paul uses for "joy" literally means "to speak loudly, to exult". This should be our state of mind when contemplating the wonderful principles of the atonement. When properly considered, they generate an attitude of rejoicing in acknowledgement of all that God has done for us.

"By whom we have now received the atonement" — The word "received" is from the Gr. *lambano*, "to take hold of, to comprehend, to take or receive from another; to take what is given" (Bull.). The principles of reconciliation (rendered here as "atonement") are obtained through an intellectual understanding of what God has done for us — not a mere emotional experience — and by reverently accepting the terms and conditions God has provided for our eternal salvation. Thus, we not only "stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (v. 2), but also rejoice in our present relationship with God.

Paul speaks triumphantly: our earlier state of enmity with God has been replaced with harmony and fellowship.

The Greek word *katallagee* (translated as "atonement") should be rendered "reconciliation", as in the margin. It is different from the Hebrew *kaphar*, commonly rendered "atonement" in the Old Testament, and which is represented by the Greek *hilasterion*, translated "propitiation" (ch. 3:25) and "mercy seat" (Heb. 9:5); and the word *hilasmos*, translated "propitiation" (1Jn. 2:2; 4:10) — for which, see notes on Rom. 3:25. Strictly speaking, we do not "*receive* atonement", for this describes the offering of Christ by which he obtained immortality through the purging of his nature; what we receive is the *result* of his atonement: i.e. reconciliation with God made possible by the "covering" (Heb. *kaphar*) available in Christ.

The word *katallagee* occurs only in Rom. 5:11; 11:15; 2Cor. 5:18,19, and describes the "reconciling" of those who

Reconciliation and Judgment

How culpable is the world! God has revealed His love, and provided the means of reconciliation for the human race. Yet the world has neglected "so great salvation". In this there is a strong warning unto faithfulness: "How shall *we* escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). We know that the world stands condemned before God because it has rejected His goodness and mercy (Psa. 2; 149; 2Thes. 1:7-10). Having "escaped the pollutions of the world" we must exercise great care to see that we are not "again entangled therein and overcome"; rather, we should "be diligent" that we may be "found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless". To that end, having "received the reconciliation" we should continue to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Pet. 2:20; 3:14,18). — ***J.U.***

were previously at enmity because of personal transgression (Eph. 2:2-3; 4:18; Col. 1:21). The word has the idea of *a change of status* from one position to another: thus, a restoration to favor from enmity. Unity and fellowship are now possible on the basis of an understanding and appreciation of the work of God in Christ "reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2Cor. 5:19; see also Heb. 7:25).

Paul's comments on reconciliation conclude an important section of his exposition. After setting forth the *wrath of God* in his opening section of the epistle (ch. 1:18—3:20), and the *righteousness of God* in the second (ch. 3:21—5:11), he now introduces two men who represent these two sections: Adam and Christ. The principles of which he has been speaking are clearly revealed in the lives and destiny of these two federal heads of humanity.

How Justification Became Effective For All Mankind — vv. 12-21.

From a consideration of God's glorious achievement in Christ for the reconciliation of the race, Paul now turns to examine the background of events which made that work of God so essential. A plan of salvation had to be initiated after mankind became the bearer of a condemned nature, which was the direct result of sin. The Creator was faced with the need to redeem the race, and introduced a purpose which would ultimately result in the nullification of sin and that which it produces: death.

Paul now explains the principles of divine wrath (chs. 1:18—3:20) and righteousness (chs. 3:21—5:11) in connection with two arenas: The Adamic arena is the dominion of sin and death; Christ's arena is that of grace and life. Mankind finds itself inevitably involved in the former by nature, but the opportunity of redemption from that arena of death is offered by association with the Lord Jesus Christ, and reconciliation with God is thus possible to those who seek it.

VERSE 12

"Wherefore" — Gr. *dia toutou;* "on account of this (lit. Diag.), or, "for this reason". Paul links this section with the last, to demonstrate the impact on humanity of the dichotomy of wrath and righteousness, and the reason why God needed to provide for our reconciliation with Him. Man had initially become alienated from God through "wicked works" which were later compounded by "ignorance". These failings are sufficient to estrange man from his Creator (Col. 1:21; Eph. 4:18).

"As by one man sin entered into the world" — Here a new term appears in Romans: *he hamartia,* "the sin". Previously Paul has been dealing chiefly with the problem of sin as *guilt;* now he introduces the idea of sin as *revolt,* indicated by the new phrase, *he harmartia.* The phrase with the definite article "the" occurs 28 times between ch. 5:12 and 8:10. In each instance it refers to the principle of revolt whereby human desire and will rise against divine authority. Sin is not considered as a mere act, but a living, hostile, deadly power — a whole way of life, a condition of our existence, the arena of our experience. It is also personified as reigning like a wicked tyrant (ch. 5:21; 6:12,16), as one who takes advantage of God's commandments to deceive and murder (ch. 7:11), of a resident occupying the chief room of a home (ch. 7:20). Sin entered into the world in Eden, but Adam's transgression was not something which concerned himself alone as an individual; by his act sin was made regent "in the world" — i.e., dominating the human race as a condition of our nature.

In bringing the events of Gen. 3 to attention, Paul desires to show the results of transgression. *The* sin *entered* by the means of one man: for Adam was presented with the opportunity to obey, or disregard, divine law. Following the lead of his wife, who was first in the transgression (2Cor. 11:3), and realizing the implications of his action (1Tim. 2:14), he allowed the serpentine mind to override his spiritual understanding (Gen. 3:17). His mind was now adversely affected by the contemplation of wrongdoing, and his

conscience became "defiled" — his thinking became contaminated by newly-activated ungodly urges of the flesh: the "serpent mind", and a state of enmity against God became effective. His action of taking the forbidden fruit confirmed his mental state. The divine sentence of death confirmed his morally defiled state, and, consequently, his "very good" condition of nature in which he was created no longer existed.

James describes the path of sin as originating in the mind by the exercise of illicit desire (ch. 1:14). Lust, inflamed by the consideration of desire, and having already "drawn (the mind) away", the wicked desire develops into a moral action. It "conceives" (v. 15), and ultimately demonstrates its character in that which is born: "sin"! In his graphic portrait of sinning mankind, James shows that what begins as an illicit thought of temptation, introduces a child called "sin", which itself inevitably produces a grandchild called "death". This universal experience of mankind is thus a replay of the original transgression of Adam. Unfortunately, consequent upon the change of his nature to that which is consistent with the "arena of death", his progeny are born with that deficiency, as a result of which fallen human nature will produce the mind of the flesh, leading inevitably to sin in all Adam's descendants (with Christ being the sole exception).

"And death by sin" — Paul provides a divinely inspired commentary upon the events described in Gen. 3. Adam did not have mortality working in him, nor was subject to death, before he sinned. (Those who claim that man was mortal from his creation, and that the sentence pronounced against him by God was merely legal in intent, oppose the clear teaching of Scripture, and such erroneous doctrines have produced much confusion and repudiation of fundamental truth).

Yahweh's commandment for obedience contained a warning that transgression would result in a change of nature: death (Gen. 2:17) would replace the previous very good condition (ch. 1:31), and a curse (ch. 3:14,17) would overshadow all creation. Accordingly, the penalty imposed upon Adam and Eve, became a natural law to all their progeny. Adam came under a state of mortality, as a condition of his nature, which condition was passed hereditarily to his descendants. The previous "very good" physical being now became "corrupt" (Gen. 6:12), "mortal"

"By One Man" Rom. 5:12-17

These verses should impress us with two fundamental conclusions, repeatedly stressed by the apostle in this section. The first is the reality of our absolute dependence upon the atoning work of God in Christ. Sin is our great enemy, and leads us to calamity. But through Christ we can receive "the gift of righteousness" and eternal redemption. Secondly, "sin" and "grace" have one thing in common: Sin came to us through *one man*. So did grace. Thus, we term them the two federal heads of the human race. Adam was a "figure" of "him that was to come" (v. 14). With the first Adam having fallen from divine favor, it became a necessary part of God's purpose that another Adam should come. The "last Adam" (1Cor. 15:45) was to restore that which the first Adam had destroyed, establishing the means whereby mankind could find "reconciliation" with their Creator.

These two sublime principles of reasoning, beautifully interwoven into the apostle's treatise, provide us with the basic means of finding fellowship and harmony with our God. The way to justification has been set before us. The correct response, in the right spirit, must come from us. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded". But "if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God... but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 4:8; 1:5-6). — ***J.U.***

(1Cor. 15:54), "dying" (Gen. 2:17). The sad record of Gen. 5 ("... and he died" — vv. 5,8,11,14,17,20,27,31) became a record of the failure of mankind and the destiny of flesh as the act of Adam threw its influence over all men.

"And so death passed upon all men" — Rotherham translates: "Unto all men death passed through". "All men" is in the plural, emphasizing that death applies to the entire race. Even the Lord Jesus possessed the same condemned nature as ourselves. John the Baptist came with the message of Isaiah: "*All* flesh is grass" (Mat. 3:3, 13-17; Isa. 40:6-8). There is no exception to this condition.

"Passed upon" is *dierchomai*, and is rendered "to go through" (Mat. 19:24), "pierce through" (Lk. 2:35), from *dia*, "through". Having sinned, man was now caught in a condition of death. It "pierced him" through, as a law of nature, bringing him inevitably to the grave without hope. It also "passed through" Adam's corrupting, mortal body to his posterity, so affecting them with the same condition, as pestilence, or disease, might pass through a nation. What was a penalty for Adam became to others a law of their nature. Paul found this a distressing fact, and exclaimed: "who shall deliver me from the body *of this death*?" (Rom. 7:24), as he observed the weakness inherent within him.

"For that all have sinned" — A consequence of our mortality is a bias to evil, for the defiled conscience that Adam experienced as a result of the trespass in Eden became part of his mental and physical condition. This led him into further acts of sin, and that bias was transmitted to his progeny.

Bullinger gives the preposition "for" as the Greek *epi* in the dative case, implying something established upon a foundation laid, and defining it as being "used of the moving principle or motive suggesting the purpose or object and sometimes including the result". He renders it, "because that all have sinned", rejecting the incorrect marginal rendering of the AV. However, the Diaglott text has "*in which all sinned*" emphasizing that all mankind are involved in Adam's sin, by suffering its consequences. In this sense Adam stands as a federal head of the whole race that has been produced in a corrupting and sinning condition — having a nature that responds to and encourages temptation. Yahweh knew that "sin's flesh" (Rom. 8:3) would generate transgression (ch. 3:23), and legislated accordingly.

Thus Paul depicts the condemned state of humanity which is clearly revealed in the physical death to which all succumb. In this, sin and death become correlatives. To live in sin is living death, for one is actually a slave of death, obeying its commands (ch. 6:17). Thus it is said that sin reigns by means of death (ch. 5:21). But with equal force Paul can say that through sin death reigns, for the law of sin is intrinsically the law of death (ch. 7:14-24). Death is present whenever the mind of the flesh rather than the mind of the Spirit determines one's thoughts and desires (ch. 8:6-8). So the apostle could say, "I died", because sin killed him through the law (ch. 7:8-11).

Brother Carter states: "Adam sinned and was punished with death. His children inherit mortality and also a tendency to sin so inevitable in its sin-producing power that Paul can say through Adam's sin all sinned, and therefore all die through him".

In these circumstances it is evident that the divine judgment on fallen human nature has proved just, inasmuch as flesh is weak and men inevitably sin. God's foreknowledge recognized that the posterity of Adam, following the natural sin-producing propensities of flesh brought into existence by the first transgression, would sin, and therefore passed sentence on flesh as such. The fact that "all have sinned" has proved the sentence just.

But what of the Lord Jesus? Possessing the mind of the Spirit by the direct intervention of his Father in the conception through Mary (Luke 1:35) he did no sin because he did not yield to flesh. He was strengthened (Psa. 80:15) to overcome, and though involved in the physical

sentence passed upon all mankind, he was brought from the dead to a newness of life because of his righteousness and because, in his sacrificial death, he demonstrated that flesh produces no good thing and that all righteousness comes only from God (Heb. 5:8). Thus, both in the imposition of death, and in the resurrection of Jesus to life, God is revealed as just (Rom. 3:26).

VERSE 13

"For until the law sin was in the world" — Verses 13-17 are included within parenthesis as they constitute further clarification and amplification of the profound principles advanced in verse 12.

Even though the Greek does not provide the definite article to "law" in this phrase, it is evident that Paul has in mind the law of Moses, for he describes sin as being in the world before law appeared. Sin did not exist before the Edenic law of Gen. 2:16-17, though it was before the Mosaic law, for men were breaking the divine principles of righteousness (see Gen. 26:5; Rom. 1:18-20). The difference between the Edenic and the Mosaic laws on the one hand and that which existed between those times (the "Patriarchal laws") on the other hand, is that the former two were clearly established with specific punishments attached for disobedience to laws stated; whilst the latter was not so, although sin against divine principles still existed and was punished. But whilst the specifically stated Edenic and Mosaic laws could be formally "imputed" against the sinner, the intervening period lacked expressed commands and laws, and therefore, in that sense, punishments could not be exacted. However, it must be remembered that mankind still remained under the code of righteousness established by God, even though there was "no law" set

Times of Sin and Law

Paul introduces three periods of mankind's history in which law plays a varying part in the development of the divine purpose. In each condition, or state, in which men have sinned, the effects of their condition are evident.

(1) The Adamic Era. The introduction of sin by disobedience to the divine law given in Eden, was followed by the sentence of corruption and death (Gen. 2:17; 3:3,19). It brought attendant ills which inflicted themselves upon all of Adam's descendants. In this short period sin was manifested, and its effects are demonstrated in the physical condition of humanity.

(2) The Patriarchal Era. A long interval from Adam to Moses in which men continued afflicted by the mortality which they derived from Adam, and, were aware of the divine precepts and standards, but such without being actually defined as law. So, although men were aware of sin and iniquity against divine principles (cp. Gen. 6:2,5), there were no stated expressions of law nor specified punishments for infraction recorded in the scriptures (Rom. 5:13-14). Sin certainly reigned — reigned everywhere — although no laws were legislated, and therefore no punishments listed.

(3) Mosaic Era. Law was now introduced nationally to demonstrate the sinfulness of flesh (Rom. 5:20). The law entered, and pointed to the gravity, and frequency of sin, showing its abundant evils. The law was thus a "schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24), not only pointing to a Redeemer to come, but demonstrating why he was necessary. It was designed to educate its subjects to clearly recognize disobedience, by the use of ceremonial principles, and led the people to the atoning features which were to come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

down specifically.

"But sin is not imputed when there is no law" — The word "imputed" here is from a different Greek word than that found in ch. 4:6 and elsewhere. It is *ellogeo*, and only occurs here and in Philemon 18. It signifies "to charge to one's account, to lay to one's charge". Paul declares that where there are no specific penalties laid down in a formal set of laws, they cannot be "charged against one", even though the law may exist. It is not possible to charge a person with the penal judgments for sin when no such judgments are provided. So, even though a person might sin against law, it is not imputed (or charged against him) where no formal code, with penalties attached, exists.

However, we must recognise that between Eden and Moses opposition to the divine principles was manifested in the conduct and attitudes of mankind. Gen. 6:5 and 8:21 record that "every imagination of the thoughts" of man's heart was "only evil continually" and that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth". Thus sin was present in the human condition, though specific laws, such as the code of Moses, are not recorded.

VERSE 14

"Nevertheless death reigned" — Death is here personified, and represented as a tyrant wielding universal dominion over the race. Having become a law of nature since its introduction through the transgression of Adam, Death thus exercised power over mankind The reign is absolute. All Adam's posterity were in this condition, and were unable, of themselves, to avoid its power.

This verse challenged the Judaiser. With or without a law which included penalties for transgression, man was still a death-stricken, corruptible creature. Death was now a physical law of his existence, and not merely a penalty exacted against him for sins committed. Thus, being a force of nature, Death reigned as king, as a ruling condition because of the nature of flesh and the prevalence of sin in humankind.

This is another mode of speech to express that which has been stated in verse 12: that death entered into the world as the direct result of Adam's singular breach of divine law. The word rendered "reigned" is a key word in this section of the epistle. It occurs again twice in vv. 17 and 21. The word *basileuo* means "to be king, possess regal authority, to reign" (Bull.). Sin, together with its product, Death, is represented as a mighty monarch, desiring to take possession of the heart and mind of every individual, to ruthlessly rule over all and bring them ultimately to destruction and oblivion. The tragic deaths, on occasions, of newborn infants — innocent of actual transgression — show that all humanity inherits a nature which (though their misfortune and not their crime) is rightly related to death.

"From Adam to Moses" — From the time when God gave one revealed law to Adam (Gen. 2:16-17), to the time when another revealed law was delivered to Moses (Exod. 19:3-8). This was a period of about 2,500 years, during which time people died as evidence of their mortal condition, and were sinners (cp. Gen. 6:3), but who were not brought under specific laws and consequent punishments.

"Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" — Adam had broken God's law which had the penalty of death attached to it. Though law existed after the two sinners were excluded from the Garden of Eden (cp. Gen. 26:5), there was no penalty specified in the years that followed, and therefore nobody sinned in quite the same way as did Adam — being not under such a law as was he. Yet death continued to reign, proving that it had become a law of man's nature (Rom. 7:23-24).

Rotherham translates the phrase "... the likeness of the transgression of Adam", whereas the TCNT has: "even over those whose sin was not a breach of law as Adam's was". The word "similitude" (Gr. *homoioma*) is rendered "likeness", "shape", with the idea of that which resembles. Adam's was a plain, open vio-

lation of a positive precept; the failure of his descendants became a violation of laws communicated in a different way. Adam's sin brought physical mortality into being; theirs occasioned alienation from God.

"Who is the figure of him that was to come" — The word "figure" signifies *type*. Rotherham translates this: "Adam, who is a type of the coming one". The Greek word *tupos* describes a pattern, or mould, into which a final product is fitted or poured; an impression, or mark, which is made by percussion. Thus a *resemblance* can be traced between the results of the conduct of Adam, and the effects of the work of Christ. As the antitypical Adam, Christ would fulfil Yahweh's original purpose in creation (cp. Gen. 1:26 with Heb. 2:6-9).

Adam stands as the head of creation; thus representing one who would also be the head of a creation — a new dominion (Col. 1:18; Rev. 3:14). But, whereas Adam became the federal head of all those who, bearing his nature, would die; the Lord Jesus Christ is the federal head of all those who, through righteousness, will live. Adam's subjects are bondslaves (Gr. *doulos*) to sin and death (Rom. 6:16); Christ's subjects are bondslaves to righteousness and holiness (v. 22).

VERSE 15

"But not as the offence" — The Greek is *paraptoma* (vv. 15,16,17,18,20), signifying, a falling aside, a stumbling over that which is in the way. Thus, the circumstances of Adam's trial are often referred to as "the Fall" (as here in the Diaglott).

Previously Paul has shown the similarities between Adam and Christ (v. 14); now he expounds the differences between them, and contrasts the "fall" of Adam with the "elevating" (the free gift) of Christ (v. 15). There is a difference between the imposition of death and the granting of life. God is shown to be just in imposing the death sentence, for not only had Adam sinned, but God could foresee that his posterity would continue so to do.

Moffatt has: "But the gift is very different from the trespass", whilst Weymouth translates: "But it is not the same with the transgression as with God's free gift". There is certainly a great difference: man deserves punishment for the offence, but does not merit the free gift. Thus God perfectly balances the twofold aspects of His own character: justice and mercy.

"So also (is) the free gift" — The words, *to charisma*, are translated in the Diaglott as "gracious gift". God's gift is free in the sense that it is without merit on our part, and is bestowed gratuitously on the undeserving. At the same time, we must demonstrate our response to such a gracious gift, by revealing "works of faith" (Gal. 3:2; Tit. 3:14; Jas. 2:17,22).

In His abounding offer of redemption and reconciliation, God is not only revealed as just but also as abounding in mercy. Man earns death, but God grants life (Rom. 6:23). Thus, over against "the acts of sin" (committed by Adam) stands "the act of grace" (performed by Christ).

"For if through the offence of one many be dead"— In this verse Paul contrasts the *effect* of what happened as the result of Adam's sinfulness with the benefits that God produced for mankind through Christ.

The Greek has the definite article: "the many" (see Diaglott) indicating a certain community. Paul does not say "all", for, although death applies to all mankind, as explained in v. 14, he now considers a certain class who will experience also the power of life out of that condition of death. The apostle contrasts the effect of the offence of Adam with the righteous act of Jesus. "The many" are involved in both situations: Adam brought them under the condition of death; Christ brings them into a relationship to life. Thus, "the many" does not relate to common mankind, but to those referred to in 1 Cor. 10:17,33 — the believers. In the RV the latter reference reads: "Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of *the* many".

"Much more" — The third occurrence of this phrase (see notes on v. 9).

By his sacrifice Christ has "much more" than reversed the effects of the Fall. He offers free pardon for all sins, an introduction into the heavenlies in Christ, and the eventual experience of immortality and glorification!

From the time of Moses, the Scriptures taught that Yahweh's mercy is boundless toward those whom He considers worthy. "For I, Yahweh thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of fathers upon sons, unto three generations and unto four of them that hate Me; but showing lovingkindness unto thousands of generations, of them who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exod. 20:5-6, Roth.). The recurring message of encouragement throughout scripture is that the blessings to be received through Christ will more than compensate for all that has been lost through Adam (cp. Paul's attitude: Phil. 3:8).

"The grace of God" — Greater benefits are derived in Christ than were lost in Adam, because the gift by grace has abounded unto "the many". That grace (unmerited favor) originates in God. Thus we can *do* nothing to *earn* eternal redemption. Obedience certainly commends us to the Father, but it is His work that will provide eternal redemption.

"And the gift by grace" — Paul introduces a new expression. Although the word "grace" has been used seven times prior to this verse, the words "gift (Gr. *dorea*, gratuity, v. 17) by grace" have not previously been used together. Paul therefore explains what the phrase means. The comparison between Adam and Christ had been broken off in verse 12 to show more fully how "death passed through to all men". He now resumes comment on the comparison, admitting this new phrase. "Grace" defines unmerited favor. The bestowal of grace is opposite to the idea of attaining redemption upon the basis of law. The benefits flowing from divine grace are the blessings of salvation (v. 17; 6:23; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 6:4), and come upon mankind as the direct result of God's work in Christ, not through anything which may be attained on the basis of law.

"(Which is) by one man, Jesus Christ" — The Greek has: "by *the* one man." Two particular men are under discussion; each contrasted with the other. The first failed; the second succeeded.

Jesus Christ stands in bold contrast to Adam (v. 14) as the federal head of the new creation of God (Col. 1:15). He is named to emphasize the work and means by which Jesus achieved his victory. *Jesus* means "Yah's Salvation", whilst *Christ* is an anglicised form of "Anointed". He was, thus, "anointed to be Yah's salvation" — a position that resulted from his willing offering, by which he exalted the divine righteousness and provided for the salvation of "the many". It is only by association with the work and offering of Christ that the gift by grace can be obtained. We cannot of ourselves demand it on the grounds of our own personal merit, for we remain physically related to the condemnation which comes "in Adam" (see BASF clause 5 and the Scripture references appended thereto). But, by identification with the death of Christ, we become "in him" and thereby are related to life (ch. 6:3-4).

"Hath abounded" — The word (Gr. *perisseuo*, Roth.: "super-abounded", see v. 17 where the noun *perisseia* is rendered "abundance") denotes an exceeding measure overflowing; something above the ordinary (Vine), and is used four times: here to describe the abundance of grace; in 2Cor. 8:2, of the abundance of joy notwithstanding the great trials of affliction and persecution they were required to endure; in ch. 10:15, to describe the encouraging apostolic activities through the ecclesial involvement in Paul's work; in Jas. 1:21, where the word is translated "superfluity", to depict the ever-increasing wickedness that occurs when the flesh is allowed full reign. In Rom. 5:15, however, Paul points out that the gift of grace found in Jesus Christ will over-abound to those who seek it.

This power was demonstrated in the Master's ability to extend the "gift of food" to the starving multitudes who followed him from Galilee (Jn. 6:5-14). This

"sign" was a parabolic presentation of the gospel message extended to "the many" who gathered around him. From a few fish and loaves, the Lord miraculously produced food for all, "as much as they would" (v. 11). There was an "abundance" of the free gift for "many" about him — a parable of the greater benefit resulting from the "breaking of bread, and wine" in his sacrifice for salvation.

"Unto many" — Again, the definite article is employed: "*the* many"). They have entered into covenant relationship with God through "the *one*", Jesus Christ.

VERSE 16

"And not as (it was) by one that sinned, (so is) the gift" — One sin brought about a judgment that condemned Adam to death, a death that rested on his posterity. But the gift of life did not come through that means. Adam could not redeem himself from his stricken condition. His transgression defiled his conscience (Gen. 3:7), brought a moral reaction (v. 12), and resulted in a physical condemnation (v. 19). Yahweh demonstrated that provisional reconciliation was to be found through the sacrifice of an animal (as typical of the essential and true offering provided in Christ) and the covering of nakedness with its skin (v. 21). Since the animal represented the trespassing pair, death was declared to be the result of sin; but since they were also covered by the skin provided by God's instruction, redemption through that typical means was opened up.

These events foreshadowed the work of Jesus Christ, for ultimate redemption was provided through one whose perfect righteousness overcame the disability of sin (see Rom. 5:11). Sin could therefore only be overcome in the *body* of one of Adam's race who had lived a life of perfect obedience to the will and Word of God. Only by this means could God provide for mankind's reconciliation, for no animal of "the inferior creatures" (J.T.) could ever qualify for such an important work (cp. Heb. 10:4-5).

"For the judgment (was) by one to condemnation" — The divine judgment resulted from the "one" transgression against Yahweh's law in Eden. Consequently, all mankind suffers a condition of nature in which the sentence of condemnation is physically revealed.

The TCNT has: "the judgment which followed upon the one man's sin led to condemnation". Notice how careful Paul

"They Which Receive Abundance of Grace" — Rom. 5:17

Paul's words challenge every believer. Will we strive wholeheartedly to conform to the terms which God has provided for our reconciliation? Each one must carefully ponder the matter of individual responsibility to God. Paul declares that only a particular class of humanity ("they") will receive "abundance of grace". "They" are those concerning whom John said: "As many as *received* (the same word as here) him, to *them* gave he power (authority, privilege) to become the sons of God... Even to *them* that believe into his name" (Jn. 1:12). We have been called to the highest possible calling. It is not something to be taken lightly, nor should our present status before God be taken for granted. Daily, until the coming of the Lord, we should live in awesome awareness of God's great goodness to us, and humbly submit to the transforming power of His Word. This transformation will only be completed when the Lord Jesus accounts us "worthy" to be made "equal unto the angels" through the gift of divine nature and eternal inheritance in his kingdom (Lk. 20:35-36). To those who reject God's way, Christ profits nothing. To those who truly believe and seek the path of godliness, there remains for them a higher measure of happiness, contentment and glory than our present frail capacities are able to fully comprehend. In the meantime, until all comes to pass as God has promised, "the just shall live by faith" — ***J. U.***

is with this wording. He provides no basis for the Catholic doctrine of "original sin". Whilst it is true that we inherit the *consequence* of Adam's sin, it is wrong to suggest that we inherit the *moral guilt* which was pronounced upon Adam. Similarly, the scripture gives no suggestion that Adam's progeny inherits some form of *legal* guilt from Adam.

The "condemnation" that rests upon the posterity of Adam therefore does not relate to the imputing of moral guilt, but merely signifies that mankind is mortal; and is such, because it inherits the consequences of Adam's transgression, a sentence proved just by the prevalence of sin. Mankind is not held responsible for Adam's sin in any way whatever; we are only guilty for our own personal transgression. We partake of a condemned nature that will inevitably die and corrupt into dust — the result of the divine edict upon Adam.

"But the free gift" — The unmerited favor of Yahweh (see v. 15), possible through the atoning work of His Son, provided for the needs of sinful humanity.

"Is of many offences unto justification" — Weymouth: "The free gift, after many transgressions, leads to acquittal". The word "offence" in verse 15 is in the singular: thus relating to Adam's sin. Here it is in the plural, for the one act of sin brought death into the world, but through God's "free gift" *many* sins may be forgiven through Christ.

The Greek has *ek* for "unto", signifying "out of". Out of that situation of human failure, which brings "many offences", God has provided the means of justification. It covers a multitude of sins, all sorts of situations, for forgiveness is possible for every sin except those of absolute disregard for the divine gift (Mat. 12:31; 1Jn. 5:16). Justification is able to cover all manner of transgression, when the proper channel of divine mercy and forgiveness is sought (Rom. 4:7-8). Grace therefore abounds (v. 17).

VERSE 17

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one" — A third time the apostle stresses the contrast between Adam and Christ, and points to the devastating effect of Adam's transgression: the reign of death over all his posterity.

"Much more" — We have more reason to expect that God would not allow such a condition to destroy His eternal purpose to glorify His creation in manifestations of Himself (Num. 14:21; Isa. 45:18). By the constant use of this phrase (see notes Rom. 5:9), Paul emphasizes the great contrast between the effect of sin and the salvation of God.

"They which receive abundance of grace" — The divine grace extended to those in Christ not only provides a counterbalance to the evils introduced by the sin of Adam, but goes beyond that! It not only offers reconciliation by the covering of sins, but opens up the way to life "more abundant" (1Tim. 1:14; 4:8; 2Cor.4:15; 1Pet. 1:3). It is sufficient for all our needs, so that none can claim that they are beyond the means of salvation.

"And of the gift of righteousness" — This stands opposed to the evils introduced by Adam. Adam brought condemnation (v. 16) and death (v. 15) which became an inevitable condition of humanity; Christ demonstrated the benefits of righteousness, and offered himself that those who appreciate his work might avail themselves of that gift. To do so demands that Christ's "seed" manifest the same principles of life that energized him. We must consistently follow him in his steps (Mat. 16:23-24; 1Pet. 2:21; 1Cor. 11:1), ensuring that our actions in life conform to the pattern he has set. Since we cannot manifest such perfection, the "gift of righteousness" involves the forgiveness of sins, and our determined commitment to imitating him.

"Shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" — This glorious hope is before those who, though formerly subjects of King Death ("death reigned by one"), now have embraced Christ and rise through baptism to become kings in the future life (2Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6). The divine purpose expressed in the very

beginning was for man to exercise dominion over all creation (Gen. 1:26). Though sin brought a temporary delay in achieving this design, it will be achieved by all those incorporated in "*the* one" (as in the Diaglott): Jesus Christ. They will assist in bringing all things into subjection under Christ, until, finally, even the rival monarch Death will be removed (1Cor. 15:25-26).

The word "by" is *dia*, elsewhere translated "through" (Diaglott). The elevation of the saints is through the work of the Anointed, as the arena of sin and death came through the transgression of Adam.

VERSE 18

"Therefore" — Paul now summarizes his previous exposition (vv. 12-17) in one compact sentence. Having compared the roles of the two federal heads: Adam and Christ, he shows that the latter surpasses the former (vv. 16-17), and now weaves these two pronouncements into one declaration of Truth.

The omission of the italics in the AV of this verse makes difficult reading. The RSV reads clearly: "Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men".

"As by the offence of one" — Again (as in v. 15) this describes "one act of transgression" (see margin). Weymouth has: "as the result of a single transgression"; TCNT: "a single offence"; Diag.: "as through one offence". The word "offence" (in vv. 15,16,17,18,20) is the Greek *paraptoma*, "a fall, a mishap" (Bull.), or "a fall beside" (Vine). The word thus implies a falling — in this case, a single act of transgression in which Adam "fell" from the state of oneness and harmony previously enjoyed with God. The word occurs nine times in Romans: more than in any other book.

"(Judgment came) upon all men to condemnation — All have been brought under the reign of death; the sentence of condemnation being registered against Adam for transgression, is consequently found as a physical principle in the nature of his descendants.

The words "upon all" are the Gr. *eis pantas* (as in v. 12), and better rendered: "passed *through to all* men to condemnation". Paul emphasizes the result of a defiled constitution: a condemnation! This latter word is from the Gr. *katakrima* (occurring only in v. 16,18; 8:1). It is from *kata* ("against") and *krima* ("the sentence pronounced; the verdict given"). Hence: "the verdict given (against Adam) and the sentence pronounced". The latter principle passed through to all mankind in the "fallen" nature transmitted to every generation. (see BASF, clauses 5—12).

"Even so" — Weymouth: "It follows then"; NIV: "Consequently". Paul now shows that the trespass of one (Adam) contrasts with the righteousness of the other (Christ). But both have engendered a process which finds an effect in their "seeds". Just as death rests upon the posterity of Adam, so life comes to those in Christ.

"By the righteousness of one" — The word *dikaioma* is rendered "justification" in verse 16. The Diaglott has, more correctly, "through one righteous act". The whole life, death and resurrection of Christ is presented as one complete action of obedience, a "singular purpose in life", dramatized in his sacrifice, by which he "offered" this "one act" to Yahweh upon the altar of Golgotha. As he faced his final hours he prayed: "I have finished *the work* which Thou gavest me to do" (Jn. 17:4), whilst his last words on the stake were: "It (his "one act" of a 33-year righteousness) is finished" (ch. 19:30). Particular note should be made of the linking of the Lord's death and resurrection as though they were "one" — for the former would have achieved little without the latter.

The contrast is therefore set between the "one act" of Adam's transgression that brought death in its train, and the "one act" of the Lord's righteousness that produced life (Mk. 10:30; Jn. 11:25; 1Tim. 4:8). Both were to be found "in the flesh", so that the very nature which felt the rulership of death, was sacrificed by the Lord in obedience to the divine will, in order

that Yahweh's righteousness might be declared (Rom. 3:24-26), and the flesh conquered (Heb. 2:16).

"(The free gift came) upon all men unto justification of life" — The opportunity of God's gracious work in His Son is opened up to "all men", both Jews and Gentiles, who hearken to His will, and obtain the freely given "gift of righteousness" (Jn. 5:24). Thus, the "all men" of this verse corresponds to "the many" of verse 15. As death reigned over all, so Christ's "one act of justification" is able to release the stranglehold of King Death on both Jews and Gentiles, contrary to the claims of the Judaisers.

The Greek words *eis pantas* are again used, hence: "the free gift *passed through* to all men". Thus, it involved all who believe and embrace the gospel and atoning work of God in Christ. They will ultimately possess the "life" that will never end, because they will be "justified" by Yahweh. Paul takes his reasoning a step further: Mankind must seek justification by the means which Yahweh has provided; and the consequence of justification is a "life" that never ends.

The phrase "justification of life" means a status of justification (imputed righteousness) that leads to acquittal and life. Immortality is here promised, but not possessed. It awaits the judgment seat of Christ to reveal whether the free gift of justification, offered to us in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 6:4-5), has taken deep root in our lives, and provided spiritual fruit to the glory of God (Gal. 5:22-23).

Thus, this verse contains a grand message which opposes the idea that justification comes through law, for here the apostle shows that the guilty may not necessarily face eternal death! Convicted sinners may live in hope of eternal redemption! And that, not because another has died in their place as a substitute, but because God will forgive sins through the perfection of Christ's sacrifice. Law offers no way to eternal life because of the "weakness of the flesh" (ch. 8:3), but faith leads to justification and "life".

VERSE 19

"For as by one man's disobedience" — Paul restates this teaching, emphasizing the absolute need to understand it. It is a fundamental doctrine that the waywardness of Adam was the cause of humanity's evil condition of nature. Man is mortal because of sin, and that was demonstrated in the events that transpired in Eden. But Paul now takes his argument a step further. Not only did Adam's transgression affect the physical nature of flesh and bring into force a "law of nature" transmitted to his posterity, but it also involved them in a condition in which the enmity in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15) had to be challenged and overcome by those who seek for justification.

The literal Greek has "Through (Gr. *dia*) the one man's disobedience". The word "disobedience" is *parakoee*, which signifies primarily, "hearing amiss (from *para*, aside, and *akouo*, to hear), hence signifies a refusal to hear" (Vine). The word only occurs here in Romans and emphasizes exactly what Adam did! Adam clearly understood the terms of the divine instruction, and was not deceived like Eve (1Tim. 2:14). He had a choice before him: the wise and loving counsel of God, or the carnal reasoning of the serpent. But, following the lead of his wife, he refused to heed the Word of Yahweh, and disobeyed the explicit requirements by his one act of transgression (Gen. 2:16-17).

"Many were made" — Again, note the emphatic "*the* many" as in v. 15). The Greek word *kathistemi* (rendered "were made"; from *kata*, "down" and *histemi*, "to cause to stand, to set") means to be constituted into, to appoint to an office. The same verb is used in Acts 7:27, "Who *made* thee a ruler and judge over us?" Paul's use of the word in this context is one of relationship rather than of character. Paul's point is that since the "fall" of Adam every single member of Adam's progeny has been born *into* a "constitution" of sin, even before becoming *actual transgressors* or *sinners!* This "constitution" is elsewhere termed "sinful flesh" or "sin's flesh"; that is, "flesh" under the

dominion of a sinful constitution and therefore subject to death (ch. 8:3; 6:9). It is this constitution to which Paul refers when he describes Christ as having been "made sin for us" (2Cor. 5:21). Though never at any time guilty of transgression, the Lord Jesus was a direct descendant of Adam, and therefore inherited the same corruptible, death-stricken nature, as have all Adam's progeny.

Thus Paul describes a realm of sin and death, a constitution or arena of domination, in which the propensities of flesh, inflamed by Adam's transgression, must be suppressed and conquered. This teaches that death is the way to life! The only means to justification is through repression of the unlawful desires of the flesh. Man is not personally responsible for the death-stricken state into which he is born; it is not his crime but his misfortune, a calamity that has come upon him like an unfortunate disease. Yet, in this very situation, he is provided an opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to God. Paul found himself in this "constitution", having "a body of sin" (Rom. 6:6), being "sold under sin" (ch. 7:14), and therefore being naturally dominated by King Sin who metaphorically has purchased him, along with all others in this mortal coil.

"Sinners" — Man is *constituted* a sinner, for he exists in the domain of sin, being bound by the nature that derived from sin in the first place, and is, himself, potentially a sinner. So he dwells in an arena where sin is a constant influence. Paul uses the figure of Death as a monarch reigning over his domain of sin. All mortals are subjects of that kingdom, being born into it, even though they may not approve of the principles in which it rejoices.

"So by the obedience of one" — "*The* one" — the parallel federal head to Adam: Christ, whose obedience was "unto death" (Phil. 2:8), to demonstrate the righteousness with which God is well pleased. Brother Thomas writes: "The two Adams are *two federal chiefs;* the first being figurative of the second in these relations. All sinners are *in* the first Adam; and all the righteous are *in* the second, only on a different principle. Sinners were in the loins of the former when he transgressed; but not in the loins of the latter, when he was obedient unto death; therefore the flesh profiteth nothing" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 132).

Thus, as a person is constituted a sinner through Adam, not by personal transgression, but by "constitution", so one is constituted righteous through Christ by identification with the principles seen in him, and not by personal acts of righteousness. Of course, inevitably a "constituted sinner" will sin on his own account (cp. Eccl. 7:20; 2Chron. 6:36); whilst a "constituted righteous one" must work righteousness in accordance with his status in life (Jas. 2:24; 1Jn. 3:7).

The Greek word for "by" is *dia*, "through" (see previous note), and for "obedience" is *hupakoe*, a "hearing attentively or listening; hence obedience as the result of attentive hearing" (Bull.). The word appears seven times in Romans (see the exhortationary application, especially in ch. 1:5; 6:16, twice; 16:19,26). This was Christ's unyielding disposition, in contrast to the weakness manifested by the first Adam. The word is used of the Lord in Heb. 5:8, "Yet *learned* he *obedience* by the things which he suffered". His disciples must learn to follow his steps, by imitating his disposition of total commitment to obeying the will of his Father (Eph. 1:4).

"Shall many be made righteous" — The same word *kathistemi*, "constituted", is again employed to contrast the effect of Adam's sin with that which is accomplished in Christ. Christ's work of salvation opens up a condition of existence in which "the many" who enter are considered to be covered by his righteousness. Thus baptism brings a person into the "constitution of righteousness" and sets them upon a path that will ultimate in immortality with the Lord.

By this means we have been delivered from the sure and certain results of sin: eternal oblivion in the grave, and have been brought to walk in a way that may

lead to the "life" (eternal), which is the result of justification. It is important to remember that the way of righteousness is a *present condition* (v. 1). We should never forget the moral failure of the first Adam and the contrasting moral perfection manifested in Christ. Therefore the Truth must be appreciated intellectually and then manifested morally, if we are to obtain the "life" that results from justification.

VERSE 20

"Moreover, the law entered" — The Greek word indicates that the law "came in beside" as an additional element in the divine plan, supervening the state before Moses, when men were living without a revealed code of law, and "standing beside" the sin that already existed. Thus, the law illuminated more fully and irrefutably the sinfulness of mankind. The word *pareiserchomai* is translated "come in privily" (Gal. 2:4), with the idea of a stealthy action. In Gal. 3:19 Paul argues that the law "was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made". The law was an important necessity to demonstrate to Israel the grossness of sin and to show that sin was inevitable because the flesh is essentially sinful (Rom. 8:3). However the law could not make men righteous, and therefore pointed forward to the means by which grace might be revealed in the personage and purpose of God's Son.

"That the offence might abound" — This does not mean that the law created an abundance of sin, for sin already existed before Moses. However, it had not been set down clearly in the form of expressed commandments. The law, with its many statutes and instructions, entered to condemn the many kinds of trespass that previously opposed God's character, and to reveal the attitude that was repulsive to divine purity. The law categorized and legislated such actions and attitudes as sins so that by this means man was educated to know the gravity of sin, and develop the divine perspective. Sin was seen as a violent invasion of God's province, showing that it "abounded": being more extensive, more apparent than might otherwise be realized. The Greek word for "abound"

Sin, the Reigning Principle

The word *sin* is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "*the transgression of the law*"; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "*which has the power of death*"; and it is called *sin,* because the development, or fixation, of this *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh", that is "*flesh full of sin*"; so that *sin,* in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called *man.* In human flesh "dwells no good thing"; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the "propensities", and these set the "intellect" and "sentiments" to work. The propensities are blind, and so are the intellect and sentiments in a purely natural state; when therefore, the latter operate under the sole impulse of the propensities, "the understanding is darkened through ignorance, because of the blindness of the heart". The nature of the lower animals is as full of this physical evil principle as the nature of man; though it cannot be styled *sin* with the same expressiveness; because it does not possess them as the result of their own transgression; the name, however, does not alter the nature of the thing. — ***Elpis Israel,*** pp. 126-127.

is *pleonazo*, meaning "to increase", and appears again in ch. 6:1.

"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" — Rotherham translates this: "But where the sin abounded, the favor greatly super-abounded (Gr. *huper-perisseuo*)". Where sin existed, the need for divine grace was made more obvious. There were sins for which forgiveness was not provided in the law of Moses, as David found to his dismay (see Rom. 4:7-8). Indeed, if a person transgressed in one small matter, he came under the full judgment of the law (Jas. 2:10-11). Consequently, in order to redeem mankind from the strictures of the law, and the final effect of sin, grace had to be more powerful. It has to reign in righteousness (ch. 5:21), and become victorious over the grave (1Cor. 15:54-57), and for that purpose grace is given in "superabundance".

VERSE 21

"That as sin hath reigned unto death" — Sin is here personified as a king, whereas, in verse 14, Death was similarly described. There are, therefore, two kings reigning jointly: *Death* and *Sin*. By "sin" Paul means fallen human nature with its fleshly lusts (see Romans 6 and 7 where sin is used in that way). Primarily sin is transgression of law, or a state of lawlessness (1Jn. 3:4), but as it comes "from within" (Mk. 7:21-22), so, by metonymy, Paul uses it to denote the lusts of the flesh (cp. Rom. 7:20).

The word "unto" occurs twice in this verse, but is rendered from entirely different Greek words. In this statement the word is *en*, "in, within, upon". Thus, "sin hath reigned *in* death" — death was the final struggle for mankind, in which "sin" was always the victor. Death provided

Summary of Romans Chapter Five

Paul has described the lofty calling to which the faithful have been invited in Christ, and summoned to come before God through the power of the gospel, thereby finding reconciliation with Him. Through the goodness and immeasurable mercy of Yahweh, we have been elevated into "the heavenlies" in Christ Jesus to live "in hope of the glory of God" (vv. 1-11). In the latter half of the chapter, the apostle sets forth the dramatic and significant contrast between Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ: the first Adam and the last Adam. Paul understood that the former was a real and living person; a historical personality; the first created being — and not merely a synonym for early humankind. He was the one through whom sin was introduced into the world, bringing, in its train, death — the ultimate destroyer of the race.

From the time that sin entered into the world, whether mankind was subject to established judicial laws or not, the human race was condemned to bear a corruptible nature in all succeeding generations; every human being born into the world becoming an inheritor of a nature that would inevitably bear every one of them away to find oblivion in the grave.

This process, from birth to everlasting extinction, could be halted by only one means: the saving intervention of the Creator. Thus, in an act of immeasurable mercy, Yahweh "made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10). Through that which He achieved in His Son, He brought hope to a perishing creation: the hope of justification, the vanquishing of the power of sin and death, the promise of everlasting life.

"Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised! And His greatness is unsearchable" (Psa. 145:3). —*J.U.*

proof that sin "reigned" triumphantly over humanity.

The words "unto death" are *en toi thanatoi* in Greek, and signify, "by means of", or "in the sphere of death". The RV translates the phrase: "sin reigned *in* death". Paul personifies Sin and Death, showing that the former reigns in the territory of the latter. He later shows that the effectiveness of sin's rule is emphasised by the law, for it revealed Sin (the flesh) as the ruler and chief of man.

"Even so might grace reign" — Sin reigned with an objective in view: the death of humankind. When Grace reigns, it is also with an objective: the salvation of the race, and the perfection of Yahweh mentally, morally and physically in the glorified multitude of all the redeemed (Num. 14:21). If Sin is a powerful Monarch, a king whose power is seen in the condition of mankind, Grace is even more powerful. For, when God forgives sins, Sin and Death are vanquished and defeated for ever!

This was the promise of Gen. 3:15, when the divine enmity was introduced against sin, and would ultimately be revealed in its total destruction.

"Through righteousness" — The means of its victory is seen in the development of righteousness after the fashion of Christ's unspotted life. Bro. Carter comments that grace "reigns through righteousness, as the result of Christ's life of righteousness, of Christ's death which exhibited God's righteousness and the resultant gift of righteousness to the believer". Thus, righteousness is the principle upon which grace will be extended; and righteousness only comes from God — the flesh cannot produce it.

"Unto eternal life" — The preposition here is *eis*, and signifies "with the purpose of; to the end that; with the purpose in view". All that was achieved in the past work of the Lord Jesus was for the future glory of his seed (Heb. 2:10,13). Through his labor, King Grace can reign through a justification that provides for the forgiveness of sins, and by these means his subjects can be delivered from the realm of death, to attain unto eternal life. Then Adam will have passed away, and only Christ will remain (1Cor. 15:23-26).

"By Jesus Christ our Lord" — This preposition is *dia*, "through", as in the RV. The Son of God is the source of our blessings and the medium through which all the benefits of grace are obtained (Jn. 1:17). Thus, he has provided an example of the way of life that must be followed, and has opened up that process by his sacrifice that covers those "in him".

In his next three chapters Paul elaborates on this principle, exploring the riches of the truth that where sin has abounded, grace may super-abound. He will demonstrate the means whereby we can be assisted to better service to our Master, and develop a more responsible attitude to his offer of justification.

Paul Answers Some Important Questions

Having established the principles of Justification on the grounds of faith and not law, the believer is faced with some seeming paradoxes.

Since the law could not restore sinning mankind to full unity with God, how can freedom from sin be achieved? How does Christ bring about a deliverance from sin in his followers? How is the universal law of sin and death in Adam reversed, so that a new creation in Christ can seek for eternal life? If the law was not given to provide and reward righteousness, then what is its role? What does God require in order to set men free from the "law of sin and death"?

Paul therefore establishes that the man who is considered righteous before God through faith is also a man who has been sanctified by God. His "sanctification" shows that he has a new existence in Christ. Freed from the dominion of sin through his union with a resurrected Saviour, he also rises to a holiness of life through faith and the dedication of his total self to God (ch. 6:1-14).

This new existence, or way of life, is also a new order to be respected obediently. As he formerly abandoned himself to iniquity unto iniquity, so the new man in Christ must now devote himself to a seeking of obedience. The end of this new order is sanctification in the highest sense (i.e. not merely a setting apart, but a complete identification with the new way), ending in eternal life (vv. 15-23).

Death to sin has its counterpart in death to the law as a means of salvation, for under the law man is imprisoned by sin. All who live under the law must recognise their inability to cease sinning, through the application of law. Inevitably they must fail to manifest perfect obedience. The law constantly convicts him of sin, and gives him no hope of a better way (ch. 7:1-6).

But care must here be exercised. Paul does not declare that the law is evil. In fact, it highlights the inherent weakness of flesh, constantly convicting man of sin, and therefore directing him to seek God's mercy. But sin has turned God's holy law into a judge of transgression. When the commandment of God is recognised by a man's conscience, sin springs to life and the man figuratively dies. The law thus becomes God's means of revealing and emphasizing the exceeding sinfulness of sin (vv. 7-13).

The law makes claim upon man's total devotion, but because man finds himself in a carnal condition, he is by nature spiritually impotent. The more he struggles in himself to please God, the more pathetic his existence, for his inability to provide perfect obedience emphasizes his failure (vv. 14-25).

But what man could never do for himself, God has done for him in Christ. Sending His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" God has doomed sin in the flesh, so that the wisdom and righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in the man who trusts Christ and "walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit". In the outpouring of the spirit-Truth, man obtains deliverance, guidance, assurance, help and the hope of final redemption (ch. 8:1-17).

Sanctification

Its Meaning

The word expresses "to be separated; set apart", and comes from the Hebrew *kadesh* and the Greek *hagiasmos*. It emphasizes the separation of the spiritual from the fleshly; the holy from the profane; obedience from transgression.

It does not describe, necessarily, a righteousness of action or behavior, so much as a status of being, a position of privilege. It expresses the "setting apart" of an object for the exclusive use of the owner. The principle was demonstrated in the position of the tabernacle (Exod. 29:44; 30:29). Whilst it was in the midst of Israel, it was "made holy" by being separated from the camps which ranged around on each side. But none could thoughtlessly wander into the tabernacle. It was separated from the nation by the linen court which effectively excluded it from common use.

The firstborn of Israel was to be "sanctified" to Yahweh, called upon to manifest divine principles to the nation, and to lead the family to God (Exod. 13:2). It was not that the firstborn was necessarily any more righteous than subsequent children, but the principle of divine selection and elevation was emphasized. The firstborn stood in a special relationship, by virtue of God's legislation.

The holy mount was "sanctified" (Exod. 19:23), becoming separated from all other mountains that God's law might be heard therefrom. Again, there was no difference in the construction of Sinai from any other rock, but Yahweh decreed that to be the place where His glory would be revealed, and the mount was therefore "set apart from all others".

Yahweh's sanctuary (*kadesh*), His priests and His laws were similarly set before His people that they might observe the standards of service He required: "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons... and I will dwell among the children of Israel... and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory" (Exod. 29:43-45). By these figures Israel was taught the need to recognize the divine requirements, and to set themselves apart for God.

The Lord taught that the Truth was the sanctifying medium (Jn. 17:17). Possession of the Word, and the understanding of its principles, constitutes people as Yahweh's possession. They stand as a "peculiar people" before Him (1Pet. 2:9), set apart from all others for His exclusive use. To the end that they might be redeemed, Christ "set himself apart" (Jn. 17:19) as the sacrificial victim, and accomplished the means by which his Bride might also be separated for him (Eph. 5:26). Such a life of "separation" demands that the world be excluded from a believer's consideration — he must continue in a life of dedication to the things of Yahweh, being set apart from the things of the flesh.

Thus Paul, having shown that all are under *condemnation* (ch. 1:16—3:20), and that *justification* through faith is the only basis for hope of redemption (ch. 3:21—5:21), now develops his argument to show that salvation is dependent upon the manifestation of God's privileges in a life of *sanctification:* separation from the things of the flesh, and devotion to the exclusiveness of the divine calling.

Its Means — Rom. 6:1 to 8:17

Sanctification must be manifested in a new way of life, based upon the examples of the past ..... ch. 6:1-14

It must be sought for under a new code of conduct, requiring a change of masters from flesh to spirit ..... ch. 6:15-23

Sanctification is a separating, such as illustrated in a new marriage ..... ch. 7:1-6

It must not be thought that the Law which formerly bound believers is evil or unnecessary ..... ch. 7:7-12

The Law is not responsible for death, nor for leading its subjects away from faith ..... ch. 7:13-23

However, the Law could not provide deliverance because of the weakness of the flesh and its inability to manifest complete obedience to God's formal directions ..... ch. 7:24—8:4

Therefore, the triumph of Spirit over the Flesh is evident, and essential to life ..... ch. 8:5-11

The means is now opened, by the manifestation of the spirit-life, to obtaining a maturity of sonship, and approved status in the family of God ..... ch. 8:12-17

The First Six Chapters of Romans

Chs. 1 to 2 — Man stands condemned as a sinner, and must eventually face divine judgment. This will come about either through the total annihilation of his being; or (if he has knowledge of the Truth), by his standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ for judicial decision.

Ch. 3 — God has worked on our behalf, to restore us to divine favor.

Ch. 4 — The means whereby we may attain to acceptance with Yahweh is through faith: not by a mere slavish obedience to the principle of law.

Ch. 5 — God has provided for our justification and reconciliation. Through Christ that which was brought to ruin by Adam has now been restored, and includes the hope of eternal life.

Ch. 6 — There is a need for individual response to the goodness and mercy of Yahweh in the way He has decreed. Whilst we have come to understand what God has done for us, it is imperative that we comprehend the necessity of a spiritual birth, thereby becoming sons and daughters of God by faith. We will be raised to newness of life by submitting to baptism when we understand the significance of the ritual: an outward demonstration of an inner conviction. This response on our part will lead to a new way of life based upon the perfection of the character of Christ, and motivated by faith. — ***J.U.***

PART THREE: SANCTIFICATION — Chs. 6:1 to 8:17

God's Salvation Obtained

HAVING *presented the principle of justification on the basis of a living and exercised faith, Paul now reveals what this means in the life of the believer. He shows that after a person realises that humanity is under the shadow of condemnation (Part One: ch. 1:16 to 3:20), and that justification before God is possible when the effect of faith is understood and followed (Part Two: ch. 3:21 to 5:21), such a faith must not merely remain a theory, a principle to be acknowledged. It must be reflected in actions; becoming a "living faith" (Jas. 2:22).*

To be effective, faith must be revealed in a "sanctified" life — one which is set apart from that seen in the condemned line of Adam, and which follows the example of the resurrected Christ. Thus, Paul now shows the importance of manifesting the divine principle of justification in a new way of life.

Chapter Six illustrates this principle by outlining the demands of Two Masters, and the importance of selecting One who can provide a hope of life as a result of servitude to his will. Under normal circumstances mankind is found in the realm of death, and is in need of being elevated, by a spiritual resurrection, to a "newness of life" (v. 4) — requiring a change of masters in order to obtain salvation.

Servitude must be denied the power of the flesh: Ruler Sin — for all under his employ are destined to death (v. 16,23). Commitment to this course of life will only result in a denial of all benefits which Yahweh has destined for those who seek Him.

Believers, who seek to follow the "walk of Abraham" (ch. 4:12), need to change their Master. Born into the constitution of Sin, and, finding themselves bound naturally to servitude for the gratification of the flesh in which there is no hope of future glory, they must become slaves to Righteousness, wherein is the hope of life eternal.

Paul now discusses the manner in which a change of state, or Masters, can be achieved, and the important principles involved.

Sanctification Is Manifested By A New Way Of Life — vv. 1-14.

Having established that grace has been elevated to rulership (Rom. 5:21), and now dominates the spiritual existence of believers, the question remains, as to how that grace is revealed. Since the law was shown to be unable to redeem its followers from its condemnation, and grace now abounds, by what means should the believer demonstrate its power?

VERSE 1

"What shall we say then?" — The first of two questions that might be presented on the basis of Paul's arguments in ch. 5. There he showed that the abounding of sin exhibited more clearly the grace of God in forgiving sin (v. 20), and some reasoned that, if that be the case, why restrain sin! This pernicious doctrine had a number of followers (see Jude 4; 1Jn. 2:26), and some slanderously claimed that Paul encouraged it (Rom. 3:8). Hence, the question which introduces this chapter.

This expression occurs seven times in the epistle: 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,30; and in ch. 6:15 as "What then?" It implies, "what shall we conclude from the previous statements?"

"Shall we continue" — The Greek *epimeno* signifies "to abide", such as when one dwells within a house, or in the domain of a king (see ch. 5:21). The word has the idea of an extended and cordial relationship, fellowship, unity — a pleasing association in which mutual harmony is maintained. Paul acknowledges the presence of sin, for mankind is found in its "constitution" (ch. 5:18), and is therefore prone to sin — living in its dwelling, and obeying its regal directions.

But should we remain in that condition? Are we to be hospitable to the sin which has reigned since Adam's fall? Are we to give this sin a comfortable home, and entertain it in enjoyable association?

"In sin" — The Greek is emphatic: "*the* sin" (Gr. *te hamartia*)— that which reigns as king (ch. 5:21). This does not relate to acts of personal transgression, for individual actions cannot reign as a king; they are merely the results of the direction of the master. In this context "sin" refers to that which conceives wrong-doing: the flesh, or the sinful nature we bear. Thus, while Jesus was born in this same constitution (he was "made sin", 2Cor. 5:21), he never allowed it to dominate his mind. He "did no sin", and totally displaced its power to direct his life. In that sense he was found "in sin" (i.e. in its dominion; in the condition of his nature), but did not "abide" within its influence, nor allow it to be employed in his life, but destroyed its power by the exercise of the spirit-mind he derived from his Father through the divine conception. To "continue in sin" is to allow the carnal mind free access and absolute control (Rom. 8:7), a condition which will exclude from the kingdom of God.

"That grace may abound?" — See notes on Rom. 5:20. Paul challenges the theory that allows sin to be entertained in any degree merely that divine mercy might be pre-eminent. In fact, the privilege of grace should make a person look upon sin with abhorrence, and encourage its avoidance. Grace (or favor) is only extended to those who are prepared to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

VERSE 2

"God forbid" — "By no means" (see notes on ch. 3:4). Paul immediately counters the foolish suggestion with an emotional disclaimer. The very suggestion is revolting to Paul, so that he exclaims: *me genoito* — "How is it possible!" Yet some flirt with sin, and allow it gratification, perhaps forgetting that every allowance of evil is reinforcing its indwelling power (1Thes. 5:22).

"How shall we, that are dead to sin" — In death sin loses its influence over a person; he no longer can do its bidding, or succumb to its demands. The sin in question relates to the lusts of the flesh, found in our condemned nature, that run counter to the will of God. We are called upon to crucify these lusts, and put them to death (Gal. 5:24). Outside of Christ, the flesh is

the sphere where Sin (i.e., the lusts of the flesh, Rom. 8:3) reigns supreme, but in him, we make our flesh the sphere of Righteousness (see Rom. 2:14-15; 8:13. 1Pet. 2:24). We are naturally found in a condition of being dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 1Tim. 5:6) in which Sin is victorious; but in Christ we are called to be conformable unto his death (Phil. 3:10), by crucifying the lusts of the flesh that war against the demands of the Truth (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; Gal. 2:19-21), and living unto Christ (Col. 3:3; 2:20; 2Tim. 2:11). By this means the Sin introduced by Adam, and found in our nature, is challenged, defeated and, ultimately, will be totally destroyed.

This demands stern resolve and fixed determination to do the will of God at all costs (2Cor. 10:5) Having, therefore, changed our allegiance from serving Sin in the sphere of death, to serving Christ in the sphere of life, we enter upon an uncompromising warfare, that requires our every effort to successfully combat.

The Greek is in the past tense: "who died unto sin" (RSV, NASB), and relates to a particular moment when the death to Sin was accomplished. Paul has the action of conversion and baptism in mind, as the next verse shows. But that death is only figurative: our corrupt nature, though challenged, is not eradicated, and too frequently we find ourselves in temptation. The final phase of our death to Sin awaits the day when our sin-nature will be replaced by spirit-nature, and no longer will Sin have any effect upon us whatsoever. Meanwhile, since we still possess human nature, which constantly wars against the mind of the spirit (ch. 7:23), we must maintain an active opposition to the Sin "that dwelleth in us" (v. 17).

"Live any longer therein?" — Our life must reveal that we have changed masters. We cannot be "double minded" (Jas. 1:8), with one foot in both camps. We cannot serve God and mammon (Mat. 6:24; Lk. 16:13).

A profession of being Christ's requires that we abide within the sphere of his righteousness, and discard our former residence with Sin.

This does not mean that we will not transgress, for the impact of the sin-nature still remains; but it does mean that confession of sin will be made by which a repudiation of the power of sin is expressed — and thus, we no longer live (abide with) sin as a way of life.

VERSE 3

"Know ye not" — A familiar phrase of the apostle, by which he emphasizes the point he now makes. Cp. Rom. 3:19; 6:16; 7:1,14,18; 8:22,26,28; 10:19; 14:14. Paul draws attention to the circumstances of the believer's baptism, and its implication in his life.

"That so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ" — Baptism is an act of complete identification, by which a person acknowledges a change of masters. Being covered in water, he figuratively dies with Christ, aligning his will and life to that displayed perfectly by the Master. Thus, baptism is the public demonstration of an inward conviction; it signals a change in relationship from that of Adam (which leads to death) to Christ (which leads to life). It is offered as the second step of obedience that will result in salvation following belief and repentance (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38), and forms part of the apostolic commandments to believers (Acts 2:38; 10:48).

Israel was "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1Cor. 10:2), when they were redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, and separated from the power of the flesh in a national sense. They no longer "lived in Egypt" (cp. Rom. 6:2), but were divinely led out to dwell in the land over which Yahweh has dominion (Deut. 6:23; 11:12).

John the Baptist demanded of his followers that they be baptised "for repentance" (Lk. 3:3), in preparation for the "remission of sins" that would come through the sacrifice of Christ.

The Greek verb *baptizo,* to dip, signifies the dyeing of a garment, by which it is changed from one color to another. The

garment must be totally changed in color, or the *baptizma* (noun, washing, baptism) is ineffective. The word is sometimes applied to the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, so that the water passes totally into another container. It signifies a complete change from one position to another; from the rule of Adam (the flesh) to that of Christ (the spirit).

The word "into" is the Greek *eis*, and indicates "unto; towards". There must be a purpose in baptism; it is not merely a "washing of the flesh" (1Pet. 3:21), but a signification of something greater. It is a ritual which represents a moral action, or understanding. The pouring out of ointment by Mary was "against the day of his burying" (Jn. 12:7), and displayed an affection and perception of the purpose and mission of the Master, with which she desired to identify herself. Similarly, effective baptism is only transacted when the purpose is kept in view: a representation of the need for a judgment against flesh, a death to sin, as seen perfectly achieved in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Were baptised into his death?" — Baptism is a figure of death — but not any death! It relates only to Christ's death, for his death was the result of perfect obedience to the divine will (Jn. 10:17-18; Heb.

The Institution of Baptism

Baptism being the institution that affords scope for the obedience of faith, and obedience to the faith, can only be scripturally and rightly observed by a true believer — a believer of "the truth as it is in Jesus". The religious use of water is of no efficacy to any other kind of subject. No invention can supply the lack of an intelligent belief of the gospel of the kingdom in the person to be baptized. He must be "dead to sin", that he may be "baptized into Christ's death", who "died for sin once"; for it is only the dead, in this sense, who are released or freed from sin (Rom. 6:1,3,10,7).

The quantity of water is not sufficient if the subject cannot be buried therein. In whatever place there are persons "ordained for eternal life", sufficient water will always be found. The quantity required is indicated by the word *immersion,* which is the English synonym for the Greek word *baptisma.* "We are buried with Christ", says Paul, "through the baptism into the death" of Christ. The action of baptism is, therefore, *a burial in water* as a sign of burial with Christ; which signified burial no one can be the subject of who does not believe "the things of the name of Jesus Christ". The phrase used by Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus indicates the quantity of water, and the action inseparable from baptism — "Except a man be *born of water* and spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God". To be born of anything is to emerge from that thing in which the subject of birth had been previously concealed. Hence, no one can be "born of water" unless he have been covered with, or put out of sight, in water. The action of baptism is, therefore, clearly a burying in water, or immersion, and an emergence from it. This is a *sign* based upon the burial of Christ crucified for our offences, and his resurrection for our justification (Rom. 4:25); and signifies that the subject, having Christ in him by faith (Eph. 3:17), is crucified, dead, buried and risen together with him, to walk in newness of life. ***— J. Thomas, Eureka***

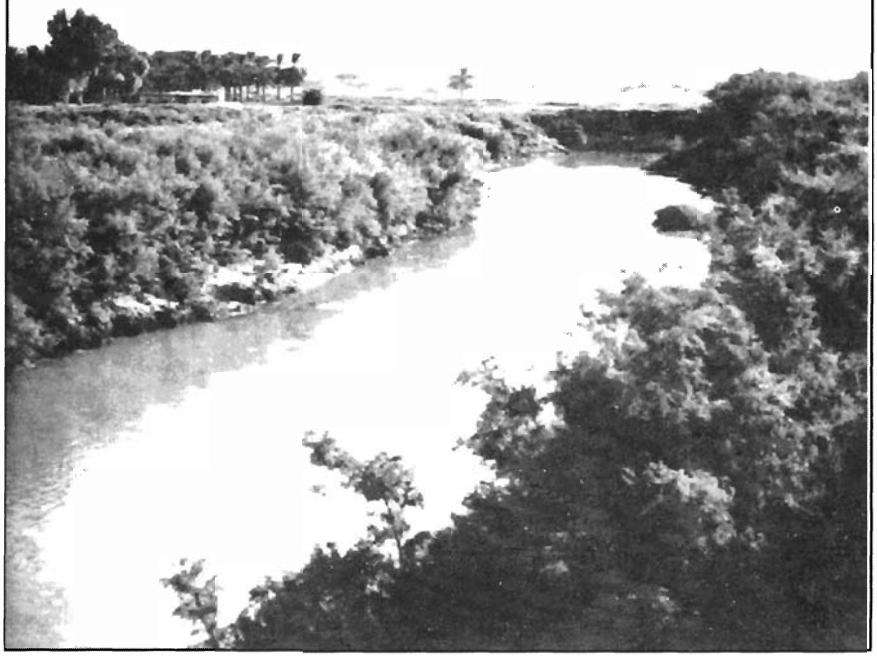
10:9), a decision from which he never deviated (Jn. 12:27). Jesus offered himself in a sacrificial demonstration of the righteous judgment of God against flesh, that the divine love might be revealed in his resurrection. There was, of necessity, the aspect of his suffering therein. Of his impending sacrifice he declared: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Lk. 12:50). Herein was his victory over flesh, for the flesh shrinks from pain and agony; yet the Master denied the flesh by facing the trauma of his death, knowing that only thereby could salvation be effected.

Baptism is therefore a symbol of suffering, for the death of Jesus was a violent cutting off of his life. As his flesh was crucified, so we are called upon to figuratively crucify the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:24; Heb. 9:22). As his blood was poured out, so we are called upon to devote our lives to performing the divine will, for blood poured out represents a life dedicated (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). It is important for disciples to recognize the principle of agony represented in the baptismal death of the Lord, and to try to relate that aspect to the personal crucifixion of self.

VERSE 4

"Therefore" — Having established in v. 3 the principle that baptism relates to the sacrificial death of Christ, Paul now

The river Jordan just before it flows into the Dead Sea passes by Bethabara, the site of the Lord's baptism by John (Jn. 1:28). It is a delightful spot, where the fresh waters of the Jordan bring life to the surrounding desert. The locality has been identified as near Bethnimrah, on the east of the river, nearly opposite Jericho. If so, it was a significant spot for a significant event. There, stones of witness were placed in the water by Joshua, (Josh. 4:3) to which John the Baptist made reference (Mat. 3:9).



draws a conclusion as to its application in a way of life.

"We are buried with him by baptism" — Total immersion is required to fulfil the symbol of burial. A burial presupposes that death has already occurred, so that baptism (like the sign of circumcision in the flesh) is really only the outward manifestation of an inward conviction. It dramatises what has already occurred! The gospel message must have so affected a person, that he recognises the need to destroy the impact of sin in his life. The "hearing of the Word" (Rom. 10:17) energises faith and removes ignorance.

As a seal was placed over the tomb in which the dead body of the Lord was placed (Mat. 27:60,66), so baptism is the seal of faith "placed upon" the person submitting thereto, and which confirms the death of the one within.

Rotherham emphasizes the identification of the baptised person with the Lord Jesus: "buried *together with him* through our immersion into his death". Thus, the Lord did not "die for us" in a substitutionary sense; he died for himself that it might be for us (Zech. 9:9, mg; Heb. 9:12 where "for us" is not in the original). We achieve recognition *with him* when we re-enact his action, align ourselves with his death, and become incorporated into the same figure. Then Christ's sacrifice embraces us.

Thus, it is not *our* baptism that saves; it is Christ's! Our salvation comes from being identified "in" Christ's sacrificial baptism (Mk. 10:38), and a life in conformity with that action. Our body of sin-motivated flesh must be entombed ("sealed") with Christ's, so that our life is "hidden with him" there (Col. 3:3). By this ritual we are buried together with him.

Burial epitomises the fatal result of sin. It is a blotting out of sight, so that no longer is the impact of sin seen. So with baptism. It symbolises a judgment upon sin, in which all must participate if they would be "Christ's" (Gal. 3:29). This was prefigured in Jesus' own baptism in the river Jordan. Being first asked to confess his sins (as was John's custom), Jesus acknowledged that he had none (Mat. 3:14)! John therefore declined the performance on the grounds that perfect righteousness did not require it: "But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But the Master responded by declaring: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness". He taught that for transgressions to be removed in "us", required the nature to be changed; for the nature to be changed required a sacrificial death, symbolised in baptism. In his action, the Lord's baptism was provisionally for all those "in him" when he said: "thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness" (v. 15). In the enactment, John the Baptist represented the community of saints, who acknowledge their inferiority (v. 14), whilst Jesus, as the perfect Lamb of God, was the means by which the baptismal burial would result in a newness of life.

"Into death" — The Greek word *eis* ("into") signifies "unto". Baptism is only a symbol; a figure. It is a ritual to represent the attitude and intention of the subject being baptised. It must be with the solemn purpose of *becoming* dead to sin and the world. But it is not any death of which the apostle speaks; not merely into a death-condition. The Greek text has *eis ton thanaton:* "into the death". It is the sacrificial death of Christ to which he refers, for the effect of that offering was the Lord's resurrection to eternal life and glory. Similarly, baptism is a figurative death which anticipates the final change of nature into immortality, for the baptismal process will not be truly completed until we are made "partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Pet. 1:4).

"That like as Christ was raised up from the dead" — Literally, the tomb was thrown open and the Lord Jesus emerged to receive a life of immortality and honor at the right hand of Yahweh (Mat. 22:44; Acts 2:33). The agency for this wondrous event was his obedient sacrifice (Heb. 13:20). It was therefore not possible for the grave to hold him (Acts 2:24), for, by his perfect obedience to the

divine will, he had overcome both the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), and the curse of mortality (Rom. 5:18). Since the law could not destroy a sinless man, Jesus was brought again to life; and since a resurrected sinless man could not be condemned to death, his nature was purged of its mortal propensities and he was honored with immortality, becoming the "first-fruits" of those who "die in him" (1Cor. 15:20,23).

Concerning his death and resurrection Jesus declared: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn. 10:17-18). This describes his shepherding function (vv. 1-18), as he went forward to challenge the enemy sin-power, and to overcome it through his own death (Heb. 2:14). The "power" lay in his obedient life and his voluntary sacrifice, which necessitated his subsequent resumption of life: "to take it again". As a shepherd, he left the same example for his sheep to follow.

"By the glory of the Father" — The whole transaction is designed to elevate the Father in honor and praise, so that flesh is humbled and spirit is elevated. The divine glory is seen in the conquering of sin, for that answers the original intention of Yahweh in Eden (Gen. 3:15). God's glory was manifested at Jesus' baptism (the parable of his ultimate salvation: Mat. 3:16; Lk. 3:22), at his transfiguration (the prophetic vision of his immortality: Mat. 17:2; Lk. 9:32), and at his resurrection (the reality of his victory: Mat. 28:3).

But those physical theophanies of glory were emblematic of the divine Majesty at work. The Greek word "by" in this verse, is *dia*, meaning "through, because of". All that was achieved was because of the divine glory. Yahweh was honored and glorified in putting His Son to death (Isa. 53:10); and in bringing him forth therefrom (Jn. 17:5; Rom. 9:23; 16:27). Yahweh is glorified when victory over sin and death is achieved (1Cor. 15:55-57).

"Even so we also" — We must imitate his perfect offering, so as to share in his resurrection. We cannot perform this to the faultlessness that he manifested, as we are encompassed with transgression and have fallen short of the divine glory (ch. 3:23). However, in recognizable measure we must align ourselves with Christ's life. His sacrifice was not *substitutionary*, for if it were, our salvation would have been accomplished without any exercise of our part. But it was *representative*, thus emphasizing that what he is, we must become.

"Should walk in newness of life" — Conforming to the pattern the Lord Jesus has already set. He told Peter, who had ideas of glory without sacrifice, to "get thee behind me" (Mat. 16:23) — to walk in step, and not wander off to speculative paths adverse to the divine plan of salvation. Later, Peter instructed disciples that Christ has "left us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1Pet. 2:21). That pathway cannot avoid crucifixion, but will result ultimately in glorious liberty and renewed nature. Thus, we are reminded of our obligations: "ye are *risen with* him" (Col. 2:12), and must endeavor to manifest the same devotion and dedication that he did.

The Garden Tomb, possibly the actual site of the burial of the Lord Jesus, is empty and open — a testimony to the fact of his resurrection. It is stark evidence to a new life beyond its power — a fit symbol of baptism which removes the power of Sin, and provides opportunity for life. So the believer walks in "newness of life".

To "walk in newness of life" is to act in understanding of the process of salvation. The "newness of life" that Jesus achieved in himself was divine nature; we need to conduct our lives with that in view. As God is the giver of life, so this "new life" must come from Him (Phil. 2:13).

The word "walk" expresses the course of a man's life, the tenor of his conduct. We are required to "walk after the spirit" (Rom. 8:1) by making the Truth the direction of life, following its precepts in the decisions we make. This will then reflect to the honor of our calling (Eph. 4:1), and demonstrate our worthiness of the Name bestowed upon us in baptism.

As the Lord was raised mortal and then elevated to immortality, so there must be an increasing development of the newness of life in the believer — a process which commences with a birth and proceeds through various stages until full maturity is achieved (Mat. 5:48).

It is a "newness" since it does not reflect the mind of the flesh with which we were naturally born. We become "born again" (Jn. 3:3) as a "new creature" (2Cor. 5:17), and, as spiritual "new-born babes" (1Pet. 2:2) must reflect the characteristics of our parents: Yahweh and His spirit Word (cp. Gal. 4:26).

VERSE 5

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death" — The NIV has: "If we have been united with him like this in his death", emphasizing that identity with the sacrifice of Christ must be acknowledged. The Greek word *sumphutos* ("planted together") signifies "congenital; to be made one; to grow up together". The metaphor is taken from the grafting of plants by which one is attached to another, as the mistletoe might grow upon and into the oak. The purpose of such grafting is to use a good stock in order to produce further fruit. True baptism is a complete identification of oneself with the death and resurrection of Christ, who, as the good stock of Yahweh's planting, will provide life to those who are grafted into him (Jn. 15:1-2; cp. Rom. 11:17).

"We shall be also (in the likeness of his) resurrection" — The ultimate purpose of grafting is to produce a better crop upon the basis of a good stock. This will be achieved in Christ through the figure of baptism of "water and spirit" (Jn. 3:5), for both are essential to salvation. The former achieves a moral rebirth; the latter is for rebirth physically — they are two parts of the one process.

Baptism of water demonstrates the "likeness of his death", in which the believer acknowledges the need to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24). In rising from the water, he is in a morally resurrected state, and walks "in newness of life" (v. 4). This symbolises his eventual perfection of nature, so that he will be "like Christ" in all respects (1Jn. 3:2).

Notice the past and future tenses used by Paul in this verse: "as we *have been* planted ... we *shall be also* in the likeness of his resurrection". He refers to our past moral crucifixion and resurrection, and shows that our future physical regeneration is consequent upon a faithful and obedient life (Rom. 6:4); for we will never be identified with the Lord in nature unless we first demonstrate that anticipation in actions (2Pet. 1:4; 1Cor. 15:49,53).

VERSE 6

"Knowing this" — To be in full realisation of the facts! Paul implies that believers might easily overlook the responsibilities of their new state of liberty and hope. But resurrection can only follow death! There must, therefore, be evidence of death before there can come resurrection. It is a fact that must be continually borne in mind. These principles become mere academic knowledge if they fail to find any application in life.

"That our old man is crucified with (him)" — The "old man" (Col. 3:9) refers to the lusts of the flesh which dominate the natural mind, and characterize the way of life manifested in the world. It is described as "the body of sin", the inherited propensities of "affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24) and "the law in the members" (Rom. 7:23), which develops "the carnal

mind" (Rom. 8:7) and gives vent to the child of sin (Jas. 1:15). When the natural mind and conscience are united to the lusts of the flesh, it allows the ungodly propensities full reign. Baptism, however, represents a change in outlook and direction; it is on the basis of "repentance" (Acts 2:38), a word which means "to turn about", thus to take a new direction. No longer are the lusts of the flesh to be followed, for the "mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5) will direct the spiritual conscience into godly paths.

But to do this requires death! There cannot be any compromise between the flesh and spirit; the "old man" (that which is worn out and of no further use) must be buried out of sight. To allow two opposing principles to reign in life is to serve two masters (Mat. 6:24) and to manifest duplicity in outlook. Such a "wavering" attitude will cause a person to be "driven with the wind and tossed" (Jas. 1:6), finally ending up as a spiritual shipwreck.

But Paul emphasizes that we cannot wait for the "old man" to die, we must

The Lord's Crucifixion Of The Flesh

The statement of Peter, that the Lord Jesus "bare our sins in his body on the tree" literally expresses what was symbolically represented under the Law. For the scapegoat symbolically represented the bearing away of the sins of the Israelites that were ceremonially laid upon him, to a land not inhabited (Lev. 16:21). The Lord has done that for believers, in that, in him, their sins are forgiven. But to do so, he had to be identified with them, and so become representative of them. Therefore, because he was of our nature, expressions are attributed to him such as "this body of sin" (Rom. 6:6), being "made sin" (2Cor. 5:21), "made a curse" (Gal. 3:13). Figuratively, therefore, he "bare our sins in his body", he "bare our iniquities", and he "bare the sin of many" (Isa. 53:11).

All these expressions signify that he was manifested in a nature that was identical with that of those he came to serve; the natural promptings of which must be ruthlessly suppressed (crucified) in order that the divine attributes might be revealed therein. Therefore, when we read that Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself", and that in consequence of having put it away, when he comes a second time it will be "without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26-28), we perceive that it could not possibly be our personal transgressions he put away 1900 years ago. The expressions therefore, refer to sin in relation to himself, in putting off the "body of sin" with which he was burdened in the days of his flesh. Human nature, styled sin's flesh, was crucified on the cross, and after resurrection the Lord was clothed with divine nature (1Pet. 1:4). Therefore, in no sense can these terms be now applied to him. As a representative sacrifice, as the shepherd of the sheep, he revealed to all humanity the seeming anomaly that since the advent of sin, the way to life is through death. What Christ did, believers must attempt. Paul taught that "he died unto sin once" (Rom. 6:10); and in context with that statement, he exhorts "likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 11).

The principles of the sacrifice of Christ should be manifest in action, and not merely proclaimed by doctrine.

—H. P. Mansfield, The Atonement, pages 196-197

"crucify" him, as did Christ. The Lord never allowed the evil propensities of the flesh resident in him to generate sin. Though tempted in all points like us, he "resisted unto blood" (cp. Heb. 12:3-4), and publicly demonstrated at Golgotha the principle that had activated his whole life. In following him Paul declared: "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), which involved a "putting off" of the "body of the sins of the flesh" (Col. 2:11). Crucifixion is a violent act of destruction; it involves anguish and suffering. By crucifying the natural physical lusts, we challenge our own flesh-driven emotions, and refuse to allow them to direct our decisions. Unfortunately, we cannot fully succeed in this matter, for perfect obedience is not possible under present conditions. So Paul realised that he was engaged in a constant battle against his own emotions (Rom. 7:14-21); it was a challenge to the "law of his mind" which represented the Spirit-Word that he had mentally assimilated (v. 23), and with which he had to consciously contend against the "law in his members" daily (1Cor. 15:31).

Though the Lord was granted mental ability beyond ours, through the supernatural spirit conception from his Father, he nevertheless felt the drawing power of sin "in his members" during "the days of his flesh" and was in need of personal deliverance therefrom (Heb. 5:7-8). He "suffered" the strictures of his natural emotions, and repeated the ceremonial baptism undertaken in the Jordan (Mat. 3:15) in a mental and moral crucifixion daily. The final physical crucifixion on Golgotha was only a public presentation of what he had accomplished morally throughout his life (Luke 12:50).

"That the body of sin" — A synonym for the flesh, defining "the old man" in Paul's previous phrase. It refers to the natural body in which the principles of sin lie dormant until they are activated by temptation. The apostle uses a similar phrase in Col. 2:11 where he teaches that we must deny, despoil, or "put off" the "body of the flesh" (the RV and others eliminate the words "of the sins"). We do that when we subordinate our emotions to the will of God.

It is called "the body of sin" to distinguish it from active transgressions, the "doing of sins". It describes the condition of our mortality, for we are "conceived in sin" (Psa. 51:5), in the sense that the evil propensities of the flesh are transmitted in the nature we bear. Christ possessed this

The Destruction of the Body of Sin In Type and Antitype

The type *(of the burnt offering under the Mosaic Law)* involved in complete burning is self-manifest: it is consumption of sin-nature. This is the great promise and prophecy and requirement of every form of the Truth: the destruction of the body of sin (Rom. 6:6). It was destroyed in Christ's crucifixion — the "one great offering"; we ceremonially share it in our baptism: "crucified with Christ", "baptised unto his death". We morally participate in it in putting the old man to death in "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" and the hope before us is the prospect of becoming subject to such a physical change as will consume mortal nature and change it into the glorious nature of the Spirit... When the work is finished, flesh and blood with all its weakness and its woe, will have ceased from the earth, and given place to a glad and holy race of men immortal and "equal to the angels".

It was a beautiful requirement of the wisdom of God in the beginning of things that He should require an act of worship that typified the repudiation of sinful nature as the basis of divine fellowship and acceptability.

Those who deny Christ's participation thereof, deny its removal by sacrifice, and therefore deny the fundamental testimony of the gospel, that he is "the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world" ***— R. Roberts, Law of Moses, p. 238***

same body of "sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), being "made sin for us" (2Cor. 5:21), that he might "condemn sin in the flesh" (i.e. in the condition of mortality in which it is found). As Christ "planted" (v. 5) his "old man" (mortal nature) in death, so must we. This is done ceremonially through baptism; and ultimately in a change of our nature to immortality, when mortality ("our old man", the "body of sin" etc) will no longer exist in us.

"Might be destroyed" — The Greek word *katargeo* signifies to render inactive, inoperative, powerless. We are not called upon to destroy the flesh by dying, for that would make it impossible to perform the divine will. Because we are not sinless, as was Jesus, we have no hope of being immediately resurrected from the grave, as was he on the basis of perfect obedience to his Father's commands. However, we must "render the flesh inactive" by refusing to allow its ungodly propensities to lead us into transgression (v. 12; 13:14; Eph. 2:3; 4:22; Tit. 2:12; 3:3; 1Pet. 1:14; 2:11; 4:2). This endeavor demonstrates in our lives, our desire to identify with the crucifixion of the Lord, and makes our baptism a reality and not a mere ritual.

"That henceforth we should not serve sin" — Rotherham has: "that we should no longer be in servitude to sin". The word "serve" (Gr. *douleuo*) is used of the habitual and enforced labor of a bond-slave, who does the bidding of his Master. The master in this case is "Sin", a synonym for the lusts of the flesh found within our nature. Though Jesus possessed the same nature, he refused to conform to the directions of his flesh, resisting temptation at every point, and, therefore, did not "serve sin". In this, his faultless example is provided for us to attempt to imitate. We cannot do this in our own strength (Rom. 7:23-24); it requires the full power of the "mind of the spirit" which the Lord was granted in his unique begettal. In us, however, we must develop "the mind of Christ" (Phil. 2:5) which will identify the dictates of sin and enable us to gradually overcome its power.

VERSE 7

"For he that is dead is freed from sin" — A dead person is no longer able to respond to the emotions or directions of his nature, and is free from the promptings of temptation. In the figure of baptism that Paul here employs, the death in question has reference to the "burial of water", and because, in baptism, sins are forgiven, so those who submit to it are freed or justified from sin. In fact, baptism brings a person into a relationship with Yahweh, with its hope of a future change to divine nature (2Pet. 1:4). Thus, the baptised person is morally freed from the absolute dominion of sin, and stands in hope of being ultimately released from mortality and all its effects.

John speaks of those being "born of God" (i.e., out of the "womb" of water, Jn. 3:3, by the power of the spirit-Word acting upon a person's mind) as "not committing sin" (1Jn. 3:9). He does not mean that they are perfectly obedient, nor that they do not transgress from time to time, but that they live within the sphere of righteousness, being of the family of God. John concludes, "they cannot sin, because they are born of God". The sin spoken of is the lawless attitude (v. 4, lit. Greek) of a person who will not respond to the clear directions of the Word. He lives beyond the sphere of righteousness, and is completely within the dominion of King Sin. But those who are "born of God" are not in that condition. The very seed that begat them (a knowledge of the divine will and purpose) makes it impossible for them to live in indifference to God's word and law, so that they are always conscious of the divine demands upon their lives.

Thus Paul says that "being dead" (in baptism), they are "freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7), being no longer under its direction or restraints. The word "freed" is Gr. *dikaioo*, which signifies, to justify (thus in the RV). It means to set at liberty, or to free from power or dominion. Sin has lost its claim upon the man who has died with Christ.

VERSE 8

"Now if we be dead with Christ" —

If we be buried "together" (Roth.) with Christ, in the same manner — i.e., as the result of crucifixion. As he was dead in the grave, so we are dead to sin and are covered by his righteousness.

"We believe" — Gr. *pisteuo*, to be persuaded; to have faith. This characteristic comes from a crucified death, in which a person deliberately submits to death that he might obtain "a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). In such cases, faith enables him to see beyond the cross and shame (Heb. 12:2) to the glory beyond.

This is illustrated in the "repentant thief" who was crucified *with Christ*, and publicly confessed his faith in the redeemer beside him. He acknowledged the justness of the condemnation that rested upon him (Lk. 23:40), his personal transgression (v. 41), and expressed his faith in a better future (v. 42). "Belief" enables a person to understand the true nature of crucifixion, and to see it as the basis of resurrection.

"That we shall also live with him" — This is the corollary of having died with him. Christ's perfect obedience and voluntary sacrifice ensured his resurrection; so it is with us. Resulting from his confession of faith in Jesus, the repentant thief (see above) was promised: "Thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43).

Paul speaks in the future tense, and therefore refers to our physical regeneration, rather than the "newness of life" of the moral resurrection spoken of in Rom. 6:4. The process for eternal life begins with the implanting of the divine seed through the Word understood and believed (1Pet. 1:23), continues with baptism in water (Jn. 3:3), and a way of life consistent with that profession. The process concludes when we are finally made "like him" in both character and nature (Col. 3:4; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 2:7; 6:23; 1Tim. 6:19).

VERSE 9

"Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more" — His resurrection to immortality was the divine seal of his perfect offering. He was "brought again from the dead... through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20), so that death now has no further claim over him, nor is there any need for him to offer himself again. His sacrifice was final and complete, fulfilling all the terms of the Mosaic figures, and by which he "obtained eternal redemption" (omitting the erroneous italics in Heb. 9:12). In his offering he "abrogated the law of condemnation *for* himself" (BASF, clause 8), by which his nature was purged of its former impurities, and made of the same nature as the Deity.

"Death hath no more dominion over him" — The Diaglott has: "death no longer lords it over him". While he was mortal, the Lord was subject to temptation, but struggled against its power successfully (Heb. 5:7). But that no longer applies! Christ is no longer in the sphere of death; King Death does not reign over him, nor threaten him with its power (cp. Rom. 5:21). Immortality takes a person beyond the grasp of death, and is therefore held to be the great victory of faith (Jn. 3:15; 10:28; 17:2; 1Tim. 6:19).

VERSE 10

"For in that he died" — This was not a mere death, but a sacrificial offering. Death, of itself, implies the victory of sin, but the perfect offering of the Lord was a challenge to sin, and it was by "that death" (Rom. 6:4) that he destroyed the diabolos (Heb. 2:14).

"He died unto sin" — Christ was thus in some way related to sin, but inasmuch as he did not sin, this can only refer to the flesh (see Brother Thomas' exposition on page 175. This shows conclusively that the "sin" in question is not actual transgression, but the propensities which were resident in his nature. Christ's death upon the cross was only a public demonstration of what he did figuratively in his daily life, by submitting to the will of the Father, and refusing his nature to exercise its power over him in any degree. Christ's crucifixion foreshadowed or demonstrated what his followers must do, for they, too, must "die unto sin" (v. 2).

Thus Jesus was "made sin" (2Cor. 5:21) by birth into the human race; he appeared in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3) that all the power of the flesh might be defeated in him; he was sacrificed "for sin" (ch. 8:3; cp. Heb. 10:8-9,18; 10:26; 13:11) that thereby he might exonerate himself and his brethren therefrom.

"Once"— The Greek *ephapax* should be rendered "once for all" (RSV). The Greek is emphatic, that the perfect offering of Christ was satisfactory in all respects; it has no need to be repeated. He provided the *one* sacrifice for sin which could completely take away its effect. Under the law, the priests were required to make continual offerings for sins, because it was impossible to fully overcome sin. Daily offerings for sin were legislated, constant individual sacrifices were demanded — as sin continued to work in the lives of worshippers.

On the yearly Day of Atonement the high priest had to demonstrate in the progression of sacrifices he was required to offer, that both he and the nation were under the domination of sin, and were unable, because of sin, to overcome its power. Thus, he offered two sacrifices: one for himself, and one for the people he represented (Lev. 9:7; 12:1-7; 16:6,11-15; 23:29; Heb. 5:1-3). But, since the priest was himself a sinner, his sacrifice for himself could never fully expiate himself, and he had, therefore, to offer repeatedly. Christ was greater than the priesthood of Moses, for although he had need to offer for his own cleansing, being associated with the sinful condition of his people (1Pet. 2:24) his perfect obedience ensured his resurrection to immortality, and he had no further need of sacrifice. Thus, Paul comments that Jesus "needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for *this he did once* (Gr. *ephapax*), when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27). This was achieved when, through his sacrifice, he "entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (ch. 9:12). The perfection of his offering enabled divine nature to be revealed in flesh, and to accomplish the removal of "sin" (human nature) in himself: "now *once* in the end of the world (age) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26).

As his people, we achieve sanctification through the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ, *once for all (ephapax)*" (ch. 10:10).

Unlike that of Lazarus, Christ's resurrection precludes the possibility of his dying again. He became the first of Adam's race to be resurrected to life eternal. Therefore his death, instead of being a sign of the victory of sin over man, was a sign of the complete overthrow and conquest of Sin in a singularly decisive engagement on the stake. The serpent-nature was "crushed" on the head (Gen. 3:15, Roth.). The Goliath-like force which has attacked mankind since the transgression of Adam, was finally and absolutely defeated in the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:14).

"But in that he liveth" — The use of the present tense has a sense of victory and achievement. He is no longer dead! The whole evidence of the apostles' disbelief following the Lord's crucifixion confirms the fact. Against their own inclinations and convictions at that time (note the repetition of the phrase "believed not" in Mark 16), the fact of Christ's resurrection could not be ignored. He "appeared unto the eleven... and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart" (v. 14); he allowed Thomas to observe the evidence of his wounds (Jn. 20:26-27); he "shewed himself ***alive*** after his passion *(suffering)* by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3), so that there could be no mistake as to the victory over Sin that had been achieved. Later, John confirmed his experience: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1Jn. 1:1-2).

"He liveth unto God" — For Christ, death is a past event, never to be repeated. The Lord now is of divine nature, having

"entered within the veil" and being constituted a high priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:19-20).

The word "unto" is translated "by" in the Diaglott, twice in this verse. There were two powers existing in Jesus during his term of mortal service: sin and righteousness. He possessed "sin's flesh," and because of that principle in his nature, he "died *by* Sin," used here by metonymy for human nature (i.e., because of its power in his nature). But now he "liveth *by* God" (being raised by the righteousness and power of God: Acts 2:24). The contest between sin and righteousness, which originated in the Edenic transgression, has now been settled in Christ; he is the victor, but that victory came only because "God was in Christ" (2Cor. 5:19), and because the Master gave himself totally to fulfilling his Father's will. Thus, he overcame "with strong crying and tears... though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:7-8).

VERSE 11

"Likewise" — "So, too with you" (TCNT). Gr: *houto*, "in this manner." As Christ has experienced release from sin nature, so sin must no longer reign in the life of a justified believer. Paul now applies the exhortation seen in Christ's personal victory over sin, to those who are his by faith, and shows that what Christ has done, they must imitate. In 1Cor. 11:1 he declared: "Be ye followers (Gr. *mimetes*, imitators) of me, even as I also am of Christ."

"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" — The word "reckon" is *logizomai*, which means (see its use in ch. 4:3), to "consider, calculate, take into account (Vine). It is similar to the English word "logistics," relating to numerical calculations. This is one of the key words in Romans; it occurs a total of nineteen times. The word indicates the computing or calculating of thoughts, actions and environment. Believers need to "take into account" (or, add up) their personal actions, and compare them to the example of the Lord. His crucifixion of the flesh must find a reflection in his disciples' lives as well. Identification with Christ's "death unto sin" is first intelligently comprehended through a mental understanding (or "adding up") of the principles involved in the work of Christ; that must be followed by a moral acknowledgement and application of those principles to oneself; and finally, there must be a physical expression of that Word in the actions of life. This will result in the constant surrender to the power of the Word of God in our lives, and by continuing communion with the Father in prayer, seeking His guidance and direction, and His forgiveness for those many times when we fail to live up to the perfect example of His wondrous Son.

"But alive unto God" — Putting to death the flesh is the *negative* side of the sacrificial life; the *positive* aspect is of equal importance. As Christ was raised to a new life, in which his mortality was replaced by immortality, so his disciples must live in awareness of that "newness of life" (v. 4), having become mentally and morally "alive from the dead" (v. 13). Such a way of life has the seeds of eternal life in it, for the moral newness will ultimately be fully revealed in the perfection of physical nature (1Pet. 1:23). Paul demonstrated the moral "aliveness" in his own life by revealing Christ in action (Gal. 2:19). Thus, combined, the positive and negative aspects of Christ's character represent God-manifestation — a quality of life we must reveal to some degree.

"Through Jesus Christ (our Lord)" — The words "our Lord" do not appear in some ancient texts (see Diaglott) which have: "in the Anointed Jesus." Again, Paul emphasises that the way to spiritual success is only through association with Christ Jesus; in fact, there can be no righteous way of life unless the individual is fully "in" Christ. Having accomplished his own salvation, he now acts as the firstborn of a spiritual creation (Col. 1:15), by which he leads those who are his "brethren" and "children" (Heb. 2:11-13) to salvation with him.

VERSE 12

"Let not sin therefore reign" — A conclusion drawn from the previous statement. Paul urges us that we do not allow the thinking of the flesh to dominate us. To emphasise the danger, he maintains the figure of Sin as a king reigning over his subjects, and holding them in his control. The believer, having figuratively destroyed Sin in the waters of baptism, should not return to that former environment by yielding habitually to this tyrant.

The word "reign" is *basileuo,* which signifies "to exercise kingly power." Bullinger suggests: "to be king; to possess regal authority; to reign." The propensities for evil are already resident in the flesh. King Sin desires desperately to bend us to his will, causing us to bow before him as supreme monarch over all that we think and do; our aims and objectives in life; our ambitions and desires. But, since the Truth has enlightened us as to the true nature and intentions of this evil ruler, Sin (the lusts and affections of the flesh) must be opposed and challenged; he must remain a dethroned monarch — keep him in that state! The effect of being "dead with Christ" must be revealed in the release from the dominance of anything which might disturb the manifestation of divine ideals. So Paul told the Colossians: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments (elements) of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances... which all are to perish with the using" (Col. 2:20-22). Even while performing the terms of the law in a ritualistic and legalistic way and ignoring its spiritual significance, they were actually still serving Sin; it was a form of self-aggrandisement, and not devotion to Christ.

"In your mortal body" — This is the *only* arena in which king Sin can reign. No other seat of power is available to him. Sin desires to set up its throne in "the mortal body," and rule through the evil desires resident therein. Paul's usage of the word "mortal" serves to remind the believer that he is not yet free from the dominion of the evil monarch, who may regain his throne if given opportunity. Hence, in ch. 8:3 Paul speaks of "sin *in* the flesh." Notice, particularly, that in both passages the apostle emphasises the "body" or "the flesh." He does not say "the mind," for it is the "flesh" or "mortal body" which is the source of sin. Evil propensities given free reign, produce the carnal mind; not the other way round.

"That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" — "Should" is the Greek *eis to,* "in order that; to the end that..." Sinful appetites have not yet been extinguished in the believer, for "lust" is here used in the sense of inordinate desires which is part of our inherited human nature; and all such lusts of the flesh must be brought into subjection to Christ. The Diaglott has: "in order to obey its desires." Lust, or inordinate desire, is the power of King Sin, and those who give themselves over to compulsive fulfilment of personal desire lead themselves into his control. Christ never allowed the evil propensities that he possessed in his body (called "our sins" in 1Pet. 2:24), to direct him, or cause him to give undue attention to them. Even the provision of wine at the feast in Cana was to "manifest forth His glory " (Jn. 2:1-11), and to call attention to the power of God that was freely offered through him.

It is sometimes claimed that there are lawful lusts to which we can give free vent, but a careful consideration of Scripture will reveal that, to become lawful, all our desires must be governed by divine principles. Take, for example, the natural appetite for food. Is it sin to gratify it? Not under the conditions that God stipulates, for Paul says: " Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1Tim. 4:4-5). The legitimate partaking of food with recognition of the Source of that food, is permitted. The Word must govern us, even in this matter, and direct our minds to control our natural desires by God's will. Then, as was perfectly demonstrated by the Son of God, all the propensities of the flesh are controlled, and that which would otherwise be offensive is

made legitimate. But if we satisfy the lust of appetite without due consideration to the Giver, or over-indulge and so disgrace the Provider of all gifts (Deut. 21:20: 1Pet. 4:3), it becomes sin.

VERSE 13

"Neither yield ye your members (as) instruments of unrighteousness" — The word "yield" is a military term. The word appears in Mat. 26:53, " he shall *presently give (parastesei)* me more than twelve legions of angels." The Greek word *paristemi* (from *para*, near; and *histemi*, to set, hence, to set near) means to place beside, to put at one's disposal, to present (as a soldier "presents arms"), and is found here in the present imperative tense: "Do not go on presenting." "Do not let your members (*melos*, a limb, any member of the body) ever be *set near anything* which may produce unrighteousness!" What extreme care believers must take! It is natural to allow the flesh to be gratified, and that had been the experience of believers before their baptism. But now there was to be a change. They were no longer to "present" themselves in the former fashion. Each of the "members" of the body are soldiers in the warfare of life, being energised and directed by the Head, for the benefit of the whole body. So the arms, legs, tongue, eyes (etc.) are all part of the natural force, and are exercised for the gratification of the flesh (Mat. 18:8-9), unless they are challenged by another power. The natural mind directs its resources to seek "unrighteousness" in the sense that anything that lacks godliness as its motivating force, is without God (Eph. 2:12), and therefore is fully committed to the bidding of natural ungodly lusts and desires. It is best, counsels Paul, to remain *well clear* of any activities or influences which might lead to sin.

Sin is constantly fighting against that which is *right* in God's eyes, and the state of warfare must be unrelenting. Hostility *against* God's righteousness must be continually opposed by means of the "sword of the Spirit" which is "the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

The word for "instruments" is from the Greek *oplon*. It occurs only seven times in the N.T., and only here (twice) is it rendered "instruments." In all other passages it is rendered "arms," "weapons," or "armour." It is clearly the language of a soldier at war — which is what we must become in the warfare against sin (cp. 2Cor. 10:3-6; 1Tim. 6:12; 2Tim. 2:3-4, etc.).

Of course, the members of the body have the capacity to either render service to the flesh, or to honor Almighty God. Paul urges that we should not present them as "instruments" of unrighteousness, for that will bring no glory to the Creator, nor ultimate salvation to the disciple. The margin has "arms or weapons." All the natural faculties of the body must be used in the service of the Truth, not to gratify personal ambition.

The word "yield" occurs twice in this verse, but the tenses are significantly different. Here it is in the *continuing present tense:* i.e., do not *continue* to present your members." The second (see below) is in the *momentary past tense:* i.e., "but you *have* yielded yourselves to God as a single, all-embracing act of choice and obedience to God's will. Your one act of total commitment has achieved this state for you."

"Unto sin" — The Greek word *te* has various shades of meaning; here the idea is "to sin" in the sense of placing ourselves in the hands of sin, as a Controller.

"But yield yourselves" — Here the word "yield" is in the past imperative tense, to indicate: "present yourselves, *by one decisive act;*" i.e., to capitulate entirely, to completely surrender in one decision of total acceptance and commitment. It speaks of the natural yielding to Sin which is a constant "re-presenting" as each challenge is faced, but the presenting ("to yield") of oneself to God is revealed through the waters of baptism. Therefore we must labor in co-operation with Him, constantly "re-presenting" ourselves as each new challenge to faithfulness is faced.

The words of Moses and Joshua are

Not under Law But Under Grace (Rom. 6:14)

Unfortunately, Paul's expression has been distorted by some. It has been said that, once baptised, men and women are no longer required to give total allegiance to the commandments of Christ, or any laws of divine origin. Salvation, it is argued, depends upon no such attitudes or actions, for it is the "grace" of God which saves us (whatever they may understand by that term), and that this alone will see us through into the kingdom. Paul's words certainly do not mean this (see notes on v. 15)! Instead, the apostle draws attention to the fact that the principle of law-keeping as the means of attaining to eternal salvation, as propounded by the Judaisers, was invalid since the Law could avail nothing under the principle of "grace" ("favor"). Upon the basis of His own righteousness and mercy, God will provide the means whereby sins may be forgiven. This is a means of escape from the rulership of king Sin which would be totally inconceivable if law alone was the appointed means to that end.

Law cannot cover sin. It can only reveal it. Because of the weakness of flesh, law must inevitably confirm the existence and reality of sin. Hence, if God judged mankind purely upon the basis of obedience to law, He would never have given His Son to die — and therefore we could not be saved. This statement must be understood as meaning: "In Christ, you are not under a *legal* dispensation, but under one in which the *grace* or *undeserved favor* of God can provide for your justification."

Does Paul's assertion in any respect imply that we are now free from any requirement to keep the commandments of Christ, or the moral demands which God makes upon us? By no means. Rather than pleading the removal of all allegiance to moral laws, Paul is showing that the gospel is designed to secure our obedience to those precepts which define the perfect moral character of the Father and His Son. The mere *ritualistic legalism* of the Law provided no means whatever for justification upon such a basis.

"Grace" (unmerited favor) means that God will treat us, not according to our works which demonstrate our constant failings, but according to His mercy. Paul's readers were to understand that the mere keeping of law is something that *man* attempts, and yet fails. But "grace" and "mercy," for the forgiveness of sins, can come only from *God.*

This declaration is not established for the purpose of abuse. Are not divine commandments a reflection of the divine Will? Are Christ's disciples free from adherence thereto? "Ye are my friends," said the Master, "*if* ye do whatsoever I command you... If ye love me, *keep my commandments*" (Jn. 15;14; 14:15). Hence, it is through the "*obedience* of faith" that the believer sets a course whereby he will *manifest* his faith, dedicating his life to becoming numbered among the "obedient children" who will — though imperfectly in this present age — manifest the holiness of Yahweh, who has provided for their eternal redemption by the only means possible: the sacrifice of His Son, and man's humble submission to all that is embodied therein (Rom. 16:26; 1Pet. 1:14; Rom. 5: 8-12).

— J. Ullman.

wonderful examples of what God requires: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose life!... Choose* you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, *we will serve Yahweh!*" (Deut. 30:19; Josh.24:15).

"Unto God" — The opposing power to that of Sin. See former note on the Greek *te* (to), which is here repeated.

"As those that are alive from the dead" — A moral resurrection through baptism has given the believer a newness of life, a special relationship with the Deity, and therefore has set him on the path to full maturity of Sonship experienced in eternal life. The former "dead works" of darkness and sin (Rom. 1:21; 2:19; 2Cor. 6:14; Eph. 4:18; 5:8) have been replaced with the light of resurrection (Eph. 2:1, 5).

Notice the repetition of ideas: Christ "liveth unto God" (v. 10); now, we are to be "alive unto God" (v. 11), because, in a moral sense, we are "alive" from the dead (v. 13). Being dead to sin, but alive unto God, is the constant theme of these verses. The *Jerusalem Bible* has "consider yourselves dead men brought back to life" (Gr. *ek nekron*, out of dead ones...).

"And your members (as) instruments of righteousness" — This is a constant exhortation with a warning that failure is possible. Although the reign of Sin is broken in the justification offered through Christ, yet it is possible that though sin *need* no longer reign, the justified may nevertheless lapse from grace (v. 16) and allow the flesh to continually affect decisions in life. The admonition "let not sin therefore reign" (v. 12) implies that it is still there, although it may be passive. But it ought no longer to be a *sovereign*, for Christ has superseded it. Having been liberated from this reign of Sin, those who have become justified through Christ are now able to serve *their* new Master! How should this be done? By rendering all members as instruments (weapons) of righteousness. This principle was demonstrated in the calling of the Levites under the law of Moses. They were enrolled in a service of antagonism against Sin and were commissioned to "wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 8:24-25). The Hebrew *tsaba* ("wait") means to amass an army of soldiers or servants. The margin has: "to war

The Two-fold Analogy of Romans 6

In vv. 1-14 Paul presents the life in Christ as a warfare, in which victory is possible by grace and faith (see also Rom. 7:23; 8:37). In vv. 15-23, he sets it forth in the form of servitude to a new master who will ultimately grant the benefit of immortality.

He summarises the first analogy by revealing:

- Two monarchs, one ruling in the sphere of death, the other ruling in the sphere of life (ch. 5:21).
- An unrelenting battle between them for possession of the believer (6:12).
- The first engagement in this battle has already been won by Christ on their behalf (6:6).
- His victory has led the way to complete victory for them (6:9).
- With determination, believers must follow his lead as well-disciplined soldiers in his service (6:10-11, 14).
- They must disarm the enemy (the flesh), and use the very weapons he would use, to defeat their opponent (6:13).

Paul summarises the second analogy (see Rom. 7:14) by revealing:

- Sin and Righteousness are two slave-owners uncompromisingly antagonistic to each other (6:18).
- The slaves (believers) have been released from one through their purchase by the other (6:17).
- Because of the benevolence of the new slave-owner, this is to their advantage (6:22).
- Sin (by metonymy for the flesh) rewards with the miserable soldier's or slave's pittance of death (6:21).
- Righteousness rewards with the lordly gift of eternal life (6:23).

the warfare." In the spiritual warfare on behalf of faith, every "weapon" must be finely tuned, correctly used and courageously applied (1Tim. 1:18; 2Tim. 2:4; 1Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:12-18).

"Unto God" — The Greek *eis* is again repeated. He is the supreme commander of the faithful. His will and instructions must be followed explicitly and fully if victory is to be achieved. The divine Will is expressed in appropriate prayer (Rom. 8:27), in the consistent development of the spiritual mind (ch. 12:2), in actions of assistance to others (2Cor. 8:5), in opposition to the designs of the present world (Gal. 1:4), so that the man of faith might be perfectly formed in all aspects (Col. 4:12).

VERSE 14

"For sin shall not have dominion over you" — Paul now introduces a final word of encouragement as he concludes this section in regard to dying with Christ. It contains an uncompromising challenge to every believer.

The word "dominion" suggests the victorious conquest of King Sin (the propensity, or inclination to sin which is in our nature) which rules dictatorially in the world triumphantly sitting astride mankind as undisputed ruler over all. But this will not occur to the people of God if the exhortation of vv. 11-13 is heeded. Although, in our present state, we may not overcome to perfection as did our Lord, certainly our faithfulness can be counted to fit us for the kingdom.

"For ye are not under the law, but under grace" — We have been brought into a relationship of service which requires obedience of the heart, not merely obedience of ritual (v. 17). Being under divine grace provides a great advantage in the fight of faith, for, whereas the law condemns and strengthens the hold of sin by making it obvious when disobedience occurs, divine grace provides forgiveness and breaks the control of sin unto ultimate victory.

When Paul claims that we "are not under law" (note, there is no definite article "the" in the Greek), he does not discount the Mosaic Law as worthless, for, although its curse has been removed in Christ (Col. 2:14), its figures, types and principles of teaching remain. A spiritual warrior will observe the benefits to be gained by the instruction of the Law (Gal. 3:24), and allow its illustrations to find effect in life. By that means the Law drives us to appreciate the gift of grace.

True Baptism Necessitates a Change of Masters — vv. 15-23

Paul now describes the power and influence of the two Masters: Flesh and Spirit. Not only do they make demands upon their adherents, but also reward conscientious service. Those who serve Flesh will reap their due wages; whereas those who commit themselves to the warfare of the Spirit, will be abundantly rewarded beyond their expectations.

VERSE 15

"What then" — Since Paul has shown that Christ's obedience and sacrifice has delivered us from the power of sin and death, what does that imply for us?

The question which follows may well have come from the Judaisers! Having read the statement of v. 1, then the further, more intimate aspect of the subject, in v. 14, it is not difficult to imagine Paul's adversaries in a state of agitation: "Because God has promised to forgive sin, are you saying that God will *not* judge us according to our conduct as required by His law, but will only judge us as worthy of His goodness?" The *legalistic* Judaiser is now offended! But this is only because he has not carefully followed the apostle's reasoning. Paul now proceeds to elaborate upon the conclusion he has advanced in verse 14.

"Shall we sin" — This is different from the previous question in v. 1. Paul there posed the query: "Shall we continue *in* (the) sin?" In that place the noun *hamartia* occurs, indicating sin as an accepted way of life (the same noun occurs in 2Thes. 2:3 for "the *man* of *[the] sin:*" one who is not merely a sinner, but

who is a *representative* of sin; a "professional" sinner!). It deals with the permanent environment of sin, its habitual continuity in the sphere of sin. Now he asks: "Are we to continue *to* sin?" using the verb *hamartano,* relating to single acts of personal, individual disobedience. The question thus signifies: Can we plan for a life of occasional sin, seeing we are under the compassionate sceptre of Grace? The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "Does the fact that we are living by grace and not by law mean that we are free to sin?" The answer is a decisive, No! (see ch. 13:14).

Paul's words cannot be taken to mean that God refuses to forgive sins which are confessed, repented of, and abandoned. He is dealing with a frame of mind that desires to practise sin in any form, either habitually or individually. Having such an attitude would debar a person from the service of Christ to which he has been called.

"Because we are not under the law but under grace?" — The definite article "the" is not in the text. The Judaisers might complain that by Paul's supposed dereliction of the law, he allows for the believer to commit acts of sin without the judgment of the law being exacted against the sinner; thus, "since we always have grace to rely upon" might not an occasional indulgence in sin, a lapse now and then, be one of the privileges of grace? But is this so? Paul exclaims:

"God forbid" — *Me genoito,* "May it never be!" (NASB). See notes on ch. 3:4, Paul gives no opportunity for sin to be committed in order to elevate and magnify grace. Divine favor is extended for the purpose of forgiveness and restoration to His regard; not for the benefit of sinners to continue in their weaknesses.

Grace is not more lenient than law, but is actually stricter in its demands, calling forth an unbounding service in love (Jn. 14:21-24; Gal. 5:13; 6:7-8). Law might call forth a *fear* of sin, but grace will create a *hatred* of it. Law will develop a fear of God's judgments; grace will forge a fear of offending Him. Though the believer might sin, he will not provide for it in allowing for planned occasional sin (see Mat. 6:24). Therefore he does not say, "I can sin because grace will cover it!" Such a philosophy will receive the severe rebuke: "How is that possible! It should never be."

Nor does grace replace the need for obedience to God. Rather, the exercise of grace by God implies a need for greater loyalty to Yahweh by those who are recipients of that grace. Loyalty places strict demands upon those who desire to demonstrate this to God.

VERSE 16

"Know ye not" — Paul now calls their attention to an obvious rule of life that must govern their attitude and actions. He uses this expression to emphasise the principles of Truth of which they should be aware: "Do you not know?" See similar expressions in ch. 2:4, 18; 3:19; 5:3; 6:3, 6, 9, 16; 7:1, 14; 8:22, 28; 11:2 ("wot"); 13:11.

Ignorance cannot be justified in these important matters and Paul warns the Romans that uncertainty of these principles of the atonement could prove fatal to their hopes of eternal salvation.

"That to whom ye yield yourselves servant to obey"— The Diaglott translates the word "yield" (Gr. *paristemi,* to cause to stand near, to place or present oneself before) as "present" (see notes on v. 13); thus to acknowledge oneself as being under command. The word "servants" is the Greek *doulos,* a bond-servant, who is owned by another, and whose will must be completely absorbed in that of his master.

"His servants ye are to whom ye obey" — Since you will be a bond-slave to one master or another, remember that there can be no half-way attitude in your loyalty and fidelity. As a bond-slave remember that you possess no rights nor privileges of your own, and must be content merely to serve your master." Thus, he is either a slave of Sin (the gratification of the flesh) or a slave of Obedience (justification in Christ). In this sense "sin" and "obedience" do not merely represent our

thoughts and actions, but most especially the particular *Power* which has dominion over us, and whose bidding we have committed ourselves to obey.

"Whether of sin unto death" — Here is sufficient ground for making the correct decision, for a bond-slave of Sin is not merely a sinner, but one who is enslaved to the lustful demands of the flesh. In this verse the word "unto" is the Greek *eis: towards.* Sin is here used metonymically for the evil proclivities in the flesh, inherent in the condemned nature we bear. Such has the power to lead us to death, and without the intervention of the Spirit-Word, mankind would inevitably die and remain eternally in the death-state (v. 23). Those who obey the master called Sin (Jn. 8:34), are committed to gratifying the lusts of the flesh. This may be manifested in a complete abandonment of all restraint (as shown in the world of Gentilism), or in a ritual observance of law ungoverned by the principle of faith (as seen in religious asceticism). Though seeming to be religious, such are actually serving Sin! In Col. 2:20 Paul describes them as "subject to ordinances," being committed to personal sacrifice for the aggrandisement of their own religious achievements. Such, he says, follow "the commandments and doctrines of men" (v. 22). James describes those who "*seem* to be religious" (ch. 1:26), but whose devotions are self-centred, and all their professions of godliness are "vain."

"Or of obedience unto righteousness" — Paul does not express the exact antithesis to " sin unto *death,* " which would be" obedience unto *life.* " If he did, he would have given credence to the erroneous theory that our obedience can earn us eternal life. Though in Jesus the principle of perfect obedience provided him with a right to resurrection, his "servants" cannot obtain that because they cannot claim faultlessness. Slaveship to the master Sin automatically brings death; but servitude to obedience does not automatically confer life, because we are, in some degree, defiled by transgression, and must seek salvation through sacrifice.

Recognising this, Paul uses the term "obedience unto (Gr. *eis: towards, in the direction of; to the end that; for the purpose of*) righteousness." We must clearly understand precisely where our allegiance will lead us. This choice faces every individual enlightened with the Truth: he can serve only *one* of the two king-masters, for "no man can serve *two* masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other..." (Mat. 6:24).

In offering to willingly serve the gracious master, Obedience, personal failings must be acknowledged; but since those servants hate sin and love righteousness (Psa. 11:7; 33:5; 45:7; 119:140; Heb. 1:9), Obedience confers the privilege of "justification" (imputed righteousness). The servants of Obedience are therefore elevated in their status, and await in hope for the gracious gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23), because their lives have become devoted to living according to the righteousness of God.

VERSE 17

"But God be thanked" — The liberty that believers now possess as the slaves of Obedience should cause them to express gratitude for their exalted position. God has purchased them from master Sin, and brought them into His profitable employ. This was the apostolic experience, following the repentance and baptism of about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41, 47). Thanksgiving for this privilege was a common exercise amongst the believers for the great favor of divine servitude and benefit (ch. 3:8-9; 8:8; 13:52; 15:3; 16:25). It is a characteristic of Paul, found over 35 times, to bring to mind the blessings which flow from Yahweh to the believers, and their need to always remember His great goodness with thanksgiving (cp. ch. 1:8; 16:4; Acts 28:15; 1Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16, etc.). Thanksgiving is the first principle of divine worship, in seeking fellowship with God: "Praise ye Yahweh. O give thanks unto Yahweh; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. 106:1).

"That ye were the servants of Sin"

— "Ye were once slaves of sin" (J.B.). This had been their state in the days when they were "without Christ," and therefore, by nature, automatically commit themselves to performing the works of the flesh. But Christ's brethren have been rescued from their former state — and that is cause for thanksgiving to God (1Cor. 6:11; 12:2; Eph. 2:11-12).

"But ye have obeyed from the heart" — The NIV has "you wholeheartedly obeyed." The word "obeyed" is from the Gr. *hupakouo (hupo,* under; *akouo,* to hear). Their commitment to Obedience was not merely an outward profession, but they were motivated by an inward conviction. This is a warm and encouraging assessment from the apostle: the Roman believers had committed themselves totally to Christ; they had obeyed the gospel "wholeheartedly" because they *knew* it to be the Truth. But how long did this ecclesia so remain? How many of the brethren to whom Paul wrote this epistle, became corrupted by the influence of false brethren who subverted many by perverting the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:6-7)?

To the Jewish mind the heart is the symbol for the intellect; it is used to express complete dedication, a fulsome embrace. It incorporates a sincere feeling based upon a discernment of a situation (cp. 1Sam. 1:13; 2:1). Those with a "pure heart," which indicates a singleminded attitude to godliness, are blessed (Mat. 5:8), and fulfil the spirit of the law (1Tim. 1:5).

"That form of doctrine" — The Diaglott has: "that mould of instruction." Rotherham has: "ye became obedient *out of* the heart *unto* the mould of teaching *into which* ye were delivered" (our emphasis). Almost certainly the word "unto" (*eis)* should be understood as "into," as being placed in a mould. The process describes the way in which the power of the Word can transform individuals: the Truth enters their intellect, and from there being properly digested and understood, the result was poured into the mould provided by apostolic teaching. The mould is that of the Christ-character, which is God Manifestation.

The word "form" is the Gr. *tupos,* which means a casting mould, that into which a molten liquid might be poured to fill a predetermined shape. Paul's teaching is specifically designed to lead his followers to salvation. They were to be "conformed" to the gospel mould, and to shape their understanding and life-style accordingly. Thus, the doctrine (Gr. *didache: teaching, instruction*) was to be the pattern of life. Moses was required to build the tabernacle, which represented God's principles manifested in flesh, "after their pattern which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 25:40). It was to conform to the divine specifications, and no variation was permitted. Similarly, the gospel truth cannot be watered down, or altered to please oneself or others. There had to be a cheery and hearty obedience to all that Paul communicated to them, and those who would "cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" (Rom. 16:17) were to be avoided.

"Which was delivered you" — The Diaglott and Rotherham more correctly render the text: "into which you were delivered" (see margin) rather than the doctrine being delivered unto us. The "doctrine" (instruction of Truth) had "delivered them into" servitude to Christ, and to him faithful service had been rendered. The Truth had liberated them from the lordship of the flesh delivering them to become bound under the dominion of Christ (cp. ch. 6:18; 1Cor. 7:22; Acts 26:18). The "mould of instruction" into which they "were delivered" was a protection against the encroachments of sin. As Noah was safely deposited by the angels into the ark (Gen. 7:7,16), so the ecclesial sheepcote (Jn. 10:1, 16) should be a firm safeguard against the "wiles of the diabolos" (Eph. 6:11). It will remain of the proper shape and form whilst it retains the "mould of instruction" presented in the Word.

VERSE 18

"Being then made free from sin" — Not personal transgression, for that is still

a present experience (ch. 7:15-23; 1Jn. 2:1-2), but being released from the dominion of Sin. Such are no longer servants committed to follow the bidding of master Sin.

The JB has: "You may have been freed from the slavery of sin, but only to become slaves of righteousness." The power of the gospel has enabled us to change masters, but we must understand what this means: We must now give the same total, unswerving loyalty and obedience to Christ, that we previously gave to king Sin. The false concept that, because we are under Grace, Christ does everything and we do nothing except "believe," to become saved already, has no place in apostolic teaching. From the immoral and unspiritual obligations we were pleased to acknowledge and perform in the service of Sin, we must now turn to fulfilling the *moral* and *spiritual* obligations and responsibilities which Christ requires us to honor. A life of holiness must now replace a life of unholiness; righteousness supplants wrongdoing; obedience to Christ's commandments is performed instead of lawlessness. Then, by conforming to this divine formula, Christ becomes "formed" in us (Gal. 4:19).

"Ye became the servants of righteousness" — The moment of their baptism converted their servitude to that of their new master: Righteousness. The Psalmist exulted in this great liberty in a prophecy that speaks of Christ, as the great exemplar of those who should follow in "his mould." "O Yahweh, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant and the son of Thine handmaid: Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving " (Psa. 116:16-17). Like the servant whose love for his master required his ear to be bored through as evidence of his voluntary desire to "serve him for ever" (Exo. 21:6), so the servant of righteousness is fully committed to the cause of his master. His servitude is the cause of "thanksgiving" (Psa. 116:17; Heb. 13:15).

The passive tense used by Paul in this statement indicates that we have willingly surrendered ourselves to be "poured" into the "mould" of the Truth; to become "shaped" by the Christ-mould. Thus, to become bond-slaves to the cause of Christ is not something which we can achieve, or demand; it is a change which is wrought by God in us. Hence: "God be thanked!" (v. 17).

VERSE 19

"I speak after the manner of men" — Paul illustrates divine lessons by the circumstances of natural life. The *Jer. Bible* expresses the verse: "If I may use human terms to help your natural weakness: as once you put your bodies at the service of vice and immorality, so now you must put them at the service of righteousness for your sanctification." Paul

The Infirmity of the Flesh

Paul's comment in Rom. 6:19 speaks of the inability to perceive the important and thought-provoking expressions of the Word. Some in the Roman ecclesia suffered from this infirmity, and could be easily influenced into error. There is always a danger that brethren who may be quite eloquent, can lead themselves and others astray from the Truth due to this basic human weakness. There were many such problems amongst the first century believers (see Gal. 3:1-4, etc). Since the revival of the Truth in the last days, similar tragic problems have developed with devastating results, as ecclesial history distinctly shows. The lesson to be drawn is evident, and worthy of the utmost consideration: Always carefully distinguish between the outward form of a doctrine, and the meticulously presented reasoning within Scripture. Whilst we are, indeed, "bond-slaves" to Christ, this does not mean that we abandon all faculties which enable us to discern spiritual truths in contrast to philosophical or emotive conclusions which are not in harmony with apostolic teaching. — ***J. Ullman.***

understands their natural weakness in perceiving these principles, and therefore endeavors to explain them as simply as possible. The Scriptures contain many such analogies, and teach that heaven's principles can be observed in earth's actions! By noting the common experiences of life, Paul desires to make himself better understood. Thus he expounded: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (1Cor. 15:46). Though God's thoughts and ideals are higher than normal experience (Isa. 55:8-9), He has provided in His creation examples to illustrate the divine. This is seen in the principle of marriage (Eph. 5:32), in fatherhood (3:14-15), in resurrection (1Cor. 15:42), in family discipline (Heb. 12:9), etc.

"Because of the infirmity of your flesh" — The word "infirmity" is from *astheneia,* and indicates dullness, a lack of strength, an inability to produce results. The statement does not refer to physical weakness, but to their inability to comprehend and reason upon the matter presented. He was speaking of the exalted divine teachings compatible with the Spirit-mind, but it is obvious that any who may raise such a question as that stated in v. 15, must be lacking in spiritual perception. Therefore he must bring the Truth before them in such a way that they might easily understand it. Generally, the natural mind is only alive to material benefits and self-interests, and therefore Paul uses common expressions to lift their consciousness to higher planes.

For so long they had been in servitude to king Sin, and fulfilled his bidding — their minds were "dimmed," feeble, and weakened. Therefore, to educate them in spiritual things, he employs an expression from every-day life: the familiar picture of a master and slave. It is important to develop the spiritual mind, and to encourage appreciation of higher ideals.

This is not a natural ability. Mankind generally prefers to indulge its sensual tastes and gratify the instincts of the flesh. Even in the pleasure of music, literature, conversation, a person can lift his appreciation to a better standard of expression.

It is to be regretted that the literature of yesteryear, for example, that folk then found easy to comprehend, is now difficult for present-day students. Whereas *Elpis Israel* was originally written for the unenlightened, it is today often described as a difficult book for Christadelphians! With all the technological advances of the present day, the simple skills of understanding, perception and mental prowess are deteriorating. The "infirmity (weakness) of the flesh" is often evident in the attitudes of the present generation. Lack of zeal, and of a humble, studious disposition is doubtless due in large measure to the pressures of "the last days." But such pressures must be resisted. The only real power to generate enthusiasm for salvation is to be found in the Word. We should encourage one another in that direction.

"For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness" — The tense is in the momentary past, as with the second occurrence in v. 13. Paul is speaking of our natural weakness to surrender ourselves to sin, before becoming enlightened with the Truth in Christ. The TCNT renders this: "You once gave up the various parts of your bodies to the service of impurity, and of wickedness upon wickedness." King Sin had controlled and therefore limited their intellectual development.

As sinners, we once used the members of our body, the senses of hearing, seeing, speaking, doing, etc., to fully gratify the flesh (1Cor. 6:10-11; Eph. 2:2-3,11-12). The word "uncleanness" (Gr. *akatharsia,* "the" uncleanness) signifies that which is impure, and here relates to the condition of our nature. Being born into a "constitution of sin" (Rom. 3:18-19), the natural laws of our mind and emotions of the flesh lead inevitably to sin.

"And to iniquity unto iniquity" — The word *anomia* ("iniquity") refers to actions of wickedness. It is used in 1Jn. 3:4 as "transgressions of the law" (Diaglott: "iniquity"), and is better translated as "lawlessness" (as in the RV). It describes the attitude of one who outright-

ly rejects the application of divine discipline. He may not discard the Scriptures, but he claims that its judgments do not apply "in his case"! This is described as "a sin unto death" (1Jn. 5:16), for it is without repentance, and therefore lacks the basis for God's forgiveness. Under the dominion of king Sin, all his subjects participate in a state of complete lawlessness; they are absolutely committed to fulfilling Sin's demands in every respect. Therefore, the lawlessness continues to manifest itself in further acts of blasphemy and sin.

"Even so now" — Paul injects an urgent appeal: "I want you to clearly understand what you should *now* be doing with your lives!" We cannot delay the moment to apply the divine principles; it is demanded of us by our new Master to immediately obey his instructions.

"Yield your members servants to righteousness" — The Diaglott has: "So now present your members bound to (the) righteousness for sanctification." The members that were once used to gratify the flesh (the sense of hearing, seeing, speaking, doing, etc. — see notes on v. 13), must now be committed to the services of Righteousness, our new slave-owner. The demands of this service require cultivation of "clean hands and pure hearts" (Psa. 24:3-4), of renewed and united minds (Rom. 12:2; 15:6), and of a way of life that "keepeth instruction" (Pro. 10:17).

"Unto holiness" — Holiness, or sanctification, means to "set apart," to fulfil the instruction of Righteousness. The word "unto" (Gr. *eis)* signifies "towards." Everything we perform must have "holiness" in mind — it must be the objective before us, directing every decision in accordance with it. This principle was constantly paraded before Israel. Although the nation had been separated from Egypt nationally, every individual had yet to conform to that same principle personally. Thus the high priest prominently displayed on his forehead (the mind) a plate inscribed: "Holiness to Yahweh" (Exo. 28:36). Such holiness must derive from a mental understanding of what is required, and a moral application of it in life. This is then demonstrated in worship (1Chr. 16:29; Psa. 96:9) and praise (Psa. 48: 1).

These principles will be illustrated in the millennium by a highway, called the "way of holiness," by which the righteous will proceed to the temple for worship. This "separate way" emphasises the divine requirement for worshippers to forsake the pathway of iniquity and to follow that of righteousness. Similarly, in individual lives the need for holiness will be demonstrated. Even when evil thoughts are about to be revealed in action, there will be a voice pointing to the narrow path of holiness: "this is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21). In this Yahweh is honored and His way exalted.

VERSE 20

"For when ye were the servants of sin" — Observe the contrast: the one state described in v. 21; the other in v. 22. Verse 23 then contrasts the outcomes arising from the two opposing conditions.

They were formerly bondslaves in the employ of the master Sin, doing the bidding of the flesh unrestrained by divine wisdom. The Diaglott Gr. text has the emphatic article: "*the* sin" to emphasise that it is the principle of sin, not merely personal transgression, which Paul here describes.

"Ye were free from righteousness" — In their former state, they were not at all under the influence of righteousness, but were entirely devoted to sin. Human nature has no inherent goodness, and is unable, of itself, to produce righteousness. It has been born into a constitution of sin, and will remain under the dominion of unrighteousness unless enlightened with the Word of Truth, and obedient thereto (Gen. 6:11-12; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21).

VERSE 21

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" — What reward or advantage was discovered in the former way of life? Did servitude to the flesh render any benefit at all?

Such pleasure is limited (Heb. 11:25) by frustration, disappointment and, ultimately, by death without hope (Eph. 2:12). Paul warns that "works of darkness" are "unfruitful" (5:11).

The word for "fruit" (*karpos)* especially relates to *ripe* fruit; i.e. "whilst enslaved to sin, what did you ever produce that was fit and ready for use, or of any real worth to yourselves or others?"

"Those things whereof ye are now ashamed" is in the *middle voice*, denoting something that is done for, or relates to, oneself, personally. Paul urges us to look back upon our lives *before* we came into the Truth. Looking inwardly at ourselves we will admit that we failed to produce anything honoring to God. Rather, in so many respects, we produced that which was decidedly God-dishonoring. Paul's probing question begs to be answered: Did you receive any benefit from those things in which you served Sin? Memory and conscience must reply! As the Word acts upon the mind, "shame" brings forth an awareness of deep humility before God, and "thanks" to Him for deliverance from "those things" (v. 17).

The word "ashamed" is the Gr. *epaischunomai*, which has the idea of facing confusion, shame, disgrace. The believers now recognised the folly of their former way of life (cp. 1Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:12), and, having transposed their allegiance to king Righteousness, should not provide any allowance for Sin. There were no profitable "fruits" seen when they were previously, before their conversion, fully committed to Sin; nor will any be obtained now by a random encounter with its ways.

"For the end of those things is death" — Notice the subtle change in the narrative. Whereas the earlier verses (11-20) dealt mainly with the questions of obligation and responsibility, Paul now turns to matters of consequence — i.e., penalty and reward. The ends accrueing from each of these two contrasting states (serving king Sin or king Righteousness) is certainly different, as the apostle now demonstrates in the concluding section of this chapter.

The word "end" is the Gr. *telos*, defined by Vine as "the final issue or result of a state or process." Servitude to Sin ends only in oblivion (see v. 23). The world offers no hope whatever, and those who enjoy "the pleasures of sin" find they last only "for a season" (Heb. 11:25). In the end man faces frustration and disappointment, unless he has secured a hope beyond the grave.

It may appear to some that the pleasures of this life are well worth the sacrifice and effort required to attain them. Asaph was envious at the prosperity of the wicked, until he "went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Psa. 73:3,17). He realised that the blessings of life come only to those who rely upon Yahweh for the present and future (vv. 18-28).

VERSE 22

"But now" — Paul writes with a sense of great joy. There is a clear line of distinction between the old way of life and the new.

"Being made free from sin" — See notes on v. 18. The Diaglott has: "having been emancipated from sin." Paul emphasises by repetition the liberated position the believers now enjoy; it is quite different from that described in v. 20.

"And become servants to God" — The statement is in the passive tense: "and having been enslaved to God" (Diaglott). It is an equivalent expression to "became the servants of righteousness"(v. 18), for the principle of righteousness is seen only in God (Phil. 3:9; 2Pet. 1:1) and is foreign to natural man (Jas. 1:20; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:7, 10). If this is our true state, it presupposes that holiness, as a way of life, has already become our practice. It is the "fruits" of such a way of life which Paul here wishes to emphasise.

"Ye have your fruit unto holiness" — The antithesis of v. 21, where the practice of sin brings forth fruit destined to destruction. The "fruit" of righteousness comes from the Word working within the individual and continues its healthy glow "unto" *(eis: towards)* holiness. Fruit is the

result of cultivation and labor, and, in this case, fulfils the typical mitre of the high priest: "Holiness to Yahweh" (Exo. 28:36). The word "holiness" is the same as in v. 19 *(hagiasmos)* and is always rendered "sanctification" in the RV. It signifies a state wherein men and women have become separated to God, in which they are enabled to be cleansed and purified through His influence directing their lives.

"And the end everlasting life" — There is a note of potential triumph in these words. All who strive to remain faithful to their calling in Christ Jesus will be stimulated and encouraged at the prospect which is set before them. Despite the sufferings, the difficulties, the trials of life, they learn to patiently bear all things, aware of the *end* which the future holds. Everlasting life will mean an end to suffering and trial. The wonder and glory of divine nature beckons, as it were, encouragingly to the patient, oppressed saint.

Contrast this expression with v. 21: the poisonous fruit of sin brings death. The same word for "end" is again used here: *telos*, the final and ultimate result. Everlasting life is revealed in the atoning work of Christ (2Tim. 1:10) and is obtained by diligent, continuous and faithful labor (ch. 2:15); ultimately replacing the present condition of mortality (1Cor. 15:53).

VERSE 23

"For the wages of sin" — Wages are given for services performed; they must be earned. The Greek word *opsonion* signifies the meagre rations granted to a soldier, sometimes in food (note the other occurrences of this word in Lk. 3:14; 1Cor. 9:17; 2Cor. 11:8). Paul continues his description of the soldier under service: see his words in v. 13, where he used a military term to describe the battle of life. Having shown that Sin is a dictator, seeking the absolute loyalty of his servants to his army, Paul describes the miserable pay that the flesh doles out to the soldiers in his service. The same word relates to the pittance that a slave-owner might throw to the slave that did his bidding.

"(Is) death" — After a lifetime of service, all that is obtained by the slaves of Sin is death, the cessation of the life they sought to enjoy (ch. 5:12)! This was the wage, as a matter of debt or obligation paid for the gratification of flesh, under the terms of Sin's employment. It was originally contracted between God and Adam (Gen. 2:17), and extended to all in the same service (Rom. 5:19).

Why does Sin hold out "death" as the reward it offers? The answer is seen in vv. 16-22; Sin is disobedient (v. 16), unclean and lawless (v. 19), shameful (v. 21), opposed to God (v. 22). With these characteristics, it shows neither mercy nor generosity. Sin is a hard and ruthless monarch. What else can it offer, but death!

"But the gift of God" — The word "gift" (Gr. *charisma*, Diag.: "gracious gift") is contrasted with the "death-wages" paid by Master Sin. A gift is not earned, but is given voluntarily by another. Thus, the slave-owner called Righteousness is revealed as generous and caring for those under his employ. Those who faithfully serve him will ultimately receive this gift which is far beyond their due.

But there seems to be an anomaly in Paul's terms used here. Why is the reward paid by Sin called "wages" whilst that which God gives is termed a "gift"? The answer is important. Sin pays mankind what they deserve; that which Yahweh gives is undeserved and unmerited. We cannot *earn* eternal life. God is a far better Master for Sin will only pay us what we earn — no more, no less — but God will give us that which is gratuitous, not owed by Him in any respect whatever. The immeasurable mercy and benevolence of Yahweh is summarised in this expression.

"(Is) eternal life" — The Greek *aionian zoe* is rendered "everlasting life" in v. 22. This is the gracious gift of God. Although death was imposed against Adam if he were to disobey (Gen. 2:17); he was not offered eternal life, except by inference (cp. v. 16). It was possible for him to secure immortality, by partaking of the Tree of Life (3:22), and it was therefore originally a matter of his own inquiry rather than the specific direction of God.

Immortality (1Tim. 6:16) will be granted to God's people by a change of their nature from mortality to immortality (2Pet. 1:4; 1Cor. 15:53). It is described as the power of "a glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), in contrast to the "vile" condition of our present life. Eternal life will be an amazing experience, causing its recipients to express their heartfelt gratitude to the gracious Giver of its benefits (Jas. 1:17). No more weariness, sickness, illness; gone will be the temptations, the failures, the disappointments; every single moment will be in joyous harmony with the divine Mind, able to express its wisdom, and to experience the unfolding of the eternal purpose.

"Through Jesus Christ our Lord" — The Gr. *en*, signifies "in" (v. 11). The gift of life will be available only to those who remain "in" the sphere of his influence. The term "*in* Christ" implies the atoning work of the Father in the Son, to provide redemption for the race. Only by living "in" Christ and "in" what has been accomplished in him, for the glory of God, can we hope to escape our greatest enemy, king Sin. The law, which proclaimed our condemnation because we could not keep it, no longer has power to deliver us up to its judgmental verdict. Instead of "earning" the wages paid by Sin, it is far better to seek the "gift" which only comes from God. The only form of "slavery" that men may enter upon which is totally worthwhile, and worthy of every sacrifice which it may entail, is the service of Christ. Having been "bought with a price" (1Cor. 7:23) and being aware of what the "price" involved, how could any bond-slave repudiate a slave-master of such unimpeachable integrity, such great love and tender mercy? If our lives are given in service to Righteousness, it is the mercy of Yahweh revealed in His grace, that may lead ultimately to our eternal redemption.

Note the use of the Lord's name and titles which are most fitting for the conclusion of this section. Due majestic honor is given to the Master in his glorious accomplishment as the Word made flesh, and as the Son of God. The name "Lord Jesus" (Heb. *Adon Yahoshua)* signifies "Yahweh Saves through the Lord that He has appointed" (Psa. 110:1), whilst "Christ" (Heb. *Messiah)* signifies "the Anointed." It speaks of the elevated position of the Master, as the means by which he leads others to salvation (Heb. 2:20-12).

With this expression of triumphant assurance of victory, Paul concludes his description of the contrasting influence of sin and righteousness; of disobedience and obedience; of death and life.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the bearer of the gift, as the Father's highest representative to the human race. "God be thanked!" (Rom. 6:17).

Questions That Must Be Answered

Paul's opponents might argue that chapter 6 has not covered the issue of "grace" to the point of finality, and therefore his reasoning would be invalid being incomplete. Why? Because in chapter 6 Paul has not touched on the fact that *the law* pronounced a curse upon all who sinned. Thus it may be argued, our surrender to the bondage of sin brings a just reward: death.

But some questions still remain unanswered. Cannot we find grace through the keeping of the law? Has Paul presented any argument thus far to indicate that we should renounce all hope of deliverance from sin through the power of the law? And if God has released us from the fetters of the law, does that not imply that God has failed, insofar as His own law is concerned?

While these questions remained, Paul's adversaries would not be content with the bold statements of ch. 6:14-15. "Sin," they would argue, "may be conquered by keeping the law." Paul must now develop the reasoning set forth in ch. 6 to show that this assumption is an allusion.

Chapter 7 expands upon the principle already established in ch. 6:7-13, that *death* cancels all claims which law might make upon an individual. Hence, whilst it is true that "where no law is, there is no transgression," it is equally true that law cannot operate without a subject upon which it may make demands. A man who is alive and responsible has an obligation to know right from wrong, and to think and act accordingly. When he dies, his responsibility dies with him. A man who is dead cannot be charged with guilt, nor can he be condemned. His relationship to such matters has ceased to be operative. Thus, as Paul has shown in ch. 6 that we must become "dead" to sin, he now proceeds to demonstrate that God's "grace," exercised on our behalf, causes us to "become dead" to the power and curse of the law, which is no longer able to leave us without hope.

In addition, the apostle must present further reasoning which his opponents will be unable to counter. He argues that, even if it be conceded that deliverance from sin is possible through the keeping of a divine law — which it is not — mankind would still be left to face another law, which he cannot combat. It is a "law inherent in the members;" i.e., it is "in" the "flesh." This terminology defines the death-stricken nature which all humanity has borne since the fall in Eden. Even though "the law (of Moses) is spiritual," Paul admits that he was "carnal, sold under sin." This was a "law" leading inevitably to death, a law which flesh could never defeat; a law which could be conquered only by the power of God, manifested to sinful humanity through His "grace."

The apostle humbly acknowledges this: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (verse 25).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LAW OF SIN IN OUR MEMBERS

Although the believer has found himself in the employ of a different Captain (Rom.6:13) and Slave owner (v. 18) from the one he served in the days before his baptism, he is still faced with the deficiency of his own nature. His baptism into Christ has not removed the proneness to sin which is resident "in his members" (v.13) and which continues to affect his desire to perfectly obey his new Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Though he has changed masters, his nature remains as formerly; only his mind is changed by the knowledge of the divine requirements. True, his baptism brought him into covenant relationship with the Father, who is immortality itself (1Tim. 6:16), and thereby, provisionally, can be said to be leading ultimately to divine nature. But, in reality, he finds the law of sin still powerful within himself. Indeed, he now recognises its power more than when he was naturally driven to perform its bidding. Knowing that the flesh is evil, and prone to sin, he finds himself in a struggle for life. Will he eventually succeed in the victory of his Faith over his Nature? This depends upon his reaction to two remarkable laws under which he now finds himself. Paul commences this section by outlining these principles upon the basis of the law of marriage.

Our Glorious Freedom

In Christ Jesus faithful believers of the gospel are accounted new creatures — as members of the new creation, of which Christ is the head (2Cor. 5:17; Rev. 3:14). Prospectively, they have passed from death to eternal life (Rom. 8:1-2; 1Jn. 5:11-12). For them the terror of all law has ceased. They are "complete" in the Son of God's love, as the result of his perfect obedience and sacrificial work. The eyes of the Father are now centred on that side of their character wherein they exhibit the moral attributes of the divine nature. For Christ's sake all their imperfections and shortcomings are mercifully pardoned. What a glorious freedom or liberty is that of the saints! But it is all dependent on their walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Shall we, who are saints, foolishly destroy our standing in Christ Jesus by acting contrary to our Father's will? Rather let our condemnation-less position increase our desire and exertions to please Him. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26). —***A. T. Jannaway.***

The Seventh Chapter of Romans

As Expounded by Brother Roberts

THIS CHAPTER forms part of a chain of reasoning, but may nevertheless be considered apart without disadvantage, if its relation to the chain is recognised. It presents an illustration of Peter's remark about the epistles of Paul: "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction" (2Pet. 3:16).

To Whom it is Written

There are statements in it that are only intelligible on a just apprehension of human nature in all its relations. Those who grasp only some of these, are baffled by some of those statements. It requires spiritual-mindedness to see their truth or understand them. Carnal men do not know what carnal nature is: anomalous though it may appear, it requires spiritual discernment to be able to know and recognise "the flesh" in all its significations. A lion does not know itself a lion, though it be such; man only knows it. Even so a carnal man does not know what the carnal nature is, which can only be discerned by the Spirit and by those who are taught thereby. To carnal men, this spiritual discernment is only a thing to laugh at, but it is nonetheless a palpable reality, which enables those possessing it to understand Paul, and to endorse Paul's experiences as their own. This seventh chapter of Romans is almost a touchstone by which a man's whereabouts in spiritual understanding may be ascertained. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The seventh chapter of Romans is particularly addressed "to them that know the law (of Moses)" (v. 1); because the argument to be employed was to hang on an illustration derived from the law, and to relate to their position in reference to the law.

Delivered from the Curse of the Law

The first fact laid down is, that the jurisdiction of the law over a man extended to the full term of his life. However long he might live, he could never reach an age when he would be free. "The law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth." Death put an end to this dominion, for no law could reach dead men. This is illustrated by the case of a husband to whom a wife was bound so long as he lived, but at whose death she was free to be married to another. Her husband died really, and she died legally, to the law holding them in union as man and wife; and the woman was at liberty to form a new connection. Paul applies both features of the illustration to the case in hand: "Ye, my brethren, are become dead to the law." How? "By the body of Christ." How came they to be related to the body of Christ? By being

"baptised into Jesus Christ" (ch. 6:3), and so becoming members of his body (Eph. 5:30). What had the body of Christ to do with death? It was hung on Calvary till death invaded it. What had this to do with escaping the jurisdiction of the law? Christ was made under the law, subject to death like his brethren (Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:9, 14-16). Therefore, when he died under the curse of the law, the jurisdiction of the law ceased; and when he rose again, he was "another" man in relation to what he had been before: a free man; by marriage with whom, we may obtain freedom also.

Is this what Paul means by the illustration of a widow being married to a new husband? Yes. He says: "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be *married* to ANOTHER." To whom? "To him who is raised from the dead." Wouldn't it have been sufficient to be married to the first Christ — Christ before crucifixion? Yes, if Renunciationism *[also called "The Clean Flesh" Heresy, a modern revival of the doctrine condemned in 1Jn. 4:3; 2Jn. 7 —Ed.]* were the truth; for that teaches a free Christ before he became so by death and resurrection. But according to God's wisdom, it would not have been sufficient, for he was not then free. Is it to the dead Christ we are married? No: "To him who is raised from the dead," partaking whose death in baptism, we also partake of his purchased freedom from the law of sin and death. The imputation of being baptised into "a condemned Christ" is one of the slang vulgarisms of Renunciationism carrying weight only with the simple.

THE PURPOSE OF THE DELIVERANCE

The object of this way of God is stated to be "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." This is no chance saying or rhetorical finish to a sentence. It defines a principle and an object. It touches the very marrow of the plan of salvation. The object of that plan is that the glory of the goodness that will come by it may be directly and proximately and apparently due to Yahweh, and that the glory of the creature may be excluded. It is in one place expressed by Paul thus: "That we should be to *the praise of his glory,*" and again, *"To the praise of the glory of his grace."*

Had salvation been given as a reward of merit, there would have been something for the flesh to glory in: fruit brought forth in such a connection, would have been fruit unto ourselves; but "the law having entered that the offence might abound," and all the world having thus become guilty and condemned, room is made for the abounding of grace or favor in our admission for forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake, in whom the law has been vindicated and fulfilled. Fruit brought forth by those occupying this position of favor in Christ, is "fruit unto God." They "show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1Pet. 2:9). They are God's husbandry (1Cor. 3:9); God's workmanship created (by Him) in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10). He has predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ *to Himself,* according to the good pleasure of His will *to the praise of the glory of His grace* (Eph. 1:5-6).

To this position they are called by the gospel (2Thes. 2:14). When called, they are "in the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6). The favor of being admitted to such a position is anterior to all "works." The works to come after will decide whether or not we are to continue in it, but in the first instance, the conferring of it is independent of our works. Here lies the solution of all apparent conflict in the writings of the apostles on the subject of grace and works. The opportunity of being saved is of faith that it might be by grace (Rom. 4:16), and it is of grace that it might be to the praise of God, to whom praise only truly belongs; and not to man who is powerless and empty; that we might bring forth fruit unto God and not to ourselves.

Paul in the Flesh

Verse 5 says: "*When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*" In the literal sense, Paul was still in the flesh when he wrote these words, as illustrated by such remarks as "though we walk *in the flesh*, we war not after the flesh" (2Cor. 10:3); "As many as have not known my face *in the flesh*" (Col. 2:1). But in his spiritual relations, he was no longer "in the flesh." He did not stand on the flesh; his hopes were not founded on its achievements; his friendship towards God was not based on its merits, but on God's favor in Christ. It was his doctrine, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8) because "all having sinned and come short of the glory of God" (v. 23), they were condemned already, and could not justify themselves from past sins by their good deeds. Hence, Paul did not and could not rest in the flesh as a ground of confidence. He describes himself and those who were with him, as those who rejoice in Christ Jesus, "and have *no confidence in the flesh*" (Phil. 3:3). But Paul once rested in the flesh, as is evident from this 5th verse: "*When* we were in the flesh." As he says in Phil. 3:4-5, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more:* circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee."

Before Paul saw Christ near Damascus, he was resting on his achievements under the law; he was then, spiritually, "in the flesh;" and his statement in the verse before us is, that "when he was in the flesh, the motions of sins which were *by the law* did work in his members to bring forth *fruit unto death.*" "But now," says he, "we are delivered from the law, THAT being dead wherein we were held (that is, the bondage of the law which held them, ended in Christ, on whom it expended its whole curse), that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." The law is styled "the letter" because of its being a matter of writing, whereas the liberty of the gospel was a matter of living message by the Spirit from the Father. To serve under the latter was a far more glorious thing than to stand in a written law, in sin-laden doubt. In this connection, we can understand Paul's language in 2Cor. 3:5-6, "Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for *the letter kil-*

leth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious... how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."

Paul not Unregenerate

But this argument about the law causing sin and bringing condemnation, suggests, on the face of it, that the law is a sinful thing.

Paul accordingly anticipates and answers the objection. "What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law." Here we must pause a moment to consider the "I" of this and the succeeding eighteen verses. Who is it? It would not be necessary to ask this superfluous question were it not for the class of interpreters who find it necessary to say that this "I" is not Paul, but (to use their language of Ashdod) "an unregenerate man" — an ideal personation of wickedness introduced by Paul, to illustrate the workings of sin. A very rapid glance is sufficient to show the erroneousness of this gratuitous suggestion.

The "I" of Paul's discourse is one who is wretched on account of his shortcomings (v. 24): this is not the condition of a man "dead in trespasses and sins." Paul's "I" thanks God at the prospect of deliverance through Christ (v. 25): which the typical sinner of the new theory could not do. Paul's "I" delights in the law of God after the inward man (v. 22): this does not the so-called "unregenerate man." Paul's "I" also is one who "would do good" (v. 21); who is conscious of a conflict between "the law of his mind" and "the law in his members; " who consents unto the law that it is good (v. 16); who has the will to perform it (v. 18), and who with the mind serves the law of God (v.25), in all which particulars the "I" differs totally from the man to whom his remarks are applied by the class in question.

Most obviously the "I" is Paul himself, as the connection requires, and as is conclusively proved by the last sentence of the soliloquy: "So then with the mind, *I myself* serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." Nothing but the requirements of a wrong theory could have suggested the violence of taking away these words from Paul, and putting them into the mouth of a so-called "unregenerate man."

Paul in Retrospect

But now comes the question how some of the statements are to be understood if Paul is the speaker.

This will be best answered by a close following of the statements, in the consideration of which, we shall find that *Paul speaks of himself at different stages of his life,* whence we obtain one clue to a right understanding. In answer to the question whether the law after all he had said, was not to be considered sinful, he says (as already quoted): "God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust (i.e., unlawful desire) except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet!" His object is to prove that the

law was a spiritual institution designed to make manifest the corruptness of human nature. Keeping this in view (which is stated in verse 14), it is easy to follow the argument. Paul's notions of sin were derived from the law; for if the law had not forbidden certain natural actions of the mind, he would have remained ignorant of sin in these directions, though fully exercised therein. As he says elsewhere: "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). His argument is"the law is spiritual; for it taught me what sin was." It made him aware of his tendency sin-wards. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead."

Here is a distinctly retrospective allusion — a reference to a past experience of Paul, which becomes more definite in the next three verses: "For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." As a child of the circumcision, rejoicing in the inherited privileges of Abrahamic extraction, Paul, in his early years, was alive, looking up to God with confidence, and forward with hope in the promises made to the fathers. But when the commandment came to him, on his arrival at maturity, that is, when he came as an adult under the operation of the law — when his faculties awoke and his mind opened to the full perception of what the law required, he experienced the revulsion of feeling described in these verses. He found himself condemned by the law which was ordained to, and to which he looked for, life.

But he puts not the blame on the law. It was the propensities native to himself that rebelled under the dictation of the law. The conclusion he draws from the premises is: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (v. 12). But he again recurs to the apparent paradox: "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid;" and in the next sentence he gives us the philosophy of the law, so to speak — a philosophy which is foolishness to the natural man, but in which, nevertheless, it is possible to discover a surpassing beauty. He states that its object was *that "sin might appear sin,* working death in me by that which is good; *that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful"* (v. 13). Sin (the natural rebelliousness of the human heart against the authority of God) was latent without the law. A man without command to do that which was disagreeable, or abstain from that which was pleasant to his natural impulses, could not be manifest either to himself or others in his real disposition towards God. He would be a sinner undeveloped for want of opportunity; innocent of transgression because of the absence of law, but certainly not a righteous man whose characteristic is submission to God. The object of the law was to make this latent sinner manifest. "The law entered *that the offence might abound"* (Rom. 5:20). It was added because of transgressions in this sense (Gal. 3:19), that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before

God (Rom. 3:10). It was a complicated system of exactions by which weak human nature was certain to become convicted in many transgressions. For this reason it is that Paul was able to say, "As many as are of the works of the law *are under the curse;* FOR it is written, Cursed is every one that *continueth not* IN ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

WHY GIVE A LAW MEN CANNOT KEEP?

Sport has been made of the fact that God gave a law that men were not able to keep. Son-of-Belial like, the questioner has dared the presumptuous question, Why should He do such a thing? It would be a sufficient answer to ask, "Hath not the potter power over the clay," to work it on any principle he chooses? It is easy to argue with apparent force against the principle in question. It is easy to ask, What would be thought of the man that should appoint his fellow a task impossible for him to accomplish, and then punish him for not performing it? It is easy to quote Pharaoh ordering bricks without supplying the material; but all this is nothing to the point. You cannot argue from such a transaction between man and man, to what it is between God and man. First, man has no power over, or right of property in his fellow, whereas man is the workmanship and the property of God; and He may do with man what man may not do with man; for who shall say to Him, What doest Thou? But the next thought is of even more consequence. Between man and man such a transaction, without any object beyond itself, would be tyrannical; whereas on the part of God, as an element in a process, by which great good is to be worked out, it is the form of wisdom and kindness. One man cutting off another man's leg with intention to maim, is a monster; with intent to save life from a dangerous malady, he is a benefactor. This illustrates the difference between the two, and demonstrates the shallowness of all arguments from man to God as to the working of this principle.

God gave a rigorous and burdensome law, that men might at last come to know how sinful they are, and how powerless to work out for themselves eternal good. Here it may be asked, Why did He allow man to get into such a state? Why didn't He so watch and hedge the beginning of things that man might have continued very good, and earned the divine favor by his unfailing compliance with the divine will? The answer is: that God might be exalted in salvation being a thing of His own favor. Again it may be asked, Why is it so very important that God should be exalted? Why not develop eternal society upon the principle so much applauded in the world, of self-reliance, independence, self-respect, etc. Here we touch the root and marrow of the whole subject. The recognition of God as the highest and best and the benefactor — direct, tender and cordial — is necessary for the pleasure of God and the wellbeing of man, and is demanded by the eternal reason of things as the first law. God is eternal and sovereign: man a helpless dependent upon His power, wisdom and goodness. The recognition of this fact is the essential basis of intercourse between God and man, let alone eternal fellowship. The distinct,

thrilling, striking recognition of this fact is brought about by precisely the experience through which God has put that part of the human race of whom He intends to make future use. The law convinces them all as transgressors: every mouth is shut. There is no room for glorying. Salvation has come of the pure goodness of God, in harmony with His own wisdom. God is exalted, and we are abased to the position of humble recipients of His favor, in Christ, in whom our sins have been condemned.

As an indispensable preliminary to this result, it was necessary that the natural man should be put under the law, "that sin (in him) might appear sin, and that by the commandment it might become (what it is) exceedingly sinful."

Paul Still Conscious of Failings

"For we know," continues Paul (v. 14), "that the law is spiritual": it is the dictates of the Spirit's authority and the embodiment of the Spirit's wisdom, imposed upon the natural man, who as the Spirit's work and property, is bound to be subject:

"But I (Paul) am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not, For what I should, that do I not; but what I hate that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is not more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (vv. 14-24).

These are the words that constitute the difficulty which some experience in the understanding of the Seventh Chapter of Romans. They think it inconceivable that Paul, the obedient and exemplary saint, who could say, "Be ye followers of me;" Walk *as ye have us for an example,"* could describe himself in words which appear to imply an abandoned character. Their difficulty arises from a superficial view of the case. The difficulty disappears when we follow Paul in the full depth of his argument. He is dealing with the roots and the foundations of the subject. He is showing what the law is in itself, and what human nature is in itself. The former he proves to be holy and spiritual; and though the occasion of sin to those placed under it, the cause of this he shows to lie in them and not in it. He makes use of himself to illustrate the point; for he could speak experimentally as one in whom the law had wrought its full work of causing him to know himself. And although standing in the liberty of the gospel, and serving and delighting in the law of God after the inward man, he was still in the flesh physically, and, therefore, carried about

with him the spiritual burden of the old man, whom, though held in subjection, he found to be an ever-present obstacle to the full flights marked out by the new mental man created in him in Jesus Christ. He could, therefore, declare all the things set forth in the concluding half of the chapter, without creating any difficulty as to his acceptable work and conversation.

Those who have soared the highest, spiritually, will understand this the best. Spiritual-mindedness only feels the burden of the natural man. The natural man, pure and simple, has no sense of burden in a spiritual direction; he is content with his attainments because he knows nothing beyond them; like a rustic dauber on canvas, well pleased with his own productions and those of his fellow-daubers, which would fill with anguish the soul of a true artist. Paul had become spiritually-minded, but this was an engraftment from without. It was super-imposed on the natural Paul by the education of the Truth and (in his case) the direct instruction of the Spirit. It was *a new man* united with the old or natural man. There was thus a duality created, of which every man similarly subject to the Spirit is conscious; not a separable duality, but still a felt one, so far as mental operations are concerned. It is necessary to have this duality in view, in order to appreciate Paul's remarks in question. Of the one he says, "In me (that is, *in my flesh*) dwelleth no good thing;" implying that in the other me — that is, the new "me," the mental "me" created by the Spirit through the Word — there was some goodness, viz., a capacity to "delight in the law of God *after the inward man*" (v. 22). Again, "I see another *law in my members* warring against the law of *my mind.*" This is what he said to the Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

The implantation in the mind of the Spirit by the Word, does not extirpate the natural man with his affections and lusts; it imposes but a check, a control, a power to restrain and crucify, and bring into subjection. But this power does not obtain complete ascendancy: as long as the body continues physically the mortal, sinful thing it is, the natural man acts as an obstruction to the operations of the new man of the Spirit, causing the person thus dually-constituted to feel and speak as Paul, being conscious, like him, of inability to accomplish what he "would," and a necessary submission to things he "would not." Of the natural man, which (though in subjection) continues till we are glorified, he can say, "I am carnal, sold under sin." This we inherit: sin personified is the owner of the human race, because through disobedience at the beginning, it obtained possession of the whole, and, therefore, of the saints, such as they are as natural men, and continues in possession till they are redeemed from the power of the grave.

The release begins with the mind and ends with the body. The latter continues "dead because of sin" (Rom. 8:10), till he for whom we look from heaven shall "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." While they continue in the flesh, they can say with Paul,

"That which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

This has always been a puzzle to the carnal class, but is intelligible enough to those who "delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man." Many illustrations of its meaning might be given. Let one or two suffice. Perfect fellowship with God (and it is after a perfect fellowship that the new man aspires) requires a continual memory and a continual love and adoration of Him — a continual sense of His greatness and holiness — a continual praise, though unexpressed. To forget God is sin; to see Him always before us at our right hand is the example set for us by the Spirit in David and His Son. But behold this natural sinner with which we as yet are clogged: his thoughts get easily filled with other things; he gets exhausted in physical energy, and in a state of mental blank towards God; nay, worse, through this weakness, he perhaps forgets his duty to a neighbour, and fails to sustain the part of an obedient son. The commandments concerning submission to evil, or concerning the doing of good, may be forgotten by him. He may think selfish thoughts or contemplate a selfish purpose, or fail in the management of his affairs, as a disinterested and faithful steward of the manifold grace of God. Concerning anger also, from the same weakness he may often fail. These things which he does, he allows not. He hates them, and himself as the performer. The things that he would do — the continual communion with God, the continual serenity, and purity, and love, and obedience, the continual blessing and comforting of others — he does not. His attainments are feeble and blemished by continual imperfection; and in consequence, he knows by experience what are the unutterable groanings Godwards, through the interceding Spirit in Christ, to which Paul alludes in Rom. 8:26.

At the same time, he takes the comfort that Paul administers to himself: "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is *no more I that do it,* but SIN THAT DWELLETH IN ME. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." We will not be held accountable for the non-performance of the impossible. It is not that He may punish us, but that He may make His kindness the more obvious, that weakness is the inheritance of the children of God in the first stage. Sin dwelling in them is the cause of their shortcomings. The new mental man created by the Truth (where he *is* created and is kept alive by the continual nourishment of the Word) — repudiates and grieves for the shortcomings. He consents heartily unto the law of all God's requirements that it is good. It is not he that is guilty of the things he grieves for. If things were as he ardently desires, he would serve God day and night continually, without fault. It is a grief and a burden that he has not yet apprehended that for which he has been apprehended of God. He is looking and longing with all his heart for the time when he will be delivered from the bondage of the corruption, and rise to equality with those glorious beings, the angels of his power, who "excell in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word — His ministers

that do His pleasure" (Psa. 103:20-21). In the spirit-nature, conformity with the will of God will be as instinctive and easy to him as failings are with him now. His life in its overt acts is ordered in harmony with its precepts.

This, in fact, is the great difference between him and those who are purely carnal: the latter have no aspirations Godwards, but are content with what they "know naturally as brute beasts;" the other pants after God, as the hart panteth for the water brooks, and strives to obey His commandments *while yet* in a state of humiliation before Him, because of the cleaving of his soul to the dust. He joins fervently in Paul's exclamation, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death. I thank God (who shall deliver me) through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin." That is, mentally, we seek after what God requires; but physically, we are subject to those conditions and necessities whose existence is due to sin.

There is much in all these things that to the merely mathematical mind will appear paradoxical. No man can comprehend them who is destitute of a living sense of a living God, for this is the leading factor in the whole problem. Because the natural man is destitute of this ("for the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" — Rom. 8:7); therefore it comes to be true that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

But let a man fear God, which is *the beginning* of wisdom, and let him reverently, diligently and prayerfully read His Word, and he will be able to understand these (at first sight difficult, but really) comforting and glorious things, for it is written: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of Yahweh, and find the knowledge of God" (Pro. 2:1-5). Yahweh taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy (Psa. 147:11). All the words of His mouth are in righteousness. There is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge (Prov. 8:8-9). Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? For the ways of Yahweh are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein (Hos. 14:9). Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to Yahweh (Pro. 16:5). For evil men understand not judgment; but they that seek Yahweh understand all things (Prov. 28:5). ■

Baptism is Likened to a New Marriage — vv. 1-6

Baptism brings about a new status and responsibility in life, which cannot be frustrated or repudiated with impunity. The apostle illustrates his point by reference to the law of marriage; a contract which binds two parties for life, and which brings certain obligations into force.

VERSE 1

"Know ye not" — Paul draws attention to another graphic illustration of the responsibilities of believers to the Truth. The RV continues the thought-link from the previous chapter: "Or, know ye not" (see also Diaglott text). See notes on this reoccurring phrase in ch. 6:3, 16.

Rotherham has: "Or are ye ignorant, brethren," from the Gr. *agnoeo,* to be unlearned, ignorant. Paul challenges his readers to admit that they endorse the metaphor concerning bond-slaves and slave-masters, or else confess their ignorance of the principles involved. This challenge would be difficult for the Judaisers to accept.

"Brethren" — This term, *adelphoi,* has the idea of a brother or near kinsman (Vine), i.e., one that is united from the womb. In a community of people, it defines those united by a common origin of birth. In the case of Christadelphians (Gr. *Christo-adelphoi)* that uniting birth is of heavenly origin through knowledge of the Truth and baptism (Jn. 3:3, 5; 1Pet. 1:23). Being mentally stimulated, it creates a bond closer than fleshly family ties. James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, consistently uses this intimate term to emphasize the tender solicitude and concern he had for the well-being of those believers to whom he wrote; cp. Jas. 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5; 3:1, 10; 4:11; 5:7, 10, 12, 19.

"(For I speak to them that know the law)" — His comments are particularly addressed to the Jewish element in the ecclesia at Rome, and those familiar with the requirements of the Law and its demands upon those subject to it. The Greek omits the emphatic "the," and the reference to "law" embraces not only the instruction in the Mosaic Law, but the divine principles pronounced from the beginning.

"How that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" — No law can demand obedience to its regulations from those who have died! They are no longer able to apply themselves to such rules. But while the man lives he is dominated by law.

In this illustration Paul develops the principle of that which "dominates" mankind. The Gr. word *kurieuo* indicates to "have lordship over." In Rom. 6:9 "*death*" is shown to have dominion, and in ch. 6:14 "*sin*" likewise, for they are two masters whose power in the lives of the unenlightened leads them inevitably to oblivion. Now he introduces a further principle: the "dominion" of *law.* In fact, the presence of law and the inability of sinful mankind to perfectly fulfil it, indicates the power of both "death" and "sin." Hence, in 1Cor. 15:56 Paul joins all three together: "the sting of *death* is *sin,* and the strength of sin is the *law.*" However, when *death* has finally claimed its victim by the sting of *sin,* brought into action through the operation of *law,* it ceases to assert any further "lordship" over man to condemn him.

Similarly, the Lord Jesus Christ was bound by the law of condemnation into which he was born, but when he died as one who perfectly obeyed the divine law, and therefore was without moral blemish, he obtained a title to resurrection, and, through immortality, he passed out of the jurisdiction of the law. Those who are baptised "into his death" (Rom. 6:3) do likewise, and are typically released from the "condemnation" (8:1) otherwise resting upon them (cp. Col. 2:14) having passed from the constitution of sin into the constitution of righteousness.

To emphasise these important principles, Paul draws upon the analogy of marriage, for the marriage laws were introduced in Eden for the proper regulation of society, and to teach the spiritual precepts of separation, devotion and responsibility. He makes the *illustration* in vv. 1-3, and shows the *application* in vv. 4-6.

The word "law" (Gr. *nomos*) occurs no less than 28 times in this seventh chapter. As "sin" has been the dominant theme in ch. 6 (17 instances), "law" now has to be understood in its proper perspective in relation to man's hope of salvation (ch. 7).

VERSE 2

"For the woman which hath an husband" — The marriage law illustrates the obligations entered into by the baptised believer. Paul previously used the analogies of a warrior-king (6:12), and of a slave-master (v. 16); now he uses the analogy of a husband, who likewise possesses "lordship" over his wife in the marriage state. Such a "dominion" was established after the transgression of Eve, and was designed "for her restoration" (Gen. 3:16) that true unity and an honoring of the divine principles might be achieved.

Marriage was thus ordained as a divine ordinance (Mat. 19:6) for the wellbeing of mankind, and for the display of godly principles in life. It governs the proper conduct of society, the development of the qualities of consideration and mutual sympathy, and of the recognition of the proper place of both husband and wife (1Cor. 11:3) that their united lives might become a parable of the divine purpose for the ultimate restoration of the "Bride of Christ."

Unfortunately, those

The Analogy of Romans 7:1-4

Bound by the Law to her Husband

In Paul's analogy, the "woman" represents the mental processes and obligatory understanding of the believer. The "husband" symbolises the "old man of the flesh." The attention is not focussed upon the law, but upon a woman's subjection to her husband. Thus, believers are in subjection to the old man of the flesh, until they come into Christ. What, then, happens to the flesh? In a figure, it dies beneath the waters of baptism leaving the believer free.

The language of v. 7 provides the key to this verse. With the death of the Old Man, the believer is free to remarry. It follows that he becomes espoused to Christ. note how beautifully Paul shows that we are not only delivered from the ungodly hold of our original "husband," but also from the constrictions of the law which had previously bound us into a state of obedience to the flesh (see also ch. 8:1)

Loosed from the Law of her Husband

The earlier statement that the woman is "bound by law" (no def. art.) is now changed to a more direct term: "the law of her husband." The lit. Gr. reads: "she is freed from the law of her husband" — i.e., the specific law which bound her to her husband. The apostle emphasises that there was a special law by which marriage vows were inviolably sealed, and therefore to be considered binding and not to be treated lightly. If the marriage bond is so clearly and firmly established, how great is the contrast when the bond is dissolved through the death of the husband.

In Paul's illustration (vv. 1-3) the husband dies: but in the explanation of the analogy (vv. 4-6) it is the believer who dies! There is no confusion or contradiction. It is simply a matter of understanding that the death of the believer signifies the termination of his past relationship to Adamic nature and the sin which it produces. When the believer comes to a knowledge of the Truth, he is aghast to discover that throughout his life he has been "wedded" to "the flesh" as his normal way of life . He then learns that he must repudiate his past ways, putting his Old Man to "death" in the waters of baptism. When the Old Man has been crucified with Christ (6:6), the "lawful" relationship ceases to exist. And, upon learning how he might be freed from a relationship which could only end in eternal disaster, the believer sees the necessity of becoming "wedded to the only One who can deliver him from the laws associated with flesh, and provide that which the Old Man of the flesh could never afford: the way to escape from sin and death.— ***J. Ullman.***

Marriage Preceded the Fall

God designed marriage in Eden before sin entered the world; hence, the relationship of a man to his wife, and vice versa, is part of that "very good" state that then existed. moreover, the very expression used in Gen. 2:24 denotes the most intimate of relationships: "A man shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

Two expressions in that statement are deserving of attention. They are, *shall cleave* and *one flesh.* No other word in Hebrew could add more force to what is implied than that rendered "cleave." It signifies to be glued, to be soldered, inseparably joined. And when it is further declared that they "shall be one flesh," it implies that the first man and woman were more than figuratively one; they became physically united as well. This is shown beyond any doubt by Paul's usage of the same expression in 1Cor. 6: 16 to denote intercourse.

Therefore, before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve were invited to enjoy the closest physical intimacy possible between two married persons. That still remains the case today. Paul wrote: "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

— H. P. Mansfield.

See further comments in the Expositor on Genesis 2:24, portion of which is reproduced hereunder:

Marriage was designed to perpetuate and extend the human race in accordance with the will of God. God so constituted man and woman from the beginning that an instinctive urge causes them to seek each other in marriage; and a natural act, for which God has made provision in the constitution of the sexes is the means of effecting His purpose of making both one, and extending the human race. There is nothing evil in the sexual act when legitimately engaged in; it is designed to produce life to the glory of the Father. It becomes itself a type of that personal, intimate relationship between Yahweh and true worshippers by which the seed of truth is implanted in them (1Pet. 1:23), which produces a new life to the glory of the Father. It is rather significant that when the Lord declared: "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3), he used an expression that describes the most intimate act between two persons (Gen. 4:1).

Thus marriage, as instituted in Eden, required an intellectual, moral and physical unity between the two parties, which produces fruit in the form of offspring.

divine principles originally established in Eden are today broken down and destroyed in the loose attitude of society to the marriage covenant. Mankind has ignored the wisdom of the divine instruction to Adam and Eve ("It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him," Gen. 2:18). Instead of following that precept, and seeing in marriage a representation of the Creator's will, society has used the marriage relationship for the gratification of the flesh, and the expression of its own pleasure. Thus, in the days of Noah, marriage was based upon the lust of the eyes, rather than the wisdom of God: "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that *they were fair;* and they took them wives of all *which they chose*" (Gen. 6:2). To prevent this crime from affecting Israel, Moses was instructed to educate the nation in the sanctity of marriage. The Mosaic code provided for the protection of both husband and wife against the intrusion of others into the marriage contract (Num. 5:11-31; Deu. 22:22), preserved its rightful position in the nation (Exo. 21:3, 10), and prevented marriage with the alien (Deu. 7:3; 25:5). Paul now draws upon these principles to illustrate the high status and important responsibilities attaching to the "Bride of Christ" who has made an alliance with her espoused husband through baptism.

"Is bound by the law to (her) husband" — The marriage vow is inviolable, being established by God at the dawn of history (Mat. 19:6). Paul refers to the divine law which created a wife out of Adam, and

"brought her to" the man (Gen. 2:22) — an action which confirmed the union. Adam recognised the binding contract made: "this is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (v. 23), which became the basis for all subsequent marriage contracts. Paul confirms this as being a figure of the baptismal contract (Eph. 5:32). God requires that such vows as those of marriage and baptism be absolutely fulfilled (cp. Ecc. 5:4-5; 2Pet. 2:20). Those who lightly treat their vows bring dishonor on the divine wisdom, and will be required to answer for their action to the great Judge when he sits upon his throne of judgment.

"So long as he liveth" — While the husband is alive, the wife is committed to his authority as head of the household, and is subject to his guidance (Gen. 3:16; 1Cor. 11:3; 1Pet. 3:1). The liberty to practise divorce as argued by those who opposed the Lord (Mat. 19:3) is excluded from the apostle's argument; it is not permitted under any condition. Even under the Mosaic code it was limited to certain circumstances because of "the hardness of heart" evidenced in faithless husbands (v. 8). The Lord Jesus clearly pronounced the divine intention: "but from the beginning it was not so." God's will is honored and exalted when married couples maintain those principles in their covenant; it is defiled and disturbed when the marriage vow is broken, and when alternative contracts are sought.

"But if the husband be dead" — Death terminates the contract, and thus ends the marriage obligations. In this case, a wife may marry another man without offending the divine principles.

Similarly, in his analogy, Paul reminds his readers that they had been bound to the law of ordinances (called in Col. 2:14 "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us"), while it remained a live principle. But once removed that would not be the case. In the atoning work of Christ, he took the law "out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14), by perfectly obeying its every requirement. Even the mode of his sacrifice was important. He was crucified on "the tree," thus coming under the curse of the law (Deu. 21:23), but, because the righteousness of Yahweh demanded the resurrection of an innocent and sinless man, Jesus Christ was elevated beyond the power and authority of the law, thus removing its curse, and has "redeemed us" therefrom (Gal. 3:13). His sacrifice became the mode of death to the impassé of the law, and allowed the new marriage contract of Grace to be undertaken.

"She is loosed from the law of (her) husband" — The law of marriage introduced in Eden (Gen. 2:21-24) joins a wife to her husband while he lives; the death of one of the partners is the only reason that permits the other partner in the marriage union to enter a further contract of marriage without offence. Death removes the obligation placed on both partners by virtue of the vows made in conformity with the divine instructions (1Cor. 7:3). To be joined to another while the husband lives is to commit adultery (Mat. 19:9; Mark 10:12).

VERSE 3

"So then if, while (her) husband liveth, she be married to another man" — By such an action the wife disregards the responsibilities of solemn vows made in accordance with the divine marriage laws, ignoring her obligations to her husband as her "lord" (v. 1). Although the word "married" does not appear in the Greek text (e.g., Diaglott: "if she belong to another man"), it is obvious that another marriage contract is undertaken in opposition to her legitimate state.

"She shall be called an adulteress" — This statement is translated from two words in the Greek: *chrematisei* (Diag. "she will be declared an") *moichalis* ("adulteress").

The word *chrematisei* is used to denote being branded, named, described as or defined. It is used in Acts 11:26 to identify the "christians." Vine suggests that its primary significance is: "to have business dealings with;" thus to be associated, or known by such a name. The woman who marries another during the lifetime of her husband bears the degradation of such an appellation, and is considered to be an adulteress, even though she may have sought

the legitimacy of the marriage covenant.

In the analogy that Paul uses to explain the contract of baptism, he shows that unless the old way of life is acknowledged to be "dead," a believer cannot properly enter into the compact of marriage with the "new husband" (Christ, v. 4). James describes as "adulteresses" (ch. 4:4), those who sought to maintain a liaison with the world to which by baptism, they professed had "died"! We are in danger of defiling the new covenant of baptism if we are to allow the "old man" of the flesh to become alive in our consideration. Marriage with Christ is only valid on the basis that the first husband (the Old Man and his worldly associations, with all its lusts: 1Jn. 2:16) is dead!

"But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law" — This is the only legitimate ground for remarriage. The death of the husband obviously means that the wife can no longer perform her proper function in the marriage bond; nor be subject to her husband. Thus she is freed from her contractual obligations, and is at liberty to enter into a further marriage covenant without guilt. For believers, such a second marriage covenant must be "*only* in the Lord" (1Cor. 7:39). Marriage outside the bonds of the Truth is forbidden.

"So that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" — There is no condemnation resting upon her in this circumstance. The second marriage contracted after the first husband's death is held to be as honorable and as binding as the former. No such derogatory expression of "adultery" can be levelled against this new covenant, for it fulfils all the requirements of the divine law of marriage given in Eden.

VERSE 4

"Wherefore" — Paul now demonstrates the application of the contractual law of marriage to the baptismal bond, and shows the apt connection between chapters 6 and 7 of his exposition. The first six verses of ch. 7 are to be understood as an appendage to ch. 6, and represent the final part of the argument contained therein. In ch. 6:1 a question was posed: "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Three answers have been given: First, that the believer has now become united with Christ and a sharer in his death through baptism, that "the body of sin might be rendered powerless" (vv. 2-11). Secondly, the believer has now changed masters, and therefore no longer has any allegiance whatever to either sin or the flesh (vv. 12-19). Thirdly, Paul gives an impressive illustration from the law in relation to the marriage state, showing that through "dying" with Christ we are *freed* from our "old" relationship to sin, and therefore can quite lawfully enter into a permanent marriage bond with Jesus Christ (ch. 7:1-6).

"My brethren" — A term of affection. See note v. 1.

"Ye also" — Like the husband in the analogy which has been set forth.

"Are become dead to the law" — The Greek *thanato,* in the passive tense, signifies "were put to death" (as in the Diaglott), and implies a sudden, violent death (6:3). In baptism, the believer has become "borne along" by the power of the Word, permitting its guidance to lead the individual to surrender to Christ and his will. Through this death, the bond between believer and law is severed, permitting a new relationship to develop in which the law "of ordinances that was against us" (Col. 2:14) has no claim.

This violent death is demonstrated in the action of baptism by the believer, who willingly submerges in the waters of baptism to declare his rejection of the previous way of life, and a desire to walk in "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

The "law" here represents the divine code of judgment revealed through ordinance, statute and ritual. It includes the Law of Moses (Lev. 18:4-5), but was not limited to such, as Yahweh's laws with their judgments in Eden (Gen. 2:17; 3:19), were anterior to the Law of Moses (Gen. 26:5). The Gentiles are also subject to divine laws and judgments (Rom. 1:32), and, though they refuse to recognise God, He will still judge them by those laws

The Man of Flesh and The Man of Spirit

This intellectual comprehension of the true God is renewing, and capable of developing, the likeness of His moral or spiritual image in the illuminated... Paul tells obedient believers of the Word, that they had *put off* the old man with his deeds, and put on "the new" made again by exact knowledge *(eis epignosin)* after the image of Him creating him (Col. 3:9,10). Here are two characters, or moral natures, in relation to one and the same animal man *[called by the writer: A.B.]*... Now, it is to exorcise A.B. of this Old Man, to deliver him from him, to cast the demon out, "to *put off* the old man and his deeds" from A.B.... that the system of divine truth hath been devised. The Old Man of Sin's Flesh, who is the Devil, cannot be converted. His destiny is destruction...

But if the Old Man cannot be converted, A.B. may. Our friend A.B. may "be taught of God", not by direct spirit-afflation, according to the Old Man's theology, but by the direct operation of the heavenly ideas of God upon his brain-flesh...

When A.B. knows God, and Jesus the Anointed, apostolized, or sent; in other words, when he has *believed into* the true God, in believing the gospel of the Kingdom, and obeying it; in the act of obedience, styled by Peter "the obeying of the truth", he *puts off* the Old Man of the Flesh with his deeds, and *puts on* the New Man of the Spirit. He is still A.B.; but he is no longer A.B. invested with fig-leaf devices. He is A.B. in a new character. Instead of thinking with the Old Man in his wickedness and folly, he thinks with the Spirit. That is, God's thoughts and ways have become his. He understands, believes, and loves what God has spoken by His Spirit in the prophets in Jesus, and in the apostles; so that this thinking is now no longer "the thinking of the flesh", which is always wrong, when speculating upon divine things; but "the thinking of the Spirit" which is always right, so long as the seed of God abideth in him.

Here then are two men, each of whom set up rival claims to A.B. — the Old Man of Sin's Flesh, or the Devil; and the New Man, the Spirit, or the likeness of the Image of God. — ***J. Thomas,*** *Phanerosis,* pp. 38-43 (*Logos* edition).

The foregoing can be illustrated thus:

The Old Man	***The New Man***
In Adam.....	In Christ.
Flesh-thinking.	Spirit-thinking.
Blind feelings govern thoughts ...	Godly thoughts control thoughts
Sinner.	Saint.
In darkness.	In light.
Living in fear.....	Living in Confidence.
Dead.	Alive.

(Rom. 3:6, 9; Acts 17:30-31). The result of the law in this context is that it had the effect of rousing the innate tendency of man to sin, and so bound the consciousness of the individual to the "old man" (the natural and evil proclivities of the flesh). Through Adam's sin, man inherited a nature that was mortal, "and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12; 3:23). Because of this rule (law) in man's nature since Adam's fall, man is innately married to the flesh, the Old Man. The law of condemnation therefore binds the two together.

"By the body of Christ" — The Greek *dia* means "through". When Christ died, the law no longer had power over him, and that same principle similarly applies to those who are scripturally baptised into his death (ch. 6:3), in that they are no longer "bound" to the inevitability of condemnation.

The "body of Christ" describes the physical body of a condemned nature which represented "our sins" that the Lord bare on the tree of sacrifice (1Pet. 2:24). This action of a sinless man provided the basis for his resurrection, and thus the Lord entered into the state or condition of immortality. Such was only possible by the destruction of the evil propensities of the flesh, called "the diabolos" in Heb. 2:14.

Paul now shows that this action dramatised what must be done in us (Gal. 5:24)! The old man of flesh (Rom. 6:6) has become dead, and the law, which restricted the liberty of the flesh, as the marriage bond does that of a wife or husband, is no longer operative. With the death of the old man, the "*New Man*" of faith comes into being (Col. 3:10; Eph. 2:15; 4:24), and is at liberty to "marry", thus becoming united with Christ.

Observe how this conclusion must affect the Jew (cp. v. 1). If he refused to take advantage of release from the bonds of the law which Christ provided (cp. Heb. 10:26), he was left with no alternative but to continue his struggle to attain justification through obedience to the law! Thus Paul challenges his belief by claiming that the convert to Christ must become dead to two things: (1) to sin and the sinful ways of the flesh; and (2) to the principle of attaining salvation through the law.

"That ye should be married to another" — Thereby coming under the law and control of another. Usage of the word "ye" changes the original illustration of vv. 1-3 into a more personal matter for every believer. Paul uses the symbology of a "woman" to represent our consciousness and reasoning processes, because when our mental faculties are harmonized with the Christ-mind, this transforms us into the *Bride* of Christ.

This "second marriage", however, is only approved if the first "husband" be dead. Paul's analogy demands that the former way of life contracted by the believer (whether that be to a form of law, as in the case of the Judaisers; or to the ways of the world, as in the case of the Gentiles) be completely put to death.

"(Even) to him who is raised from

The Motions of Sins

Although a sinner may have been "delivered from the power of darkness", or ignorance, and have been "translated into the hope of the Kingdom of God and of his Christ", by faith in the divine testimony and baptism into Christ — yet, if he turn his thoughts back into his own heart, and note the impulses which work there, he will perceive a something that, if he were to yield to it, would impel him to the violation of the divine law. These impulses are styled "THE MOTIONS OF SINS". Before he was enlightened, they "worked in his members", until they were manifested in evil action, or sin; which is termed, "bringing forth fruit unto death". The remote cause of these "motions" is that physical principle, or quality, of the flesh, styled indwelling sin, which returns the mortal body to the dust; and that which excites the latent disposition is the law of God forbidding to do thus and so; for, "I had not known sin, but by the law". — ***J. Thomas*** (*Elpis Israel*, p. 137).

the dead" — Thus identifying the "new husband", and emphasizing the means by which his qualifications have been revealed. Since the "old man" nature in the Lord Jesus was put to death in his sacrifice, so his victory over sin and death was confirmed by his resurrection (John 10:18). Thus he is qualified to be the husband of the ecclesial Bride.

Paul's point directs the believer to his *own* spiritual resurrection through the waters of baptism. The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection was that *we*, with him, might manifest the characteristics of godliness, as befitting those who have been raised to newness of life. This is illustrated by the Lord's own confession of faith to John the Baptist at his baptism: "Thus it becometh *us* (Christ and his Bride) to fulfil all righteousness" (Mat. 3:15).

This verse parallels ch. 6:4, and the next phrase shows that it is a continuation of the theme set forth in ch. 6:22.

"That we should bring forth fruit unto God" — The result of the new marriage between Christ and the Ecclesia is the development of children to the glory of the union (Heb. 2:12-13) which reflects to the honor and glory of Yahweh. These are described as the "fruit unto holiness" (Rom. 6:22), the "fruit of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22), which is produced by Christ being in us (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:17).

In contrast, the previous alliance to the rituals of law, and the works of flesh, diligently produced "fruit unto death" (Rom. 7:5; Jas. 1:14-15).

VERSE 5

"For when we were in the flesh" — In the analogy of marriage, Paul portrays the previous time when there was a complete union with "The Flesh", which is here a synonym for a life given over to performing the will and dictates of our natural mind. Although Paul was physically still "in the flesh" when he wrote this epistle, and would remain so until his change to immortality at the coming of Christ, he does not here speak of his physical being, but his past *constitutional* state. Being "married to the flesh" means serving the Old Man, the undisciplined forces of our emotions which express their power in "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19) when the believer was unconverted, and subject to the controlling passions and propensities of a corrupt nature (Rom. 8:5), and ruled by the flesh under the lordship of King Sin.

In this regard the term "flesh" does not refer to the mortal flesh-body, for Christ was of the same (Jn. 1:14; 6:51; Acts 2:30; 2Cor. 5:16), yet in all things he "pleased" the Father (Mat. 3:17). Brother Carter wrote: "In the flesh does not mean an embodied state, for Paul was as much in the flesh in that sense when he wrote the words as at any time in his life. But before, he had trusted in the flesh, hoping by flesh descent from Abraham and by his own achievements to obtain salvation. But those efforts only made manifest that the flesh was really a 'body of sin'. The Law with its restrictive 'Thou shalt not...' only made evident that human nature was evil. The passions aroused in their outworking brought forth fruit unto death".

"The motions of sins" — The word "motions" is an Old English expression for "emotion" (see margin), meaning simply the passions, the evil affections, the corrupt desires. The Diaglott has: "those sinful passions" from the Gr. *pathema*. A person who allows himself to be ruled by the emotions of the flesh carries with him three cogent arguments against obeying God: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1Jn. 2:16). See hereunder Brother Thomas' comments on "The Motions of Sin".

These sinful passions rule those dominated by the Adamic constitution. Not knowing the way of righteousness, the sinful passions of the flesh can only produce Sin, whose wages are death (ch. 6:23). The same Greek word *pathema* is used for the "affections" (sinful passions) which must be crucified (Gal. 5:24).

The word is also used commonly for the "*sufferings*" of Christ, and is so rendered eleven times out of 16 occurrences.

"Which were by the law" — They

were not created by the law, but were excited, or brought to view, by it. Adam was first formed, then tested by the application of law; his disobedience to that law emphasized the presence of sin generated by the influence of the serpent. That condition of nature has consequently been passed on to his posterity. The Greek word "by" is *dia*, "through", for the presence of the divine will revealed the awfulness of the "emotions" of sin, showing that such "lust *became* sin" (cp. vv. 7-13; 5:20).

"Did work in our members" — The sinful lusts inherent in our nature manifest themselves in the activities which come forth: the "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19). The word for "work" is *energeo*, which emphasises the constant activity of sin. It was seen in the actions of Cain, whose emotions of jealousy and rebellion "energised" his body to commit murder (Gen. 4:8), and the same mind of the flesh is the originator of every evil device (Eccl. 7:29; Jn. 8:44). Driven by the mind, these "emotions" affect the whole body (Col. 3:5; Jas. 4:1).

"To bring forth fruit unto death" — The progeny of union with the flesh is crime, agitation, conflict, distress, and finally, death. Such "sinful passions" are the outworking of the evil propensities inherent in the flesh, and which provide for an active life bringing forth "fruit" — but it is poisonous fruit which proves fatal to those partaking! This is what happened to Eve in the beginning. She looked upon the "fruit of the tree" which she had been forbidden to eat, but "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise" (Gen. 3:3-6). So she fell prey to the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1Jn. 2:16), and took of the fruit, with terrible consequences of divine displeasure and discipline. The "fruit" of Eve's action produced inordinate desire and unrestrained passion.

This condition contrasts with the marriage of believers to Christ (v. 4), which brings forth the glorious fruit of divine virtue and immortality.

VERSE 6

"But now" — An enthusiastic cry of victory! A complete change has taken place. No longer placing confidence in the idealism of seeking salvation through a keeping of law, we have sought for better things. We have been invited to a higher and more satisfying relationship. By marriage to Christ, we have the opportunity of complete deliverance, and the production of the fruits of righteousness. That has been possible through "the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (ch. 1:16), revealing that we are "not under law but under grace" (ch. 6:14; 3:24; 5:2,15,17,20,21, etc).

"We are delivered from the law" — Baptism has provided the means by which the dominance and curse of law are removed, allowing for the new relationship in Christ to be opened up. This does not mean that we are freed from the principles of divine law, for they remain as a code of conduct, "holy, and just, and good" (v. 12). The word "delivered" is the Greek *katargeo* (from *kata*, down; *argos*, inactive), which signifies to abolish (Vine), to leave unemployed or idle; to make useless, void (Bullinger). It has the idea of rendering inactive, and is rendered "loosed" in v. 2; "abolished" in Eph. 2:15, where Christ is shown to have removed the enmity, or curse, of the law, and replaced it with the union of "one new man". It is also found in 2Tim. 1:10 where Paul shows that the work of Christ has removed, defeated, and "abolished death" for those who seek his association. The significance of the word is that the law can no longer imprison us within its power or chain us in a form of permanent relationship. We have been "delivered" therefrom as the woman of v. 2 has been "loosed". Compare also the interesting usage of the same word in ch. 6:6.

"That being dead wherein we were held" — The Diaglott has: "But now, having died, we are released from the law, by which we were held". The "old man" of the flesh was virtually *imprisoned* by the strength and power of the law, as well as

by its authority. The law shackled a man, holding him in fetters because it constantly *convicted* him of sin (ch. 6:6), securing him within the bonds of death. Such a person was unable to rise above his condition, there being no formula by which he might redeem himself from the inevitability of sin. But baptism into Christ *crucified* "the old man", releasing the believer from its power and law — thus we are no longer in bondage (ch. 7:1-2) to serve him as his "wife" (v. 4).

"That we should serve" — The Greek *douleuo* is a dramatic return to the metaphor of slavery! Newly released from the hopeless confines of the law, the believer now finds that he is still in a state of bond-service (ch. 6:19). However, he is thankful and delighted to change Masters, and to obtain release from the law. Release from the former Master involved a voluntary action, in that no force was used to cause the "prisoner" to crucify his "old man" in the waters of baptism. He changed Masters happily in an act of self-surrender to his new owner, the Lord Jesus Christ. He now serves a Master who has been "crowned with honour and glory", and who, through his sacrifice, has provided the means whereby he might bring "many sons unto glory" in making "reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:9,10,17).

"In newness of spirit" — i.e., in a new spirit. The word "newness" is *kainotes,* which does not relate to a point of time, but represents that which is new in quality in contrast to that which is worn out. Bullinger has: "not merely recent but *different* from that which had been formerly". The higher calling provided in Christ is described as a "newness of life" (ch. 6:4); a "new creature" (Gal. 6:15) by which a "new covenant" is effected (Heb. 9:15), being married to the "new man" (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10), walking in the "new and living way" (Heb. 10:20), towards the "new Jerusalem" which constitutes part of the "new name" (Rev. 3:12).

The word "spirit" (Gr. *pneuma*) refers to the mental disposition: the attitude and emotion which must accompany doctrine and teaching. The Lord declared: "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23), defining the two elements necessary in order that divine wisdom might develop in flesh. There needs to be an understanding of principle, and an acceptable disposition. Both will be subject to the scrutiny of the great Judge. Yahweh declared: "I search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10). To the Hebrews the "heart" speaks of the seat of intelligence that directs the life of the body; the "reins" refer to the kidneys, by which the body is purified, and which the Jews interpreted as the seat of desire and feeling. Thus Jeremiah shows that God is able to penetrate that which is hidden from man's view. Unfortunately, some are intellectually affected by the beauty of the Scriptures, but fail to really experience the impact and emotion of the Truth. They are like a beautiful set of Bible expositions: telling much but feeling little. Of such, the prophet declared: "Thou (Yahweh) art near in their mouth, and far from their reins" (ch. 12:2). So Paul urges us to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23): by a genuine application of understanding.

The apostle therefore urges his readers to recognise the need to develop a quality of spirit: an awareness of, and involvement in, a new way of life through baptism into Christ (Rom. 7:6). He uses the word "serve" (Gr. *douleuo,* the duty of a bondslave), since the liberty gained by release from the law, and by association with Christ, is not a licence for personal pleasure, but a commitment to obedience.

"And not (in) the oldness of the letter" — This carefully chosen statement refers to the Jewish ritualistic religious philosophy, which centred upon an outward observance of the law which failed to recognise that man can only serve God by acceptably manifesting the attributes of the divine character. Literal, external obedience — even if meticulously obeyed — will not, of itself, change the internal dis-

position of an individual. Mechanical religion is not God manifestation. The inner being is not exercised by the former; hence David's acknowledgement that the provisions of the law could not, of themselves alone, meet his desperate needs: "create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa. 51:10). Such is the work of God, not man.

The word "oldness" is contrasted to the "newness" of the spirit-man. The Gr. *palaiotes* signifies that which is of long duration, old in years; thus that which is worn out, decayed and of no further use. The ritual of the law was for a limited duration: it was a schoolmaster leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24), but is now replaced by a "better way" seen to perfection in the Lord himself. By his sacrifice, the Lord Jesus had replaced the purpose of the law. The verb *palaioo* is twice used in Heb. 8:13 in relation to the law: "In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made *the first old.* Now that which *decayeth* and waxeth old is ready to vanish away".

Paul's use of this term is not merely to explain the position of law in relation to faith. Nor is he satisfied to make a brief statement which shows that the Old Master has failed to relieve the eternal needs of humanity. His point goes further. In these few words he boldly states that it was futile to rely upon the Judaising interpretation of the Mosaic Law. Their conception of religion was bereft of hope. They could offer nothing. How utterly tragic that the Judaisers failed to turn to Christ and recognise in him the reality of that which is "new and spiritual" (Weymouth). But salvation is an individual matter: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25).

The word "letter" is the Gr. *gramma*, that which is written. It refers to the law inscribed and catalogued as a series of commandments. To the Judaisers it was merely a service consisting in external forms and ceremonies, in offerings and sacrifices, according to the literal requirements of the law. Though these were listed as the ritual obligations for sin and transgressions, they were not the ultimate desire of God. Samuel told the errant Saul: "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1Sam. 15:22). God desired a full commitment of loving service by His people: in the sincere offering of heart and life. Thus Paul argues that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2Cor. 3:6). That which kills is the lifeless ritual of sacrifices without the discernment of their true meaning; that which gives life is an attitude that makes the righteous laws of God into a way of life, by which "the things contained in the law" are done "by nature" (see notes Rom. 2:14).

The Position and Purpose of the Law — vv. 7-12.

Paul has shown that the emotions of the flesh held mankind in the power of the law (v. 5), and that the result of such a union was death. However, in Christ we are delivered from the law that held us wedded to the old man of the flesh (v. 6). Forgiveness of sins is obtained, a hope of complete redemption is offered, and the means of energising power to rise above the flesh is granted (Gal. 2:20). Therefore, some might argue, the law has no value nor use whatever. So Paul shows that the law performed a valuable service in revealing the true nature of our former "marriage" to the flesh, and directs us to the means of the greater union in Christ.

The section from vv. 7-14 is in the past tense, as Paul draws upon his previous experience and personal knowledge to show the power of the law prior to his association with Christ.

VERSE 7

"What shall we say then?" — In view of the foregoing, what is the purpose of the law? Are we to suppose that the holy law of God is not only insufficient to sanctify us, but that it is the mere occasion of increased sin?

These opening words to this section are emphatic in the Greek: "What inference, then, shall we draw?" (TCNT);

"What follows, then?" (Moffatt). It was not a question of mere comment on the law; Paul makes an appeal for the recognition of a *conclusive verdict*, based upon the teaching of the Word.

"(Is) the law sin?" — Is its very nature the vehicle and means of sin? Does it force a person into transgression, by virtue of its existence? The question results from the words of v. 5, that the "motions of sins" were "by the law". Here the word "sin" (Gr. *hamartia*) is used in a metonymical sense; the law did not *produce* sin, but it did disclose it. The legalist would have challenged Paul: "Are you claiming that all blame for our guilt may be justly laid with the law?" Such a suggestion is preposterous. In actual fact, the law revealed God's Will; therefore, rather than the law being sin, it revealed the sinfulness of *man*.

"God forbid" — Gr. *me genoito*, let it not be so! (see notes ch. 3:4). The answer to his foregoing rhetorical question is a decisive, No! The law is not sin, even though it reveals sin for what it is. Its purpose is to place restraints on the flesh, by which it shows that the flesh is disposed to sin.

"Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law" — Notice the personal reference to Paul's own experiences. He presents himself, personally, as an example of the way in which the law operated upon an individual. In citing his own circumstances he shows shrewd wisdom, implying that it should be understood that such experiences will be shared by fellow-Jews — including his Judaising opponents!

The apostle therefore acknowledges that knowledge of sin comes from the law. Unless a person is acquainted with the divine viewpoint (as codified in the laws and commandments of Scripture), he remains without understanding and is as the "beasts that perish" (Psa. 49:20). The law reveals the true nature of "lust" (the emotions of the flesh) as to whether they are legitimate or otherwise (cp. Deut. 14:26) and makes us aware of the dreadful character of sin, by clearly identifying all wrong-doing and unrestrained desires.

The word "known" is the Greek *ginosko*, signifying: to become acquainted with; to experience; to learn and perceive objectively (Bullinger); thus the intimate knowledge that bears fruit, or results. The law accurately shows the results that might be expected from sin: alienation from God, and eventual death.

The word "by" is *dia*, "through". Paul states categorically that the law was the *medium* through which his sinfulness was revealed. He speaks not merely concerning his knowledge of sin, or an awareness of it theoretically, but by knowing it experimentally.

"For I had not known lust" — This careful statement indicates that there is a strong antagonism between sin and the law; thus, the law was certainly "holy", being antagonistic towards sin! The words which follow ("the law had *said*") make this clear. The law spoke as the voice of Yahweh, setting forth His commandments which were to be honored by men.

The word for "known" is *oida*, which signifies "to know (intuitively) without effort; to understand subjectively" (Bullinger); thus to appreciate as a theory.

The lust spoken of is more than mere desire. The Greek is *epithumia*, which denotes a strong passion, an illicit emotion, or forbidden desire. It is translated "concupiscence" in v. 8. Although Adam was created with desires, feelings and emotions, so that he could express his sentiments, they had not been aroused to unlawful fulfilment until after the Edenic sin, which generated an awareness ("the eyes of both of them were opened": Gen. 3:7) to illicit lust not previously present. But now Paul finds in himself a natural bias to covetousness which is highlighted and identified by the divine law.

To support his claim, he now cites the tenth commandment. All the ten commandments could be broken simply by bringing to bear against them "forbidden desire" (lust) which is the natural outworking of the flesh.

"Except the law had said" — The law puts bounds on desires, in order to demonstrate the culpability of human nature, and to manifest the divine mind. It

By The Commandment — ch. 7:8

This is a brief but graphic statement. The Greek word *dia*, means "*through* the commandments". Sinful impulses working in Paul's body to produce sin found that the "base" of its "operations" was divine law. Why? Because, at its starting "base" sin manifests its antagonism *against* divine law, and proceeds against it. Sin then becomes a reality. This is what Paul means when he says "the strength of sin is the law" (1Cor. 15:56). The law proved emphatically that sin exercised lordship over man, because ungodly desires continued to pursue their objectives, even after it became known to the individual that the law repudiated such ungodly desires. Through the weakness of the flesh, sin ruled man, *not the law!*

Paul used a significant word for "commandment". It is the first occurrence of the word *entole* in Romans. But the word occurs again in vv. 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 — a total of six times in six verses. The word is here used to represent the *whole* law, and not simply a single commandment. The word means "that which has been enjoined; an injunction, charge, precept" (Bullinger). In this context the word is somewhat more direct than the word "law"; for it serves as a reminder that the law was comprised of many hundreds of individual commands or precepts (cp. Heb. 9:19-20). There is a further occurrence of the word in Rom. 13:9. — *J. Ullman.*

teaches man where lawful indulgence ends, and where sin begins. There is an important principle thus established. The divine law in Eden was designed to provide a character moulded under trial; the law of Moses provided the typical means of redemption, by which a person could be reconciled to God through the atoning altar; the law of Christ fulfils perfectly the needs of mankind under sin, and restores full fellowship with Yahweh. For this reason it is important to be familiar with the law in all its forms and aspects, both legal and practical, being relevant and applicable to Christ's disciples (Mat. 23:23). So David expressed his mental enjoyment in the study of the law: "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies" (Psa. 119:97-98).

"Thou shalt not covet" — Paul cites the tenth commandment of Exod. 20:17 (see also Deut. 5:21) to illustrate the power of the law, and the tragedy of sin. Paul uses the singular word "thou" in his quotation from the law, emphasizing the individual's responsibility.

This *final* commandment in Moses' list of "ten words" (Exod. 34:28) epitomises the whole catalogue, for, like the *first*, it relates to the motive of the heart. The first and the last are the only two of the Ten Commandments that require fulfilment ***"within"*** *the heart*, in the hidden chamber where only God (the first commandment) and the person himself (the last commandment) attend! All the others can be manifested externally in actions involving the worship of God (Commandments 2-5) and in association with others (Commandments 6-9).

Thus, this tenth commandment was pertinent to Paul's argument, and showed the real deviation of flesh at its root: the heart, which "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). Coveting is the illicit desire harbored in the heart to have what is another's, and is a form of idolatry (Col. 3:5; although here the Gr word is *pleonexia*, avarice) practised by the worldly (1Cor. 5:10), particularly in the last days (2Tim. 3:2), and which will prevent a person from inheriting the kingdom (1Cor. 6:10).

Notice, however, that to "covet" applies to evil desires; it is the verb of the same word rendered "lust". The Greek verb, *epithumeo*, translated "lust" and "covet" in Rom. 7:7, means to fix the desire upon; to earnestly seek. It can be the expression of godly actions: 1Cor. 12:31; 14:39. Concerning the human condition, Bro. J. Carter commented: "Sin is there, but latent. A man might desire many things, but in the absence of prohibition

the desire is not sinful. But sin found occasion, opportunity, 'a base of operations' with the coming of the commandment. The Law showed the rulership of sin over man in that the desire persisted after the prohibition was known".

VERSE 8

"But sin" — Lit. "the sin"; personified as a power antagonistic to the law of God, and refers to the lawless nature of the flesh; thus sinful flesh (ch. 8:3) that generates impulses which "lust against the spirit" (Gal. 5:17). Being a physical element of our nature established as a result of Adam's transgression (Rom. 5), the principle of sin has remained as a "law of our members" whilst we continue in a mortal condition (cp. Rom. 7:24). The terms "the sin" and "the flesh" are thus interchangeable, as indicated in Gal. 5:17, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit".

"Taking occasion" — The Greek word for "occasion" (*aphorme*) means, a starting place; a base of operations; something to take hold of. The word is sometimes used as a military metaphor for "a base of operations" in war, from which the battle is plotted and directed — thus it emphasizes the antagonism between sin and the law.

Sin has its place of activity (in the flesh), as its opponent Righteousness also has (in the "mind of the spirit", v. 23). Like an enemy on the watch, sin seizes its opportunity when law comes in, to challenge and oppose it.

In its godly application the word is also found in 2Cor. 5:12; Gal. 5:13.

"By the commandment" — By the Law which was appointed to restrain and control the mind. Whilst the whole law condemned the principle of sin in life, the individual precepts and instructions of the law highlighted sin in its stark reality, seen in personal transgression and continual wrongdoing. Paul reasons that the lusts of the flesh provided a base of operations upon which the precepts of the law could work, and these precepts revealed that the flesh was subject to all manner of unlawful desires.

"Wrought in me" — Gr. *katergazomai* (from *kata*, down) to work down, as towards an objective; to effect or achieve. The word means to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner (cp. ch. 1:27). Paul found that his flesh produced sinful impulses which went to work *against* divine law and became sin. They sought for self-gratification, challenging the will of God that he desired to serve (ch. 7:19).

"All manner of concupiscence" — The Gr. *pas* signifies "all, any, every". Hence its occurrence in Lk. 4:13 in regard to the temptation of the Lord: "So the devil *(diabolos)* having fully tried *every kind* of temptation on him, left him for a time" (Weymouth). Paul now does not wish to minimise the extent to which his fleshly nature exerted its enmity against the divine law. So, "sin... produced in me *every kind* of covetous desire" (NIV). Sin made itself known to him in every form imaginable.

The Figurative Death of Paul

Rotherham translates v. 9 as "sin sprang up to life, whereas I died". Simply, the law slew him. Sin, using the flesh as a weapon, triumphed and pronounced Paul to be a condemned sinner, a state to which he remained in bondage from the age of twelve. He was only released from this deadly power at his baptism (vv. 1-6). This was a devastating and uncompromising statement, intended to make an effective impression especially upon his Judaising readers. Why is this brief comment so shattering to Paul's opponents? A man close to death, through disease or any other cause, may well recover, perhaps through the help of a physician, or even his own inner physical resources. But when a man is dead, *he is beyond all help!* The law condemned Paul to death, and could do nothing else for him. Worse: in death a man is separated from God. What hope could he have? No power could deliver him, other than the One who alone has the power to raise the dead! (v. 25). — ***J.Ullman.***

This painting by Moritz Oppenheim, called "The Bar Mitzvah Speech", is typical of a 19th-century German Jewish household. The young man in the centre, on attaining the age of 13 years, is required to present an address called a "derashah" (a talmudic discourse) of acknowledgement as part of his induction. The talk usually dealt with some aspect of the rite; it provided opportunity for the boy to thank his parents for their love and care, and the guests for their participation in his celebration. The custom is still observed today, with 13 year old sons of traditional families giving a talmudic discourse, and others a more general talk upon the basic principles of the law.

The Bar Mitzvah Ordinance

According to *Encyclopedia Judaica*

The "son *(or daughter: Mat Mitzvah)* of the commandment" is a term denoting both the attainment of religious and legal maturity as well as the occasion at which this status is formally assumed for boys at the age of 13 plus one day, for girls at 12 plus one day. Upon reaching this age a Jew is obliged to fulfil all the commandments. Although the term occurs in the Talmud for one who is subject to the law, its usage to denote the occasion of assuming religious and legal obligations does not appear before the 15th century...The calling up (of the boy) to the reading of the Torah at the Bar Mitzvah is a symbol of a boy's attaining maturity.

A Jewish boy learning to put on the phylactery before his Bar Mitzvah. Four paragraphs from the law (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21) are written on one piece of parchment; then again on four separate parchments. The four pieces are put into a special leather box with four compartments, and this is tied to the forehead by a band round the head, and fastened at the nape of the neck by a knot in the shape of the Hebrew letter D (daleth). The single parchment is put into another box. This is strapped to the biceps of the left arm, fastened with a knot in the shape of the letter Y (yod= י), with the rest of the strap wound seven times around the arm, three times around the middle finger, and the rest wound around the palm, forming the letter SH (shin= ש). The three letters make the title for God: SH-D-Y (Shaddai: Almighty= שדי).

These are supposed to be worn by all Jewish men aged 13 years and over when they pray. The law was to be bound as a sign upon their hands and as "frontlets" between their eyes. Such elaborate ritual required by the law (Exod. 13:16; Deut. 6:8) was designed to remind the Israelite of the power and instruction of the law — a daily association, that drew the attention of the spiritually-minded to the realisation of their constant failure to fulfil the law!

Unfortunately, for most the ritual made them not one whit "holy", since the law remained on their sleeves and not in their hearts (Mat. 23:23).

The word "concupiscence" is *epithumia*, rendered "lust" (the noun: *epithumia)* and "covet" (the verb: *epithumeo)* in v. 7. It signifies inordinate desire, the inward passion of the flesh, the overweening desire for self-exaltation. The commandments of the law revealed that what might have been thought a legitimate desire was, in fact, sinful, and the character of our nature inevitably seeks to circumvent the disciplines of the law.

"For without the law, sin (was) dead" — The law brought into bold relief all the evil propensities of the flesh: "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (1Cor. 15:56) inasmuch as the law demonstrates the presence of sin, and elevates it into a power that governs in life. The Greek has no definite article with "law" in this case: "apart from law, however, sin is dead" (Diag.). The word "without" should be literally rendered "apart from". What a remarkable paradox is drawn. Paul shows that despite the antagonism which exists between "sin" and "law", they are inextricably related to one another; for sin cannot be manifested apart from the presence and application of law, and law has no power to condemn man as a sinner until sin has been manifested!

The TCNT has: "for where there is no consciousness of law, sin shows no sign of life". Unless the law is recognised, sin is dormant, ignored and "dead". But the law of God revives the challenge between flesh and spirit, and shows the evil character of sin that resides in the flesh.

Often in this epistle sin is personified as a king, setting up his throne in the hearts of men, making unrighteous war against the ordinances of God, using fallen human nature as his weapon. He pays wages and is possessively jealous in his goal to work for the death of his subjects. As a living force, sin remains intensely active and powerful, but when sin is dead, it cannot work.

VERSE 9

"For I was alive without the law once" — The word "without" means "apart from" (as in v. 8). Paul refers to his own experience in the innocency of childhood. He was never really without the law, being born as a Jew into the constitution of Moses, but he speaks of a time of youth when its impact was not perceived. As a young child he lived without knowledge of the ritual and responsibility of law, without realising his failure to fulfil it. Even later, when he came to know and understand the law, he believed that he kept it "blamelessly" (Phil. 3:6), fulfilling its ritual requirements as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). But now, understanding his own inability to keep the law perfectly, he found it "was alive", daily examining his life and condemning his continued failures. Finding that the law could not be perfectly obeyed by sinful flesh, Paul asserts that when he felt the effects of the commandments upon him to condemnation: "I died".

There is no definite article in the original, as the Diaglott indicates: "I was formerly living apart from law". He was then ignorant of the conviction of conscience and concern that came with the revelation of commandments and instructions.

"But when the commandment came" — The TCNT has: "but when the commandment was brought home to me". When Paul was made aware of his responsibilities to acknowledge the law, his situation changed and he felt its full impact upon his life.

When the Truth is understood, there is an obligation to respond to it. To the Athenians Paul stated: "The times of this ignorance God winked at (the days of Gentile "youth" when the divine will was revealed only through Israel); but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Knowledge brings responsibility, and none with an understanding of God's will can avoid such judgment. Thus His Word is the ground of our responsibility, and will be the basis for personal examination at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Jn. 12:48). God has elevated His Word above even His holy Name (Psa. 138:2).

"Sin revived" — The Greek verb *anazao* means "to live again" — it was

experienced again in the body of yet another son of Adam. Paul became aware of this when it occurred: "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (ch. 3:20). It was no longer dormant in him as had been his previous experience in the ignorance of childhood, and Paul experienced the common feelings of mankind. The flesh which had manifested sinful characteristics in all other people, did so also in Paul when he became aware of the ordinances of law. In this sense, the sinfulness of flesh, which was previously quiescent in him (v. 8), was now quickened into new life, being revived as a principle and manifested in action.

"And I died" — This phrase stands boldly and graphically opposed to "I was alive". The Greek verb *apothnesko* means "to die out, to expire, to become quite dead", and Rotherham translates it: "sin sprang up to life, whereas I died".

The phrase represents the divine edict on Adam for transgression: "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17), a condition that was passed upon all his posterity. Paul was brought under this constitution, not only physically by birth, but also morally by action, becoming a transgressor himself.

In innocency, Paul did not realise that he was breaking the law, but at the age of thirteen years (some say this was at twelve years), he became a *Bar Mitzvah, Son of the Commandment*, and assumed a responsibility to fulfil the law. Then he became familiar with God's "Thou shalt not"; whereupon his natural bias to sin within him rejoined, "I will"! Later, when faced with his own insufficiency and disobedience (cp. Acts 9:4-6), he recognized that he was constantly sinning against God's law, and therefore subject to its curse which is death (ch. 6:23). Paul became a "dead man" in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and, being a transgressor of the law, he knew that the "curse of the law" would eventually exact its toll in death. This is the experience of every person; the Lord Jesus Christ alone being able, through his sinlessness, to "redeem from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13) for he was not suffered to "see corruption" (Acts 2:27).

VERSE 10

"And the commandment which (was ordained) to life" — Divine law was not designed to destroy; it was the intervention of sin that accomplished that (Gen. 2:17). The performing of the commandments gave protection and preservation, for Moses was told: "Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall *live in them*" (Lev. 18:5). The Lord Jesus verified that instruction: "If thou wilt enter *into life*, keep the commandments... This do, and thou shalt live" (Mat. 19:17; Lk. 10:28). But though it was "intended for life" (Diag., Rom. 7:10), none, except the Lord, could keep the law perfectly (ch. 3:9-10) — therefore the failure of all others to maintain the requirements of the law, emphasised the need for the Redeemer.

The law alone could not give sinning mankind life. Even in its own institutions it taught that life was through death: for a male child eight days old was subjected to circumcision (symbol of the cutting off of flesh) and offerings (Exod. 13:2; Lev. 12:3), that he might enter into the "life of the nation", and become an accredited Jew. Thus, the law convinced men of their impotence to effect their own salvation, and caused them to seek the omnipotence of Yahweh to accomplish it (Rom. 7:13). In this regard the law drew attention to the means whereby that life could be obtained; it was a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24), through whom comes saving grace (v. 25). To a man who recognised the true significance of the law, and strove to faithfully live thereby, it was able to lift him above mere fleshly thought on to a high spiritual plane. It became a schoolmaster to those with spiritual discernment, and would lead them to Christ. Moses and the prophets are grand examples of such faithfulness, as they looked forward in faith to the coming of the Just One (Acts 22:14).

But what of the Lord Jesus? Did he not completely fulfil the law? Certainly, but that brought him into death, for he too

was of our "condemned nature" (*BASF*, clause 8), and required salvation therefrom. He could not complete the law's requirement of the Passover Lamb without dying; and, as he was born for the purpose of fulfilling every principle of the law (1Tim. 1:15), he had to be involved in the sacrifice of himself in death. However, he obtained "a title to resurrection" by his perfect obedience, and subsequently entered into life.

"I found (to be) unto death" — Paul's personal experience revealed the sinfulness of his condition, and its effect in death, after the example of Adam (Gen. 3:19). The Diaglott Greek text has: "(This) was found by me the commandment that for life, same for death". In his earlier life, as a Pharisee, Paul had boasted in the law, as did his Judaising contemporaries. Using such passages as Lev. 18:5 they taught that "keeping" the law would gain them eternal salvation. But now Paul's mind has been illuminated with the Truth. He sees not only his present, but also his *past* relationship to the law in its true light. The "commandment designed to bring me life, brought me death!" (Weymouth). Though knowing that it expressed divine wisdom: Paul found that he had to confess his personal failure to honor that law. With that realisation came the conviction that sin and death had control over him. Instead of being the pathway to life, as he had supposed, he found that it condemned him to death.

Honest worshippers will acknowledge the same principles, as they examine themselves (1Cor. 11:28) and observe the constancy of personal failure. Sin deceives by making promise of power, pleasure and wisdom (Gen. 3:5-6). All it can really offer, however, is death!

Three Features of the Law — v. 12

In this verse Paul summarises the three major attributes of the law. It was ***separate*** from all other laws known to man and was therefore to be regarded as sacred and sanctified. It was ***just and right*** in all that it taught. It was ***good and worthy*** of admiration because it expressed the mind and counsel of Yahweh. This, then, was Paul's conclusion in regard to the law, thus providing an answer to his opponents who would readily claim that he desired to debase and destroy the Law of Moses. He stood firmly by the principle that if men and women used the law as the *means* whereby they hoped to attain eternal redemption, they were doomed. Salvation could be attained only through faith in Christ Jesus, and that which God had accomplished in him: this belief alone would allow the believer to recognise and respect the law and its purpose, in true perspective. —*J.Ullman.*

VERSE 11

"For sin" — This verse amplifies Paul's argument in v. 8. The Diaglott Greek text has "*the* sin", identifying human nature, the serpent in the flesh, which is as beguiling as the animal that spoke to Eve (Gen. 3:13). Paul finds this a continual threat to his obedience to the divine law, and shows the dreadful results of its work: Rom. 7:15-24. It is the nature we bear that must be purged of the *diabolos* character it possesses (cp. Heb. 2:14), and this will only be accomplished through the Christ-sacrifice and our baptism of the Spirit (Jn. 3:5). Then sin, as a principle describing both our nature and personal transgressions, will be removed for ever (Rev. 21:2-4).

"Taking occasion by the commandment" — As a "monarch", sin used the existence of divine law to demonstrate the inability of flesh to completely fulfil it! In this it completes the work of the Edenic serpent, which utilised the instruction of the Elohim to deceive Eve: "Yea, hath God said..." (Gen. 3:1-5). Using the presence of the commandments, sin reveals that mankind is unable to obey their demands.

The word "by" is the Greek *dia:* "through". The NIV has: "For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment... deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death". The flesh

The Need and Beauty of Law

How much the excellence of human life depends upon law: we do not at first realise how much! We grow up under the feeling that the best thing for us is to be just let alone to follow the bent of our own sweet will. We learn at last that this is just the worst for any man or nation. Experience confounds false philosophy. Men are not as cabbage roses that will automatically unfold their blushing beauty and exhale their fragrant odour if left alone; they are rather as the apple trees that will grow crabs unless grafted with good slips. The dictum of Christ and Paul is found correct: "In the flesh dwelleth no good thing" (John 6:63; Rom. 7:18)...

Among all the systems of law that have appeared among men, there is only one that makes any admissible claim to be Divine; and that is the system known as the Law of Moses. Of this we have the most ample information in the Bible, apart from which we could have no reliable knowledge of it, for Jewish tradition and Rabbinical gloss tend rather to obscure than to reveal its features. We could wish for nothing fuller or more satisfactory on the subject than we get in the Bible. — *Law of Moses*, pp.1,2.

The Glory of the Law — Psa. 19:7-14

In a magnificent poetic description, the Psalmist exalts the great privileges of the divine law, and shows the spiritual benefits that flow forth from it. He shows that the divine law is:

Verse 7 —

"PERFECT, CONVERTING THE SOUL". The word "perfect" signifies that which is complete, entire, all-necessary. So the law provides all that is needful for the purpose of converting (RV mg: *restoring*) the soul. It refreshes, invigorates, sustains, comforts and encourages.

"SURE, MAKING WISE THE SIMPLE". Its principles and testimonies are "sure" in that they are not variable nor changeable. They can be depended upon for their wisdom, so that the "simple" (those who are "open" [Heb. *pethiy*] and receptive to the Truth) are able, as little children, to humbly accept their rules. They are not the sophisticated of the world, who exalt their own capacities and sagacity; but are modest enough to recognise their innate deficiencies, and seek the aid of Yahweh.

Verse 8 —

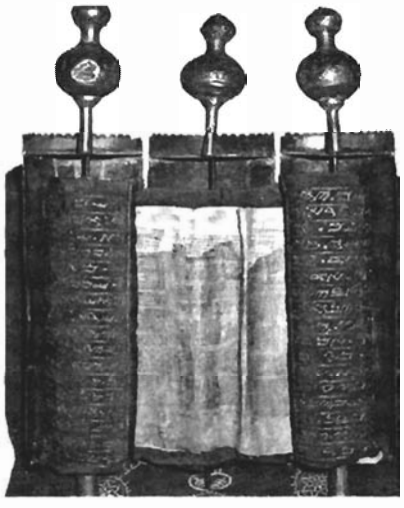
"RIGHT, REJOICING THE HEART". The law is upright, straight (as the word "right" means), uncrooked. Every statute contained within the law reveals the pathway of truth, the "strait and narrow" way that leads to the kingdom. Because of that the heart can rejoice notwithstanding trials and tribulations that might beset the pathway.

"PURE, ENLIGHTENING THE EYES". Yahweh's demands are like the pure light of the sun: destructive of the darkness and gloom of night (see Prov. 6:23). They enable the spiritually blind (Mat. 13:13; cp. Jn. 9:7) to see.

Verse 9 —

"CLEAN, ENDURING FOR EVER". The law brings reverence and respect for the authority of the One who provided it. That leads to a desire to be cleansed by the moral influence of the law, a process commenced in baptism (1Pet. 3:21), and continued in the daily washing of the Word (Eph. 5:26). Such a cleansing provides the basis for eternal life, and will be ultimately seen in the garments of righteousness, "clean and white", that grace the saints (Rev. 19:8).

"TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER". The decisions of God, embodied in His law and ordinances, are in accordance with His principles of Truth and Righteousness (see Jn. 17:17; Deut. 4:8). They will be eternally fulfilled and manifested in the multitudinous Christ in judgment and mercy (Rev. 19:11).



Every synagogue contained a scroll of the Torah, the law. It was revered and honored as the most sacred of all books — but unfortunately, although regularly read (cp. Lk. 4:16), its precepts and principles were rarely kept. Because of their trespasses, the law remained to "curse" the people (Gal. 3:13), whereas it was designed to bless them (Deut. 11:27).

does not naturally accept the restrictions of God's commandments, but sees all divine precepts as restraining, oppressive and unreasonable. This, of course, is due to the weakness of the flesh and the deceitfulness of sin.

"Deceived me" — The verb *exapatao* is in the intensive form, meaning to beguile thoroughly, wholly. The word only occurs five times, one of which speaks of the serpent "beguiling" Eve through "his subtilty" (2Cor. 11:3). Eve was deceived by an external tempter, but sin continues that beguiling work from "within, out of the heart of man" (Mk. 7:21), as Paul will outline in the following verses.

Though the apostle appears to be alluding to Eve's downfall, it must be remembered that he is expounding upon his *own* weaknesses. In Gen. 3 it was the serpent who was responsible for the failure of Adam and Eve. Here it is "sin": the sinful impulses which are now inherent in fallen human nature. Notice that with these words Paul clears the law of being responsible for his condition. Sin is to be blamed, not the law.

"And by it slew (me)" — Gr. *dia*, "and *through* it, slew me (lit. "to kill *outright*, put to death"). Note the order carefully stated here: Sin revived (v. 9), then beguiled him, then slew him.

All sin ever offers is death. That was the experience of the first pair (Gen. 3), and their seed (ch. 5: "and they died..."). It was not the commandment that was at fault; it was the result of a nature unrestrained and defiant of all law, which inevitably brought the possessor into the grave.

VERSE 12

"Wherefore" — What conclusion might we come to in view of the argument in v. 11? Could we assume that the law was at fault in this matter, since it was by virtue of its power that death came? Not so!

The Greek word *hoste* occurs also in v. 4, and means: to mark the result; to represent the result as a fact. Paul does not place a question, but makes a statement of fact. The TCNT has: "The conclusion, then, is that the law is holy..." Paul has provided adequate evidence that he would not blame the law for his sinful condition. Sin was the culprit, and the flesh was the weapon it used to gain its ends. Therefore the apostle shows the value and importance of the law which was provided by a merciful and understanding God.

"The law (is) holy" — Paul makes a difference between the "law" and the "commandments" in this verse. The law relates to the whole compilation of precepts; to the principle of law as such, rather than the individual commandments. The law is holy, for it is a revelation of the divine wisdom designed to "separate" (i.e., make holy) a people unto God.

Moses was told that Israel was constituted a nation upon the basis of their sanctity: "Now therefore, *if* ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:5-6). The law is designed to catalogue a people as special to the Owner, and distinct from all others. The adjective "holy" (Gr. *hagios*; from the verb *hazo*, to venerate, consecrated, sacred) means that to which reverence is due; to separate so as to honor. This principle was repeated by Peter to the ecclesia: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1Pet. 2:9). The basic principle of holiness is that of separation (2Cor. 6:17-18), but that does not complete the process: the separation is to be for a purpose; that which God has in mind: the manifestation of His character in the people.

Actually the Greek text includes the word *men*, "indeed", obviously added for emphasis, so that there should be no mistake in understanding Paul's position on this matter. Thus: "the law *indeed* is holy..." (Diag.). Paul is emphatic that the excellency and purity of the law stands unimpeached.

"And the commandment holy" — The "commandment" refers to the individual instructions of the law, originally codified in the "ten words" written on two tablets of stone (Deut. 4:13). Obedience to them would preserve the people from the "disease of Egypt" (Exod. 15:26), and provide the necessities of life (Lev. 26:3-5). To respect each principle of the law in individual commandments was the means to honoring the God who gave them. The Master elevated such commandments, uncovering the hypocrisy with which the leaders of Israel discriminated unjustly between commandments: Mat. 23:23. The law required that every one of the commandments was important, and neglect of any would bring the processes of the law against the disobedient (Jas. 2:10).

"And just" — The word indicates the rendering of that which is due. The Greek *dikaios* signifies: "fulfilling all duties which are right; right conduct". The commandments revealed that the divine way brought honor to Yahweh and benefits to His people. Even its penalties are consistent and wise. If the principles of the divine law were the basis of national codes of law, much of the troubles of this present age of licence would be averted. Such laws will be reintroduced in the kingdom of Christ, and all mankind will be required to submit thereto (cp. Jer. 16:19-20; Zech. 13:3; Psa. 72:11).

"And good" — The Greek word *agathos* signifies that which is honorable in character and constitution, and beneficial in effect; in its very nature it tends to produce happiness. The sin and condemnation of the guilty is not the fault of the law; if obeyed, it would produce goodness everywhere. The law is good inasmuch as it reveals man for what he is, and shows the need of a redeemer (Gal. 3:24).

The Law is not Responsible for Death — vv. 13-23.

Paul desires his readers to understand the full effect of sin, and the power it holds over those who would challenge it. Though sin is only manifested by the intervention of divine law, it is not that which causes death, but the power of sin that

The Power of Sin in Our Nature

This enemy within the human nature is the mind of the flesh, which is enmity against God; it is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be. The commandment of God, which is "holy, just and good", being so restrictive of the propensities, which in purely animal men display themselves with uncontrolled violence, makes them appear in their true colors. These turbulent propensities, the apostle styles "sin in the flesh", of which it is full; hence, he also terms it "sinful flesh". This is human nature; and the evil in it, made so apparent by the law of God, he personifies as "PRE-EMINENTLY A SINNER".

— *Elpis Israel.*

resides in our nature. For, notwithstanding how much we try to perfectly fulfil the divine law, sin is present to exert its force upon the human will, and inevitably leads to death. Paul now speaks from his personal experience, and opens his innermost feelings for his readers to understand the power of sin he experiences in his life.

VERSE 13

"Was then that which is good" — The Diaglott translates this: "That good thing", and the original Greek text includes the definite article: "*the* good". The law was good (v. 12) because it manifested the divine will, and instructed mankind in what Yahweh required of them. Even when a person fails to maintain the law, its essential goodness must be acknowledged (v. 16).

It should be observed that Paul desires to answer every objection to his argument. His opponents might claim: "In view of your thesis in vv.10-12, in which you admit that the divine commandments could only be productive of good, is it not a contradiction to argue that what is beneficial is also fatal?" Paul proceeds to answer this proposition.

"Made death unto me?" — The Greek reads: "has it become death unto me?" Was the only effect of the law to condemn him? Was the law a vehicle of death? Was its only purpose one of destruction?

"God forbid" — Gr. *me genoito*, "certainly not!" (TCNT; see notes on ch. 3:4). It is sin, not law, that brought death. The "good thing" revealed sin for what it is, and has shown why man is held captive to death. The very excellence of God's law demonstrated the flesh as extremely evil and worthy of death. The fault was not in the law; it was in Paul's own sinful propensities, which he proceeds to enumerate in vv. 15-20.

"But sin" — Paul personifies this power, as in vv. 8,11. It is seen as an overbearing and dominating slave-master (v. 14). The Greek has the definite article: "*the* sin". The "good thing" is immediately related to the evil thing of sin; but the law was not responsible for Paul's sinful condition; rather, it *revealed* it, and had thereby shown the utter futility of placing any confidence in the ability of flesh to keep divine law without failing.

"That it might appear sin" — Revealing its true nature; being no longer merely dormant as a principle in his flesh, but manifested in works. Thus Weymouth has: "It might be seen in its true light as sin". The word "appear" is *phaino* in the passive voice signifying "to be brought forth into light, to become evident, to appear" (Vine). When the law of God is applied to daily circumstances it highlights the presence of sin, so that a man might recognise how deep and desperate is his guilt.

"Working death in me" — The Greek word *katergazomai* (the same word as occurs in v. 8) has the sense of working out by toil and perseverance; to achieve, or result by labor. Revealed in its true nature, sin used the law as a weapon by which to "slay" the apostle. The Diaglott has: "that good thing producing death to me" Sin does not give up; it pursues its objective, until its subject has succumbed! Sin automatically "works" in our nature to accomplish its designs, in accordance with the "law in our members" established in the very beginning (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 7:21-23). Sin pursues its objective unceasingly, and to combat this evil force the believer must "work" at developing righteousness and godliness (Phil. 2:12 — where the same word refers to the labor of the Spirit in achieving salvation).

Here, then, are two opposing forces: our physical nature works at accomplishing our death; our discerning and spiritual mind must work at seeking salvation. Paul found, however, that the former power came naturally; the latter must be cultivated and developed. From that challenge we cannot yet rest, but must "labor" (work at) our own salvation through the means provided us in Christ Jesus, and by surrendering to the influence of God's Word (Phil. 2:12; cp. Eph. 2:8).

"By that which is good" — The word "by" is the Greek *dia*, which signifies

"through" (Diaglott). It was not the "good" law but the evil effects of sin that brought destruction. What the law was designed to do, was to show the power of sin in all its carnality. Sin acts like a cancer, eating through the vitals of the spiritual body, until only a skeleton remains. This is only spiritually discerned, for Asaph was mistaken in the condition of the foolish and wicked: "There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men" (Psa. 73:4-5). It seemed as though such godless and apostate people are relieved of all concern. Not so! When Asaph "went into the sanctuary of God; then understood he their end" (v. 17). It was now evident to him that, notwithstanding the seeming pleasure and joy of the wicked, they were shackled by sin, and were inevitably sliding down the path to destruction.

"For I Am Carnal" (Ch. 7:14)

With this statement the apostle turns to a completely different aspect of his reasoning. This statement, and the verses which follow, explode one of the major arguments used both by Judaisers — who refuse to take this reality into account — and some proponents of what has become known as the "Clean Flesh" teaching. The latter claim that there is nothing inherently wrong with human nature, and therefore it is quite possible (in theory) for any of Adam's descendants to perfectly keep God's law. In this respect there is little difference between one of the basic elements of Judaising and the theory of the Clean Flesh adherents. The latter claim that we only die *because we sin;* that the guilt established through transgressing divine law is the only reason mankind becomes condemned to death. This fallacious and fatal doctrine leads to many errors, including that which teaches that man was created in a state of mortality, and therefore when the sentence of death was passed upon Adam and Eve, it was merely a judicial or legal condemnation. (For Paul's answer to this foolish proposition, see notes on ch. 5:12).

The truth is that, since sin entered into the world, all Adam's progeny, including the Lord Jesus Christ, are born into a *constitution of sin* (see notes on ch. 5:19). All are therefore born with a *nature* which is subject to death. Brother Thomas points out: "This is a misfortune, not a crime" (*Elpis Israel,* p. 129). But what of the deaths of newborn babes? Are they convicted sinners? Of course not! Are they guilty in the eyes of God for having the misfortune to be born? Such a belief is reprehensible and God-dishonoring.

Christ, as bearer of our nature (Heb. 2:14-17) lived under the "dominion" of death during his mortal lifetime.

Thus, in introducing this new thought, the apostle teaches his readers, that, as the progeny of Adam, our quest for a life beyond the grave is dependent upon finding answers to a twofold problem: Firstly, the inevitability that we *will* commit sin, because of the weakness of the flesh; secondly, that, even if we could overcome the first difficulty, we would still be left with a *nature* "which is doomed to death" (v. 24, Roth.). Note especially Paul's use of the present tense: "I *am* carnal..." (Gr. *eimi,* "I am" — Bull.). He does not say: "I *was*" (i.e., "before I came into the Truth"). From this point on to the end of the chapter, Paul speaks of his actual state at the time of writing.

Of the word "carnal" (Gr. *sarkinos*) Vine says: "consisting of flesh; or, pertaining to the natural, transient life of the body". Hence, "I am fleshly" (Young's Lit., Diag.); "I am earthy" (TCNT), "I, however, am a creature of flesh" (Roth). This is clear. But perhaps Paul is saying more than this. Is he contrasting his own lowly, humiliated state with the godly origin and essential holiness of the law? Most versions suggest this, rendering the passage: "The law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual". It is obvious that he is confessing to having a natural state which was "dragging" him "down to death" (v. 24, TCNT). Only God could deliver him from this condition, so he "thanks God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25).

—J.U.

"That sin by the commandment" — The word "by" is the Greek *dia*, to be rendered "through" (as in the Diaglott). The divine law was able to diagnose and highlight the problem presence of sin. It is in the realm of sin that the law is proclaimed. Law demands that which sinful man can never discharge wholly: a perfect obedience to its requirements, and absolute repulsion of the power of sin. Only the Lord Jesus was able to achieve this, being "made strong" by the divine overshadowing of the virgin Mary in conception (Psa. 80:15; Luke 1:35) to accomplish that which none other has been able to achieve.

"Might become exceeding sinful" — Much stronger words are now used: "sin *became* (Gr. *gionomai*) *exceeding* (Gr. *kata hyperbole*) sinful", or "super-eminently sinful" (Bullinger). The full power of sin is thus revealed; it becomes powerful to the utmost degree, so that absolutely nothing could be hidden from the law (see the use of the phrase in 1Cor. 12:31; 2Cor. 1:8; 4:7; 12:7; Gal. 1:13). The Diaglott emphasizes the personification of sin: "Sin... might become an exceedingly great Sinner". The awakening of sin in life by the power of God's law and its display to the spiritual consciousness demonstrates the grotesque ungodliness of sin, and the impossibility of overcoming it without the aid of Almighty God through His Son (Psa. 80:17). It was seen to be absolutely and violently opposed to God and His law.

VERSE 14

"For we know" — "For" is from the Gr. *gar*, often an important conjunctive. It is rendered by the Diaglott as "Besides", i.e., an additional final thought on the subject of his exposition. The remainder of this chapter comprises the apostle's own testimony of his experience with sin. He finds the presence of sin to be a constant agitation, a companion in all his determinations, an opposition to his desires to please God. He commences by an acknowledgement of the presence of sin: "We know...", and concludes in exasperation that he cannot avoid its control and power: "O wretched man that I am!" (v. 24). Thus Paul puts two complementary facts side by side in a contrasting parable of life: "We know... but I am: the law... sin; spiritual... carnal".

The Greek word for "know" used in this verse is *oidamen* (from *oida*, to know by observation, by understanding), meaning to admit, to concede, to understand well. Paul first expresses his conviction of the benefit of the law, then proceeds to outline his personal experiences ("*we* know") which demonstrate his inability to maintain perfect obedience to that law.

"That the law is spiritual" — The law reveals the "mind of the spirit" (ch. 8:27). The Greek word is *pneumatikos*, which signifies belonging to or proceeding from the Spirit; thus it expresses the divine mind. In the same sense the meat, water and rock of the wilderness were "spiritual" (1Cor. 10:3-4); they were designed to teach spiritual principles and lessons. Similarly, the law was given that men might perceive the divine mind in the issues of life. As such the law elevates the human mind to higher principles than otherwise perceived (Isa. 55:8-9). Hence the law was an expression of the thoughts and mind of Yahweh. Because of its origin, and in view of that which it expresses, the law must be "spiritual". So Paul states this foundation principle for the dramatic and irrefutable statement which follows.

"But I am" — Paul uses the present tense to describe himself at the time of writing, contrasting his past experience (v. 7) with that which he now finds to be part of his life. Note the constant repetition of the personal pronoun "I" in this section (vv. 14-25), as Paul emphasizes his own involvement in the contest between Sin and Righteousness. He finds himself weak "through the flesh" (ch. 8:3), and unable to attain his own salvation without recourse to the divinely provided means in the sinless Son of God (ch. 7:25).

"Carnal" — Greek: *sarkinos*, "made of flesh and blood" (1Cor. 3:1), translated elsewhere as "fleshly", the source of sensual passions and propensities (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul expresses the fact that naturally

The Significant Word "Do"

The English word "do" occurs ten times in Paul's exposition on the effects of sin in vv. 15-21, as the apostle demonstrates the bondage under which he labors, and emphasizes the inevitability of sin whilst the power of the flesh remains a part of his experience. But the word "do" is commonly translated from three different Greek words. It is important to clearly distinguish the different shades of meaning indicated by these words, and the student is recommended to note these varying meanings in the Bible, and to color each word differently, so that quick identification can be made and the sense of Paul's argument more easily perceived. The words are:

[1] *poieo.* To do, perform. It speaks of a labor which "makes", or acts. It therefore indicates an act performed — then: a random series of actions rather than a habitual continuance in a sinful way of life (for which see the next word).

[2] *prasso.* This signifies to practise consistently, to maintain the work undertaken, to labor habitually. Vine expounds this word as: "Generally speaking, in Paul's epistles *poieo* denotes an action complete in itself, while *prasso* denotes a habit. The difference is seen in Rom. 1:32 RV. Again, *poieo* stresses the accomplishment, e.g., 'perform,' in Rom. 4:21: whereas *prasso* stresses the process leading to the accomplishment, e.g., 'keep' in ch. 2:25. In Rom. 2:3 he who does, *poieo,* the things mentioned, is warned against judging those who practise them: *prasso*".

[3] *katergazomai.* This signifies "to work out, bring about, accomplish, effect". In Eph. 6:13 it is rendered: "having done (all)" (cp the Diaglott: "having achieved everything") emphasizing the completion of the labor. This word occurs eleven times in the epistle (six of them in ch. 7; see vv. 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20), and is therefore one of the key words in this chapter.

he is servile to the flesh, and contrasts this attitude to the influence of the Spirit-Word which acts in opposition to the natural laws of the flesh (vv. 22-23). In the absence of the restraint on the flesh provided by the divine law, the flesh is disposed to sin and its emotions have full rein (Gal. 5:19-21).

Paul is under no misapprehension concerning the power of the flesh. He recognises the dangerous influences at large, and warns against an indulgence of its tendencies. So he told the Romans to "make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (ch. 13:14), and the Galatians were exhorted to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

"Sold under sin" — Finding himself as a bondslave without rights or privileges, but forced to obey his master, Sin. The Greek literal text is "sold under *the* sin". As Israel in Egypt suffered the bondage of a cruel overlord and was afflicted by the incessant demands of their captors (Exod. 1:13), so Paul recognises similar experiences in life. Physically, he is held captive by human nature, and cannot escape its power whilst he remains mortal; he constantly feels the impact of temptation which arises out of his own emotions (Jas. 1:14). Even though he has given his allegiance to Christ, he still experiences the continuing challenge of the flesh.

The word "sold" is from the Gr. verb *piprasko;* whilst "under" is from *hupo,* with the accusative. It provides the idea: "sold into the power of sin for the purpose of slavery". This brief but eloquent statement is like a cry of anguish (cp. v. 24); a vexatious recognition of Paul's true condition, to which he would remain in servitude until the coming of his Lord to release him from the bonds and frailty of flesh. Notwithstanding this, Paul did not passively accept such a lot; he remained implacably opposed to sin. In ch. 6 he revealed that the convert to Christ *refuses* to permit Sin to exercise lordship over him (v. 1); nor will he accept that even a single act of sin can be justified (v. 15).

VERSE 15

"For that which I do" — As a slave (v. 14) he is bound to perform a work which he hates. Being driven by a nature which is sin-oriented, he finds inevitably that he produces the "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19). This is an inevitable, yet distasteful, service to a master who is abhorred.

The word "do" found in this section (vv. 15-21) is rendered from three different Greek words, the meanings of which more graphically illustrate Paul's exposition. These words are indicated in the Diaglott translation of this verse: "For what I work out *(katergazomai)* I do not approve; since I do not practise *(prasso)* what I desire, but what I hate, this I do *(poieo)*". See the bordered insert opposite for a definition of these different words.

In using the word *katergazomai* Paul admits that as a slave he performed the works of the flesh being dominated by the sinful propensities of his nature. He finds himself performing that which represents the desires of the flesh. Thus he speaks of the evil which he unwillingly does, the sinful acts of which he is conscious and which trouble him. Only the Master was able to live without performing any acts of sin, for he "knew no sin" (2Cor. 5:21). This was a unique condition only achieved because "the Father was with him" (Jn. 16:32) inasmuch as the divine conception of the Holy Spirit which came upon his mother Mary (Lk. 1:35), invested him with a capacity to overcome. Such an unparalleled condition is not found in those born "by the will of the flesh". Yet it still required the Master's own personal application of the spirit mind, and his challenge to the influence of the flesh which he experienced in common with all others (Heb. 2:14-17). Thus he needed to "offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from *(out of)* death" (ch. 5:7). Whilst all mankind has submitted to the powers of the flesh to a greater or lesser extent, a much heavier burden rested upon the Lord Jesus, for he bore the responsibility for the salvation of the race.

"I allow not" — "I do not approve". The TCNT has: "I do not recognise the results of what I am doing". The verb *ou ginosko* signifies to be unable to observe as a result of experience. Though the margin has "know" (the normal meaning of the Greek *ginosko*), the word is sometimes used in the sense of approving: "Many... which have not *known* (approved) the depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24); "I will not *know* (permit, allow, approve) a wicked person" (Psa. 101:4).

Paul was not prepared to acknowledge the actions performed as being acceptable. He was well aware that the law did not permit breaches of divine commandments. In fact his own reason and conscience agreed with the law and approved of its precepts. Yet, as he confesses, he acted contrary to both his reasoning and conscience. Why? Because, in mortality, he remained the "slave" of Sin's flesh.

In regard to this power over man, Brother Carter commented: "As the slave performs his task, blindly unquestioning, not having regard to why the task is set and what the object is, but simply in response to a command of the owner, so there is a surrender to sin's service. It is a service which is not the voluntary act of a righteous man, but an act he really repudiates. There is a failure to perform the good intention, and a doing of the thing which is hated". Paul finds himself involved in acts of weakness; he does not wish this condition to continue, but his natural inclinations (the slave-owner, Sin's flesh) bend him to it.

"For what I would" — The Diaglott has: "what I desire". His understanding had been enlivened by the spiritual law of God, and he desired to always fulfil its terms, knowing its benefits for the "inner man": v. 22.

"That do I not" — Weymouth has: "What I desire to do is not what I do". The word "do" is *prasso*, to practise consistently, habitually (see definitions in panel). Though he respects the law of God, and has a continuous desire to obey it completely, he finds that inevitably he fails! The "consistent practice" of experience is

that Sin enters, and transgression results.

The fulfilling of the divine law is not restricted to obeying its precepts; it demands that a person manifests its spirit and reveals the standards it requires. Man is called not only to obedience, but also to display "the glory of God", but all "come short" of it (ch. 3:23). The standard set before us is the "perfect man... the *measure* of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Even when we aim for the "mark" (Phil. 3:14) in a sincere endeavor to do the perfect will of the Father, we fall short of that perfection, as an arrow sent to its target might not reach the centre.

"But what I hate" — Of the verb "hate" *(miseo)*, Bullinger states: "usually implying active ill-will in words and conduct, or a persecuting spirit". Paul was not ignorant of the forces arrayed against him, in the weakness of his own flesh and the temptations which were inherent to his nature. He shows that by stating that he *recognises* what he "hates". He is active in his opposition to sin, and opposes it with an absolute disapproval. Nevertheless he must still acknowledge his weakness.

Hatred is part of the divine character. In the declaration of His Name, Yahweh declared that He would "by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" etc. (Exod. 34:7). His Son hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes (Rev. 2:15). Similarly, His children must learn to hate sin and all its effects: Psa. 97:10. David hated the works of those who turn aside (Psa. 101:3) and "every false way" (Psa. 119:104). We must therefore hate wrongdoing (Rom. 7:15), iniquity (Heb. 1:9), evil ways (Jude 23). A wholesome hatred of our own ungodly inclinations and tendencies will help develop the mind of Paul expressed in this section of his exposition. This divine quality opposes every natural feeling generated from "within" (Mk. 7:21), and is the reason why so few delight in the ways of God (cp Isa. 55:8-9).

A poet (cp. Acts 17:28) puts the problem in the following metre:

I like, dislike, lament for what I could not;
I do, undo; yet still do what I should not,
And, at the selfsame instant, will the thing
I would not.

It is the paradox of the spiritual life!

"That do I" — Notwithstanding Paul's desire, he finds himself bound to the slave-owner, Sin. The verb "do" is the Greek *poieo*, meaning, the performance of a determination; to do an act. He experiences the "sin that doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1) as an irregular series of acts committed. Yet, the imprint of the divine will on his mind (Rom. 7:22) brings him into a continual warfare against the natural inclinations of the flesh which trouble him. Recognising the sinful condition of his nature, Paul is not guilty of the "sin unto death" (1Jn. 5:16) for which forgiveness is not available; he recognises that the things he does contravene the divine will, and constitute "sins not unto death" for which he must seek forgiveness (ch. 2:1), and the strength to overcome (ch. 5:14).

A man may "love righteousness and hate wickedness" (Psa. 45:7), and may have integrity in the eyes of Yahweh; but as long as he remains in the present death-stricken nature, he will experience its weaknesses. Nevertheless, when the power of the Word is brought to bear against the influences of sin, a Godly character is developed — despite the failures. Paul urged that believers should "greatly rejoice" in the trials of life which come upon them, which he describes as "the trial of your faith". He expressed the earnest desire that, "though it be tried with fire" such faith might be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1Pet. 1:6-7).

VERSE 16

"If then I do that which I would not" — i.e., if his conscience, enlivened by the Word of God, reminds him that his actions violate the commandments given. The verb "do" is *poieo*, a random series of actions — see panel on page 245. Paul understood that he was caught in a struggle between right reason and conscience on the one hand, and carnal inclinations on the other. But there was no doubt as to

What Sin Is & What It Is Not

In verse 17 Paul provides an amplification of what he has already stated in v. 15. He does not claim that "sin" is some undetermined *substance* which was pumped into Adam's body consequent upon his transgression — sometimes referred to as "the implantation theory", as though God possessed a syringe full of "sin" which He injected into Adam. The *potential* for Adam's sentence of mortality and corruption was realizable from his creation, otherwise he would have been created immortal and could therefore have never died. He was created neither mortal nor immortal, as Paul clearly shows in ch. 5:12, but *became* mortal because of sin. Brother Thomas wrote: "The word 'sin' is used in two principal acceptations in the Scriptures. It signifies, in the first place, *the transgression of the law*; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh 'which has the power of *death*'; and it is called '*sin*' because the development or fixation of this *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 126).

It should be noted that whereas in ch. 6 Paul spoke of Sin as a king reigning over the natural man (v. 12, etc), he does not use that term here. He speaks of "sin" that "*dwelleth*" in him; not that sin "reigns" over him; for he has changed Masters. It is Christ who "reigns" in his innermost being, even though he is still, by nature, under the "dominion" of sin (ch. 6:9). — ***J.U.***

where his absolute loyalty belonged, and to which Master he was totally committed. Peter was likewise driven to absolute desperation and deep regret at his sad failure in the high priest's palace: "Peter remembered the word of Jesus... and he went out, and wept bitterly" (Mat. 26:75; Lk. 22:61-62). Paul suffered a similar problem: Acts 23:2-5.

"I consent unto the law that it is good" — Paul confesses that his real love is for the law. His struggle against sin and evil demonstrates that he does not approve of these; he desires to uphold the law which condemns sin. The Greek word for "consent" is *sumphemi*, which signifies "to speak with", from *sun*, with; and *phemi*, to speak; hence, to express agreement with. The NIV has: "I agree that the law is good". Both he and the law are in agreement in mutual opposition against sin and the elevation of the principles of righteousness (see v. 12). In this Paul shows that the law must be honored and recognised as the standard of life; the fact that he fails to perfectly maintain its principles in life is no evidence that he does not regard it highly.

The same principle applies to the individual now "in Christ". Though also subject to the commandments of Christ, the fact remains that "sin is lawlessness" (1Jn. 3:4). When the believer fails to honor Christ's commandments as a way of life, they convict him as a sinner. But, whereas the law of Moses, concerning which Paul wrote, made no provision in itself for the forgiveness of sin, those in Christ are able to confess their sins to God, knowing that forgiveness is readily available to the truly repentant (1Jn. 1:6-10).

VERSE 17

"Now then" — Paul desires to explain how this paradox comes about; why he is so beset with such antagonisms: the law of righteousness on the one hand, and the evidence of sinful actions on the other. Is it his desire to so act? Does he voluntarily give himself to sinfulness, whilst acknowledging the presence of law? Of course not! Therefore the first two words in this verse indicate: "In view of the circumstances I have described, it follows that, it is no more I that do it..." He proceeds to explain the reality of his situation.

"It is no more I that do it" — Paul finds two aspects in his life. The true Paul was "the inward man" who delighted in the law of God (v. 22); nevertheless he

possessed in his nature the propensities of the flesh which were so strong a force that he constantly failed to perform his conscious will which was based upon his knowledge of the divine law. This caused him distress as he recognised the warfare that went on within him, between his conscience on the one hand, and the demands of the flesh, or "sin dwelling in him" (see Mk. 7:21-22; 10:18; Gal. 5:17) on the other. The Lord possessed the same nature, and experienced a similar bias. "In that he himself hath suffered (such conflict between his physical feelings and the spirit-mind which governed his thoughts) being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

The word "do" is *katergazomai*, to work out; to perform. Paul disclaims that it is his desire and will to perform what his body demands in gratification. He looked forward to the day when the source of temptation will be completely removed: "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body (Gr. body of our humiliation) that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working *whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*" (Phil. 3:20-21), being no longer driven by the emotions of the flesh.

"But sin that dwelleth in me" — This defines not specific acts of transgression, but the nature we bear, described in ch. 8:3 as "sinful flesh" (sin's flesh). It is the nature which was condemned by God because of the transgression of Adam and Eve in the beginning, and continues to bear the unfortunate powers of sin and death. All of Adam's posterity receive mortal bodies with inherent evil propensities that in all, except the Son of God, have led to actual transgression.

Brother Roberts explains the difference between sin-nature and sin-actions when expounding on the trespass and sin offerings: "Why, then, should there be a trespass offering as distinct from a sin-offering? Because, while all trespass is sin, all sin is not trespass. There is what Paul calls 'sin that dwelleth in me' (Rom. 7:17). There is sin of forgetfulness; sin of 'unadvised' but unintentional words, in 'the multitude of which', in an ordinary way, as Solomon says, 'there wanteth not sin': sin of omission; sin of thought — all of which cause a righteous man to exclaim with Paul, 'O wretched man that I am!

The House of Flesh in Which "Dwelleth No Good Thing" (Rom. 7:18)

A defective piece of mechanism cannot do good work. The principle must be perfect, and the adaptation true, for the working to be faultless. Man in his physical constitution is imperfect; and this imperfection is traceable to the physical organization of his flesh, being based on the principle of decay and reproduction from the blood; which, acted upon by the air, becomes the life of his flesh. All the phenomena which pertain to this arrangement of things are summed up in the simple word *sin*; which is, therefore, not an individual abstraction, but a concretion of relations in all animal bodies; and the source of all their physical infirmities. Now, the apostle says, that the flesh thinks — that is, the brain, as all who think are well assured from their own consciousness. If, then, this thinking organ be commanded not to do what is natural for it to do under blind impulse, will it not naturally disobey? Now this disobedience is wrong, because what God commands to be done is right, and only right; so that "by His law is the knowledge of sin"; and this law requiring an obedience which is not natural, flesh is sure to think in opposition to it. The philosophy of superstition is — *religion in harmony with the thinking of the flesh;* while true religion is religion in accordance with the thoughts of God as expressed in His law. Hence, it need excite no astonishment that religion and superstition are so hostile; and that all the world should uphold the latter; while so few are to be found who are identified with the religion of God. They are as opposite as flesh and spirit.

*— **J. Thomas**, Elpis Israel, p. 127.*

who shall deliver me?' — but which do not constitute trespass. Trespass is an open and hurtful act, in disobedience of express statute, as when a man lies or steals".

Such sins of ignorance, or unintentional failure, arise from the condition of our being, our unclean nature, which thus can be accurately described as "the sin that dwelleth (is in my body) within me".

The word "dwelleth" (Gr. *oikousa;* Diag: "dwelling") signifies to reside as in a building. The principle of sin is found "in the flesh", dwelling there (Rom. 7:18), and although this is not a matter of guilt on our part, when we allow our nature to direct us into acts of folly and transgression, we become culpable (Mk. 7:21). In the days of his mortality Jesus experienced the "indwelling sin" (Rom. 8:3), but was strengthened in the manner of his unique conception to have the capacity to overcome the power of sin, destroying the *diabolos* through his obedient life and willing sacrifice, and thus becoming the saviour for mankind.

VERSE 18

"For I know" — Gr. *oida.* To know by perception (see v. 7). To illustrate what he has just said, Paul examines the principle of sin which he finds within his flesh, and expounds on the power it wields in his life. He was not ignorant concerning his condition since coming into Christ, nor wanting in understanding in regard to the struggle which had to be maintained to "love righteousness" and "hate wickedness". There was no speculation upon these matters; he discourses firmly upon what he *knows* to be the truth.

"That in me (that is, in my flesh) — Paul speaks of man in his natural state, for the word "flesh" (Gr. *sarx*) describes human nature in corporeal form (see Gen. 6:3; 8:21). Paul is under no misunderstanding as to the condition of the flesh with which he was born. He finds that it harbors the ungodly propensities that cause him to sin. He does not admit the comfort of an external supernatural devil upon which to blame his misdemeanors; his failings are entirely due to the power of his own flesh. In fact, his knowledge and awareness of this truth also highlight his moral accountability to God. In coming to an understanding of the Truth every believer must recognise that the flesh is in a state of constant antagonism against the principles of divine truth (Jn. 6:63; Gal. 5:17). A correct appreciation of this is a matter of life or death (ch. 8:13-14).

"Dwelleth no good thing" — Jesus admitted that only God has underived goodness (Mat. 19:17), for, although being the Son of God, he was a sharer in the fallen nature of mankind, which is associated with death (Gen. 2:17). Goodness does not naturally "dwell" (Gr. *oikeo*, signifying, to occupy a house, to live within) in the condemned Adamic body, called "this vile body (lit. *the body of our humiliation*)" in Phil. 3:21.

Of the condition of our flesh Brother Thomas wrote: "Flesh and blood, or sin's flesh is radically bad. When Paul subjected the nature he possessed in common with all the race of men, to an enlightened scrutiny, he declared that 'in his flesh dwelt no good thing'." *(Eureka).* Again: "In human flesh 'dwells no good thing' (Rom. 7:18), and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him (v. 17). Operating upon the brain, it excites the propensities, and these set the intellect and sentiments to work" (*Elpis Israel*, page 127). These statements are supported by the record of past events. In the days of Noah mankind had abandoned themselves to the ways of the flesh, and "Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Later, Jeremiah noted the same condition: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (ch. 17:9).

Therefore the "good thing" must be superimposed upon flesh, and is derived from one source only, even God (Jas. 1:17), thereby becoming "the Word made flesh" (Jn. 1:14). Unenlightened man is mere "dust and ashes", and is unworthy of transformation into the divine likeness (2Pet. 1:4; 1Jn. 3:2), there being nothing

in him, as such, to commend him to God. The "incorruptible seed", the "Word of God", must be implanted in flesh, through the mind, before any good thing will be found in a person (1Pet. 1:23-25), and even then the words of Mat. 26:41 will prove true: "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". Thus Paul adds: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not". He desired to do the will of God, but found that even desire was not sufficient. This nature must be changed and perfected by the divine power. Only after it becomes divine nature can it be described as "good".

"For to will is present with me" — The NIV has: "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out". Paul had every desire to fulfil the divine precepts, recognising them as the means of life (v. 10); it was not a matter of personal intention that caused him to fail the standards established by the law — it was the presence of sin in his members (v. 23): i.e., his sin-nature which was *always* with him as an unfading belligerent adversary to the will of God.

The word "present" is *parakeimai*, which means "to lie alongside". His will to perform the commandments was always with him, a constant companion, a habitual inclination and purpose of mind to do what was right. It had been implanted there by the Word, as an "incorruptible seed" (1Pet. 1:23) developing the mind of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus acknowledged this will, reminding his disciples when they face temptation: "The spirit (the mind, desire, inclination) indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mat. 26:41). Paul finds that to be a practical truth, as he struggles with the contest between his "will" and his "performance".

"But (how) to perform that which is good" — The word "perform" is *katergazomai*, elsewhere translated "do" in this section (see panel on p. 245), meaning "to accomplish, complete, achieve".

Notice Paul's careful development of his argument. Firstly, he expresses a clear-cut confession of awareness of his condition. Now, it is as though he has *searched constantly* for the means whereby he might work out righteousness in his life, to the exclusion of sin. But he has found that way to be elusive because of the continuing presence of the sinful propensities within his flesh. Since the flesh is the source from which all ungodly desires and promptings emanate, he acknowledges his nature as his enemy. The flesh has no craving to fulfil the will of Yahweh, and thus provides a constant pressure upon the spiritual goals of all who wish to be faithful to Christ. This, as with all believers, causes an element of despair and frustration, to which the only answer is a continued commitment to Christ, together with the exercise of faith and a ceaseless appeal to Yahweh in prayer. He is the source of strength, comfort, guidance and forgiveness of sins.

"I find not" — In himself Paul "finds not" the answer to his anxiety. He cannot extricate himself from his problem, and must seek for help beyond himself. Thus Jeremiah admitted, "I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

The verb "find" (Gr. *heurisko* — see in v. 10), indicates "to find out by enquiry, to learn, discover as by experience". It cannot be uncovered by natural ability; nor revealed by the carnal mind. The solution to his dilemma lies beyond himself (see v. 25). Solomon set himself to find the means to achieve the greatest good in life. He had all the opportunities, the resources and substance to pursue his quest, and recorded his experiences in the book of Ecclesiastes. But, like Paul, at the end of all his search, Solomon recognised that the only true satisfaction is to "fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the *whole man*" (ch. 12:13). He "found" by examination that the "complete man" is only developed through a spiritual re-creation.

Thus, the only way in which "a good thing" (i.e., a godly thing) can be manifested in man, is if he responds to the influence of the Word of God which comes *from without* (Contrast Mk. 7:21).

All goodness, righteousness, holiness and truth comes "from above" (Jas. 1:17). It is obtained by wisdom which comes from "asking God" (Jas. 1:5; Prov. 2:6), and is "first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. 3:17). By permitting the influence of God's Word to dominate our lives, we live in the hope that ultimately we will gain victory over sin, and the weakness of our nature.

VERSE 19

"For the good that I would" — "Would" is from the Gr. *thelo*, meaning to will, to wish, implying volition and purpose, to desire. It occurs in vv. 15, 16, 18 ("will"), 19 (twice), 20 and 21. Whereas in vv.14-15 Paul stressed the evil influence in his nature which caused him so much anguish, in this verse he emphasizes his fervent desire to do *only* that which is "good" or godly. The repetition of this expression suggests that Paul's mind was so full of the subject and how much it affected him, that he desires to state the principle in varying forms of expression. He wants us to be under no misapprehension as to the evil nature of our sinful propensities which drive us to perform the "works of the flesh".

It is important to distinguish here between the pronouns *I* and *me*, or *my flesh*. Paul is conscious of two identities at war within himself. The one *I*, or self, consents "unto the law that it is good" (v. 16), and wills and chooses what the other fleshly identity does not practise (vv. 17-21). This good force, he expressly tells us in v. 22, is the "inward man", called in v. 23 the "mind" (Gr. *nous*) or reason.

The other *I*, called "my flesh" in v. 18, does things which distress the "mind" or "inward man". This lower, physical, "outward" self (cp. 2Cor. 4:16) is further identified as "my members" (v. 23) and as "the body of this death" (or, this body dominated by death, v. 24). In Rom. 6:6 he had also spoken of "the body of sin", meaning "sin's body", or "the body dominated by sin". Here the same idea is expressed, but he is more particularly thinking of sin's awful consequences.

"I do not" — Gr. *poio*, the fulfilment, the completed act, or that which is produced. Paul does not see in his own life the accomplishment of sinless activity such as is revealed in the example of the Lord Jesus (2Cor. 5:19); instead he is grieved and experiences a feeling of wretchedness (v. 24) by his failure to achieve that standard. He desired always to "produce" the righteousness of Yahweh's character in his life. With what open humility this great apostle confesses that he cannot match the perfection seen in the Son of God (2Cor. 5:19-21; Heb. 4:15)!

"But the evil which I would not" — His mind identifies those actions which

"I find a law" (v. 21)

The word "law" is from the Greek *nomos*, and occurs 23 times in this chapter. The word is applied by Paul to both the law of God, and the law inherent in his "members" (his flesh) which produces sin. Thus law is law, from whatever angle it might be viewed. There is a law of God which man is required to obey; but his knowledge of the Truth has enabled him to discover another law which is equally as demanding. So: "I find it to be a law [of my being]" (Amplified N.T.). "This, then, is the law I find, that when I want to do right, it is easier for me to do wrong!" (TCNT). According to Paul, this is the behavioural law which governs the aims, objectives, desires and will of the human body. In the Greek it is "the law" — *the* law by which the human body functions in all matters of morality and spirituality. It operates according to a *natural* process, which is not only foreign to divine law, but is antagonistic thereto. This "law" is related to the "constitution of sin" (ch. 5:19). Paul's daily experiences continually impressed upon him the fact that he had been born into this constitution. God's law was the object of his desire. But the "law in his members" was an unceasing adversary — ***J.U.***

are against the spirit of divine law; he knows them to be "evil", the product of the carnal mind aroused within him. Paul performed this evil as a slave would the dictates of his master — of compulsion and not of pleasure. He was "sold under sin" (v. 14), and felt the driving power of his nature in the things which occurred in his life.

"That I do" — Greek: *prasso,* to habitually practise. There is the continual evidence before him of actions that do not conform to the Word of God: v. 15; Acts 9:5; 15:39; 1Tim. 1:13; Acts 23:5.

Paul's words here are like a cry of agony from the lips of an unwilling slave. The propensities in his nature are ruthlessly demanding. He is reminded of his earlier definition: "I am carnal, sold under sin" (v. 14).

VERSE 20

"Now if I do that I would not" — The NIV has: "Now if I do what I do not want to do". Paul provides a conclusion drawn from the reasoning presented in vv. 17-19. The moral man struggles against the carnal man — but the former is warring against the latter with unremitting dedication to the cause of Christ. Is, then, the reasoning and conscience of the moral man to blame for his sinful condition? By no means. It must therefore be due to some other cause.

The verb "do" is *poieo,* to complete, fulfil an action. Sinful actions are "completed" inasmuch as they are performed in his life (cp. Jas. 1:15), though contrary to his real intentions. Paul is well aware of the sinful nature of flesh, and though he struggles against it, he feels its constant influence. It is only the Word of Truth that will ultimately save him from sin and death (v. 25).

"It is no more I that do it" — The word "do" is *katergazomai,* to work out, accomplish, achieve. He does not purposely set out to perform the evil and sinful actions that inevitably occur; he is not on the path of ungodly trespass, nor is his mind "set to do evil" such as is in "the hearts of the sons of men" (Eccl. 8:11), who have abandoned the way of righteousness in preference to the fulfilment of their own gratification.

The word "I" relates to Paul as the new man in Christ Jesus. He had not deliberately set his way to practise and endorse the principles of ungodliness. Compare this expression with Gal. 2:20, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth *in me*". Whilst he was not two literal persons, he had two conflicting forces at work within him. All too easily he found by experience that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

"But sin that dwelleth in me" — Paul speaks here of the inherent lusts of the flesh which lead to sin when they are not restricted or moulded by the Word of God (see v. 17), described in ch. 8:3 as "sin in the flesh".

In many aspects of the Mosaic law, this principle of defilement was illustrated. It was for that purpose that the altar required atonement (Lev. 8:15), and the priests had to be consecrated by sacrifice (vv. 22-29) — aspects that did not teach individual or personal transgression, but an association with the "sin which dwelleth within" in a physical sense. The ritual "ribband of blue" on the hem of every Israelite's garment (Num. 15:38), was designed to remind them that they had to walk within the bounds of the divine (blue) will. They were reminded that the sin which resided naturally in the human heart, and which would direct the individual to fulfil its desires irrespective of the divine will, was to be harnessed. Although it could not be entirely eradicated under the present mortal conditions, sin must be repudiated. The ribband of blue on the hem of the garment surrounded their feet; it represented the divine law which was to control their hearts and minds and to restrict their path in every direction; to encompass their every intention. "Sin" might remain within (their flesh), but the principle of the ribband of blue was to contain it, and eventually destroy sin by

Developing the Spirit Mind

Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and affections, exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the gospel, but is by no means completed thereby: it takes a life-time for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is naturally alien from God and all His ideas (Rom. 8:7; 1Cor. 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the divine likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for the purpose; viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of Truth. Spiritual-mindedness, or a state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings, can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded. Away from this, the mind will revert to its original emptiness. The infallible advice, then, to every man and woman anxious about their salvation is — read the Scriptures daily. It is only in proportion as this is done, that success may be looked for. The man who sows sparingly in this respect, will only reap sparingly. Much spiritual fructification is only to be realised in connection with fructifying influences of the Spirit in the Word.

— ***R. Roberts,*** *The Bible Companion.*

the sacrifice of the One who would be the perfect fulfilment of the ribband of blue (Heb. 2:14).

Misguided brethren and sisters might be inclined to use these words to absolve themselves from personal responsibility on the question of sin. They may be moved to conclude: "There is nothing I can do about sin. I am a sinner; and I will remain such until the Lord comes. It is therefore my sin-nature that is responsible for my sins. I can only continue to accept this sinful state, repudiating all responsibility for those sins". Paul never reasoned that way, and it would be foolish for any to do so. We must endeavor to follow Paul, even as he struggled to follow Christ (1Cor. 11:1). Therefore, we must renounce sin in all its manifestations, refusing to voluntarily accept its lordship over us. True believers are a people *at war against sin* (ch. 6:12-13; 2Cor. 10:3-5).

VERSE 21

"I find then a law" — Verses 21-23 provide a compact summary of Paul's exposition in vv. 15-20. He examines his personal condition, and observes that there is a principle inherent in his nature, identified as the will of the flesh, that seeks to consistently impose itself on his desires and pressures him to perform certain actions contrary to the spirit of Truth. This "law" is not that of Moses, nor the divine law of righteousness, but is a physical bias towards "evil". It is the power of his carnal and corrupt nature; it is the evil propensities and dispositions which are leading him astray.

"That when I would do good" — Paul had an intense desire to fulfil the divine pleasure in his life. He wanted to "do" (Gr. *poiein*, to perform; the action complete in itself) good, as he examined each action performed, but even at that very time, his nature tended to assert its own inclinations.

"Evil is present with me" — There was a constant warfare in progress: the lusts of the flesh versus the requirements of the Word (see Gal. 5:17).

The lit. Greek is "*the* evil": i.e., the outworking of *the law* in his members. Rotherham translates: "To me, who wish to be doing the right, that unto me the wrong lieth near". The word "present" is *parakeimai*, meaning, to be at hand; alongside; near unto. Paul finds himself saddled with great difficulty; in endeavoring to fulfil that which is good, he is encompassed with evil. The sinful impulses of the flesh are always very close at hand, ever ready to grasp any opportunity to nullify the will of God and create sin. Paul could not hope, in this present life, to avoid *the* evil, nor to move beyond the

reach of its ever-present impulses.

In describing the race of life in Heb. 12:1, Paul portrays a runner with a great handicap of weights all about him. To achieve final success the runner must endeavor to release such weights that might be hindering his strength. Paul describes the "sin which doth so easily beset us" as the power of the flesh that makes its constant demands upon the spiritual mind.

VERSE 22

"For I delight in the law of God" — An exclamation of joyous experience that the apostle has with the divine mind, seems to take him beyond his feelings of despair that come through the constant ravages of sin in his life (vv. 15-21).

This expression appears to be quoted from Psa. 1:2, "His delight is in the law of Yahweh". Paul's sympathies were not with the flesh, but with the will of Yahweh. Thus it is with great relief that he reaffirms his true feelings, and his intense pleasure in the contemplation of God's will. With joy and singleness of mind he approved the law and wisdom of God. This was because his reason and conscience ruled on the side of God's righteousness.

This is the only occurrence of the Greek verb *sunedomai* ("delight") in the scripture. It not only implies a mental appreciation of the law, but also an emotional reaction to it. Vine defines it as: "to delight in (a thing) with others, to delight with oneself inwardly". Paul desires the law of God to fill his "heart (the mind) and reins (the emotions)" (Jer. 17:10). This is the attitude of those who value the higher things of the Spirit (Prov. 23:15), notwithstanding the constant presence of evil: cp. Job 23:12; Psa. 1:2; 119:97.

"After the inward man" — The RSV translates this phrase: "in my inmost self". This relates to the mind and conscience, so that intellectually, or academically, Paul found great pleasure in the law of God and desired to follow its precepts completely. To develop that attitude in those who would be "followers of Paul" (1Cor. 11:1) is extremely important, but it requires a definite and consistent endeavor. It does not come naturally, but must be cultivated. There are many ways in which this can be encouraged. A program of daily Bible readings; personal meditation upon the Scriptures; discussion with others of spiritual perception; consistent study of the divine Oracles, that the "deeper things of the Spirit" (1Cor. 2:10) might be understood. Brother Thomas defines this phrase in *Elpis Israel,* p. 141: "This new mode of thinking and feeling created in a true believer by the divine law and testimony, is variously designated in scripture. It is styled 'a clean heart and a right spirit'; 'a new spirit' and a 'heart of flesh'; 'the inward man'; 'new creature'; 'the new man created in righteousness and true holiness'; and 'renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him'; the 'hidden man of the heart'; and so forth". Thus: Psa. 51:10; Ezek. 11:19; Rom. 7:22; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; 1Pet. 3:4.

VERSE 23

"But I see another law in my members" — This is called "the law of sin and death" (ch. 8:2); it originated in the law of Gen. 3:15 which promised continuing enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent-power of sin, until the destruction of the latter. Paul has not sought to be dominated by this law; it inevitably involved him because he was born into the constitution of this law. It is the law of the "outward man" as distinct from that of the "inward man" (v. 22); the dominating power of the flesh expressed in the demands of his body (2Cor. 4:16), called the "old man", the "body of sin" (Rom. 6:6). Paul experiences this law "in his members", as a physical direction governed by the will of the flesh in the circumstances of life. Unless countered by the law of the Spirit, these "members" cause all kinds of ungodly behavior (Col. 3:5-7) and bring divine retribution upon mankind (cp. Gen. 6:5-7).

In claiming correctly that Christ gained victory over the serpent-power of

sin (Gen. 3:15), it is sometimes overlooked that its power will not be totally eradicated from the earth until the abolition of sin-nature at the end of the millennium when there will be "no more sea" or mortal nations (Rev. 21:1; Isa. 26:9-10; Jer. 16:19).

"Warring against the law of my mind" — The words "warring against" are from the Greek *antistrateuomai*, meaning to lead out an army against; to vigorously oppose. It is obvious to Paul that the two laws he experiences are contrary to each other. They cannot be reconciled, and are engaged in a battle to the death. Only one can be victorious in the end. In most people the law of the flesh is dominant, and will successfully take them to the grave in dishonor (Psa. 49:12); in a few, the spirit-mind will engage the enemy of flesh *(sarx)*, and, by the power of Jesus Christ within (Phil. 4:13), will overcome, crucify the flesh, and ultimately enter into life. The exhortation of the Master is to "overcome" (Rev. 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12, 21).

The contest is between "the members" and "the mind", and it was here that Jesus successfully challenged the flesh he bore in common with his brethren. Though he experienced temptation (Heb. 2:18), he was able to completely overcome the flesh through allowing the "mind of the spirit" (which he possessed to an extent greater than any other man, as a result of his unique birth) to totally rule his life.

This battle commenced in Eden, when "enmity" (Gen. 3:15) was established between the principles of right and wrong, and Yahweh foreshadowed the continuing contest that would ensue between the "seed of the serpent" (representing the "law in our members") and the "seed of the woman" (representing the "law of the spirit-mind").

"And bringing me into captivity" — The power of the flesh found in his members makes Paul a slave to its demands. Weymouth has: "and leading me captive"; NIV: "making me a prisoner of the law of sin". Paul returns to the language of the Slave-Master. As a "captive prisoner" he would be bereft of all rights and privileges, and could not expect mercy nor benevolent treatment from his captor. He is held fast within the confines of his own nature — a miserable, hopeless fate, if without the hope of the Truth.

Paul found that he unfortunately gave way to the lusts of the flesh, as does all mankind (apart from the Lord Jesus). Having thus sinned, he earned (ch. 6:23) the mortality which he had inherited, and was forced to acknowledge that the penalty of God against flesh is just. Paul finds himself in a difficult condition, in which he constantly experiences the power of two opposing forces: the lusts of the flesh, and the mind of Truth.

But he is an unwilling captive. He refuses to bend to the will of the tyrant-power of the flesh, and, in fact, his mind has been liberated therefrom by the introduction of the Spirit-Word, and invested with the ability to challenge the power of the flesh. Thus: "Though we walk *in the flesh* we do not war *after the flesh:* (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing *into captivity* ***every thought*** to the obedience of Christ" (2Cor. 10:3-5).

"To the law of sin which is in my members" — See v. 18. Earlier (vv. 14,15) the sin leading man to death is attributed to the flesh (Gr. *sarx*), but now the "law of sin" is spoken of as ruling "in the members" (i.e. in the body, *soma*). This principle dwells in the body of every member of Adam's race, and constantly asserts its demands even in those who desire to perform works of righteousness. By recognising the inherent power of this law, the servant of God will guard himself against allowing it to overcome him.

Because of the Weakness of the Flesh Deliverance can only come through Christ — vv. 24–8:4.

Paul now looks beyond the circumstances of his own personal fallibility to see the wonderful work God accom-

plished. Though he recognises his own wretched state due to his enslavement to sin and the sin-nature, Paul's mind is opened to One who has gained the victory over the flesh and all its works. It is seen in Jesus Christ — thus the apostle now directs us to observe what God has accomplished in His Son for the salvation of the human race.

VERSE 24

"Who shall deliver me" — Paul's cry for deliverance is significant for three reasons: (1) Flesh cannot provide the means for his salvation; (2) The law offered no means for his eternal redemption; (3) His only escape from sin and the nature which produced it was to turn wholeheartedly to Yahweh and the victory He had achieved in Christ.

Thus Paul recognises that he is bound within the physical constitution of sin, and, being a personal sinner himself (vv. 12-21), realises that he cannot extricate himself therefrom. The word "deliver" means *to rescue, to preserve* (from the Gr. *rhuomai*), and is used in the Lord's prayer: "deliver (rescue) us from evil" (Mat. 6:13). Paul sees himself as a condemned victim in distress, and cries for a saviour who would redeem him from the power and destiny of sin. The word is used of the national Deliverer (Rom. 11:26) who will save Israel from their enemies and the distresses and sufferings of their history. He will "plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more" (2Sam. 7:10).

Then Righteousness will be victorious. Sin will no longer hold Paul as a helpless, eternal captive, but he will be sustained by the Lord Jesus Christ — the victor over sin. Despite their trials and suffering in the warfare, all who imitate Paul's disposition and undying dedication to the cause of Christ, will share in Christ's triumph through the mercy of Yahweh.

"From the body of this death?" — The margin has: "this body of death". Rotherham renders it: "this body doomed to death"; TCNT: "who will deliver me from this body which is dragging me down to death?". Note the emphasis upon "*this* body" because the human body is the only arena in which sin can hope to reign as supreme Monarch. Paul finds himself locked in a constitution of sin found in the nature he bears, which gives him no hope, and offers only the destiny of death. This is the condition of all mankind who, in "fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15). Thus the "body of death" refers to the flesh with its corrupt and evil propensities, and which is therefore deathly in its consequences.

The Two Influences in Paul's Experience

Paul was human and he knew the difficulties of life. His apostleship did not exempt him from any conflict that is the common lot of all. His early efforts to keep the law of Moses, combined with his later knowledge of God's purpose, must have given him a fearless and honest power of introspection. While it is one Paul, he yet recognizes that he is under two influences. In Galatians he says "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". Here he says, speaking of failure to do as he would have liked, "it is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me". There is a danger of these words being used to get rid of personal responsibility. They will always remain true when every effort has been made to follow righteousness, but should only be used when that effort has been made, when the words from Galatians can also be used. To follow a way of sin and excuse it by putting the blame on "sin that dwelleth in me" is as far removed as possible from Paul's position. In fact, it would seem that those only can rightly use his words who are trying most to be followers of Paul as he was of Christ.

— J. Carter, Letter to the Romans.

Adam Clarke comments: "There seems to be here an allusion to the ancient custom of certain tyrants who bound a dead body to a living man and obliged him to carry it about, till the contagion from the putrid man took away his life". After this figure, we are inevitably affected by the unclean nature we bear, and which contaminates us when we submit to its bias by actions of personal transgression. It was in order to be released from the "body of this death" found in his nature, that the Lord Jesus voluntarily submitted to the sacrifice of Golgotha, and was thereafter delivered from that burden by the "blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20).

The word "from" in this verse is the Gr. *ek*, "out of", thus adding weight to the question of the *origin* of sin: a nature in which "dwells no good thing". Paul claims that as long as he continues to bear Adamic nature he was doomed to remain enslaved to the dictates of his flesh. His only hope is expressed in the next verse.

VERSE 25

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" — Here is an exclamation of victory! What the conscience could not do, what the law could not do, what unaided human strength could not do, God has done! Having given a long description of his unhappy association with sin, and the impossibility of himself overcoming the power of the flesh, Paul finds the answer to his perplexity. He gives a joyous cry of thanksgiving, as he pushes the constancy of sin to one side, and exalts the victory of Christ. Then, more calmly, he concludes this verse with a general statement which summarises what he has advanced in the past eleven verses.

This was also the constant cry of the Psalmist who sought for relief from the internal and external challenges he experienced: Psa. 25:20; 107:15; 103:14. Deliverance can be obtained from the nature of flesh and its effects — but only by the divine work of God in Christ (2Cor. 5:19).

The word "through" is the Greek *dia*, meaning *by means of*. God provided the means, and the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the assignment. They went "both of them together", as did Abraham and Isaac, whose action on the mount of Moriah prefigured the ultimate and perfect sacrifice of the Lord (cp. Gen. 22:6,8).

It is appropriate that Paul designates the Master by the appellation, "Jesus Christ our Lord", for it specifies he who has been "anointed" to become the "saviour" of mankind (see notes on ch. 6:23). His elevation to immortality is the divine confirmation of the Master's ability to be the means of salvation (Acts 3:20-21; 17:31).

The term "Jesus Christ *our* Lord" directs his thanksgiving further than his own personal hope. He includes the vast multitude who share his hope in the coming victory over sin. The Lord Jesus will deliver *all* the faithful together.

"So then" — Paul summarises the question posed in verse 7, having considered the whole inquiry. Mentally he subscribed to the law; physically he sinned, because he was not able to perfectly fulfil the demands of the law. Thus, he recognised the need of a Redeemer who could deliver him from "this body of death", and that redeemer he found in Christ.

"With the mind I myself serve the law of God" — Paul gives intelligent acceptance to the righteous principles and judgments of the divine law against sin in all its aspects. Mentally, he gives allegiance to the Truth and wisdom of Yahweh.

The Greek reads: "I myself serve *(douleuo — am in servitude: Diag.)* to a law of God". Although now "in Christ", and therefore no longer under the dominion of the law of Moses, Paul nevertheless accepted without question that he was still subject to divine law, in the form of the commandments of Christ. Intellectually, rationally and morally, he humbly acknowledged the Truth and its power to change him for the kingdom of God. The word "mind" is *nous*, referring to the organ of thinking and knowledge. It is only through the influence of the Spirit-Word that there can be any hope of combating

"the law" of sin in our "members". This defines the state of warfare which exists within every believer; a struggle in which the flesh is opposed by the influence of the Spirit-Word. The divine will was the light shining in the otherwise dark recesses of Paul's mind.

"But with the flesh the law of sin" — Mentally Paul subscribed to God's law, but physically he sinned, thus revealing the need for a redeemer who would deliver him from "this body of death". He draws attention to the will of his nature and describes the stricken state of the man in the flesh, the slave of sin, the wretched man who feels the constant attack of weakness and iniquity.

The literal Greek is "a law of sin". The declaration shows that the law was ineffectual as the means whereby sin could be subdued or overcome; and therefore it was unable to provide justification for sinners. Additionally, so long as fallen Adamic nature remains the constitution of man, sin will continue to exercise its diabolical power and influence. However, a glorious hope is set before the believer. He no longer capitulates to sin; there is a repudiation of the "old man" of the flesh; there is faith and confidence in that which has been accomplished in Christ. A way has been provided for the forgiveness of sin, and for attaining to unity with the Father and His Son: "Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised! His greatness is unsearchable!" (Psa. 145:3).

Paul's final statement introduces the subject of Romans 8, in which he expands upon the doctrine of sanctification, and the practical means by which the flesh can be conquered through the power of the Spirit, and a life of sacrifice.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE JOY OF VICTORY

Sanctification Through The Spirit

Not for ever will the flesh triumph over the spirit, continuing the power of the seed of the serpent to crush the heel of the woman's seed. By the power of the Spirit-Word, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ can rise above the level of flesh, seeking for the grand status of maturity in the family of God, when mortality will be swallowed up of life. None have sound reason to not attain that glorious privilege, for "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). In this chapter the apostle outlines the benefits and privileges of divine service, and shows how the disciple must apply himself to seeking the honor of Yahweh within the circumstances of life.

Paul continues his examination of the principles of sanctification (ch. 6:1 to 8:17), as a basis for the final canopy of glorification that will involve the "sons of God" in a change of nature (ch. 8:18-39).

He shows that the warfare experienced between the mind of the spirit and the natural impulses of the flesh (ch. 7:25) must be energised by the principles of true holiness, the "sanctification", that comes by discipline through baptism (ch. 6). The spirit-mind develops from the implantation of the divine seed within the mind by the Word (1Pet. 1:23), and sets the disciple along a course of life that will honor the Father.

The Means of Divine Help

Notwithstanding the great difficulties he experiences by the influences of the flesh (ch. 7:13-23), God has provided great help: the example and work of His Son (ch. 8:3); the saving principle of baptism (v. 11); the direction of the Spirit-Word (v. 14); the privilege of prayer (v. 15); the comfort of fellow-disciples (v. 17); the hope of coming glory (v. 18); the intercession of prayer (v. 26); the overshadowing of circumstances (v. 28); and the constant labor of the divine Family for our salvation (v. 31).

The Power of the Spirit

Only four times thus far in his discussion of the new life in Christ has the apostle made explicit reference to the Spirit (chs. 1:4,9; 2:29; 7:6). In chapter 8 he makes twenty-one references to it! The subject becomes the absorbing principle of his exposition, as he urges his readers to secure the power of the Truth in their combat against the ravages of sin.

It is the labor of God that His people experience the refreshing and invigorating influence of the Spirit, for through Isaiah the prophet, Yahweh spoke of His great work for the new spiritual creation that is being developed through the influence of His Word upon sinful human flesh: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. 44:3). Thus the Word must work upon flesh to produce something worthwhile to the glory of God. It will stifle the evil propensities of flesh, and replace them with the qualities of the Spirit.

The question posed at the beginning of this section was: "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" (ch. 6:1). The ultimate answer to the problem of man's sinfulness is the Sanctifying Spirit, which is the divine power by which we overcome the principle of sin "in our members" (ch. 6:13).

The *spirit* spoken of is not the specific miraculous power of the "Holy Spirit", but the transforming influence of the "Holy Scriptures", which is able to make us "wise unto salvation" (ch. 1:16). It is found within the pages of God's Word, given that we might come to a knowledge of the Truth (1Jn. 4:6; 5:6).

But it is more than mere abstract Truth, and the theoretic pronouncement of the divine Will — it is Truth in Application (2Thes. 3:13), the Word of God in active manifestation. Its fruit is revealed in actions which reflect honor to Yahweh (Eph. 5:9). To the Romans, Paul explains it to be a complete way of life in harmony with the Father's mind, and forming part of His purpose to fill the earth with His eternal glory.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Paul desires to enforce the great privileges of believers in Christ. He shows that [1] the gospel does what the law could not do, inasmuch as it has the power to deliver an adherent from condemnation (vv. 1-13); [2] it provides a spirit of adoption that leads to a status with God not previously attainable (vv. 14-17); [3] it gives hope of ultimate deliverance from the difficulties and evil circumstances of life (vv. 18-25); [4] it leads to the means for personal development in the experience of the power of the Word and Prayer (vv. 26-27); [5] it provides assurance that divine providence overshadows the circumstances of the believer (vv. 28-30); [6] it gives confidence that the Father and Son are ready to assist in the warfare of life (vv. 31-34); and finally [7] the gospel provides personal satisfaction in the ability of the believer to overcome all obstacles through the power of divine love represented in "Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 35-39). The whole chapter is an expansion of the profound expression of gratitude seen in Rom. 7:25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord".

VERSE 1

The first four verses of this chapter continue the exclamation of thanksgiving in the previous verses (see subsection heading on page 256). Paul proceeds to show how Sin, as the "owner" of the human race ***lost*** *its power to eternally condemn all humankind, because Christ overcame temptation and offered the perfect sacrifice.*

"There is therefore now" — i.e., "at the present time". Paul continues his exposition from the previous statement that he finds "in Christ" the means of victory not possible by the Law (ch. 7:10-11), because of the power of the Adamic nature that he possesses (ch. 5:12).

Some mistakenly believe that Paul here teaches that once an individual has accepted Christ, he virtually has eternal life and is therefore "now" (Gr. *nun*) saved. But the word "therefore" marks a transition from the words preceding to what naturally follows. Paul is about to deal with the sure and certain position *now* of all who have renounced the Adamic constitution of sin in favor of the Lord Jesus and the constitution of righteousness.

"No condemnation" — The Greek *katakrima*, signifies *the sentence pronounced against* (see notes on ch. 5:16, 18). Paul contrasts the favorable position we enjoy in Christ with the hopelessness of our situation when we were constitutionally "in Adam" (cp. ch. 5:19-21). The apostle now reverses the theme expounded in ch. 5, and develops it to its inevitable conclusion, as in ch. 8:35-39. The judgments of the Mosaic Law have been removed by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:13); and the condemnation which bound those of Adam's race to eternal oblivion in the grave, because they, like him, were sinners (Rom. 3:23), has been likewise breached by the resurrection of Christ. He has the "keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18), and can release from the effects of such condemnation those worthy of his grace.

It must be understood that this verse is not claiming that all who have been baptised are automatically entitled to divine nature. It is speaking of the *present* state of the believer, and the advantages he has in his relationship to God, which were not previously enjoyed.

In Christ, *constitutional* condemnation has been nullified, because the believer no longer stands condemned *(katakrima)* either by law (from which he had no escape), and by a corruptible nature (as he now stands related to divine grace).

"To them which are in Christ Jesus" — Paul contrasts the benefits derived "in Christ" with the state of things which exist "in Adam" (cp. Rom. 5:16). "In Christ" provides only benefits: whereas the condemnation of mortality rests upon those "in Adam", and provides no means of redemption therefrom.

Paul is not referring to the judgment seat of Christ, as though believers will not be subjected to the examination of attitudes and actions that will then be necessary. Nor is he teaching that one who has

embraced Christ, but subsequently wandered out of the way of righteousness will not be condemned. It is a thesis of the church that "once saved, always saved", but this is far from Biblical teaching. Paul teaches that "in Christ" there are found only advantages: the "curse of the law" has been removed (Gal. 3:13), and therefore the "ordinances that were contrary to us" (Col. 2:14) no longer bind us to their power. This liberty now found in Christ provides for the manifestation of grace, and confers benefits discernible now, as well as in the future.

Being "in" (Gr. *en*, which Bullinger defines as *being or remaining within*, with the primary idea of resting in any place or thing) Christ requires a believer to reveal in himself the Christ-attitude (cp. Phil. 2:5) and to remain within the sin-covering atonement provided by the Lord. This position of benefit is not conferred merely upon the ritual of baptism, nor the declaration of "being a Christadelphian"; it demands the wholesome and faithful "walking after the spirit" (Rom. 8:1) and the development of the "fruits of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22).

"Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" — This statement is eliminated by the texts, and is probably a gloss from v. 4 (see notes). The elimination gives greater emphasis to what is implied in the phrase "in Christ". A person who fails to carry out his precepts is not truly "in Christ". For "spirit" see p. 261.

VERSE 2

Notice the development of ideas in the first four verses. In **v. 1**, Paul speaks of *"them"*; in **v. 2** he has *"me"*; in **v. 4** he defines *"us"*. Thus, in v. 1 is a general description of those who benefit from the work of Christ; in v. 2 Paul reverts to the autobiographical strain of the previous chapter, speaking of his personal experience, and the joy of his freedom in Christ; in v. 4 he involves his readers with himself in the expression of devotion and dedication to the ways of the Spirit.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" — Having condemned *law* as a principle whereby mankind may seek to attain eternal salvation, Paul now maintains that there *is* a law whereby we might be saved. But he does not speak of the law as would a Judaiser. It is the "law of God after the inward man" (ch. 7:22) — the rule or principle revealed in the divine expression of truth and righteousness, and found in the teaching of the Spirit-Word (see ch. 2:14-15; Jn. 6:63), which regulates and directs the spiritually minded disciple in the ways of God. By that rule, he proceeds along the "strait and narrow path" (Mat. 7:13), the "measure of the rule" of God (2Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:16), which brings a unity of direction in the ecclesia (Phil. 3:16). No opposing principle should guide our lives.

Thus when we receive into the mind the Truth of God's Word, we receive the law of the spirit *"of life"*. When this "spirit of life" is obeyed, the individual *walks* according to "the law of the Spirit". What joy and hope is seen in these terms in contrast to "the law *of sin*" (ch. 7:23).

Of this law of the Spirit of life, Brother Thomas wrote: "Where the truth has possession of the sentiments, setting them to work and so forming the thoughts, it becomes the law of God to them (Rom. 7:22), which the apostle styles the *law of his mind* (ch. 7:23); and because it is written there through the hearing of the 'law and the testimony', which came to the prophets and apostles through the spirit, he terms it, the *law of the spirit* inscribed on fleshy tables of the heart (2Cor. 3:3) and the *law of the spirit of life*, because, while obeyed, it confers a right to eternal life" (*Elpis Israel*, p. 89).

"Hath made me free" — This phrase must have surprised the Judaisers! Paul speaks of "law" which *makes free*, rather than shackling men under bondage. When Paul served "a law of God" (ch. 7:25), it freed him from the manacles of sin and death, leaving him "free" to worship his God in the spirit of the Truth. This freedom was from the condemnation of the law of Moses, and the "law in his mem-

bers" (ch. 7:23) which caused him to describe himself as "carnal" by nature (v. 14).

He does not mean that he is now perfect, having no longer any association with the "law of sin and death", for the effects of transgression and mortality are still present with him (ch. 7:23-24); but no longer is he inevitably embraced by its direction and control. He has found a means to overcome the power of his flesh: it is seen in the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", which gives release from the previous bondage, and hope of ultimate complete freedom from its effects (Rev. 1:18; 2:7).

"From the law of sin and death" — Paul did not cast off all restraint from law when he came to the liberty in Christ; instead he submitted to a new law. But it was a better law, for it gave freedom from the dominance and curse of the former. Under the previous law of sin and death, sin was revealed but not forgiven; the end was death. The new law of the Spirit is a rule of life that brings forgiveness of transgressions and leads to salvation. For, being liberated from the control of the old master Paul now found himself able to serve the new one: ch. 6:18,22. The law of Christ had "liberated", or "freed" him by providing a means of forgiveness of sins, which previously held Paul captive to the law of sin and death (Rom. 7:23).

Brother Carter wrote of the law of sin: "It is one of the many descriptions of the ruling impulses of human nature with its evil inclinations: 'the law of sin which is in my members'. Now Paul calls this ruling principle 'the law of sin and death', the added words showing the issue of sin. This summarily describes the state of man, evilly inclined morally, mortal physically. Paul says he is 'made free' from this. In what sense is he made free? It is evident that he does not mean an actual present freedom, for he has been bemoaning just before the continued existence of 'the law — evil present with me'. He is, however, free from the condemnation that arises from the operation of the 'law of sin in his members'. That freedom is at present enjoyed. And a full deliverance will follow, when the 'bodies of our humiliation will be conformed to the body of his glory'." (*Letter to the Romans*, pp. 81-82).

Release from the ultimate effects of this "law of sin and death", does not mean that the disciple no longer sins, nor that he has a new-found ability to achieve a state of perfect righteousness. Paul still found that the power of that law was "in his members" (Rom. 7:23), and showed itself *in actions of transgression*. But there is a difference between the absolute commitment of flesh unrestrained and unregulated by the inspired Word, and the regretted sins of omission and commission that constantly plague the disciple. Concerning this difference, Brother Roberts commented: "While all trespass is sin, all sin is not trespass. There is what Paul calls 'sin that dwelleth in me' (Rom. 7:17). There is sin of forgetfulness; sin of 'unadvised' but unintentional words, in 'the multitude of which' in an ordinary way, as Solomon says, 'there wanteth not sin'; sin of omission; sin of thought — all of which cause a righteous man to exclaim with Paul: 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" — but which do not constitute trespass. Trespass is an open and hurtful act, in disobedience of express statute, as when a man lies or steals... a different category from sins of weakness that are not conceived in the spirit of presumptuous disobedience" (*Law of Moses*, p. 244).

The glorious privilege of freedom in Christ was forecast in the prophets and will ultimately be seen socially as well as individually (see Isa. 44:3; Joel 2:28). Ezekiel speaks of such a transformation which will cause a dramatic change in direction by Israel: "I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes" (ch. 36:26-27), and Jeremiah declared: "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (ch. 31:31-34). These prophecies are not speaking of an outpouring of Holy Spirit power, but of the development of a godly disposition within individuals.

VERSE 3

"For what the law could not do" — Neither "the law of sin and death" which resulted from Adam's transgression, nor "the law of Moses" which was given to regulate the national life of Israel and to be a child-leader or teacher (Gal. 3:19,24), could provide salvation from the condemnation of the flesh. Justification from sins was impossible; hope was beyond reach (see Rom. 3:20; Acts 13:39; Heb. 7:19), for such laws only emphasized the reality of sin, and made man's state appear hopeless (see Rom. 7:7,9,13). For, though the law of Moses was designed "for life" (ch. 7:10), it was "found to be unto death", being unable to redeem the sinner who was condemned by its righteous precepts; and therefore it could not "justify" such (Acts 13:39; Gal. 4:3). The NIV translates this phrase: "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature".

The words "could not do" are emphatic. The phrase includes the Gr. *adunatos,* which means "powerless" (cp. ch. 3:20; 7:7). The law revealed sin, and therefore convicted man as a sinner. It could not, of itself, redeem him from that condition.

"In that it was weak through the flesh" — The word "through" *(dia)* is important in this context. The law could only operate *through* the flesh. Therefore, if a man could not bring his flesh into complete subjection to the law, *he* failed — and so did the law! The fact that this was the point at which the law failed, did not indicate that there was anything wrong with the law itself. It was "ordained to life" (Gr. *eis:* "into, towards, with a view to"; Bull.). Hence it was "ordained to the end that it might bring life" (ch. 7:10), being "holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (v. 12). The law failed to bring justification to mankind because the evil propensities within the flesh were so strong that man was too weak to keep the law. It was because of the weakness of the flesh that the law held mankind in bondage (Gal. 4:9). It was because Yahweh knew that the law could only convict men as sinners that He did not insert any clause in the law which *promised* eternal life (cp. Gal. 3:21-22). Just as a rope is powerless to save a drowning man who has not the strength to grasp it, so mankind was too weak to throw off the bondage of sin as revealed by the law.

The verb "weak" (Gr. *asthenei*) indicates that which is "enfeebled through infirmity", and consequently inefficacious. The law did not have the ability to overcome the problem of sin. The flesh, with its lusts, is so powerful that, despite the earnest efforts of faithful men, its requirements were constantly and universally broken. Therefore, as a justifier of humanity the law was weak, because the flesh is weak (Gal. 4:9; Heb. 7:18). It could arouse sin to activity (Rom. 7:9-13), but it could not cast sin out. The law therefore made obvious the need of a redeemer, and the sacrifices of the law prophetically foreshadowed his coming.

"The flesh" is here used metonymically for the deceitful and uncontrolled lusts and passions of the human mind, which motivates flesh into unrighteous actions contrary to the divine law. Though the Lord Jesus came in the same "flesh" (nature) as his brethren (Heb. 2:14), he inherited the "mind of the Father" (Phil. 2:5) and was thus strengthened to overcome the tendencies of his nature, which in all others lead to sin.

"God" — In one word there is expressed the answer to the otherwise hopeless state of humanity. The power and majesty of the Eternal Father is brought immediately into relief, as a great contrast to the ineffectiveness of the law and the terrible influence of sin. Overshadowing all the affairs of creation, Yahweh stands supreme as the means of ultimate redemption.

What the law could not do, God did! Whilst the law could not provide forgiveness of sins, nor hope of salvation, God worked to achieve both benefits in the offering of His Son. It was "God in Christ" that gained the victory (2Cor. 5:19), as it is *Christ in us* that will do so also (Phil. 4:13). We will not obtain it unaided (James 1:17; 1Pet. 1:23). At the same time we must render ourselves pli-

able to the moulding influence of God. Christ did so by saying: "Not my will but Thine be done" (Lk. 22:42). He denied himself, and drew strength from above. In his offering, therefore, there was a negative as well as a positive principle. The former was expressed in the denial of the flesh; the latter in his dedicated life. Jesus was the Son of Man whom Yahweh "made strong for Himself" (Psa. 80:17), and we can only become strong through him. This is the doctrine of God-manifestation, as beautifully expressed by Brother Thomas:

"Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God-manifestation, not human salvation was the grand purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but it was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone Himself on the earth, and in so doing, to develop a divine family from among men, everyone of whom shall be spirit because born of the Spirit; and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood" (*Herald of the Kingdom*, April, 1855).

"Sending His own Son" — The literal Greek is in the past tense: "The God having sent of Himself the Son". The atonement was essentially the Father's work (2Cor. 5:19), in which the Son played a willing and loyal part. This was prefigured in the attitude of Abraham and Isaac who, in obedience to the divine fiat, went "both of them together" (Gen. 22:6,8) in sacrifice. It was essential that God provide His own Son for this work, so that it might be clearly seen that man cannot procure his own means of salvation.

The expression, "He sent His own Son" emphasizes the unique bond of love uniting the Father with the Son, for though it was the Father's work, the Son gave himself voluntarily and willingly: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, (in such a way) that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power *(Gr. authority)* to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn. 10:17-18).

The reference to the "Son" indicates God's personal involvement in His plan of salvation. It was to be seen in the One whom He sent as *an extension of Himself* — the perfection of the divine character manifested in flesh.

"In the likeness" — In the eyes of his contemporaries, Jesus was a man like all other men, possessed of the same flesh-and-blood body, with a nature that was under the same condemnation of mortality resulting from the Edenic transgression. Thus, he was "likeness" to the point of complete identity of nature (Heb. 2:17). In respect to Christ's humility, Paul says that Jesus was "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7), and his statement in Rom. 8:3 is similarly an identification with the same nature possessed by all "his brethren" (Heb. 2:12). In "all things" he was "*made*" (i.e. in respect to his condition of nature) like unto his brethren (vv. 17, 14).

Paul could have said "God sent his Son in sinful flesh" eliminating the reference to "likeness" — but the inclusion of that description emphasizes the *similarity* and *identity* with the object of the work of salvation: his brethren who "likewise" possessed the same fallen nature. Notice the use of the word in Phil. 2:7 where Paul states that the Lord was made "in the *likeness of men*" — he was "of men" to the extent of total identity with Adam's descendants)see also Heb. 2:17; 4:15).

"Of sinful flesh" — The Diaglott renders this: "flesh of sin" (cp. *Eureka* vol.1, p.106), whilst others have "sin's flesh", or "sin-influenced flesh". It was flesh in which, naturally, sin reigned (Rom. 6:12), and produced its fruits (v. 19). The term relates to flesh that is weak and prone to sin, because of the inherent characteristics derived from the parents. The nature of Jesus was identical to that of our own, being "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4), and had he followed the will of the flesh, he would have sinned; but this he never did. Nevertheless, he was fully aware of the

strong bias within his nature which was capable of deflecting him from his Father's will, had he capitulated to such pressure. Paul told the Hebrews that Jesus "in the *days of his flesh* when he had offered up prayers and supplications with *strong crying and tears* unto Him that was able to save him from *(out of)* death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. 5:7). Paul relates the days of flesh to the impact of sin in his members felt by the Lord, and the struggle in opposing it through the power of his divinely-inherited mind.

The word "sinful" is the Gr. *harmartia* in its genitive form, indicating a relationship of ownership, by virtue of its origin (from the transgression of Adam). Thus the flesh is constitutionally *owned* by sin: is under the *dominion* of sin.

In explaining the term employed by Brother Thomas of Christ being "a constitutional sinner", Brother Roberts wrote that Jesus "stood related to a *sin-constitution of things* — a state of things arising out of sin, without being himself a committer of sin. Sorrow arises out of sin: and he was a man of sorrow. Pain (among men) arises out of sin, and he suffered pain. Weakness arises from sin, and he was 'crucified through weakness'. Mortality (among men) is the result of sin, and he was mortal, requiring to be saved from death (Heb. 5:7), and bringing life by his obedience (Rom. 5). Into this state of things he was introduced, as we are introduced, in being born of a sinful woman. This is the sense of the phrase *'a constitutional sinner'*. Only perversity would suppress the word 'constitutional', and allege that the Christadelphians teach Christ to have been a sinner" (*The Christadelphian*, June 1874, p. 281). In this way Christ was "made (i.e. constituted) to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2Cor. 5:21).

Whilst stressing the true nature borne by Christ, Paul's comment in Rom. 8:3 does not suggest that the Lord Jesus was a moral sinner. He never permitted his nature to reign over, nor dominate him, so that in every moral sense he remained sinless. Weymouth adequately renders this verse: "Sending His own Son in the form of sinful humanity to deal with sin, God pronounced sentence upon sin in human nature". In *Elpis Israel*, p. 128, Brother Thomas says: "Sinful flesh, being the hereditary nature of the Lord Jesus, he was a fit and proper sacrifice for sin, especially as he was himself 'innocent of the great transgression', having been obedient in all things".

"And for sin" — The words "and for" are from the Greek *peri* with the genitive, which relates to something done in *relation* to sin: i.e., "and *concerning* sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Roth.). Note two other passages where this same word is used with the genitive: "He shall give his angels charge *concerning* thee" (Mat. 4:6); "Jesus began to say unto the multitudes *concerning* John" (ch. 11:7). Other passages read similarly. Thus these words focus attention on the *necessity* of something being done to destroy the power of sin. The RV has "and as an offering for sin" and the Diaglott has "even [by an offering] for sin". While these renderings literally follow the Greek, they do, together with the AV margin, endeavor to identify the sacrifice of Christ as being at the heart of what was done *concerning* the need to destroy the power of sin.

The phrase *peri hamartias*, "and on account of sin" (Diag.), is used over fifty times in the Septuagint translation of Leviticus in reference to the sin offering ritual of the law. The sin offering acknowledged that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God", and therefore it was an obligatory offering. It demonstrated the peculiar association of man with weakness and inadvertent sin, for it was offered in the event of "unconscious transgression" (Lev. 4:2). It only covered sins of ignorance (Lev. 4:2,13,22,27), rashness or hastiness (Lev. 5:1-13). The law was merciless against the murderer (Num. 35:31), presumptuous or high-handed sins (Num. 15:30-31), adultery (Lev. 20:10), blasphemy (Lev. 24:14-16). However, since ignorance is no excuse, there is a need for confession of sin if forgiveness is to be obtained.

The sin offering was the one offering

most closely linked with "sin in the flesh", being that principle which Cain's "fleshly mind" refused to acknowledge (Gen. 4:7), a weakness which Paul attributed to "sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:20). Christ himself was subject to all the sinful impulses which belong to a weak Adamic body, and fully comprehended the reality of the power of flesh in the many trials he experienced — yet without yielding. Herein is the significance of the flesh of the sin offering under the law being termed "most holy", that is, when brought into association with the divine principles there was moral perfectness residing in an imperfect fleshly frame. That offering is wonderfully fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ: a man of flesh who possessed the divine sinless character, and thereby was enabled to overcome.

"Condemned" — The verb *katakrino* signifies *to give judgment against, to pass sentence upon*. To "condemn" means more than to register disapproval; the law does that. God, however, "pronounced the doom of sin", and deposed it from its autocratic control. God dealt with sin in the only arena where it could exist and reign as king: the flesh. It had held sway throughout four thousand years of human history; now it was to be dealt a fatal blow, fulfilling the prophecy of Gen. 3:15. In the atoning work of God through Christ, the principle of sin found in our nature, and its fruits demonstrated in actions of transgression, were challenged, condemned and destroyed. Thus Paul says that through his sacrificial death, Jesus "might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14), an act of severe judgment against sin in all its manifestations.

It is obvious that the Lord must have been related to sin in the flesh in order for it to have been thus condemned. What was this relationship? Scripture teaches that the Lord, by nature, inherited the same propensities which have led to sin in Adam and all his descendants, excepting only the Son of God. The principle of evil, which is identified with the flesh, has been inseparable from human nature since the Fall. To condemn sin, as Paul uses the term here, was to condemn sin in an active sense, and human nature as the *source* of sin. This was done before the eyes of all men in the crucifixion of Christ.

Thus, his work demonstrated that the "flesh profits nothing" (Jn. 6:63), and literally set forth that which all must figuratively do if they would gain eternal redemption (see Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:3). Christ conquered in life by repressing the flesh with its lusts, and he conquered in death because his perfect obedience and sacrifice ensured his resurrection to eternal life (Acts 2:24). His conquest proclaimed the sentence of condemnation on "sin in the flesh", for all "in him" can now conquer through the forgiveness of sins that is obtainable through him. A person only becomes "in him" by figuratively dying to the flesh, and rising to newness of life (Col. 3:3; Rom. 6:3). By such means he figuratively "condemns" sin with his Lord, and his sins are blotted out.

The law could not do this. It could only pronounce judgment against man and inflict penalty, but could not dethrone that which is the cause of sin. In fact, the law gave existence and life to sin by revealing its power and dominance (Rom. 7:7-8). But Christ's conquest of sin removed its power, leaving it as a condemned criminal awaiting the moment of final execution. This will occur when "this mortal" (the physical sin-prone condition of our nature) will be replaced with immortality in those who have continued to challenge the influence of sin in their lives. Ultimately, at the end of the millennium, sin itself will be destroyed and vanquished forever in the final judgment (Rev. 20:12-14).

Thus, whereas the law condemned sinners and sentenced them to death (Rom. 7:9), in Christ sin is covered and a way of life opened up. Christ's offering passed judgment on the flesh which is the seat of sin.

"Sin in the flesh" — This term relates to the ungodly lusts of the flesh (see Rom. 7:18). A person figuratively "crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24) when he subordinates its cravings to

"Sin in the Flesh": What Does it Mean?

Answer: Job, speaking of "man that is born of woman" says, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?", and David, by the Spirit, says in Psalm 51:5, "Behold I was shapen *in iniquity*, and *in sin* did my mother conceive me". Furthermore, the annual atonement under the law (Lev. 16) was appointed "even for the holy place", because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, besides their "transgressions in all their sins" (v. 16). "Sin in the flesh", which is *Paul's phrase*, refers to the same thing. It is also what Paul calls "*Sin that dwelleth in me*" (Rom. 7:17), adding, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing".

Now, what is this element called "uncleanness", "sin", "iniquity", etc? The difficulty experienced by some in solution of this question, arises from a disregard of the secondary use of terms. Knowing that sin is the act of transgression, they read "act of transgression" every time they see the term sin, ignoring the fact that there is a metonymy in the use of all words which apply even to sin.

Suppose a similar treatment of the word Death. Primarily, death means the state to which a living man is reduced — when his life ceases. Now we read of one of the sons of the prophets saying, "there is death *in the pot*". Does this mean there was a corpse in the pot? No, but that which makes a corpse of any living man. "Death" literally meant "that which would lead to death". Again, "death hath passed upon all men" means the condition that leads to death. So, "let the dead bury their dead" means, "Let those who are destined to be numbered with the dead, bury those who are actually dead". "Passed from death unto life", means, "passed from that relation that ends in death, to that which leads to life".

A disregard for metonymy and ellipsis in such statements has led to most of the errors of the apostasy, and is leading some back to them who had escaped.

There is a principle, element, or peculiarity in our constitution (it matters not how you word it) which leads to the decay of the strongest or the healthiest. Its implantation came by sin, for death came by sin; and the infliction of death and the implantation of this peculiarity are synonymous things. God's sentences are not carried out by hangmen's ropes and executioners' axes, but by the inworking of His appointed law. Because the invisible, constitutional, physical inworking in us came by sin it is termed sin. It is a principle of uncleanness and corruption and weakness — the word and experience conjoining in this testimony. For this reason, it is morally operative: for whatever affects the physical, affects the moral. If no counterforce were brought into play, its presence would subject us to the uncontrolled dominion of disobedience, through the constitutional weakness and impulse to sin. The enlightenment of the truth helps us to keep the body under.

Still we are not thereby emancipated. Our experience answers to Paul, and leads us to sympathise exactly with his exclamation, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death". The body of the Lord Jesus was this same unclean nature in the hand of the Father, that deliverance might be effected by God on His own principles and to His own glory. Condemnation has been called a cage; and it has been asked how one prisoner can liberate another? The answer is that God never allows His locks to be forced or His prisoners to be unlawfully set free. The doors must be opened legitimately, and the opening of

the prison must be for a reason among the prisoners, as in the closing. God accepts no compromise. He provided a prisoner furnished with the key of obedience who could open the door for all who should name themselves after him.

— ***R. Roberts,*** *The Christadelphian,* Vol. 11, p. 88.

Adam was driven out of Eden because of disobedience. He was therefore thrown back upon himself, so to speak, and he soon found in himself and his progeny how weak and evil a thing the flesh is, for his first son was a murderer. And because disobedience, or sin, was the cause of his expulsion, and that sin was the result of the desires of the flesh, and because all the desires that are natural to the flesh organisation are because of native ignorance, in directions forbidden, there is no exaggeration, no high figure in talking of sin in the flesh.

It is Paul's figure. He speaks of "sin that dwelleth in *me*", and as he defines *me* to be *"my flesh"*, sin that dwelleth in me is "sin in the flesh" — *a metonym for those impulses which are native to the flesh,* while knowledge of God and of duty is not native to the flesh.

— ***R. Roberts,*** *The Slain Lamb* (published in *The Atonement,* p. 45).

the will of the Father, saying "Thy will be done, not mine". It is "sin in the flesh", or "sin's flesh", that is condemned. Flesh itself is to be changed into divine nature in order to inherit the kingdom (1Cor. 15:51). In his glorified state, the Master drew attention to his divine nature, saying "a spirit *(phantasma)* hath not *flesh* and bones, as ye see me have" (Lk. 24:39). The body put to death upon the stake, the blood poured out in willing obedience, he now rejoiced in being energised by the power of the Spirit, which replaced the inherently weak nature with which he had been born, the evil propensities of which he had overcome (Heb. 13:20).

VERSE 4

"That the righteousness of the law" — By this is meant the righteous requirements of the law. The RSV has: "the just requirement of the law" (Gr. *to dikaioma tou nomou*). The NIV has: "in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us". The law set forth God's will for man; but it also emphasized through its sacrificial code, that the way to life is through death — and the law could not provide that way! It was impotent to implement the very thing that it taught! Such righteousness by law is an impossibility for mankind afflicted by the weakness of the flesh, and who find themselves as trespassers of that law. The law revealed sin to be what it is (see notes on ch. 7:13), and thus demonstrated the need of a redeemer who could provide the means whereby sins could be forgiven. But there the law stopped short, for it did not provide such a redeemer; so that men of faith had to look forward to the One who would come (Deut. 18:18), and thus live in hope of redemption through him. In Christ Jesus, therefore, the righteousness of the law is revealed and fulfilled, if we "walk after the spirit". This requires a loving submission to the divine ways, for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (ch. 13:10), and this is seen in the lives of those who live according to the spirit (Gal. 5:14).

"Might be fulfilled in us" — Thus Paul taught the principle of God-manifestation. When we fulfil the requirements of God's commandments we become the Word made flesh, even though ever so imperfectly. The Greek *pleroo* signifies *to make full, fulfil, perform fully, complete, accomplish* (Bull.). Note the occurrence of the word in Mat. 3:15; 5:17; Col. 1:9,25;

Rev. 3:2, where the word is rendered "perfect". The word occurs more than eighty times.

The "righteousness of the law" is only "fulfilled" when, like the Lord Jesus Christ, we bow in humble submission to the will of Yahweh in all the circumstances of life, recognising that failure to maintain its requirements can be covered by forgiveness through Christ for those who sincerely strive to honor and reverence God's ways. The law, as a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24) taught that God's pleasure was seen when the commandments and instructions were honored and applied in life. Thus, concerning the sabbath law Isaiah proclaimed: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing *thy pleasure* on *My holy day;* and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of Yahweh, honourable; and shalt *honour Him,* not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou *delight thyself in Yahweh;* and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth" (ch. 58:13-14).

Note that Paul says the law must be "fulfilled *in* us" (not *by* us). It is not mere actions performed that count, but works "of faith" which display the spirit of the law *in* the performer. Thus, he says: "the riches of the glory of this mystery *(secret)* among the Gentiles which is *Christ in you,* the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). The demonstration of the spirit of the law must be seen in those who hope to benefit in Christ's victory over the flesh.

"Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (spirit)" — This expresses a mode of life, a direction of action indicating a class of people who morally manifest the principles which were perfectly exhibited in the life of the Lord Jesus.

Notice the difference between the phrase "walk *in* the flesh" of 2Cor. 10:3, by which Paul refers to our present mortal condition with all its vulnerability and weakness. For example, the Lord Jesus, though being born "*according to* the flesh" (Acts 2:30), was never guilty of "*walking after* the flesh", for he was absolutely sinless in character and action. But to "walk *after* the flesh" means to follow the precepts and instincts of its corrupt passions and desires, and to seek for the gratification of its "affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). This attitude to life is found in the presumptuous and self-willed (2Pet. 2:10). Cain manifested this inclina-

Christ condemned sin in the flesh by refusing to bow to the evil propensities of the flesh. By this means he conquered the grave because his life of sacrificial obedience, in which he conformed completely to the declared Will of his Father, ensured his resurrection from the dead. Thus, "it was not possible" that he should be "holden" of death (Acts 2:24). Christ's victory over sin guaranteed the end of sin's reign over all the human race; for sin had been conquered in one of Adam's race. Sin was condemned in *the flesh* of the Lord Jesus Christ: it was given a sentence of execution because it had been met in mortal combat and defeated. Having, by the grace of God, been brought "into" Christ, we are required to "condemn sin", for "sin *shall not have dominion over you*" (Rom. 6:14). This does not mean that the believer, now "in" Christ and therefore no longer under the condemnation of the law, is free to continue sinning (ch. 6:1,15). The individual who desires to be saved from his sins, and the effect of those sins, must turn to God. He dare not turn back to the "weak and beggarly elements" of the law, to which he had been "in bondage" (Gal. 4:9). As Brother John Carter observed: "The law of Moses could not condemn sin; it condemned the sinner". Therefore, the sinner is in need of grace and mercy, together with forgiveness. Christ has made open the way. God will provide the reconciliation for those accounted worthy. God has done that which neither man, nor the law, could do: He passed judgment of death upon sin, and that judgment was fulfilled in the victory over sin which was wrought in the mind and body of His own Son. — ***J. U.***

tion when he refused to conform to the sacrificial requirements of God, and murdered his brother (Gen. 4:8) through his own selfish pride of life.

To "walk in the spirit" is to manifest the principles of the Spirit-Word (Jn. 6:63) in the circumstances of life, and to obey the divine instruction. It is to "walk with God" as did Noah (Gen. 6:9), who was mindful of the requirements of the Truth and of the need to separate from the fleshly way of life about him (v. 5). It necessitates the crucifying of the "flesh with its affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24), that the divine will might be followed (Eph. 2:10), and the "fruits of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22) displayed. This will be seen in actions dictated by a love of the Word (Eph. 5:9).

Paul explains this statement of Rom. 8:4 by the dramatic contrasts of vv. 5-11 in which he shows the triumph of the spirit over the flesh in those who are thus minded.

The Triumph of the Spirit over the Flesh — vv. 5-11.

There are only two directions in life. One is dictated by the flesh and its propensities, with which we are born by nature; the other is directed by the Spirit-Word of God, mentally understood, and by which we can please God. The former leads to death; the latter leads to unity with God, and life eternal. Paul now explains these two conflicting ways of life.

VERSE 5

"For" — The word *gar* has a more extensive meaning than the English "for". It expresses "the reason, cause, motive, principle, etc., of what has been previously said" (Bull.). The word is repeatedly used to link together various aspects of a central line of reasoning. Thus Paul's exposition in vv. 5-11 is the development of what was set forth in vv. 1-4.

"They that are after the flesh" — See comments in the previous verse. The Greek *kata sarka* means "according to the flesh" and refers to those who are driven by the sin-prone tendencies of the flesh, to fulfil its lusts in their own desires and achievements. Rotherham has: "They who according to the flesh"; the NIV translates the phrase: "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires". Paul is referring to people whose lives are dominated by the flesh, styled "the natural man" (1Cor. 2:14).

In this case "flesh" is not used in the literal sense, as one might speak of an injury or disease "in my flesh", but must be understood in a metonymical sense, where the effect is put for the cause. In that sense the scripture indicates the arena in which the evil thinking of the fleshly mind is revealed. In ch. 3:13-17, Paul describes various members of the physical body which manifest active sin: the "throat", "tongue", "mouth", "lips", "feet", etc.; whilst Job spoke of the "*hands* of the wicked" (ch. 16:11). This results from the original transgression in Eden which established the "law of sin" in the physical flesh of Adam by mortality, so that the heart of man became "desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), and "evil continually" (Gen. 6:5) — the "heart" itself being used as a figure for the emotional and feeling part of man. "Flesh" therefore is the cognate term by which all these members are identified.

Yahweh makes reference to parts of the human body metonymically to represent spiritual qualities or activities. For example: "He that hath clean *hands* and a pure *heart*" (Psa. 24:4; Mat. 5:8). "How beautiful are the *feet* of him that bringeth good tidings" (Isa. 52:7). "My *tongue* shall speak of Thy righteousness" (Psa. 35:28). "Grace is poured into thy *lips*" (Psa. 45:2).

The "*flesh*" is used metonymically for *the natural mind* in the following representative passages: "They that are *in the flesh* cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). "No *flesh* should glory in His presence" (1Cor. 1:29). "Filthiness of *the flesh*" (2Cor. 7:1). "As if we walked according to *the flesh*" (2Cor. 10:2). "For *the flesh* lusteth against the spirit" (Gal. 5:17). "Rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence *in the flesh*" (Phil. 3:3). In such cases, the word does

The Carnal and the Spiritual Mind

Those who follow the ways of the flesh merely manifest that which they are by nature. On the other hand, those who are spiritually minded have accepted into their thinking and way of life something that is alien to the natural man. The understanding and acceptance of the Truth generates a new process of thinking which is "renewed in knowledge" day by day (2Cor. 4:16). Through the constant and regular recharging of the spiritual mind, the thought processes are recurrently fed by the Spirit-Word. In considering this phrase it should be remembered that God's determination in making known His revelation was to declare the character and purpose of the Creator, and to cause men and women to become transformed by that knowledge, so as to form an extension of His character. The expression "to be spiritually minded" is another form of words to describe the process of God-manifestation. The characters and motivation of all men and women must be measured against the touchstone proverb: "as he *thinketh* in his heart, *so is he*" (Prov. 23:7) — or, as Rotherham renders it: "as he hath *thought* in *his own mind*, so is he". For these significant reasons, every believer must bring *his mind* into subjection to that revealed in the Spirit-Word, and direct his ways accordingly. Only thus will flesh be overcome. When the carnal mind, the "thinking of the flesh" endeavors to assert itself, it may be effectively crushed by the power of the Spirit-Word brought into action against such thoughts. Such an awareness of the reality of this struggle must continue with all who would gain the kingdom. Paul says, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and *these are contrary, the one to the other*" (Gal. 5:17). Such is the absolute reality of faith.

— J. Ullman.

not define the actual physical constitution of flesh, but that which it represents: the undisciplined will and desires that are generated from the nature we possess, and which manifest themselves in actions of wickedness. Therefore, those who are "after the flesh" (Rom. 8:5), are those following the evil inclinations of the "constitution of sin" in our nature, and seek for gratification of self.

"Do mind the things of the flesh" — The Greek word *phroneo*, means *to think, feel or regulate the mind in a certain way;* thus to care for the principles of "sinful flesh" (v. 3). In conforming to the lusts and evil desires of the flesh, the *mind* or *the minding* of the flesh is produced. When the human mind accepts the ungodly promptings of the flesh, subservience to God's will is rejected and the will of the flesh is fulfilled. Sin is the inevitable result. As the NIV has: "their minds (are) set on what that nature desires". So, whilst "being after the flesh" indicates the *condition of our nature* in which are embodied the propensities to sin; to "mind the things of the flesh" refers to the *disposition or conscience* arising out of that condition. It means to give active support to the principles of our nature, and to allow them to dominate our lives. That was the sad condition of the sons of God in the days of Noah. They "saw the daughters of men that they were fair" (Gen. 6:2), which was the exercise of the natural propensities: but then they proceeded to "take wives of all which they chose", and thus "minded" (cared for) the things of the flesh. Paul warned the Philippians concerning those whose "God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who *mind earthly things*" (ch. 3:19). Their interest was in the things of the world and the gratification of their fleshly desires.

"But they that are after the Spirit" — Guided by the principles discovered in the Spirit-Word, and understanding the "mind of the spirit" (Rom. 8:27). Notice the contrast: "*after* the flesh... *after* the spirit".

"The things of the Spirit (spirit)" — Those who follow the *teaching* of the

Spirit in contrast to those who follow the *impulses* of the flesh. Their desire is for the manifestation of divine characteristics, as inculcated by the Spirit-Word. The "spirit" here relates to the "words of Jesus" (Jn. 6:63), or "the Truth" (1Jn. 5:7), and so Paul taught that "the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). The "things" of this Spirit-Word are the virtues enumerated in Gal. 5:22-25 and 2Pet. 1:5-8. A person who is "following" the Spirit will build these principles into his life, for they are the teachings of the Word, and have the seeds of eternal life within them (1Pet. 1:23). Brother J. Carter describes this process as: "there is a change in tastes and aims. The disposition is altered. Thoughts are brought into line with God's thoughts".

Paul shows in Romans 8 that the man who "follows the spirit" cannot live "according to the flesh"; the two ways of life are incompatible, and have distinctly different destinies as he now shows in verse 6.

VERSE 6

"For" — Gr. *gar*. See notes on v. 5.

"To be carnally minded (is) death" — The margin has: "the minding of the flesh"; whilst the NASB has "For the mind set on the flesh is death". The Greek *sarx* is in the genitive tense, and therefore strictly means: "*of* the flesh". If we follow the inclinations of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, we will ultimately reap the just results: death. The term "carnally minded" thus relates to the natural thinking of the flesh unilluminated by the divine revelation, or unresponsive thereto. Thus Paul teaches that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor. 2:14). The flesh only sees things from its own experience and preferences; it considers issues on a sensual, earthly, material level, divorced from any contact with the spiritual. There is no inherent "light" in man; it must come from without: from God (James 1:17-18; 3:17-18). That is why the Lord told Nicodemus: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh (it remains in the same condition, and develops those natural qualities)... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (lit. *from above*)" (Jn. 3:6-7). This regeneration only comes by substituting the "mind of the flesh" with "the mind of the spirit".

"But to be spiritually minded" — This is the mind, or way of thought, created by the Spirit-Word. The Greek has *to phronema tou pneumatos*, "the minding of the Spirit". The Truth develops a new process of thinking, not inherited at birth, and which must be constantly "renewed in knowledge" (Col. 3:9-10). These things are hidden to the eye of the natural (Gr. *psychikos*, rendered "unspiritual" in 1Cor. 2:14, RSV) man, but "God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Cor. 2:9-16). A mind that perceives these wonderful principles of the Spirit is not natural to the flesh, and therefore must be cultivated and developed. That is why God has designed knowledge as the pathway to salvation (Jn. 17:17), and why He concealed His wisdom in a most enigmatic book. Thus, "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2). God's glory is only revealed when the mind is exercised in spiritual things; when a person is committed to "searching out" the hidden treasures of the Word. The Bible is designed not so much to convey information (such as a dictionary or encyclopedia), as to change us by the power of its influence (Col. 1:13) and to develop within us a unique divine attitude to life. The more we "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8), the more our actions will conform to Yahweh's requirements, for, as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Our duty is to replace the natural "thinking of the flesh", which is common to all mankind, by thoughts that are induced by the Spirit-Word. By this means the Word will become the object of the mind, the aim of all our actions, and the power of our life; replacing the natural thinking with that of the Spirit (Eph. 4:22-

32; Mat. 12:43-45; Rom. 12:21).

"(Is) life" — Opposed to death which derives from the carnal mind and the sin-prone nature it has produced. The Spirit-Word provides life where previously there was only death, and therefore reverses the natural order of things set in motion by the Edenic transgression. The thinking of the Spirit has put to death the thinking of the flesh, and a new way of life is opened up (Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20), which brings peace of mind.

Two main Greek words are translated "life" in the N.T. One is *bios*, which means biological life, and relates to the existence of life in creatures of all forms — life as a condition of being. The other is the word here used: *zoe*, (from which come our English words: zoo, zoology) and refers to the duration of life. One Greek authority states: "Now the strange thing is that in classical Greek *zoe* is used as inferior to *bios*. *Bios* is life as lived in extent — the duration of days: whereas *zoe* is the life by which we live, the principle of life. The Bible reverses the order and lifts *zoe* to the pinnacle of supremacy" *(Explanatory Notes Upon the N.T.)*. In Rom. 8:6 *zoe* speaks of the new way of life opened up by the work of Jesus Christ, and perceived by an understanding of the Spirit-Word, generated within the mind by the conception of the Truth (1Pet. 1:23). Such provides a vision of eternal life which will be the inheritance of all those who are "born from above" (Jn. 3:3,5).

"And peace" — The Greek word *eirene*, means *to be at one; in unity; to be complete*, and implies true fellowship. Bullinger adds the definition of "rest, peace; in contrast with strife and denoting the absence or end of strife". These are the qualities of life manifested when the "thinking of the spirit" dominates the believer. The Spirit-Word not only brings "life" (and a vision of immortality now opened up through Christ: 2Tim. 1:10), but invites a believer into a fulness of fellowship (1Jn. 1:7) — a "peace" with God which will ultimately lead to the perfect state wherein is an end to all strife and contention. The person governed by a spiritual mind reflects that mind in a new way of life, and in fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Brethren of Faith.

VERSE 7

"Because" — The Gr. *dioti* means *for this reason; on this account*. Paul now adds a reason for his previous comment. In v. 6 he had affirmed that to be carnally minded *was* death, but had not stated *why* this was so. He now explains this by showing that it is enmity against God, and thus involves a sinner in conflict with Him. He shows the essential nature of the fleshly spirit, and its inability to be converted.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God" — According to Vine, the word "enmity" (Gr. *echthra*, meaning *hatred, opposition, hostility, to be an enemy*) is the opposite to *agape* (love). It is described in Gal. 5:20 (rendered "hatred") as one of the works of the flesh. There appears to be an allusion to Gen. 3:15 where the Septuagint uses the same word to describe the enmity that was established in Eden following the transgression of Adam and Eve. Paul now shows that mutual hatred exists between the "thinking of the flesh" and the "thinking of the spirit". It is a struggle that began in Eden and will continue until victory is finally achieved for all God's faithful servants — as it has already been revealed in His righteous and glorified Son.

The "enmity" in Eden revealed the refusal of Yahweh to countenance sin, and acknowledged that the ongoing warfare that was then introduced would continue between the two "seeds" until ultimately Truth would completely destroy error. There is no peace nor true fellowship with God when the carnal mind ("the mind of the flesh") dominates a person.

That principle has been repeatedly stated throughout Scripture. It was seen nationally in the hostile attack by the Amalekites on Israel, as they journeyed Zionwards (Exod. 17:8-16). Warfare erupted, and Moses realised that unless faith prevailed, his people would be destroyed. Victory came that day by the

power of God represented in the work of Moses, Aaron and Hur overlooking the scene (v. 10), whilst below, in the forefront of the fray, the faithful Joshua led his people in battle. Though the Amalekites were put to flight, the divine edict confirmed the continuing saga between the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the serpent": "Yahweh hath sworn that Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (v. 16).

Unfortunately, carnal thinking permeates every part of human existence and can even be found within the brotherhood. James denounced the "enmity" manifested in an ecclesia when its members are dominated by the carnal mind (ch. 4:4). He condemned such conduct on the part of those betrothed to Christ as the behavior of "adulteresses". To accept and endorse a state of friendship with the world is to capitulate to the "mind of the flesh", and to oppose the will of God.

"For it is not subject to the law of God" — The carnal mind pleases itself, and is driven by the demands made by the flesh for gratification. The NIV has: "The sinful mind is hostile to God", whilst the JB has: "...never does submit to God's law".

The word "subject" is the Gr. *hupotasso*, and is primarily a military term meaning *to rank under* (from *hupo*, under, and *tasso*, to arrange). The word carries the idea of a rigid and loyal discipline. This is the first occurrence of the word in Romans, but it occurs again in v. 20 (twice), 10:3; 13:1,5.

The "law of God" directs us to become an army standing before its commander, and ready to perform his every commandment. Our commander is the Lord Jesus (Isa. 55:4) being the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10), and we should arrange ourselves in order under him, as soldiers in the spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:13-17; 2Tim. 2:3). Our weapons are spiritual: "yield your members as instruments *(weapons, arms)* of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13); "*arm* yourselves with the same mind" (1Pet. 4:1).

However, the carnal mind refuses such service and discipline. It will not submit itself to the divine decrees of the spiritual commander, but seeks to exercise itself according to its own will, demonstrating open hostility to the principles of the Truth; and, because it can never be rehabilitated, it must be destroyed by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13).

"Neither indeed can be" — Paul makes an emphatic statement that the carnal mind can never respond to the will of God. It cannot be converted, but is destined to be destroyed and replaced by the mind of the spirit in those who respond to the divine will. Since there is no hope for the carnal mind, it must be "crushed" (Gen. 3:15) as the stone from David's sling struck Goliath upon the forehead (1Sam. 17:49), typifying Christ's victory over sin and the sin-nature.

The great failing which constantly resulted in disaster for Israel was that they were dominated by the carnal mind. Rom. 10:3 (where the words "have not submitted" are from the same Gr. word *hupotasso*, as here used) shows that they thought to establish their own righteousness by their own means. Refusing to be "subject to the law of God" Israel came into conflict with God. That same problem has resulted in the spiritual death of many ecclesias throughout the centuries (cp. Rev. 3:16).

A person governed by the carnal mind has three powerful reasons for pleasing himself: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1Jn. 2:16), and whilst so dominated he "cannot please God". These ungodly desires, called by Paul the "motions of sins" (Rom. 7:5) must be put aside in order to serve God. Faith is the power that will achieve this, since "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Faith effectively combats the ungodly outworking of the flesh, for faith becomes alive and active through the power which is in the Word of God (Rom. 1:16; 10:17).

VERSE 8

"So then" — Upon the basis of what has been stated in vv. 5-7, Paul turns in

vv. 8-12 to stress the personal aspects of the matter. Leaving "the flesh" as his topic of conversation, he now addresses individual men and women: "*they* that are in the flesh". These are words of grave warning, inferring that every individual in Christ must examine himself in the light of the Word.

"They that are in the flesh" — See our notes on v. 5. As with the phrase "*after* (following) the flesh", so to be "*in* the flesh" here does not indicate our mortal physical condition, for Jesus possessed it as do we — and he always pleased his Father. The phrase indicates *a way* of life, the imitating of fleshly thinking, following the "minding of the flesh" (v. 5), and the seeking for the ungodly desires of the flesh. Such a person is at the mercy of the dictates of the flesh. His entire existence depends upon the body of sin, and is under the dominion of that which is hostile to God. In such a state, a man can neither please God, nor find favor with Him.

"Cannot please God" — Because God seeks the manifestation of Himself in His creatures. He is "spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Consequently God is pleased by a fulsome and willing dedication to His precepts. God's "pleasure" was seen in the sacrifice of His Son (Isa. 53:10a), as part of the process of his prosperity (v. 10b). This attitude comes from faith (Heb. 11:6).

The same word "please" is applied to Christ in Rom. 15:3 that "he *pleased not* himself". He is the great example with whom believers must constantly compare themselves. The Lord lived every moment of his life to *please* his Father, and therefore he always lived according to the "thinking of the spirit".

VERSE 9

"But ye" — The personal note continues. Believers are reminded of the privileged position in which they now stand. Through their knowledge of the Truth and baptism into Christ, they have covenanted to repudiate the flesh, and the carnal mind which it produces.

True believers are different from those "of the flesh" described in vv. 5-8; they have been called to separate from carnal thinking and worldly actions, and to seek for higher things (cp. Eph. 1:3, 7).

"Are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" — Their whole way of life is distinctly different. The Diaglott Gr. text has no emphatic "the"; thus: "You but not are in flesh, but in spirit". Rotherham has: "ye have not your being in flesh but in spirit". It is not the literal flesh *nor* spirit which is here described, but two different ways of life, one governed by carnal ideas, the other directed by the divine Word. Paul reminds his readers of their responsibility since they have committed themselves to the "life of the spirit", performing the will of the Father, to their utmost ability. They have rejected the "course of this world" (Eph. 2:2), acknowledging that therein is no hope, for it is without God (v. 12).

Those whose minds have been illuminated by divine Truth, and converted to the way of life which develops righteousness and holiness, will reject the way of

Being "In The Spirit"

Rom. 8:9 is better understood as meaning "Ye are not in a state of flesh, but *of spirit*, if so be that a *divine spirit* (or a God-like spirit) dwells in you. But if any man have not a *Christ-like spirit*, he is none of his". There is no reference here to the Holy Spirit. And this type of spirit is not uncommon. For example, in 1Jn. 4:3 we read of "that spirit of antichrist". This is a "spirit" in men and women which is in opposition to the Truth. Here, in Rom. 8:9, Paul speaks of a "spirit" or attitude of mind, in harmony with the Word of God. The Lord Jesus had so perfectly achieved this state that he could say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Therefore Paul claims that this same family likeness must be developed and manifested in all God's sons and daughters. That is the challenge which the Truth brings home to every believer, every day of their lives. — ***J.U.***

life wherein they were *ruled by* the thinking of the flesh. Those who have been converted to the way of Truth do not regard their mortal existence, with its fleshly lusts, as the centre of their moral existence — for their thoughts, actions, aims and objectives are formulated under the influence of "the spirit" which is "the Truth" (1Jn. 5:6; lit. Gr.).

"If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" — The conditional "*if*"(Gr. *eiper*) is emphatic and indicates that being "in the spirit" is not to be assumed by mere profession. It must be demonstrated by real action. The "fruits of the spirit" must be seen to exist (Mat. 5:16; Jn. 10:32; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 2:10; 5:9. cp. Lk. 13:9). Notice the use of "if" in Heb. 3:6,7,14,15; 4:3,5,7,8, etc. We cannot presume on our standing in the Truth (1Cor. 10:12).

To be "in the spirit" requires the spirit of God to *dwell* in us. The Greek word, *oikeo*, signifies, *to live within a home*. It requires us to maintain our position in the divine family, covered by the atoning work of Christ, and thus becoming the "house" or dwelling place of the Truth. We are "Christ's house" (Heb. 3:6) by allowing his disposition to reside in our hearts and minds. Then the "spirit of God dwelleth" in us (1Cor. 3:16), as a controlling power, able to direct our thoughts and actions.

In order to understand its full significance, v. 9 should be placed in juxtaposition with ch. 7:20. There, Paul shows that indwelling sin *(he oikousa en emoi hamartia)* determines the existence of the man under law: his life is "in the flesh" and "according to the flesh" because "the sin" *(he hamartia)* dwells, or makes its home, in him. In v. 9, the indwelling spirit *(pneuma theou oikei en humin)* motivates and empowers the man who is "not under law, but under grace" (ch. 6:14); his life is "in the spirit" and "according to the spirit". The apostle can say, without difference of meaning: "you are in the spirit", and "the spirit is in you". Both expressions have a common meaning, namely, *the spirit of Truth governs your existence.*

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ" — The spirit of Christ is the mind developed by the Spirit-Word (vv 5-6). The word "spirit" often signifies the disposition of a person, and only in limited places is it used in the N.T. to represent miraculous spirit-power. Here it emphasizes that the whole outlook of Christ is required. It includes the recognition of sacrifice, as well as of the promised glory. When Peter objected to these principles in the atoning work of Christ, the Lord responded: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Mat. 16:23). At that time Peter did not understand "the mind of Christ", and was driven by the emotions of the flesh. Thus Paul exhorted: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). In 1Cor. 2:11-12, he contrasts the "spirit of man" (the natural thinking of the flesh) with the "spirit of God" (the mind induced by embracing the truths of God), declaring: "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God".

"He is none of his" — Such an one cannot claim true discipleship. The Diaglott has: "He is not of him", and the Greek word indicates that *he has no possession of him*, or, as Weymouth has it: "such an one does not belong to him". Christ will not claim possession of those in which his spirit is not found. Nor can a man claim to belong to Christ if he does not make the Spirit-Word his guiding counsel in life. So Paul said: "Let this mind *(i.e., disposition)* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Some of the Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham (and the Hebrew word for "son", *ben*, means "to be filled with": thus to have possession), but the Master described them as being "possessed by" their father, the devil (Jn. 8:39,44).

VERSE 10

"And if Christ (be) in you" — This is only achieved by the infusion of the Spirit-Word, and an appreciation of what

Christ represents: a life of sacrifice and dedication to the divine pattern. Paul was able to say: "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), for he manifested a oneness with his Master in crucifixion (mental and moral sacrifice) and in resurrection (a "living again" by a renewed mind and attitude). See Col. 1:24, 27-28.

"The body (is) dead because of sin" — Paul previously lamented the fact that he carried about a "body of death" from which he longed to be delivered (ch. 7:24), and which was figuratively crucified (Gal. 5:24). The "body" is "the flesh" of vv. 5-8, the moral existence in which sin was the motivating power. But now the ungodly lusts and affections have been figuratively destroyed by the covering of baptism. We have been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), and the "body of flesh" has become dead in the sense that it has been figuratively buried in the waters of baptism (see Gal. 5:24). The reason for destroying "the body" is the presence of "sin" in it. The Diaglott has: "the body indeed is dead *as to* (lit., *with respect to*) sin".

The words "because of" come from the Greek *dia* with the accusative "through, as tending *towards*, on account of" (Bull.). So Rotherham has: "the body indeed is dead *by reason of* sin", whilst the TCNT has: "though the body is dead *as a consequence of* sin, the spirit is full of life *as a consequence of* righteousness". The believer acknowledges that the flesh, with its inherent weaknesses and evil propensities, is no longer vital to existence. Having relinquished his previous loyalties and enslavement to the flesh, the believer now allows Christ to "live" in him through the Spirit of the Word.

"But the Spirit (is) life" — This expression has the joyful ring of triumph! The body of flesh no longer lords itself over God's true saints. Thus, in contrast to his previous statement, Paul shows the benefits of destroying "the body" of flesh. It allows the manifestation of the Truth and the principles of godliness to be revealed in life. Now Christ lives within such believers through his Spirit-Word (see Gal. 2:20). With minds illuminated with the thinking of the Spirit, they have been elevated to the highest plane mentally and morally (cp. Rom. 3:21; 5:21).

"Because of righteousness" — The preposition *dia* signifies *through, towards*, "with respect to" (Diag). See note on previous occurrence in this verse. When righteousness is revealed in principle and action, *life* results. These elements of righteousness transform the character of the believer into the likeness of Christ (2Cor. 3:18). It was God's plan of justification set in motion through the work of His Son that provides life to His people. So "God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto Himself*" (ch. 5:19). By faith "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1), who is in us "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Thus, though the "flesh" is typically dead, the power of Christ is alive in us through the Spirit-Word.

VERSE 11

"But if the Spirit (spirit) of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead" — The power of the Spirit-Word that God has provided for our salvation, is seen in the resurrection of Christ. The Spirit of God is so powerful that it was able to raise the dead body of the Lord Jesus from the grave, and then infuse it with the wonder and power of divine nature. In that miracle, the power of sin was summarily dismissed (Jn. 1:29; 8:46), the *diabolos* in his flesh was destroyed (Heb. 2:14; Acts 2:27), and the divine approval was registered in the glorious nature of his resurrection (Phil. 3:21). As Jesus was honored with immortality, so those "in him" are associated with the same process of renewal (Rom. 6:4). The transformation is firstly mental and moral, but will ultimately raise saints from the grave and clothe them with everlasting life. This spirit originates from the Father (Jn. 12:49).

"Dwell in you" — Paul previously found that sin "dwelt" in him (ch. 7:17). The same word *oikeo* appears in both these verses, and signifies *the indwelling*. Paul experienced a paradox. He was

"home" to indwelling sin and to the indwelling Spirit of God! The former was the condition of his nature by birth that sought to establish sin; the latter was the condition of his mind when he allowed "the mind of Christ" to enter in at the time of his spiritual birth. So he concluded: "with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (ch. 7:25).

How careful disciples must be in the exercises of daily life — two tremendous powers exist contemporaneously within us; one for good, the other for evil. But the evidence of the resurrection of Christ shows that we can overcome "through Christ who strengthens" us (Phil. 4:13).

"He that raised up Christ from the dead" — The same power seen in the resurrection of Messiah can become "mighty in us" (2Cor. 13:3) by the transforming power of the Word of Life, and will ultimately secure our exaltation (Eph. 1:19-23). See notes at the beginning of this verse.

"Shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit" — Rotherham has: "shall make alive (even) your death-doomed bodies". Paul uses the same word here as did the Lord when he said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are *life*", having first declared: "It is the spirit that quickeneth" (Jn. 6:63). Not only does the Spirit dwell within us *mentally* by the implantation of the Spirit-Word, and *morally* by actions which conform to its principles and power, but ultimately there will be a *physical* presence of the divine power. The word "quicken" *(zoopoieo)* means *to make alive* (see also ch. 4:17). Mortality speaks of a dying condition. God's purpose is to arrest the direction that mankind's sin has brought, and to heal the corruption of transgression. That will provide for the eventual conferring of immortality as part of the "great and precious promises" given to men and women of faith (2Pet. 1:4).

Thus Paul takes us beyond the primary states of transformation — that which is first mental, then moral — onwards to the Judgment Seat and to the rewards of faithfulness. He speaks of a *physical* "quickening" of this present mortal body, to make

The Development of a Spiritual Body

Their resurrection is the opening of the Book of Life, or God's remembrance of them practically demonstrated in their deliverance from death. *Spirit-Truth* inscribed them on His memory, and *Spirit-Power*, the same Spirit of God that revealed the doctrine through prophets and apostles, raises them from the dead, or opens the gates of the invisible, by Jesus; and then will be verified the words of Paul, who says, "If the spirit of Him who raised up the Christ from among the dead dwell in you, He... shall also make alive your *mortal bodies* by the means of His spirit indwelling among you" (Rom. 8:11). "I am always bearing about the putting to death of the Lord Jesus in the body, that *the life also of Jesus* (the Lamb's life), may be manifested *in our body*. For we, the living, are always exposed to death on account of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested *in our mortal flesh*". And, "He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise us up by Jesus, and shall present us with you", when "mortality shall be swallowed up by life" (2Cor. 4:10,11,14; 5:4). This is the Lamb's life — immortality of *body*, a living, incorruptible *body*, evolved from the ashes of the *former body* by the Spirit of God, therefore *a spiritual body*, or *spirit*, which are equivalent terms in the case; born from the invisible *by resurrection*, which is *the opening* of the house of death. Thus, "that which has been produced from the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). —*J. Thomas, Eureka.*

it "like unto his (Christ's) glorious body" (Phil. 3:21). Like their Master, the saints will be raised from the grave in a state of mortality (Rom. 14:9; 2Cor. 5:10), and, upon acceptance, undergo the change to divine nature.

It should be understood that throughout his discourse Paul shows that this process of bringing individuals to eternal salvation does not begin with the miraculous Holy Spirit power, but with the Spirit-Word: "Of His own will *begat* He us *with* the Word of Truth" (Jas. 1:18).

"That dwelleth in you" — This expression indicates that there must be a very close and intimate relationship between the believer and the Spirit-Word which he draws upon for his daily spiritual sustenance. The "incorruptible seed" of Truth (1Pet. 1:23), found in the Word of Life, "liveth and abideth for ever". The Master said that his words are "spirit and life" (Jn. 6:63). When intellectually digested and consumed in a life of dedication and love for the Truth, the same Word will "judge at the last day" (Jn. 12:48). Upon that basis eternal life will be granted. Therefore the Spirit of Truth which now dwells in us mentally, will become the power of an "endless life" (Heb. 7:16) by the physical regeneration of our bodies (Phil. 3:21). In a sense, what we are today is what we will be tomorrow. Paul declared that as we sow, so shall we reap, and therefore if we "sow to the Spirit we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:8). It is important that this principle be applied in daily experience, for if the Spirit of Truth is not found in our hearts and minds in these days of opportunity, we will lack the great joy of a physical regeneration with the divine nature (2Pet. 1:4).

When the spirit of the Truth (and not merely the Truth as a set of doctrines believed) is "living" within individuals, they are practising, even though ever so imperfectly, the principles of God-manifestation. If individuals permit the spirit of the Truth to "live" within them — and therefore to be "alive" — they will become the Word made flesh, and therefore the process of developing them for the kingdom will continue to mould and shape them to that end.

Manifestation of the Spirit-life leads to Maturity of Sonship — vv. 12-17.

Having dealt with the aspects of servitude (ch. 6:22), of marriage (ch. 7:4), of warfare (ch. 7:23), Paul desires to show that the process of divine regeneration is also seen in the family status. Being called to become members of the Family of God, we must not remain in a state of immaturity, as those who need constant feeding with the "milk of the Word", but should develop to the stronger, more skilful use of the power of Truth (Heb. 5:13).

VERSE 12

"Therefore, brethren" — Paul repeats his brotherly appeal: see ch. 1:13; 7:1,4.

He again makes use of this important conjunction (Gr. *ara oun*), urging that the logical outworking of his reasoning in vv. 5-11 should not be ignored. If there is a life-and-death struggle between being carnally minded or spiritually minded, to what state has the Truth brought us? Obviously we will acknowledge the absolute necessity of repudiating not only the flesh, but also the *thinking* of the flesh. Having made a total commitment to Christ through knowledge, faith and baptism, we are no longer "debtors" to the flesh, and therefore owe it nothing whatsoever.

Paul now provides a single-minded exhortation to live in accordance with the example of Christ, that we might ultimately reap the same eternal benefits as our Lord received.

Note Paul's useage of the intimate form of address: "brethren". This is only the fourth time Paul has used the term in the epistle (ch. 1:13; 7:1,4). Although the word occurs a total of twenty times, Paul will use the term seven more times in the epistle as a direct form of address, and in every place he makes an intimate, sympathetic appeal to his readers. If we are all "brethren" in respect to a mutual recognition of "*all* the counsel of God" (Acts

20:27), we should not only all be "one" in these matters, but also in the application of them.

"We are debtors, not to the flesh" — We are under no obligation to the corrupt propensities and passions of the flesh. We owe it nothing, for it has given us nothing but trial, temptation and sin. Nor will it reward us if we gratify it, for any such fleshly pleasure only results in death (ch. 6:23; Gal. 6:7-8). The power of the Truth has "loosed our bonds" (Psa. 116:16), and removed us from the arena of corruption, as was the case with our Master (Acts 2:27).

"To live after the flesh" — Acting according to its dictates, which culminates in death. The Diaglott has: "to live according to the flesh", i.e., following a course of life which gives total gratification to the flesh. Since we have been "bought with a price" (1Cor. 6:20; 7:23), and have committed ourselves to the employ of the Spirit, we no longer need to concern ourselves with the ungodly demands of the flesh.

VERSE 13

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" — Indulging our carnal appetites will result in eternal death. Such will be the inevitable outcome of a life according to the dictates of the flesh. In such a life nothing of value is produced to the glory of God, nor is there exhibited a form of God-manifestation. Therefore nothing is produced to be worthy of eternal preservation.

The expression literally is: "If you live according to the flesh you are *about to* die". Thus: "If, having been quickened by the Word, you now decide to return to the old ways of the flesh, you will become *dead* while you are still living!" (cp. Jas. 5:5; 1Tim. 5:6).

"But if ye through the Spirit (spirit)" — The Truth (Jn. 6:63; 1Jn. 5:6) must become the means and motivating power by which the believer combats the influence of the flesh, and seeks for divine approval. Note the qualifying "if" which occurs consistently in this section of the epistle, and which presupposes that this important principle is not automatic in the lives of disciples. It does not necessarily follow that, because a person confesses Christ and is baptised, he will use the power of the Spirit-Word to overcome. It must be specifically read, understood and applied in the circumstances of trial and testing.

"Do mortify the deeds of the body" — To mortify is to put to death. The Greek *thanatoo* means *to destroy, to cause to die*, and is related to the word *thnetos*, mortal. It is found in Rom. 7:4, "ye are also become dead", and also occurs in ch. 8:36, where it is rendered: "for thy sake we are *killed*...".

It is not the physical body that must be crucified; it is the "deeds": the corrupt inclinations and desires that are part of our mortal constitution and the cause of transgression. We must, therefore, destroy that which is destroying us! (see Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:5). The Lord Jesus "destroyed that which has the power of death, the diabolos" (Heb. 2:14) as an example to his followers. Obedience to the Spirit-Word demands that we reject the "deeds of the flesh", and baptism is the figurative token that the believer has covenanted to do this (Rom. 6:3).

Paul's statement makes it quite clear that the flesh is the source of all sin. Whilst the word "deeds" is properly translated in this verse, the JB captures the apostle's expression by rendering the phrase: "the misdeeds of the body", whilst Rotherham has: "the practices of the flesh". Here is a reminder that King Sin, though now dethroned from the hearts of believers (ch. 6:12), will continue his struggle to regain his lost dominion. As the believer continues to grow in knowledge and faith, developing a more mature spiritual mind, so King Sin will find his efforts increasingly thwarted.

"Ye shall live" — In contrast to the state of spiritual death which results from walking according to the dictates of the flesh, resulting in eternal death in the grave, the believer now "lives" in the eyes of Yahweh. The figurative crucifixion of the "deeds" of the body leads to the ulti-

"They are the Sons of God"

What a wonderfully warm and intimate expression, especially in view of the encouraging words of verses 9-11! These words stress the personal, filial relationship between Yahweh and His spiritual offspring. There is, indeed, a Father-Child kinship between the Great God of heaven, and those whom He has begotten through the Word of Truth (Jas. 1:18). Believers should never forget the high and immeasurably lofty calling to which they have been called in Christ Jesus. Constantly reassured by the reality of this fact, they continue to be led by the wisdom of God through all the trials and vicissitudes of life. Thereby they will come to an eternal inheritance with the joy and gladness of receiving the gift of divine nature.

For almost 1,500 years the Jewish nation had boasted in the exclusiveness of their Jewishness. They had continued to assert their confidence in being the sons of God. And so they were in a national sense. But the question of their individual standing before God, in relation to eternal salvation, was another matter. In Rom. 8:14, Paul forthrightly affirms that there are only two classes of people in the world: those who are truly part of the spiritual family of God, and those who are not. Here the only ground upon which one may claim sonship is clearly stated. Like the Gentile, the Jew must seek for sonship upon this basis; otherwise he will remain out of the way which leads to eternal redemption. — ***J. Ullman.***

Important Greek Words

The Greek text has different words to describe a developing child. The most common are:

TEKNON refers to a child, and especially to the fact of its birth; from the verb *tikto*, "to beget" — thus a babe or young child, still in its early formative years. It occurs in the epistle in the following verses, being translated as "children" in every case: ch. 8:16,17,21; 9:7,8 (3 times). An associated word *TEKNION* is always used in the plural, and is found seven times in John's first epistle, where the Lord speaks of his "little children" (Jn. 13:33) in a term of endearment, and to emphasize their spiritual rebirth.

PAIS signifies a child in relation to descent; thus a son or daughter (see its use in Mat. 21:15), being linked with the parent.

PAIDION is a diminutive of the previous word. It is generally used of an infant just born (cp. Mat. 2:8), and thus can refer to believers who have just been subject to spiritual birth and therefore lack understanding (cp. 1Cor. 14:20).

HUIOS, a son; generally one older in years, and thus of a reasoning ability; one able to understand and learn (cp. Mat. 5:9, 44-45). It occurs in Romans as "son" or "sons" in ch. 1:3,4,9; 5:10; 8:3, 14, 19, 29, 32; 9:9; and as "children" in ch. 9:26,27.

HUIOTHESIA signifies "the placing of a son *(huios)*" and has particular reference to a child who has arrived at the age of responsibility, having achieved the fulness of his standing. It expresses the maturing of a child into adulthood, in contrast to the dependence of a minor. It therefore means "sonship" and is translated (wrongly) as "adoption" in ch. 8:15,23; 9:4.

In the *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Vine states: "*Teknon* gives prominence to the fact of birth, whereas *huios* stresses the dignity and character of the relationship". The difference between believers as 'children of God' and as 'sons of God' is brought out in Romans 8:14-21. The Spirit bears witness

with their spirit that they are 'children of God', and as such, they are His heirs and joint heirs with Christ. This stresses the fact of their spiritual birth (vv. 16,17). On the other hand, "as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God". Their conduct gives evidence of the dignity of their relationship and their likeness to His character.

The apostle John uses both words in his first epistle, and indicates that we are now "children of God" (1Jn. 3:1-3 — Note that "sons" in vv. 1,2 is *teknon*). We became such when born of water at our baptism (cp. Jn. 3:3-5). Although *huios* occurs frequently in John's epistle, it is used only of Christ himself.

The theme is nowhere expressed more beautifully than in Rom. 8:19 — "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the *Sons (huios) of God*". — ***J. Knowles.***

mate change in nature when "our vile body may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he (Jesus Christ) is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21). As the Lord achieved immortality through his obedient life and cleansing sacrifice, so we can anticipate the glorification of our lives at his coming (1Tim. 4:8).

VERSE 14

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God" — These are those who "follow after the Spirit" (v. 5), and who allow the power of the Spirit-Word to dominate them, both mentally and morally (see Gal. 5:18). They allow their minds to be directed by the Word. The Greek word for "led" is *agontai*, thus, *to bear up, to carry, to lead out*; "guided" (Diag.). Thus they submit to the influence and control of the Word, which will "bear them up" in the hour of temptation.

This verse is in the present, passive tense, indicating that being led by the Spirit-Word is a continuing exercise, to be maintained until the process is completed at the moment of physical death, or with the coming of Christ. Use of the passive tense also shows that the entire development of the Godly man is a work of God and not of flesh. The believer must surrender himself passively to the influence of God's Word that he might be totally guided, directed and educated thereby. Only those who are "led" by the Spirit-Word will remain under its influence, and thereby follow in the footsteps of Christ, even though imperfectly.

"They are the sons of God" — The word for "sons" is *huioi*, and signifies *an offspring, particularly with reference to its origin or nature* (see panel on page 26-27). Being led by the divine Spirit-Word they reveal evidence of their parent: Almighty God. The Lord's opponents wickedly claimed that his parentage was suspect (John 8:41), but he countered their evil contention with the wondrous claim that "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me" (v. 42). A claim to sonship is dependent upon evidence that the child could be shown to be of such a parent; thus whilst the Lord did not dispute Israel's fleshly descent from Abraham (vv. 33,37), he rejected their boast that Abraham was their "father" (v. 39). Whether or not they were prepared to manifest the "works" of Abraham would determine their legitimate claim to sonship. On their part, this would require the understanding of sound knowledge, the exercise of faith, and the manifestation of its works. Otherwise, they remain of the "family of the *diabolos*" (v. 44), notwithstanding their protestations.

To affirm that a person is a "son *(huios)* of God" (Rom. 8:14) is only legitimate of one who is "led of the spirit of God" and who thus shows that his origin is out of the Truth intellectually believed and enthusiastically followed. Ultimately, this will be confirmed by a change of

nature, so that all the faithful sons of God will be partakers of the divine nature "having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Pet. 1:4). Then the prophecy of Rev. 21:7) will be fulfilled.

VERSE 15

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" — The word "spirit" is used to indicate an attitude, or state of mind. There is the "state of mind" that belongs to the flesh, and there is the "state of mind" which belongs to the Truth (cp. 2Tim. 1:7).

The "spirit" (or disposition) of a slave is one of dread and concern. He lives in constant fear of punishment for failure to perform the demands of his bondage. But, though Christ's followers are still slaves, being in bondage to him (see Rom. 6:16), there is a vast difference between servitude to the flesh and servitude to Christ. In the latter, there is no "fear" such as there is associated with serving the flesh, for Christ's servants have been brought into a new way in which is provided a hope of future benefits. Such slaves enjoy "the life that now is and that which is to come" (1Tim. 4:8).

Rotherham has: "Ye have not received a spirit of servitude leading back into fear". Our new bondship with Christ is one that gives hope and joy — unlike the former despotism of the flesh which brought only sin and disaster. The "spirit of the Truth" does not "lead us back" to the death that is occasioned through our mortal nature and which brought us in "fear of death" to a lifetime of bondage (cp. Heb. 2:15; 2Tim. 1:7; 1Jn. 4:18, and contrast 1Cor. 2:12). Instead service to Christ is a "walking in newness of life", and "seeing afar off" the glorious promises of eternal life and companionship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "bondage" is from the Gr. *douleia*, which occurs only five times in the N.T., including two occurrences in this chapter: here and v. 21. The word signifies *servitude, slavery*. Vine says the word primarily relates to "*the condition* of being a slave". The word is only ever used of Israel's bondage to the law (Gal. 4:24; 5:1), or mankind's bondage to Adamic nature (Heb. 2:15). In Rom. 8:15 it refers to our previous enslavement to the Adamic constitution under the relationship of sin. This is further emphasized by Paul's careful use of the word "received" (twice in this verse). The Gr. *lambano* means, *to take hold of* — i.e., "You have not taken hold of that hopeless condition of enslavement which could only fill you with fear and dread". How striking is the contrast: "bondage" to the flesh is related to fear and hopelessness; whereas "bondage" to Christ offers the rewards of faith.

The Greek word for "fear" is *phobos*, from which comes the English "phobia". The word implies the *feeling of fear, terror, fright, dismay*; hence flight. Under the law, service was compulsory, as if compelled by a tyrant master. This generated a fear of not fulfilling its letter of slavery. Similarly, Gentiles had come from bondage to the rites and ceremonies of a multitude of deities, all of whom their followers believed constantly demanded placating, and failure to do so brought the fear of death.

Although in this verse Paul states that we have been released from the "fear" that comes from the spirit of bondage, he uses the same Greek word in Phil. 2:12 to exhort us to "work out our own salvation *with fear* and trembling". There is no conflict between the two statements. In his exhortation to the Philippians Paul speaks of the solemn attitude of reverence, humility and submission that should be manifested towards God as we strive to prepare for the Lord's return. Thus: "do not take it for granted that your eternal redemption is already an accomplished fact".

"But ye have received the Spirit of adoption" — This is a new status obtainable through Jesus Christ. The word "adoption" is *huiothesia*, and signifies "the placing of a son"; the status of sonship. It applies to the Jewish child when he attains maturity, and is no longer "under tutors and governors" (see Gal. 4:2), but is accepted as an adult member

of the family and in line for the inheritance. From childhood the Lord Jesus "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8), and was educated in divine principles by the Spirit and the Spirit-Word. He had "tutors and governors" in the form of the law which he upheld in every particular (Mat. 5:17), and benefited from his spiritually-minded guardians, to whom he remained "subject" during his childhood development (Lk. 2:51). Having the mind of the spirit by the direct intervention of Yahweh upon the virgin Mary, Jesus was able to fully perceive the perfect character of his Father with a clarity above our ability, and thus could "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (v. 52). Having "humbled himself" he was obedient unto the death of the cross, and thus demonstrated his worthiness to become fully "placed as a Son" (the meaning of the term "adoption" in Rom. 8:15). That sonship was acknowledged at his baptism (Mat. 3:17) and transfiguration (ch. 17:5), and will yet be declared again at his return (Ps. 2:7). Paul says that God "hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). The perfect obedience and cleansing sacrifice of the Master provided the means for his final exaltation to glory. He now stands exalted with his Father — a position he achieved by means of his unique birth, his education and his performance of everything His Father required. In him, the Father's character was fully developed.

The "spirit of adoption" (the status of mature sonship), achieved by the Lord Jesus, is now available to his brethren, and delivers us from the "spirit of bondage" which was our former state. This spirit of sonship is the token of complete liberty which is yet to be fully manifested at Christ's coming (see Rom. 8:23). Therefore, though we are slaves of Christ (ch. 6:16), this servitude offers the hope of complete freedom. *Huiothesia* really expresses the maturing of adult sonship in contrast to the dependence and standing of a minor. The law treated Israelites as minors, no better than slaves, even though they might claim sonship (see Gal. 4:1-5), but Christ offered the liberty of maturity. Judah, as a nation, however, rejected this offer and preferred the restrictions and servitude of the law.

This "sonship", which was offered to Israel after the flesh (Rom. 9:4), is available in Christ (Gal. 4:5) to Gentiles (Eph. 1:5), and is summarized in the words of Jn. 1:12, "But as many as received him (the *logos*, "wisdom", v.1), to them gave he power *to become the sons of God*, even to them that believe on his name".

The word "sonship" is to be preferred as a better rendering than "adoption", which in common usage does not relate to the scriptural phrase: for a believing, faithful Gentile is just as much a true son of God as is a believing, faithful Jew.

"Whereby we cry" — As children who need protection and help. The word is *krazo*, which Vine defines as "an onomatopoeic word, used especially of the cry of the raven; then, of any inarticulate cries, from fear, pain, etc". It is the word used of the Master's cry at the close of his sufferings (Mat. 27:50; Mk. 15:39), when he appealed to the Father to accept his life of devotion and perfect sacrifice. Paul uses it here to describe the urgent cry of a child for the help, care and protection of a parent.

"Abba, Father" — The Greek for "Father" is *pater*. Thus, *Abba* and *Pater* are the Jewish and Greek forms of the same word, but they relate to fatherhood in two different relationships. *Abba* is the first word that a Jewish child learns to say, and its use here speaks of the complete and unquestionable trust such as a baby has for its parent. It is the intimate family term for "father". *Pater* is a more intellectual expression, and implies a maturing understanding of the father's love and position as the parent. The Greek word comes from a root signifying *a nourisher, protector, upholder* (and is mostly translated "father" in the N.T.). When used of Yahweh it acknowledges His special relationship as the One who has called us to become "a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14) and has given us spiritual birth and care. The title "Father" should not be used

instead of the honored memorial Name of *Yahweh* which the Eternal Spirit especially selected to indicate His purpose with mankind ("*I will be Whom I Will be*", Exod. 3:14). However, the words *Abba, Pater,* beautifully express the very personal relationship that we enjoy with Him.

The Master used this same combination in Mark 14:36 to express both his origin from the Father *(Abba)* and the guidance and direction that he has received throughout his life *(Pater)*. Jesus acknowledged both principles in his crucifixion ("the passing cup"). The Lord's example is held up by Paul in Gal. 4:6 as being the pattern that must motivate all "sons of God" — enabling them to utter the same words, *Abba, Pater*.

Thus in Rom. 8:15 Paul reminds his readers that their baptism has brought them into a special relationship with Yahweh. They are His true children by birth through the Spirit-Seed (1Pet. 1:23), and they have a further responsibility to acknowledge Him as their Father in the development of their understanding and appreciation of the family characteristics, which are built upon the Truth believed and practised.

The use of the two words by Paul in Gal. 4:3-6 also emphasizes the unity of Jew and Gentile in the one family, showing Yahweh to be Father of all who come unto Him (Acts 15:14-17).

VERSE 16

"The Spirit itself" — Incorrectly, some biased translations (e.g. RSV, NASB, RV) render the word "itself" as "himself" without justification, and in opposition to the Greek construction of the phrase. The word *pneuma* is in the neuter gender, indicating an impersonal power (see Diaglott, Rotherham). The Spirit is not the third person of a triune god, but the power, or essence, that flows forth from the Creator: "He divideth the sea with *His* power... by His spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:12-14).

"Beareth witness with our spirit" — If the first privilege of our sonship is to call God *Our Father* (v. 15), then the second privilege is to bear His Spirit-Word in ourselves, and reveal it to others.

Although the translators have capitalised one word "spirit", but not the other in this verse, there is no difference in the word *pneuma* itself. The word means *to blow, breathe,* and indicates the extension of oneself, the exercise of one's life or power. In its first use it refers to the Spirit-Word, the Truth which has been "breathed forth" from the Deity as the expression of His will and desire. In the second use it relates to the believer's emotional regard for the Father, a love for Him (1Jn. 4:19), such as children should have for their parents. Such a regard must also be "breathed forth", i.e., be manifested in active filial affection. It refers to the attitude made evident to others. Therefore our filial affection towards God bears witness with our understanding of the Truth (the spirit) demonstrating that we are, in fact, "children of God".

The word "witness" is the Gr. *summartureo,* which signifies *to bear witness together with or along with another.* It requires two identities: one presenting and the other receiving. Paul says that the Spirit "bore witness" or "testified" in the miraculous works produced by the apostles and disciples. It provided evidence that their message was from God. When *our* spirit (or disposition) becomes sympathetically united with the Spirit of the Truth there develops within us a deep reverence and love for Yahweh, not only as a supreme Being and Creator, but as "our Father". Hence, we become persuaded that we are, indeed, the "children" of God.

Thus the Spirit-Word must be reflected in our actions, by which the Father's characteristics are seen by others in us. The Truth and our own affections must co-operate together to the glory of Yahweh. This was evident in the apostles who were considered to be "unlearned and ignorant men", but, being fired up by the power of the Truth, people "marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Similarly, we must let our "light so shine before men, that they may see your good

works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 5:16).

Notice that the apostle did not say "our *spirits*" (plural), but used the singular "spirit". There is only *one* spirit which should motivate all believers. It is the singular disposition which is acquired through an acceptance of the *one* true message of salvation as seen in the gospel.

"That we are the children of God" — The action of the Spirit of God (the Truth) with our spirit (our attitude and devotion) is evidence of our true relationship with God. He is the Father of all who manifest the qualities of the spirit of Truth, and demonstrate in life the divine characteristics.

To be a "child of God" does not depend upon natural relationships of birth or family alignments. Speaking of the Jews' claim to sonship from Abraham, Paul says in Rom. 9:7-9, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children (for Ishmael was a son of Abraham); but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son". A mere Jew after the flesh is not a son of promise; whereas a Gentile embracing the Abrahamic hope, and manifesting the Abrahamic faith, is accounted a true seed of Abraham. Christ repudiated the claim of the Jews of his day that they were the true seed of Abraham, and declared that they were "of the devil",

Christ as Heir

As Son of Adam, Christ is heir to universal dominion: Gen. 1:26,28; Psa. 8:4-8; Heb. 2:6-8.

As Son of Abraham, Christ is heir to the Land of Promise: Gen. 22:16-18; Rom. 4:13; Heb. 2:16.

As Son of David, Christ is heir to the throne of Israel, established by Yahweh: Mat. 1:1-6; Lk. 1:30-33.

As Son of God, Christ is heir of all things: Acts 10:36; Heb. 1:1-2.

the flesh (Jn. 8:39-45). Sonship is predicated upon action, not upon flesh or upon words. A person can claim that he is a Jew, either by birth or by faith (Rev. 3:9), but unless his character conforms to his belief, the claim will be repudiated. It is a true faith manifested through action that will demonstrate the spiritual parentage of an individual. Thus, it is not those who declare "Our Father, which art in heaven..." who are accounted as *children of God*, but those who "do the *will* of my Father in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

The Gr. word here is *teknon*. The change from the word "sons" (v. 14, *huios*) to "children" (*teknon*) is significant. This is its first occurrence in this epistle. It signifies *that which is born*, being derived from *tikto, to bear*. Vine suggests that the word gives prominence to the *fact* of birth, whereas *huios* stresses the *dignity and character* of the relationship. From this point Paul will use the word a further six times (vv. 17, 21; 9:7, 8 – 3 times).

VERSE 17

"And if children" — Note the addition of "if", a small word of great importance. See notes on v. 9. In the indicative mood, the word *ei* assumes the hypothesis as an actual fact (Bull.). Use of this small word indicates an interrogative comment: "Be certain, brethren, that you really are the children of God; not merely in name or in theory, but in reality; a relationship which must not only be established, but also consistently sustained; for without this qualification you will not be numbered among the heirs of God".

"Then heirs; heirs of God" — The noun *kleronomos* means *to receive a portion or lot*, especially of an inheritance (Vine). Sons and children are also heirs, inheriting from their father in due time. Similarly we also inherit the riches which accrue from faith (Eph. 3:8).

This same word occurs in Gal. 3:29 and other passages, in relation to the promise of an inheritance in the kingdom; e.g. Jas. 2:5. Note these important occurrences of the verb: Mat. 5:5; 25:34; Hebrews 6:12; Revelation 21:7.

The phrase "of God" refers to His gracious gift of His own nature offered to those who honor and respect Yahweh as Father. Having become "heirs of God" (Gal. 4:7; Mat. 25:34) through baptism into Christ, we are brought into an intimate relationship with the hope of immortality, for the "great and precious promises (provide opportunity to be) partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption of the world through lust" (2Pet. 1:4).

"And joint-heirs with Christ" — The proof that we "live" (v. 13) is completed by this phrase. Paul now introduces Christ into the narrative. The divine inheritance is shared with the Lord Jesus Christ, the eminent Son of God; his redemption

Partaking of The Sufferings of Christ

This manifestation of the Deity... began in Jesus, Son of David and Son of Deity. Of him it was prophesied, "they pierced my hands and my feet". He was cut off, or covenanted; and afterwards removed by Eternal Power from this sublunary field of blood. But Jesus, though the Head, was not the Body. He had suffered, but his sufferings did not complete the sufferings of "His Body, which is the Ecclesia". Hence Paul says, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, *and fill up that which is behind of the affliction of the Anointed One* in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Ecclesia (Col. 1:24). But Paul did not consider that his sufferings, added to those of Jesus, would fill up the measure; for, in writing to the saints in Corinth he associates them with himself in the work, "as the sufferings of the Anointed One", says he, "abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth through the Anointed One. But whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is operative *in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;* or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that *as ye are partakers of the sufferings*, so ye shall be also of the consolation (2Cor. 1:5-7). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Tim. 2:12).

Thus the Body is pierced with suffering as well as its Head; and as Jesus, "though a son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered", so all his brethren must. It will be seen, then, that when the One Body is complete in all its elements, it will have been a suffering community. This is its Alpha, its Beginning, its *ho on*, or present condition. Most of its members are in the womb of death, shut up within "the gates of the invisible", which are so securely locked that no power can open them save that which is eternal. The key or power, is with Jesus, through whom it will operate as it did upon him when the power or spirit of the Father raised him from the dead.

At present, the Saints sleeping in the dust, and the few that are living in this generation, are all waiting for "The Adoption;" for living or dead, they were all immersed in hope of being planted in the likeness of the resurrection of their Elder Brother. Being thus "baptized for the dead", they suffer with him, that they may be *glorified together* in the manifestation of the Sons of the Deity, who shall then "with him freely give us all things" (Rom. 6:5; 8:23,17,19,32). As the brain in the head has property in the body, and calls it his; so the Logos in Jesus has property in him and his brethren, and styles them members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; so that they all become one flesh; "which is a great mystery", says Paul, "but I speak concerning the Anointed One and the Ecclesia" (Eph. 5:22-32). — ***J. Thomas,*** *Eureka*, vol. 1, pp. 151-152.

and exaltation to glory being evidence of that which is also offered to "his brethren" (Heb. 2:11) on the basis of his own sacrifice. But sharing his crown presupposes first sharing his cross (Phil. 3:8-10; 1Pet. 2:10-25). Those who reflect his qualities of life are those who receive his glory. Thus, in the parable of the Judgment Seat, the Shepherd-King gives to the approved the great joy of the future: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34).

"If so be that we suffer with him" — Throughout this verse the present tense is used. The TCNT has: "for we share Christ's sufferings in order that we also share his glory". Heirship is based upon an identification with Christ's sufferings. It was herein that he demonstrated his filial love to His Father. Continually he refused the will of the flesh and upheld the wisdom of Yahweh, and this culminated in his public demonstration of devotion and total dedication by voluntarily permitting himself to be put to death by crucifixion; his willing submission being in complete harmony with the express commandment he had received from his Father (Jn. 10:18; Acts 2:23). In all this, the righteousness of God was acknowledged and manifested. There is a need for believers to "fellowship the sufferings of Christ" (1Pet. 2:19-25; Rom. 6:3; Phil 3:10), as an essential element to salvation (Acts 14:22; 2Cor. 1:7; Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:24) and to ultimate glorification (2Tim. 2:12). This "suffering with Christ" means "putting to death" the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) in personal sacrifice and denial. The emblems of the "body and blood of the Lord", partaken of by disciples each week, are the outward token of such an inward conviction.

"That we may be also glorified together" — If united in Christ's sufferings, it is appropriate that we should anticipate a day of mutual glory, as the Bride whom he has selected, and who will share in his honor (Rev. 19:7). The purpose of suffering is to prepare a character for ultimate glorification. This will be based upon the exaltation of the Lord, as our suffering is upon his crucifixion. Thus, God has "highly exalted him" (Phil. 2:9), granted him "all power in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18), and conferred on him a "glorious body" of immortality (Phil. 3:21). Therefore, if we "suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Tim. 2:12).

These words, which conclude this section, illustrate that there is a reason in suffering. God takes no pleasure in the pressures or sorrows which come upon His saints, but in His wisdom He knows that the trials of life are the means whereby faith is developed and matured. Faith is therefore not merely a matter of theoretical knowledge; it must be proven in circumstances of life to be real and active. All who suffer because they obey God's Word are sharing the sufferings of Christ. Their faith shines forth when they cheerfully and patiently endure.

Sufferings arise from two sources. The first is our own rebellious nature which prefers to ignore or repudiate the divine way. The second is a world which knows not God and has rejected His Word and goodness. Our desire to please Him requires that we trample underfoot the evil dictates of the flesh, as Christ crushed the head of the serpent to gain victory over sin. In our desire to triumph that Yahweh might be glorified in us, we cry unto Him: "Abba! Father!" that He might continue to look upon us "like as a father pitieth his children" (Psa. 103:13).

Peter urges us to remain totally committed to the cause of Christ, looking for the "glory that shall be revealed". He reminds us of the coming salvation which is "ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations *(trials)*; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1Pet. 1:5-7).

This important principle is now extended by the apostle Paul in the balance of this chapter, as he shows how the

vision of future glory outweighs present distress, and provides us with the means to victory. Paul says in Rom. 9:7-9, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children (for Ishmael was a son of Abraham); but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son". A mere Jew after the flesh is not a son of promise; whereas a Gentile embracing the Abrahamic hope, and manifesting the Abrahamic faith, is accounted a true seed of Abraham. Christ repudiated the claim of the Jews of his day that they were the true seed of Abraham, and declared that they were "of the devil", the flesh (Jn. 8:39-45). Sonship is predicated upon action, not upon flesh or upon words. A person can claim that he is a Jew, either by birth or by faith (Rev. 3:9), but unless his character conforms to his belief, the claim will be repudiated. It is a true faith manifested through action that will demonstrate the spiritual parentage of an individual. Thus, it is not those who declare "Our Father, which art in heaven..." who are accounted as *children of God*, but those who "do the *will* of my Father in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

The Gr. word here is *teknon*. The change from the word "sons" (v. 14, *huios*) to "children" (*teknon*) is significant. This is its first occurrence in this epistle. It signifies *that which is born*, being derived from *tikto, to bear*. Vine suggests that the word gives prominence to the *fact* of birth, whereas *huios* stresses the *dignity and character* of the relationship. From this point Paul will use the word a further six times (vv. 17, 21; 9:7, 8 — 3 times).

VERSE 17

"And if children" — Note the addition of "if", a small word of great importance. See notes on v. 9. In the indicative mood, the word *ei* assumes the hypothesis as an actual fact (Bull.). Use of this small word indicates an interrogative comment: "Be certain, brethren, that you really are the children of God; not merely in name or in theory, but in reality; a relationship which must not only be established, but also consistently sustained; for without this qualification you will not be numbered among the heirs of God".

"Then heirs; heirs of God" — The noun *kleronomos* means *to receive a portion or lot*, especially of an inheritance (Vine). Sons and children are also heirs, inheriting from their father in due time. Similarly we also inherit the riches which accrue from faith (Eph. 3:8).

This same word occurs in Gal. 3:29 and other passages, in relation to the promise of an inheritance in the kingdom; e.g. Jas. 2:5. Note these important occurrences of the verb: Mat. 5:5; 25:34; Heb. 6:12; Rev. 21:7.

The phrase "of God" refers to His gracious gift of His own nature offered to those who honor and respect Yahweh as Father. Having become "heirs of God" (Gal. 4:7; Mat. 25:34) through baptism into Christ, we are brought into an intimate relationship with the hope of immortality, for the "great and precious promises (provide opportunity to be) partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption of the world through lust" (2Pet. 1:4).

"And joint-heirs with Christ" — The proof that we "live" (v. 13) is completed by this phrase. Paul now introduces Christ into the narrative. The divine inheritance is shared with the Lord Jesus Christ, the eminent Son of God; his redemption and exaltation to glory being evidence of that which is also offered to "his brethren" (Heb. 2:11) on the basis of his own sacrifice. But sharing his crown presupposes first sharing his cross (Phil. 3:8-10; 1Pet. 2:10-25). Those who reflect his qualities of life are those who receive his glory. Thus, in the parable of the Judgment Seat, the Shepherd-King gives to the approved the great joy of the future: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34).

"If so be that we suffer with him" — Throughout this verse the present tense is

used. The TCNT has: "for we share Christ's sufferings in order that we also share his glory". Heirship is based upon an identification with Christ's sufferings. It was herein that he demonstrated his filial love to His Father. Continually he refused the will of the flesh and upheld the wisdom of Yahweh, and this culminated in his public demonstration of devotion and total dedication by voluntarily permitting himself to be put to death by crucifixion; his willing submission being in complete harmony with the express commandment he had received from his Father (Jn. 10:18; Acts 2:23). In all this, the righteousness of God was acknowledged and manifested. There is a need for believers to "fellowship the sufferings of Christ" (1Pet. 2:19-25; Rom. 6:3; Phil. 3:10), as an essential element to salvation (Acts 14:22; 2Cor. 1:7; Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:24) and to ultimate glorification (2Tim. 2:12). This "suffering with Christ" means "putting to death" the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) in personal sacrifice and denial. The emblems of the "body and blood of the Lord", partaken of by disciples each week, are the outward token of such an inward conviction.

"That we may be also glorified together" — If united in Christ's sufferings, it is appropriate that we should anticipate a day of mutual glory, as the Bride whom he has selected, and who will share in his honor (Rev. 19:7). The purpose of suffering is to prepare a character for ultimate glorification. This will be based upon the exaltation of the Lord, as our suffering is upon his crucifixion. Thus, God has "highly exalted him" (Phil. 2:9), granted him "all power in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18), and conferred on him a "glorious body" of immortality (Phil. 3:21). Therefore, if we "suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2Tim. 2:12).

These words, which conclude this section, illustrate that there is a reason in suffering. God takes no pleasure in the pressures or sorrows which come upon His saints, but in His wisdom He knows that the trials of life are the means whereby faith is developed and matured. Faith is therefore not merely a matter of theoretical knowledge; it must be proven in circumstances of life to be real and active. All who suffer because they obey God's Word are sharing the sufferings of Christ. Their faith shines forth when they cheerfully and patiently endure.

Sufferings arise from two sources. The first is our own rebellious nature which prefers to ignore or repudiate the divine way. The second is a world which knows not God and has rejected His Word and goodness. Our desire to please Him requires that we trample underfoot the evil dictates of the flesh, as Christ crushed the head of the serpent to gain victory over sin. In our desire to triumph that Yahweh might be glorified in us, we cry unto Him: "Abba! Father!" that He might continue to look upon us "like as a father pitieth his children" (Psa. 103:13).

Peter urges us to remain totally committed to the cause of Christ, looking for the "glory that shall be revealed". He reminds us of the coming salvation which is "ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations *(trials)*; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1Pet. 1:5-7).

This important principle is now extended by the apostle Paul in the balance of this chapter, as he shows how the vision of future glory outweighs present distress, and provides us with the means to victory.

PART FOUR: GLORIFICATION
Chapter 8:18-39

God's Salvation Manifested

The Joy and Blessing of Being Sons of God in Character and Nature

No longer concerned with the conflicts of life and the warfare between flesh and spirit, evil and good, error and truth, the apostle now examines the joyous relationship of the saints with eternal principles of the Truth. It is the picture of a new creation developed through the faithful work of the Last Adam, in which paradise is restored, and harmony with Yahweh is enjoyed. Considering these wonderful truths, and anticipating the day of full glory, the apostle concludes with a superb ascription of praise and joy. Nothing can remove the hope that he has; nothing can change the desire for full association with the Father. Paul looks at all the issues of life, the conflicting feelings that might swirl about him through the weakness of the flesh. But out of it all, faith is victorious, and his hope is strengthened.

The Conclusion of the Final Section on Paul's Doctrinal Exposition

Rom. 8:18 commences the final subsection of the second division of the epistle (see Analysis on page 10). The first subsection sets forth the ***Condemnation*** *which is the common lot of all humanity in Adam (ch. 1:16–3:20); it is followed by the second sub-section that stresses the need and method of* ***Justification*** *(ch. 3:21–5:21); and then the third subsection on* ***Sanctification*** *(ch. 6:1–8:17), which is the practical manifestation of Justification. The final subsection sets forth the hope of* ***Glorification*** *in the Age to come when the process of salvation will be completed in immortality.*

The plan of Paul's exposition, therefore, follows the pattern of the tabernacle established by God for the spiritual education of His people (Gal. 3:24). The person desiring to worship Him, leaves the ***Profane Place*** *(Condemnation) which was found in the camp of Israel outside the tabernacle; and proceeds into the* ***Outer Court*** *(Justification) where sacrifices and washing were emphasized; into the* ***Holy Place*** *(Sanctification) in which mutual worship, fellowship and prayer were available; and beyond the dividing veil into the* ***Most Holy*** *(Glorification) itself — teaching the means by which God would be honored, and through which He would elevate His people. The true "way into the Holiest" was manifested in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:8), by which he was able to enter "into heaven itself (the glory of immortality), now to appear in the presence of God for us" (v. 24).*

Thus the process of salvation established in the ritual of the Law, was revealed in the work of Christ, and fulfilled in the glorification of the saints.

The Ultimate Manifestation of the Sons of God — vv. 18-25.

The education of the developing child of God through trials and difficulties (v. 15) is for his eventual elevation to full maturity and responsibility in the family. This proffers the granting of immortality to the faithful in Christ Jesus, that they might be "one with him" and the Father (Jn. 17:21) in both spirit and nature.

VERSE 18

"For I reckon" — The Gr. *logizomai* commences a new division of the subject, which is based on what Paul has already expounded. The word means *to count, compute, think or judge*, generally of a numerical calculation. The word is greatly favored by Paul in this epistle, for he uses it no less than nineteen times — eleven of those occurrences being in chapter 4. In all other epistles he uses the word a total of sixteen times. He is not saying what he "presumes" but what he has carefully "added up" or "computed" as a result of his knowledge and understanding of the divine revelation. He therefore "adds up" the facts observed in the life, sacrifice and subsequent exaltation of the Lord Jesus as a basis for the encouragement of disciples. By this means Paul will "compute" the value of personal sacrifice, suffering and discipline (chs. 6-7) and compare them with the great benefits of sonship with God. It is a matter of "logic" that the glory outshines the suffering, as the child under "tutors and governors" (Gal. 4:2) will ultimately aspire to adult privileges and benefits. See notes on "the spirit of adoption" in v. 15.

"That the sufferings of this present time" — An allusion to v. 17. There is no exemption from the "present sufferings" (NIV), as the young child cannot avoid the demands of the tutor appointed to teach him. The Greek word for "sufferings" is *pathema*, which has the idea of afflictions (so translated in 2Tim. 3:11; Heb. 10:32; 1Pet. 5:9, or "passions" in Gal. 5:24, DIAG.). It signifies *evil suffered or afflictions endured*. These evil sufferings may come from various sources. The flesh is a constant cause of distress (ch. 7:20) as the faithful disciple wars against desires that would deflect from the path of Truth. We wrestle against antagonists who proclaim error and ridicule our beliefs (Eph. 6:12). We oppose the social environment of the present-day Sodoms and Gomorrahs (2Tim. 2:4). Sometimes such conflict brings unpleasantness, difficulty, or material disadvantage.

Paul was able to "glory in tribulations" (Rom. 5:3) since he realised that the "end of Yahweh" brings great blessings (Jas. 5:11; Job. 42:12). We suffer evil today, but we do not despair on that account, for the joy that is before us is greater compen-

A Summary of the First Eight Chapters of Romans

Chs. 1-2: The failure of the Jew — condemned by the Law that bound him.

Ch. 3: Nevertheless, the Jew had "advantage" — yet failed to profit from it, not recognising the purpose of the Law to lead him to Christ.

Chs. 4-5: Abraham's "justification" preceeded the Law — his faith foresaw Christ. Condemnation also preceded the Law (ch. 5:16), which only confirmed its justness. So "acquittal" also preceded the Law by a faith which "saw" Christ.

Chs. 6-7: Then how should ***we*** react? Christ frees from bondage to the Law, and, as it were, takes men back to the Abrahamic state *as individuals*, bound either to sin, or released from that bondage, and subject now to another saving service of God (through Christ).

Ch. 8: These latter are no longer subject to the "condemnation" of the law of sin and death (ch. 5:16). There is acquittal for them through Christ (v. 2) if found faithful at his coming. The Law could not do this because of the weakness of its subjects; but God did it through Christ, and by His grace He has granted the benefits of faith to those who are Christ's through obedience.

— E. Wilson.

sation for all that is endured at present (cp. 2Cor. 4:7-10; Heb. 12:2).

In using the term "present time" Paul indicates that there is an end to these experiences. As nationally there is a "set time to favor Zion" (Psa. 102:13), so God has decreed a time when the saints will no longer suffer abuse, but will finally "enter into their rest" (Heb. 4:11).

"(Are) not worthy" — NIV: "are not worth comparing". The word for "worthy" is *axios*, which signifies *that of equal value or like worth*. When our thoughts are concentrated upon the hope of the gospel, and the future glory, we give little consideration to the vicissitudes of our present life. Such was the attitude of the worthies in former days. Moses recognised the contrast between the enjoyment of "sin for a season" and "the recompense of the reward", and esteemed the reproach of Christ as *greater riches* than all Egypt's wealth (Heb. 11:26). Paul considered the benefits of this life as being "refuse" compared with the glories of the future (Phil. 3:8). There is little value in continually contemplating what can be obtained from this age; it is not of "equal value" (*axios*), nor of real weight compared with the promise of immortality.

"(To be compared) with the glory" — The word "glory" is from the Gr. *doxa*, which is usually used to express the divine glory. Paul speaks of the glory of divine nature (2Pet. 1:4); the honor of being king-priest representatives in the future age (Rev. 5:9-10).

"Which shall be revealed in us" — The Greek word *apokalupto*, means *to be revealed; manifested; to take off the cover*. During this present age, the glory remains hidden, and our developing characters are also largely hidden because the world has no interest in recognising or acknowledging the principles of godliness. Thus this "treasure" is hidden in "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2Cor. 4:7).

Thus, whilst we have the "spirit of sonship" now (v. 15), the full manifestation of it is yet future (v. 23). The day is imminent when *the glory* will be seen — and it will be revealed *in us!* For we will receive the priceless gift of divine nature — the Father's physical perfection — having manifested His character mentally and morally in these days of personal development. The glory that will be revealed is eternal and limitless (2Cor. 4:17) in contrast with our present feeble efforts to manifest Yahweh on earth.

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

The literal expression of this verse is: "which is about to be revealed in us". Paul reminds his readers that the hope of the gospel must burn brightly within them with such a fervor that they can anticipate the glory to be manifested at any time — that, at any moment, we may be summoned into the presence of our glorious king. Then, if we have been living in accordance with the spirit of the Truth, "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1Jn. 3:2).

VERSE 19

"For the earnest expectation" — The Greek word is *apokaradokia*, from *apo*, "away", *kara*, "the head" and *dokeo*, "to watch". The word thus signifies a watching with the head erect and outstretched, an earnest waiting in suspense, an eager anticipation. The Century Bible gives the meaning as "waiting with head outstretched and turned away from all else". This is the attitude of those who really "suffer with Christ" (v. 17), ardently watching for signs of his return, and craning forward towards the Kingdom with eyes firmly fixed on the future, waiting for their hope to become a reality. Paul said that a crown of righteousness would be given to those who "love his appearing" (2Tim. 4:8), and who are completely absorbed in anticipation of the Master's

coming. The spirit of the Song of Solomon is that of a bride earnestly longing for the return of her bridegroom (ch. 3:2).

"Of the creature" — The Greek word *ktisis* is more correctly rendered "creation" (as in most versions), from a root meaning *to create, to found*. That this word embraces the whole of creation is shown in v. 22. The whole creation desires a better state than that presently experienced, in which sin and death reign supreme (Rom. 5:12), and groans under existing conditions. There is no hope for a world facing destruction by its own hands (cp. Rev. 11:18, "destroy the earth"). As all nature was subjected to the curse, so all nature looks for alleviation of distresses under which it now labors. The animals prey upon each other, and the farmer labors to destroy the weeds that choke his land. All creation thus seeks some better thing, but, unfortunately, most people ignore the only possible solution: and that is the "manifestation of the sons of God". Then the Edenic curse will be minimised (Isa. 35:2,10), and eventually removed entirely (Rev. 21:4). But, in fact, until that time arrives the "groaning of creation continues".

Although "all creation" awaits that day of divine glory, the apostle has specifically in view the world of mankind; for the phrase "the whole creation" (Rom. 8:22) is rendered "*every* creature" in Mark 16:15 and Col. 1:23, being limited to those to whom the apostles preached the Word.

The same word is found in vv. 20, 21, 39, and is to be understood as "creation".

"Waiteth" — The Gr. *apekdechomai*, signifies, *to eagerly expect* (Diag.: "looks for"). Thus is emphasized the urgent need of creation: "The earnest expectation *(apokaradokia)* of creation eagerly expects *(apekdechomai)*..." It does not experience the balance and contentment which is desirable. This is because of sin and the effect it has produced, which has touched the entire earthly creation.

The same word is in vv. 23, 25.

"For the manifestation of the sons of God" — Referring to the full development of the believers. We become the sons of God by embracing the Truth — and by patiently walking in the ways of God in anticipation of the promises. However, we have not yet been apocalypsed to the world as such. But in that day we will be revealed in our exalted and mature state of spiritual and physical perfection, by a resurrection to glory. This was the case with the Lord Jesus (ch. 1:4), who was brought from the dead by "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20), and "being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all who should obey him" (ch. 5:9). The manifestation of the sons of God will be seen when they are also glorified with immortality. Meanwhile, however, it is important that the qualities of true sonship be revealed by the development of character and the implementation of godly ways. To this end John explains: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1Jn. 3:2-3). In developing the character of a son of God, the believer must first become mentally and morally "pure" (by the acceptance of the Word of Life and through forgiveness of sins), in the knowledge that, by this means, a change to divine nature may be granted through the goodness and mercy of Yahweh (Eph. 2:8).

When the time for the manifestation of the sons of God arrives (the millennial Age: 1Cor. 1:7; 2Thes. 3:5; Gal. 5:5; 1Thes. 1:10), the whole world will benefit by the benevolent rule of Christ.

VERSE 20

"For the creature was made subject to vanity" — The word "subject", from the Gr. *hupotasso*, signifies *to arrange under* (from *hupo, under*, and *tasso, to arrange*): thus: *to be placed into such a state; to be brought under its control*. In apostolic times it was primarily a military term to describe a trooper who knows no freedom from the authority imposed upon him by his superiors. Thus, the creation

now "ranks under" the effects of sin, and is in subjection to that condition. The inevitable result is "vanity" (emptiness): that which produces no worthy result.

The Diaglott has: "For the creation was made subject to frailty". The Greek word for "vanity" is *mataiotes*, signifying *emptiness* (i.e., as to results). The original creation was designed to reflect to the glory of God, but the transgression of Adam and Eve inhibited that project. Sin entered, and the divine punishment that was pronounced brought a change in conditions upon the earth. The ground was cursed, so that thorns and thistles became prolific in growth. Animal creation was cursed, the serpent more so than all other creatures of the field, so that violence became a characteristic of beasts as they sought to dominate each other. Humanity was cursed, for death began to work in the nature of Adam and Eve, and remained to afflict all their posterity.

Thus in all areas of creation, an "emptiness" was experienced, for the divine purpose had been impeded by sin. With the presence of sin and death it was impossible to fully "fill the earth with Yahweh's glory" (Num. 14:21), and therefore Paul's statement that the "creation was made subject to vanity" emphasizes that, without the redemptive work of God, it will fail to produce the results originally designed.

"Not willingly" — The fact that Paul uses the words "was made subject..." emphasises that this "subjection" was a divinely pronounced sentence. Hence, "not by its own choice" (TCNT) — not voluntarily, nor as a matter of choice. It came through the divine edict against sin. As a result of the first transgression, humanity was condemned to a sin-prone, dying condition. That mortal condition has passed upon all mankind, although we are not held personally responsible for it. We did not "willingly" select our physical condition, although we must bear with it in our endeavours to honor the authority and purpose of God.

But subsequently, mankind only too willingly became vain in mind and wicked in action (Rom. 1:21). Instead of challenging the presence of sin, by filling their minds with the power of the Spirit-Word, their minds became emptied of spiritual principles, and thus in a condition of "vanity" (emptiness). This is illustrated in the Lord's parable of the man who was cured of mental aberration. However, neglecting to refill it with the divine mind (Phil. 2:5), he found himself swamped with "seven wicked spirits": complete fleshliness (Mat. 12:45). He remained in this condition of spiritual "vanity". Thus, apart from hope in God, and responding to His will,

Awaiting the Day of Joy

The whole creation groans and travails in pain. Suffering is the appointed lot, but in the light of the purpose of God, that suffering is seen to be travail — a birth pang which will bring forth a new order. The believers, even those who had spirit-gifts, share the common lot and groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of "our body". The spirit-gifts are called the "firstfruits". When Israel was in the wilderness, the spies brought to them the firstfruits of the land of Canaan, but a period of waiting followed before they entered into the land. And the gifts of the spirit were similarly firstfruits. In the first century many tasted of the powers of the age to come; now there is a time of waiting; and the harvest will be received with the entrance upon the inheritance. This will coincide with the redemption of "our body" — not "our bodies", though the change of physical nature is involved, but the "body" of which Christ is the "head". "The manifestation of the sons of God" (v. 19), "the glory of the children of God" (v. 21), and "the redemption of our body" are but different descriptions of the grand development to be brought about at the time of the dead when God shall give rewards unto His servants. For this we "wait", it is as yet a matter of hope, not yet possessed, but we "with patience wait for it". — ***J. Carter,*** *Romans.*

mankind faces a future of "vanity": emptiness and worthlessness. It is only in the performance of the divine will, and in praising Yahweh, that there is any value to life. This was aptly expressed by Brother Thomas when he declared: "men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God manifestation, not human salvation, was the grand purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but it was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone Himself on the earth, and in so doing, to develop a divine family from among men, every one of whom shall be spirit because born of the Spirit; and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood" (*Herald of the Kingdom*, April 1858, p. 84).

"But by reason of Him who hath subjected (the same)" — "By reason" is from the Gr., *dia,* with the accusative, "denoting the ground or reason of the action". In subjecting the creation to the ***effects*** of sin God was not only discharging a punishment upon humanity: He had an end in view that would eventually lead to the completion of His purpose. Whilst God punished, He also gave hope.

The Diaglott has: "But by Him who placed it under". God appointed His people to this lower condition for their good. The divine purpose of developing a people that manifested a godly character was to be despite the fall of Adam. By means of the curse placed upon all creation "not willingly", Yahweh was able to exalt His own qualities of grace, mercy and hope. There was sound wisdom in all that was done, and in the narrative of the Adamic transgression God expresses the cause of His action: "Because thou hast done this" (Gen. 3:14), "because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife... cursed is the ground *for thy sake*" (v. 17). God was not moved by unreasonable anger in punishing man, but by wisdom, and all that He did was for the benefit and ultimate salvation of His creation.

At the same time He punished, He also promised. So with the condemnation of Genesis 3, there is given the hope of life in that the "seed of the woman" will ultimately crush "the head" of the serpent. Men moved by such a revelation are able to say with Solomon: "He hath made everything beautiful in His time; also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Ecc. 3:11). In this quotation the words "beautiful in His time" are better rendered: "appropriate to its season". With that in view, the present creation, with all its striving and labor, is the best thing for man under the existing circumstances of sin and death; it is "appropriate to its season", for it reminds man of his deficiencies, and directs him to the means by which these might be overcome. Solomon teaches that God hath "set the world in their heart", but the word "world" is *olahm*, the *hidden period*. God has set this before man as a glorious hope, a wonderful vision that enables him to see beyond the vanity of present existence: "So that no man can find out the work of God". Young renders the word "so" as "without"; thus, without this hope of eternity a person cannot understand the work of God. How true are these words! Paul states this truth in the verse before us. We can therefore paraphrase Solomon's words: "God has made everything appropriate to its season; but in addition He has set the hope of eternity before men as something to strive towards; and without understanding this, a person cannot appreciate His true purpose".

"In hope" — If the creation, as existing at present, was all we could ever expect it to be, there would be no necessity for the creation to have "hope" of something better in the future. But the divine purpose is with the object of achieving a better future (cp. Isa. 51:3; 55:13; Ezek. 36:35; Amos 9:13). Purified from the curse of mortality, mankind will ultimately rejoice in the goodness of God for eternity. It was the "joy set before" Christ that enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb. 12:2); and that

same vision of hope must stimulate us also. We are thus "saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24), and can anticipate the time when Yahweh's glory will overspread the earth (Hab. 2:14). In this, the believer will see beyond the present circumstances to the hope set before us.

VERSE 21

"Because the creature itself also shall" — i.e., the creation (as in v. 20). The Diaglott continues the thought from the previous verse: "In hope that even the creation itself will be emancipated from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God". The hope of ultimate salvation from its lower condition is part of the desire of creation: it seeks to better its position, but cannot do so outside of the plan and purpose of Yahweh.

"Be delivered from the bondage of corruption" — This is the ultimate purpose of God. Young's Literal has: "shall be set free from the servitude of corruption". This includes all aspects of our mortal condition: physical and moral. Paul has already explained the inhibiting effects of mortality on the servant of God, and now puts the principle of deliverance before his reader. "Corruption" is from the Greek *phthora*, "the bringing into a worse state", or "the withdrawal of the powers by which life and activity are maintained". It is applied to both *[1]* physical decay (1Cor. 15:42, 50; 2Pet. 2:12), and *[2]* moral degeneracy (2Pet. 1:4; 2:19). We are bound to a body which is corrupting, and a

A Scheme Marked with Great Wisdom

The world is a wilderness in which brambles tear the feet of the pilgrim, but this is not always to be so. God never intended that the fine sensibilities which appertain to the creature formed after the type of the Elohim should forever be violated. It is no plan of His that hearts shall always be torn and souls always withered by the hot breath of the desert. It was never intended that the world should always be the scene of that "inhumanity to man" which "makes countless thousands mourn", or that the meek of the earth, seeking after God, should always go thirsting for comfort never to be found. Such a state of things is of itself the best proof that it is abnormal. The very spectacle of man everywhere *seeking, seeking, seeking,* and never finding, is a proof of something out of joint. With the Scriptures in our hands we see what it is; with the Scriptures out of our hands we cannot account for it; for, away from the source of information, there is no explanation of the mystery that the principal work of nature should be the greatest failure. The Scriptures explain everything. The Almighty, ever-living One, who always has been, and whose wisdom, and power, and goodness, and justice are above the reach of our intellects, though not beyond the flight of our faith, is working out, on this little part of His unlimited dominion, a scheme or purpose marked with great wisdom, and pregnant with great goodness, and joy, and glory, to all connected with that purpose in its ultimate form. We see Adam placed in the Garden of Eden, under the law of obedience. We see him disobedient, and we see and feel the consequence. God exiled man from His society and friendship. He drove him out to do for himself, and the race is now in that driven-off state. We are not under the divine guardianship Adam enjoyed. We are outside of the state represented by the literal Garden of Eden. We are not in communion with the Almighty. We are not living under His shadow. Human society is not constituted in harmony with His deep, eternal and perfect laws. But this will soon be changed, for the day of Christ, the second Adam, is about to dawn! — ***R.Roberts.***

nature which tends towards evil.

Notice the contrasts introduced in this verse. Law, bondage, corruption and fear all speak of the old way of life which has been crucified in Christ. But grace, liberty, life, love and hope speak of the new way of life in Christ.

"Into the glorious liberty of the children of God" — The ultimate purpose of God with His creation, which will be completed at the end of the millennium when mortality and its effects will be finally removed for ever.

The Diaglott has "...into the freedom of the glory of the children of God". They will be made totally free when released from the shackles of sin and mortality. The day of their glory is still to come (v. 17). This is a work which only God can perform, and Paul's statement is a further reminder of two vital truths: The first is that no man — apart only from the Son of God — can manifest perfect obedience to the Truth, so that he is in no need of a redeemer. Therefore, the sons and daughters of God must be "delivered... ***into*** the glorious liberty" which only Yahweh is able to provide. The second aspect of truth apparent in this expression is that it is directed at the Judaisers. Paul again reminds them that they, like the rest of mankind, were dependent upon the mercy and righteousness of God to find freedom from sin and death; a state into which they could never pass upon the basis of their own personal self-merit.

Paul teaches that there will be a partial lifting of the curse at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the manifestation of the "sons" (Gr. *teknon, a child* from the fact of its birth; thus one who is related to Yahweh as Father, by whose power this change will occur) of God through immortality. See Isa. 11:9; 65:25, which can be understood both literally and figuratively.

"Liberty" (Gr. *eleutheria*) suggests complete freedom to go where one wills. The change to divine nature will provide the means for the manifestation of the divine qualities in spirit-flesh without the restrictions we presently experience. No longer will there be the constant challenge of the flesh to the practising of the wisdom of God (cp. Rom. 7:21).

VERSE 22

"For we know" — Gr. *oidamen*, to perceive by understanding. Paul makes further observations based upon the previous premise. This brief statement carries an implied exhortation: there is no reason why we should not correctly understand this basic element of the Truth. The doctrines of the Atonement and God-manifestation are set forth in scripture, and every member of Christ's ecclesia should comprehend the truth concerning these matters. If we are found in a state of ignorance at Christ's coming, we have only to blame ourselves!

"That the whole creation" — Note the mg: "every creature". The Greek for "whole creation" *(ktisis)* is similar to *ktisei* which occurs in Mk. 16:15, where the word is rendered "preach the gospel to *every creature*". The entire creation, bearing the effects of sin and of man's appalling treatment in misusing God's handiwork, is joined in sorrow and anguish, enslaved to the forces of corruption until the dawn of the New Messianic Age.

Thus, the Adamic condemnation in the beginning affected mankind with mortality, brought disharmony, violence and bloodshed among the animal world, whilst the earth brought forth weeds and thistles in abundance. Everything is in a condition of pain and disorder, in groaning and death. Every creature is subjected to servitude, anguish, vanity and death. There are no exceptions, and even when the Son of God was born into this condition of things, he possessed the same frail nature as his brethren (Heb. 2:15).

"Groaneth and travaileth in pain" — This describes the pangs of childbirth, for the present creation is to give rise to a newness of life in the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:15-16). The word "groaneth" (Gr. *sustenazo*, from *sun:* "with", and *stenazo:* "to grieve") means *to groan together and sigh as of persons joined in distress.* It depicts the general condition of things,

knowing that the present is unsatisfactory. All are united in a condition of sorrow; all experience the common grief of death. Though most people are today ignorant of the reason for the vanity of life, the world will then learn of the divine purpose from the teachings of the saints during the millennium (Isa. 60:2; 66:12). The phrase "travaileth in pain together" is from the Greek *sunodino*, signifying *to be in travail together*, and indicates the extreme pain of parturition; the intense agony of suffering. The word is used of the pangs of childbirth (note 1Thes. 5:3, where is found the word *odin*, "travail"). Here the word *sun* ("with") is added to indicate a union of many in the same pain. But there is an end in sight, for the era of the birth will manifest the redemption of the saints and introduce a new order of things.

"Until now" — The Gr. *akri* means *continually, fixing the attention on the whole duration up to a certain time, but leaving the future continuance undetermined* (Bullinger). Therefore, Paul is not saying that the "groaning and travailing" was then coming to an end in his time; but rather urged his readers to consider that it had continued unabated right to that moment, as they read his words. It was true of his time; it is equally true of the times since he wrote. The continuance of this universal condition of sin and death will be broken at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of immortality upon the earth seen in himself and his saints. Since we do not yet see that glad sight, the phrase Paul uses reveals that the birth of the new order has not yet occurred, and therefore the birth pangs have not ceased, and our hope has not been quenched. We must still feel the effects of our nature; and earnestly hope for redemption yet to come.

VERSE 23

"And not only (they)" — There is no word for "they" in the Greek. The Diaglott has "Not only it", thus creation in general — but especially those who are without hope, and do not understand the reason for the condition of nature.

"But ourselves also" — Paul compares the creation in darkness with ourselves — Christ's brethren and sisters — who are conscious of weakness, and look earnestly for release from mortality, and the manifestation as Sons, at the day of resurrection and glorification.

"Which have the firstfruits of the Spirit" — This describes the transforming power of the Spirit-Word in changing the character of men and women; a transformation which distinguishes true disciples of Christ from other men. The TCNT has: "though possessing, in the spirit, an earnest of the future". The Word enables us to enjoy "the firstfruits of the Spirit" by convincing us of the grand divine purpose whereby we are able to obtain "divine nature" (2Pet. 1:4), and receive the "power of an endless life", becoming ultimately the firstfruits of salvation. These "firstfruits of the spirit" will be introduced to the world at the commencement of the millennium, thus constituting "the firstfruits" of the resurrection, being born of Spirit-nature (Rev. 14:4; 20:4-5), having been conceived by the Spirit-Word of Truth (1Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18).

"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves" — Even though we understand the purpose of God, and enjoy fellowship with Him, we are still subject to sin through the nature we bear. Being "in" Christ does not alleviate that state, but should rather sharpen our perception concerning our true physical state with all its shortcomings and limitations. Rather than resenting this condition, we should be humbled by a consciousness of "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12:1).

Use of the term "within ourselves (or, inwardly)" is with the dative, plural, and indicates that we groan "*to* ourselves" or "*for* ourselves", thereby signifying that we comprehend our true state. Paul's implied meaning is that we should be ever mindful of the absolute necessity for the redemption of our *bodies*. Physically, we are still of Adamic nature. The Christ-like disposition requires that we continue to long intensely to be delivered from this state, to become perfected with the Lord.

The Reason for Suffering

The Scriptural principle is that suffering must precede glory: for it is through "much pressure" *(thlipsis)* that we "must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Such suffering results in the subduing of the evil propensities of the flesh, and the sacrificing of Self that we might submit to the will and work of God. The word rendered "travaileth" in Rom. 8:22 gives impetus to the "hope" referred to in verse 20. It is the word *sunodino*, which means "to travail in childbirth, together". It is a beautiful expression, because Paul states that the present pain and suffering will ultimately result in a ***new birth!*** That is: the dawning of the Kingdom Age. The Lord used similar language when describing the reality of our hope: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (Jn. 16:21). All of creation is involved in the need for a "new" creation. The present "pangs" will continue until the time of the new birth, when there will be a "*new* heavens and earth wherein *dwelleth righteousness*" (2Pet. 3:13; cp. Mat. 19:28; Acts 3:20-21). A similar pronouncement will be made at the end of the millennium: "Behold! I make all things *new!*" (Rev. 21:5). And that is the ultimate goal towards which the creation is steadily (though largely unknowingly) moving. "Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (Psa. 145:3). — *J. Ullman.*

When we experience the change to divine nature, we will be free from the limitations and domination of flesh. The word "groan" (*stenazo;* compare v. 22), signifies *to sigh as in distress*. The expression indicates strong desire: the deep anguish of the heart for relief. The bondage of the flesh is a physical matter, and therefore continues even though one has embraced Christ.

Some teach differently from Paul, claiming that the condemnation in Adam is a moral matter, or one only of relationship; but here Paul stresses the physical aspect of being "in Adam". We continue "in Adam" physically, though we may also be "in Christ" spiritually, and will continue to be so until changed into divine nature at the coming of Christ. To be "in Adam" relates not only to the condition of all who are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them" (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21), but also to our physical condition of mortality, with all its weaknesses and ills. Being in that condition we lament the frail, dying and sin-prone "body-of-Adam". Earlier in the epistle, Paul described his struggle against the flesh (Rom. 7:15-21) referring to himself as a "wretched man" (v. 24). He groaned, as do we, because of the present "vile body" which afflicts us with constant frailty and sin.

"Waiting" — Gr. *apekdechomai*, indicating *to expect eagerly, to look longingly for*. The word is used in vv. 19, 25, and in Phil. 3:20, "from whence also *we look for* the Saviour"; in Heb. 9:28, "unto them that *look for* him shall he appear the second time". The word suggests our intense desire for alleviation of the present distress, and the manifestation of a future benefit. It signifies to wait for a long time, if need be; but to wait *ardently*. It represents the state of mind manifested by true sons and daughters of Yahweh. "Thy Memorial Name is the *desire* of our soul" (Isa. 26:8 RSV). David was similarly minded: "This is *all* my salvation and *all my desire*" (2Sam. 23:5). "He will fulfil the *desire* of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Psa. 145:19). In view of the certainty of our "hope" we must "with patience, *wait* for it" (v. 25). Our groaning, therefore, represents not only the present pressures and sufferings, but also our fervent yearning for the relief and glory that is to come.

"For the adoption" — This is still future; thus the word should not be used in the current sense of transferring from one family to another. There is no article in the Greek; hence, "waiting for sonship"

(DIAG.). The Greek word means the status of true sonship, to bring to full maturity. Rotherham has: "sonship ardently waiting, the redeeming of our body". See notes on v. 15 where Paul declares that we have "*received* the *spirit* of sonship", but now states that we are "*waiting* for the sonship". This is no contradiction, for Paul simply means that we now await the completion of the process: the change to divine nature at the coming of the Lord. We have the "*spirit* of adoption" now in the relationship created through the baptismal birth which produces a mental and moral likeness to the Father, but the manifestation of fully matured sonship will come when we are given divine nature at Christ's judgment seat. This will make our sonship complete, as seen first when Jesus was declared to be "the Son of God... by the resurrection from the dead" (ch. 1:4).

"(To wit), the redemption of our body" — This verse is an extension of the idea expressed in ch. 7:24, where Paul asked: "Who shall *deliver* me from the body of this death?" He speaks now of the physical change which will transform the sons of God into beings of divine nature, when the Lord Jesus shall "fashion anew *the body of our humiliation*, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:21, RV). The physical change at Christ's coming will occasion the complete recovery of the body from death and corruption; our bodies will be released from the shackles of sin and death, weakness and corruption. Then, the identities of all true sons and daughters of God will be revealed to an astonished world.

The example is seen in the Lord Jesus, whose resurrection to glory made his sonship a matter beyond dispute (Rom. 1:4). Christ spoke of this redemption (Lk. 21:28), and Paul described it as a release from "this body of death" (Rom. 7:24, DIAG.) by a change to immortality (1Cor. 15:51). This will mean the end to all our suffering, our groaning, our waiting; for the time of glorification will have come. The redemption of all true saints will then be a reality.

Paul uses the term "our (plural) body (singular)", thus referring to the collective ecclesia, which is "the body of Christ" (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18, 24; Rom. 12:4-5) and which shall be glorified as the Lamb's wife at his appearance (1Jn. 3:2; Rev. 14:4; 19:7-8) -- each individual member possessing divine nature (2Pet. 1:4). Brother Carter comments: "In the first century many tasted of the powers of the age to come; now there is a time of waiting; and the harvest will be received with the entrance upon the inheritance. This will coincide with the redemption of 'our body' — not merely 'our bodies', though the change of physical nature is involved, but the 'body' of which Christ is the 'head'. 'The manifestation of the sons of God' (v. 19); the 'glory of the children of God' (v. 21), and 'the redemption of our body' are but different descriptions of the grand development to be brought about at the time of the dead when God shall give rewards unto His servants. For this we 'wait'; it is as yet a matter of hope, not yet possessed, but we 'with patience wait for it'."

VERSE 24

"For we are saved by hope" — The Diaglott has: "We were saved by ***the*** hope", referring to a particular and defined hope, and not just hope as a general principle. It is a "saving hope" that is required, described by Paul as "***the*** hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). Merely hoping for something (but without understanding the terms of that hope, as is the attitude of many religious people) is unavailing; such an attitude, whilst commendable, does not secure salvation.

Use of the definite article, ***"the"***, indicates that there is only one "hope" by which we might be saved; which means that we must clearly understand *the* Truth before we can scripturally embrace the one hope of the gospel. Apart from *the* hope, we are *without* hope (Eph. 2:12). "If *in this life only* we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1Cor. 15:19).

The Greek word *elpis* is a joyous anticipation of good with confidence, and

must be based upon an understanding of that in which one might hope. Paul carefully distinguishes between "faith" and "hope". Hope is an extension of faith, and can only be produced through faith.

In stating that "we are saved by the hope" Paul does not teach that salvation is guaranteed, and that we do not need to concern ourselves any further about preparating for the Judgment Seat of Christ. It shows, however, that we have been "saved" from the inevitable eternal fate of all who remain in the constitution of Adam, and set on a path which may bring us to eternal redemption. Our hope is not yet a reality; it is not in our possession, but it still became very real and operative when we were baptised. Hope is an expectation of good things to come; and therefore implies the absence of those good things whilst "hope" is still operative. Hope and sight are inconsistent. For the present our faith gives power to our hope; and our hope provides evidence of our faith.

It was this verse that changed Brother Thomas' early concept of truth. Before he studied the implications of this statement, he felt that such subjects as the mortality of man, the return of Christ, the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth, etc., whilst true beyond all doubt, did not constitute essential and saving truth, and that a person believing on Jesus Christ, and yet embracing certain errors on these matters, could be saved. However he discovered from this verse that salvation is inexorably bound up in a full and correct hope. The Greek has the definite article: "saved by ***the*** hope": that is, the Hope of Israel, *Elpis Israel* (Acts 28:20). So Brother Thomas came to realise that unless a person wholeheartedly accepted the hope of Israel and all that is involved, he was without hope of salvation. This discovery led him to sever his connections with the Campbellites and others, and lay the foundation of the Christadelphian community.

"But a hope that is seen, is not a hope" — In the previous phrase Paul spoke about *the* singular hope of the gospel; now he generalises on the principle of "*a* hope". Hope has reference to that which is at present unseen, but which will give benefit and joy. Our promised inheritance still remains out of sight; it remains a hope to be sought.

Paul expresses a generalisation, and uses the phrase "*a* hope" rather than "*the* hope" as in his previous statement. The joy anticipated gives strength to overcome the trials that are meanwhile experienced (cp. Heb. 12:2). But, of course, when the object of that hope appears, then its anticipation has been realised, and salvation becomes a fact.

The Greek word "seen" is *blepo, to behold, perceive.* Vine says that "it especially stresses the thought of the person who sees". So a person who has reached the object of his hope no longer sees it as something vital to achieve. Therefore we must maintain our keen expectation of that which is yet to come. Paul says that faith enabled the worthies to "see (the promises) afar off, and were persuaded of them"; he urges us to "love the appearing" of the Lord (2Tim. 4:8). That keen desire must continue until the "hope is seen" in reality.

"For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" — Paul states the obvious to emphasize the need for the patient endurance that he will expound in the next verse.

A Redeemer for This Body

How consoling and cheering is it, then, amid all the evils of the present state, that God hath found a ransom, who is willing and able to deliver us from the power of the grave; and not only so, but that "at the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:17-25), when he shall appear in power and great glory, "*we shall be like him;* because we shall see him as he is" (1Jn. 3:2). Then will the saints be "changed into the same image from glory", not only a matter of hope, "into glory" as seen and actually possessed, "even as the Lord" himself was changed, when he became "the spirit-giving-life", or "a quickening spirit". — ***J. Thomas.***

VERSE 25

"But if we hope for that we see not" — i.e., its reality is not revealed. We see the kingdom in vision (Jn. 3:3), but only "through a glass darkly, but then *[when the kingdom appears]* face to face" (1Cor. 13:12). The word hope (Gr. *elpis*) implies a strong desire and a fervent expectation for the object of that hope. Therefore we have been termed "heirs of salvation" (v. 17; cp. Heb. 1:14), because we have been granted a genuine "hope", though, as yet, it remains out of sight.

"(Then) do we with patience" — Gr. *di hupomones*, signifies *an endurance* (from *hupo*, under; and *meno*, to abide). It speaks of the ability to maintain a course of life irrespective of the trials and pressures that might challenge from every side. The word does not suggest a passive inactivity or disinterest, but an earnest and active endurance of whatever faces the believer. The phrase could be expressed: "though bearing up under the weight of trial". Coneybeare and Howson render it: "we steadfastly endure the present, and long earnestly for the future" — describing the depth of faith and dedication of all who will inherit the kingdom. Despite the difficulties of life, if faith and hope burn brightly in our mind, we will continue to persevere, patiently awaiting the end of our probation

Job is a remarkable example of patience (Jas. 5:11). See further notes on Rom. 5:3.

"Wait for it" — Gr. *apekdechomai*, to *wait or expect eagerly*. Those possessing such "hope" are keen for its fulfilment. There is an ardent and conscious waiting, for with such a hope before them, true saints will await the realisation of their hope with fortitude. Our present sufferings are "but for a moment" while "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Cor 4:17-18). See notes on ch. 2:7; 5:3-4. Compare 2Thes. 3:5; Jas. 1:3; Rev. 2:2.

It is at this point that Paul reminds his readers of the gracious assistance of the Spirit-Word when believed and practised, in all our infirmities and in the offering of our prayers (Rom. 8:26), in view of the need to await the promise to come.

What Christ Is, We Can Become — vv. 26-30.

Having indicated the degradation that has come upon creation through the original transgression of Adam, Paul shows that there is a means of redemption. Salvation is found in "hope" (v. 24). But hope of what? The desired redemption through the Seed of Promise (Gen. 3:15) is only achieved through "bruising" and "crushing" the power of sin, and this has been openly demonstrated in the life and sacrifice of the Lord. Therefore his resurrection to immortality constitutes the pattern for our own salvation. But whereas he was perfectly obedient and thereby the grave could not hold him, we cannot achieve the perfect standard of faithful adherence to God's Truth seen in him. Nevertheless, by the power of the Truth we are positively assisted to reach forward to the ultimate glorification offered by Almighty God.

VERSE 26

"Likewise" — The preceding verses emphasize the sufferings and the hope needed in this arena of "groaning and travailing in pain" (v. 22). Now Paul draws attention to our acknowledgement of the reasons for our infirmities, and directs us to the means of strength and direction in such a situation. As the whole creation groans for deliverance, as we inwardly grown awaiting the sonship of divine nature, so the Spirit-Word is at one, in sympathy with us, if our disposition and motives are in harmony with Yahweh and His purpose.

"The Spirit" — Not the personal gift of the Holy Spirit power, but the principles of the Truth believed (see notes vv. 13-14). When the teachings of the scriptures (Jn. 6:63) lodge firmly in the heart through studying and embracing them, the disciple is in "possession of the spirit", for "the sword of the spirit is the Word of

God" (Eph. 6:17). In these days of affluence and pressure of time, this tremendous power is sometimes overlooked, and therefore Paul expounds upon its influence to emphasize our own personal infirmities.

"Also helpeth" — Like a companion along the way, who sees the weaknesses and injuries to a fellow-traveller. The Greek word *sunantilambano* signifies *to take hold with, at the side for assistance* (Vine). It is usually applied to those who unite in supporting or carrying a burden. The Truth is able to do this by strengthening conviction, even though a person finds himself inflicted with and overcome by transgression. So David expressed: "cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit" (Psa. 51:11-12)

Because of human fallibility and uncertainty, we are not always able, of our own volition, to correctly analyse situations and to pray intelligently concerning them. The reading of the Word, particularly those parts of scripture where examples of faithful prayer are given, often provides sufficient guidance to stimulate our minds for prayer. A more careful study of the Word in regard to our special needs will prove even more helpful.

The influence of the Word within a disciple will cause that desire to help in another's "infirmity", as Paul exhorted: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and *so fulfil the law of Christ*" (Gal. 6:2).

"Our infirmities" — Gr. *asthencia*, meaning *want of strength; weakness; frailty; disease*. The power of the Truth believed, enables us to derive strength to overcome our natural inability to approach God aright. The word emphasizes the root cause of our failures: the "weakness of the flesh" (ch. 8:3) found in our human nature.

The word is used in an almost identical sense in Heb. 11:34, where Paul says that "out of *weakness*" many "were *made* strong" — and these were "made" strong through faith, which comes only through the Spirit-Word (Rom. 10:17). The only other occurrence of this word in Romans is in ch. 6:19.

"For we know not what we should pray for" — The definite article should be appended to the word "what" according to the literal Greek text rendering in the Diaglott: "*the* for *what* we should pray as it behooves, not we know". We are often unaware of "*the* what" thing is our actual need in the circumstances of life. Therefore, for what should we actually pray? We may face difficult circumstances; should we seek to be relieved of them, or to be strengthened in them? Is God testing our fidelity, or helping us develop qualities of steadfastness that please Him? Is it to our eternal benefit to be put under greater trial, or will we be advantaged by its removal? We cannot answer appropriately, since we cannot perceive every aspect of our condition. In this regard, our knowledge of the divine purpose is limited, and when under the stress of trial, or perplexed with weakness, distress and bewilderment at many of the frustrations which face us, we are often at a loss as to what is best, both for ourselves and in the wisdom of Yahweh. Job was perplexed at his difficult circumstances, and sought for some answers: "O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor!" (ch. 16:21). Paul besought the Lord thrice that his "thorn in the flesh" should be removed, but this was not granted (2Cor. 12:7-8). Instead, he was told: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness". What we sometimes imagine are points of strength, might really be aspects of weakness. The example of the Lord should lead us. At a moment of great stress he prayed: "Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: But for this cause came I to this hour! Father, *glorify Thy Name*..." (Jn. 12:27). The natural mind is not attuned to the things of the spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God... because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor. 2:14). However, even with an understanding of the Truth we are not always aware of our real strength (which we only develop through the influence of the Word), or of our dangerous weaknesses.

"The Spirit" — Not the Miraculous Power of the Holy Spirit, but the Power of the Word: ch. 8:26

To this verse, the word for "spirit" (pneuma) has occurred twenty times in the chapter. The word occurs a further three times to the end of the chapter — and in none of these 23 occurrences does it refer to miraculous Spirit-Power. Otherwise, it would be illogical to apply the teachings of this chapter to any generation beyond the first century.

Here is a "spirit" which "groans" without clear or fluent expression — hardly descriptive of God's unerringly directed Power.

Notice in this chapter, that Paul uses the word "spirit" of (a) The mind of God; (b) The mind of Christ; (c) The spirit in which we must receive the Truth; (d) The power of the Truth working in the lives of individuals.

There is therefore no reason to deduce that Paul introduces a different application of the word in verse 26.

The Word of divine Truth becomes Power when it motivates the thinking and actions of men and women. Hence, Paul states that the "spirit" of the Truth and the power of the Word will help us in our infirmities if we give free reign to the influence of the Word in our lives. It will reinvigorate us, comfort us, and encourage us in our times of need (Jn. 6:63; 1Jn. 5:6; Heb. 10:15-16; Eph. 6:17). — ***J.Ullman.***

This question emphasizes how helpless we are in our infirmities, and lays the basis for the special kind of help afforded by "the Spirit" which comes to our assistance at such times, as Paul now explains.

"As we ought" — The words *katho dei* signifies just what is necessary in the nature of the case. We should be praying in accordance with the divine mind — but since we are limited in that elevated concept (cp. Isa. 55:8-9), we cannot always see where wisdom lies. Only a developing knowledge of the Truth can help in that regard, and we need to ask for wisdom to that end (Jas. 1:5). If our attitude is one of searching for what is right, and we humbly submit to the Word of Truth, we will obtain guidance in that direction.

This limitation of knowledge continues with the believer so long as he remains in the present weak mortal condition.

"But the Spirit itself" — The Greek is in the neuter gender (*"itself"*), disproving the apostate concept of a Trinity. It refers not to a person but to a power. It is the power of the Truth believed. The Word will help us understand our real need — as we examine its precepts and principles of action, observe the examples of former worthies in faith, carefully heed how the "spirit" acted in differing circumstances in the past. By these means we are assisted to understand "the what" for which we should pray today.

"Maketh intercession" — This word is the Gr. *huperentugchano*, which primarily signifies *to fall in with, to meet with;* and then *to make petition, to plead with a person on behalf of others.* The spirit (power) of the Truth working in us, will help our weakness, revealing for what we should pray, and produce in us the true submission which is pleasing to Yahweh.

Examples of acceptable and abhorrent prayers are given in Luke 18:10-14. A certain Pharisee exalted himself in his self-righteousness, and "prayed thus *with himself*" (v. 11). He had not learned the lesson of humility and personal weakness; nor was he aware of his need of mercy and grace. In contrast, the humble and contrite publican alongside, "smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (v. 13). Yet he was justified rather than the other, because he responded to the divine will.

Being often unaware of our failings, and not knowing the right decision to make in some circumstances, we need "intercession", the assistance of the Spirit-Word, developed and understood through trial. If any are not "led of the Spirit-Word" they might well "ask and receive not because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts" (Jas. 4:3).

"For us" — Most manuscripts omit

these words; they should be eliminated.

"With groanings" — Compare the similar wording in vv. 22-23. The Greek word, *stenagmos*, has the idea of grievings, of an inward, unexpressed feeling of sorrow. It is translated "with grief" in Heb. 13:17; "sighed" in Mark 7:34; "grudge" (i.e., murmur: RV) in Jas 5:9. Some translate it as: "unutterable gushings of the heart". Thus it speaks of sighings which express our emotional, inward feelings which we cannot express in words. When we consider the love, mercy and goodness of the Father, and compare them with our own unworthiness of all that He has given us, and our constant failings, we can but express our feelings in sighings — for words are inadequate.

"Which cannot be uttered" — Some translate this phrase: "with inarticulate sighings" or "inexpressible yearnings". Whilst repudiating sin, we aspire unto holiness. Hence, the negative aspects of life must be counter-balanced by the positive. With our limitations, due to the inherent weaknesses in our nature, we sometimes become hesitant and uncertain as to how we should seek help from Yahweh.

Words sometimes cannot fully express the inner feelings of the heart. How ineffectual are mere cold, hard words at times when our heart yearns to be in union with the Father, but we are faced with our own weaknesses and deficiencies? The Psalmist felt such a dilemma when under the stress of his personal failing: "when I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long" (Psa. 32:3). Again: "Lord, all my desire is before Thee; and my groaning is not hid from Thee" (Psa. 38:9).

In an entirely different context (that of visions beyond the millennium), Paul likewise found words inadequate, and unable to properly express his inner feelings of joy in the contemplation of the divine: 2Cor. 12:4.

Though we may not, of ourselves, know what to say under certain difficult circumstances, the Spirit-Word helps us to understand our need, and formulate our appeal. It contains examples of faithful men and women who labored under great stress; who acted wisely in distressing circumstances; or who were forced by their own inability to throw themselves upon the mercy of Yahweh. The pages of God's Word direct us to examples of the way we should act.

The very thoughts of the believer are read by Yahweh *before* they are uttered (Mat. 6:8). Therefore, the publican's short prayer of seven words was much more effective than the garrulous and bombastic lecture of his companion: Lk. 18:9-13. The deep, intimate "groanings" of a Spirit-mind are much to be preferred than the proud and loud boastings of the flesh.

VERSE 27

"And he that searcheth the hearts" — Christ is the full manifestation of the Father, who has "committed all judgment unto the Son" (Jn. 5:22). Thus he now exercises the divine prerogative of judgment (cp. Jer. 17:10; Psa. 7:9; 44:21; Prov. 17:3; Jer.11:20; 20:12), and declares himself to the ecclesias as the one able to "search the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:23). The "reins" speak of the emotional feelings, whereas the "heart" refers to the intellectual appreciation — thus Christ examines both our emotion and understanding of his Truth. Both must be properly balanced, so that the divine "searching" might find a reflection of the divine mind in us.

The word rendered "searcheth" occurs only six times, and appears as "search" (see Jn. 5:39); "searcheth" (see 1Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:23), or "searching" (see 1Pet. 1:11). Compare 1Sam. 16:7; Jer. 11:20; 17:10.

The use of the phrase in Rom. 8:27 is to reveal the ability of the Master to examine our understanding of the Spirit-Word and to make intercession accordingly.

"Knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" — Christ knows the disposition induced by the Truth, and is not deceived by the mere pretence of pseudo-disciples. Prayers are not judged in heaven according to their eloquence or fluency, but

according to the degree of honesty, integrity and heartfelt humility which is engendered in men and women through a true understanding and acceptance of the spirit of the Truth (cp. v. 5). Since Christ is able to "search" or investigate our hearts in the light of "the mind of the Spirit" how vital it is that we should understand *how* we should use the Spirit-Word in making known our needs to the Father — and how essential to remove from our minds all manner of pretence or hypocrisy in our relationships with Him.

The Greek *phronema* signifies *what one thinks and feels.* It occurs twice in v. 6 and once in v. 7. The Son understands the "mind of the Spirit" from the viewpoint of those associated with the weakness of humanity, for he, himself, was "compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2). He is therefore able to discern the "inarticulate sighings" of a spiritual mind which is generated by a love of the Truth.

"Because" — Gr. *oti;* better as in the margin: "that".

"He maketh intercession for the saints" — This verse speaks of the important work of Christ, achieved through his sacrificial life. Because of our personal sins, we cannot approach directly to the Majesty on high, but, as high priest, the Lord is able to represent his people before the Throne of Grace (Heb. 2:17).

The word "intercession" was used in v. 26 for the Spirit of Truth; here the word (Gr. *entunchano*) is related to the work of Christ. There is a lovely combination of both the Word and the Lord in helping our needs. As we absorb the power of the Word, we are directed to the provision of the "great high priest" whose office is after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 5:10), and who is able to bring us into the presence of the Father (ch. 10:21-22).

This verse is Paul's first mention of "the saints" since ch. 1:7. Why introduce the word again here? To show what a privileged *community* are the saints; that only they stand in this constitutional and exalted position, having the Son of God as their high priest and mediator, standing at the right hand of the Throne of God to intercede on their behalf (Heb. 7:25).

"According to the will of God" — Only the words "according to God" appear in the Greek text. "According" is from the Gr. *kata*, with the accusative: *down towards, denoting object and intention.* Hence the AV translators have added the words "the will of". The JB renders it: "according to the mind of God". Thus we are taught that Christ searches our hearts, knowing what is the mind of the Spirit, and upon that basis examines all prayers and attitudes of prayer, to see if they are in harmony with the *mind* and will of the Father. This is the basis for acceptable prayer, and the only appropriate means for the Lord's work (v. 34; Eph. 2:18; 1Jn. 5:14-15). This was the clear instruction given to the apostles with respect to their work: Mat. 16:19, which, according to an alternative translation is better: "whatever you forbid on earth must be what is already forbidden in heaven; and whatever you permit on earth must be what is permitted in heaven". So the Lord's Prayer contains the plea: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (ch. 6:10). All that we determine in life should accord with the Father's will (Jas. 4:15), and upon that basis He hears the intercession of the Son.

VERSE 28

"And we know" — Gr. *oida*, to intellectually understand. A further statement which carries an exhortation. Paul indicates that here is a further matter which should not require explaining to the brethren; he is to refer to matters of faith with which they should be familiar. He outlines another ground upon which we may build confidence in our "hope". It is in the great benefits of association with God, and the application of the Hand of Providence in life, based on his statement of v. 27: "according to the will of God". This great truth is not easily perceived when evil circumstances occur. Job experienced great anguish of mind as he tried to understand why he so suffered (ch. 23:3). Though he could not fathom the divine wisdom, he retained awareness of

the ultimate goodness and mercy of God revealed in the redeemer who should come (ch. 19:25). All experiences of life must be viewed in the light of our *knowledge* that God has control of all things (Dan. 4:17).

"That all things" — No incident is beyond the control of Yahweh. Even persecution, distress and calamity are as necessary for saints as are the joys of companionship, comfort and freedom from anxiety.

Notice Paul says "*all* things", because the eye of Yahweh misses nothing. He intently beholds the individual lives of His people: and always has in mind their ultimate welfare, that He might be glorified in them. "*All* things" will be beneficial towards our eventual perfection if we strive to live close to our God, seeking His will and wisdom in "*all* things".

"Work together for good" — This is a positive statement which should cheer and encourage all believers. It is in the present tense in the Greek: "all things are working together" — i.e. even now! "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thes. 5:9). The overshadowing providence of Yahweh is ever-present to provide circumstances which will purify the sons and daughters of God, and guarantees that all the trials, frustrations and difficulties of life are for the ultimate benefit of those who love Him. Therefore Paul emphasizes the tremendous love and interest of the Father in our affairs. It is a mutual love: the love that God has for His own, and on whose behalf "all things" are working together; and the love of His children for Him, in that they repose confidence in Him to fulfil His care for them. When such considerations are borne in mind (when "we know": v. 28), we will not fret unduly over the difficulties which might face us from time to time, but we will submit to every form of discipline required, knowing that it is for our ultimate good (v. 35). It is very difficult to so face the problems of life, but it is essential to do so if we would see the real purpose in God permitting such things to happen. See 2Cor. 4:15.

Whilst we should joyfully appreciate our gracious privilege to call upon the great God in heaven in time of need, we must also discern the necessity of maintaining a correct and acceptable disposition in all aspects of the exercise of prayer. Prayer to Yahweh is not something to be indulged in lightly or carelessly, or with an easy or insincere familiarity. Let us learn, through the guidance of the Spirit-Word, to always exercise the great benefit of prayer in the true spirit of the Truth, and in accord with the mind and will of the Father. — J.U.

The words "work together" come from the Gr. *sunergeo* which signifies the activity of a fellow worker. Since Yahweh controls all the circumstances of life, He works through those events to develop in His saints the characteristics which please Him. This might sometimes require trial and difficulty, as Joseph reminded his brethren: "ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). This has been the experience of all saints; in their latter years they have been able to see that worth has accrued from their afflictions, and to recognise the will of God therein: Psa. 119:67,71; Jer. 31:18-19; Heb. 13:11. Thus, the very trials which upset us, and seem to hinder us, are so influenced by God as to provide the means for His glorification in us. However, it is not our "works", but God's works in us for the development of His purpose, that will accomplish this end: 2Tim. 1:9.

The "good", which is in accord with the wisdom of God, benefits the divine purpose: both in the exaltation of the majesty and honor of the Deity in the establishment of His glory on earth; and in the salvation that this brings to those who are "called according to His purpose".

"To them that love God" — This is the first of two aspects in which all things "work for good". The second is, in being called to the Truth. Thus, two basic aspects in the life of a saint are in "loving

God" and "being called". The first represents a willing and humble response to God's Word; the second is seen in a life of dedication in the fulfilling of His will.

The Gr. *agapao* speaks of the sacrificial love (often translated "charity" in the AV) that seeks the benefit of its recipient. The word signifies *a profound respect based upon knowledge, and manifested by sacrifice and self-denial.* It is a mutual relationship between Yahweh and His faithful saints (cp. Mat. 22:37-38; Rom. 5:8). He manifests His love for them by seeing that everything works for their good; and they respond by giving to Him the love and obedience which dutiful children should manifest towards their father. It will be seen in "keeping (Christ's) words" (Jn. 14:23) and "walking after his commandments" (2Jn. 6). When such a sacrificial love is expressed to brethren it reflects to the honor of the Father: 1Jn. 5:1-2. Therefore they show their confidence in Him by patiently submitting to all trials and circumstances of life.

Those who thus "love God" understand and submit to His Word of truth, and manifest the principles of godliness by giving their total loyalty to the ways of the Truth. They do not compromise in either doctrine or practice, but strive to live by the commandment: "Like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1Pet. 1:15-16 RV).

The Greek also has "*the* God", thus emphasizing that there is only One True God in whom we place our trust.

"To them who are the called according to (His) purpose" — The Gr. *kletos* signifies *called, invited, welcomed, chosen.* This expresses the great honor and privilege that heaven's King has extended to a selected few of His creatures (cp. Mat. 20:16). His object is to grace this earth with those who respond to His glory, and who have developed characteristics through trial and suffering that manifest His wondrous ways.

By the use of this phrase, Paul reminds his readers of his opening theme at the beginning of the epistle. In the first few verses he stressed that believers are a specially privileged people, in that they have been *called (kletos)* by God to receive His Truth, and that, having accepted it, they have been "constituted holy ones". The only other occurrences of the word *kletos* are in Chapter 1: "*called* to be an apostle" (v. 1); "among whom are ye also the *called* of Jesus Christ" (v. 6); "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, *called* saints" (v. 7).

The word "purpose" (Gr. *prothesis*) is used again in ch. 9:11. It relates to the "*eternal* purpose" of Yahweh (Eph. 3:11). It is thus Yahweh who calls, and it is Yahweh's purpose to which we are called. We are called to a royal purpose, by the One who is the Sovereign King over all creation. God acts for our salvation without any merit on our part, since we are undeserving of His mercy or goodness. Therefore He is under no obligation to us.

VERSE 29

"For" — Gr. *oti, because* (DIAG; YOUNG'S LIT). Bullinger says that this word "introduces that which rests on a patent fact... thus, *because, inasmuch, seeing that.* Paul's conclusions reached in vv. 26-28 are founded upon sure and certain divine principles, upon which he will not elaborate.

"Whom He did foreknow" — The word *proginosko* comes from *pro, before,* and *ginosko, to know intimately,* and signifies a knowledge that brings together. Yahweh "knows the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:10); He "calls those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17) — thus He "brings together" the past, present and future, having a complete knowledge of all things, and is able to see the future as clearly as the past. Divine foreknowledge is the basis of the divine purpose. It enables Him to extend His calling for salvation knowing the ultimate results of that calling. So He could select with perfect wisdom and justice a Jacob rather than an Esau (Mal. 1:2-3), because He knew how

each would develop, and the characteristics that they would manifest. With similar ability the divine call goes out today to invite those who have the capacity and desire to reflect the divine glory (1Pet. 1:2; 2Tim. 2:19).

The Greek word *proginosko* occurs only in the following places: Rom. 11:2– God *foreknew* the Jews as His people. Acts 2:23 *(prognosis)*; 1Pet. 1:20 – God *foreknew* (foreordained) the mission and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:29-30 – God *foreknows* those who will conform to the image of His Son. 1Pet. 1:2 – God *foreknows* (*prognosis*) the election of the saints. Acts 26:5 *(proginosko)* – Certain Jews *knew* Paul *from before*. 2Pet. 3:17 *(proginosko)* – We can *know before* the events of the future, for God has shared part of His foreknowledge with us through the scriptures.

"He also did predestinate" — The word *proorizo* comes from *pro, before*, and *horizo, to mark out* or *bound* (from which we have our word "horizon"). Thus the idea is *to limit in advance; predetermine*, to "divide or separate one part from another". The word refers to God's ability to mark out the ultimate destiny of His chosen ones (see Eph. 1:5,11). He has determined the "horizon" of our future, having laid out the "line" of our life. This was accomplished in the garden of Eden, when, notwithstanding the failure of mankind to live up to the obedience required, Yahweh "preserved" the "way of life" (Gen. 3:24); He provided the means by which faithful believers might ultimately enter into the promised inheritance (Rev. 2:7).

Therefore God has predetermined their destiny on the basis of His foreknowledge of how they would act. Paul says that God has "made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ... in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:9-12). God has marked out beforehand the program of His actions with mankind, and therefore is able to see the results of that work before it comes to pass.

He did not, however, determine the actions of His creatures, nor force them to do what they would not willingly have done (see Phil. 2:12). The thing predetermined is the standard of Christ, to which all must conform. God required beforehand that those whom He foreknew should conform to that image of His Son.

Predestination, or the prediction of what would occur, is only possible through the prescience of Yahweh, and only divine wisdom and power can foretell the future with unerring accuracy. The principle of predestination is summed up in the phrase: "He that believeth and is baptised ***shall be saved***" (Mk. 16:16): it is a certain, established and defined destiny of those who remain faithful. Thus we have hope of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1Pet. 1:4), and which God will grant to all who conform to His precepts.

"To be conformed" — The Greek *summorphos*, signifies *jointly formed* (from *sun, with;* and *morphe, a form*); thus to "have the same form as another". The use of this word emphasizes that those whom God selects will resemble His Son; they will have the "same form" — mentally, morally and physically — as the Son of God. They are "formed" as one with him, and this is accomplished through their identification with "his death" through baptism (Rom. 6:3; Heb. 2:11-12). The word appears also in Phil. 3:10, "being *made conformable* unto his death", and in verse 21 in regard to the physical regeneration of our nature: "Christ shall change our vile body that it may be *fashioned* like unto his glorious body". Thus, there is to be a binding together with the Lord Jesus Christ in a moral compatibility now, and ultimately in a physical likeness when we rejoice with him in divine glory.

"To the image of His Son" — The word "image", *eikon*, does not merely mean "identification" or "likeness". It sig-

Christendom Astray

Many "christians" who have little appreciation for the doctrines of the Atonement and God-manifestation, profess to believe in the "doctrine of predestination". They claim that the future destiny of every child of God has already been pre-determined, so that their eternal expectations cannot be altered by any means. They allege that God has already determined who will be received into His kingdom, and who will be excluded; that He has already concluded the issues of who will gain eternal redemption, and who will be rejected. The logical outworking of this pernicious doctrine is that there is nothing any individual can do to alter their destiny in any way. This conclusion leads inevitably to the next step: There is little point in striving to develop the characteristics of godliness, nor is there any point in living a life which may be pleasing to God, if it is true that we are unable to change the judgment of God which has already been determined concerning us.

This doctrine is opposed to every perfect characteristic of the Deity, and is in wicked conflict with the teaching of His Word. Scripture declares that "God is not willing that *any* should perish" (2Pet. 3:9). Moses clearly taught Israel the matter of individual responsibility to Yahweh; that their ultimate destiny would be determined in accordance with their disposition towards Him: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life* and *death, blessing* and *cursing:* therefore ***choose life,*** that both thou and thy seed may live! That thou mayest love Yahweh thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for *He is thy life!*" (Deut. 30:19-20).

It is the personal attitude of people that will determine the decision which the great Judge shall give in the day of account, either for or against them.

For a clear answer to the evil doctrine of "christian predestination", and to demonstrate the justice, mercy and goodness of God, see Ezek. 33:11; Mat. 18:14; 1Thes. 5:9; Acts 10:34; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:4-5; Heb. 10:39; Rev. 3:18; 5:9; 14:3. Whilst predestination may be incorrectly understood, the doctrine of divine "foreknowledge" is quite different: it reveals the absolute wisdom and wonderful principles of selection according to the mercy of the Father. — ***J. Ullman.***

nifies *representation* and *manifestation*, from the primary word *eiko*, meaning *to resemble*. Bullinger comments that the word "denotes not merely the image, but also the *pattern*, the *original* (in opposition to *skia*, the shadow)." It is not merely that we are to become *identified* with Christ, but to become manifestations of what he *was* (mentally and morally), and what he now *is* (physically). This is a process which begins with our baptism and continues throughout life, until the Lord's return. As we continue to deny the flesh its will, manifesting the mind of the Spirit (v. 6), we undergo a form of suffering in which the flesh does not delight, but which causes us to become increasingly tranformed into the "image" of Christ (see the same word in 2Cor. 3:18). These words make clear the fallacy of "christendom's doctrine of predestination". God has not determined to save men whether they be dedicated to the ways of sin or the ways of righteousness, without regard for the character they have formed. All who are to inherit the glory of divine nature must have a strong, identifiable resemblance to the captain of their salvation.

As Christ is the "image of God" (2Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15), so the redeemed must be in the "image" of the Son. They will be "like him" in nature (Phil. 3:21; 1Jn. 3:2) when they receive immortality, but this will only be to those who also represent and manifest him in character and action. Peter declared that Christ has "left us an example, that we should follow his steps" (1Pet. 2:21). That graphically describes those who are walking in the footsteps of the Master, following his direction, fulfilling his commandments (Mat. 16:24). For that reason, though we may now suffer, facing trial and difficulties in so many

ways, it is for the express purpose that we may gain, in similar experience as did our Lord, an experience that was only possible through suffering (Heb. 4:15–5:2; Phil. 3:10; 2Tim. 2:11-12). As did Jesus, so we will learn to endure suffering and trials with greater understanding and fortitude, and will be more successful in overcoming all difficulties.

We must manifest his standards to those about us. The disciples were recognised as "christians" (Acts 11:26), being *Christ's ones.* So Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Cor. 11:1), and commanded: "Let this mind *[Gr. disposition]* be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

"That he might be the firstborn among many brethren" — See Col. 1:15,18. The firstborn of Israel had many peculiar privileges (cp. Gen. 43:33; 49:3). In each family he acted as priest on behalf of the members, and was the representative of the family in all religious and legal matters. But the firstborn lost his rights to the priesthood after the rebellion in the wilderness (Exod. 32), and the privilege was then transferred to a particular tribe: that of Levi. But now, in Christ, the original conditions for the priesthood have been restored to the firstborn in the family, after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20; Psa. 110:4). As the firstborn in Israel was the head of the family, so Christ is the head of the ecclesia, the divine family on earth.

Accordingly, due to the failure of the original "firstborn" Adam and the sinfulness of all his progeny until the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ was elevated to the firstborn (Psa. 89:27), and given a position of honor and power, by which he might represent all his brethren to the Father. In this, the Lord Jesus is our "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14), through whom alone we have access to heaven. His perfect life and atoning sacrifice provides the means by which his "brethren" can "conform" (Rom. 8:29) to his image. He elevates to glory his brethren (Heb. 2:11-12), fulfilling the terms of the family firstborn.

A further significant feature of this restoration of the priesthood to the Melchizedek firstborn, is that the common Hebrew word for firstborn is *bekowr*, from *bakar*, meaning "to burst forth" — i.e., the first in the family to come forth to life, Christ being the wonderful antitype.

VERSE 30

"Moreover" — Paul now expands his exposition to show that the divine purpose involving God's foreknowledge is to achieve the personal salvation of individuals that Yahweh might be glorified thereby. There are four stages in this process, as Paul now explains in this verse. Firstly, there is the *predestination*, the divine foreknowledge that individuals would come to the Truth and begin to be conformed to the image of His Son. Then there is the *calling*, or invitation to the Truth, which comes through the gospel (1Cor. 1:9; Jn. 6:44). After that comes *justification* through acceptance of the Truth, and walking therein (Rom. 5:1; 6:17; 1Cor. 6:11). Finally, *glorification* is achieved by complete identity with God through the bestowal of divine nature upon His chosen (Rom. 5:2; 4:17; Lk. 20:37-38).

"Whom He did predestinate" — Those brought into the scope of the divine mercy, and who seek for the joy of companionship with His Son. The cause of such great honor was God's work of reconciliation, not our ability nor supposed excellence — see notes v. 29.

"Them" — The *call* has only gone to those whom God, through His foreknowledge, has known to be amenable to becoming "conformed to the image of His Son". However, all do not respond to the "call" in this way. The invitation of the gospel message must be willingly received into the intellect, understood, and acted upon in all humility. God is aware that there is a class who may have the potential to receive His Word, yet will refuse to respond to it. Similarly, His foreknowledge makes Him aware that there are those who will begin the race for life but either cast the Truth aside or ultimately be proven unworthy. The fact that all will not be found fit for the Kingdom does not

alter the divine character, nor His offer of mercy to those who are without excuse for rejecting His great goodness. "God is faithful, *by whom ye were called* unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1Cor. 1:9).

"He also called" — Having established the means of salvation, Yahweh continues the process by "calling". The Gr. *kaleo* signifies *to call*, from a root meaning *to incite by word* (see Strong). It has the idea to arouse or enliven by that which is declared. It is not merely a call, but a call to revival, a call to action. The "calling" implies a summons or invitation which has to be obeyed (cf Acts 26:19); it is by the Word of God (ch. 10:13-17), and through the Spirit of Truth (Jn. 6:44).

Many people hear the call but do not respond; or responding, do not meet the terms of the call: that of committing oneself to the purpose of the call.

The divine call has been instituted by the revelation of God's gospel of salvation. This grand declaration has been set before mankind (Acts 17:29), and seeks to attract individuals to the fellowship of Christ (1Cor. 1:9). It matters little who might be the preaching agent to that end, it is God drawing men and women unto Him by the influence of the Truth, apart from which there can be no call (Jn. 6:44). It is a work that God not only instituted, but continues to superintend.

The Law of the Firstborn

[1] The firstborn son was consecrated to God (Exod. 13:2; 22:29), and held the position of priest in the family (Num. 3:12-13; 8:14-18).

[2] He received a double portion of the inheritance of his father (Deu. 21:15-17; Eze. 47:13).

[3] He was held next in honor to his parents (Gen. 49:3).

[4] He succeeded in the control of the family, or kingdom, on the death of his father (2Chr. 21:3).

[5] He could forfeit his position through misconduct or incompetency (1Chr. 5:1; 26:10; Gen. 25:31; 48:5,13,14).

[6] A younger son could assume the position (1Sam. 16:11-12).

[7] Israel was a national firstborn (Exod. 4:21-23) elevated above other nations who existed before them.

Christ as the Firstborn
(Col. 1:15; Rev. 1:5).

Adam was a son of God (Lk. 3:38), but he forfeited his right through misconduct. Consider the following quotations in line with the above points: *[1]* Lk. 1:32,33; 2:22-23; Heb. 4:15. *[2]* Rom. 8:17-29; Heb. 1:3-4; Phil. 2:9-11. *[3,4]* Rev. 3:21; Jer. 3:19. *[5]* 1Cor. 15:45. *[6]* Psa. 89:24-27. *[7]* Hos. 11:1; Isa. 49:3. ***— J. Knowles.***

Brother Thomas Comments on the Matter of "Election" in Relation to Foreknowledge and Predestination

It may be remarked here that the election of Scripture has reference to "the purpose of God" in relation to the constitution of the kingdom. He has elected *its territory;* He has elected *the nation* to inhabit it for ever; He has elected *the king* to rule over it; and He has elected *its saints* to assist him in the administration of its affairs... He does not say to this man, "I elect you from all eternity to be saved from the flames of hell, do what you may"; nor does He say to that, "I predetermine you to reprobation and eternal torture, do what you can"... men are "elect through sanctification of spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1Pet. 1:2). This reveals to us the means and design of the election in relation to the present time. "Sanctification of spirit" is the means; "obedience and sprinkling of Christ's blood", the end... Thus they were "washed, sanctified, and justified by the name of the Lord, and by the spirit of God"; and after this manner elected according to His foreknowledge and predetermination.

— *Elpis Israel*, p. 265.

"And whom He called, them He also justified" — The next stage in the divine purpose is the justification (righteousness: Gr. *dikaioo, to pronounce righteous; to acquit.* See pp. 114-115; 146) of those called by God. Notice that it is not their personal "righteousness" by virtue of works. It cannot be said that they *justified themselves*, as the Judaisers would teach. Their philosophy was: "We shall be justified before God *if we keep the law...*" But Paul makes it clear that the redeemed will owe their justification to the grace and mercy of Yahweh, and not to anything they have attained by way of self-merit. Eternal life is the "*gift* of God" and cannot be earned (Eph. 2:8), though Christ is the exemplar for all whose earnest desire is that they might find eternal redemption. Thus, justification is imputed to them by God through faith (see notes on Rom. 4:24; 5:1). This is accomplished by their identification with "the name of the Lord Jesus" and "by the spirit *(the Truth)* of our God" (1Cor. 6:11), of which baptism is the outward token (Rom. 6:17).

"And whom he justified, them he also glorified" — This is the final stage in the divine purpose: the destiny that God has predetermined (see ch. 5:2). Its fulfilment awaits the future, but Paul uses the past tense because the glory that will be conferred upon the saints is accounted in the Father's mind as having been already accomplished. In the absolute certainty by which His will is worked out, God calls "things that be not as though they are" (ch. 4:17), and therefore, in the divine purpose, Abraham is accounted as even now raised from the dead (Lk. 20:37). The actual event, of course, still awaits realisation at the coming of Christ, even as the glorification is yet to be revealed. However, Rom. 8:30 shows that saints, like the Son himself, have been glorified in the mind of the Father from the beginning (Jn. 17:5). So the Lord could say: "The glory which Thou ***gavest*** me ***I have given*** them" (v. 22). This obviously does not prove the pre-existence of Jesus because it would require the pre-existence of all "in him", who share the same glory!

It should be understood that all those who have been *called* and *justified* might not necessarily be *glorified.* Though Paul hopefully assumes that his readers will persevere to the end, these words should be carefully pondered in the light of Paul's comment in Rom. 11:21.

Though this glorification, both for the Son then and for the saints now, is a matter of future fulfilment, it is expressed in the past tense because, with Yahweh, such glorification is a certainty. It will be fully realised when immortality is conferred upon the saints, making them the complete manifestation of the Deity on earth, so that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

Victory can be Ours for God is on Our Side — vv. 31-39.

Paul has shown that the future is certain, that God's glory will be revealed in His people, that the means has been provided for salvation. He now demonstrates that we can anticipate that grand time with confidence if we seek the means that God provides. Nothing can prevent individuals from attaining immortality, except their own negligence. The apostle now introduces a court scene, with the evidence of the power of God to save being placed in a series of questions.

VERSE 31

"What shall we then say to these things" — What conclusions are we to draw from the facts stated? The NIV has: "What, then, shall we say in response to this?" Believers must accept without question the absolute assurance of divine purpose. We have nothing to fear in life, for God's predetermination has provided for our salvation. However, we are faced with certain doubts: our own fallibility; the challenges of life that might draw us away from the joy of complete union with Yahweh. Our own inherent weaknesses, if not subdued, may resist and counter the spirit of the Truth within our hearts.

None can fault what God has done for the salvation of the race. Hence this dis-

cerning question comes from the apostle like a cry of triumph, summarising what has been said in vv. 28-30. Sorrow or trial, persecution or frustration, need never conquer the saint who is fully persuaded that "*all* things work together for good, *to them that love God*, to them who are called according to His purpose" (v. 28).

This question is followed by a second, which together represent an epitome of a zealous and robust faith, manifested by those who place complete confidence in the Father for help and direction.

"If God (be) for us, who (can be) against us?" — This second question carries a note of victory. What adverse power can there be which is stronger than God? This is the great challenge of faith. It answers the natural desire to rely upon the power of the flesh for protection or vindication. In the midst of his tremendous difficulties, Job was able to declare: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Five Stages to Glory: vv. 29-30

PAST:

1. The foreknowledge of God: *proginosko.*
2. Marked out by God: *proorizo.*

PRESENT:

3. Called by God: *kaleo.*
4. Justified by God: *dikaioo.*

FUTURE. (but as good as done: ch. 4:17)

5. Glorified by God: *doxazo.*

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job. 19:25-27). At the time of his trial, when challenged by Pilate who asserted: "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?", the Lord confidently responded: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (Jn. 19:10-11). In such statements men of faith and courage exalted the authority of Yahweh and rejected the claims of men (cp. Psa. 118:6).

The Diaglott presents Paul's words more positively, suggesting not so much a question as a statement of fact: "*Since* God is for us..." God is always available to those who manifest faith and trust in Him (Psa. 18:2).

The real question is whether *we allow God* "to be for us". We can deny God's intervention, by seeking for strength and protection elsewhere: from the exercise of the flesh; by permitting power, prestige or pride to govern our lives. Therefore the Greek *ei* ("if") is appropriate to Paul's question. Here the word is in the indicative present tense, which "assumes the hypothesis as an *actual fact...*" (Bull.). Therefore the question is better expressed as: "In view *of the fact* that God is for us, who can be against us?" Paul states emphatically that Yahweh is on the side of the faithful. He will support, direct and help those who rest upon Him. His thoughts towards us are "of peace, and not of evil" (Jer. 29:11). If God is on our side "all things" are working "for good". If nothing external to ourselves can rob us of eternal redemption, even suffering and trial are "working" in our lives for "good", and for the perfecting of our characters for the kingdom.

Of God's goodwill toward us there can be no doubt: "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (ch. 5:8). That carries with it everything else. He will give us all things, as Paul now proceeds to explain.

VERSE 32

"He that spared not His own Son" — The Greek is more emphatic. The inclusion of *ge* in the phrase means that it should be understood as "*indeed* spared not..." — emphasizing Yahweh's great sacrifice of His own Son. The words "His own" *(idiou)* add a strongly personal, intimate note: "His *genuine* Son". The words "spared not" indicate that Yahweh made no attempt to withhold His own Son,

despite the suffering that it would bring to them both. This same word is applied to Abraham in the Septuagint version of Gen. 22:16.

Paul's statement reveals the amazing extent of the love and concern of God for failing mankind. Could He do anything greater for the human race than offer His own Son as the only satisfactory sacrifice? Thus God has provided all things needful to our salvation, even to the extent of providing His "only beloved Son" in order to redeem those "in him". This is the act of true sacrifice, the perfection of which is seen in the work of "God in Christ". Thus John writes: "Hereby perceive we the *(wonderful principle of)* love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1Jn. 3:16). This principle was revealed in the obedient, faithful action of Abraham, the "father of the faithful" who "spared not" his son Isaac (Gen. 22:16) — and thus demonstrated the need for his spiritual seed to commit their lives unto Yahweh in confidence that He "would provide" (Gen. 22:8,14). For this reason, Abraham was able to declare his unwavering faith in the provision of God. He said to those who accompanied them to the mount of sacrifice, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and *come again to you*". The Hebrew is written in the plural, and Berkeley translates the phrase: "so *we* may worship and return to you". Abraham confidently believed that, having offered Isaac as a sacrifice, Yahweh would raise him from the dead; since Isaac was the only one through whom the promises could be fulfilled. In "sparing not" from suffering and sacrifice, Abraham gained all (cp. Gen. 22:15-18), as does Yahweh in the provision of His Son for the salvation of His people (Heb. 2:10-11).

"But delivered him up for us all" — The word *paradidomi* signifies *to give up, hand over to another, deliver up, surrender.* In this context the idea is that God "delivered him over to death". Hence Yahweh "purposed to bruise him; bruising him sorely" (Isa. 53:10, ROTH. mg). Jesus was given into the hands of wicked men, to suffer the cruel death of crucifixion (Acts 2:23), in order to provide the means by which mankind might be released from the bondage of sin and death (Heb. 7:27; 13:20). Paul reverts to his exposition of Rom. 4:25, "our Lord... was delivered for our offences", in order to show the full extent of the benefits that accrue from the divine work in him.

All this was done "for us all": literally "on behalf of us all" (TCNT). It shows the extent to which God is "*for* us" (v. 31). There was no compulsion in what the Father did, nor was there any obligation on His part. All that He did was an act of supreme sacrifice and merciful goodness for the salvation of the race. The word "all" indicates Paul's joyful thoughts in contemplating that "all" of his readers had been brought into covenant-relationship with God's work of redemption in Christ Jesus.

"How shall He not with him also freely give us all things?" — "Surely, then, He will, with him, as freely give us everything!" (TCNT). The essential union of the Son with his brethren is now stressed. God's gifts to us are on the basis of what the Son himself receives. And, since the Father bestows upon us "His unspeakable gift" of life through the sacrifice of Christ, He will certainly not deny us the smaller tokens of His love. These "all things" to which Paul refers are the matters upon which he has been expounding: the gracious gift of justification, glorification, and so forth. In all this wonderful work, the majesty of God, and His limitless love, are revealed. He *wants* to help us; He *desires* our salvation; He has *provided* everything necessary for those "who shall be heirs of salvation" (1Cor. 3:21-23). If we do not ultimately receive the gift of God in immortality, it will be due only to our own foolishness.

VERSE 33

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" — Moffatt suggests: "When God acquits, who shall condemn". The words "lay anything to" are from the Greek *egkaleo*, a legal term

which signifies, to *call in a debt; bring to account*, thus, *to accuse*. The Diaglott has: "bring an accusation against", an expression taken from courts of law (e.g. Acts 19:38). The idea is: "who will bring someone against the tribunal of God so as to cause their condemnation". Obviously this cannot be done when God has "justified" such a person.

The word "elect" (Gr. *eklektos*, from *ek, out of*, and *lego, to gather or pick*) signifies "called out ones", a word similar in meaning to *ecclesia (ek klesis)*. They are those who have responded to the divine appeal to separate from their surrounding environment, in order to seek the pleasure and mercy of the Father. If Yahweh has "picked" or "chosen" them *out of* the nations for the honor and glory of His Name (Acts 15:14), who would be able to "pick" them "out of" the hand of God? He knows those who will fulfil His intentions,

"If God was prepared to go to the length of giving his own Son as an act of mercy to effect our salvation, how could it be suggested that He would withhold anything that would be to our eternal advantage?" God does not wish to see us perish. He desires to witness our eventual total deliverance from sin and death. To that end He has provided everything needful to accomplish that purpose in us. Let us be comforted and encouraged with Paul's words in Phil. 1:6, "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ" (NIV). Daily our hearts should be filled with gratitude for all that Yahweh has done for us; and in that same spirit we should earnestly desire to return His goodness and mercy by serving Him wholeheartedly, in the spirit of the Truth. The only danger to Yahweh's purpose in us not coming to fruition, rests with every individual believer (as is indicated in Rom. 8:39. — J.U.

and will declare them "justified". To bring a charge against these "elect" ones would be to dispute the justice of God.

Notice that all these actions come from God: He calls; He chooses; He justifies; it is His work of justification. Thus, where does the Judaiser stand in claiming that man may attain unto eternal salvation through keeping the law?

"(It is) God that justifieth" — The Diaglott translates this as a question: "Will that God who justifies?" Omitting the words in italics (which are not in the original text), the passage takes on an entirely different meaning, and introduces a series of questions to emphasize the unspoken, but obvious, reply. This rendering is supported by many authorities, including Rotherham, Moffat, Companion Bible, Diaglott, NIV, etc. One authority comments: "The Greek equally allows the rendering 'Is it God, etc?' And this is on the whole more likely to be right, if only because we are here in a series of questions (from vv. 31-35 inclusive) the force of which is surely greatest when unbroken. The doctrine of the passage is unchanged by the difference of rendering."

It is absurd to think that the Father, whose endeavors to rescue His elect from the damage of sin included the offering of His Son as the sacrificial means of forgiveness, would then condemn them! The only ones to be condemned by God will be those who have either rejected His Word, or who have been so indifferent to their spiritual responsibilities that the character of Christ will not be recognised in them (Mat. 7:21-23; 25:11-12). Thus Paul emphasizes the wonder and importance of God's graciousness to His servants.

For comments on the word "justify" (Gr. *dikaioo*) meaning to *render just or innocent*, thus "to impute as righteous", see our notes on ch. 3:26 (p. 119; also p. 146).

Paul's personal experiences provide proof of his comment in this verse. He had been persecuted, beaten, left for dead, and had suffered many things in the course of his service to Christ. Yet, had these experiences really cost him anything of lasting

value? Was it possible that the many Gentiles who had endeavored to destroy Paul, could rob him of his eternal inheritance? In that regard they could achieve nothing. The apostle Paul had every confidence in Yahweh's willingness and ability to eventually bring him successfully through all trials and suffering, to receive the "crown of righteousness" which would also be bestowed upon the faithful. It is God who pardons, forgives, and acquits. He is the supreme and final judge. Flesh can never hope to overturn His righteous judgment.

VERSE 34

"Who (is) he that condemneth?" — That is, to pass a sentence of condemnation, and to commit the guilty to its consequences. The Greek *katakrino* signifies *to pass sentence against.* Vine says that it implies the *fact* of a crime (ch. 2:1; 14:23), or its imputation, such as in the Jewish condemnation of Christ (Mat. 20:18; Mk. 14:64).

"(It is) Christ that died" — More correctly as a question: "Will that Anointed one who died?" (Diag.). It is unthinkable that he who died for our salvation, would then condemn us! In fact, the One who has been given the authority of Judge is the Lord Jesus (Jn. 5:27), but to those "in him" there is "no condemnation" (see v. 1 for explanatory notes).

"Yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" — Continuing the form of questions, Paul elaborates upon the work of Christ on behalf of "his brethren". The Diaglott expresses the four points of consideration: "Will that Anointed one who died? and still more, who has been raised? who also is at the right hand of God? and who intercedes on our behalf?"

Paul draws on Psa. 110:1 to demonstrate that the Son of God, who gave his life for us, rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father where he now pleads our cause as our high priest and mediator. Would one who acts as our Advocate wish to bring about our ruination?

The ***first question*** in this verse implies that Christ, who died to save us (Rom. 5:8), certainly would not want to condemn us. In fact, his death for us (1Thes. 5:10) is the guarantee that he desires our salvation.

The ***second question*** points to the fact that he who rose from the dead in order to "bring many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10), would surely not desire to reject us.

The ***third question*** reveals the great strength available to secure our protection — for he who was granted power, authority and dignity at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Col. 1:16), would obviously seek to elevate us with himself (cp. Col. 3:1; Heb. 4:16).

"Sheep for the Slaughter"

Despite such fearful circumstances, Psalm 44 (quoted by Paul in Rom. 8:36) shows that a true saint is convinced of Yahweh's fidelity, and has a firm assurance that God is able and willing to ultimately redeem His people, and will surely do so. "In God we boast all the day long..." (v. 8). The similarity of language between this Psalm and Isaiah 53 is remarkable. And, although Isaiah uses the plural (*"all **we** like sheep have gone astray"*), he also uses the singular: "*He* is brought as a lamb to the slaughter..." Although Isaiah speaks of Christ as the singular, perfect sacrifice, Paul captures the idea stressed by Peter: "Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example, that we should follow* his steps" (1Pet. 2:21). His "steps" led him inevitably to the stake, upon which he died. Paul has yet another reason for quoting from this particular Psalm. The text contains no mention of sin or guilt, because the Psalm stresses that *suffering in the cause of righteousness is an accepted part of life in the Truth,* whether the suffering be deserved or not. The next verse takes up this theme, and shows that whilst Christ will lead us to the cross of sacrifice (Mat. 16:24) he will lead us further, to the glory that lies beyond the suffering. — ***J.U.***

And, *finally*, he who constantly intercedes on our behalf (Isa. 53:12), pleading our cause, aiding and assisting us, being himself touched with the feeling of our infirmities in the days of his flesh, would certainly strive for our reconciliation (Heb. 7:24-27). The Greek word translated "maketh intercession" (*entugchano*, to *confer with; entreat*) is only found in v. 27, Heb. 7:25, Rom. 11:2 and Acts 25:24. In this capacity the Lord now bears the titles of High Priest and Mediator; offices which he effects on behalf of his brethren and sisters. It is humbling and comforting to know that we have a means of communication with the Father through the intercession of the Son. Our security, both now and in the future, will be assured providing we remain within the orbit of God's love and mercy (Jude v. 21).

There are two powerful divine persons in heaven, the Father and the Son, both of whom are sympathetic to our interests and working on the cause of our eternal salvation. If, in spite of all that they do for us, we fail to attain unto the promised glory, the fault is ours alone.

VERSE 35

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" — It is not who shall keep Christ from loving us (for only we, by our own folly, can do that!), but who or what will keep us from loving him! When we view tribulation, distress, persecution or any difficult circumstance, in the light of verse 28, we learn that such external incidents are not designed to separate us from divine love, but to shape our characters in such a way as to fit us for the glory to be revealed. It is a question that assumes the answer: "Who can?" "None can!"

It is only when we allow anything to infringe upon our devotion to Christ, that we might be cut off from the love which comes from Christ.

In this verse Paul primarily refers to the great love which Christ exercises and cherishes towards *us*, without which we would be lost. It is, however, a mutual love between Christ and his disciples. Paul's series of challenging questions continues, each leading to another until arriving finally at this crucial result. The forms of sufferings now listed may appear to be overwhelmingly formidable; but none are sufficiently powerful to separate the true believer from the love of Christ.

Peter had to recognise the depth of the Lord's work and love for him. After the sad events of the crucifixion of his Master, and the apostle's own utter despondency at his threefold denial of the Lord, an opportunity occurred for Peter to be "converted" (Lk. 22:32) by the use of those circumstances. He was to be tested by the ques-

Paul's reference in Rom. 8:34 to the Lord being "risen again, who is even at the right hand of God" is the only direct reference in this epistle to the resurrection* and *ascension of Christ into heaven. Thus, we are to appreciate that Christ not only died to provide the means of forgiveness for our sins, but that he is also risen from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the throne of Glory in the heavens to* continue *the work of reconciliation. Paul quotes from Psa. 110:1, which is the most quoted verse of Old Testament Scripture in the New Testament, with at least 19 direct reference to it. — J.U.

All Things Work for Good

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

tion: what would *separate him from the love of Christ?* The Master appeared to him by the Sea of Galilee with the challenge: "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest thou me* more than these?" (Jn. 21:15-17) Was Peter's affection and conviction for the Lord greater than that of his associates, in view of his earlier claim (Mk. 14:29)? Three times came the question, the first two involving the Greek word *agapao* (a sacrificial, selfless love; the word used by Paul in the verse before us), and the final question using the word *phileo*, a caring affection, a tender feeling. Peter deeply felt the impact of the Lord's words. He realised his previous failure, and now the tremendous commitment that he had in response to the enormous work displayed in the Master's sacrifice. So he was told: "Feed my lambs... sheep". True disciples will see such opportunities as the evidence of the love of Christ, and seek to respond by becoming intimately involved in the labor of tending the flock of God.

The word "separate" (*chorizo, to give space; to leave room; to put apart.* Eng.: *chasm)* means to be estranged by distance, to find a great void dividing us from the Lord's influence. The word "love" is from the Gr. *agape*, speaking of the intensive, sacrificial love of Christ that is far above mere human affection or feeling (cp. 2Cor. 12:15).

In Rom. 8:38-39 Paul lists ten potential "opponents", any one of which might rob us of our inheritance in the Kingdom. 10 is the Biblical number to symbolise completeness.

"*(Shall)* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" — Paul lists seven external afflictions which comprehend the differing circumstances that might affect us — including natural disasters as well as opposition from enemies.

"Tribulation" (Gr. *thlipsis*, pressure) speaks of the friction that comes from difficult situations, the "pressure" brought upon saints by internal or external causes, forces and trials of various kinds (cp. Acts 14:22); sometimes resulting from the inherent weakness of our nature. It is translated "affliction" in the Diaglott. Yahweh permits such pressures to strengthen our faith and develop our character. The profession of our faith will be proven or refuted under the pressures of life, whether originating from within or without.

"Distress" (Gr. *stenochoria, narrowness of room; calamity*) has the idea of restrictive conditions where there seems to be no solution, no way to manoeuvre. It especially refers to anxiety of mind, when a person is at a loss to know which way he should turn. This word was used to describe first-century Jewish society which faced an impending national crisis at the hands of the Roman oppressors (1Cor. 7:26; 1Thes. 3:7; Lk. 21:23). It was sometimes caused by divine intervention (Zeph. 1:17; Jer. 10:18); sometimes by enemy action (Isa. 29:7).

"Persecution" (Gr. *diogmos, to put to flight, drive away;* hence, *violent pursuit*) refers to constant active opposition that gives no relief; when believers are recipients of the rage and malice of persecutors (Lam. 5:5; Acts 8:1. See also Mat. 5:11).

"Famine" (Gr. *limos*, a *scarcity of food*) has sometimes been a means of testing the faithfulness of believers (Gen. 12:10), of confirmation of prophecy and divine providence (ch. 41:30), as well as a punishment upon evildoers (2Sam. 21:1; 24:13). Many were exposed to famine as the natural result of being driven from their homes, and of being often compelled to wander amidst strangers, in deserts and desolate places.

"Nakedness" (Gr. *gumnotes*, to *be bare*) speaks of deprivation and difficulty; of losing all forms of protection and covering (Gen. 42:9; Deu. 28:48; 2Cor. 11:27). Famine and nakedness are often the result of persecution. In times of violent opposition to the Truth believers have been denied food supplies and refused even the basic necessities of life. Driven from their homes, forced to wander in deserts and desolate places, they suffer all these things with their faith and confi-

dence in Yahweh unimpaired (cp. Heb. 11:36-38).

"Peril" (Gr. *kindunos, danger*) refers to trouble of any kind (Lam. 5:9).

"Sword" (Gr. *machaira, a knife*) reflects vigorous opposition, the threat of violence by antagonists, with the fear of death.

Altogether, such experiences might well test the fidelity of a believer. Yet Paul asserts that the power of the Truth firmly believed and lovingly followed is a greater force than all that nature or humanity might bring against us. Job is such an example. Faced with the cruel work of the Satan, the ignorance and unworthy criticism of his friends, the distressing effect of personal and physical affliction, he nevertheless remained faithful to his God. The divine testimony to his associates was: "ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, *as My servant Job hath"* (Job 42:7, 8). His faith in Yahweh's ultimate salvation was not shaken, though he was perplexed and bewildered at the reason for his dreadful experiences (cp. Job 19:25; Jas. 5:10-11).

In this verse Paul lists seven forms of suffering which may be brought to bear upon us by a world which is hostile to the Truth. All these afflictions were experienced by the resolute apostle in his warfare of faith. He faced tribulation (Eph. 3:13); distress (2Cor. 6:4); persecution (2Cor. 12:10); famine (2Cor. 11:27); nakedness (2Cor. 11:27); peril (2Cor. 11:26), and finally the sword (2Tim. 4:6). The only one of the seven forms of suffering for Christ which are listed here, which Paul had not experienced when he wrote his last inspired epistle, was "the sword". He places it last in his list because he was aware that this severe trial would be the final one that he would face. The exhortation evident in his own life is clear: None of these things, even the sword, can alienate Christ's love. Rather, as was the case in Paul's own life, every form of suffering, or testing, or trial, will only draw us closer to Christ and to our God, if we realise the *purpose* of our suffering (1Pet. 1:5-6), and acknowledge that "*all* things work together for good, to them that love God" (v. 28).

VERSE 36

• Verse 36 is a parenthesis. Verse 37 continues Paul's argument and gives the answer to the questions listed in v. 35.

"As it is written" — The Diaglott emphasizes Paul's citation: "*Even* as it has been written". The apostle quotes Psa. 44, which is a lament associated with the Passover, illustrating the principle that "the pathway to life is through sacrificial death". In it the Psalmist pleads for deliverance from the dangers he faced from his persecutors. It is a reminder of the days of Egyptian persecution, when the cry of the people rose to heaven, because of the tribulation they bore. The Psalm was probably composed at a time of national reversal when the people were greatly perturbed by the circumstances and felt that

"Who Shall Be Able to Separate Us?" (Rom. 8:39)

With the wonderfully intimate word "*us*" the apostle gathers together in one all God's faithful servants — including himself — wherever they might be and in whatever generation they may live. No wonder this great apostle had said earlier, with conviction: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (ch. 7:25).

The love of Christ cannot be destroyed by: **** Death. * The weakness of the flesh. * False leaders in the ecclesia. * Governments or Rulers. * Any forces which would persuade us from serving Christ. * The frustrations and pressures of life. * Trials which may await us in the future. * Successes or failures. * Any created being on the face of the earth.***

"In" Christ, the means are always available whereby we might rise above every contingency which could arise in our lives, which would work against us inheriting the Kingdom. There can be no greater encouragement to continue steadfastly in the warfare of faith than this knowledge. — ***J. Ullman.***

they were undeserving of them (cp. vv. 17-22). The background might well have been the precarious military situation recorded in 2Sam. 8:3-15, when David's attack on Hadadezer was jeopardised by the counter-attacks of the Damascenes and Edomites and when Israel's situation was so grave due to the weakened condition of the nation, that it seemed as though there was no hope of success. And yet, out of those dark hours came a great victory and the salvation of the nation.

Paul appears to quote verse 22 of the Psalm with the intention of emphasizing the particular trials and persecutions suffered by the early ecclesia — although it has even been so, as Heb. 11 testifies. Throughout the ages, the enemies of Yahweh's people have looked upon them as sheep fit only for slaughter. In quoting this Psalm, Paul provided a significant historical link, showing that as in the days of the Psalmist, the same forms of suffering would come upon the people of God in his own day. It was as though he was exhorting: "Take courage, brethren! Remember the faithful saints who have gone before us, and who remained faithful unto death!"

"For thy sake we are killed all the day long" — The Diaglott has: "on account of thee". True believers suffer for Christ's sake because of their unwavering commitment to his cause (cp. Heb. 12:5-13) revealed in their identification with the Truth. If we were to follow our fleshly inclinations, and to associate with the world (Jn. 15:19), we would suffer no such calamity. We would be accepted as part of the riotous generation (1Pet. 4:4). It is because of the Truth, "for the sake of Christ", that we face such circumstances (Mat. 5:11-12). Peter exhorts: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but 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" (1Pet. 4:12-13). Ultimately, though we endure sufferings equivalent to death (1Cor. 4:9), or death intervenes, we will be rewarded for our faithfulness and love of the Truth (cp. Heb. 11:35-40).

"All the day long" expresses the constancy of Gentile opposition to the Truth (cp. 1Cor. 15:31; 2Cor. 4:10-12). The word "day" is from *hemera*, which, in a figurative sense, indicates a period of time — in relation to development of the divine purpose (cp. 2Pet. 3:12). The world continues its antagonism for a period. It neither relents, nor changes, though it may change tactics from time to time. Though we do not experience the constant and active persecution meted out to our brethren of former times, the destructive influence of the world remains ready to suppress those who uphold the true faith, if it could do so.

"We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" — Literally: "as sheep of slaughter". When saints challenge and reject the ways of society, they are despised and condemned. This same attitude was manifested against the Lord Jesus, to whom this prophecy primarily applies (John 11:50; Isa. 53:7). In such circumstances the disciple is not above his Master. If enemies crucified him, if his life was one of suffering and pain, should it be any better for his disciples? If, through the work of the Son, God was able to reveal the extent of divine love, then the sufferings of believers should not obscure that love. It is by such means that we "fellowship the sufferings" (Phil. 3:10) of the Lord, in order that we might ultimately associate with his glory (2Tim. 2:12). Therefore such trials as might affect the flock have always been the lot of God's servants, and are not the means of separating us from God.

VERSE 37

"Nay" — The Gr. *alla* is always an emphatic: "No!"; "But!" (DIAG). Paul makes a resounding declaration of confidence in the power of God to protect us, challenging the timidity of those who seek to avoid the consequences of true and courageous discipleship. It is not inevitable that we should be destroyed through the opposition of enemies; on the contrary, our faith may be strengthened and matured thereby.

"In all these things" — The uncomfortable, the difficult, the unpleasant experiences of life. The Lord Jesus was required to accept "these things" throughout his life and in his final challenge to the power of the flesh at the time of his crucifixion (Heb. 2:14). In the face of the soldiers and officers of the chief priests and Pharisees, Jesus told his disciples: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Jn. 18:11). Nothing should dissuade us from the great privilege of overcoming the power that opposes our faith. It was the faithlessness of Israel in the wilderness that prevented them conquering the promised Land (Num. 13:28-33; Heb. 3:10), and Paul exhorts us: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). When we are faced with the difficulties and anguishes of life, of whatever source or extent, let us remember the challenging voice of Paul: "Nay!" — we shall not succumb.

"We are more than conquerors" — Paul expresses great excitement and joy in this declaration. It embraces more than merely the overcoming of an enemy. The word used is a strong, emphatic expression, such as the apostle often employs (cp. 2Cor. 4:17), and which is used here with great force and appropriateness. The Greek has only one word for "more than conquerors": *hupernikao* which signifies *to vanquish beyond* (from *huper: over, above, beyond;* and *nikao: to conquer, overcome, prevail*); hence "super-conquerors", who gain a victory so great it is regarded as being unsurpassable! Paul was able to visualise something of the glory that is to come, despite the fact that his present circumstances were often clouded with trials and difficulties. Through the dimness of despair and out of the darkness of suffering, we can develop the same spiritual hope and vision as the apostle, and be greatly encouraged thereby (Phil. 3:14).

Why should Paul use such an extravagant word as "super-conquerors"? To demonstrate by way of added encouragement, that Yahweh possesses absolute powers to provide for all our needs — and more! His powers are far beyond our limited comprehension; they are limitless. He will not only supply all our necessities now and at Christ's coming, but has the ability to provide far more than we will ever need. What courage and determination we should manifest, in knowing that we are to be redeemed by a God who is All-Powerful, and who can do all things for us, and more.

If the trials and vicissitudes of life are confronted with the disposition which is encouraged in this chapter of Romans, we will certainly be numbered among the "super-conquerors". Such an attempt to "overcome the world" requires that we do not "live after the flesh" (v. 12), but that we are "led by the Spirit of God" (v. 14); that we accept submissively the sufferings of the present (v. 18), awaiting the redemption of our body (v. 23), believing that God will freely give us all things (v. 32). In all this, we will be manifesting the character and the way of life of the one who died that we might live.

"Through him that loved us" — His love is the means by which victory is achieved (see Phil. 4:13; Gal. 2:2). In appreciating such great love for us, a love that culminated in the surrender of his own life, we lend vigor to our faith and reality to our hope. It was not by our own strength of will, nor achieved by individual perfect obedience, but as God was in Christ (2Cor. 5:19), so Christ is in us (Rom. 8:10) to strengthen us in victory over the flesh and to sustain us against all trials and difficulties. It was the "love" of Christ that brought us to spiritual birth, and provided the characteristics by which we might ultimately succeed. Thus John declares: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1Jn. 5:4).

VERSE 38

"For I am persuaded" — Paul's confident assertion formed out of a life of great difficulty, many problems, challeng-

ing circumstances, and extreme privation. Often the apostle reminded his readers of his absolute conviction of the benefits of discipleship: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

The word "persuaded" used here is the Greek *peitho*, and signifies: *to convince; pacify; assent; rely.* It is in the passive voice, thus meaning: "to suffer oneself to be persuaded or convinced" (Bull.). Most versions render it "convinced". It implies Paul's careful deliberation of all the facts of the matter, followed by full conviction, and is elsewhere found in many places including ch. 14:14; 15:14; 2Tim. 1:5, 12; Heb. 6:9. Paul had surrendered his own will to that of the Father, having been fully persuaded by the power of the Word. His confidence in God was absolute and unshakeable, and he now expresses his inner conviction formed out of the realisation that external circumstances are controlled by God, and are therefore endured for one's own benefit.

"That neither death" — In view of the hope of the resurrection, death is merely "sleeping" awaiting the moment of new dawn (cp. Jn. 11:11; 1Thes. 4:14). Indeed, how could death possibly separate us from the love of Christ, in view of the fact that the Lord's own tomb is now *empty!* The grave has been conquered! God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to *our* works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the Age began, but is now made manifest by the *appearing* of our saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath *abolished death*, and hath brought *life and immortality* to light, through the gospel" (2Tim. 1:9-10).

"Nor life" — Life might bring persecution and trial, or ease and wealth, but no experience of life should sever our association with the Almighty. If the flesh is repudiated and the "works of the flesh" are "put to death" (v. 13), "life" may be used to serve Christ in a spirit of self-denial. "Life" will then provide us with the opportunity of serving God rather than the flesh, leading to the reward of an endless life.

"Nor angels" — Whether heavenly angels, commissioned to do the divine bidding (Heb. 1:14), or earthly messengers (Gr. *aggeloi, messengers*) whose lives are subject to the divine providence. Even faithless leaders of the ecclesia are styled "angels" (cp. Rev. 2,3; Acts 20:28-29; Jude v. 6; 1Cor. 6:3).

"Nor principalities" — Persecuting authorities and governments (Eph. 6:12). The word *arche* signifies *a commencement, chief;* and usually refers to magistrates and civil rulers (cp. 1Cor. 15:24, "rule"). The work of the Lord Jesus, through his victorious sacrifice, achieved the dissolution of the ruling Jewish State (Col. 2:15).

"Nor powers" — The Gr. *dunamis* (Eng. "dynamo") signifies *the ability to perform; power in action.* It is rendered "mighty works" (Mk. 6:5) and "miracles" (Mk. 9:39; Acts 2:22; 8:13, etc), and here indicates authorities with absolute power to act in such a way as to draw adherents from Christ (see Rom. 13:1; 1Pet. 3:22).

"Nor things present" — The frustrating and difficult circumstances of life. Such calamities which might befall us are not necessarily the means of punishment (cp. Lk. 13:4), but might be a divine testing to determine our fidelity to the Truth, as to whether such things could "separate us from the love of Christ".

"Nor things to come" — Whatever the future might hold. Sometimes we might anticipate trouble, and be tempted to avoid such situations by renouncing the things of the Truth. This is not the attitude of a dedicated disciple (cp. Acts 21:11-13), who will face the future in confidence, and in conviction that the "love of Christ" can overcome anticipated difficulties, as it can our present experiences.

VERSE 39

"Nor height" — The praise and pride which may result from success, and the enjoyment of prosperity, honor and elevation before one's fellows. Even when cir-

cumstances bring a measure of importance, wealth or prosperity (as was the case with Joseph: Gen. 39:2; 41:41-45, and with Daniel: ch. 2:48, etc), the sense of true humility and dependence upon Yahweh will destroy the fleshly feelings of pomposity and self-achievement.

The way in which such circumstances may fuel our natural "pride of life" may well influence us to believe that we can be self-sufficient without God and His Word. Pride is probably the greatest destroyer of men.

"Nor depth" — Whilst pride may lift us up, destroying our humility before God and dependence upon Him, so a feeling of humiliating depression, which may result from failure or defeat, can have a similarly destructive effect, if permitted to influence us. We may feel that God has failed us, that He does not care for us. We may question the goodness of God, or experience degrading ridicule or rejection by our fellows. Faith and hope provide the antidote to either "height" or "depth". Even the dreadful affliction which befell the faithful Job was not able to "separate *him* from the love of God" (cp. Job 19:25).

"Nor any other creature" — Lit. "nor any created thing"; any other being in the universe. No created thing is more powerful than Yahweh, and certainly no created thing can frustrate God's purpose in us. Thus Paul's last example expresses his unwavering confidence that there is no external reason for the disciple to sever his association with Christ, and to lose the power of "his love".

"Shall be able to separate us" — Paul concludes his answer to the question posed in v. 35: "Who shall separate us...?" He has briefly summarised all the *external* challenges that can face us in the differing circumstances of life, and finds that none have the ability to turn away our fervor for the Truth, nor defeat our earnest commitment to the cause of Christ.

But there is one challenge that Paul has not mentioned! The only influences that ***can*** separate us from the love of Christ are our own fleshly inclinations. In this sense, we can become our greatest enemy "if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3). Demas forsook Paul because he wanted to become attached to "the world" (2Tim. 4:10). His "love of this present world" was more important than the "love of Christ", and his own heart was the cause of his downfall.

Paul thus emphasizes the glorious, yet serious, matter of our *own* personal decisions in life. The Father assists us with everything that is necessary, and we must draw upon this help at all times, whilst remaining ever aware of the frailty and fallibility of the nature we bear.

Paul here uses the word "separate" for the second time. In v. 35 he has spoken of the "love of Christ"; now he speaks of "the love of God". Why the change? There is really no change, for the Father and Son are not only of one mind and purpose — they are inseparable in every respect. Why, then, does Paul conclude this section of the epistle with the emphasis upon not being "separated" from the love "*of God*"? Since the focal point of the epistle is Jesus Christ, set forth as the blood-sprinkled mercy seat (ch. 3:25), this wording is most significant. The law taught: "And thou shalt hang up the ***vail*** under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither ***within*** the vail the Ark of the Testimony: and the vail shall ***divide*** unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the ***mercy seat*** upon the Ark of the Testimony ***in*** the most holy place" (Exod. 26:33-34). The word for "divide" has elsewhere been rendered ***"separate"***. Thus: "The ***vail*** shall ***separate*** unto you between the holy place and the most holy place". But not any more, says the apostle! The "separation" has been removed. The vail symbolised the flesh of Christ, and through the perfect offering of Christ, the vail has been rent asunder (Mat. 27:51; Heb. 6:19; 10:19-20). Now, ***no veil exists*** which could "separate" us from God. Earlier, in Rom. 1:17 Paul firmly stated his thesis regarding the gospel: "Therein is the righteousness of God ***revealed***..." The word *(apokalupto)* signifies *to uncover, to* ***unveil!*** The way to reconciliation between God and man has become a reality. The

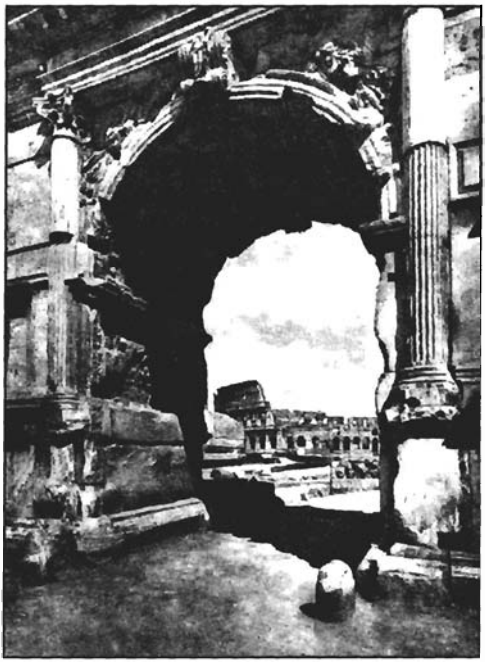
vail has been torn asunder, and there revealed is the blood-sprinkled mercy seat: the Lord Jesus Christ. "Who shall ***separate*** us from the love of God?" Nothing. There is no power sufficiently great. The only possible danger lies within ourselves. Let us rejoice, greatly humbled at the great mercy of Yahweh, whilst being warned concerning the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

"From the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" — The greatest power in the universe is seen in the divine love manifested in sacrifice. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2Cor. 5:19), and by that means provided for the salvation and elevation of those who would come unto Him. Fully committed to our welfare, Christ is able to help us in all the trying circumstances of life (1Pet. 3:22), for in him there is strength (Phil. 4:13), and in his love we can conquer persecution, trial or temptation. Success or depression are thus modified in him, because, through his love, we look upon life from a balanced perspective, and its extremes assume a deeper and spiritual meaning. Created things lose their terror for us, because we have access to the Increate. So, in Christ, there is the ability to rise above every situation and see beyond it to the glory to be manifest when the love of God shall be fully revealed. Then it will be seen that our trials, or depressions in life, are scarcely worth regarding in comparison with our future glory (2Cor. 4:17-18). Our confidence will not be misplaced, so long as we remain in that love. See Jn. 14:23; Rom. 8:9; 11:22.

Safe in the hands of Yahweh our redeemer, we may confidently commit our way to Him, whether it lead through persecution, trial, sickness, or even death, knowing that ultimately, and triumphantly, we will witness the day of our complete adoption, when we will experience the redemption of our body and the wondrous glory of divine nature.

Triumphal Arch that commemorates Jerusalem's Fall

Through the Arch of Titus is seen Rome's Colosseum. Neither arch nor edifice existed in Paul's day, but they are historically linked with the apostolic age. Standing on raised ground overlooking the Forum, this Arch of Victory was erected by the emperor Domitian (AD81-96) in honor of his brother Titus' conquest of Jerusalem in AD70. Sculptures adorning the Arch depict scenes from the triumphal procession of the conqueror on his return to Rome. Jerusalem thus suffered for its rejection of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the gospel message of salvation preached by the apostles.



Comments on Chapter 9

Paul's words in this section are carefully and thoroughly chosen. He provides not one shred of argument which could indicate that because of his acceptance of the gospel of Christ, he now revealed only hostility towards Jews in favor of Gentiles. In this regard it was essential for Paul to exercise extreme care in stating his case, since his preaching work among the Gentiles would have been well-known to the Jews (cp. Acts 21:26-31, etc). Paul's opponents had charged him with insincerity, even falsehood, and had represented him as an apostate, an enemy of his own people. Imagine, then, the vehemence with which he would have penned the words: "I say ***the truth*** *in Christ!" Christ was his motive, and Christ was his witness. Such a solemn declaration would demonstrate Paul's deep grief at Jewry's antagonism to the gospel, and the degree of desperation he felt in striving to draw them to its saving power.*

In the main, the truth which Paul is about to reveal, primarily for the benefit of Jewry, concerns ***future*** *hopes for the nation. The generation of Paul's day remained without hope so long as they continued to repudiate the Son of God. Yet they considered their position impregnable — they were the "chosen" people, the "covenant" people to which (so they believed) their circumcision fully testified. They were convinced that, nationally,* ***they*** *were "the son of God" and they were proud of that relationship.*

*Paul now pleads with his people to understand that there is only one means whereby they might attain unto eternal salvation. Though Israel, nationally, has in store a wonderful future, individual salvation is not a national matter, but a personal one. "****This*** *is life eternal, that they might* ***know*** *(ginosko, "a deep, personal, intimate knowledge") Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3). Paul sets about his purpose with characteristic resolve and earnestness.*

Emotion and the Truth

It is not possible to possess the *spirit* of the Truth, whilst exhibiting selfishness and lack of compassion towards others. In addition to knowing and understanding the gospel, it is necessary to manifest the *spirit* of the Truth as a way of life. But something even deeper than this is involved. When we are the instrument whereby a person is brought to an acceptance of the Truth, a human being is led into the way which can bring them eternal salvation — and above all else, Yahweh is glorified thereby. In the Greek, Paul's words "I could wish" (Rom. 9:3) are in the potential imperfect tense; thus conveying the idea of "an unattainable wish". However, even though he realised the impossibility of such an occurrence, this did not stop the apostle from showing his willing devotion to such a cause, even at the cost of his own life. Paul would have been well aware that no sacrifice could be efficacious when offered on the behalf of a faithless, disbelieving people. Such a sacrifice would have been in vain. Perhaps this knowledge, more than anything else, brought anguish to the apostle. So great was his benevolence for Jewry that he was ready to do or suffer anything whatever, if their salvation could have been secured thereby. But faith, which has the prerequisites of knowledge and belief, is the only principle upon which natural Israel could hope to be redeemed. Paul has already spoken of the "righteousness which is *out of* faith" (ch. 9:30, lit. Gr.). Thus, the answer which would have been given to Paul would have been the same as that given to Moses in similar circumstances: "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, *him* will I blot our of My book" (Ex. 32:33). This is referring to those who were either unrepentant, or had no covering for their sins. No wonder Paul felt such personal distress at the state of his "kinsmen according to the flesh". ***— J. Ullman.***

ROMANS:
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Section Three

PAUL'S NATIONAL EXPOSITION

How the Gospel Relates to Israel

Chs. 9:1 to 11:36

PART ONE: ISRAEL'S SELECTION

The Principle of Divine Sovereignty.

God's Work in the Past.

— Chapter 9

Yahweh's Purpose is Vindicated in His Principle of Selection

In the previous section of his epistle, Paul has expounded on the wonderful purpose of God in the development of principles by which individual salvation might be achieved. He did that likewise in regard to the nation of Israel — yet the nation has dismally failed to uphold His righteousness. Is that reason for Yahweh to repudiate His calling to Israel? Not at all; therefore there is a further principle to be upheld in this matter. Israel was not only called to glory because they were a nation under the oppression of Egypt — it was because of the divine promise to the fathers of old. God's honor and fidelity is inseparably attached to what He performs with Israel.

Therefore, having affirmed his own love for Israel (vv. 1-5), Paul argues in a masterly way that Israel's disbelief cannot frustrate God's purpose of election (vv. 6-13). Further, though Israel would degenerate in unrighteousness, the election of the nation does not imply unrighteousness on God's part (vv. 14-18). Indeed, there is remarkable wisdom and purpose behind God's choice of Israel as His "holy people" that will ultimately reveal the divine sagacity to all mankind (vv. 19-24). Paul shows that God's righteousness with Israel has brought Gentiles into the arena of salvation (vv. 25-29), and that finally, it will be upon the manifestation of faith and acceptance of the Messiah, that the nation will be permitted to enjoy high honor and privilege in the kingdom to be established by the Lord Jesus Christ on earth (vv. 30-33).

In the wonderful outworking of the divine plan, Yahweh's wisdom and righteousness are upheld, and the salvation of His selected ones is achieved.

HAVING *clearly established the principle of personal justification, and the means by which Yahweh would call individuals to His glory, Paul now shows that the divine plan does not ignore the covenant which Yahweh made to His chosen men of faith — a plan which of necessity includes the seed of Abraham after the flesh, constituted as the nation of Israel, in their ultimate restoration to favor. This enterprise demonstrates the unfailing faithfulness of Yahweh, so that we can have the utmost confidence in His Word that He will fulfil that to which He commits Himself.*

This third section (see our analysis on page 10) commences with chapter 9 and continues to the end of chapter 11. It expounds the divine purpose with Israel, and can, itself, be divided into three parts, conveniently headed: ***[1] Selection: ch. 9, [2] Rejection: ch. 10, [3] Restoration: ch. 11.*** *Again, the three chapters reveal [1] Divine Sovereignty, [2] Human Responsibility, [3] Universal Blessing. Yet again: [1] God's work in the Past, [2] His action in the Present, [3] His purpose in the Future.*

This section is just as vital to the subject of Justification — The Power of God to Us — as the former chapters. As a nation, Israel is representative of those who in all times have sought salvation by law; i.e., by their own merit and righteousness. The proclamation that men are "justified by faith apart from works of the Law" (ch. 3:28 NASB) reaches its final climax in this section. The peril and plight of Israel is that of every man who refuses the salvation freely offered through Christ on the basis of identification with the atoning work of God in him. Nevertheless, the amazing mercy of God is extended to every son of Adam's race, for He has "concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (ch. 11:32). The divine plan is to justify all who are prepared to humbly seek Yahweh's goodwill and mercy — whether individually, as His immortalised saints, or nationally, as with the restored nation of Israel.

In his treatment of the gospel in relation to Israel, Paul shows that the invitation of salvation that was issued to Gentiles when the Jews rejected the Redeemer, does not annul God's ancient promises, nor deflect His purpose with Israel. Indeed, God remains completely consistent in turning from the generation that rejected His will, since the call to the nation of Israel out of Egypt was on the basis of selection without the manifesta-

tion of personal merit on its part (Rom. 9:11), and on that same principle He now invites Gentiles to seek for salvation (vv. 14-15). Israel (Jacob) was selected instead of Esau before either had done good or ill (Gen. 25:22-23; Mal. 1:2), though the record of history reveals that the choice, based upon God's foreknowledge, was both wise and good. In view of all that, faith in God should now acknowledge that a similar choice of Gentiles on the same principle must likewise be prudent, and in accord with the perfect standard of divine morality.

In masterly fashion, the apostle shows that justification of Gentiles is accomplished without annulling the divine purpose with Israel, which is not subject to change (Rom. 11:29). Chapters 9 to 11 thus answer the question: "Seeing Gentiles are being justified equally with Jews (Rom. 3:1-2), does that abrogate the purpose of God with Israel as proclaimed in the Old Testament?" Paul confidently affirms that God remains consistent in all His actions, and expounds upon the ultimate glory that will come to the people of God —both individually and nationally.

Paul's Love for Israel — vv. 1-5.

Having rejected the principles of Judaism in favor of faith in Christ, and having repudiated those of his nation who had crucified the Lord of Glory, Paul nevertheless retained a deep affection for the people of Israel. Like the prophets before him, Paul labored tirelessly to bring his kindred to an understanding of the saving gospel. He now expresses his intense sorrow at Israel's rejection of the Truth; he would have gladly forfeited his own hope if such a sacrifice on his part could have secured the salvation of Israel. However, there was only one sacrifice by which the nation could be redeemed: the perfect offering which had been made by Christ.

VERSE 1

"I say the truth in Christ" — Paul now introduces the subject of Israel nationally. He does it with great tact and delicacy, so as to demonstrate that what God proposes with a nation that has rejected Him, is in full accord with His principles of righteousness. So the apostle makes a solemn assertion to emphasize his love of Israel, and to clear himself of any suspicion that his preaching to Gentiles was motivated by hostility, or indifference, towards Jewry, as some might have suggested.

In this phrase, Paul unites with Christ, as indicated in the Diaglott Greek text: "Truth I speak, in Anointed". Christ represents the means of forgiveness to those who are "out of the way". Concerning the ignorant of the nation that crucified him, the Lord Jesus pleaded: "forgive them for they *know not* what they do" (Lk. 23:34). That prayer was answered in the mercy extended to such as the apostle Paul, and ultimately will be fulfilled in the deliverance of the nation and its elevation in the millennium. In this statement he bears witness to the united endeavors of both the Lord Jesus and himself, that Israel might be redeemed: through the acknowledgement of Christ's sacrifice, and acceptance of the apostle's preaching.

"I lie not" — Paul emphasizes his selfless entreaty. He was genuinely dis-

tressed by the plight of Israel, and the impending dissolution of the State, as prophesied by the Lord, and he desires to assure his readers of the facts and veracity of his exposition concerning Israel.

"My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit" — In addition to asserting his union with Christ, indicated in the opening phrase, Paul now claims that the Holy Spirit had assisted in bringing him to a correct understanding of the divine purpose (cf. John 16:13), and had therefore endorsed its testimony. Paul is willing to be perfectly open to his readers in setting forth the gospel message in relation to Israel in all its power, that they might similarly exercise their intellect to develop faith (ch. 10:17), and thereby respond wholeheartedly to the Truth.

Paul's *conscience* testified to his honesty before God (Acts 23:1; 24:16; Heb. 13:18), even though he was once living in ignorance of the saving principles of the gospel (1Tim. 1:13). The power of the Truth sincerely believed and faithfully followed will develop a "good conscience and faith unfeigned" (1Tim. 1:5; 3:9); whilst others, who neglect the Truth revealed by the Spirit, allow their conscience to be "seared with a hot iron" (1Tim. 4:2).

By using the word "conscience" rather than simply referring to himself, Paul draws attention to his personal integrity. He claims that his genuine motive was above suspicion or doubt. The spirit of Christ permeated his entire thoughts and life.

The Diaglott has "my conscience coattesting with me, in a holy Spirit". The word translated "witness" is *summartureo*, signifying *to testify jointly*. From the word *martureo* comes the English "martyr"; thus it indicates one who is prepared to witness even to the commitment of life itself. Paul states that both his own inclinations, together with the teaching of the Truth, join in providing ample evidence concerning his desires that Israel should benefit from the efforts put forth on their behalf.

VERSE 2

"That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart" — Paul experiences the kind of emotion similar to that which was deeply felt by the Lord Jesus as he approached Jerusalem. He expressed his intense anguish: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Lk. 13:34). Their stubborn refusal to accept his message of salvation was one of the reasons why the Lord was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3).

Paul shared that pathos. The cause of his grief was the fact that so large a part of the nation called to manifest God's glory on earth, would be rejected and cast off because of its rebellion against Him. The word "heaviness" signifies sorrow and pangs of grief; whereas "continual sorrow" emphasizes the longstanding nature of his sadness. There were obvious ties of family and associations of earlier days, that came to his mind at this moment, and which, to a man of large sympathies, brought such distress.

Though writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Paul is permitted to reveal his deep, personal feelings. This is a wonderful example of Yahweh working "together for *good*" with those that "love God" (ch. 8:28). If we wish to understand what it means "to love one another" we should look firstly at the perfect example of the Son of God. Then we can observe the life of this great apostle and others like him. Paul's spiritual and emotional feelings for his fellow man were based upon his clear understanding of the Truth, and not upon mere sentiment and personal likes and dislikes. "Great sorrow and unceasing pain" (RV) are descriptive terms. The first indicates emotional anguish; the second refers to a physical condition. Thus, Paul was both mentally and physically affected when contemplating the spiritual state of his Jewish brethren. It is evident from his writings that Paul was an extremely intense man. He gave himself fully and unreservedly to whatever cause

he espoused. Since his conversion to Christ he had known no other stimulus nor motivation. As a man of God, devoted to the cause of his Master, Paul's life remains an outstanding example for all who strive to follow in the steps of the Son of God.

VERSE 3

"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ" — The word "accursed" is the Gr. *anathema*, signifying *dedicated to destruction; to ban or excommunicate a thing or person* (1Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8-9). So intense was Paul's love for Israel, that he was prepared to be "separated from Christ", and therefore perish on behalf of the nation, if that action would accomplish its salvation. In this he was like Moses, who, when God threatened to destroy the people because of their wickedness, begged that he himself should die rather than that the nation of Israel, whom God had rescued from Egypt "with a mighty hand", should be destroyed (Exo. 32:32). But such would not have been an efficacious offering; neither honoring to God nor acceptable to Him. Therefore, it would be unrighteous of Yahweh to justify any individual on the ground of another's ineffectual sacrifice.

Obviously Paul recognised that principle, and, having fulfilled his fervent desire to emphasize his feelings for Israel, he puts the matter to one side. Literally his words are in the past tense: "I myself was wishing" (Diag.). It is said that the Greek tense indicates a wish begun, but stopped at the outset by some antecedent consideration which renders the fulfilment of it impossible. The consideration that stopped Paul's wish was doubtless his realisation that any sacrifice on the behalf of people in the condition of faithlessness, as were the Jews, was futile — for faith on their part is necessary for salvation, and for any sacrifice on their account to be of any value (cf. ch. 11:23). But the fact that he was capable of such an intensive desire demonstrates that he was not repudiating nor disowning Israel, as many claimed (Acts 26:20-21).

"For my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" — Paul states the reasons for his deep compassion. Firstly he was tied to the nation by blood as a "kinsman". The apostle never lost his feeling of identity with his fellow-Israelites, and always recognised a burden of responsibility to them. He initially addressed the Word of God "first *(to the Jews)* but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). This again occurred when Paul was in Rome: he called for the Jews of that place to make known to them the "hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). It was only after they had rejected the principles of salvation, and took themselves into the class of "swine" (Mat. 7:6), that the apostle turned his attention to others.

VERSE 4

"Who are Israelites" — This is the second reason for Paul's compassion: it is based on the divinely bestowed privileges which had been given to the chosen people (ch. 3:1-3). They were partakers of the promises made to Jacob upon whom the name "Israel" was conferred. This honored name signifies *A Prince with God (El)*, or *He who Strives with God and Prevailed will Prevail with Men* (see notes in *Genesis Expositor* on Gen. 32:28). Those who descended from Israel are consequently called by God: "a holy people unto Yahweh... chosen to be a special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deu. 7:6). The name of Israel was bestowed upon Jacob in acknowledgement of his changed and elevated status before God, and to indicate that, despite all difficulties and reverses, he would ultimately prevail both with God and man (Esau).

Since they are beneficiaries of the divine promises to their father Jacob, Paul recognises Israel's right to the privileges of their calling. It was their national wickedness, in rejecting both God and their Saviour, that alienated that generation from divine grace.

This is the first occurrence of the name *"Israel"* in this epistle. It serves as a sub-

tle reminder to Jewish readers that they were a people whom Yahweh made His own. See Deut. 7:6. The very name "Israel" illustrated the fact that they were the most exalted of all nations. Every Israelite was called to become *A Prince with El*, but they could only attain such a state by becoming "Israelites *indeed*" (Jn. 1:47). Abraham and David (referred to in ch. 4) were outstanding examples to the nation in this regard.

"To whom (pertaineth) the adoption" — See notes on ch. 8:15 (page 284) concerning the term "adoption" (Gr. *huiothesia*: the *placing of a son*). It relates to the maturing of adulthood, for the nation of Israel was called out of Egypt that it might represent the wisdom of Yahweh to all peoples. For that reason Yahweh declared: "Israel is My son, even My firstborn" (Exo. 4:22). The "adoption" was the process by which the nation would be developed in faith and understanding. Hence Paul says that "when the fulness of the time *(i.e., the moment at the time appointed, according to the divine economy and purpose)* was come, God sent forth His Son... to redeem them that were under the law *(and consequently, still in servitude)*, that we might receive the adoption *(sonship)* of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). Unfortunately, the nation acted rebelliously and defiantly: it crucified "the Lord of glory", and was therefore estranged from Yahweh.

Notice that Paul emphasizes that the privilege of sonship "pertaineth" (belongs) to Israel. This accords with the advice of the Lord to the Samaritan woman: "Salvation is of the Jews" (Jn. 4:22). Sonship (full maturity of faith) is only possible for Gentiles by them embracing "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20).

"And the glory" — Gr. *doxa*. Israel was specifically called out of Egypt to manifest the moral excellence of Yahweh to the nations (Exo. 29:46; Isa. 43:7), and the token of this purpose was the presence of the shekinah glory that shone above the mercy seat and between the cherubim in the Inner Sanctuary of the tabernacle, and was later manifested in the temple. That glory denoted the presence of Deity in the midst of His people (2Chr. 5:14; 7:2). It was there that God would meet with Israel (Exo. 25:22), so that the Ark of the Covenant was later called "the Glory" (1Sam. 4:21).

Israel was called to reflect the physical glory of the tabernacle and temple in actions of moral excellence. No other nation was ever thus favored (cp. 2Sam. 7:23). Yahweh declared of His people: "I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house

The Characteristics of a True Israelite

In the New Testament we have the terms "Hebrew of the Hebrews", "Israelite indeed", "a Jew inwardly", and "circumcision of the heart" (Jn. 1:47; Rom. 2:29; 9:6; Phil. 3:5). These are phrases which resolve the descendants of Abraham into two classes — Israel after the flesh; and Israel after the spirit. Referring to this division, Paul says, "they are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but "in Isaac shall thy seed be called" — not in Ishmael or Esau. "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8). Thus, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and all the prophets, Jesus and the apostles, and so forth, were "Hebrews of the Hebrews", "children of the kingdom", "Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile", "Jews inwardly", who were circumcised in heart and ears; while Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the sons of Eli, Saul, Absalom, Zedekiah, Judas, Caiaphas, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and such like, were "the children of the kingdom to be cast into outer darkness", "Jews outwardly"; and of a "circumcision, which is outward in the flesh", according to the letter; *"of Israel"*, but *"not Israel"*; whose praise is of men, but not of God.

—***J. Thomas***, *Eureka*, vol. 1, pp. 224-225.

of Israel... that they might be unto Me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory; but they would not hear" (Jer. 13:11). He chose Israel, guided them, educated them, revealed His will unto them, in order that they might reflect His glory, and that they might be equipped to pass on to others the message of His plan. But they refused to hear.

However, an Israel properly humbled and converted will ultimately attain unto a state of national glory (Jer. 33:8-9), and become the "first dominion" in all the earth (Mic. 4:8).

Meanwhile, Yahweh has revealed His glory through His Son (Jn. 1:14; 2:11; 2Pet. 1:17), and has offered participation in that blessing to Gentiles: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27; cp. Rom. 5:1-2).

"And the covenants" — Paul speaks in the plural form, primarily denoting the Abrahamic (Gen. 12-22) and Davidic (2Sam. 7) — the two covenants of *promise* to which the nation had been appointed heir — whilst not forgetting the Mosaic. Therefore, actually there was only ***one*** basic covenant: the Abrahamic; all others are progressive developments of that covenant in national or regal aspects — i.e., they are "administrative" provisions concerning its fulfilment. The Greek word *diathekai* indicates: *a disposition; a contract; a will.* Yahweh plainly declared His determination to fulfil His pleasure upon the people of His choice, and acknowledged Israel as the "seed of Abraham" (Acts 3:25; 7:8), and "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28). Being bound by covenant relationship to Yahweh, Israel enjoyed a wonderful privilege, together with an onerous responsibility.

The Greek word rendered "covenant" is used by the *Septuagint* translators to represent the Hebrew *beriyth*, a word well known to Jews. It means "a covenant; so called from the idea of *cutting*, since it was the custom in making solemn covenants to pass between the divided parts of the *victims*" (Gesenius). Thus there can be no covenant between God and man apart from a sacrifice, or covenant victim. So far as the Mosaic covenant was concerned, this had been fulfilled in "the blood of bulls and goats" which "could *never* take away sin" (Heb. 10:4, 11). Hence, the *covenants of* ***promise*** were confirmed by the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God (Heb. 9:12; Rom. 15:8). Accepting this principle, Israel would have been brought into the Truth. Thus with this one word, Paul establishes a foundation upon which he will not elaborate, leading to the conclusion that the Jew has no relationship to the covenants *of promise*, so far as eternal salvation was concerned, apart from an acknowledgement of *the covenant victim, which Yahweh had provided:* the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 8:6).

"And the giving of the law" — The Greek has one word: *nomothesia*, from a root meaning *the placing of law.* It brought the nation under the responsibility of obedience; a test that was originally made in the garden of Eden, and which Adam failed. Now Paul takes his readers back to the moment of Israel's national birth, when the people were constituted the "holy nation" by the conferring of divine laws to Moses on Mount Sinai amidst the grandeur and splendor of the divine presence (Exo. 20; cp. Psa. 147:19). It made them a "peculiar treasure unto God above all people" (Exo. 19:5).

What a privileged people they were! "What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?" (Deu. 4:7-8, 21-34). Should not this law, together with the divine glory associated therewith, have filled the nation with awe and reverence for Yahweh? Yet the possession of the law, without its observance, conferred no benefit, and has already drawn a strong rebuke from Paul (in ch. 2, etc). The keeping of the law was regarded by the Jews as being the means whereby they might secure the joy and blessings of the Messianic Age; yet they would not acknowledge that none were able to perfectly fulfil it (ch. 7:7-11; Gal. 2:21; 3:10-11).

"And the service (of God)" — This phrase is better rendered: "and the rites of

The Two Sons of Abraham

In Rom. 9:7 Paul considers the direct progeny of Abraham, the Father of the faithful, and even here privilege did not embrace all his children. Not all were children of God, but "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). The desire to have children in order to fulfil the promises was the constant hope of Abraham.

At length, by a fleshly contrivance, Abram begat Ishmael by Hagar, the bondwoman. Abram thought that the promise might thereby be secured, and for thirteen years his hopes centred around Ishmael: "O that Ishmael might live before Thee". But God knew the heart of Ishmael and refused him. Abraham was instructed that the seed of the promise would be in a son by Sarah (Gen. 17:15-19). The fact that no confidence was to be had in the normal fleshly mode of propagation had already been indicated by the law of circumcision, instituted just beforehand (vv. 9-14; Phil. 3:3). At length, by faith in the power of God, Sarah conceived and the "child of promise" was "born after the Spirit" (Heb. 11:11; Gal. 4:29). It was at Sarah's request to "cast out the bondwoman and her son", that Abraham was told "let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). No Jew would object to the rejection of Ishmael and the selection of Isaac, but in accepting that fact, a principle was involved which, in its outworking, destroyed their position of imagined favor. — *J. Knowles.*

service" (DIAG.). There is no Greek word for "God" in the text. The phrase refers to the principles of divine worship which were incorporated in God's Word, for the enlightenment of Israel: "He sheweth His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel" (Psa. 147:19).

The Law of Moses revealed a divine mode of worship designed to bring the people close to Yahweh (Heb. 9:1). It instructed them in holiness and the etiquette involved in the service of their God. There were certain rituals, actions and customs essential to the proper performance of the divine will, as there are under Christ. Though the "services" (Gr. *latreia*: *ministrations*) might have changed under the "Law of Grace" (for instead of a tabernacle altar we now have the table of remembrance with its bread and wine), there is still a great privilege to be acknowledged by those who are called to the "service of the Truth" in giving their full allegiance to the commandments of Christ (cp. Heb. 9:9).

"And the promises" — The noun and the verb of this word occur nine times in this epistle. On the foundation of the covenant, rituals and laws given to Israel (Eph. 2:12), many benefits and advantages were held out to them. Promises were made by God concerning the land (Exo. 12:25), the gospel (Acts 13:31-32), the Messiah (Acts 3:22), and the future hope (Acts 26:6).

VERSE 5

"Whose (are) the fathers" — The TCNT has: "They trace their descent from the patriarchs". The nation was related to an illustrious ancestry: faithful men (Heb. 11:8-21; 39-40) who are "beloved of God" (Deu. 7:6-9; Rom. 11:28). So great were these men in Yahweh's eyes that He surnamed Himself by them: "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Heb. 11:16; Gen. 17:7). On this, Israel highly valued themselves (Jn. 8:39; Mat. 3:9). Unfortunately, though they had such a great heritage, they neglected to perform the works of their "fathers". Paul's use of the phrase in the verse before us reminded Jewry that God did not look upon them with favor because of any merit on their part, as they unjustly believed; but because the "fathers" had proven faithful, having learned to "walk by faith" before God, and were therefore pleasing and acceptable to Him (see Heb. 11).

The same responsibility rests upon those "of faith", who claim association

with "fathers" who have pioneered the revelation of Truth in these last days. Peter condemns those who act inconsistently with the example and faith of the "fathers" by scoffing at the evidence of their prophetic words (2Pet. 3:4).

"And of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ (came)" — Being, in respect to his human lineage, the son of Abraham and of David (Mat. 1:1; Rom. 1:3), and therefore a member of the nation of Israel. The "Christ" was the only man of fleshly descent who had walked perfectly before God, and who had been granted divine nature and elevated to sit at the right hand of the Father. Being born of Mary (Gal. 4:4), Christ was the fulfilment of the Davidic promise, as both son of David and Son of God (1Jn. 4:2; 2Sam. 7:14); the subject of the Immanuel prophecy of Isa. 9:6. Though Israel was privileged to provide from among its families he who was the manifestation of Yahweh, they refused to recognise him as Messiah, Saviour and King (Jn. 1:11, 17).

"Who is over all" — Christ's destiny is to be governor of all the world (Isa. 9:6), placed over "all the things" previously enumerated by Paul. Thus he is the true *Israelite* (Isa. 49:3), the true *Son* (Mat. 3:17; Heb. 1:2), the real *glory* (Jn. 1:14), the confirmation of the *covenants* (Gal. 3:17), the high priest dedicated to divine *service* (Heb. 5:10), the manifestation of the *promises* (2Cor. 1:20), and the *Father* of eternity (Isa. 9:6). In him are found all the privileges granted unto Israel, the royal-priestly nation; but when he came unto his own "his own received him not" (Jn. 1:11). Thus, despite all the privileges given to Israel, the nation failed, and this occasioned the sorrow of heart so intensely felt by the apostle Paul.

"God blessed for ever. Amen" — Here is one of those sudden, fervent outpourings of reverence which are found, quite movingly, in Paul's writings (cp. ch. 1:25; 2Cor. 11:31; 1Tim. 6:16). He is so utterly devout that his mind is filled with adoring thoughts of his God and Lord, and he expresses his thoughts with earnest intensity. In "following Paul" (1Cor. 11:1) we should similarly be filled with reverential awe and ardor for all things relating to Yahweh, and express such feelings with joy and confidence.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the Deity, and represents the means by which Israel will ultimately achieve the grand privileges of its calling. Because he totally fulfilled the divine will, Christ has been elevated to divine nature and honor — the perfect reflection of the Father Himself (Phil. 2:9-11). Thus he assumes the Father's Name (Heb. 1:8; 1Jn. 5:20). Israel will ultimately acknowledge this principle when they shall "look upon Me *(Yahweh* manifested in the flesh of His Son*)* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him *(Christ)* as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 12:10).

There is a remarkable development in the list of Israel's privileges that Paul catalogues in Rom. 9:4-5. Commencing with the naming of *"Israel"* in the days of Jacob, he then proceeds to the *"adoption"* of the nation when they were redeemed from Egypt, to the *"glory"* manifested at Sinai and the granting of the *"covenant"* that bound them to Yahweh, with the *"giving of the law"* that directed their paths subsequently, and the *"service"* which provided the means of continuing worship — to the *"promises"* which gave hope of future blessings, and culminating in the manifestation of Yahweh among the nation, in the personage of the Lord Jesus Christ, elevated and glorified.

No wonder Paul ends this section with a fervent *"Amen"* (see notes on Rom. 1:25; 11:36; 15:33; 16:20, 24, 27). The word does not merely signify the conclusion of a statement, but implies the "faithfulness" of Yahweh that guarantees its fulfilment. Notwithstanding a temporary abandonment of Israel because of their hardhearted blindness, God will ultimately restore them to favor, as He has promised.

Israel's Disbelief does not Frustrate God's Purpose of Election — vv. 6-13.

Paul acknowledges that the privileges and responsibilities given to Israel were not honored by most of the people. There

were some who responded, and who continued the line of faith manifested by the patriarchs. But, nevertheless, God's foreknowledge enables Him to control events so that His principle of election is maintained. It is seen in a seed of faith.

VERSE 6

"Not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect" — The Greek word *ekpipto* signifies *to fall powerless, to be without effect.* This is impossible as far as the Word of God is concerned, because it is infallible. It "is quick and powerful" (Heb. 4:12), and is the basis upon which mankind will be judged (Jn. 12:48). The "Word" (Gr., *logos*) was established in the beginning as the design of the Creator (Jn. 1:1), and takes into account every divergence from the plan of Yahweh that may come through man's folly. It had not been weakened nor destroyed because of the failure of Israel to maintain its standards. The *Diaglott* has: "But not as implying that the Word of God has fallen". Instead, the Word was strengthened, for the gospel was taken beyond Israel, to enable the Gentiles to share in the wondrous divine purpose under the terms of divine grace (Rom. 11:15).

In this section the apostle gives his first clear answer to the question: "Has God's purpose failed?" In vv. 2-3 the apostle revealed that the nation of Israel failed. Does that therefore mean that God's Word has also failed? Does it mean that God is now frustrated through Israel's failure, and is therefore unable to realise His planned purpose? To affirm this would be to argue that God could be faithless to that which He has promised. It is impossible for "the Word of God" to fail. Yahweh has declared: "My Word that goeth forth out of My mouth shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

"For they (are) not all Israel, which are of Israel" — Not all the natural seed of Jacob have the true spirit of Israel, or are Jews in the scriptural sense of the term. True Israelites are those who manifest the characteristics of their father Abraham (Jn. 8:39), and are defined as those "of a clean heart" (Psa. 73:1), as "Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile" (Jn. 1:47). Only such will prevail with God and man (see notes on v. 4). They are "Jews inwardly *(whose)* praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29).

The Lord repudiated the claim of sonship to Abraham that was professed by the Jews of his day (Jn. 8:39). In rejecting him, the people manifested the characteristics of the *Flesh* as their father (the serpent), doing its will (vv. 40-44). Thus a true Israelite is one who manifests the purpose for which Israel was called into existence: the indwelling glory of God (Exo. 29:46).

The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "Not all those who descend from Israel are Israel; not all the descendants of Abraham are his true children". This single statement would have been viewed as outrageous by most of the Jews. It struck at the very root and foundation of accepted Jewish religious teaching. In all respects they considered themselves superior to Gentiles because of the exclusiveness of their calling, and their privileges as "God's chosen race". However, few understood the moral responsibilities demanded of them.

VERSE 7

"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, (are they) all children" — The Jews of Jesus' day boasted that they were "Abraham's seed" (Jn. 8:33), forgetting that Abraham had two sons: one of Hagar the Egyptian bondslave; the other of Sarah the freewoman. Therefore in the matter of fleshly descent Ishmael could claim sonship equally with Isaac!

Indeed in the allegory recorded in Gal. 4:24-25, Paul argues that the attitude of Israel had put them in the position of Hagar's children: those of "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children". The nation had come, wrongly, to identify their Abrahamic descent with the law and its ritual observances, and had therefore lost sight of the moral qualities associated with willing submission to the

requirements of Yahweh, and a loving disposition towards their God, as was evident in the example of Isaac. Therefore they were more like the wilful Ishmael.

The word for "children" is the Gr. *tekna*, which refers to a child by the fact of begettal (see definition on page 282), and not necessarily to the reflection of the parent's characteristics.

It is also essential to grasp Paul's definition of "Abraham's seed" (cp. ch. 4:13, 16, 18; Gal. 3:16, 19, 29). These passages show that "seed" is a collective term which focuses upon ***One Descendant of Abraham:*** Christ. Christ is the "seed of promise" (Gal. 3:16), but this term includes those who by faith are "in Christ" (Rom. 4:13, 16, 18; Gal. 3:29). It is *in Christ* that the promises of God are fulfilled. Thus the thought of verse 4 expresses a certain qualification: *the promises do belong to Israel, but — to those who are truly Israel!* Paul now carefully defines the true Israel of God.

In the Lord's discourse with the Jews (Jn. 8) he acknowledged their literal, fleshly descent from Abraham. But when, a little later in the discussion, the Jews asserted that they were "the *children of* Abraham", the Lord rejected their claim. He told them that *if* they were the children of Abraham they would "do the things Abraham did" (v. 39). Abraham heard the Word of God, and developed faith; then manifested his faith by his works. The Jews did not understand this, as the discussion in Jn. 8 shows.

"But, In Isaac shall thy seed be called" — Paul cites Gen. 21:12 to reveal the divine decision that, at the very commencement of the history of the nation, Isaac was selected instead of the older Ishmael as the son of promise to continue the line of faith from Abraham. If the claims of fleshly descent were valid, Ishmael could have claimed equality with Isaac! In effect, Paul states: "Simply because men are the *seed* of Abraham, they are not necessarily the *children* of Abraham — and the Scriptures testify to this fact!" (as seen in Gen. 21:12). Natural descent alone was not, and never had been the grounds upon which men and women might receive divine grace.

Thus, God made a distinction based upon His foreknowledge of the characteristics of those two boys, and for the purposes He had in mind. That distinction is continued in the principles of the Truth. Thus: "We, brethren, *as Isaac was*, are the children of promise... Of His *own will* begat He us, with the Word of Truth" (Gal. 4:20; Jas. 1:18).

VERSE 8

"That is" — Paul expounds on the principle set forth in v. 7. Before the kingdom of Israel was established upon the basis of the Mosaic Covenant, the criterion by which the divine selection would be made of those who would comprise the true seed of faithful Abraham, was clearly fixed.

"They which are the children of the flesh" — The natural descendants, which formed the nation of Israel. No Jew would object to the fact that the selection of Isaac and the rejection of Ishmael had brought great privileges to the seed of Isaac. But Paul is now to reveal that the very promise concerning Isaac's destiny, determined that the seed of faith was not restricted to natural lines. The selection of Isaac over Ishmael proved that point. Paul gives emphasis to his quotation from Gen. 21: "In *Isaac* shall thy seed be called..." and now explains the reason for so doing: "they which are the children *of the flesh* (as Ishmael had been — a type of Israel after the flesh), *these are not* the children of God".

"These (are) not the children of God" — How could they be if they are children of flesh? Otherwise Ishmael's credentials would have been accepted, and his line would have been accepted by God. Paul emphasizes that the divine selection is not on the grounds of natural inheritance; the selection of Abraham's true seed is only upon the basis of faith. The Lord told Nicodemus: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn. 3:6). As the man "who came to Jesus by night" could only

claim fleshly descent as a member of the Jewish race, Nicodemus had to be "born again", or "from above" (see mg). Mere fleshly descent can assume no claim upon the kingdom of God, for "flesh and blood does not inherit it" (1Cor. 15:50). That is why the Lord Jesus rejected the claim of the Jews that they were the children of Abraham: true sonship is predicated upon faithful action, and not upon claims of fleshly descent. Ishmael was of the flesh; Isaac was of promise — and the latter, though younger, deposed his brother.

"But the children of the promise" — Those whose birth is as a result of divine intervention, as was Isaac's (Gen. 15:4). The means is by the Spirit-Word (1Pet. 1:23), which conceives the mind of faith (Phil. 2:5), and which brings us into the arena of the divine promises (2Pet. 1:4). It is this principle which will ultimately supersede the Adamic condition of mortality (the Ishmael principle), and constitute us fully as "sons of God" in perfection (1Jn. 3:2).

"Are counted for the seed" — Since acceptance of the promises requires faith, there is no place for the fleshly-minded Jew in the matter of eternal salvation. Upon this same principle, Isaac gained divine favor instead of Ishmael. Thus, faithful Gentiles are identified as "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), spiritual Jews (Rom. 2:29), the "seed of promise" (Rom. 4:13, 16), and "the children of Abraham" (Mat. 3:9; Heb. 2:16; Jn. 8:39; Gal. 3:7). As such they attain unto the privileges that were once made available exclusively to Jewry (Eph. 2:11-13), and they illustrate the truth of the proverb: "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren" (Prov. 17:2).

The word "counted" is from the Gr. *logizomai, to take an inventory; estimate.* It is elsewhere translated "thinkest" (Rom. 2:3), "counted" (ch. 2:26), "reckon" (ch. 4:4), and implies that which is added up that a full result might be obtained. This is not achieved through the flesh, but by the power of the spirit. That "the flesh profits nothing" (Jn. 6:63) is illustrated in the life and character of Ishmael. He was born according to human will, and was rejected. Isaac, born by the interposition of God's will and power, becoming "the seed of promise", was accepted. Brother Thomas commented: "If the children of the flesh had a right to share with Abraham when he obtains possession of the world which God has promised him, then all descended from Ishmael and Esau, his son and grandson, as well as from Isaac would have equal rights. But God, who not only promises the estate, but specifies the conditions of heirship, has restricted the inheritance to those termed the 'children of the promise as Isaac was' (Rom. 9:8). He has proclaimed the great truth that 'the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman' (Gal. 4:30). To be a son of the freewoman, a man, although a Jew, must *believe in the promise made to Abraham;* he must be of a like disposition with Abraham; he must be obedient like

"The Purpose of God" — Rom. 9:11

Paul raises an important issue in this phrase. Tragically, over many centuries the Jews have become blinded to the Truth through their own conceits, and therefore gave little thought to the fact that the nation of Israel had been chosen by Yahweh for *His purpose*, that *He* might be glorified *in them.* Paul's careful use of this term in this verse was designed to awaken them to the fact that they should be concerned solely about the divine purpose, and not taking pride in what they regarded as their exalted status, merely because they were the fleshly descendants of Abraham. The "purpose of God" is at the very core of Paul's exposition in this whole section of the epistle. God's "purpose" is not dictated by fleshly whims nor fancies, but is His perfectly legitimate objective of desiring to see Himself glorified in the works of His hands. Hence, God's people should always be guided in their thoughts and actions by the infallible maxim: "Do all *to the glory of God*" (1Cor. 10:31). ***— J. Ullman.***

Abraham; he must have faith in Jesus as the seed of Abraham associated with him in the promise; he must believe in his name; he must be constitutionally inducted into Christ by immersion into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit... 'And ***if*** ye be Christ's ***then*** are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise' (Gal. 3:26). These are the children of the promise, the children of God, the brethren and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, the sons of the freewoman, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's seed, who are alone entitled to possess the world with him" (*Elpis Israel,* pages 190-191).

Faith in the *promises* is a remarkable force. This is the reason why the case of Isaac is so appropriately set forth by the apostle. Abraham and Sarah, though both physically impotent to bring forth a son, were vitalised through their faith in what God had promised. The intervention of divine power provided the desired result. Their faith in the promises bore fruit. So it is with those who become the spiritual children of Abraham. Thus, we have been "born again, not of corruptible seed (like Ishmael!), but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1Pet. 1:23).

VERSE 9

"For this is the word of promise" — The Gr. for "word" is *logos,* a word that signifies the inner reasoning that has determined a course of action. The divine Wisdom foresaw the need for a Son of Abraham who would maintain the line of faith. This would not be through Ishmael. Therefore to bring to fruition that which had been promised, it was necessary for God to intervene; it required a work which was totally beyond man to accomplish (Rom. 8:3). This was literally true in the case of Isaac, but Paul further teaches that to become a true son or daughter of Abraham, a person must be "born" through the operation of a divine power: the Word of Truth (Jas. 1:18).

The same "word of promise" is the means whereby those with a disposition of faith would supersede the national son of Abraham (the Jewish race) as far as immortality is concerned. To prove his point, Paul now cites Gen. 18:14 which shows that the true seed of promise was brought into being by the intervention of God, and not through the "will of the flesh" (Jn. 1:13).

"At this time will I come" — Though Abraham was the literal father of Isaac, the birth was miraculous. Sarai was "restrained from bearing" (Gen. 16:2), and the subsequent conception was therefore the result of divine intervention. In the antitype which provided the real "son of promise", the Lord Jesus Christ, the miracle was more profound. Mary was a virgin, and the conception of Jesus was only by the "Holy Spirit... and the power of the Highest" (Lk. 1:35): exclusively divine.

Yahweh had selected the moment of Isaac's birth; it was destined for an "appointed time" (Gen. 18:14), as was the birth of the Lord (Gal. 4:4), and as will also be the birth of the national son, Israel after the flesh, whose "appearance" will be manifested at the epoch of the "set time to favor Zion" (Psa. 102:13).

Notice that in his quotation from Gen. 18 Paul combines a clause from v. 10 and another from v. 14. The first reference clearly alludes to the time of the year when the angel visited Abraham. Then, at precisely the right time, the promise would be fulfilled: "at the appointed time I will return" (NIV). Nothing that Yahweh plans and executes is left to chance. His will and purpose will always prevail. Man cannot be so certain concerning his aims and objectives (Jas. 4:13-14).

"And Sara shall have a son" — What a triumphant expression of divine intent! It caused Sarah to laugh in incredulity (Gen. 18:12), but it became a fact. A similar promise from a divine messenger caused Mary to rejoice (Lk. 1:46-55), and foreshadows the birth of the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 4:27).

VERSE 10

"And not only (this)" — The *Jerusalem Bible* has: "Even more to the point is what is said to Rebecca". Not only did God make a distinction among the nat-

ural descendants of Abraham, but even among *those* descendants, further division was made.

The Jews could counter the argument of Paul by asserting that Ishmael was rejected because he was not a genuine son of Abraham, for his mother was the slave Hagar, while Isaac's mother was the princess Sarah (Gal. 4:21-31). So now the apostle advances a case that cannot be refuted: that of Esau and Jacob. The example of Rebecca's sons shows that mere fleshly descent proves nothing. Both sons were equally of Isaac as relating to the flesh; both were circumcised, but Jacob alone revealed characteristics that showed that he was responsive to divine principles. Thus, this selection was not made according to any natural principles, but a distinction was made on character and action that would subsequently be revealed in the two sons of Isaac. We cannot attain eternal salvation on natural abilities nor personal merit. We will only be part of the "election" if we manifest the characteristics of faith, godliness and consistent obedience to the divine will.

"But when Rebecca also had conceived by one" — The words "by one" is emphatic: "from one conception" (DIAG.). Jacob and Esau not only have the same father (as did Ishmael and Isaac), but they also have the same mother, and their origin goes back to one moment of conception (Gen. 25:23). The divine election in this case was not based upon natural superiority of one over the other, but the divine wisdom selected Jacob rather than Esau because it would accord with Yahweh's plan of salvation.

"(Even) by our father Isaac" — Paul deliberately identifies himself as a Jew when he emphasizes: "*our* father Isaac". He avoids giving his adversaries any opportunity to argue that he had renounced his associations with Israel.

Isaac was selected because God had a purpose with him; his sons were to be the means by which that purpose would be extended, but of these two only one, Jacob, would be acceptable as a man of faith and destiny. The word "by" (occurring twice in this verse) is the Greek *ek*, signifying *out of*, thus emphasizing that the selection of Jacob from Esau was not made on the grounds of national inheritance. The Ishmaelites (out of Abraham), and the Edomites (out of Isaac, through Esau), were unsuitable for the divine purpose. But Paul is not justifying the selection on the basis of history or circumstance. Isaac and his seed were chosen because God had a purpose with them which involved them as the custodians of His Word, and His representatives among the nations. But that selection gave the descendants of the fathers no inherent right to salvation. It was to be on the basis of God's work within individuals.

VERSE 11

"For (the children) being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil" — A further blow is struck at the Judaistic concept of self-merit. Jacob was not selected as a *reward* for having fulfilled some meritorious legal obligation; being unborn, he had fulfilled no works of law whatsoever! In addition to this, being unborn at the time of his selection, Jacob was then without character! Yahweh's selection was determined beforehand since His foreknowledge recognised the different qualities that would be later manifested in their lives. His selection of Jacob demonstrated that God is not bound by the limitations of flesh, but seeks the manifestation of the spirit. That was seen in Jacob rather than in Esau; it was later to be manifested in spiritual Israel rather than in the nation according to the flesh. Therefore divine selection is not on the basis of our family associations, however beneficial they might be; nor is it on the basis of any works that we might accomplish in our own strength. Selection by Yahweh is on the grounds that those chosen, honor His precepts in their lives. Upon that basis we were selected "before we were born" (cp. Eph. 1:4) — although not in the sense of the popular doctrine of predestination (cp. 1Thes. 5:9; Deu. 30:19, etc). Before we were called to the Truth, or produced in our lives any reflection to the glory of

God, Yahweh acted to our benefit. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Herein is seen the immeasurable grace and mercy of Yahweh.

"That the purpose of God according to election" — The Greek word for "election" is *ekloge,* and signifies, *selection.* God is selecting unto Himself a people of faith (Acts 15:14), which was the basis of His selection of Israel. But though they kept the passover (Heb. 11:28) and were then delivered from Egypt, the nation failed to honor the responsibilities associated with their divine selection. When John saw the apostate descendants of Jacob gathered before him at the river Jordan, he warned them: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mat. 3:9). It was out of the waters of baptism that such a faithful seed would be developed (Rom. 6:3-4).

"Might stand" — This word is the Greek *meno,* signifying, *to stay, remain, abide.* The eternal principles of the Father are commended to our meditation. He will always act in accordance with His wisdom (Jn. 1:1).

"Not of works, but of him that calleth" — Paul now demolishes two of the most consistent doctrines of Judaism. He totally sets aside the "works" of law as the means of justification, and yet at the same time he denounces human merit as a ground upon which God chooses His people. God has absolute freedom in all things, and His discernment and judgment are always perfectly just. Hence: "God's choice is free, since it depends on the one who calls, not on human merit" (J.B.).

When Yahweh selected Jacob instead of Esau, neither had done good or evil, and yet the selection was not unjust; it was based upon God's foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29), and therefore illustrated His wisdom and power. God could foresee the characteristics of both children even before they had been revealed, and made choice accordingly. That is the principle upon which He selects men for His purpose, and we, in faith, should recognise this. There is no injustice with God, but only faultless wisdom and complete understanding. If we imagine there is injustice, it is because of our limited viewpoint and comprehension of the eternal principles of Truth. In so doing, we attempt to bring Yahweh down to our level of understanding, instead of trying to elevate ourselves towards His ideals. Jacob, the younger son, proved a far better choice than the profane Esau, even as the Israelites were a better nation than the Edomites. The Jews who hearkened to Paul, could not fail to acknowledge that! How, then, could they refute the wisdom of God in extending His choice to include Gentiles, whilst excluding Jews who were merely of the flesh. As proof of this proposition, the apostle again quotes from scripture, now citing Gen. 25:23 and Mal. 1:2, 3.

VERSE 12

"It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger" — This prophecy given to Rebekah (Gen. 25:23) referred to the disparity between the two boys, and to the relationship that would develop between their posterity. At first Esau did not serve Jacob, but rather provoked and opposed him. Ultimately, when the two families met on the eastern side of the Jordan (Gen. 33:1-16) Esau acknowledged that Jacob's blessings were from God; that he had the blessing of his father, including the birthright. Thereafter Esau dwelt in Mount Seir, leaving Jacob to inhabit the Promised Land. Nationally, the antagonism between Israel and Edom, during subsequent centuries, was finally settled by the complete destruction of the Edomites. Of them Obadiah proclaimed: "Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised" (v. 2). They were condemned because they had refused to fulfil the terms of servitude to Israel (cp. v. 10, etc). Politically, the Edomites typify the Gentile powers (Amos 9:11-12; cp. Acts 15:16-17), who will be subject to the authority of Israel during the millennium. Israel will be "the first dominion" (Mic. 4:8), elevated to a nation

of Levites in the Holy Land, through whom the Gentile powers will learn the principles of worship as they come before the King in obedience to the divine edict (Zech. 14:16). In this the nations of the world will benefit from the instruction and guidance provided by Israel in the Land.

VERSE 13

"As it is written" — Paul now cites Mal. 1:2-3 to demonstrate that it is the nations of Israel and Edom which are to be considered. Although the words spoken to Rebekah applied to her two sons, who manifested two different characteristics — one Godfearing and spiritually responsive; the other fleshly and self-willed — they were to symbolise two types of people (Gen. 25:23). Their destinies would be in accordance with the divine foreknowledge. Jacob (Israel) was the elect nation, and Edom (from Esau) had incurred the wrath of God because of its unbrotherly conduct towards Israel in the day of Judah's calamity (Amos 1:9).

Both the Ishmaelites (from Ishmael) and Edomites (from Esau) would have been unsuited to helping forward God's purpose. But Paul is not justifying the selection of Israel on the basis of history. Jacob and his seed were chosen because God had a purpose with them which involved them as the custodians of the Word, and His representatives in this dark world. He chose Abraham and his seed to be granted divine favor and blessing, but this gave his descendants no inherent right to salvation. He had a larger purpose involving "all peoples" (Gal. 3:8), and for which He sought those who manifested the "faith of their father Abraham" (Rom. 4:12).

With the evidence Paul presents from Gen. 25 and Mal. 1, it is clearly established that God never acts from caprice, prejudice nor favoritism. Moreover, the reference to Malachi has the added impact of being historically indisputable. The record of relationships between the two nations shows that Yahweh was wise and totally accurate in the exercise of His foreknowledge concerning the destiny of these two nations: Israel and Edom.

"Jacob have I loved" — Notwithstanding some of the difficulties he faced, and decisions he made, Jacob was Godfearing and upright. He earnestly sought the divine birthright, thus acknowledging that the blessings of God are the most important objectives in life, and must be sought for, as a precious privilege.

The word "loved" is the Gr. *agapao*, which indicates the quality of sacrificial love that seeks the utmost good for the recipient of that love. God was prepared to expend Himself on behalf of His servant, for the characteristics of Jacob were spiritually directed.

"But Esau have I hated" — This phrase is a Hebrew idiom meaning "I have preferred Jacob to Esau". He provided opportunities and privileges for Jacob, but did not do so for Esau. There is no injustice in this. To confer blessings on one person does not require that the same blessings must be also given to others without reason.

The word "hate" implies to set aside in preference to something or somebody else. The Greek word is *miseo* which signifies *to detest*. Strong defines it as "to love less" whereas Vine has: "relative preference for one thing over another". It occurs again in Eph. 5:29, "For no man ever yet *hated* his own flesh", and in 1Jn. 2:9,11, "he that *hateth* his brother". Yahweh could foresee the characteristics and attitude of both sons of Isaac even before they were born, and made choice accordingly. God selected Jacob and rejected Esau because His purpose was to be with Israel, appointing them as custodians of His Word and representatives of His principles to the peoples of the ancient world. Thus, divine selection is on the basis of His purpose, and not because of any supposed inherent right to salvation.

God's Purpose of Election Does Not Involve Unrighteousness on His Part — vv. 14-18.

In case some might consider that God's dealings are unjust, Paul now advances examples from Israel's early history providing irrefutable proof that there

is no inequity with God. He is supreme in administrating both justice and mercy.

VERSE 14

"What shall we say then?" — What conclusions come from the obvious facts advanced? Paul immediately counters the possible accusation that God has shown undue preference for one against the other. It is as though he is saying: "Have I now argued myself into a position in which I have admitted that God, having called and selected Israel, is now acting unjustly in rejecting them?"

The Jew would raise no objection to the rejection of Ishmael, or that of Esau, but when the same principle involved the rejection of some of Israel, then the justice of God would be called in question.

"(Is there) unrighteousness with God?" — Does God practise injustice or wrongdoing? Are His ways unequal? The word "righteousness" is better rendered "injustice", thus: "Are we to understand that God has been *unjust* in His dealings with Israel?"

Because He threatened to punish them for iniquity, Israel complained that Yahweh was partial in judgment, declaring: "The way of Yahweh is not equal", to which came the challenging response: "Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" (Ezek. 18:25). The nation had proved to be quite inconsistent in attitude, and contradictory in action — its history was a catalogue of sinfulness, of suffering and of turning again to seek God, whilst Yahweh had patiently borne with them. Therefore the charge of unrighteousness by God was completely unjustified.

"God forbid" — See explanation at ch. 3:4. Paul makes his characteristic response: "By no means!" "Absolutely not!" It is a flat and unambiguous negation; an almost vehement denial. God's selections are never unjust; they are not based upon human ideals nor values. As in the case of Jacob and Esau, His decisions are based on His foreknowledge of how they would act in life (cp. ch. 8:29).

VERSE 15

"For He saith to Moses" — Paul cites Exod. 33:19, to comment upon an incident of shocking iniquity for which the nation was responsible. In the absence of Moses, Israel sought to adulterate the worship of Yahweh with a golden calf of human design. It brought terrible retribution, and Moses sought to mediate on behalf of the guilty nation: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Yahweh; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exod. 32:30). But sacrifice which was not efficacious would not be in accord with divine justice. His plea was refused (v. 33), although a personal plea for help and a request to be granted the privilege of personally witnessing the glory of Yahweh was allowed (ch. 33:17-19). Thus the balance and perfect justice of Yahweh's actions are seen. He exercised mercy in the one case, whilst declining to do so for the other: and yet the reason why God so acted is clearly evident. This incident demonstrates that God never does anything without sound reason.

Though Paul makes constant references in this epistle to the *writings* of Moses, he mentions him directly only thrice. This citation by Paul is the first and the others are found in ch. 10:5 and v. 19. The mention of Moses in ch. 5:14 does not refer to him directly. So few references to Moses in such an epistle may appear strange. However, it shows the skilful manner in which the epistle is composed. Paul desires to demonstrate that the *words* Moses wrote were of primary significance in this treatise upon the atonement; not the man himself — upon whom the Jews looked reverently as "the father of the law". It is necessary that Paul should mention Moses personally at this point, because he is about to deal with the conflict between two *individuals,* one of whom was blessed by Yahweh, the other condemned. The two were Moses and Pharaoh. Yahweh was the judge. How would He deal with these two, and upon what basis? Paul proceeds to expound the

scriptures providing convincing answers in the case.

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" — God is the supreme judge in all things, including the dispensing of mercy. Mercy is not a quality that can be earned, nor demanded as a right. It can only be sought in humility, faith and gratitude, as a *gift* from God. It is only given upon the basis of the divine goodness, according as Yahweh may choose, and upon His principles of selection. Against the background of Israel's degrading infidelity, Moses sought the manifestation of God's goodness (Exod. 33:19). Yahweh granted that privilege as the evidence of His abounding benevolence to him personally, notwithstanding the presence of sin in the nation.

The word "mercy" is the Greek *eleeo*, which signifies *to be compassionate by word or deed.* It means to feel sympathy, and manifest pity towards the misery of another, and to reveal this in a responsive action. It implies a need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it.

At the same time, the statement upholds the fact that Yahweh has absolute wisdom in the dispensing of mercy and the exercise of compassion. He has laid down the terms by which those qualities will be revealed, and will not disseminate either, until men meet His terms — notwithstanding the favored position that they might achieve through birth (for Jews) or baptism (for individuals). He will not extend mercy to those who reject His principles; yet His mercy is offered to those who willingly seek Him (cp. Gen. 19:19; 24:27).

"And I will have compassion" — The word here is *oikteiro,* signifying *to exercise pity.* It defines the inward feeling of distress for the distressed. Compassion is a divine characteristic, revealed in the way in which Yahweh deals with the wayward and adverse circumstances of His people. It is most consoling to realise that Yahweh is moved thus towards His children; that He has great and real feelings of pity and sorrow for them in their trials, brought about through the effects of sin and death. Concerning the nation that God delivered from Egypt and led through the difficulties of the wilderness and Promised Land, Isaiah records: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63:9). When the indifference with which Israel received the divine goodness expressed towards them is borne in mind (and ofttimes we are no different to them!), how great is the love and mercy of the Father, "for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). In spite of the disobedience of the people of Israel, and in answer to Moses' plea, Yahweh sent "the angel of His presence" to be with them, to care for them, to guard them, and bring them into the land (Exod. 33:14). Therefore, whatever we might have done in life, forgiveness is still extended by Him if we seek Him in the right spirit.

"On whom I will have compassion" — This statement indicates that God is selective concerning those upon whom He bestows His care. He spoke these words to Moses at the time when Israel had strayed from the obedience enjoined upon them during their leader's absence in the Mount (Exod. 32). Moses subsequently sought to see the divine glory which was the basis of Yahweh's continued presence with Israel (ch. 33).

Against the background of these circumstances (Exod. 33:19), Yahweh declared that He does not limit His blessings to Israel, but is prepared to extend them to whomsoever He desires, whether Jew or Gentile. By advancing this statement Paul shows that it is consistent with Yahweh's purpose of selection to make a choice among Gentiles that there might be gathered to Him "a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).

The wording of Ex. 33:19 adds further weight to Paul's overall reasoning. It should be noted that Yahweh did not say that He would have "compassion" and "mercy" on whomsoever He would, *pro-*

viding the individual was an Israelite! Had this been the case, Paul could not have sustained his conclusion. There is, therefore, great significance in the fact that Yahweh completely reserves the right as to where and how His mercy will be dispensed. The narrow interpretation of scripture as erroneously propounded by religious leaders in apostolic time is, by this evidence, thoroughly discredited. After all, Yahweh is taking *"out of the Gentiles a people for His Name"* (Acts 15:14). In all things, God is bound only by the standard of His own righteousness, and not by those who make claims upon Him whilst failing to understand His purpose, character and Truth.

VERSE 16

"So then" — Paul now comments on the scripture he has advanced, to show the effect of Yahweh's policy of mercy and compassion with regard to the called nation of Israel.

"(It is) not of him that willeth" — The word means "wish" or "desire", from the Greek *thelo*, signifying *to determine; choose; prefer*. It is not mere desire that obtains divine mercy; many "desire" salvation, who are not prepared to conform to the instructions of scripture. It is certainly not the prerogative of any who demand it. We cannot compel Yahweh to respond to our ultimatum, nor take for granted His response to our situation.

The NIV has: "It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy". Divine mercy is not available to all. It is not even necessarily extended to those who claim they desire to receive it. All decisions in regard to this matter are entirely the prerogative of Yahweh. It should be obvious that this is right and just, since only God is qualified and capable of discerning who should receive His mercy, and He is fully aware of the reasons why some should be denied His goodness.

One who had "willed" or wished earnestly for divine mercy had been Abraham, on behalf of Ishmael (Gen. 17:18), but it was not granted. Yahweh was far wiser than Abraham, who ultimately learned this lesson and benefited thereby. Esau's effort to expeditiously please Isaac (Gen. 27:4-5, 30-31) and to seek his father's blessing was in vain. Yahweh's comprehension and foreknowledge resulted in Esau being denied his will in this matter.

"Nor of him that runneth" — This indicates the person who is searching for divine favor. Whereas, the word in the previous phrase, "willeth", is expressive of man's purpose or desire; the word "runneth" is a metaphor for strenuous, continuous effort, thus speaks of exertion (1Cor. 9:24-26; Gal. 2:2, 7; Phil. 2:16; 3:12-14), as when a man is anxious to achieve a project. But even such an admirable quality is not, of itself, an assurance of divine mercy. A person might desire it, or seek it, who is not prepared to carry out the terms and conditions necessary to receive it. That, indeed, was the position to which Israel had degenerated. "We are the favored people of Yahweh" they declared (Jer. 7:4; Ezek. 35:20), but divine compassion was withdrawn from them for they were not worthy of it — and therefore the purpose of Yahweh included the extension of His mercy to the Gentiles (Gal. 3:8).

The blessings of the gospel result not from man's desire or purpose or effort, however intense such feelings and actions might be, but simply of God's mercy. It is true that our *purpose* in life must be to serve Yahweh; our *desire* must be to do His will; our *effort* must be to perform that which will honor Him. But for all that, the question must be put and answered: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded" (Rom. 3:27).

Thus, it is God, not man, who defines the terms upon which He admits any to His favor. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Yahweh, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon". Immediately, Yahweh adds: "for My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways" (Isa. 55:7-8). A worshipper must understand and acknowledge

that, after all he might desire or do, divine grace is a "gift" (Rom. 5:15). We are forgiven, not *on account* of our efforts, nor *because* we exert ourselves, but because God *chooses* to pardon.

Divine mercy, therefore, must be understood as a benevolent gift from God, and can never be attained on the basis of personal self-merit. Man is imperfect, yet the law allows of no imperfection. Since erring humanity can make no legal claim upon Yahweh, how utterly dependent is every saint upon the gracious mercy of the Father.

"But of God that sheweth mercy" — In this Yahweh is rightly elevated, and His privilege of mercy is upheld. He has a right to bestow it where He pleases (Psa. 115:3). He is not indebted to any.

This brief, emphatic statement is designed not merely to summarise that which has been said, but also to strip away the greatest of all human enemies: Pride. A true saint will always strive to approach the Most High in an attitude of humble submission to His will, whilst expressing total dependence upon His goodness and mercy. No other disposition is acceptable to God.

VERSE 17

"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh" — Paul again cites scripture, this time to reveal that God is not only supreme in mercy (v. 15), but also in judgment. He spoke to both Moses, the leader of Israel (v. 15), and also to Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt.

Paul cites Exod. 9:16, to carefully establish his case upon an argument of irrefutable logic endorsed by divine revelation. It is important to notice the way in which God hardened Pharaoh's heart. He did so, not by asserting control of the king's heart irrespective as to his personal desires or intentions, but by controlling events and circumstances in such a way that Pharaoh hardened his own heart and refused to let Israel depart. In that way Yahweh's actions resulted in Pharaoh's true character being revealed — so "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Exod. 7:13). See this indicated in Exod. 8:15, 32; 9:34; 1Sam. 6:6.

In *Elpis Israel* (p. 267), Brother Thomas comments: "Pharaoh of Egypt is another illustration of this principle. God purposed to show forth His power that His Name might be declared throughout all the earth. This manifestation was not left to the wisdom or pleasure of Moses. The display was to be according to the divine will. The world was overspread with ignorance and superstition; and Pharaoh was the autocrat of the age. He was totally ignorant of who Yahweh was, and therefore refused to obey Him. He was 'a vessel unto dishonor' — an idolater under the dominion of the propensities... He that has power over the clay, had appointed Israel to be 'a vessel unto honor', upon whom it was His sovereign pleasure to have mercy. They were, therefore, 'vessels fitted for mercy', whom He had before prepared, that on them He might make known the riches of His glory, both then and in a time to come. To effect their deliverance then; to punish Pharaoh and his abettors for their tyranny; and to make Himself known to the surrounding nations — He stirred up the Egyptian king to show all that was in his obdurate and relentless nature. Upon this view of the case, He elected Pharaoh and his host to a terrible overthrow; while He elected Israel to become His people in the land of Canaan. Thus, 'he had mercy on whom He would have mercy, and whom He would He hardened'."

Notice, particularly, Paul's emphatic use of the term: "the scripture saith". It was actually the divine voice which made this proclamation; but to the apostle it is important to establish that "the scripture" is the voice of God and must be reverenced accordingly. This point is dramatically illustrated in the change from "*He* saith" (v. 15). Paul personified scripture, because he believed all scripture to be the voice of God (Gal. 3:8, 22, etc). Yahweh caused this particular Pharaoh to appear upon the scene of history for the purpose of showing His power and vindicating His Name, whilst at the same time redeeming

His people from the bondage of Egypt.

The word rendered "for" is the oft-mentioned *gar*, expressing the "reason, cause, motive, principle, etc, of what has been previously said" (Bull.). Paul will take his line of reasoning a stage further in the words which follow.

"Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up" — The Greek word *exegeiro* means *to rouse fully* (Str.); thus to excite, to stir up. Vine has: "*ek=out of; egeiro=to raise*. Hence here: to raise a person to public position". God permitted Pharaoh to exercise power and authority in order to achieve His purpose with Israel (cp. Dan. 4:17). Pharaoh had the obstinate, rebellious, stubborn qualities that were suited for the purpose in mind: the salvation of the seed of Jacob through trial and adversity. In all that Pharaoh did, he *chose* to do — it was his characteristics that were being displayed, although Yahweh controlled the circumstances that permitted that display. Instead of destroying him at the beginning of the confrontation with Israel, Yahweh permitted him to continue, thus reserving Pharaoh for an even greater overthrow, testifying to the superior power of the Most High (Dan. 4:17). Then He would reveal Pharaoh's true character beyond all doubt, vindicating God's own Name and character.

At a different time and in a different place Yahweh "raised up" a king of an entirely different character, for a different purpose (Ezra 1:2). God's perfect foreknowledge (Rom. 8:29) enabled Him to do all this without, in any respect, interfering with human will. Throughout history Yahweh has continued to follow this pattern of guiding the destiny of His people and the nations of the earth, moving always toward the fulfilment of His grand design: "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh" (Num. 14:21).

"That I might show My power in thee" — This was the first of two reasons advanced from the scripture. The first has to do with "power", the second concerns the "Name". Divine power was shown in the defeat of the Egyptian magicians, and in the ultimate overthrow of the king's hosts (Exod. 15:1). Forty years later this was evidenced in the testimony of Rahab: Josh. 2:9-10. God's power was demonstrated in judgment upon wicked Egypt.

The words "*in thee*" indicate that only Yahweh could have prior knowledge of these events transpiring through Pharaoh. He realised that a ruler over Egypt, bearing the fleshly characteristics of perverse rebellion and hardness of heart, was a suitable personage to fill such a role, so that Yahweh could deliver His people in the way He did. At the same time He was able to show to both Israel and Egypt, that He was supreme over all flesh and utterly invincible. Therefore the words "*in thee*", literally mean that Yahweh *selected* this Gentile monarch above all others of the day, to make him a conspicuous and eternal example of the consequences of disobedience and rebellion against the God of heaven.

"And that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth" — This was to be seen in a people saved from the oppression of Pharaoh. Israel was called to that destiny (Exod. 19:4-5; Deut. 2:25; 4:6-8). It will yet be fulfilled and witnessed throughout the earth, fulfilling the prophecy of Deut. 32:3.

Moses' request to see the divine glory, which gave rise to the declaration concerning Yahweh's mercy (Exod. 33:18-19; cp. Rom. 9:15), was followed by the important revelation of the divine character: Exod. 34:6-7, which was a proclamation of "the Name of Yahweh" (v. 5). Thus the Name represents the character of the Father, and He seeks that this be "declared throughout all the earth" (Rom. 9:17). God is drawing a people from the Gentiles "for the Name" (Acts 15:14), and ultimately His purpose is that the Name be known, understood and honored by all (Isa. 19:21; Jer. 31:34).

Levites were commissioned to "minister in the Name of Yahweh" (Deut. 18:7); prophets had to "speak in the Name" (v. 22). The Name will be revealed in the Saints of glory (Isa. 30:27), will be loved by mortal beneficiaries of the kingdom (ch. 56:6), and will be revered by all (ch. 59:19).

VERSE 18

"Therefore" — The fourth summary by Paul of the arguments being advanced. God was righteous in choosing *[1]* Isaac over Ishmael (vv. 7-8; Gen. 17); *[2]* Jacob over Esau (vv. 9-13; Gen. 25); *[3]* The righteous over sinners in Israel (vv. 14-16; Exod. 32:32-33; 33:19); and *[4]* Israel over Pharaoh and the Egyptians (vv. 17-18; Exod 7:1–14:31).

The apostle now proceeds to apply all these examples to God's present dealings with Jews and Gentiles. He concludes that, since it was the just and righteous thing to do in the above four cases, it is only just and righteous for God to cut off Israel temporarily, and to choose Gentiles to continue His purpose.

"Hath He mercy on whom He will (have mercy), and whom He will He hardeneth" — There are two sides to God's character: "goodness and severity" (Rom. 11:22). They are seen in the mercy He shows to those whom He chooses to favor, and in His judgments against those whom He rejects.

One writer summarised the principle in these words: "God hardens on the same grounds of showing mercy. If men will accept mercy He will give it to them. If they will not, thus hardening themselves, He is only just and righteous in judging them. Men are privileged to humble themselves and seek mercy, or exalt themselves and refuse mercy. Mercy is the effect of a right attitude; and hardening is the effect of stubbornness, or the wrong attitude towards God. It is like the clay and the wax in the sun. The same sunshine hardens one and softens the other. The responsibility is with the materials, not with the sun. Men are more responsible than these materials, for they have wills to make proper choices. The only sense in which God hardened Pharaoh was in giving him the occasion to harden his own heart or obey. Such is the choice all men have to make daily (2Cor. 2:15-17)".

The word "hardeneth" is from the Greek *skleruno* which indicates *to render stubborn, to indurate, harden.* The word also occurs in Acts 19:9, where the preaching of the gospel message resulted in some refusing to believe: they "stubbornly" refused the evidence of the apostle Paul. The same characteristic was evident in the attitude of Israel in the wilderness (Heb. 3:8, 13, 15, etc), presented as a warning to believers that the same characteristics can be developed in those who refuse the wisdom of the Word.

The Doctrine of Election Shows that God's Power is Absolute — vv. 19-24.

With His foreknowledge and almighty power, God is able to design all things with infallible wisdom in accordance with the purpose for which they are best suited.

VERSE 19

"Thou wilt say then unto me" — Paul now answers what could be a further Jewish objection. If those who refuse God's will do so because He has "hardened" them (eg. Pharaoh), thus fulfilling His purpose, how can they be blamed? If God treats men as Paul's opponents suppose that he has explained, then they have no moral responsibility. God has no right to condemn a sinner whom He himself has "hardened". But Paul raises this question,

The Character of Vessels of Wrath

Those who manifest a distorted and disappointing attitude, refusing to conform to the divine image, constitute the vessels against which God's wrath will be exercised.

They are the stubborn (ch. 9:6); proud (ch. 9:31); blind (ch. 11:7); ignorant (ch. 10:3); jealous (ch. 10:19); fallen (ch. 11:12); angry (ch. 10:19); disobedient (ch. 10:21); self-righteous (ch. 9:32); cast away (ch. 11:15); spared not (ch. 11:21); cut off (ch. 11:24); broken off (ch. 11:20); unbelieving (ch. 11:23).

Therefore, manifesting the character of wickedness and evil, they will ultimately be destroyed from the earth — as the skilful potter dispenses with any of his vessels that do not reflect to the glory and ability of his workmanship (cp. Eph. 2:10).

not to merely answer it, but to remove all doubt concerning the matter.

"Why doth He yet find fault?" — Why does God blame men if their conduct is in accordance with His purpose, and since He bestows mercy according to His sovereign will?

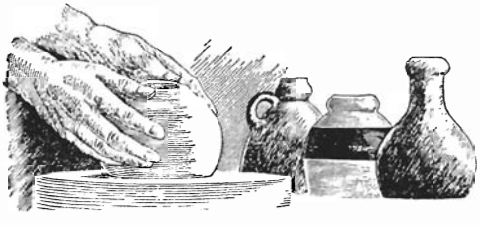
"For who hath resisted his will?" — The question supposes that since the will (design, purpose) of God is established by divine decree, it is impossible for man to successfully challenge and withstand it.

The word "resisted" has the sense of opposing as by soldiers, or armed men. The Greek word *anthistemi* means *to stand against* (from *anti*, "against" and *histemi*, "to cause to stand"); thus, *to oppose*. It is used in Eph. 6:13 to encourage the spiritual warrior to "withstand *(resist, or oppose)* in the evil day", and in 2Tim. 4:15 of those who oppose the fight of faith undertaken by the apostle Paul.

The word "will" is from the Greek *boulema*, which signifies *deliberate design or purpose*. It refers to the overriding principle of the divine plan for salvation. None can successfully withstand the divine purpose in the earth, for it will ultimately come to pass whatever individuals might do about it. Despite all endeavors of mankind, or human programs that "corrupt" the earth (Rev. 11:18), Christ will return, mankind will be disciplined, the nations will be subdued, the kingdom will be established, and God will be vindicated.

VERSE 20

"Nay but, O man" — Paul contrasts the fallibility and weakness of man with the power and omnipotence of God. He has already shown that man is evil, inconsistent in action, rebellious against God who is just and good. Paul challenges his opponents, using the singular form, by asking: "But what right have you, a human being to cross-examine God" (J.B.). How can such a fallible creature stand in judgment upon the all-wise and supremely good Creator? Man is finite, limited both in understanding and power — how can he possibly know the fulness of the things relating to Yahweh? What he knows, he has only received by divine revelation, and therefore he is utterly dependent upon God for all things, even for his understanding of the Almighty. This is a "science" that even the most brilliant of human minds cannot penetrate! It is a barrier that stands between flesh and absolute wisdom.



Paul responds with two principles: firstly, the supreme authority of God gives Him the right to determine His purpose (Rom. 9:20-21). Secondly, it must be recognised that God acts according to the beautifully balanced qualities of mercy and justice (vv. 22-24). Both these elements are beyond the capacity of humankind to perfectly manifest.

"Who art thou that repliest against God?" — Because man is the creature, formed by the power of God, it is inappropriate that he should question the Almighty. The margin has: "Answereth again, or disputeth with God". God is not answerable to man. For the creature to pass judgment upon the Creator is an act of sinful pride, and absolute impudence.

However, God's purpose from the beginning, took into account man's freewill, and the inevitable disobedience that resulted, and so humanity's disobedience is consistent with His plan.

"Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed (it), Why hast Thou formed me thus?" — The creature should not question the Creator as to the reasons or purpose for such action. Paul cites Isa. 45:9 to reveal the inappropriateness of such a situation. However, the Hebrew word used by Isaiah (rendered "striveth" *in the A.V.)* is *riyb*, meaning *to toss, wrangle, to defend*, and suggests the principle of freewill; of one being able to oppose

another. Some, who have seen in these verses a doctrine of predestination that does away with freewill, should consider that if this were the case, then the thing made could not possibly "*strive* with his Maker" as Isaiah teaches. As human clay, we should allow ourselves to be moulded by the divine Potter (Isa. 64:8), recognising that He labors for His own glory which He desires to reveal in "the work of His hands". The principle suggested by Abraham should likewise be kept in mind: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25) — a tenet exhibited in the destruction of Sodom and the saving of Lot, and even in the discrimination between Lot's wife and her daughters (see Isa. 29:16; Jer. 18).

The Divine Foreknowledge and Selection of the Vessels Fit for His Glory

His absolute rule is now shown to be exercised with forbearance, and this removes every objection. God willed to show His wrath against sin, and to make His power known. The objects of His wrath were vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. Yet God endured them with much long-suffering. The object in view was to make known, not merely His glory, but the riches of His glory. While the vessels of wrath are "fitted to destruction" by their own acts, the vessels of mercy are "afore prepared unto glory" by God. God is not said to "fit" a man for destruction; but it is necessary that He should "prepare" man for glory, because man cannot "fit" himself to that end. God bears with the evildoers that He may develop vessels of mercy, and exhibit His mercy to those responsive to His will, but who have not of themselves anything which merits glory. For, as Jeremiah said, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed because His compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22). The recipients of His glory are "called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles" (v. 24).

— J. Carter.

The words "thing formed" is from the Greek noun *plasma*, signifying *a mould, shape by manipulation*. An associated verb *plasso* is rendered "moulded" in 1Tim. 2:13.

VERSE 21

"Hath not the potter power over the clay" — In the process of "forming" (i.e., moulding or fashioning") the object on his wheel, the potter is able to construct the object according to his own perception — or refashion it if he so chooses. He thus has absolute control over the results of his work, or can discard it if it does not conform to his requirements. The power, or "authority" (DIAG.) is in his own control.

The word "power" (Gr. *exousia*) denotes the *freedom of action; right to act;* therefore "authority". It indicates an absolute and unrestricted jurisdiction of action. It is a different word from v. 22.

"Of the same lump" — The fashion of the article is not seen in the substance from which it is formed. The clay is obtained, and from it is formed an object — but the results might be valuable or useless. The decision as to the ultimate acceptance of the article rests with the potter. Thus, from the earth-clay Yahweh has formed mankind, some of whom are for honor and some for dishonor.

A similar term is used of the ecclesia in 1Cor. 5:6 and Gal. 5:9, from which brethren and sisters of faith are to be fashioned. Great care must therefore be taken by believers to allow the moulding principle of the Spirit-Word, by which we are fashioned "according to the pattern" thereof (cp. Heb. 8:5).

"To make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" — God can mould an individual or nation for the purpose He chooses. However, some harden themselves against God's will, and (like Pharaoh) refuse to be mallible clay in His hands, being unresponsive to His Word. God made Egypt to dishonor, but selected Israel for glory — not by forcing either to act against their own will, but by a control of environment and circumstances, revealing as to whether they were fitted

Background to the Quotations Advanced by the Apostle Paul

VERSES 25-26

The first two quotations are taken from the prophecy of Hosea. This prophecy was delivered towards the end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and in the first instance was a warning of God's judgments on the ten tribes, which would be executed by the Assyrian power. The theme of the book, however, is of God's unchanging love for Israel, despite her faithlessness to Him. Hosea experienced in his own life the very things that Yahweh experienced with the nation, and these fitted him to be Yahweh's prophet, as well as providing the means of conveying God's exhortation to Israel in a very personal, moving and dramatic way.

Some of the characters in the book include the prophet's wife, *Gomer* (whose name means *to fill up:* ch. 1:3); their son *Jezreel* (meaning, *God sows* or *scatters:* ch. 1:4); a daughter *Lo-Ruhamah* (meaning, *not pitied,* or *not having obtained mercy:* ch. 1:6); and another son, *Lo-Ammi* (meaning, *not my people:* ch. 1:9).

The theme of the Book is intimately linked with these names, and Paul's first quotation is taken from Hos. 2:23 in which all three children are brought together, and used to convey a message to Israel. Thus the verse reads: "And I will sow her *(Jezreel)* unto Me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her *(Ruhamah)* that had not obtained mercy *(Lo-Ruhamah);* and I will say to them which were not My people *(Lo-Ammi)*, Thou art My people *(Ammi);* and they shall say, Thou art my God". The "sowing" now signifies a rebirth of the nation, and thus a fulfilment of Hos. 1:10, which is Paul's second quotation.

Rom. 9:25 — Paul's First Quotation; from Hos. 2:23 — The ten tribes had been cast off, and had become "not My people". But they have to be "sown" again "in the land", and to become "My people". The principle which Paul here extracts from this passage is, that if this can happen to one class of people (the Jews), then it can also happen to others upon the same principle, and so Gentiles can similarly become "My people".

Rom. 9:26 — Paul's Second Quotation; from Hos. 1:10 — In the "place" of Israel's dispersion, where they were "not My people", there they will again be called "sons of the living God", and Israel, with Judah, will be gathered together under one head. If Israel, who were cast off as "no people" can be restored, then Gentiles who were "no people" can also become sons of God.

Therefore these two quotations show that Jews and Gentiles may become "sons of God" upon the same basis of faith.

VERSES 27-28

The next two quotations are both taken from the prophecy of Isaiah. The first is from ch. 10:22-23, a section of the *Prophecy of Immanuel* which extends from chapters 7-12. As with the quotations from Hosea, this section of scripture is also imbued with the significance of names.

Isaiah (whose name means *The Salvation of Yah*) had two sons: one was called Shear-Jashub (meaning, *The remnant shall return:* ch. 7:3), and the other was Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (meaning, *Speed the spoil and hasten the prey*). These three men, together with the name Immanuel (meaning, *El with us:* ch. 7:14) were intended to convey a message to Judah in the form of a sign: "Behold, I and the children whom Yahweh hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel, from Yahweh of hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion". In the names of Isaiah's sons is represented the goodness and severity of God, and the message was, that if the nation rejected the mercy that was offered them in the sign of Shear-Jashub, they would receive the judgments

symbolised in the name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. History reveals that the nation experienced the judgments of God. Nevertheless, a remnant was saved, hence Isa. 10:20-21 states: "It shall come to pass in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the House of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return *(Shear-Jashub)*, even the remnant of Jacob unto the Mighty El".

Rom. 9:27-28 — Paul's Third Quotation; from Isa. 10:22-23 — "Esaias also crieth on behalf of Israel... a remnant shall be saved". Paul draws upon the situation in Isaiah's day to prove that there is no unrighteousness with God. Yahweh rejected the nation because of lack of faith, but He accepted Gentiles who manifested faith. At the same time, He carefully reviewed the circumstances of Israel's condition, and preserved the righteous remnant upon the same principle of faith and election.

VERSE 29

The second of the quotations from Isaiah is from ch. 1:9. The prophecy opens with Yahweh's words of indictment through the prophet to a nation which He styles "a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken Yahweh, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (v. 4). Having depicted them as being stricken with spiritual leprosy (vv. 5-6), Isaiah then describes their country as desolate and overthrown by strangers (v. 7). The *Jerusalem Bible* notes that the word "overthrown" is only used in reference to the destruction of Sodom, and translates the latter part of v. 7 as "all is desolation, as after the fall of Sodom". This serves to introduce the quotation which Paul takes from v. 9: "except Yahweh of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrha". Again, the mercy of Yahweh is shown in the fact that, although He could have treated them as Sodom, in which the people and city were utterly destroyed, yet in order that His purpose "according to election" might stand, "a very small remnant" was preserved.

Rom. 9:29 — Paul's Fourth Quotation; from Isa. 1:9 — "The Lord of Sabaoth", or Heb: *Yahweh T'zvaoth* (of armies), a militant title of God. In citing this passage Paul shows that it was only of God's mercy that the nation survived through the "seed", or remnant. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham pleaded with Yahweh that if only ten righteous could be found in the city, He would refrain from destroying it for the sake of that "remnant". Yahweh agreed: "I will not destroy it for ten's sake". But Yahweh was again seen to be just when He rained down total destruction upon those cities, allowing Lot to flee to Zoar (Gen. 18:32; 19:24-25). In this graphic way, Paul shows the justice and mercy of God in later preserving such a "seed" by which Israel escaped a like destruction. — ***J. Knowles.***

for one destiny or another. Brother Carter comments: "God is using the clay of sin-stricken humanity, remaking it as He wills. He would do not wrong if He left the clay to perish. The soft, responsive clay is being prepared for greater things, while the hard, unresponsive can only be destroyed".

The word "honor" is the Greek *time* (from the root *tino, to pay a price*) and indicates that which is of value, precious, costly. The word "dishonor" comes from *atimia,* indicating to be clothed with *ignominy, disgrace, reproach, shame, vile.* The same word is found in the expression "vile affections" (or "vile passions", RV; LIT. "passions of dishonor") in Rom. 1:26. The same word is also used by Paul of the "sowing" of the natural body (1Cor. 15:43), and of "shame" (1Cor. 11:14), in both instances contrasting with the "glory" (Gr. *doxa*).

VERSE 22

"(What) if God, willing to shew (His) wrath" — This is the second point introduced in v. 19. What was previously shown to Egypt, is now to be transferred to Israel, because, although they were fashioned to be an object of divine delight, they manifested the spirit of Egypt, and refused to be formed according to the wish of the Potter.

The word "willing" (cp. v. 16. Here it is the Gr. *thelo: to determine, choose, prefer*), suggests that God was prepared to exercise discretion in the ultimate purpose of His work, as the potter "is willing" to discard the articles of pottery that do not fit his expectations. God will "show His wrath" when necessary, by judging whether a "vessel" is to honor or dishonor. He will not accept inferior products.

"And to make His power known" — To exert His influence and decision on the "vessels of wrath" by determining their destiny. The Greek word here for "power" is *dunatos*, signifying *powerful, capable.*

"Endured with much longsuffering" — The ability to "bear long" with His people is one of the beautiful qualities of the Father (Exod. 34:6); He is both just and merciful. The word "endured" is from *phero*: to *bear or carry.* It is also translated "upholding" (Heb. 1:3), "bearing" (ch. 13:13), thus indicating that God "carries" His infinite patience along in order that He might exercise it for the benefit of His people. Even the "vessels of wrath" — the evil characters of mankind — are allowed to continue, that God's chosen might receive mercy. He showed His longsuffering towards Pharaoh for Israel's sake; He extended His mercy to rebellious Israel for the sake of the righteous minority within the nation. In both cases, powerful lessons were taught (see Rom. 11:22; Psa. 78:38), and this also applies to the world of Gentilism (Prov. 16:4). He awaits the day when His longsuffering will be no longer required, when the "set time" to favor Zion will have arrived (cp. 1Pet. 3:20; 2Pet. 3:9). This quality of "longsuffering" is commended to His children, as a "pattern" for believers (1Tim. 1:16), but that longsuffering does not mean endless tolerance. It bears in view the desired end: the salvation of the approved.

"The vessels of wrath" — Describing misshapen objects for which there is no future. As articles of inferior construction, not being moulded according to the divine pattern, they are consigned to destruction. The phrase therefore denotes the wicked against whom it is fit or proper that wrath should be determined. Thus Pharaoh (v. 17) was "meet for destruction", for his heart was "hardened"; as was Israel's in the wilderness (Heb. 3:8, "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness"). Therefore, the divine displeasure was exercised against them.

"Fitted to destruction" — In the Greek the verb is in the middle voice, implying something done on the behalf of oneself. The phrase is better rendered: "fitted themselves to destruction". To be "fitted" (Gr. *katartizo*) means *to restore, to place in order, to render complete, to adapt to, or prepare for.* The characters of these "vessels" are such as deserve destruction; there is nothing that can be done to save them (cp. Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26).

The word "destruction" is *apoleia*, which signifies *ruin or loss*, with the idea of that which has no value and must be discarded, as a deformed piece of pottery. It comes from a root *apollumi*, which means: *to destroy fully.* Of such was Judas, the betrayer, who was described by the Master as "the son of perdition *(destruction)*". He had not "been transformed by the renewing of the mind", but remained "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2), and was of no use to the Lord, whose "kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36). This attitude was repeated in the "enemies of the cross of Christ", who, rejecting the sacrificial principles of Truth, awaited "destruction *(apoleia)*" (Phil. 3:18-19; see use of the word also in Heb. 10:39, translated "perdition" and 1Tim. 6:9). Paul prophesied of the advent of the Man of Sin, "the son of *perdition*" (2Thes. 2:3). Peter appears to be very conscious of the destructive work of those in his times who

acted like the pseudo-disciple Judas. He uses the word *apoleia* six times (the symbolic number of flesh!) in his epistles: "damnable", "destruction" (2Pet. 2:1); "pernicious ways" (v. 2); "damnation" (v. 3); "perdition" (ch. 3:7); "destruction" (v. 16).

VERSE 23

"And that He might make known" — God's object in using Pharaoh was for Israel's benefit: that they might "*know* that there is none like Yahweh" (Exod. 8:10, 22; 7:17; 9:14). The words "make known" are from the Greek *gnorizo,* which has its root in *ginosko:* to *know by experience.* Israel came to "know" Yahweh when they experienced His saving hand in Egypt. Similarly when the potter's article pleases him, it is preserved to manifest the "glory" of his artistry. Ultimately, all the world will come to "know" Yahweh through the judgments and salvation that He will demonstrate throughout the earth: Ezek. 38:23.

"The riches of His glory" — These riches relate to the "hope of the glory of God" that is held out to believers whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 5:2; 10:12). Paul prayed that believers might come to perceive fully "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). They comprehend the divine grace, a benefit that makes poor men rich (Rev. 2:9) and opens for them the way to life eternal.

"On the vessels of mercy" — Contrast the "vessels of wrath" (v. 22), which will be rejected through investigation and judgment (Rom. 2:5). The term "vessels" has particular reference to our physical nature, our bodies (1Thes. 4:4). The vessels of our "earthen" nature (2Cor. 4:7), will be "changed" (Phil. 3:21), by being "filled" with the Spirit. Here Paul describes our bodies as being "filled" with the divine mercy, since, having come to an understanding and acceptance of "great and precious promises" (2Pet. 1:4), God brings us into a state of "mercy".

"Which He had afore prepared unto glory" — Paul has already stated that God foreordained His purpose in relation to the "vessels of mercy", and now He reveals that the glory of these "vessels" is prepared of God beforehand. The words "afore prepared" are from the Greek *proetoimazo,* which signifies *to prepare beforehand* (DIAG: "previously"). Contrast is here made with the vessels that *fit themselves* for destruction (v. 22), and those whom God prepares for glory because a man cannot fit himself for that end. The former are moulded according to their own ideals; whereas the latter are shaped by the Spirit-Word. God has already established the desired spiritual pattern by which the vessels will be shaped. It is seen in His Son, in whom the divine glory is revealed. So John testifies: "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). This glory was in the mind of the Father from the very beginning (Jn. 17:5), and is now manifested in His Son. We await the day of immortal glory, that is prospectively held out to us: 2Pet. 1:4.

But the glory is not achieved by our own efforts. In 2Cor. 4:7 Paul declares: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us". By means of His Word, God moulds believers in accordance with His pattern, and seeks their cooperation to that end (Phil. 2:12). God desires not the eternal death of any, but that all may be saved (1Tim. 2:4), but such salvation is possible only upon the basis that the "vessels" conform to the moulding hands of the Divine Potter.

Whether we are vessels of wrath or of mercy depends upon whether we resist the divine will, or conform to its principles.

VERSE 24

"Even us, whom He hath called" — The composite body of faithful believers comprises the "vessels of glory" that God has selected from the clay of the earth to form the pattern He desires. He has "called them forth" (Gr. *kaleo*) from amongst humanity to be fitted for His purpose (Acts 15:14).

The word *kaleo* occurs eight times in

this epistle, the last three occurrences being here, in vv. 24, 25, 26. The emphasis is upon the principle of divine selection. But when vv. 23-24 are read together as one statement, it is evident that Paul is connecting the divine call to God-manifestation with the necessary human response.

Thus God, in His ineffable mercy, extends the summons; men and women who are called must respond by surrendering their own will to that of the Great Master Potter, permitting Him to mould them according to His will and purpose. The grace of God, in extending this summons to receive His Truth, is the ground for all our hope, and should therefore provide the motivation to produce humble submission to His Will.

"Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" — The selection of "vessels for glory" is not restricted to race, since it is done on the basis of faith. In this God is perfectly just, since He has always required the quality of faith in His people (Rom. 4:16).

The form of words indicates that Paul considered Jew and Gentile to have become equal inheritors of the promises. It was not merely a case of Gentile admission to the hope of Israel because of Jewish rejection, but rather the long-term purpose of Deity. In the next verse, Paul will prove this reasoning from scripture by citing the words of Hosea.

Paul's carefully chosen words of impartiality serve an additional purpose: At Rome, and in all other ecclesias where this epistle would be read, his words would strike a further blow against those who desired to boast in their Jewish exclusiveness: cp. ch. 1:16; 2:9, 10; 3:29, 30; 4:9, 12.

Gentiles as well as Jews are the Subjects of His Grace — vv. 25-29.

Paul now cites a series of four quotations from the Old Testament, predicting that Israel would be temporarily rejected, and then regathered. There is no injustice in God so acting, for the Jews proved themselves unworthy of the goodness of Yahweh, and rejected His Son, the manifestation of His glory among them (Jn. 1:14). In quoting these passages, Paul emphasizes that as the Jews were cut off through lack of faith, so Gentiles have been invited into divine association on the basis of faith. In this, God is both consistent and wise. For if Gentiles reveal what Israel lacks, and Yahweh seeks, would not God be unjust in rejecting them?

VERSE 25

"As He saith also in Osee" — Paul cites from Hosea 2:23, to prove that the principle of God's "election" of a "people for His name" (Acts 15:14), will embrace those who were not formerly part of the covenant-nation of Israel, but who would be invited upon the basis of faith.

Notice the way in which Paul carefully and skilfully uses the scripture to enforce his argument. First, he shows that the calling of the Gentiles was prophesied beforehand (vv. 25-26), and then provides evidence that the prophetic Word anticipated that only a minority of the Jews would respond to the call of the gospel (vv. 27-29).

"I will call them My people, which were not My people" — Israel was called from Egypt to become the "holy nation", called by Yahweh to manifest His glory (Exod. 19:3-6; Deut. 28:10; 2Chron. 7:14). But they failed to maintain their fidelity to Yahweh and His Word. In their rejection of the Son of God, the apostle Paul declared that they had forfeited their privileges. The sacrifices of the law were then ineffective to "lead them to Christ" (cp. Heb. 10:26; Gal. 3:24), and to maintain their credibility as "the people of Yahweh". John the Baptist warned of this possibility in a parabolic judgment on those who came to him in the attitude of hypocrisy: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mat. 3:9). He probably spoke of the stones of witness, found in the river Jordan (cp. Josh. 4:7): a symbol of those who would embrace the divine way through the waters of baptism. Thus, when

Paul's message of salvation was rejected by the Jews, he held them culpable for the death of Christ (Acts 18:6), and he therefore "turned unto the Gentiles" (ch. 13:46). Peter also quoted Hos. 2:23 to remind his readers of their privileged position upon the basis of a faithful response to the gospel (1Pet. 2:4), having replaced the former faithless generation (1Pet. 2:9-10).

God will not tolerate faithlessness — whether in Jews or Gentiles — and will turn to others if we fail to respond to His "high and holy calling".

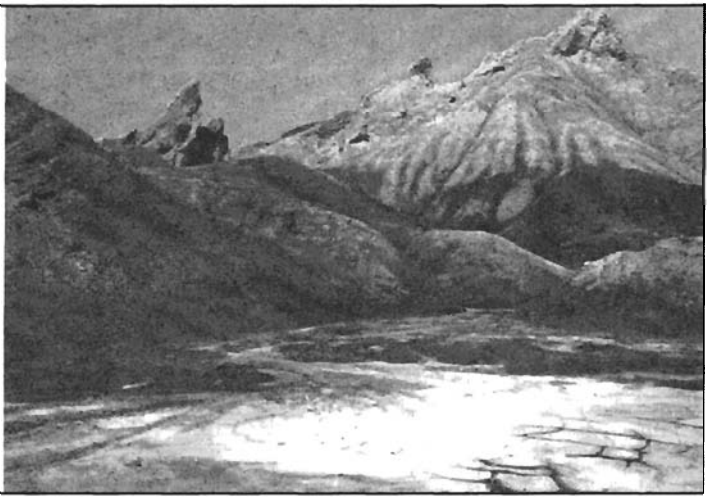
Hosea's words are based upon his own experiences. Hosea was required to take a harlot for a wife. Gomer was chosen, and she gave birth to a son who was named Jezreel, meaning "God *(El)* sows". His name was related to Yahweh's judgment which was to come upon the northern kingdom (ch. 1:4), and therefore implies: *"God sows that He might reap in judgment"*. Gomer then bore Hosea a daughter, Lo-ruhamah, *"Not having obtained mercy"*; and then another son, Lo-Ammi, *"Not my people"*. The message was to the ten tribes: "Those who are not my people will not obtain mercy from Yahweh". Paul's usage of this scripture was remarkably appropriate. The Gentiles could not have been more alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, than was the ten-tribed kingdom of Israel, whom Yahweh had utterly disowned. The northern kingdom was declared by God to be neither His people, nor objects of His mercy; but He also promised that this dreadful gulf of alienation would eventually be bridged, and His people restored. Thus Paul argues that the Gentiles who had been outcasts, unrelated to the covenants of promise, would not be received as "the people" of Yahweh, to whom He would extend "mercy".

"And her beloved, which was not beloved" — Paul interprets the words of Hosea: "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy" (Hos. 2:23). Yahweh would select a faithful wife out of those He called, that she should be "beloved" in His sight. The invitation to become a part of that Bride, is extended to Gentiles, as well as to the Jews.

VERSE 26

"And it shall come to pass" — A citation from Hos. 1:10, to confirm the assured fulfilment that God's will in this matter will be accomplished.

"(That) in the place where it was said unto them" — In the very condition



Salt rocks near the Dead Sea, and the acrid reek in the air, are silent reminders of the fate of Lot's wife. Reluctant to leave Sodom, she was overwhelmed in the catastrophe and rain of salt.

of their enmity; in the moment of their sin; upon the specific foundation of the divine assessment of their position in His sight.

Although Paul is undoubtedly thinking of the call of the Gentiles, who were found exiled from the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12), and in a condition of sin (Rom. 5:8), he may well have in mind (as did Hosea) the longstanding failure of Israel and their ultimate national redemption (Rom. 11:25-26).

"Ye (are) not My people" — Israel was exiled through faithlessness; the Gentiles were accounted strangers from the covenants of promise.

"There shall they be called the children of the living God" — This is a declaration of great blessing and warmth. To be "children of the living God" is to have the promise of immortality; the heritage of divine glory (2Pet. 1:4). It is to be accounted righteous as was Abraham (Rom. 4:22-24), whose God was "God of the living" (Mat. 22:32). It was upon the important declaration of Peter concerning the Sonship of Christ, that the ecclesia of faith would be established: "Thou art the Christ, the *Son of the living God"* (Mat. 16:16). Hosea's prophecy demonstrates that such a privilege is extended to those who previously were unable to achieve divine sonship (see Rom. 8:15-16). David expressed his greatest desire to be association with "the *living God":* Psa. 42:2; 84:2.

The term "living God" is used twelve times by Paul, and occurs in only four passages of scripture apart from his writings. The title stresses that Israel's God is a living, supreme Being, in contrast to the *dead* gods carved from wood and stone, which were so revered among the Gentile nations unto whom Paul was sent, and among whom he preached the living and true God.

VERSE 27

"Esaias also crieth concerning Israel" — Having called upon Hosea as an inspired authority concerning the destiny of the Gentiles, Paul now turns to Isaiah to settle the question in relation to Jewry. He cites Isa. 10:22-23, in order to show that the Hebrew prophets had foretold that only a minority of Jews would acknowledge the Lord Jesus as Messiah and Saviour at his first advent. Paul considerably shortens the citation from Isaiah, but this indicates that he uses well-chosen words to deal with the question in a concise and unmistakable manner.

The Greek word for "crieth" is *krazo,* which signifies *to croak, shriek* or *scream.* It represents a loud and earnest utterance, conveying a note of urgency. Thus the prophet makes an impassioned, heartfelt cry, as he sees the infidelity of the nation, and hears of the inevitable judgment of God that would result. The DIAGLOTT has: "But Isaiah cries on behalf of Israel..." His words were not merely judgment, but designed to draw the attention of the people to their sins, that they might repent, and form part of the "remnant" that would be saved.

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea" — There appears here to be an allusion to the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 22:17). In quoting these words from the prophet, Paul implies that, though ultimately there will be a full-scale restoration of an enlightened Israelitish nation, only a remnant would receive the message of salvation preached by Christ and the apostles.

God's salvation does not depend upon numbers; it is founded upon faith. Though He is willing to "have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth" (1Tim. 2:4), He will not act indiscriminately. Merely being part of a covenant nation (as in the case of Israel), or of a privileged Brotherhood (as in the case of Christadelphians) is no guarantee of divine favor. It will only be a remnant from both which will be saved. No wonder Isaiah felt the need to "cry aloud and spare not, to lift up the voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). Paul found the same need when he viewed the condition of the first century ecclesia: Acts 20:31.

"A remnant shall be saved" — Yah-

weh's eyes of tender mercy are not upon the unbelieving majority, but the faithful few. These men and women will always be the object of God's unfailing care, and will remain indelibly impressed in His memory until the day of account, when the faithful "remnant" will receive their vindication and reward.

Isaiah's words are set against the background of the impending invasion of Babylon, out of which only a remnant would be redeemed. The faithless generation who were taken into captivity (called "the very naughty figs" by Jeremiah: ch. 24:2), were rejected by God, and only a small number would be saved: "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set Mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am Yahweh: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart".

This has always been the divine intention. There was only a remnant in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:8, 13; Heb. 11:7); in the days of Christ (Mat. 24:22); and in the latter days (2Tim. 3:5; 2Thes. 1:11). Thus, whether out of Israel or the Gentiles: "many are called, few are chosen" (Mat. 22:14).

In selecting the "remnant", therefore, God is not unrighteous. He rejected the nation of Israel because of lack of faith, and He accepted Gentiles who manifested faith. At the same time, He carefully reviewed the circumstances of Israel, and preserved a righteous remnant. In all that Yahweh has done, He has revealed Himself to be just and merciful, and in all the circumstances of selection, the principle of faith is revealed as triumphant.

VERSE 28

"For He will finish the work" — Paul uses the word *logos* ("work", AV), which signifies *the inward reason,* thus: *a decree made, a doctrine revealed.* The DIAGLOTT renders the phrase: "He is finishing and cutting short His *account* in righteousness". The "account" is that which God has revealed and proclaimed for the attention of mankind. His judgment against the guilty would be executed speedily.

The NASB translates the phrase: "execute His Word", whereas the NIV has: "carry out His sentence". Nothing can prevent the Most High from fulfilling His declarations.

"And cut (it) short in righteousness" — The word "short" (Gr. *suntemno*) emphasizes that a limit is put upon the divine activity. Yahweh would complete His desired purpose, based upon the saving of a remnant and the removal of the guilty. Though severe, His purpose reveals Him as being righteous in all His ways. Evil must be removed, and Yahweh's determination would see that achieved.

Therefore, great numbers of Jews were soon to perish in the impending judgments of AD70, because of precisely the same reasons as in the past. Yet so many professing servants of Yahweh forget the exhortation: "I am Yahweh, *I change not*" (Mal. 3:6).

"Because a short work" — Again Paul uses the word *logos.* The repetition of the idea in this verse emphasizes the absolute fulfilment of God's purpose.

"Will the Lord make upon the earth" — In the citation from Isa. 28:22, reference is particularly made to the Jewish "earth" (see Isa. 1:2): the common society of Israel. The whole nation would be involved; none would be excluded from the divine judgment that would occur.

The conclusion to be drawn from this citation is both comforting and chilling. Comforting for Gentiles who embrace the gospel and walk in the way of the Truth; chilling to Jewry who disregard the saving power of the gospel. Whilst the quotation from Hosea (vv. 25-26) has shown that Gentiles would become acceptable to Yahweh, the words of Isaiah (vv. 27-28)

demonstrate that only limited numbers of Jews would be found walking in the way of salvation. In all of this it is evident that Yahweh is neither faithless nor unjust.

VERSE 29

"And as Esaias said before" — Paul now cites from the early verses of Isaiah's prophecy: Isa. 1:9. The word "before" is used with subtle care (lit.: "to tell before; to foretell"). In effect, he says: "I am not setting before you *new* propositions or theories, for all that I tell you in this epistle is thoroughly rooted and grounded in the Scriptures of Truth established long ago". Further, Paul's usage of this quotation from Isa. 1:9 is showing that Israel's relationship to their God has not now taken some new and strange turn, but that Yahweh's attitude in His dealings with His people have never basically changed.

"Except the Lord of Sabaoth" — Paul quotes a significant divine title to his Gentile readers, to emphasize the important principles established therein (see its use also in Jas. 5:4). In the Hebrew it is *Yahweh T'zvaoth:* "He who shall be [manifested] in armies". This is the militant title of Deity, by which His omniscient power is revealed for both salvation and judgment. In the incident referred to by Isaiah, divine judgment was threatened against Sodom and Gomorrah, and the message of the impending destruction was conveyed to "a faithful remnant", Lot and his daughters, by the representatives of *Yahweh T'zvaoth*, the army of heaven. The two deputed angels declared: "*We* will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before *the face of Yahweh;* and Yahweh hath sent *us* to destroy it". In destroying Sodom, God saved "just Lot" (2 Pet. 2:7) from the holocaust that ensued. In Isaiah's prophecy the Sodomic catastrophe was re-enacted in the Babylonian onslaught against Jerusalem. The faithful remnant, comprising Daniel, Ezekiel and those of like mind, were protected by the superintending angels: the "Hosts of Yahweh", *Yahweh T'zvaoth*, and their ultimate restoration was assured.

This divine title is comprised of mas-

The Stumbling Stone: v. 32

Israel refused to exercise FAITH because they were offended by the Messiah as he appeared among them; they were not impressed with his lowliness, his character, or the gospel he preached. Since they sought redemption through WORKS, they would have preferred a Messiah who came among them as a figure of power and authority to lead them to victory against their Roman overlords. In the re-establishment of the kingdom by this means, they would have seen their pride and self-righteousness fittingly rewarded. Thus, their national characteristic was not of a disposition to receive the Messiah whom Yahweh had promised to send them. The reason for the "stumbling" lay not with the stone, but rather as the result of the mood and disposition of those to whom it proved an "offence" (v. 33). Whilst Paul preached "Christ crucified", his preaching was "unto the Jews a stumblingblock" (1Cor. 1:23). The catastrophe which came upon the nation resulted from their refusal to either "hear" or "perceive" the Truth (Mat. 13:14). Pride and self-righteousness were the primary cause of their destruction.

Do we constantly retain in our minds an understanding of the sublime beauty and perfection of our Lord's character? Do we continually remember the way in which he gave himself for us, totally crucifying the evil propensities of the flesh day by day, until the moment of his agonising death? Do we always remember that he left us "an example", that we should "follow his steps" (1Pet. 2:21)? We should never forget that the fact that believers become justified at all, springs entirely from the undeserved mercy of God. Exercising the sharpest spiritual vision, we must remain sure of the "path" we are treading in the Truth, taking the greatest care to see that we do not "stumble" against the Rock of our salvation, thereby giving offence to both the Father and the Son.

— J. Ullman.

culine and feminine nouns. *Yahweh* is masculine; *T'zvaoth* is feminine. Together they represent the Husband and Bride, working unitedly in the development of the divine family, through the destruction of evil and the elevation of good. The present work of the angelic T'zvaoth will provide for the redeemed "seed", found in the saints.

"Had left us a seed" — The normal word for "seed" (Gr. *sperma)* means the posterity, or descendants of a father, but the Hebrew word for "remnant" in Isa. 1:9, from which Paul is quoting, is *sariyd*, and signifies *a survivor; one who escapes.* (Paul, however, may have been citing the *Septuagint* version, which uses the word *sperma, seed*). It thus more correctly applies to those who enjoy the overshadowing care and protection of God, and who are rescued from evil, that they might establish a chosen remnant. The idea is to select a small portion of a harvest which is reserved for sowing; thus to maintain for a future destiny.

"We had been as Sodoma" — Completely destroyed through divine anger at the wickedness of the people: Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; Jer. 49:18. The sad record reveals that Abraham's nephew, Lot, was only able to rescue himself and two daughters from the conflagration that annihilated Sodom (Gen. 19:30), for even his wife, who left her beloved city when commanded by the angels, was really fascinated by its attractions, and "looked back" (v. 26) becoming a example to those who "love the present world" (2Tim. 4:10).

Unfortunately, Israel imitated the characteristics of Sodom (Isa. 1:10; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:49), and, therefore, similar judgment threatened. It was only the divine purpose, preserved in a remnant, that prevented the complete destruction of the nation.

Similarly, those of the elected people who neglect "so great salvation" will suffer the overwhelming judgment of God. Having received the precious heritage of the Truth, their responsibility to conform to the divine will is much greater than was the case of the inhabitants of Sodom (Mat. 11:23). Similarly, the present world, likened to Sodom (Luke 17:30; Jude v. 7) is ripe for destruction; but woe to those in the Brotherhood who fail to see the signs of the impending judgment, and who reject the urgent warnings to separate from the materialism and ungodly attitudes of such a way of life (2Pet. 2:6).

"And been made like unto Gomorrha" — The twin city of the plain of Jordan, which existed not far from Sodom: Gen. 13:10; 14:10; 18:20. It appears to have been subservient to the city of Sodom, probably following the fashions and wicked practices developed and elevated in its unscrupulous and profligate sister. As such it is an example of an unprincipled people who weakly follow the way of evil set by their leaders. See Isa. 1:10. Thus, both leaders (Sodom) and followers (Gomorrah) of evil, will be removed from the earth.

This picture of two evil cities, so like our times, constitutes a warning that divine vengeance will be experienced against both "teacher and scholar" (Mal. 2:12) within the Brotherhood, of those who imitate the fashions and attitudes of a guilty world.

The Principle of Selection Demands the Manifestation of Faith — vv. 30-33.

Israel had been selected with the object of glorifying God, but the people failed to respond to their calling. Now Gentiles had been selected with the same objective, and they had been successful when they sought justification through faith, and not by the works of law.

VERSE 30

"What shall we say then?" — What is the conclusion from the Scriptures quoted and the examples cited of the past? It is necessary for Paul to pose this question, since none of the three quotations he has used mention either "righteousness" or "faith"; both words being integral to his argument. It is a question which Paul must answer to place the seal of fidelity on all that he has said concerning the three O.T. citations.

"Israel 'followed after A LAW of righteousness'. The whole position was misconceived by them. Instead of looking for God's method, they sought for a law which had righteousness for its aim. ... 'By works' was the Jewish aim; 'by faith' was the method propounded by Paul. The law was for the guidance of a reconciled people and it is faith that opens the door to reconciliation, and therefore faith comes first and then a patient continuance in the way of God's commandments. Because of this misconception the Jews stumbled at the very foundation of God's work. They did not see in Christ the one who fulfilled the law, for they tried to make the shadow into the substance. But in so doing they fulfilled the testimony of their own scriptures". ***— J. Carter.***

"That the Gentiles" — The original text has no definite article: "that those Gentiles" (DIAG.). Paul is not speaking of Gentiles as a whole, but only selected individuals who have "laid hold" on the righteousness which comes by faith. They were "some from among the Gentiles", a "remnant" drawn from the Gentile world, who would not "stumble" at the principle of faith established in the ministry and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 33).

"Which followed not after righteousness" — The words "followed not" (Gr. *dioko*) mean *to seek, to pursue;* thus the NASB has: "who did not pursue righteousness". In contrast to the nation of Israel which received the divine law showing the way of righteousness, the Gentiles, as a race, were estranged from the "covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:11-12; 4:18), and had not sought to "follow after righteousness", which was an exclusively Israelitish hope. God ignored their national "ignorance" (Acts 17:30).

This extension of divine salvation was indicated in the ministry of the Master. He invited tax collectors and harlots to obtain forgiveness and to seek salvation, which, he declared, they would obtain rather than the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 21:31). So, believing Gentiles who had never before shown an interest in being righteous before God, were now able to obtain pardon and favor from Him.

"Have attained to righteousness" — Gentiles who desired to seek God previously, could only do so through the Mosaic Covenant. If faith in the Abrahamic Covenant produced in them "the righteousness of faith", whilst keeping the law, they could walk in hope of eternal life (Hab. 2:4). Of such were Rahab (Josh. 6:23), Ruth (Ruth 1:16), the Syrophoenician woman (Mk. 7:26), etc.

But now, says Paul, the principles of faith and justification have been clearly revealed in the work of Jesus Christ, and individuals among Gentile races that had never been called to "attain unto justification", can achieve it by seeking it in faith. Thus the apostle speaks of a class of Gentiles who had become acceptable to God on the grounds of their belief in the Truth, and their holy way of life. They have now obtained justification by faith (ch. 5:1), and have therefore been admitted by the mercy of God without any merit on their part, to share in the blessings promised in the gospel. They had previously received no revelation to guide them. Even their consciences had been of limited value due to lack of knowledge. Yet, when salvation was offered to them, many welcomed it, taking hold of the Truth with a zeal and tenacity that stood in sharp contrast to the indifference displayed by the majority of the Jews.

The word translated "attained" is the Greek *katalambano,* which signifies *to make appropriate; to seize; to catch hold so as to make it one's own.* The same word is translated "apprehend" in Phil. 3:12-13, "Not as though I had already attained *(lambano)* either were already perfect: but I follow after *(dioko)*, if that I may *apprehend (katalambano, catch hold of)* that for which also I am *apprehended (katalambano)* of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended *(katalambano):* but this one thing (I do), forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are

before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". The Master "caught hold" of Paul on the road to Damascus, and set before him an objective which became Paul's daily task to pursue (see v. 14). In Rom. 9:30, Paul teaches that Gentiles have "apprehended righteousness" — justification — so as to make it their own, because they sought it in faith. No longer was there a need to comply with the ritual laws of Israel, nor to be absorbed into the nation through circumcision. Salvation was made possible on the basis of individual faith, the first public evidence of which was demonstrated by conforming to the requirement of baptism. The Jews failed to grasp this, because they did not see the need for faith, but remained enmeshed in the formalism of the law.

"Even the righteousness which is of faith" — For "righteousness" see notes on page 114. As "faith comes by hearing the Word" (Rom. 10:17), this was a righteousness that was presented to Gentiles by preaching (see Rom. 10:14-15), and called individuals to Christ. This is contrasted with a code of legal righteousness as set before Israel by the law, and which was proclaimed nationally by its enactments.

VERSE 31

"But Israel, which followed not after the law of righteousness" — The phrase "the law of righteousness" aptly summed up the religious philosophy of the Jews. To their mind, the only way to obtain God's favor was by means of obeying a law. They held a concept of "right" or "wrong" from a ritualistic standpoint. If obeyed, they thought this would produce righteousness in them. Believing that keeping the law would make them holy, they "did not arrive at that law" (NASB), because it was beyond the capability of flesh to attain to righteousness by such a means (ch. 8:3). But even had they kept the law, mere legal observance would not have produced righteousness. "Spirit" (disposition) and "Truth" (sound comprehension of divine revelation) was to be combined with the exercise of "faith" — and only upon this basis can "the righteousness of faith" be produced (Jn. 4:23-24; Rom. 10:17; 10:6).

When the "spirit" of the law was expressed to the Jews in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 5:20-22), they refused it, and rejected the means of salvation typically foreshadowed in the law given to Israel through Moses.

"Hath not attained to the law of righteousness" — The word "attained" is different from the previous verse. Here it is *phthano*, a primary word which signifies: *to reach; to arrive at.* It is translated "come upon you" in Luke 11:20. In all their rituals, observances, commandments and ordinances, they never "came upon" the true obedience required by the law of righteousness, for they sought it not by faith (v. 32). It completely eluded them.

Gentiles can do similarly. They might seek to justify themselves before God; attempting to weave a system of righteousness of their own. But perfect obedience to a code of precepts and statutes — if such were humanly possible — would still not, alone, make a person righteous. Any who attempt to do so will find themselves victim of the same destiny which befell the Jews.

VERSE 32

"Wherefore?" — Why is it that Israel did not obtain the justification through the law, which the nation had sought for so long; and yet, had sought in vain?

"Because (they sought it) not by faith" — They did not seek righteousness according to *God's way,* but upon their own way. If only they had looked back, beyond the law, to the faithful father of their nation: Abraham — who implicitly believed God, trusting in Him (see Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:13; cp. Gal. 3:17-18). The justification that God provides is upon the basis of faith. This principle was embodied in the law (1Kgs. 8:32; Isa. 58:13; Hab. 2:4), but it required a worshipper to recognise the *spirit* of the law and the exercise of *faith,* and not merely the ritualistic letter. Thus, the law was a "schoolmaster leading to Christ, that we might be *justified by faith*" (Gal. 3:24). A brazen

serpent was provided by the divine decree for the deliverance of a stricken people, but it required *faith* to be exhibited in the divine provision for the antidote to be effective (Num. 21:8).

"But as it were by the works of the law" — In this Israel failed to see the purpose of the law. It was not an end in itself, but the means to an end: to prepare the nation for the coming of Christ, to demonstrate the divine principles of salvation in a legal parable; to open up the way of salvation. But without the effectiveness of faith, the law remained a series of cold, ritualistic "ordinances" (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). Flesh being weak, the law could only condemn man because he did not obey it perfectly. The "just requirement of the law" cannot be met by those who follow the way of legal righteousness, but only by those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). So justification had to be by faith, and that revealed the need for Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins through him (Rom. 3:23-27). Here Israel failed, because the people rejected Christ, and therefore ignored the principle of faith.

The Jewish attitude engendered a spirit of pride and self-righteousness, which was a reason for the rejection of their Messiah and Saviour. Nationally, they refused to place trust or confidence in Christ because he came to save lost sinners. The Jews considered that only Gentiles were "lost" — and that, irretrievably; and through pride in their law they could not see that they needed to be drawn to God through His grace and mercy, as manifested in His Son.

"For they stumbled at that stumblingstone" — Rendering these words in harmony with the vernacular, Weymouth has: "they struck their foot against the stone which lay in their way". The people of the law could not understand that *faith in Christ* is necessary for justification. Therefore, Israel, striving after righteousness, failed to achieve it; the Gentiles hearing the preaching of the gospel, discovered faith, and thereby stumbled upon the divine righteousness, like the farmer of the parable discovering the hidden treasure (Mat. 13:44).

The word "stumbled" is from the Greek *proskopto* signifying *to strike at,* from a primary word having the idea of beating the chest heavily in grief. It implies the character of annoyance, "to show irritation towards" another. To the Jews the cross of Messiah was an offence (v. 33), which irritated and annoyed them into indignation — so much so that "with wicked hands they have crucified and slain" the Prince of life (Acts 2:23; 3:14-15). The word "stumblingstone" is the Greek *proskomma* which signifies: *to stub the toe against; to hit against an obstacle.* Strong adds to the meaning: *occasion of apostasy.* Unable to accept Christ as the true Son of God, Israel stumbled over the obstacle that Yahweh had provided. The people recoiled from Jesus as one who failed to meet their ideas of the Messiah (Isa. 53:1-6). Rejecting him, they rejected the "Rock of Israel" (2Sam. 23:3) manifested in the Son (cp. 1Cor. 10:4).

VERSE 33

"As it is written" — Paul cites from Isaiah 28:16 and 8:14, applying both to the work of the Messiah, and the failure of Israel to accept the purpose of Yahweh in him. In rejecting the cornerstone of Yahweh's provision, Christ became an offence to them.

Notice that Paul adds "on him" to Isaiah's words, to show emphatically that the prophecy concerned Christ. Observe, also, that whilst in Isa. 28:16 the "stone" is "tried, precious, a firm foundation", in Isa. 8:14 it is described as "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence". The former is God's wondrous provision; the latter is the attitude of faithless Israel. In 1Pet. 2:5-7 these two passages are quoted and linked together with Psa. 118:22, thus combining three passages all using the symbology of the "stone". (see also Mat. 21:42,44; Lk. 20:17-18).

"Behold, I lay in Sion" — This citation is taken from Isa. 28:16, which prophesied of the work of God in providing in Zion the means of salvation. It was to be

found in One who would appear in Jerusalem, and in whom the people should believe. Isaiah declared: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste". Isaiah predicts the laying of a new foundation stone in alignment with a new order: the gospel of faith. This implied a lack of finality in the existing temple arrangements of the time. The principle of faith was emphasized: "he that *believeth* shall not make haste" — i.e., would be constant, firm and steady, and not flee away in ignorance or unbelief.

The city which witnessed the public sacrifice and humiliation of Christ in the first century, will be brought to recognise his ultimate glorification. Zion will then rejoice in the redeeming work of Yahweh (Psa. 2:6; 9:11; 14:7; 48:2; Jer. 3:17).

"A stumblingstone" — Paul now quotes from part of the Immanuel prophecy: Isa. 8:14. Ahaz had rejected the sign provided that Yahweh was nigh to those who manifested faith in His ability to save the nation from the opposing forces ranged against it. Consequently his lack of faith in Yahweh prompted the prophecy of the coming Immanuel who would bring victory upon the basis of faith. But Israel did not benefit from the experiences of Ahaz (Isa. 7:11-12). Like the faithless king, the nation later rejected the divine "sign" to be seen in the son of the Virgin, and therefore this sign became the stumblingblock and rock of offence that would destroy it (Mat. 22:5-7).

The word "stumblingblock"is the Gr. *proskomma: a stub; an obstacle.* See comments on v. 32.

"And a rock of offence" — The Greek word for "rock" is *petra,* one of the two associated words used in Mat. 16:18, "Thou art Peter *(petros, a movable stone),* and upon this rock *(petra, a firm, steady, immovable rock)* I will build my ecclesia". *Petra* has the idea of an indestructible principle. Christ was such a rock. Israel was unable to avoid him or destroy him; and will ultimately be unable to ignore him.

The Greek for "offence" is *skandalon: a trap, snare.* Metaphorically, the word can be applied to anything that arouses prejudice, or becomes a hindrance to others. The sacrifice and resurrection of Messiah was the block over which the Jews fell to their own ruin (1Pet. 2:8).

"And whosoever" — The opportunity of justification is available to all, whether Jew or Gentile, upon a living and effective faith expressed in the atoning work of Christ.

"Believeth on him shall not be ashamed" — In this citation Paul reverts to Isa. 28:16, to emphasize the need of faith and belief in the One whom Yahweh appointed. None who put confidence in the divine program of salvation will have cause to regret such a decision. Though it might require sacrifice and humiliation in the day of probation, ultimately joy, gladness and honor will result (Rev. 5:10).

The quotation in Isaiah has: "shall not make haste", whereas Paul has: "shall not be ashamed", as in the *Septuagint.* The ideas are linked together, for those who have an abiding confidence in Yahweh's provision, will not rush around seeking for alleviation of their problems by humanistic solutions. They will not be "ashamed" of their well-founded confidence in the Messiah. One writer aptly put it: "The man who stands on God's foundation will 'keep his head when all about him are losing theirs and blaming it on him'; he will not fuss and rush around, but trust in God, confident that His purpose will be accomplished in His own time".

PART TWO: ISRAEL'S REJECTION

The Principle of Human Responsibility. God's Action in the Present.

CHAPTER TEN

Yahweh's Purpose is Manifested in His Judgment Upon Sin and Failure

To Israel was granted the great privilege of becoming the special nation which would receive the divine favor, and manifest Yahweh's glory to the Gentiles. This was nullified through their failure to maintain the standard of righteousness required of them. The people neglected to seek the righteousness that comes by faith; they preferred to rest in the rituals of the law, and failed to develop the qualities that give honor to the Creator. Israel stumbled at the "foundation stone" that Yahweh provided in His Son as the means of attaining redemption, and, rejecting the promised Redeemer, found themselves rejected. Paul now examines the reasons for this failure and its effect on Israel and the Gentiles.

The Cause of Israel's Failure — vv. 1-4.

There is no real break in Paul's argument between ch. 9:30-33 and what he reveals in ch. 10:1-13. But before expanding his argument, Paul pauses a moment to express his sorrow and affection for his misguided brethren, in view of their misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Atonement.

VERSE 1

"Brethren" — With this one word Paul united all who are in Christ Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile, excluding all others. However, there is an underlying pathos in its usage here, for it is the apostle's earnest wish that those who are his brethren in the flesh, fellow Israelites, might also be his brethren in Christ.

This address is also desired to give special emphasis to what follows. He wants them to realise the serious situation into which the folly of Israel has led the nation, since the Gentile ecclesia might also imitate Israel's attitude to the Truth.

"My heart's desire" — An expression which indicates Paul's attitude of hearty and sincere benevolence towards his fellow Jews (see notes on ch. 9:2). It shows that Paul was not biased against Jewry, but rather the opposite: that his heart went out to his people, and his personal feelings were heavily weighted in their favor. He sincerely sought to bring the Truth to them, notwithstanding their tragic history and current opposition to the gospel message. In this the apostle manifests the godly characteristics expounded by the Master: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Mat. 6:11-12).

"And prayer to God for Israel is" — Thus endorsing the final appeal of the Lord Jesus Christ from the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34).

"That they might be saved" — Notwithstanding their treatment of Yahweh's Anointed, and the general rejection of the nation by God (Mat. 22:7), forgiveness was possible upon the basis of acknowledgement of their sin, and the development of faith. Such Israelites needed to associate with the disciples, and commit themselves to following "the way" (cp. Acts 19:9): a life of sacrifice and dedication to the things of God.

VERSE 2

"For I bear them record" — With a long history as a fervent and unbelieving Jew, Paul was certainly able to understand the position and general disposition of the Jewish people (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:13-14). The phrase "bear them record" is the Gr. *martureo,* sometimes translated *witness* (cp. Acts 1:8, 22). Paul did not despise the admirable quality of enthusiasm for religious activities manifested by many of the Jews, and which might become the means of their salvation, if they would take heed to his appeal.

"That they have a zeal of God" — The *Diaglott* has: "zeal *for* God". The word rendered "zeal" (Gr. *zelos*) signifies *to boil or seethe,* and is expressive of eager, vehement passion, ardor or fervor. The noun, *zelotes* (Eng. *zealot*), is used to describe an "uncompromising partisan", and was applied by the Jews to an extreme element of the Pharisees who were bitterly antagonistic to the Romans. Paul's usage of the word *zelos* is thus indicative of the intensity of Jewish fervor. This characteristic was revealed in Israel's stubborn application of ritual and ordinances, notwithstanding that they were unable to answer the challenging statements of the Lord which showed the vanity of their religious observances (cp.Mat. 23:25-31). They were diligent in fulfilling the ordinances of the law and the traditions of the elders, but neglected balancing their zeal-

The Misdirected Zeal of Israel.

Wherein did they fail to discern? They were ignorant of God's method of justification and as a consequence they sought to establish a righteousness of their own, by personal effort bringing merit to themselves (v. 3). Their zeal had not been rightly directed; their very earnestness helping to pervert their minds. That they had failed to apprehend the right method was evident, for they had rejected Christ, through whom only, in God's arrangement, righteousness could be attained. And so Paul says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness... (v. 4). Three things are affirmed of Christ's work. He is "the end", not only of "the law", but "of law", that is, of any law. In what way is Christ "the end"? He is the end in the sense that he is the fulfilment of the types of the law. He also fulfilled the law, in obeying it perfectly. But the meaning here is that Christ's work shows that law could never give righteousness to a man. What has been done, by the very fact that it has been done, has put an end to the idea of the object of the law which the Jew entertained. The two methods are so incompatible that to understand Christ's work is also to see that the other method is wrong. When a man perceives that God offers righteousness through Christ, he has finished with law as a means for attaining to it, for he then recognises that salvation can never be reached by law. And this work of Christ is "unto righteousness to everyone that believeth". The benefits are for all; a law could only avail to those under it. "Righteousness" is not of works, but to him that believeth. These two aspects, righteousness by faith and for all who believe, are considered in the remainder of the chapter. ***— J. Carter.***

ousness with an understanding of the mission and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the purpose of Yahweh in him.

It is important to manifest *zeal.* The Lord is the perfect example of righteous

Moses and Paul in Unison in Proclaiming the Great Work of God.

What a stunning blow to the Judaisers to hear Paul so quote Moses as he does in verse 5. They now found Moses, in whom they trusted, actually standing with Paul on the side of faith!

Yet their disbelief and incredulity was now much greater and more serious than that of their fathers. Yahweh's strong hand had been so much more closely revealed. He had sent His Son into the world (Lk. 1:31-32, 35), thus commending His great love to men (Jn. 3:16), and revealing His Word to them by him in person (Jn. 3:34-35). Thus, through His own Son, the fullest manifestation of Himself, He had sent His Word from heaven (cp. Jn. 6:50, 51, 58; 3:13). This was the basis of faith for mankind! God alone could have done this great work (cp. Jn. 3:2; 5:36).

Likewise, Yahweh had given hope and faith to all mankind when He raised His Son from the dead (Acts 17:31, mg). This was a demonstration of the working of His mighty power (Eph. 1:19-20; Rom. 1:4). The right hand of Yahweh had again become glorious in power, but in a way much closer than Israel's deliverance through the Red Sea (Exod. 15:6). The resurrection of Christ was thus a basis of faith for mankind, for only God could do such a great thing.

"The Man that Doeth These Things shall Live By Them" (v. 5).

These words could well have been spoken in answer to an objection which might be made by a Jew quoting the words of Moses from Lev. 18:5. "Did not Moses give us a law, the observance of which would secure our salvation?" Such a law Moses undoubtedly gave, and that law promised life to those who performed its precepts; but who could plead for life on this ground, if they ignored Christ who is "the end of the law"? No man ever did, nor ever could, fulfil that law so as to ***merit*** *salvation by the performance of it: for, as "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God", they are all under the curse of the law, which says, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10-12). Wherefore by the deeds of this law none can be justified, because all are in a state of condemnation for transgressions already committed against it. Therefore, if it were not for the provision of the sacrifice of Christ, there would be salvation for none.* ***— J. Knowles.***

zeal: "his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" (Jn. 2:17). The Corinthian disciples had "provoked" others with their good example of fervency for the Truth (2Cor. 9:2), as did Epaphras for the Colossians (Col. 4:12).

But zealousness without Truth is a fire without a purpose; it burns without hope — and in this Israel failed its divine destiny.

Paul was well aware of the nation's zeal. He had earlier displayed this same purposeless zeal when he had persecuted the ecclesia: Acts 9:1; 22:3; Gal. 1:14. Now his plea is that they might follow his example of conversion, and allow their zealousness to be properly channelled in the way of righteousness.

"But not according to knowledge" — This was the area of their deficiency. Love, zeal, enthusiasm, warm-hearted concern for one's fellows — are empty qualities without the important *knowledge* of Yahweh which must accompany them and transform them into divine characteristics. Israel was destroyed for lacking true knowledge of God's ways. Hosea reported Yahweh's assessment of the nation which possessed His covenant and tables of law: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6).

In this verse before us, however, Paul does not use the usual word for knowledge *(gnosis),*

but an intensified form: *epignosis*. This signifies a full or exact knowledge. It is the highest and most perfect form of *gnosis*. The knowledge of which Paul speaks includes the atonement as seen in Jesus Christ, of which the Jews were ignorant. Without a proper knowledge of the nature of flesh and the sacrifice of Christ, a worshipper is without hope, and manifests the spirit of antichrist (1Jn. 4:2-3; 2Jn. 1:7). Refusing to accept the Word of God in Christ (2Cor. 5:19), the Jews put themselves beyond the scope of salvation, notwithstanding their obvious zealousness for the law of God, as they understood it.

Epignosis is obtained by absorbing the "wisdom and revelation" of God, found in His inspired Word (Eph. 1:17). It is the means to the fuller manifestation of Christ in the believer (Eph. 4:13; Col. 3:10), and is the foundation of salvation (1Tim. 2:4).

Col. 1:9 gives an indication of what is meant by this word: "that ye may be filled with the knowledge *(epignosis)* of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding". In addition to its literal meaning, "discernment" is an apt word to describe *epignosis*, especially in such a context as the verse under consideration; for it embraces sound knowledge, belief, conviction, wisdom, and understanding. All these elements the Jews lacked; not through want of "zeal" but because their entire spiritual vision was misdirected. Their earnestness was not guided by an intelligent conception of God's purpose. And *enlightened zeal* enables men and women to discern and to discriminate. Paul prayed that the Jews might come to this, to see the truth of the case and react accordingly.

VERSE 3

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness" — The Judaisers were not "ignorant" (Gr. *agnoeo: not to know through lack of information or ignorance*) of the moral excellence of God as expressed in the law; they acknowledged God's personal righteousness. But they were ignorant of the *way* of "righteousness" (Gr. *dikaiosune, justification*) which God has placed before sinning humanity. God's way contrasted with "their way" (i.e., their view concerning how righteousness might be obtained). Paul is not saying that the "ignorant" state of Israel was due to some misfortune or lack of opportunity; for he makes it clear in vv. 15-18 that they were culpably ignorant, and therefore answerable to God. But Israel did not understand what was necessary to establish the righteousness of God (see Phil. 3:9), nor the means by which transgressors of the divine law might be redeemed. They thought it was in the fastidious observance of ritual and sacrifice, of law and discipline, and did not recognise the spirit of that very law which pointed to the means of redemption. In the Jewish eagerness to pursue after the latter, they had remained ignorant of, and had not submitted to, the method of salvation which God had revealed in His Son.

The law set forth the requirements of God, but flesh failed to measure up to it, so that the law only made manifest the reality of sin. How can flesh find justification in view of transgression? Only by the forgiveness of God. Did the law provide for that need? It did not, except provisionally and typically, in its demands and offerings, for, unless *faith* saw in those

The Principles of Law and Faith

The principle of the Law is: Do this, and live. The principle of Faith is: Live, and do this. The righteousness of God as manifested in the Word Made Flesh (Christ) shows mankind how to ***live*** *a true spiritual life. The law taught "love Me" (this is how we will please the Father and manifest His ways (Exod. 20:6). If Christ is "the end of the law", he has also put an end to self-righteousness. To continue to set up a righteousness of our own would be to show that we have not really discovered the true significance of being "in" Christ, and have therefore not submitted to the righteousness of God.* ***— J. Ullman.***

offerings a typical foreshadowing of the redeemer to come, their observances availed nothing. Therefore, a person who rested in the law without the faith necessary to "quicken" its significance, was only condemned by that same law.

"And going about to establish their own righteousness" — Had the Jews succeeded in this, they would have established a "righteousness" *of their own,* and therefore not of God. What would have been the benefit of that? Nothing, so far as Yahweh was concerned. The Jewish diligence for ritual and sacrifice was for personal justification ("their own" methods and merits), in contrast to "God's" righteousness.

The word "establish" (Gr. *histemi*) means *to stand, to appoint.* The Jews had appointed their concept of righteousness instead of seeking the divine Will. Thus, they sought justification by the deeds of the law (Phil. 3:9), a righteousness that conferred personal merit. But, as Paul has already proved (see ch. 2:23; 3:19-20; 7:9), the law emphasized the reality of sin. Though flesh might attempt to achieve obedience, sin remains a reality. Therefore, the law condemned all who trusted solely in it. The very attempt to establish their own righteousness by the rituals of the law, blinded Jews to the justification possible through forgiveness of sins, that is only found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostate christendom repeats the example of Jewry. Claiming to use the Bible as their foundation, they establish doctrines and church systems which do not relate to the *way* of righteousness revealed in the one true gospel. Since they remain as ignorant of this as do the Jews, they are in no better position in the eyes of Yahweh.

"Have not submitted themselves" — Paul uses an emphatic word to describe the Jewish rebelliousness against the will of God. The Greek *hupotasso* has the idea of *being subordinate, obedient to a demand.* It is a military term, implying the subjection of one under orders to obey. Here the word is in the middle, passive voice: "to subject oneself". It was their duty to place themselves under the terms of divine righteousness, but in a vain seeking for righteousness through personal merit, Jews failed to appreciate the channel of divine grace found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of manifesting *obedience* to God, they revealed the very opposite!

Paul's expression emphasizes that to accept God's *gift* of righteousness, requires laying aside our "own" efforts to seek righteousness. We cease trying to make *ourselves* righteous. This is something only God can and will do, providing we surrender our "own" will and submit to His.

"Unto the righteousness of God" — The divine plan for the justification of transgressors. But faith is not merely an intellectual process — the "do's" and "do not's" — it must also include the exercise of the will in submitting to the authority of God. It is this submission, willingly offered in the right spirit, which develops the Christ-like character. "Submit yourselves therefore to God" (Jas. 4:7). The Jews were unable to understand their own law in this light; and for this reason Paul prays for them. We must not be devious in our own walk in the Truth. The Truth must be understood as a way of life, sacrificing the flesh in submission to the will of the Father; the example being so perfectly demonstrated in the life of His Son.

VERSE 4

"For Christ (is) the end of the law" — Paul now gives three reasons why the Jews were in error: **(1)** The law had fulfilled its purpose (v. 4); **(2)** The way of salvation through Christ, based on faith, should now be apparent to all enlightened by the scripture (vv. 5-10); **(3)** The way of seeking the "righteousness which is of faith" has been opened to all, both Jew and Gentile" (vv. 11-13).

In this verse, Paul does not say that in Christ a person is relieved from the demands of law (cp. 1Cor. 9:21), but, rather, that Christ is the "fulfilment" of all aspects of the Mosaic Covenant. The word "end" is *telos,* which means *the point aimed at as a limit; the termination.* He is

the finality of the law. The same word is used to describe the extent of love that the Master manifested for his disciples: "he loved them to the end *(telos: the uttermost limit)"* (Jn. 13:1). Thus it speaks of the completion, the fulness, that which makes it perfect.

God gave the law to reveal the presence and power of sin; He gave Christ as the *end* of that process, and the means by which transgression might be removed. Without Christ, the law would have been incomplete, the sacrifices a mere meaningless ritual — but he, being the complete embodiment of the law, and the complete fulfilment of its prophetic spirit, the full significance of all the law is manifested.

"For righteousness" — The preposition is *eis, into, unto, with a view to.* The law indicated a redeemer to come as the means of divine righteousness; Christ is its fulfilment. Thus, in him is found the righteousness that the law offered.The forgiveness of sins in Christ brings to an end the frustrating, ceaseless, hopeless pursuit of justification by means of law on the part of weak mortal flesh (Rom. 9:31).

So Paul emphasizes that Christ leads us *into (eis)* the way of righteousness. Paul's argument to the Jews is: "You will find righteousness if you come *into* Christ, thus becoming a part of his mystical body".

"To everyone that believeth" — Here is the qualification. There is no hope of attaining to righteousness other than by this means. It is offered upon the basis of understanding, faith and a knowledge of what God has accomplished in Christ. Such a unique relationship with the Father and Son can never be found by those who seek salvation through law.

The Law Taught that Faith is Necessary — vv. 5-10.

If Christ is the "end of the law" then the law itself must indicate the need of such a redeemer. Paul now adduces arguments from the Law to show that faith is absolutely necessary in order to manifest an acceptable walk before Yahweh.

VERSE 5

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law" — Paul now quotes the words of the Lawgiver to indicate the purpose of the law and the benefits it could provide. If a spiritually minded Jew were to seek within the Law the way leading to righteousness, he would inevitably discover that he could not meet perfectly the requirements of the law, and could not therefore be saved by this means. He would see that God would need to reveal His arm to bring salvation. A saviour would have to be sent to achieve that which no other man had ever accomplished: a life of perfect obedience before God, the putting to death of the flesh showing it to be rightly related to death. Unless the power of sin was overcome in a perfectly righteous man of fallen Adamic nature, thus triumphing over both sin and the flesh, there could be no hope for the redemption of the race.

"The man which doeth those things shall live by them" — The preposition "by" is the Greek *en, within,* or: *in their sphere.* The word "doeth" is the Greek *poieo* which relates to an action, *to make* or *to do.* It refers to the faithful acknowledgement of the wisdom of the law, and a person's endeavor to fulfil its demands. Thus Paul cites Lev. 18:5, which relates to those who faithfully endeavored to keep the law. The faithful keeping of Yahweh's statutes and judgments would reveal for such the need of a redeemer who would be the antitype of the sacrifices. Thus, the "doer of the law" would live within the framework of that to which the law pointed, and recognise that, in spite of all his works, he still sinned, and therefore must look in faith to the cover that Yahweh would ultimately provide (Psa. 32:1; Rom. 4:6). Such an Israelite had his eyes opened to behold wondrous things out of Yahweh's law (Psa. 119:18). In general, however, Israel sought justification by law, and did not attain unto it (Rom. 9:31; Neh. 9:29; Acts 15:10; Gal. 3:10).

VERSE 6

"But" — In opposition to the aforesaid.

"The righteousness which is of faith" — Here the preposition is *ek, out of,* and indicates that the means of reconciliation must develop from a conscience which is the product of belief and understanding.

"Speaketh on this wise" — Faith always recognised the need of a redeemer who must be strengthened from above, who must die and be raised again. But faith did not question how it was possible for this to be accomplished, but accepted the word that promised it, and placed confidence in Yahweh to fulfil His word. So Paul cites again from the law in Deut. 30:12-13 to show that faith is necessary even to attempt keep the law in the right spirit!

"Say not in thine heart" — Do not suppose! It was not to be in remarkable acts of outstanding ability, such as are outlined in vv. 6-7, that would constitute acceptance in God's sight, but the acknowledgement of His Word (v. 8). Thus, the law commanded its followers to exercise faith; yet Judaisers were attempting to obey the law without it!

"Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)" — In these words the apostle Paul does not literally quote Moses' words in Deut. 30:12-13, but interprets their meaning. Who is able to enter the realms of heavenly glory in order to secure the services of Christ, or to accomplish one's own salvation?

In fact, the statement shows that Yahweh achieved what mankind never could. The Law proclaimed the need for one to be born "from above" (Jn. 3:3, mg) as was the Lord Jesus (Lk. 1:35), before flesh could be sufficiently strengthened to conquer sin and obey all God's requirements. The Law, therefore, showed clearly the impossibility of flesh fulfilling its requirements unless it was specially strengthened by Yahweh in the way described in Psa. 80:17, and in these words from Deut. 30:12-13.

VERSE 7

"Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)" — In interpreting Moses' words, Paul shows that the Law predicted that Jesus must not only be born "from above" but must also die, and be raised again from the dead. The Master acknowledged that the Father required this of him: John 10:17-18. Thus, the Law itself pointed to the offering of Christ as the means of justification. How foolish of any to speak of Jesus entering into eternal life on his own without dying, for should he have refused "the commandment of his Father" to lay down his life, he would have transgressed God's Will! How would the Law in this particular be fulfilled if such had occurred?

VERSE 8

"But what saith it?" — What is the *real* meaning of the law? Paul is about to quote from Deut. 30:14, which teaches that faith is absolutely essential to the proper keeping of the law. This was a principle that the Jews, in their formalism, had completely overlooked. It is one, too, which believers sometimes overlook when they glibly say that "the law is done away in Christ". What is true is that the *ritual* and *curse* of the law, with its *condemnation*, are "done away in Christ" (Eph. 2:15) in that in him is found forgiveness of sins. Christ fulfilled the law, he became the "uttermost" of the law, the One of whom it prophesied in precept and principle. In Christ, we fulfil the terms of the law in its true spirit (cp. Isa. 58:13-14), and obtain its benefits.

"The Word is nigh thee, (even) in thy mouth" — They had been made aware of the divine principles contained in the Holy Oracles, and therefore, there was no excuse on the grounds of ignorance, such as the Gentiles might have formally claimed (Acts 17:30).

"And in thy heart" — It must not only be expressed vocally ("in thy mouth"), but be reflected in belief and faith. In quoting thus from Deut. 30:14, Paul shows that the law of Moses taught the need of faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God (Rom. 10:17).

The quotation from Moses continues: "that thou mayest *do* it". The Word "in the heart" will find reflection in action, and in so doing, there will be manifested works of faith. It was here, however, that Israel failed, for the people saw only the formalism of the law, and not the faith to which it was designed to lead (Gal. 3:23-24). Paul taught: "the word preached did not profit them, not being *mixed with faith* in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2). Because of this, they did not fulfil the righteousness taught in the law, and therefore, "the commandment which was ordained to life" was revealed "to be unto death" (Rom. 7:10). Only through faith could they fulfil the requirements of the law, and see through it to the Redeemer who would recover them from the sin that it revealed unto them.

"That is, the word of faith" — Paul identifies the Word that saves; it finds its effect in the attitude and development of belief in the remarkable work of salvation by which Almighty God will redeem mankind from the power of the grave.

"Which we preach" — Paul has shown that he can quite freely and boldly quote from Moses, because there was no conflict between Paul and Moses. The gospel which was preached by Paul and his fellow apostles drew heavily upon Moses and the prophets because the divine revelation through them laid a vital and necessary foundation for the manifestation of Christ as the Word Made Flesh, and for the gospel which would afterwards be preached in the name of the *risen* Christ (cp. Gal. 1:6-10). Paul now expounds upon this principle, showing in Rom. 10:9-10 that the power of God in the convicted heart can provide spiritual resurrection and ultimate salvation.

VERSE 9

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus" — In addition to the influence of the Word, there must be a demonstration of faith by the believer. Confession with the mouth, and belief in the heart, are essential qualities for righteousness and salvation.

Paul has identified his teaching with the "word of faith" that the law declared should be in the hearts of the people (v. 5), and now he reveals what that requires: "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus". This answers to the clause in the law: "The word... in thy mouth" (v. 8).

The word "confess" is from the Greek *homologeo*, from *homos*, "the same", and *lego*, "to speak". A person confessing the Lord Jesus in that sense proclaims only things which reflect what the scriptures teach of him. In the terms of the law, such a belief requires acceptance of the truth that Christ is from above (v. 6; see Jn. 3:2-3); thus, he is the manifestation of Yahweh. In teaching this, the law revealed that flesh unaided cannot keep God's law or requirements. We all need a strength greater than ourselves (Phil. 4:13).

"And shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead" — A further clause in the statement of Deut. 30:14, involving faith and conviction in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus: that is, "bringing up Christ again from the dead" (v. 7).

Paul has in mind here far more than the raising up of a dead body from the tomb. Christ had been raised to receive the same nature as his Father; to be made deathless. He was raised that he might ascend to the right hand of Yahweh in the heavens, there to remain as the high priest of all who have true covenant relationship with God — and from there he will return to earth to reward his faithful servants with divine nature, and subjugate all nations within the kingdom of God, reigning over all from Jerusalem. All these glorious truths are embodied in the simple statement: "hath raised him from the dead" — see Phil. 2:9-11.

"Thou shalt be saved" — The understanding and confession of the origin, death and resurrection of Christ are foundation doctrines for salvation. So John makes this truth a test of faith: 2Jn. v.7. But this promise is only for those who believe it, embrace it wholeheartedly, and walk in the way of the Truth.

VERSE 10

"For with the heart" — A sound conversion to the Truth requires a strong inner conviction, not merely a confession by word of mouth. The knowledge of God's way must be absorbed, becoming a powerful, living faith that energises a believer to fulfil such a commitment. In ch. 6:17, Paul commends them: "Ye have obeyed from the heart..." In such actions, they had fulfilled the threefold requirements of Moses: *(1)* Faith in the heart; *(2)* Confession by the mouth; *(3)* Performance in deed (see Deut. 30:14). Israel failed to measure up to the standards required by the law, and was therefore rejected.

When Israel gathered at the foot of Sinai they were "converted" by "word of mouth"; for three times they responded solemnly to the *words* of Moses by affirming, "All that Yahweh hath said, will we do and be obedient..." Yet, within a short time, they were dancing around the golden calf! They had no deep, inner conviction; therefore their "conversion" to the Truth was merely superficial and did not withstand the first trial they faced. All converts to Christ must "continue" in the Truth, "grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23).

"Man believeth unto righteousness" — The Greek preposition *eis* ("unto") implies *movement towards* a certain objective. Here the purpose, objective, or end in view is righteousness (i.e., justification). Thus "believing" is essential that "righteousness" might ultimately be achieved.

"And with the mouth confession is made" — With an "inner conviction" and a "believing", Paul now refers to the need for open confession of that conviction. Moses' words cited in v. 5, taught that mankind is called upon to hear and obey God's commandments, as a means to righteousness. But since none, apart from the Lord Jesus, are able to achieve this (vv.6-7), mankind is faced with the reality of failure through sins committed. In seeking for justification, a person must openly acknowledge the divine holiness and his personal conviction. This conviction is found in the confession of the mouth (Mat. 12:34) which is the outward expression of that which is hidden in the heart. Such confession is made at baptism (Rom. 6:17), which constitutes the first action of obedience, springing out of conviction. It is therefore an application of the terms of Moses' command: "that thou mayest do it".

"Confession" is not only expressed in acknowledgement of personal sin (Jas. 5:16; 1Jn. 1:9), but in the recognition of the divine way of salvation (Phil. 2:11). Peter was commended by the Master for "confessing" the status and work of his Lord: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16), to which came the divine response: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for *flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father* which is in heaven" (v. 17). Later Jesus "witnessed a good confession" before Pontius Pilate (1Tim. 6:13) when he forthrightly set before his detractors the divine principles for which he had been apprehended (Jn. 18:36-37).

"Unto salvation" — Again the word "unto" is *eis: leading towards* (see previous note on this verse above). Salvation results from a disposition to "confession". The Master commends such a disposition, and shows that it will be publicly honored at his return to earth: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 10:32). Salvation is not made available to those who rely on works, as the Judaisers, but to those who recognise the need to develop faith. A man of faith, under the law, would realise that the animal sacrifices commanded were in themselves inadequate (Psa. 51:16). They were merely types of that which was to come, and therefore a discerning and spiritual mind would see in them a foreshadowing of the redeemer promised in Gen. 3:15, and which was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. The worthies, such as Moses, David and John Baptist, recognised this (see Acts 2:30-31; Jn. 1:29), and this "word in their hearts" led them on to the righteousness which is found only in the

forgiveness of sins in Christ the perfect and complete sacrifice. Thus they could "see that day" (Acts 2:25), and the efficacy of that sacrifice on Golgotha's hill reached back to their own times (Hebrews 9:15).

The Scriptures Testify that Salvation Was Not Limited to Israel — vv. 11-15.

Paul draws from the Old Testament Scriptures to reveal that God intended all men to be saved, and that the opportunity to be included in that salvation was to be effected through the misconduct and failure of Israel. He shows by the use of many scripture passages that there is therein a uniform teaching on the matter of faith.

VERSE 11

"For the scripture saith" — Whereas in his first reference to Isa. 28:16 (Rom. 9:33), Paul showed that *faith* is the condition upon which salvation may be obtained, he now quotes it to show that the way of redemption is open to all who are willing to receive the Truth — Jew and Gentile alike.

"Whosoever" — This word is not found in the prophecy of Isaiah, but is added by Paul to bring out the point on which emphasis is to be laid. Instead of the *"he"* of Isaiah, Paul has "whosoever", to teach that the *"he"* can be "every one" of any race; thus not confining the prophecy to the Jews.

In adding this word to his citation, Paul does not merely quote the prophecy, but interprets it in the light of other scriptural revelations. Salvation was not to be limited to the faithful in Israel, but available to those of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9) who were prepared to "confess" (Rom. 10:10) the principles of the Truth.

"Believeth on him" — Whosoever believes, having faith, will succeed in the issues of life. In scripture "belief" and "faith" are cognate words; one implies the other. Faith is impossible without an understanding (Rom. 10:17), and the word for "belief" implies much more than mere academic knowledge. A true faith develops from a conviction based upon understanding the declarations of Yahweh.

"Shall not be ashamed" — But the quotation in Isa. 28:16 reads: "shall not make haste"; that is, shall not flee away in defeat. The words were stated against the background of a prophecy concerning the laying of a "precious corner stone, a sure foundation" in Zion, upon which the faithful will find protection, comfort and strength — a Messianic stone upon which the spiritual temple of faithful Jew and Gentile would be established (Eph. 2:20; 1Pet. 2:6-10).

In citing Isaiah's prophecy, Paul interprets its significance in the context of his argument that "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Rom. 10:12). Neither will be "ashamed" when "belief" is properly expressed. The literal Greek means: "shall not be put to shame"; i.e., defeated. Gesenius suggests that the Hebrew verb *chuwsh* ("to hurry") not only means *to hasten,* but *to be ashamed.* Those with a true belief and a confident faith will not be "hurried away" from their conviction, nor will they be "ashamed" of their position (cp. Gal. 1:6).

VERSE 12

"For" — Paul now comments on the scripture quoted. He justifies his usage and interpretation of it on the fact that where there exists an understanding faith, the matter of race, status or any other distinction is of no consequence. But Paul has already demonstrated this in chapters 3 and 4. Why, then, does he return to this theme? Because he now stresses this truth for the particular benefit of Jewish readers. He has shown that Jewry failed their God (ch. 9:30-33); that they must learn to understand and accept "the righteousness which is by *faith*" (ch. 10:1-10). The "whosoever" of v. 11 calls upon the Jew to acknowledge God's inalienable right to call Gentiles to the saving power of the gospel.

"There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" — Paul makes the same observation in Gal. 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus". Faith will bond all different classes in a common, mutual submission to the same Lord, and therefore in the matter of justification before God, all (both Jew and Gentile; see Rom. 3:22) had sinned; all had failed to obey the law; and all must be reconciled in the same way: by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:7-9).

The word "difference" is the Greek *diastole,* which signifies *to set asunder.* Most translations render the word "distinction". The atoning work of Jesus Christ has removed the distinction by bringing Gentiles into the ambit of salvation where there exists a faith based upon sound understanding: see Eph. 3:14-18. In the matter of salvation, all men are equal in Christ (v. 12; 1Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

"For the same Lord" — There is but one God, and all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, are the work of His hands (Acts 17:26-30; 1Tim. 2:4). Where there exists faith based upon a sound understanding, there is no difference or distinction between Jew and Gentile. The One Faith will bring all such individuals into subjection to the same Lord. They may thereby partake of the rich spiritual resources which, in His goodness and mercy, He is willing to lovingly provide. Yahweh's glory has been conferred in His Son, whom God elevated to power and dominion (Acts 10:36; Heb. 1:8-10).

"Is rich unto all that call upon him" — The riches of Yahweh relate to His gracious offer of glorification through faith, and are revealed in Christ: see Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:4-7; 3:8, 17. The word "rich" (Gr. *plouteo, to be wealthy)* has the idea to "have abundance, to have in store much more than is needful for present or personal use". God thus *abounds* in mercy and goodness to those who respond to His invitation (Eph. 3:20). So Paul teaches that God is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), and that His people should manifest His qualities by being "rich in good works" (1Tim. 6:17-18). James exhorts that they should be "rich in faith" (ch. 2:5).

The word "call" comes from the Greek *epikaleomai,* signifying *to entitle, to call upon by way of adoration; making use of the name of the Lord* (Vine). It does not merely mean to address, but with a stronger meaning: to beseech, to invoke, as a person in need, or one desiring to honor. Calling upon God is the outward expression of faith.

Paul draws the word from the quotation already in his mind (Joel 2:32), that he now reveals in the next verse.

VERSE 13

"For" — Here Paul cites Joel 2:32. Peter quoted from Joel to enforce his argument to the Jews at Pentecost that the "day of the Lord" had come; it was typically fulfilled in the revelation of the saving gospel, evidenced by the presence of the spirit gifts. Now Paul shows that the day of salvation has been opened unto all.

"Whosoever" — See notes on ch. 9:33. Paul claims that Joel's use of the word "whosoever" shows that salvation is not limited to Jews, and now reveals the action required of all who would seek to please Yahweh. Brother Carter comments on this verse: "the appositeness of this quotation is seen when each word is considered. *Whosoever* requires faith: *call* implies an invocation of aid, which requires faith; *the name of the Lord* refers to the purpose of redemption memorialized in God's Name as announced to Moses at the bush, and which is embodied in Jesus; *saved* tells the end to be reached by all who answer to the description of the verse".

"Shall call upon the name of the Lord" — The words "call upon" signify to turn around to appeal to the one addressed (see v. 12). The terms of Joel's statement require that a person desiring to be saved turn to the "Name of Yahweh", which is as a "strong tower", providing safety (Prov. 18:10). People of salvation, therefore, are those who have turned from the ways of the flesh to become "a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14). They turn to Christ who is the manifestation of Yahweh. His ministry glorified the Father on earth, for he both manifested and declared

His Name to the disciples (Jn. 17:6, 26), and prayed that the Father might continue to keep them "in His Name" (v. 11). That Name is bestowed upon believers (1Thes. 1:1), and requires of them that they manifest its principles in action, and so build into their lives the divine characteristics they see revealed in His Son.

"Shall be saved" — Those who have "called upon" "the Name" in "spirit and in truth" will find that their desire for the things of God and their hope of immortality will result in their ultimate glorification. Salvation is not possible upon any other basis.

VERSE 14

"How then" — Paul again reasons upon the quotation he has already given. The word "whosoever" used by Joel, and implied by Isaiah (ch. 52:7 that he now advances), shows the need of preaching the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, even though the former might condemn the apostle for so doing.

Paul enumerates four questions, linking each one to its companion. Men are urged to call upon the Name of the Lord and be saved; but they will not call upon that Name unless they have been moved to believe in Him; they cannot believe in Him unless they have heard of Him; they cannot hear about Him unless someone proclaims the gospel to them; and no one can proclaim the saving Word unless he has been sent.

"Shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?" — The folly of such action is evident. A person will not "invoke the aid" of someone in whom he has no confidence. "Belief" has the idea of "faith", and without faith none can please the Father (Heb. 11:6). A person cannot believe unless he first hears.

"And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" — Therefore it is necessary that the gospel message be preached, for this is the means Yahweh has selected that His will might be appreciated by mankind.

"And how shall they hear without a preacher?" — Faith must be exercised in Christ, but it is the preacher of Christ's saving gospel who must be heard. It is a natural weakness of human nature to reject the counsel of another, especially when such advice requires a change to one's philosophy or way of life. Thus, in order to humbly "hear" the Truth, the natural desires and inclinations of the flesh must be subdued that the Word might enter the intellect and effect the change Yahweh requires.

The word "preacher" is *kerusso: to herald,* and indicates one who proclaims loudly in a public manner so as to cause people to heed his message (Acts 10:42). The Ethiopian expressed his need of assistance: "How can I (understand), except some man should guide me?" (ch. 8:30-31).

VERSE 15

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" — "Be sent" is the Gr. *apostello: set apart; send out,* commonly translated "sent, send", as on a particular mission. It signifies to be divinely commissioned, and sent forth by God, as in the past: "Yahweh hath sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them" (Jer. 25:4).

"As it is written" — Citing Isa. 52:7, to introduce the scriptural grounds for his preaching to the Gentiles which so much angered his Jewish brethren (Acts 22:21-22).

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace" — The context of this quotation reveals that the gospel message, the "glad tidings of good things", was to be displayed before "all nations". The word "beautiful" in both Hebrew *(na'ah:* meaning, *to be quiescent;* hence, to rest, to be at one; to be suitable, becoming*)* and Greek *(horaios: belonging to the right hour or season)* implies that which is brought to full maturity and vigor; that which is revealed at the very right time. The Greek word is derived from *hora,* meaning *a season, a period fixed by natural laws.* Thus: "that which happens in its proper time". The revelation of the gospel to the Gentiles was pre-

ordained by God, and would be accomplished at the right moment in history. This came about with the manifestation of the Son of God, "in the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4), through whose atoning work the gospel was extended to all.

But whereas Isaiah declared "how beautiful are the feet of *him*", Paul changes this word to the plural "*them*", again interpreting the prophecy in accordance with the developing purpose of God. The gospel was verified by the Lord Jesus Christ, as a "minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8), and was then carried forth by "them", the apostles, that "the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (v. 9). The apostles were Christ's representatives (2Cor. 5:20), with the responsibility to carry this message of salvation "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15).

These "feet" were full of vigor, and swift to carry the message at the right season. The Acts of the Apostles conclude with the evidence that "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

"And bring glad tidings of good things" — Again notice the variation between the singular tense of Isa. 57:7, and the plural interpretation of Paul in this verse. Isaiah prophesies concerning Messiah, and Paul applies the words to the apostles. But though there is variation, there is no conflict. In verse 14 Paul refers to those who "call on *him*... believe *in him*". Now he speaks of "they" who preach. Paul explains that the Roman brethren have heard Christ through the ministrations of the apostles (cp. Gal. 3:1), and now applies Isaiah's reference to the work that he and his fellow apostles were doing. They were Christ's ambassadors, as he declared in 2Cor. 5:20, adding: "we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God". To the Galatians he declared that the purpose of God was "to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:16), so that the apostles were manifestations of Christ, as he is the manifestation of Yahweh (cp. Jn. 17:6,8). In "them" therefore, the hearers of the message saw and heard "him", as in all the ecclesias Christ should be displayed to the world (Col. 1:27).

Not All Who Hear the Gospel Accept Its Principles and Privileges — vv. 16-18.

Yahweh has provided every opportunity that all might hear the gospel message confirmed through the sacrificial ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet not all have been prepared to accept its terms, and even in this, Bible prophecy was fulfilled.

VERSE 16

"But" — This word appears five times as Paul presses his argument concerning the Jewish reaction to the proclamation of the gospel. ***(1)*** v. 16—Israel were not obedient to the gospel. ***(2)*** v. 18—Israel has clearly heard the evidence. ***(3)*** v. 19—Though Israel heard, did they not understand? ***(4)*** v. 20—Since Israel refused to heed, some of the Gentiles would. ***(5)*** v. 21—Faithlessness by those privileged to hear the gospel will lead to divine judgment.

"They have not all obeyed the gospel" — Notice how often Paul emphasizes the fact that there was nothing new in his reasoning: "It was Isaiah who said long ago that Israel would reject their Messiah; and what I am teaching you is an endorsement of what has already been said". Paul makes an obvious observation. It must be admitted that although God had provided the means through His Son and the apostles, many in Israel failed to respond. Paul experienced this stubborn opposition to the Truth: Acts 13:46, 50; 14:4; 18:6; 28:24, 27; Rom. 3:3.

"For Esaias saith" — For evidence, Paul cites Isa. 53:1, to show that the prophets predicted that only a remnant would heed the gospel message.

"Lord, who hath believed our report?" — Isaiah complains that his declarations concerning Messiah had been

rejected by his countrymen. The Greek word for "report" is *akoe,* and signifies *a hearing,* and is thus translated twice in v. 17. The same citation was used by the Lord Jesus against the faithless generation who opposed his ministry, even when it was accredited by the evidence of the miraculous power of God (Jn. 12:37-38).

VERSE 17

"So then, faith (cometh) by hearing" — Isaiah heard the divine testimony and believed (Isa. 1:1). The apostles heard the word of Christ and believed (Mat. 16:17). Disciples out of all nations have likewise heard the voice of preaching and believed (1Cor. 1:21).

"And hearing by the Word of God" — This is the only means whereby faith may be acquired, and from which conversion to the Truth may result. The Word never indicates that faith can be obtained by any other means, such as an "experience", as is popularly claimed by some. The message of the gospel must be clearly and correctly understood *intellectually.* It is not the voice of fallible man that saves, but the words of divine Truth.

The texts read: "the word of Christ" (as in most translations), and can be interpreted as "a message concerning Christ". The Greek for "word" is *rhema* which has the meaning *to utter; to speak aloud,* thus that which is uttered in speech or writing, in contrast to the word *logos: reason.* It thus refers to a declaration made evident to those who might hear.

VERSE 18

"But I say" — The second use of this arresting statement. Paul answers the objecting Judaiser who might claim that God's Word had been evidently proclaimed to the nation selected out of Egypt, and granted the divine law of salvation.

"Have they not heard?" — If "hearing" is the prerequisite to faith, we would expect faith to be found in Israel.

"Yes verily" — There is no doubt! The "report" (v. 16) has been clearly and unequivocally revealed in the works and words of the Messiah, confirming the prophetic declaration (Deut. 18:18). To this end Paul now advances Psa. 19:4, and interprets the quotation in the light of his argument.

"Their sound went into all the earth" — The words of Psa. 19:4 are quoted and adapted to the circumstances of the gospel proclamation. The Psalm extols the glory of the creation of God, describing the heavenly bodies that send forth their mute testimony of a living God to all the world — so the gospel of Christ has borne testimony to all the Jews of the civilised world. Further, as the "stars" of the political firmament of the future kingdom (Dan. 12:3), the apostles had partially fulfilled the Psalm by proclaiming the word of Christ to "the earth" (see Col. 1:23).

The word "sound" is the Greek *phthoggos: utterance,* and refers not merely to the voice heard, but to the meaning expressed. The word "earth" is the Greek *ge,* signifying: *soil; region.* It thus refers to the mortal constitution of mankind, upon whom the gospel Truth has shone.

"And their words unto the ends of the world" — Here the word is the Greek *oikoumene,* meaning *the habitable,* and applies particularly to the arena of the apostolic ministry. The DIAGLOTT renders the latter part of this verse: "their sound went out into all the land, and their words to the extremities of the habitable". This gave opportunity for Israel in dispersion to hear of the word of Christ, as well as to the Gentiles throughout the earth, and was in accordance with the will of God because it fulfilled the intention of the Psalm here cited (Col. 1:5-6; Acts 17:6).

Israel Rejected the Message, and Therefore God Turned to the Gentiles — vv. 19-21.

Still quoting from scripture, Paul shows that Yahweh has revealed His intention to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, so that the apostolic work of preaching fulfils the requirements of prophecy.

VERSE 19

"But I say" — The third occasion of the statement (see v. 16).

"Did not Israel know?" — "You cannot say they did not *hear;* you certainly do not mean to say then, do you, that Israel did not *understand?"* The introduction of the name Israel here is significant. From this point onwards the contrast between Israel and the Gentiles is the key to Paul's argument. Above all peoples, Israel should have understood God's message.

The word "know" (Gr. *ginosko*) means *to take in knowledge; to understand completely,* and emphasizes that every opportunity for instruction was given to Israel, so that the nation could not plead innocency on the grounds of ignorance.

"First Moses saith" — Paul advances the evidence of Moses, the redeemer and deliverer of Israel from Egypt at the beginning of their national history, and who is greatly respected by the Jewish advocates (Mat. 8:4; 23:2; Mk. 10:3; 12:26; Lk. 5:14; 16:31; 24:27; etc), and therefore his words are important at this point in Paul's exposition.

"I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people" — Paul quotes from Moses' *Song of Witness Against Israel* in Deut. 32:21. The "no people" is used by Paul to describe the Gentiles who were originally excluded from divine salvation, which was only to be found in the covenant given to Israel through Moses.

"And by a foolish nation I will anger you" — God tested the fidelity of Israel by opening His invitation to the Gentiles: the "foolish (Gr. *asunetos: unintelligent,* thus, ignorant of the divine will) nation". If such peoples beyond the Israelitish covenant (who were not recognised as peoples covered by divine grace at all), and unintelligent peoples (i.e., idol worshippers), could be brought to understand the gospel, a privileged and spiritually blessed people like Israel was surely inexcusable if the nation failed to understand it. Therefore, through the prophecy of their leader, Moses, and at the earliest time of the nation, Israel had been taught that because of lack of faith shown by their worship of idols (the "*no-gods*" of the Gentiles: Isa. 37:19; Jer. 5:7; 16:20), God would be provoked to jealousy, and would in turn provoke them to jealousy by "*no people*" (the Gentiles who would be redeemed through faith). Thus, Israel could hardly claim ignorance.

VERSE 20

"But Esaias is very bold" — He spoke out plainly, and in a way calculated to bring an immediate reaction. His words were a dramatic challenge to faithless Israel, and a prophecy of God's intention to extend the gospel to the Gentiles. Isaiah proclaimed the Truth at great personal peril, and Paul's use of the present tense ("*is* very bold") gives a vivid picture of the fearlessness of the great prophet. Paul had, himself, valiantly followed Isaiah's example. It took great courage to rebuke the unbelief of fellow Israelites in the days of the prophets; and no less so in the days of Paul.

"I was found of them that sought Me not" — Paul cites Isa. 65:1. Yahweh acted to provide mercy and forgiveness to those in need before they realised the benefits to be received therefrom. This was the case in the days of Isaiah when a remnant of Jews obtained salvation although the majority of the nation remained in apostasy. Paul quotes the verse in application to the Gentiles, for divine mercy was now extended to them through Jesus Christ, before they were aware of their need. The apostle has already declared that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners,* Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8; see also 1Jn. 4:10, 19). Therefore God's spontaneous, unmerited love, takes the initiative in the matter of salvation, and offers unsolicited mercy to the unworthy. The basis of His remarkable action is in the repentance of those who "*find* Him", even though they previously "sought Him not".

The TCNT has: "I was found by those who were not seeking Me". What a contrast with vv. 2-3! A people who had on conception of divine truth joyfully received it upon *hearing* it preached. Paul demonstrated this when at Antioch in Pisidia: "And when *the Gentiles heard* this, they were *glad,* and glorified *the*

word of the Lord" (Acts 13:48). Where was this spirit to be found within the nation of Israel? It was virtually non-existent.

The phrase "I was found" indicates that action on the part of sinners is necessary before the proffered mercy can be granted. So Noah *found* grace (Gen. 6:8), as did Moses (Exod. 33:12).

"I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me" — The word "manifest" is the Gr. *emphanes* and indicates *to be personally apparent.* It has the idea of God providing ample proof of His existence and forgiving qualities. His salvation could be easily recognised. This prophecy applied firstly to a remnant in Israel, and secondly to those from the Gentiles who would appreciate His graciousness and lovingkindness (Acts 15:17).

VERSE 21

"But to Israel He saith" — These introductory words of Paul are important, because Isaiah makes no such clear line of demarcation between disbelieving Israel and believing Gentiles — but Paul does so, since the circumstances require that he should emphasize this point.

Unfortunately national Jewry ignored the "manifestation" of God. They "forgot" His works and refused to walk in His ways (Psa. 78:10-11). Therefore Paul quotes Isa. 65:2, to reveal that although Yahweh had provided for the salvation of His people (v. 1), Israel did not respond (v. 2). Yahweh offered forgiveness; Israel replied with hardness of heart, and stubbornness of mind. Therefore Israel would be temporarily set aside so that Gentiles might have opportunity of the divine mercy.

"All day long" — This expression denotes Yahweh's constancy. During an astonishingly long period of time, Yahweh had reached out towards His people, showing the loving care of a dutiful father. His forbearance had been strongly evident. How could Israel complain at the judgments which fell upon them as a result of their rebellious denial of Yahweh's goodness and mercy? Israel stands inexcusable because the people stubbornly refused God's proffered grace (cp. Acts 7:51-53).

The "day" (cp. Gen. 2:17) might well refer to the period of the Mosaic covenant: the "day" of Israel's opportunity which closed when the nation crucified their Messiah, and they were delivered into the hands of the Romans. At "every hour" of that day of Jewish privilege Yahweh had exercised Himself on their behalf. He declared: "For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in *the day* that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto *this day, rising early and protesting,* saying, Obey My voice" (Jer. 11:7; 25:3, 4; 35:14, 15; 44:4). Unfortunately, "they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods" (ch. 44:5).

"I have stretched forth My hands" — The open hand of mercy is evidence of the patient longsuffering of Yahweh (1Pet. 3:20; 2Pet. 3:9). He is ever ready to help those who turn to Him (Isa. 55:2). His mercy towards the repentant is boundless (Psa. 103:12), and complete confidence can be placed therein (cp. Jer. 29:11).

God had not simply waited upon action from Israel; He had shown a consistent initiative. He had pleaded with the nation, and had endeavored to patiently draw them into the *way* of His Truth. He had "stretched *forth*" His "hands" in an attitude of pleading and entreaty. But all in vain. Nationally, Israel had not only failed to respond, but had contemptuously rejected the "gospel of peace" (v. 16).

"Unto a disobedient" — The word "unto" is from the Gr. *pros, towards.* God ever extended His mercy *towards* His people. The Gr. *apeitheo* means *to disbelieve,* and is derived from the word *apeithes, to be unpersuadable.* Thus, to be obstinate, willingly perverse, and refusing to conform to requirements. The constant complaint of the prophets was that Israel was "a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Yahweh" (Isa. 30:9; cp. 28:12; 59:2; 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 13:11; 22:5; etc).

"And gainsaying people" — Gr. *antilego:* to *dispute; refuse.* They mani-

fested a contradictory and contentious attitude to the will and precepts of Yahweh. Jeremiah witnessed against them: "They obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction" (ch. 17:23). Notwithstanding their obstinate argumentativeness, Yahweh's mercy was always held out to the nation, as Paul now shows in Romans 11.

PART THREE: ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

The Principle of Salvation through Faith. God's Action in the Future.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Yahweh's Purpose is Achieved by Divine Wisdom in Overcoming the Failures of Mankind and Providing for Redemption in Christ

In Chapter 9, Paul outlined God's doctrine of ***Election*** *— how and why He chooses or rejects individuals and nations, as the instruments of His purpose. In Chapter 10 the apostle reveals why the Jews deserved their* ***Rejection****, since they themselves had, in effect, rejected God. Because of their action in bringing about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, God had withdrawn their exclusive and peculiar privileges, and had opened the gospel message to the Gentiles. So the question might be asked: What then, is the divine purpose with Israel? Has the disobedience of the Jewish nation caused God to cast off His people whom once He had chosen, dispensing with the promises given unto the Fathers? Paul now shows that Yahweh's purpose remains constant; that a remnant will finally be recovered, and that Israel will ultimately be restored to divine favor. In the recovery of Israel nationally, through the deliverer who will be provided, there is seen the elevation of the faithful remnant, both of Jew and Gentile, to the honor and glory of Yahweh.*

Israel's Rejection was Temporary; A Remnant will be Saved — vv. 1-10.

Yahweh's eyes are ever over His people, carefully noting in His book of remembrance those who remain faithful to Him. Though they may not be recognised by their contemporaries, they are not forgotten by Him.

VERSE 1

"I say then" — "I ask then" (TCNT). In view of what has been established in chapters 9 and 10 concerning Israel's relationship with Yahweh — past and present, at the time the apostle writes — should we assume that Israel, as a nation, has now been irretrievably lost to the Truth and permanently cut off from their God? Anticipating that his Judaising opponents will pose this question on the grounds that the salvation of the Gentiles presupposes that God had dispensed with His ancient people, Paul therefore considers the question: Has God replaced Israel with the Gentiles?

"Hath God cast away His people?" — The Greek word for "cast away" is *apotheo,* which, when used in the middle voice signifies "to thrust from oneself, to cast off, by way of rejection" (Vine). For God to do this would be to negate all His promises to the fathers of Israel, and to bring discredit upon His holy Name. This He will never do. Samuel declared: "Yahweh will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake: because it hath pleased Yahweh to make you His people" (1Sam. 12:22. See also Jer. 31:37; Hos. 14:4; Isa.

12:1; Psa. 94:14; Amos 9:8-9). God's righteousness demands that He discipline His people when their actions require it (cp. Heb. 12:5-7), but this is an expression of love for their development and not evidence of His rejection of their position of privilege. God will fulfil His purpose with Israel, a principle witnessed by His faithfulness in creation: Jer. 33:20-21.

"God forbid" — A fervent denial by the apostle of such an unworthy suggestion; he repudiates with horror the thought of Israel's rejection. See notes on ch. 3:4. The expression should be rendered "Certainly not". Rotherham has: "Far be it!". Bullinger has the lit. Gr. as "May it not be!". For God to so act would be to deny His character and to ignore His declared purpose.

"For I also am an Israelite" — Why does Paul introduce this personal note into his narrative? For two reasons. Firstly, to demonstrate to his readers his own deep, personal involvement and interest in the Jewish question. He is not expounding the subject from the point of view of one who is personally unrelated to the issue. Secondly, Paul does not wish his adversaries to forget that he had not only been a Jewish Nationalist, but had previously *thought* like a Jew, *spoken* as a Jew, and had *acted* with typical Jewish perversity. At the same time, he desired that all should know that he had never *renounced* his Jewish origins. Indeed, in Acts 22:3 he calls himself a "Jew". The fact that Paul was a Jew who now walked in the way of righteousness because he had come "into Christ" was, in itself, proof enough that God had *not* "thrust away His people".

In Phil. 3:5, Paul describes his ancestry as being "of the stock of Israel". The name was first expressed to Jacob at a time of weakness when faced with the threat of his elder brother, Esau: Gen. 32:26-28. In extreme trepidation, surrounded by the darkness of the night, Jacob had proceeded to the brook Jabbok, to be accosted by a "man" who "wrestled with him until the breaking of the day." As a result of the patriarch's tenacity and determination to secure the divine blessing, an expression of God's providence in adversity was given to him, and expressed in the name *Israel: "A Prince with El"*, or *He who strives with God and prevails* (see *Expositor: Genesis*, p. 377 on Gen. 32:28).

Paul argues that if God had cast away His people, then, as a member of that nation, he would have been excluded from any benefits. In view of his previous blasphemy against God's Son, and his violent way of life against the believers, the mercy that he received was a refutation of the suggestion that God had cast off Israel. As Paul had received that mercy, so upon repentance could national Israel — and thus they ultimately will: ch. 11:26; Zech. 12:10-13:1.

Religious organisations, such as the British Israelites and Jehovah's Witnesses, who reject God's future purpose in natural Israel, teach the very thing that Paul rejects: that God has entirely cast away His people. Therefore such religious bodies are plainly astray from the Truth!

The only other "Israelite" so mentioned in the N.T. was Nathanael, who succeeded in achieving recognition by Christ (Jn. 1:47) as the determined Jacob did by God (Gen. 32:30).

"Of the seed of Abraham" — Emphasizing the association of natural Israel with the divine promises to the "seed": Gen. 12:1-3. It is certainly "for the fathers' sakes" that God will honor the promise made to His friend, Abraham (Rom. 11:28; cp. Ezek. 39:25).

However, the Jews mistakenly imagined that their fleshly descent from Abraham gave them the right to fellowship with God, without the responsibility of acknowledging His salvation established in His Son (Jn. 8:42). They will be accepted, but only upon the basis of faithful works of obedience (v. 39).

"Of the tribe of Benjamin" — The third identification of Paul's Jewish origins. He treats with this fact more fully in Phil. 3:5, acknowledging his association with that tribe. From Benjamin came the first king (Saul: 1Sam. 9:21). It was the only tribe, outside of Judah, to remain loyal to the royal house of David, and

therefore its members might well claim an extra honor.

VERSE 2

"God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" — Clearly dogmatic, and without contradiction, Paul argues on the fact of God's foreknowledge. The Greek word *proginosko*, meaning *to know beforehand* (Diaglott: "formerly acknowledged), indicates God's ability to discern all that will occur, for He "declareth the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:10), and determines His actions with full understanding of all the circumstances (see notes on Rom. 8:29). The scriptures Paul has already quoted show that God knew that Israel would turn from Him, and yet He still selected the nation as the vehicle of His message of salvation to mankind. Therefore, to believe that God would dispose of the nation is to ridicule God's action in originally selecting them. God selected Jacob, recognising the weaknesses that he would manifest in life, but understanding also that through tribulation Jacob would rise to faithfulness and dignity before Him (cp. Rom. 9:10-13). So will the natural seed of Israel that came from him. The evidence for such a transformation yet to be seen in the whole nation, was evident in individual Jews, such as Paul and the other disciples, who were prepared to acknowledge the messiahship of Jesus, and to seek to honor the "God of Jacob" (2Sam. 23:1; Psa. 20:1; 146:5; Isa. 2:3).

The TCNT translates the phrase: "God has not repudiated His people, of whom He *took note* at the first". This is an allusion to Psa. 94:14, which would show Paul's adversaries that he was not repudiating this divine principle. He further proves the point: the AV of the Psalm has "For Yahweh will not cast off His people", to which Paul adds the significant words: "which He foreknew". The fact that Paul has twice used the term "*His* people" (vv. 1, 2) is proof of God's foreknowledge. Yahweh's choice, as with His foreknowledge, must always be right; even though on so many occasions their rebellion caused Him to become angry with them, so that He punished them accordingly. "You *only* have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). Yet, could Yahweh have been surprised at their rebellion and disbelief? His foreknowledge provides the answer to the question: By no means!

"Wot ye not" — The reason to follow is this: If some maintain that Paul is trying to argue that God has now "cast away" His people Israel, they must ignore the evidence of history. Then, as now (in the days of Paul) the *entire* nation appears to have given itself over to apostasy; but this proved not to be the case, for a remnant still remained faithful. They "refused to follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. 23:2). Not only was this a matter of historical fact, it was recorded in the *inspired* Word of God. Hence: "Do you know what the Scripture says in the case of Elijah?" (Wey.).

"What the scripture saith of Elias?" — The word "of" is the Greek *en*, meaning *in*. The Diaglott has: "(in the history) of Elijah". In saying "in Elijah", Paul refers to the section of scripture that records the circumstances of Elijah's ministry in Israel. It was a period of gross apostasy, when the nation deserted the true worship of Yahweh and slaughtered His true prophets (1Kgs. 19:10, 14). But Elijah was told that Yahweh could see further than he could; Elijah believed that he alone remained faithful in such times of wickedness: "I, *even I only*, am left; and they seek my life to take it away" (v. 10). Yet, even under such extreme apostasy, God had protected some who refused to follow the majority who flagrantly practised evil. The presence of a faithful minority was hidden from Elijah at the time: "I have left Me (preserved to Me) seven thousand in Israel" (v. 18). Though mankind may not see the evidence of faithfulness in an apostate Israel, Yahweh will work to bring about a reformation such as is portrayed in the prophets. Significantly, it will be Elijah who, after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth, will be the instrument by which the "faithful remnant" will be recovered from the lands of the Gentiles, and brought to the attention of all the world: see Mal. 4:4-6).

Paul cites the days of Elijah for another reason also. It was undoubtedly one of the most disgraceful periods of apostasy in the nation's history. Paul is obliquely drawing a parallel between the extent of the nation's wickedness in the days of Elijah and their rejection of Christ, and his saving gospel in the apostolic period of history. There is something very ominous in this parallel. Following their rejection of Elijah, terrible judgments came upon Israel at the hands of Hazael and Jehu. For similar reasons, and worse, divine judgment was drawing near once again — this time at the hands of the Roman armies in the period of AD70.

"How he maketh intercession to God against Israel" — The words "maketh intercession" (Gr. *entugchano*) literally means *to come to another's aid; to discharge the office of an advocate, to plead one's cause in a court of law.* It can, however, apply to the prosecuting, or to the defending advocate. Elijah was accusing the Jewish people before God, charging them with the crime of murder and insurrection against the prophets of God.

The word "against" is the Gr. *kata, down,* with the idea of submitting Israel to the pressure of divine judgment.

"Saying" — Paul quotes the words of 1Kgs 19:10.

VERSE 3

"Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars" — The nation was so steeped in apostasy, incited by Ahab and Jezebel, that the crimes of murder and rebellion against God are brought to the bar of divine judgment. The Lord Jesus, in his condemnation of the ecclesia in Thyatira, advanced evidence of the same type of sacrilege (Rev. 2:20); yet in that ecclesia there were some who had remained separate from the developing apostasy: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, *as many as have not this doctrine...* " (v. 24) This small group of faithful disciples parallel the "seven thousand" in the days of Elijah.

"And I am left alone, and they seek my life" — Elijah was unable to see the work of God being maintained within Israel because it was hidden from him. We may sometimes feel similar desperation to that of Elijah, as we observe the declining standards of the Brotherhood today, and as the philosophy of a Jezebel-Laodicean age takes its toll upon the brotherhood. But the work of Yahweh continues on, sometimes hidden from the general view of the community. Faithful groups of disciples strengthen themselves and their brethren in spiritual things, as *Elpis Israel* is read, and the pioneer expositions are studied and thoughtfully considered. We have a responsibility to "strengthen the things that remain", and to recognise that Yahweh has control of such circumstances. Let us put absolute trust and confidence in His unerring wisdom.

VERSE 4

"But what saith the answer of God unto him?" — The Diaglott has: "But what says the Divine Oracle unto him?" Whatever the disappointments of existing circumstances might be, whatever our despair at the deterioration in these latter days, our confidence can be strengthened by a deeper understanding of the Word of Truth. God has not left His servants in ignorance (Amos 3:4-8), and He has testified that He "will never leave nor forsake" those who rest upon His revelation (Heb. 13:5). Yahweh's answer to Elijah was not to be found in the dramatic upheaval of earthquake, nor the consuming influence of fire, nor the blighting violence of storm — all evidences of the mighty power of an external law: that of nature — but His answer came in the "still small voice" of comfort, assurance and divine instruction (1Kgs 19:11-13).

"I have reserved" — The Hebrew is: "I have caused to remain". The words mean: "I have done it!", or "I have kept for Myself" (JB). Elijah previously said: "*I* am left alone"; but Yahweh replies: "*I* have reserved to Myself"! This citation reintroduces the subject of *divine selection,* which the apostle further elaborates in the next three verses.

The preservation of a remnant was a divine work. There is an analogy between Elijah's circumstances and those of Paul's day (as there is also with these latter days). The spiritual conditions are the same. The nation as a whole had rejected God's message in the days of the prophet; antitypically they repeated that attitude in the days of the apostle. Yet there was a faithful remnant, carefully nurtured by the Father: the seven thousand in Elijah's day, the ecclesia in the days of Paul — and the remnant called "his own elect", in the days of the return of Christ (Lk. 18:8) — though the company of the faithful may be small in every age.

"Seven thousand men" — The number is not meant to be an accurate tally, but represents an indefinite or general company. These may not have been prophets like Elijah, but they were faithful *witnesses* to the Truth, and that was the reason for the preservation.

"Seven" is the scriptural number of completion, perfection. Such a loyal and obedient group of men and women constituted the true nucleus of Israel, and their presence in the days of Elijah preserved the nation spiritually (Isa. 65:8). They type the faithful remnant protected of God throughout the ages (cp. Rev. 3:1; 4:5); and those of the "seventh" vial who are the company of the redeemed, "preserved" throughout the dark ages of Gentilism (cp. Rev. 16:17; 17:1).

"Who have not bowed the knee to (the image of) Baal" — To bow or bend the knee is an act of worship (Dan. 3:5-6; Phil. 2:10; Eph. 3:14). These were Israelites who refused to be swayed by the general attitude of the majority in the nation at that time. They stood by the Truth, rejecting the powerful liberal influences then current. These brethren would not stand for the watering-down of the Truth in any way, nor the changing of "the truth of God into a lie". They opposed error without, and refused to bow the knee to fleshly pressures from within their own community.

Baal-worship was the state religion of Israel under Ahab and Jezebel. It was with this god that Elijah had his great contest (1Kgs. 18). Baal of old typifies a wicked world which seeks to make all mankind subservient to the things it offers, all of which cater to the ungodly propensities of flesh. Homage is given to the god of self-interest and materialism today, just as it was given to the idol of Baal formerly. The faithful remnant of "the latter days" will stand aside from the pressures which are brought upon them by a wicked world; will refuse to bow to the dictates of flesh; and will continue to respect the Word and majesty of Yahweh. They continue under His gracious protection, to "witness" to His Truth (Isa. 54:17).

VERSE 5

"Even so then" — Paul draws an analogy from the days of Elijah to his own situation. Similar circumstances are to be found in every age when there is a general apostasy from the Truth. The JB has: "today, the same thing has happened". If there were any doubts earlier as to Paul paralleling the times of Elijah to his own day, they are now totally dispelled. His Jewish readers should observe the warning: "Something similar to that which happened in the days of Elijah, has happened again!"

"At this present time also" — The word "time" is *kairos,* signifying *a season* or *epoch.* It is different from the word *chronos* which would be used to indicate a specific moment of time. Paul refers to the Mosaic epoch that was about to end in his day (Heb. 9:26), but a remnant would be preserved through the grace of God. *Kairos* is also found in 1Thes. 5:1, in reference, primarily, to the judgment which would occur about AD70: "but of the *times* and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you". There would be a faithful remnant then, as there will be at the epoch of the complete fulfilment of that prophecy.

"There is a remnant according to the election of grace" — Notwithstanding the pressures and difficulties associated with the end of an epoch (both in AD70 and today), Yahweh has "preserved" unto

Himself such a remnant of faithful worshippers (Rom. 9:27). They were protected by the gracious and merciful Hand of Providence superintending the circumstances of their lives, and not through any personal merit. The seven thousand of Elijah's day were preserved because of their courageous action of refusing to bow to the idol of Baal; the remnant in Paul's day was preserved, not because they were the seed of Abraham, nor because of their works — but because God had selected them to receive His "grace" (divine unmerited favor); the remnant of faith in these last days are similarly protected because God finds pleasure in, and extends His lovingkindness (2Pet. 3:9) to those who separate from modern Baal worshippers.

The importance of the last four words in Paul's statement cannot be over-emphasized. Was it not possible that some of Paul's adversaries would argue that the "7,000" who had not bowed the knee to Baal had done so upon the basis of *works*, upon the principle of *law?* These four words answer that question. Paul thus declares that the "7,000" were the subject of divine "grace" (favor); they were therefore moved by *faith* in Yahweh's ability to preserve them according to "election". How devastating to Paul's opponents to be faced with the fact that the faithful "remnant" in the days of Elijah realised and acknowledged that their deliverance from the hands of the powerful majority, led by the wicked Jezebel, came solely through the grace and mercy of Yahweh, and not through any merit on their part! Had the "remnant" *earned* a right to deliverance, there would have been no ground for God to exercise *grace* on their behalf. The fact that He did so indicates their *need* of the grace of Yahweh. Paul never loses sight of the fact that God *chose them* because He exercised mercy towards them.

VERSE 6

"And if by grace, then (is it) no more of works" — This statement summarises the reasoning set forth in the previous five verses. The words translated "no more" are from *ouk eti*, and are better understood as "no longer" or "not any more".

In past generations there were Jews who had acknowledged their dependence upon the grace and mercy of Yahweh, because they realised that there was no other means whereby they might be saved. These faithful Jews discerned that the Judaistic concept of "salvation through works of law" was erroneous, and therefore ineffective.

Grace is undeserved favor. Had faithful Jews of earlier times anticipated salvation upon the basis of their self-merit, there would have been no exercise of *grace* in God's dealings with them. They had not obtained *grace* as wages earned, since divine favor cannot be earned by any means which man may employ, including a claim based upon law. Good works will never give a person the right to make claims upon God, because such works will never result in perfect obedience in anyone, apart only from the Son of God. Hence, "it is no more of works", or, as in the TCNT, "it does not depend upon men's actions".

"God's grace", however, is expressed in the forgiveness of sins, leading to peace of mind in fellowship with God. As selection (election) is based on divine favor, it cannot be governed by works. Seeing that man receives from God all things necessary to life, there is nothing that he can do that will put God into his debt, or that will establish man's right to justification. This was brought home to Israel when the people were warned against claiming that they had inherited the land because of their righteousness (Deut. 9:4-5).

"Otherwise grace is no more grace" — If salvation could be attained upon the basis of works, there would be no need for God's gift of unmerited favor. If salvation were a right that man could demand because of his works, it would effectively place God in man's debt. This would be totally unjust. "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (ch. 9:20, NIV).

"But if (it be) of works, then is it no more grace" — It is as though Paul is

saying: "Common sense and basic logic require that you cannot have it both ways! Either salvation is through the grace of God or it is through works. It must be one or the other".

Some might suggest (v. 5) that the seven thousand in Elijah's day were reserved because of their works, for they had certainly been obedient to the demands of Yahweh, and had "refused to bow to Baal". But why did they not worship Baal? It was because of their faith, and that was the quality that commended them to God (Heb. 11:6). It is not the mere action of rejecting associations with this ungodly world that is of importance, but the *reason* for so doing: the desire to give honor and glory to Yahweh. The desire to obey His commandments naturally flows from the desire to give Him respect (Jn. 13:34; 14:15).

It is evident that the careful wording in vv. 5-6 is designed to bring the genuine seeker after Truth to a state of utter humility, inducing childlike faith and trust in the heavenly Parent, developing a deep sense of gratitude towards Him for His immeasurable goodness and mercy. This frame of mind causes a person to remain pliable to the guiding, moulding influence of God and His Word (cp. Mat. 18:1-4).

This last phrase and the balance of this verse do not appear in most texts (RV, RSV, NASB, DIAG., ROTH., BULL., etc).

"Otherwise work is no more work" — The opposite principle to that earlier expressed in this verse is repeated: that is, that true "works of faith" no longer appear as such if salvation were only by works.

VERSE 7

"What then?" — What are we to conclude from the principles outlined in vv. 5-6, which establish that salvation is based upon divine favor; that works of themselves do not commend any to God; and that only a remnant receive God's pleasure?

Paul now shows that a remnant in Israel had already exercised faith, anticipating the coming of a Saviour; and they had exercised true faith in the true spirit of the Law. Many in Israel may seek for eternal salvation. The question is: How will they seek it? Through the only means that God has provided?

"Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for" — In their ignorance of the need to seek God's grace, they saw before them only the Law, and sought salvation on the basis of fulfilling its code of works. Being the covenant nation, and receiving the "law on stones" they interpreted God's will as being a mere performance of rituals and commandments. They sought justification by the works of the Law. In that they misunderstood the divine purpose, and thus failed to obtain the salvation they sought (see ch. 9:31; 10:3).

The word "obtained" is *epitugchano*, which has the idea, *to hit or light upon as a goal to be reached.* The nation did not "walk" along the pathway of faith, and therefore was not in the proper position to achieve the salvation it needed.

"But the election hath obtained it" — Discerning that God sought the development of faith and love in His servants (Heb. 11:6), the remnant cultivated such qualities, and therefore received the divine "favor".

The word "election" (Gr. *ekloge, to pick or gather out; to select)* signifies "those chosen". The NEB has "the selected few", whilst the JB has "chosen few". Perhaps Paul's mind is still dwelling on the faithful 7,000 of v. 4 and their wonderful example! Certainly those chosen by God out of the nation to receive divine mercy

How often do we find that punishment corresponds in its form to that mode of life which man has chosen. Because the early Christians did not receive the love of the Truth, God sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie (2Thes. 2:10-11). Israel had such an obsession for their own mode of attaining to righteousness that God shut them up to their own folly. They might have known, for their own prophets had warned them of the danger.

— J. Carter.

were so selected because of their response to the principles of faith, love and obedience (2Tim. 2:19).

"And the rest were blinded" — The word in the Greek is *poroo, to petrify*, from *poros, a thick skin, a callus, a hardening*; thus metaphorically, "to grow hard, become dull, lose the power of understanding". The margin has: "hardened". Those who were not part of the "remnant" became hardened by the circumstances (cp Exod. 7:13), and failed to exercise faithfulness; thus they became impervious to the appeal of Yahweh. They were, in effect, too thick-skinned for the Truth to penetrate their minds, and bring them to a humble dependence upon the grace of Yahweh. In the passive tense, this verb means "to *be* blind" or "to *become* blind", but when in the active voice, as in this verse, it means "to *make* blind", or "to be *made* blind". Because Israel did not seek justification by the correct means, they *made themselves* blind, as a consequence of which Yahweh *made* them blind. Israel's "hardness", their refusal to hear the Word of God as He diligently set it before them through His servants, Moses and the prophets, resulted in spiritual blindness. Their religious worship was turned to sin, for it was not motivated by faith. Spiritual calluses covered their eyes, and they became spiritually blind (Jn. 9:41), as are those of the Laodicean disposition (Rev. 3:17-18; cp. 2Pet. 2:1-2).

VERSE 8

"(According as it is written" — Paul cites Isa. 29:9-10 and Deut. 29:4 to verify his statement. He shows that the Jewish Scriptures themselves indict the people in this fashion, for both references relate to the apostasy of Israel, and confirm the divine assessment of flesh. The natural heart favors its own pleasure, and seeks to indulge in self-delusion.

The reference to Deut. 29:4 becomes even more significant when it is seen that spiritual blindness was a constant problem in Israel's history, dating back to the days of Moses!

"God hath given them" — The sad condition of Israel's spiritual blindness resulted from the circumstances of trouble that overcame them at a time when they lacked the vision of faith to see beyond the difficulties. Since God controlled such circumstances, the statement represents the blindness as coming from God. The Hebrew in Isa. 29:10 is: "God has *poured upon them*", inasmuch as He has permitted the Gentile oppression to so affect the nation as to be like a vial of judgment poured out (cp. Rev. 16:2).

But in view of all that Paul has written in chs. 9 and 10, this statement does not indicate that God had been unjust. Whilst extending grace and mercy to those whom He selects, Yahweh will not force anyone into the way which leads to salvation. On the contrary, if people prove wilfully disobedient, desiring to follow their fleshly

The Danger of Slumbering.

*Rom. 11:8 reveals a people in a state of spiritual insensibility, intoxicated by the philosophies of the flesh, blindly following their own feelings and desires. Could a nation be found in a more disastrous condition than this? Their state was due to one cause: an unwillingness to receive into their intellect the pure teaching of the Word of God, and to act in accordance therewith. Those who claim to be Yahweh's servants in this present age cannot afford merely to shake their heads in disbelief, as though finding it difficult to believe that the people of Israel could ever have descended to such depths of spiritual insensitivity and obtuseness. Are the people of God in this present evil age exempt from such failings? Is it not vital that every individual should carefully examine himself in the light of the Word, to consider the need for sound guidance of the family, and to care for the spiritual welfare and development of the ecclesia? This is a great responsibility which rests upon all who claim allegiance to the cause of Christ in these last days of the Gentiles. — **J. Ullman.***

inclinations rather than the ways of Yahweh, He will "turn" away from them and "give them up" to their own devices (Acts 7:42).

"The spirit of slumber" — Israel was in a state of spiritual stupor, unaware of the danger of divine rejection, and the imminent judgment facing them because of their ignorance and wickedness. The word "slumber" (Gr. *katanuxis*) has the idea of "a prickling" (Strong: "a prickling sensation as of the limbs asleep"), and from this it came to mean extreme sorrow and grief, insensibility, torpor or stupor of mind, which produces dizziness and reeling, likened to intoxication. In apostolic times the word was understood as "sleepiness or drowsiness". Thus the phrase has been rendered variously: "a spirit of stupor" (R.V., ROTH., NIV., NASB.); "a sluggish spirit" (JB.); "a deadness of mind" (TCNT). These renderings convey the thoughts Paul had in mind when guided by the Spirit to choose this word. They describe a people who are spiritually indolent, indifferent, unknowing, uncaring.

The context of the passage from Isaiah that Paul cites (Isa. 29:9) is one of drunkenness, but not that which comes from wine. The people were intoxicated with false doctrine because they had lost their spiritual vision and were no longer able to discern what was right. The outcome was evident in Paul's day, as described in Isa. 29:13, "this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor Me, but *have removed their heart far from Me*, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men". Their attitude toward God was determined by their own feelings and desires, and not by the requirements of the Word which had been so clearly revealed to them.

"Eyes that they should not see" — Overwhelmed by sorrow and grief at the adverse conditions that came upon the nation, the people became insensitive to any consideration other than their own troubles, and indulging in an orgy of self-pity, they had no eyes to see beyond their existing calamities. There is in this statement an echo of Isa. 6:9, "He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and *see ye indeed, but perceive not*".

Spiritual blindness can come from over-anxiety because of troubles, or from over-indulgence in the world's allurements. The latter was the situation of the Laodicean Ecclesia, who were counselled by the Lord Jesus to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). The eyesalve was the ointment of the Word, that allows a believer to see beyond his present circumstances, to the "joy that is before him" (Heb. 12:2). It enables a person to clearly perceive the deadly state of society about him, to recognise the "stumbling-blocks" that may litter the path, and to be equipped to avoid the snares and traps that might otherwise claim him (cp. Lk. 21:34-36).

"And ears that they should not hear)" — Paul adds the words of Deut. 29:4 to those of Isaiah: "Yet Yahweh hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, *and ears to hear, unto this day*". This section of Moses' writings (Deut. 29:1–31:8) deals with the additional principles incorporated into the covenant which was made with the younger generation in the land of Moab, not long before their entrance into the Promised Land, and has been previously quoted by Paul in ch. 10:4-8. Moses remonstrates with Israel for their faithlessness, notwithstanding the fact that they had witnessed the mighty hand of Yahweh extended on their behalf. Instead, the nation refused to hear the message of hope proclaimed in the Word of Yahweh in the "law and the prophets" (such as is expressed in Jer. 29:10-11), and therefore remained beyond help. This was the constant complaint of the prophets: Isa. 6:9; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2.

"Unto this day" — The words of Deut. 29:4. The condition of spiritual blindness and deafness evident in the days of Moses, was still apparent in the days of Paul. Both in the days of Moses and the times of Paul, Israel rejected God's Word soon after He had provided a way of deliverance for them: Deliverance through the

Red Sea under the leadership of Moses (1Cor. 10:1); Redemption through the sacrifice of Christ in the times of Paul (Acts 28:28).

Stephen's dissertation of Jewish history provided proof of the point here made. He declared of that generation: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 6:10), ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: *as your fathers did, so do ye!*" (Acts 7:51). Paul would never have forgotten those words.

VERSE 9

"And David saith" — Citing Psa. 69:22-23. Psa. 69 is clearly Messianic in character, predicting the sufferings and sacrifice of the Lord as a trespass offering. Notice how Paul applies the prophetic import of this Psalm to the judgments which were meted out upon Israel in AD70.

"Let their table" — The "table" speaks of the blessings of joy and refreshment; but, however, the things in which they delighted and found sustenance would become the means of punishment and retribution.

The reference is particularly to the temple altar (see Mal. 1:7; Ezek. 41:22; 44:16), which, in view of their rejection of Christ's sacrifice, had become a snare and a delusion unto the Jews. They clung to the temple service, not recognising that it was but a shadow of things to come; thus Israel had lost the substance of the Law in which they rested.

The altar was the place where Yahweh met with man to either accept or reject his offerings upon the acknowledgment of the principle of sacrifice. Spiritual Israel also meets at a "table": the table of the Christ-altar, through whose intercession they are able to draw near to God (Heb. 13:10). They also meet at the "table" of Christ, the table of remembrance. On the first day of the week they gather before the emblems of bread and wine to remember their absent Lord, and his offering on their behalf. Unlike Israel of old, they should do so with due care and reverence, remembering his commandments and the need for them to humbly follow his example.

This term may also be understood in another way. The JB rendering, supported by other versions in meaning, has: "May their own table prove a trap for them, and their *plentiful supplies* a snare!" This rendering indicates that the people of Israel enjoyed the "good things of life", and their pursuit of the purely materialistic aims, luxuries and pleasures of life resulted in neglect of their obligations to Yahweh, even though they may have still claimed to be faithful believers. This attitude eventually brought about their ruination. Note that here the table is said to be "*their* table", or altar; signifying that Yahweh had disowned their forms of worship and rejected the sacrifices they offered. Israel still clung to a perverted form of their old worship, but all in vain.

"Be made a snare" — The first of four judgments against the people for their neglect of the blessings of Yahweh. The Greek word is *pagis: a noose trap,* from a root signifying "to make fast, to fix together". This word eloquently expresses the manner in which the people of Israel had become entrapped in their own misguided and erroneous views concerning the Law and its purpose. In Paul's days, they still remained held fast, as in a snare, in the grip of a religious philosophy which could only bring them to spiritual ruin.

The Jews had manipulated the events of the crucifixion, believing that they had succeeded in their venture to destroy the Son of Man — but, instead, their evil designs turned upon themselves (Acts 2:22-24), and would ultimately take away the blessings (the table of fellowship) to which Yahweh had called them. Psa. 69:22, from which Paul is quoting, continues: "that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap".

The same word occurs in Lk. 21:35 in Christ's solemn exhortation to his disciples.

"And a trap" — Gr. *thera*: *hunting, the chase;* hence, *cause of destruction,* referring to the pursuit of a quarry. The Law had entrapped Israel and held them fast, because they were unable to see beyond it. They remained unaware that the

very form of religion in which they trusted would result in their destruction, as with a bird caught in a trap or a snare. This occurred as the nation sought their prey in the Lord Jesus (Mat. 23:30-32), but, paradoxically, their wickedness led to their own destruction (v. 35; 27:25) as they became "entrapped" in their evil schemes: John 18:28, 38; cp. Mat. 21:42-44.

"And a stumblingblock" — Gr. *skandalon: a trapstick, snare;* thus an impediment placed in the way so as to encompass the fall of another. Bullinger defines the word as "a crooked stick on which the bait is fastened, which the animal strikes against and so springs the trap." To Israel, the Law became like the bait fixed to a trapstick; and because they "took" the Law in the wrong way, misusing it and misapplying its purpose, it entrapped them in the deadly coils of sin (see the use of this word: 1Cor. 1:23, etc). The cross became "an offence" unto the Jews (Rom. 9:33), and, not being able to understand its significance and necessity, they stumbled and fell (1Cor. 1:17, 18; Gal. 5:11).

The words "stumbling stone" appear again in chs. 9:33 (Gr. *lithos proskomma*) and 14:13, but here it is *proskomma lithosea,* a stone on which one may stub his toes! We are warned against placing such a stone in the pathway of our brethren (see also 1Cor. 8:9 and 1Pet. 2:8).

"And a recompence unto them" — Gr. *antapodoma: a requital,* thus, to pay back what is owing (the only other occurrence of this word is in Lk. 14:12). The failure of the Jews to recognise the true significance of the altar and sacrifice, and the fulfilment of these things in Christ Jesus, brought the recompense of which Malachi had warned (Mal. 2:3).

So corrupt did the practices of the priests become, that Yahweh, through the prophet, represented Himself as flinging back the refuse of their sacrifices into their faces! He declared that "one shall take you away *with it*", and this was fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the Jewish State in AD70.

VERSE 10

"Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see" — Citing Psa. 69:23. The nation had been privileged to receive the *light* of divine Truth through Moses and the prophets, through the Word, and ultimately through the personal presence of God's Son in their midst. Yet throughout their generations their "eyes" remained darkened. Steeped in the formalism of mechanical religion, giving careful attention to ceremonial observances, they had lost the capacity and discernment to appreciate spiritual realities, and remained blind in reasoning and understanding (Mat. 13:14). As they refused to heed the Light of truth and salvation provided by God in His Son (Jn. 1:4-9), let them remain in the darkness of ignorance (Isa. 5:20). As their eyes had gloated upon the sufferings of the Lord, so Yahweh would bring their "eyes" into judgment for their dreadful wickedness. By acting as they did they "judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:46), and covered themselves with a "vail of darkness" (Isa. 8:22; cp. Isa. 25:7).

Yet, how could they come to grips with their plight when they were unable to "see"? Groping blindly in the darkness of the many afflictions which came upon them, they remained mystified and bewildered. It should not have been so! How urgent and essential it is for believers today to ensure that their "eyes" remain open to the message of divine Truth, thereby ordering their lives to conform to the pattern set them by their Lord and Saviour.

"And bow down their back alway" — Psa. 69:23 has: "make their loins continually to shake". The "loins" speak of strength and power, which had been devoted to the persecution and destruction of their enemies, but now are weakened in fear. The analogy is to slaves forced to bear heavy burdens in the course of their service. The Pharisees caused men to bear "grievous burdens", but refused to put themselves under the "burden of Christ" (Lk. 11:46), being unable to see the true "weight" of the Law (Mat. 23:23). Hence, this class of Israelite will go into perpetual

slavery to the flesh (Isa. 51:23). His real master was King Sin, and the foolish Israelite labored in his service!

The primary reference of the Psalm, that Paul cites in this verse, is to David's enemies: their table desolate, their eyes blinded to the Truth and darkened through sorrow, their backs bent under toil through the heavy burden of sin which they bore. Jews who denied the Truth, whether in the times of David or in the days of Paul, lacked spiritual discernment and therefore denied the power of the Word of God. Without a true understanding and acceptance of the Word, they remained helpless and defenceless. Rather than this prayer being in conflict with the spirit of the gospel, it speaks authoritatively of the way in which Yahweh will treat the wicked. Those who are blind slaves in the service of King Sin can expect no other destiny than this.

Israel's Rejection Only Temporary — vv. 11-24.

Paul has shown that in spite of widespread apostasy, there has always been a remnant in Israel that has believed and obeyed in faith, and in that fact, the purpose of Yahweh has been realised. Moreover, though the nation has been punished for its failures, Yahweh's ultimate purpose with it remains to be achieved, and therefore "the casting away of Israel" is only temporary, as scripture shows. Under the impressive metaphor of the olive tree, Paul shows that Yahweh's purpose is not only to redeem Israel, but to unite both Jewish and Gentile believers in one body.

VERSE 11

"I say then" — Introducing a further step in his exposition. Paul now asks the key question: Has the failure of Israel ensured the total obliteration of their national identity and their exclusion from the divine program?

"Have they stumbled" — The Greek *ptaio*, means *to trip against*, rather than to be destroyed by a fall. It has the idea of *to make a mistake, to err, to be made wretched.* This phrase is related to the word "stumblingblock" in v. 9. When the nation rejected Christ, they struck their foot against the rock upon which they should have confidently stood (ch. 9:33). The question is now asked: "Have they stumbled so as to bring them crashing down, never to rise again? Since only a remnant of the nation have accepted the Truth, does this place the future of the entire nation in jeopardy?" This question is suggested by the apostle's words in vv. 8-10

"That they should fall?" — The context implies the addition of the ellipsis: "...that they should fall permanently and completely". The NIV has: "Again I ask, Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery?"

Here the word is *pipto* which conveys the idea of completely falling prostrate; to be cast down; to perish. It expresses the experiences of a man pitching over an obstacle so that he cannot recover himself, but falls to the ground. Notice the contrast between "stumbled" *(ptaio)* and "fall" *(pipto)*. A man who stumbles may recover himself, or he might fall completely and irrevocably, as the word here implies (cp. Isa. 24:20; Heb. 4:11).

"God forbid" — See note on v.1: "Certainly not!". This question and answer provides a major turning-point in Paul's reasoning. A man may stumble but recover himself and continue on his way shaken but unimpaired. On the other hand, he may stumble so fearfully as to fall, unable to rise again. The apostle is asking whether the former or latter case applies to the nation of Israel, and strongly denies the possibility of the latter, seeing that the religious apostasy of the Jews will be for ever effaced after the second advent of the Lord: Isa. 24:20-23). Paul now considers an aspect of his exposition which must be handled with great care. It cannot be accepted that God *deliberately* brought blindness to the Jews so that He could save the Gentiles! To argue thus would be to admit that Yahweh would sacrifice His own people unjustly. This was an unthinkable proposition. The truth of the matter

was clear, but not clear to Jewish minds because they lacked perception to see beyond the Law. Yahweh presented His Son to the nation in a manifestation which was absolutely necessary, but which the nation refused to receive. God foresaw this, and was thereby enabled to make provision for the salvation of the Gentiles. In this sense, He placed a stumbling-block before the Jews. However, the fact that they failed to perceive the Truth, brought judgment upon their own heads (Mat. 27:25). Yahweh was in no sense to blame for the spiritual blindness of the nation. Nevertheless it would result in the calling of the Gentiles, and ultimately include the restoration of the nation of Israel also, which Paul now proceeds to explain.

"But (rather) through their fall salvation (is come) unto the Gentiles" — The word "fall" here is different from the first occurrence in this verse. It is *paraptoma* which has the meaning of *a side-slip, error, transgression.* It has the idea of a lapse or deviation from a course. Israel "fell" from grace through their foolish treatment of Messiah (Acts 2:23), and consequently the nation "fell" into a period of dispersion and persecution. Consequently, the opportunity of salvation was opened to the Gentiles (Acts 10:45; 13:46; 15:14; 18:6, etc).

The "fall" or "trespass" of Israel did not frustrate the divine purpose, nor make impossible the fulfilment of God's covenant to the fathers (Gen. 12:2-4). Yahweh used the situation as the means whereby His *consummate* purpose with all mankind might be developed a stage further. Had the Jews wholeheartedly accepted the gospel nationally, it could have hindered the effectiveness of the Truth. If such powerful Jewish influence remained within the Body of Christ, it is almost certain that the influence of Judaism, with its national pride and self-righteous concept of the Law, would have gradually undermined the true faith. As it was, the Jewish elements in the early ecclesias proved to be the source of greatest danger (see Gal. 2:5; 4:11; 5:1-4, etc). An example of this is evident when first century ecclesias became corrupted and eventually transformed into what became the Roman Catholic Church. From its earliest times this religious system has imitated, in its formalism and organisation, many of the faith-destroying aspects of Judaism which threatened the existence of "the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) in the first century.

"For to provoke them to jealousy" — This phrase is an echo of ch. 10:19. It appears that in most cases the result produced was the very opposite to that for which Paul longed — a situation for which he was in no way to blame. It was the result of the hard-heartedness of the Jews, who refused to be moved by the humble faithfulness of Gentiles who openly and gladly demonstrated their belief in the saving power of God through the gospel of Christ (Acts 13:50; 17:5; 22:22). "Jealousy" did not lead the majority of Jews to repentance, but to a deeper hatred of Gentiles and a more stubborn rejection of the mercy of their God.

The word "provoke to jealousy" (Gr. *parazeloo*) has the idea of *stimulating alongside; to excite to rivalry.* The Diaglott has: "excite them to emulation". The word occurs also in ch. 10:19 (see notes) and 1Cor. 10:22, and also in Rom. 11:14 where it is translated "provoke to emulation". The hope of salvation was offered to Gentiles in accordance with Yahweh's plan from the very beginning, as revealed in the prediction of Moses (Deut. 32:21). By that means, also, Jews might be "stimulated alongside", and "excited" to seek into the meaning of God's purpose, and to ultimately reach for divine favor through the means provided in Christ Jesus.

Notice the interesting parallels: "will provoke to jealousy" (ch. 10:19); "to provoke to jealousy" (ch. 11:11); "may provoke to emulation" (ch 11:14); "do we provoke to jealousy" (1Cor. 10:22).

VERSE 12

"Now if the fall of them" — Paul again uses the word *paraptoma* (see v. 11, second occurrence), that refers to the transgression of Israel. It relates to the enormity of Israel's sin in rejecting their

Messiah and Saviour, and the dispersion that came as a consequence. The NIV renders this as: "But if their transgression means riches for the world..." The rejection of the Son of God by the Jews caused the nation to fall from grace, and this was followed by the "riches of grace" being preached unto Gentiles.

"(Be) the riches of the world" — Paul has used the word "riches" twice previously (ch. 2:4; 9:23), and will use it once more in this epistle (ch. 11:33); thus a total of five occurrences, the Biblical number which symbolises "grace" and "restoration". In this epistle those benefits are associated with the "riches" which are to be found only in Christ (Eph. 3:8).

The "enriching of the world" is a term which indicates the means whereby Gentiles might receive the divine blessing. These "riches" comprise the gospel message and fellowship with Yahweh upon the basis of the Truth; and, to receive these blessings, individuals must use the means available in Christ — the very means that the nation of Israel had rejected. Such "riches" constitute the true "wealth" available to all in Christ (see Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16).

"And the diminishing of them" — The RV renders "diminishing" as "loss" (Gr. *hettema, deterioration; failure).* Through Israel's falling away (or their "loss" of the Truth), Gentiles, who became believers, received an abundance of spiritual blessings, and therefore greatly gained through Israel's loss. Israel's falling away culminated firstly in the dreadful judgments of AD70, and continued thereafter in their wanderings among the spiritual deserts of the Gentiles, destitute of the Truth and alienated from the saving power of the gospel of Christ.

Jewish rejection of God provided the circumstances for the apostles to "turn to the Gentiles", and thus accomplish what the O.T. Scriptures had declared would occur.

"The riches of the Gentiles" — Notice the parallel statements of this verse: "the fall of them...the diminishing of them" — "the riches of the world... the riches of the Gentiles". Paul uses the term "Gentile" *(ethnos)* 29 times in the epistle. Jewry despised the word and non-Jews were defined by it. Paul's constant use of the word must relate to his desire to see Jewish believers desist from any antagonism they may have retained against Gentiles, and to accept them as equals in Christ.

"How much more their fulness" — The NASB has: "their fulfilment"; thus signifying "their full and completed number". The DIAGLOTT translates it: "how much more will their full acceptance be". The word *pleroma* means *that which fills up,* or *completes,* and is found in such passages as: "to fill up the rent in a garment" (Mat. 9:16); "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). If Gentiles have acquired great wealth of the Truth through the spiritual loss suffered by Israel, how much greater spiritual wealth will they acquire when Israel is restored to favor! Acts 15:17 declares that in the day when the Lord Jesus reigns over the restored tabernacle of David, the "residue of men will seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord". The "fulness of Israel" will reveal these riches for "all the Gentiles", and in addition it will see eternal life and royal dignity bestowed on those who have been "taken out of the Gentiles" to become "a people for His name".

The "fulness" will be seen when the people of the dispersion will ultimately return to the land under the protection of Christ and the saints, to establish themselves as the priestly nation, in the cantons of the Promised Land, as revealed in Ezek. 48. See also Isa. 11:11-16; Zech. 2:11.

Thus will be fulfilled the promise made to Abraham: *"All families* of the earth shall be blessed..." At that time the entire Gentile world will benefit from the goodness of God, when all men everywhere, Jew and Gentile, will acknowledge the power and mercy of Yahweh, Israel's God (Isa. 2; Mic. 4; Psa. 72; Jer. 16:19, etc). As the nation of Israel will be made "complete" in that day, in their restoration to God and their unification into one

nation with one king, so the Gentile peoples will be gathered into the unity of the kingdom and become united with Jewry in the true worship of the One Eternal God. What greater "riches" could the world receive than this?

VERSE 13

"For I speak to you Gentiles" — The RV clarifies this as: "But I speak to you that are Gentiles". This commences a parenthetical section comprising vv. 13-14, which is included at this point to warn Gentiles believers that they are to clearly understand *how* they had become related to the Hope of Israel. They should not fall into the trap of despising their Jewish brethren, nor the temporarily cast-off Jewish nation. Paul would not have them "to be ignorant of this secret" lest they become "wise in their own conceits" (v. 25). This is another example of the extreme care Paul took in stating his case. Whilst fully admitting the unbelief of the Jews, he gives the Gentile believers no occasion for boasting. No reasonable Jew could be offended by this tactful approach of the apostle. No thoughtful converted Gentile would vaunt airs of misguided superiority!

They were to be grateful that God has provided for their exaltation, and recognise that such a hope is possible upon the basis of the "hope of Israel" (Jn. 4:22). They were not to "boast against the branches" (Rom. 11:18), but to acknowledge that they stand in this privileged position through the work of God.

Verse 15 continues the argument from verse 12.

"Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles" — Paul was directly called to minister to the Gentile peoples (Acts 9:15; 26:16-18; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 3:8), whilst other apostles, such as Peter (Gal. 2:7), were primarily concerned with converting the Jewish community. An "apostle" (Gr. *apostolos*, from a root meaning *to set apart; send out; a messenger; an envoy*) therefore, "one who goes to a place appointed", being sent forth with a specific commission. Paul completely immersed himself in his work, being prepared to sacrifice his own convenience that the gospel might be effectively presented to the Gentile world. His numerous journeys took him to most Mediterranean provinces of the Roman Empire and other areas, including the capital of Rome (Acts 19:21), intending ultimately to proclaim the Truth in Spain (Rom. 15:24).

"I magnify mine office" — The DIAGLOTT has: "I shall honor my ministry". He saw the work of the Truth to be of prime importance, and applied himself to elevating the "ministry". He did this by completely devoting himself to the labor of preaching to the public and confirming the ecclesias established throughout the Roman world. Many ecclesias were established as the direct result of God's blessing upon Paul's personal labors in this cause. It was his earnest prayer that Jews would recognise his efforts to convert the Gentiles, and would themselves accept the Truth and emulate his fine example.

The word *doxazo* can also signify *to honor, to glorify*. Note that it was the "office", or "ministry" (NASB) — *diakonia*, "service" — that Paul honored; not himself. He did not exhibit human pride in his high calling as the apostle to the Gentiles. He speaks in this way because he placed his obligation to preach the Truth above all other considerations. He was totally dedicated to the cause of Christ, and, at the same time, trusting that the fruit which he saw coming forth from the Gentiles would also be seen, at least in part, among his fellow-Jews. In manifesting this disposition he made it apparent to all that he appreciated and acknowledged the greatness of the work which had been committed into his care.

VERSE 14

"If by any means" — Gr. *ei pos: if somehow*. The DIAGLOTT has: "If possibly"; the TCNT has: "in the hope that I shall rouse my countrymen to jealousy, and so save some of them". Paul recognised that the Jewish mind was "hardened" (v. 8), but nevertheless was not discouraged on that account. He was prepared to apply

himself assiduously to every endeavor to gain believers for Christ (1Cor. 9:22; Tit. 2:11). Even as he worked tirelessly among the Gentiles, he still retained the fervent hope that some in Israel might respond to the life-giving gospel message he taught.

"I may provoke to emulation (them which are) my flesh" — See v. 11. The DIAGLOTT has: "excite my kindred to emulation". The phrase "provoke to emulation" is the same as that rendered "provoke to jealousy" in v. 11 (in both cases the one Greek word is employed: *parazeloo*). Paul desired to stir up their spiritual vitality, for he acknowledged that the Jews had "a zeal of God but not according to knowledge" (ch. 10:2).

"And might save some of them" — This was the object of all Paul's labor. In this he co-operated with the desire of God, who "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth" (1Tim. 2:4). However, there is a note of deep sadness in the expression "*some* of them". Paul knew that, at best, he could hope for only a remnant within the nation to respond to the message of the gospel. But despite this, whether Jewish converts were few or many, Paul would labor on ceaselessly, steadfastly dedicated to the cause of Christ. In this, as in so many ways, Paul is set before us as a wonderful example of selfless devotion to the cause of Christ.

This statement concludes the parenthetical section, and the apostle's reasoning continues from v. 12 in v. 15.

VERSE 15

"For if" — The words *ei gar* rendered "for" are from the Greek *gar*, expressing *the reason, cause, motive, principle, of what has been previously said* (Bull.). The word "if" is *ei* in Greek, and denotes not a hypothetical condition, but an established fact. It is better rendered "as", or "in view of".

Notice the continuation of the parallels established in v. 12. They are repeated again in v. 15 for emphasis, and to develop the argument a stage further:

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

"The casting away of them" — DIAGLOTT: "rejection". Gr. *apobole*, a *loosing, loss*. Repeating the point of v. 12: "the fall of them". Due to the Jewish rejection of the Messiah and their refusal to accept the divine reconciliation accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ, Israel's national status of privilege has been temporarily laid aside that the gospel of reconciliation might be proclaimed unto Gentiles. Israel will remain "cast away" nationally so long as they continue in ignorance of the saving power of the gospel of Christ (v. 23). Paul's thesis requires that this present condition of national blindness will eventually be changed to enlightenment and reconciliation with their God and King (vv. 25-27).

"Be the reconciling" — Paul's ministry was essentially one of reconciliation: Of the Jews to their God; of Jews to Gentiles; of Gentiles to Jews; of uniting all believers into the One Body of Christ (2Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 2:13-17; Col. 1:20, etc).

The noun *katallage*, signifies *to restore to favor;* thus *reconciliation* (elsewhere only in Rom. 5:11). Gentiles were estranged from God through their wickedness at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:6-8), and could only find salvation through the Abrahamic covenant made by God with the people of Israel. This required Gentiles to forsake their original national identity and to become assimilated into Israel. It was a temporary measure, awaiting the time when the gospel would be opened out to all peoples. Now, through Christ, it was possible for Gentiles to be incorporated into the divine scheme of reconciliation on the basis of individual faith and obedience.

"Of the world" — The word *kosmos* refers to the *orderly arrangement* seen in the systems of mankind. The message of the gospel would permeate the social arena, and draw men and women therefrom to become assimilated into the new order found in Christ (2Cor. 5:19).

"What (shall) the receiving (of

them) be" — A reference to Israel's national restoration to the blessings and privileges of the Messianic kingdom. The word *proslepsis* signifies *a taking to one's self, receiving, admission* — an appropriate word to describe the restoration of the Jewish nation to the *family* of God. The national resurrection of Israel (Ezek. 37), and their restoration to their land under the guidance of Messiah, will be associated with the resurrection and glorification of the saints.

"But life from the dead?" — This appears to be a reference to Ezek. 37: the prophecy of the valley of dry bones, depicting the *national resurrection* of Israel after Christ's return. The national restoration may be appropriately described as "life from the dead", representative not only of a political, but also a spiritual revival and will accompany the fulness of resurrection to be seen in the individual glorification of believers.

Paul is primarily concerned with comparing the benefits received by the ecclesia through Israel's fall from grace, with the receiving of the nation again (cp. vv. 11-12). The resurrection of dead saints is one such benefit.

The partial restoration of Israel is thus shown as a great sign of the coming resurrection — the first work to be accomplished at Christ's return (Psa. 102:13).

VERSE 16

"For" — This begins Paul's argument that the divine purpose requires the ultimate salvation of Israel. Gr. *ei*, "and if" (DIAG., NASB); "now if" (WEY.).

"If the firstfruit be holy" — Two metaphors are now drawn from the Old Testament scriptures: firstly, that of the firstfruits; secondly, the olive tree with its root and branches.

The word "firstfruit" (Gr. *aparche*) denotes "the first of fruit or grain which was separated from the mass and presented as an offering to God". The Jews were required to present this portion of their harvest to Yahweh as an expression of gratitude and of their sense of dependence. This metaphor refers to the requirement of the Law as set out in Num. 15:18-21, "Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto Yahweh. Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it". Until this offering had been made, it was not lawful to partake of the benefits of the harvest.

From the *firstfruits* of the harvest *dough* was made for baking, and of the first of the dough, a *cake* was baked as an offering unto Yahweh. Obviously, the whole lump of dough (out of which this first loaf of bread was taken and baked) was holy, being "set apart" for this purpose, and was representative of the nation as a whole. On the other hand, the "cake of the first of your dough" was also representative of the lump of dough.

Paul is here applying the lesson to the fathers of Israel and the nation that came from them. Seeing that God accepted the patriarchs as a kind of "cake of the first of the dough", it is obvious that the nation is holy in His sight. As the patriarchs were holy as being separated unto God, so must also be the people who sprung from them. By the offering of the firstfruits the whole mass was consecrated; thus the holiness of the patriarchs of Israel consecrated all the people who came from them. As Paul later says: Israel is "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (v. 28).

"The lump" — The Greek word *phurama* signifies that which is mixed or kneaded, such as dough: that which came from the firstfruits of the harvest. The DIAGLOTT renders it literally as "the mixture" (Gr. text). The NIV has "batch". This shows that Paul's figure is derived from the ordinances of the Law contained in Num. 15:19-21. The patriarchs constituted the "loaf of the first of the dough" offered up to Yahweh, but the "rest of the dough" should have provided further loaves. Unfortunately, many of the subsequent "loaves" were imperfectly baked (see Hos. 7:4, 6, 8), though, as Paul shows, the mass of dough (the nation as a whole) is still considered "holy".

"Is also (holy)" — Not in the individual sense, as though speaking of personal perfection, but in the spiritual sense of being "separated" in service and dedication to Yahweh. By presenting their offering in this way, the Jews were to acknowledge God's claims upon them. Israel was to be a "holy people" (Deut. 7:6), the nation whom Yahweh had separated from all others (ch. 20:4). They were therefore to be "holy" as Yahweh was "holy" (Lev. 11:44). It was God's intention that all descendants (the "lump") of the patriarchs were to be similarly separated and consecrated to Him. So, the offering of the part has consecrated the whole, and therefore the owner could partake of the blessing. Thus Yahweh could enjoy the spiritual harvest of Israel that comes from the development of faith seen in the patriarchs.

In its secondary application used by Paul in 1Cor. 15:22, the Lord Jesus Christ became the "firstfruit" offering of righteousness because of his perfect obedience and willing sacrifice of his dedicated life. This was evident in his resurrection to glory (Acts 2:24, 33). Therefore believers who come "from him" are also made holy, since they are identified with the same principles seen manifested in him. So Paul says that "the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1Cor. 15:45), for he brought "life and immortality to light" (2Tim. 1:10) by his holiness. The ecclesial "lump" which is made from the "firstfruits" is described as "holy brethren" (1Thes. 5:27), being "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1).

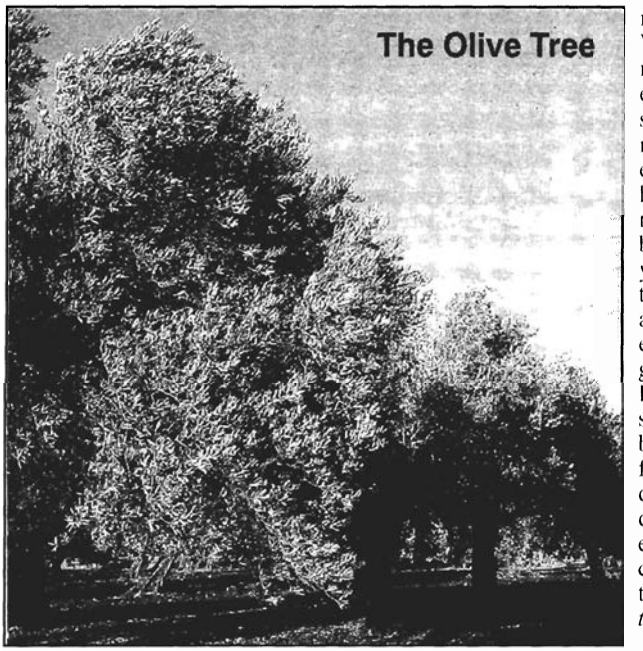
"And if the root be holy" — Now the metaphor changes. The picture is that of the tree whose fruit was used to supply the oil for the lampstands in the tabernacle and temple. The olive tree is a symbol for Israel (Hos. 14:6), and "the root" is a reference to the patriarchs from whom sprang the Israel tree (Isa. 11:1).

A most significant aspect of this simile is that the tree which *grows out of* Israel was rooted and grounded in the patriarchs, from which they were to come to full national growth, as is the case with the

The "Holy" Character of the Firstfruit and the Tree

According to the law ordained by angels in the hand of Moses, and styled "the word spoken by angels" (Heb. 2:2), mankind are separated into the holy and the unclean. It constituted the twelve tribes of Israel "a holy nation", a special and peculiar people (Exod. 19:6; Deut. 7:6, 14) while it left all other nations mere "sinners of the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:15), as all men were originally constituted by the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5:18) from whom they derive their descent. The national holiness of Israel was constitutional, not inherent. The nation was composed of a stiff-necked, perverse and intractable people who were more disposed to the wickedness of other nations than to the practice of the law of Yahweh, their king. But the holy seed of Abraham was the substance in the nation's loins, on account of whom, and the things affirmed respecting him, it was not consumed (Isa. 6:13; 65:8, 9; Rom. 11:16) but carefully preserved, as having a "blessing in it", even "an inheritor of Yahweh's mountains", who shall cause His servants to rejoice, and the nations to shout aloud for joy. Anything separated by Yahweh from things in general for His own special use is holy, irrespective of the nature or character of the thing. Hence, things animate and inanimate, animal, vegetable and mineral, solid and fluid, etc., have all been constituted holy by the law. Thus there were holy utensils, holy and most holy places of worship, holy mountains and cities, and holy officials, though oftentimes very unrighteous men. The holiness of this kind was the national holiness of the twelve tribes — a holiness conferred by the law of Moses, "which could make nothing perfect". It bestowed upon things a relative external holiness, a sort of halo of holiness confined to the surface, which left the mind and disposition, or heart of its subject untouched".

— J. Thomas.



development of a tree. Had Israel continued to develop spiritually as they did nationally, they would have been true manifestations of "the root", the patriarchs. The Jews took pride in their *national* identity without sufficiently manifesting the moral and spiritual qualities which were associated with the fathers of their nation. Whilst it could truly be said that they were the national "tree" which grew out of Abraham, they were certainly far from being identified with him in matters of conviction and faith, except in the examples of faithful individuals (Jn. 8:31-42).

The *root* of a tree is the source of the nutritious juices necessary for its growth, and gives its qualities to the tree. If that be sound, pure, vigorous, we expect the same of the branches. So the root bears a similar relation to the tree that the firstfruit does to the mass of bread, to which Paul has already referred. Concerning the characteristics of the olive tree, it is said: "It delights to insinuate its roots into the clefts of the rocks, and from thence it draws the richest stores of oil. Where its roots cannot reach rock, it languishes and the berries are small and sapless. It is most prodigal in flowers, but only one of one hundred come to maturity. The tree bears no berries until its seventh year, but will then continue to bear to extreme age. Fruit can be gathered for at least twenty generations. Its use: Pickled berries provide standard food with bread; the oil is used for cooking of most dishes, gives light to dwellings, and the entire soap supply comes from produce of this oil" *(The Land and the Book.*

"So (are) the branches" — Obviously, if the root is good, so must also be the tree which comes from the roots. The Lord Jesus identifies the "branches" as the faithful followers of his teaching: "I am the vine *[or root of the tree]*, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5). True, some branches may have to be pruned, but that would be for the betterment of the tree as a whole, thus: "if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (v. 6). Certainly, a wise husbandman does not destroy a good tree because some of the branches are faulty. He prunes them back, and waits for others to shoot forth from the same root.

In Paul's figure, therefore, there is a guarantee of the restoration of Israel (v. 23) because "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28). As the patriarchs were holy (i.e., belonged to God in a special manner), as the "root" of His sav-

ing community among mankind, so are all Israelites who belong to the stock of the tree and are nourished by the sap which flows up to them from that root. Ultimately, "all Israel" will be saved (Rom. 11:26), having been nationally "pruned" of those elements which were unresponsive to the divine will (Zech. 13:8-9).

VERSE 17

"And if some of the branches be broken off" — Because they failed to develop the divine qualities necessary to identify them as true, fruitful branches (cp. Mat. 23:38; 2Pet. 1:8). Of national Israel Jeremiah prophesied such a fate: Jer. 11:16. Such unbelieving Israelites will be removed to allow for the growth of more productive branches in their place: those who manifest the kind of faith which comes from the "root": Mat. 9:29; Mk. 11:22; Jn. 8:39.

Branches that do not produce fruit are cut off as merely retarding the tree and drawing from it nutriment to no profit; but even those branches that do produce fruit are pruned that better fruit might be developed. Thus there are revealed the ultimate benefits which accrue from trials: that thereby the lasting qualities of true faith might be developed.

"And thou, being a wild olive tree" — The Gentile believers, unable to trace their ancestry through national Jewish stock, had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12).

The olive tree was cultivated when good crops were desired. On the other hand, the wild olive tree was unfruitful, its fruit imperfect and worthless. Before the Gentiles were invited to form part of the good olive, they were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). As such they were unable to render any fruits to the honor of the Creator, their works not being based upon understanding and faith.

"Wert graffed in among them" — This statement highlights the fact that since the earliest of times, there there has been only *one* developing community of faithful believers. The faith of Abraham is fundamentally the same as the apostolic faith. In this vivid imagery, the apostle demonstrates that Gentiles were being grafted into a (singular) tree which was already in existence, having sprung from the "root" of the patriarchs.

It is contrary to nature to remove the true branches and replace them with wild grafts, although, according to Professor Ramsay, in certain extreme cases this was practised in the Holy Land. However, it hardly seems likely that Paul was referring to this remote practice, because he is showing that what was done was actually "contrary to nature" (v. 24). In view of Yahweh's purpose with Israel, the concept of God offering grace to Gentiles in preference to His own firstborn nation was "contrary to nature" in a spiritual sense. Under normal conditions, Gentiles could not expect to receive such abundantly generous treatment.

In *The Land and the Book*, Thomson writes: "The wild olive tree bears no berries, or but few, and these small and destitute of oil. The olive is wild by nature and must be grafted by the *good* before it will bear fruit, but the Apostle speaks of an opposite process. He says expressly that this is *'contrary to nature'* (v. 24), as indeed it is. In the realm of nature the process referred to by Paul never succeeds. Graft the good upon the wild, and it will conquer the wild. But you cannot reverse the process with success. If you insert a wild graft into a good tree, it will conquer the good. But not all olive trees have been claimed from their wild state by grafting. A *good* branch, cut off above the place where it had been grafted, planted in good soil, watered carefully, will strike out roots and will grow. It is now a good tree *from the root*, and all scions taken from it are also good by nature. I am told, however, by olive growers, that there is a tendency to degenerate".

In the light of such comments, we can appreciate how the apostle, with much tact, reveals the hopeless position in which

Boast Not Against the Branches.

Anti-semitism is not merely a modern philosophy. For centuries Gentiles have hated Jews. Often such views remain below the surface, but are easily inflamed. Pogroms against Jewry have been mercilessly and consistently conducted throughout the world. Paul was fearful that a supercilious attitude of superiority might develop among Gentile believers, not only against their Jewish brethren, but against the nation as a whole. Such an attitude is the product of conceit, and is therefore not in harmony with the spirit of Christ. The Catholic Church provides an outstanding example of the attitude of Gentiles towards world Jewry. Though through force of circumstances they may eventually be compelled to do so, it is significant that the State of Israel, politically reborn in 1948, has never been given recognition by the Vatican.

— J. Ullman.

the Gentiles would find themselves, if left to themselves. At the same time, the superabundance of Yahweh's grace and power is brought to the notice of the reader, for, how otherwise could such process be brought to fruition "contrary to nature".

"And with them partakest" — As the branch grafted in to the good tree becomes part of it, so Gentiles embracing Christ are incorporated into the true Israel (Gal. 6:16). They become part of "the hope of Israel", which Paul recognised as the basis of faith: Acts 26:6; 28:20.

The Greek *sunkoinonos* signifies *a joint partaker.* The only other occurrences of this word are in 1Cor. 9:23; Phil. 1:7; Rev. 1:9 ("companion"). The singular use of this word in the epistle indicates Paul's desire that Gentile believers should appreciate the great honor to which they have been raised, through their acceptance of the gospel of Christ.

"Of the root and fatness of the olive tree" — The NIV has: "share in the nourishing sap" whilst the NASB has: "the rich root of the olive tree". The word "fatness" is from the Greek *piotes,* which occurs only in this place. It signifies *to swell out; to enlarge,* and speaks of the beneficial effects that come from a healthy and firm tree. The tree represents the true faith of the fathers: the covenants of Promise that provide great benefits for those who feed upon them (2Pet. 1:4). Paul shows that through Christ the Gentiles enjoy all the advantages that were originally limited to the nation of Israel. They are able to feed from its roots, drawing upon the basis of faith and works, as revealed in "the fathers". This is our true state in Christ, and one we must constantly acknowledge. We have been cut out of the wild olive (the nation of our birth), and incorporated into Israel (the nation of our faith: Eph. 2:12). Our natural fleshly inclinations must now be replaced by what the "root and fatness" of the Israelitish olive supplies. There is no room for fleshly patriotism in the things of the Truth; we have repudiated such loyalties, even though it is "contrary to nature" to do so.

Since this is our situation, we must guard against forgetting the Israelitish nature of our hope, and the fact that we owe our spiritual life to "the root". We have only found a place in "the tree" through the removal of unfaithful "branches" which has allowed for our "grafting in". How foolish then to speak harshly of natural Israel; how wise to treat with sympathetic care and consideration the people of this nation with such a wonderful origin, and destined for a more glorious future. Let us bear in mind that our spiritual existence depends upon the Israelitish root that feeds us!

VERSE 18

"Boast not against the branches" — A solemn warning against the tendency of some to ignore the natural seed of Abraham, in view of the great favor that has been extended to the Gentiles. It must be remembered that national Israel still form "the branches" — when they have been converted to Christ (v. 23), they will have an exalted position in the Kingdom of

God, being classified as "the first dominion (when) the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:8). Gentile believers will be tested by circumstances, as were the Jews who came out of Egypt through the mediatorial work of Moses. To such Gentiles Paul also says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1Cor. 10:12). The basis of faith is not Gentilish, but Israelitish and the principles of divine selection must always be upheld.

"But if thou boast" — If we seek to glory (Gr. *katakauchaomai:* elsewhere found only in Jas. 2:13, "mercy" and ch. 3:14, "glory") in our special relationship with God to the exclusion of His relationship with Israel, we will be acting in opposition to His will.

"Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee" — Paul is careful to state that Gentiles receive spiritual life from the "root", not the "branches". It is the Abrahamic faith which gives us sustenance.

"Bearest" is from the Greek *bastazo,* which means *to sustain; to support as a burden.* Paul saw that some of the Gentiles were in danger of rejoicing over the fallen Jews, and cautions them against such an attitude. If there were a reason for such glorying, it would be in the root, or stock, which sustains the branches, and not in those who were previously wild and unfruitful. The source of all blessings bestowed upon the Gentiles is the ancient stock of Israel; it was here that the divine laws were expressed, and Yahweh's will revealed. The Gentiles derived the blessings of Abraham's faith and of the promises made to him and his seed (Gal. 3:29).

VERSE 19

"Thou wilt say then" — A further proposition is presented by the apostle to counter the claims of the Gentile believers, as a reason for rejecting their association with Israel. Gentiles may be inclined, in an unwise spirit of arrogance, to claim: "Since the Jews were cut off that we might be grafted in, we must be better than they". Paul now refutes such inferences.

"The branches were broken off" — This was the result of divine judgment upon a generation that rejected the Messiahship of Christ, and the exile of AD70 fell upon the nation. No longer were the Jews able to worship in Jerusalem; nor was the divine overshadowing of the people provided to protect the nation from oppression. But, more to the point, the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ removed the need for the continuous ritual of the Law, and the former work of the Jewish priesthood was rendered ineffective (Heb. 7:27).

"That I might be graffed in" — This was the argument that presumptuous Gentiles might express. They would readily acknowledge their indebtedness to the "pioneer root", but simultaneously boast of their superiority over the branches that had been removed. They might conclude that some branches were broken off because the wild branches were superior to them.

But Paul rejects such reasoning. The Gentile branches were not grafted into the tree because they were superior in any way, but because the original (Jewish) ones lacked a certain element, and became unfit to abide on the tree. They were removed, that *inferior branches,* yet the best now available, might take their place! They were inferior in the sense that they were not naturally related to the promises given to the fathers, and therefore were unable to claim association with "the fathers" on that basis.

Therefore boasting was inappropriate.

VERSE 20

"Well" — NIV: "Granted". Paul ironically acknowledges the force of the argument, and continues to explain the reason for the divine action of grafting in some wild olive branches.

"Because of unbelief they were broken off" — The Jewish rejection of Messiah was the cause of their exile from the land and removal from the arena of God's mercy. The Master prophesied of this (Luke 20:16) and reminded his listeners that they would lose their inheritance if they were to act unfaithfully to the calling of the nation.

"And thou standest by faith" — Natural Israel were called from Egypt and protected by the divine overshadowing "for the fathers' sakes" (ch. 11:28), and therefore each Jewish child automatically was inducted into the nation (1Cor. 10:2); but the calling of the Gentiles was individually on the basis of a declared understanding in, and confession of, the principles of the Truth. The word "standeth" is from the Greek *histemi*, which signifies, *to cause to stand; to be made to stand.* The DIAGLOTT has: "thou hast been established by faith". It is, however, on the basis of faith — a true understanding of the gospel message, and an acknowledgement of the divine destiny offered to those who seek to honor the Truth.

Paul uses two words (Gr. *a pistia: no belief; faithlessness*) in contrast to each other: "unbelief" and "faith" (*pistis: belief*). The Jew lost his position because of unbelief; the Gentile is only "established" in his place because of belief.

"Be not highminded, but fear" — "Do not think too highly of yourselves as having been elevated to divine favor, but demean yourselves as humble believers, knowing that you need continually to be on guard against conceit or pomposity of any sort; and 'fear' because you must remember that you may possibly be cut off as was Israel, and for the same reasons!"

Paul speaks not of emotional fear, but a practical reverential fear which, with correct intellectual understanding, should enable all Gentile believers to retain their faith in proper perspective in relation to Israel.

Observing God's judgment against a disobedient Israel which fell so terribly from the divine grace, the believer must recognise the serious exhortation emphasized in such passages as Prov. 28:14; Phil. 2:12; 1Pet. 1:17; 3:15.

The word "highminded" comes from the Greek *hupselophroneo*, and indicates a haughty attitude, an arrogant disposition. The word only elsewhere appears in 1Tim. 6:17. The attitude of haughtiness towards anyone, Jew or Gentile, is not a Christ-like quality, and is a characteristic to be avoided.

The verb "fear" (Gr. *phobeo*) signifies *to be alarmed; to stand in awe; to revere.* It expresses an attitude of humility in view of the authority and standing of the great Judge who determined such punishment upon a guilty nation. The word also occurs in Mat. 10:28; Heb. 4:1; 1Pet. 2:17; Rev. 14:7.

Behold the Goodness and Severity...

With these succinct words in Rom. 11:22, Paul states a timeless truth: Yahweh maintains a strict and unalterable balance of distinction between justice and mercy, truth and error, goodness and cutting-off, virtue and immorality. The strict reality of this must be understood in stark contrast to the beliefs of popular christianity in which God is portrayed as a kindly Deity, rich in benevolence, considering all men to be His children, extending mercy to all without distinction. Such a concept of God is not only false and dishonoring to His character, it is representative of a God who does not exist. Yahweh is indeed a God of love (1Jn. 4:8). He has shown this in many ways, but most importantly by sending His Son to "bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61:1); hence: "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The words "we" and "us" are significant, for they define a particular class of humanity upon whom God will extend His love to the utmost, even to the point of granting to them the gift of eternal redemption (Isa. 66:2). Goodness and severity represent the two sides to the divine character, perfectly balancing these two qualities as no human being is able to do. "Yahweh knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psa. 1:6). — ***J. Ullman.***

VERSE 21

"For if God spared not the natural branches" — The word "spared" is the Greek *pheidomai,* which signifies: *to be chary of; abstain.* God withdrew His protection from Israel, and allowed the Gentile oppression to remove those elements of His people that were unresponsive to His care. It was the wilful sin of unbelief in Israel that brought about its downfall, and this same sin could be found amongst the Gentile followers.

"Take heed lest he also spare not thee" — So the exhortation is emphasized. God did not spare Israel when they fell into unbelief; neither will He preserve the Gentile believers unless they stand fast by faith and continue in His goodness (v. 22). How vital the warning — cp. 2Pet. 2:4 where the same word *pheidomai* occurs. We need to examine the reason why divine judgment was exercised in the past in respect to Israel, and to apply the same principles to our own obligations. A greater responsibility rests upon the wild branches that have been grafted into the good olive, inasmuch as they have before them the example of those natural branches that have been cut out of the tree because they failed to produce fruit.

VERSE 22

"Behold therefore" — The NIV has: "Consider therefore". An arresting introduction to the next important principle that Paul wishes his readers to understand. They had to contemplate this matter for their own personal benefit.

"The goodness" — The first of two divine characteristics which bear heavily upon the believer's understanding and standing. The Father is first "goodness", for He reveals His salvation and will to His creation. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Pet. 3:9). The word *chrestotes* means *usefulness.* It signifies "goodness in action, manifested in the grace, kindness and compassion of God" (Vine). See notes on the word in Rom. 2:4. It is translated "kindness" in Eph. 2:7, Col. 3:12 and Tit. 3:4 and defines a quality that extends itself for the benefit of others.

"And severity" — Gr. *apotomia* which appears only in this verse, and signifies *decisiveness; rigor;* from *apo,* "off" and *temno,* "to cut": thus, a cutting off. It is commonly applied to the act of the gardener or vinedresser in trimming trees or vines, so as to cut off the decayed or useless branches. An associated word *(apotomos)* is translated "sharpness" in 2Cor. 13:10 and "sharply" in Tit. 1:13.

"Of God" — "Severity" is complementary to goodness" for both qualities reveal the love and the righteousness of the divine character. God has provided on the one hand mercy and forgiveness to needy mankind; and on the other hand He refuses to clear the persistently guilty. This goodness and severity is revealed in all of Yahweh's acts. His deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an act of "goodness"; but it was only accomplished through the manifestation of "severity" towards Egypt in the devastation of plagues poured upon the country and in the destruction of its army in the Red Sea. Similarly, Israel's occupation of the Land of Promise and receipt of divine blessings therein, were only achieved by driving out the inhabitants of Canaan, and by destroying the "giants" that formerly held sway.

The testimony of the prophets provided dire warning of severity to the wicked, but the promise of hope and goodness, to the righteous.

As the manifestation of his Father, the Master revealed this twofold characteristic of goodness and judgment in his ministry to the people. Whilst he preached salvation to those in bondage to "sin and death" (Heb. 2:15) and showed compassion towards the needy, he also publicly castigated the leaders for their iniquity, and warned them of judgment to come.

In Rom. 11:22 Paul calls upon his readers to carefully consider the twofold character of the Father, and by building the divine principles into their lives, to thereby avoid God's severity against sin and wrongdoing, and thus lay hold of His offered goodness. The manifestation of severity on the part of the Father in the

past has been necessary because of the weakness and foolishness of flesh, whilst "goodness" is a dominant feature of His character in order to help His people to overcome their difficulties. In the declaration of His name and character to Moses, these two sides of the divine manifestation to man are clearly enunciated. There is "mercy... grace... longsuffering", but also justness, for He will "by no means clear the guilty" (see Exod. 34:6-7).

"On them which fell, severity" — The record of history demonstrates that mankind cannot mock the justice of the Almighty. Divine judgment fell upon the wicked generation of Noah's times (Gen. 6), against the immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah (ch. 19), against apostate Israel (Ezek. 21:24), against the Gentile enemies of God's people (Zech. 1:15). Against each there fell punishment and vengeance, demonstrating the purpose of God to "cut off" (Gr. *apotomia,* "severity") all who oppose His wisdom and principles. Paul has particularly in mind the generation of Jews which rejected the Messiah, and therefore would experience the devastation of judgment which occurred in AD70.

"But toward thee, goodness" — God is not willing that any should perish (2Pet. 3:9), and seeks to reveal His merciful characteristic of "goodness" to those who respond to His mercy.

The Psalmist declared: "How great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee" (Psa. 31:19). Yahweh's benevolence towards man is revealed in the gospel, which pre-eminently expresses His goodness in the means of redemption it provides. The term "goodness" frequently occurs throughout scripture in this way, and shows that the ***divine compassion was***: • Explained to Jethro (Exo. 18:9). • Revealed to Moses (Exo. 33:19). • Promised to Hobab (Num. 10:29). • Hoped for by David (Psa. 27:13).

The ***divine goodness is***: • The heritage of the elect (Psa. 65:4). • Prepared for the faithful poor (Psa. 68:10). • The subject of song and praise (Psa. 145:7). • Associated with the hope of Israel (Isa. 63:7).

That ***goodness will be***: • Again experienced by Israel (Jer. 31:12). • Enjoyed by the saints (Jer. 31:15). • Be witnessed by the whole world (Jer. 33:9). • Be a feature of the millennial sons of victory (Zech. 9:17).

"If thou continue in (his) goodness" — This was always the basis of God's pleasure in His subjects (cp. Gen. 4:7); it is the condition of eternal life (Jn. 6:47). The original omits the "his" for it is not the goodness of God as such that is under consideration, although goodness certainly originates and proceeds from Him, but it is the quality of "goodness" itself that needs to be manifested by the faithful.

Notice the important preposition: "*If*". To "continue in goodness" depends upon our attitude and actions: by remaining within the bonds of the gospel covenant. It was because Israel lacked faith in the mode of divine reconciliation, and refused the provision of God in the mediator He provided, that the nation was cut off from this goodness that had been previously offered to it. To avoid a similar future we must "keep in memory" the principles of the Truth (1Cor. 15:2).

"Otherwise (thou) also shalt be cut off" — The destiny of those who reject the opportunity of divine blessing. The Lord Jesus warned the disciples of such a possibility in his parable of the vine: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit *he taketh away"* to judgment and destruction (John 15:2. cp. Mat. 15:13; Heb. 6:8).

VERSE 23

"And they also" — After reminding his readers of their personal responsibilities, Paul returns to his former subject: the position and future of the nation of Israel.

"If they abide not still in unbelief" — The only basis for Israel's restoration to favor is upon the foundation of faith. After the return of Christ, Israel will be instructed concerning the principles of the Truth, and will recognise the reality of Christ's work, fully acknowledging his Messiahship (Zech. 12:10). Upon that foundation the nation will be brought into "the bond of the covenant" (Ezek. 20:37; Jer. 31:31) at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The

"new covenant" will be established upon the basis of faith by which the sins of the nation "will be cast into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19). Thus, the present regathering of the nation is but a token of that yet to come, and is preliminary to the great restoration prophesied by Peter (Acts 3:19).

"Shall be graffed in" — This confident assertion of Paul is based upon a correct understanding of the prophets: Jer. 3:12–4:2; Isa. 40:10; Jer. 31:31; 33:6-9; Ezek. 36:21-29; 20:41-42, etc.

"For God is able" — The word "able" is from the Greek *dunatos*, indicating *that which has power; is capable.* Paul teaches that God is able to overcome the traditional stiffnecked and stubborn attitude of His people. He will do that by the great judgments that will yet pour upon the nation during the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), and the subsequent revelation of His Son — an encounter that Paul had already experienced in his personal conversion (Phil. 3:10-12).

"To graff them in again" — Though it is beyond the ability of mankind to accomplish salvation, God is able to achieve this purpose through the work of His Son. Paul uses the word "again" to remind his readers that God will restore that which formerly Israel enjoyed under the covenant of David; thus: Acts 15:17; Isa. 54:5; Hos. 3:5; Amos. 9:11.

VERSE 24

"For if" — Paul now reminds his Gentile readers that it is easier for God to graft in a natural branch than to do so with a wild olive branch. It will prove easier to convert Israelites to the true faith when the "set time to favor Zion" (Psa. 102:13) arrives, than it has been to change the hearts of Gentiles, even in these "times of the Gentiles".

"Thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature" — God's covenant with flesh requires separation from the natural attitudes and characteristics that lead to sin, and dedication of heart and life to His principles of manifestation. Thus, He invites disciples to reject the "wildness" which comes from Adamic nature, and to align themselves with His way of life. As "branches" of His selection, God has "cut us" out of the "natural tree" of mankind, and separated us from the "sap" of the flesh. This has been accomplished in a mental and moral aspect through the Word and baptism, but ultimately we will be physically perfected by immortality. This process is indicated in 2Cor. 6:17-18, "Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you". God will only accept Gentiles as His sons and daughters in the Abrahamic stock of faith, upon separation and dedication of self. Being thus "cut out" means that we enjoy "no more condemnation" since we "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

"And wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree" — Gentiles are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). God's work to transform Gentiles is "contrary to nature", for being without His law and wisdom, they manifest only the godless characteristics of unconverted flesh, and it is not "natural" for them to do His will. Therefore if God had mercy on the Gentiles, who were not formerly part of His favor, shall He not much rather show mercy to those who were for so long His people, and to whom had been given the promises, covenants and law (see Rom. 9:4-5).

The phrase "good olive tree" is from the Greek *kallielaion* (neuter gender), *a cultivated olive tree*, and only occurs in this verse. It defines the Abrahamic Covenant of Faith, whose "branches" are his sons and daughters by faith.

"How much more shall these, which be the natural (branches), be graffed" — It is far easier for God to regraft an Israel which knew His will and laws, but which for a time have gone astray, than to convert ignorant Gentiles who were always outside His wisdom. Even in apostasy Jews show a greater aptitude for rev-

Throughout the centuries Jews have retained their national love of the rituals and laws of Judaism. Today they honor their traditions at the Western Wall. When Christ returns their reverence will be converted to a true understanding of their history and destiny.

erence than do Gentiles. They honor God's authority, although they do not understand His purpose of redemption, resting on the precepts of law and ritual without faith. The "lump" and "branches" must yet be converted and offered to Yahweh. See v. 16; Jer. 33:9.

"Into their own olive tree" — The covenant of Abraham upon the basis of true faith (Acts 3:25; 7:2). This will require of them an acknowledgement of the divine authority in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true son of Abraham (Jn. 8:39, 56; Acts 3:13).

The Divine Secret Concerning Israel's Restoration — vv. 25-32.

Paul explains to the Gentile believers the purpose of God in restoring Israel, and shows that it involves the conversion and education of the natural children of Abraham. Their former alienation from God provided the opportunity for salvation to be offered to Gentiles, but their ultimate restoration will bring glory to Israel and honor to their fathers.

VERSE 25

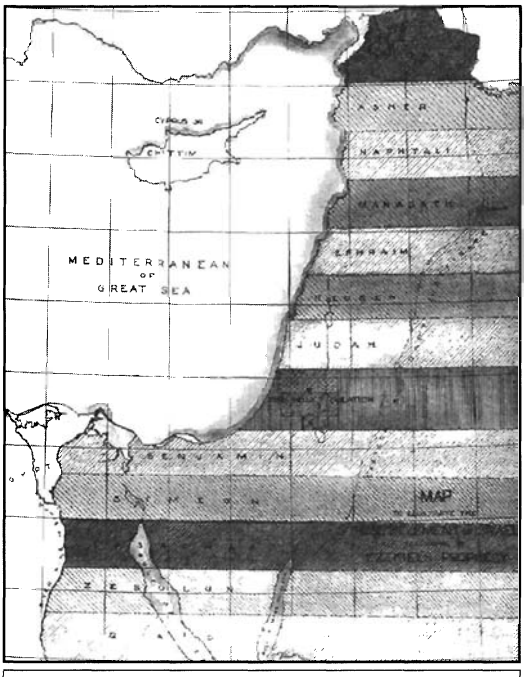
"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant" — Gentile believers had to understand the future intentions of the Father. As the gospel comprises "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20), by which salvation is obtained (Rom. 8:24), it is essential that Yahweh's intentions with natural Israel should be clearly acknowledged. Only thereby can the divine purpose be clearly seen.

"Of this mystery" — The gospel is not a mystery such as is beyond comprehension. The Greek word is *musterion*, more accurately: *a secret; that which is known to the initiated.* The wonderful principle of divine restoration can only be truly understood by those who honor the Abrahamic covenant, and appreciate the purpose of God with His people (see ch. 16:25). The gospel is a "secret" hidden from the natural mind of the flesh (1Cor. 2:7), but which is revealed by the implantation of the Spirit-Word in the heart and mind of those prepared to humble themselves before the divine wisdom (Eph. 1:9).

"Lest ye should be wise in your own conceits" — The last phrase is *en heautois*, "in yourselves". Those who discount the divine purpose with Israel have a con-

ceited view that God had elevated Gentiles above Jews. Paul had spoken of such a "highminded" attitude in verse 20. Because of that conceit many claim that God has no further purpose with natural Israel. Paul now answers that error, and explains that the divine rejection of Israel is temporary, and that ultimately redemption will come. Therefore to deny the purpose of God to restore Israel is to deny the essential principles of the saving knowledge of the gospel.

"That blindness in part is happened to Israel" — "Blindness" is from the Greek *porosis,* signifying *hardness, stubbornness; covered with a callus,* "metaphorical of a dulled spiritual perception" (Vine). The national blindness to the covenant of grace, however, is only "in part" (see v. 7). The Greek word for "in part" is *meros,* which indicates: *a division* or *share.* The NASB translates it: "a partial hardening"; the RSV has: "a hardening has come upon a part". The blindness is therefore not a complete nor permanent affliction but is limited to only one division of Jewry: those who refuse to accept the sonship of Jesus Christ, and who have remained stubbornly unresponsive to God's will. The "revealed secret" (the "mystery") is that such ignorance by Israel would remain until Christ comes to restore the nation to its former glory.



The tribal cantons of Israel in the kingdom, as set out in Ezekiel 48. See "Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy" (H. Sulley).

"Until" — An important word, limiting the time of Israel's alienation from God. The word occurs in five significant contexts introducing periods of restoration: • The restoration of the Davidic throne: Ezek. 21:27. • The restoration of Jerusalem to Jewish control: Luke 21:24. • The restoration of the nation and theocracy to Israel: Acts 3:21. • The restoration of Israel's spiritual understanding: Rom. 11:25-26. • The restoration of the house of worship for Israel: Lk. 13:35.

"The fulness of the Gentiles be come in" — This is being accomplished during a period referred to as "the times of the Gentiles" (Lk. 21:24), the long period in which the Gentiles have had dominion over Jewry in a political sense, and during which period the gospel has gone forth in Gentile lands (Acts 13:46). Currently, God is taking out of the Gentiles "a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14; Eph. 2:11-13), and when that purpose is completed, and "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in", there will follow "the fulness of Israel" which will see that nation become "the first dominion" throughout the earth (Mic. 4:8). Paul refers to this latter manifestation of divine goodness in Rom. 11:12.

VERSE 26

"And so" — As a result of the completion of God's work amongst the Gen-

Both Jews and Gentiles are faithless in the gospel of the kingdom in the name of Jesus. The Jews believe one part of it, and the Gentiles another part of it, but even these several parts they adulterate with so many traditions, that neither Jews nor Gentiles believe anything as they ought. Therefore, as He broke off Israel by the instrumentality of the Romans, so He is now about to break off the Gentiles by the judgments soon to be poured out upon them.

The work of grafting Israel into their own olive belongs to God, who as the scripture saith, "is able to graft them in again". No one, I presume, will dispute His ability. As I have shown elsewhere, He has assigned the work of restoration to the Lord Jesus, who will graft them in again upon a principle of faith. He will bring their unbelief to an end in a way peculiar to the emergency of the case. When the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, then Israel's blindness will be done away.

*— **J. Thomas** ("Elpis Israel", p. 440).*

tiles, He will turn to fulfil His determination concerning the restoration of Israel.

"All Israel shall be saved" — A thrilling and confident assertion that the divine purpose with Israel will be achieved. By "all Israel" is not meant all individual Jews, but all the tribes: thus a national redemption. The term is contrasted with the believing "remnant" of v. 5, and the "some" of v. 14; now Paul shows that the national salvation will include the whole nation. The prophets show that the rebels will be purged out of the nation gathered in the holy land (Zech. 13:9), as well as those scattered abroad (Ezek. 36:24-28). The conversion of the nation will then be undertaken (Zech. 13:1; Ezek. 36:25), and the nation will be re-established "as in the days of old" (Jer. 33:11; Amos 9:11). The tribal division that occurred in the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam will be healed (Ezek. 37:21-22), and the people will be formed into one nation, subjected to one king, and all twelve tribes will be established in the land, according to the promise made to "father Abraham" in Gen. 15:18 and the prophecy of Mic. 4:2.

Notice that "*all* Israel" are saved, but not "*all* Gentiles". Some of the present-day nations will be destroyed in judgment (Isa. 60:12; Rev. 18:8; Ezek. 38:20-22), although "many" will remain to become subjects in the kingdom of God (v. 23). This is a "secret" ("mystery": Rom. 11:25) unknown to the world at large, but whispered into the ears of those who know and love the Truth.

"As it is written" — Paul cites Isa. 59:20, Jer. 31:33 and Isa. 27:9 to show that the prophets spoke clearly of a future restoration of Israel, following a period of apostasy.

"There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer" — Citing Isa. 59:20. The SEPTUAGINT has: "The deliverer shall come *on account of* Zion"; whereas the AV has: "come *to* Zion". Both are applicable, for Christ will first come to Zion in fulfilment of Zech 14:4 and Psa. 2:6, to establish his power and authority in the city of his father David (Lk. 1:32); then he will extend his influence therefrom to all parts of the earth (Psa. 14:7). He comes first as the Victor of Armageddon; then as the Saviour of Israel.

Additionally Paul's words show that the deliverer will not be a Gentile, but one identified with Zion. He must first go *to* Zion (as Isaiah teaches) to come *out of* it (as Paul explains).

"And shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" — This will occur after the appearance of "the Deliverer", and therefore spiritual blindness will continue to be evident among Jewry until the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. By using the name "Jacob" Paul draws attention to the divine purpose with Israel seen typically in the life and experiences of "the Supplanter". Jacob endured many privations of life as he sought to achieve his intentions by the exercise of his own ingenuity and ability. Yet he always acknowledged the presence of God in the situations of life, and finally declared to his family that it was Yahweh who brought him through all such experiences and

revealed to him the future destiny of his family. As the aged man blessed his grandchildren he declared: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel *which redeemed me from all evil,* bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" (Gen. 48:15-16). Thus the name Jacob is synonymous with affliction, distress and the antagonism of his contemporaries (such as Esau), but who ultimately was victorious beyond his struggles, and exalted to become a *Prince With El* (Gen. 32:28). What was seen individually and typically in the man Jacob will be revealed nationally in his seed.

VERSE 27

"For this (is) my covenant unto them" — Paul seems to be quoting Jer. 31:33, where the prophet speaks of the conversion of Israel by the implantation of the divine law "in their inward parts". God declares: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel..." Israel will no longer be committed to an external system of ritual and laws, but will acknowledge the need to manifest the character of Yahweh in faith and performance.

"When I shall take away their sins" — Jer. 31:34 states that God "will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more". This will be upon the basis of Israel's complete acknowledgement of the work of Yahweh in redeeming mankind through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jeremiah states that then Israel will "*know* Yahweh", a principle mentioned by the Lord Jesus in his intercessory prayer for his people: "This is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (Jn. 17:3). That prayer will be fulfilled in Israel's acknowledgement of the glorious plan of redemption through the one they formerly crucified. Then their sins will be removed (Zech. 12:10), and they will again be recipients of God's grace.

Paul may also have had in mind the prophecy of Isa. 27:9, "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit *to take away his sin".* This statement is made upon the background of Yahweh's predicted destruction of "leviathan, the piercing serpent": the confederation of the power of the flesh, and symbol of all Israel's oppressors.

The phrase "take away" is from the Greek *aphaireo, to remove to another place.* The word is used in Heb. 10:4 for the inability of animal sacrifices to achieve what God desired: the worshipper's wholehearted acknowledgement of and identity with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The animals were but a type, and their removal from the camp (Lev. 4:12) foreshadowed the successful destruction of sin that Jesus Christ was able to accomplish (Heb. 2:14). This was a work of faith, and it will be only upon the same basis that forgiveness will be granted to national Israel.

VERSE 28

"As concerning the gospel, (they are) enemies for your sakes" — The word "enemies" is the Greek *echthroi,* signifying *those hateful, odious, adversaries,* thus, those alienated from God through unbelief. It is used of the diabolos (Mat. 13:39); of death (1Cor. 15:26); of the world-loving believer (Jas. 4:4). In this verse, the word is contrasted with "beloved", as Paul explains the paradox of Israel's position.

Jewry violently opposed the preaching of the gospel by the brethren in the first century (Acts 14:2), and consequently the apostles turned from them, treating them as enemies: Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28. In general, Jews remain opposed to the teachings of the Truth, rejecting the Messiahship of Jesus (*Elpis Israel,* p. 441), and will remain in unbelief until the manifestation of the one they crucified. Their unbelief allowed the Truth to be extended to the Gentiles, and in this sense their enmity was "for our sakes (advantage)".

"But as touching the election, (they are) beloved for the fathers' sakes" —

Therefore their "enemy" status is limited, and they will become "beloved" when they truly acknowledge the hope of their fathers (Mal. 4:6).

The word "election" signifies "selection" (see notes on v. 7) and therefore Israel is a nation selected by God for His great purpose. But this privilege is not upon the grounds that Jews are any better than Gentiles. It is simply because God honors the covenant of promise He made with the fathers of Israel (Gen. 12:1-2). Yahweh declared through Ezekiel concerning their ultimate restoration: "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy Name's sake" (ch. 36:22). Therefore, whilst individual Jews might suffer and whole communities be consumed by the persecution and affliction of Gentile powers, the nation of Israel will never be destroyed (Jer. 30:11). The preservation of Israel nationally shows the immutability of Yahweh's purpose, and is a token of His goodness.

The word "beloved" is the Greek *agapetos,* used of the sacrificial love of God towards His nation for the sake of Abraham, His friend (Jas. 2:23), and the fathers of Israel, with whom Yahweh entered into an eternal covenant of promise. Thus the promises of God made to the fathers of Israel are secured to their descendants, not on the ground of personal merit, but on the ground of God's fidelity to His Word, and of His response to the covenants made with His faithful servants in the past (v. 6).

VERSE 29

"For the gifts" — The Greek word *charisma* signifies a favor received without personal merit. The gifts referred to are those benefits incorporated in the gospel message, described in v. 22 as God's "goodness". Such a gift we received "when we were yet enemies" (Rom. 5:10). But the receipt of such a gift requires a response. Israel will yet recognise the great value of the divine mercy that has overshadowed the nation throughout its experiences, bringing it ultimately in the joy of restoration to favor with God.

"And calling of God" — The Greek word is *klesis, to invite* (from *kaleo, to call*), and is found in our word "ecclesia" *(to call out,* or *separate, by invitation).* God's invitation is to separate from the world of darkness in order to enjoy the offer of salvation (2Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4). God never calls individuals or nations without being willing to bestow pardon and offer life. He calls us today; He will call Israel at the coming of His Son — and in both callings there is opportunity of redemption. The responsibility to respond to such a privilege rests upon the recipient. If we reject that calling, we reveal a despising of the divine mercy, and will reap the judgment deserved.

This statement is related to the Hebrew name for the book of Leviticus (see comments in *Expositor: Leviticus,* page 5), and as such Paul's exposition is in line with the Levitical covenant, particularly expressed in Lev. 26.

"(Are) without repentance" — The Greek *ametameletos* signifies *irrevocable; without a change of mind* (see its use in 2Cor. 7:10; Heb. 12:17, where the word is *metanoia*). God is not subject to the vagaries of mankind; His principles and determinations are unalterable. Therefore His declared purpose towards Israel will not change, so that in spite of previous reverses, the nation will yet be restored to favor. Balaam warned Balak that such would occur (Num. 23:19), and Malachi recorded Yahweh's declaration to the people: "I am Yahweh; I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (ch. 3:6). In like manner His purpose concerning the gracious invitation to the Gentiles stands despite the capriciousness and perversity of mankind (Mic. 7:20; Jas. 1:17).

VERSE 30

"For as ye in times past have not believed God" — Paul reminds his readers that as Gentiles they were in a condition of unbelief before the gospel was extended to them (Eph. 2:11-12). To the Athenians he called this "times of ignorance" (Acts 17:30). To the Corinthians he described the evil society in which they

lived, and reminded them of their former state: "And such were some of you, but ye are (now) washed... sanctified... justified" (1Cor. 6:11).

"Yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief" — Mercy (Gr. *eleeo, to be compassionate)* is a divine characteristic (Eph. 2:4) which God grants to those He selects. The Gentile believers had experienced such a favor of personal restoration from a situation of bondage to sin and death. But this opportunity was only theirs because of the unbelief and disobedience of Israel; otherwise they would never have received it.

VERSE 31

"Even so have these also now not believed" — "These" are the Jews who had been set aside for a time from the benefits of God's will. Notice the poetic logic of Paul's argument. In the previous verse he mentions the unbelief of the Gentiles; here he tenders the same attitude of the Jews. In v. 30 he refers to the mercy that Gentiles received; in v. 31 he points to the mercy that will come to the Jews.

"That through your mercy they also may obtain mercy" — As mercy had come to Gentiles because of the unbelief of the Jews (v. 30), so God will extend mercy to Israel through the means of the Gentile believers.

The word "through" is *hina,* which signifies *in order that; by means of.* Unbelieving Jews will ultimately obtain mercy through the very mercy that has now been offered to Gentiles. It will be the privilege of the saints to educate Israel in the saving principles of the Truth, and to reform the nation into the prophesied "first dominion" (Mic. 4:8), so that all mankind will recognise the mercy that God has given to His people.

Paul describes this blessing as "your mercy" because those to whom he was writing had accepted the gospel message and its great benefits. He does not mean to teach that Jews will be saved through the mercy that Gentiles might show towards them, for the saving of Israel is the work of the deliverer (v. 26), and the mercy that will come upon them, will be the result of their change of heart and attitude (v. 27).

VERSE 32

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief" — The word "concluded" (Gr. *sunkleio, to shut up together*) means to "enclose", as in the margin. It suggests being shut up in prison, or confined in a city by a besieging army outside. It is used of a fish taken in a net (Luke 5:6), and of a community imprisoned by sin (Gal. 3:23). The NIV has: "For God has bound all men over to disobedience". He did so by the righteous laws of divine justice. Both Jews and Gentiles have been imprisoned by unbelief, or lack of faith, and therefore unable to see the real purpose of God's will with mankind. See notes: ch. 3:9-10.

Since "all" have been bound together in unbelief, if God is to show favor and mercy to "all" (for both Jew and Gentile are equally undeserving), it must be upon the common basis of faith for both Jew and Gentile.

"That he might have mercy upon all" — This will be the grand result of God's endeavors on behalf of His creation. The "all" identify both Jews and Gentiles. Both have been imprisoned to sin and death by their own unbelief, and none have been able to break its power, nor its hold upon them, by their own efforts, for none can obtain forgiveness of sins, except through Christ. The Law revealed the reality of sin and the need of forgiveness and redemption, but could not, of itself, provide such benefits; it was only a "schoolmaster" indicating the way to such privileges (Gal. 3:24). Through a correct understanding of the purpose of God in Christ, and an identification with his life and death, both Jews and Gentiles can be released from the prisonhouse of sin and enjoy liberty in Christ.

The emphasis of this verse is on "mercy". God is under obligation to none — for all are equally bound — and therefore those who are saved, obtain that benefit on the grounds of divine mercy. It is upon this wonderful principle that Paul now concludes this section of his epistle.

He gives heartfelt exclamations and ascriptions of praise with which the chapter closes.

The Greatness of God's Wisdom Shown in His Plan of Redemption — vv. 33-36.

Paul concludes this section of his epistle with a spontaneous burst of praise to the unfathomable wisdom of God. He sees himself as part of the former "unbelief" (v. 32), and stands amazed with wonder at the graciousness and glory of God's purpose. His words conclude the second main division of the book in a similar fashion to that which completed the first main division — see ch. 8:38-39.

VERSE 33

"O the depth of the riches" — These are seen by a very careful examination of the divine excellence. The word "depth" (Gr. *bathos* signifies *that which is profound; mysterious)* indicates that which is vast and incomprehensible (see Psa. 36:6; 1Cor. 2:20). Mortal man cannot exhaust the greatness of the Almighty, as Job was reminded: ch. 38. The physical evidence of this majesty is seen as much in the vast expanse of the universe, as in the exquisite beauty of the tiniest flower petal.

But the greatest wonder of divine goodness is seen in His "riches" (Gr. *ploutos,* signifying *wealth, possessions, abundance,* from a root, *to fill*). The extent and power of the gospel is beyond the conception of the human mind. We can never exhaust the study of the scriptures, for the more we learn, the more we realise the limitations of our learning! It is only in the mercy of God that such power has been revealed to us (1Cor. 2:10), but our finite minds are still restricted by our inability to grasp all the elements of divine manifestation (v. 11). Nevertheless, we can perceive the great riches of the divine excellence in measure, but not by a superficial reading of the Bible. It requires a deep and prayerful consideration of the Word, upon the basis of an acknowledgement to God of our desire for understanding (Eph. 1:18; Jas 1:5).

How grand the moment when immortality will cure the present inabilities of the flesh, and we shall "see him as he is, for we *shall be like him"* (1Jn. 3:2).

"Both of" — The DIAGLOTT has, more correctly, "and". Paul outlines three wonderful elements of the Deity: His riches, wisdom and knowledge. The first expresses the great benefits that derive from His mercies found in the scriptures; the second reveals the way in which those benefits have been worked out in His dealings with mankind; the third speaks of His omniscience and power, showing that nothing escapes His attention and discernment.

"The wisdom" — Gr. *sophia,* signifies *ability, skill, cleverness.* This is revealed in the manner in which Yahweh punishes Israel, extends salvation to Gentiles, and ultimately restores the nation to favor without any loss of His prestige or righteousness. In these things mercy and justice are perfectly blended, and Paul's ascription of praise aptly fits his exposition in ch. 11:22. Thus in devising a perfectly just system of redemption and restoration, God's wisdom is displayed to the praise and adoration of mankind.

"And knowledge of God" — Gr. *gnosis: that which is known and revealed,* from the same root as the word "mind" in v. 34. The knowledge of God is His understanding of what is required to achieve the purpose for which all was created, and His wisdom draws attention to the skill in which it is carried out. His knowledge is revealed in the salvation that He will effect for both Jews and Gentiles, whilst His skill and wisdom are manifested in the way that both are humbled before Him, supplementing and dependent upon each other. See ch. 10:12; 11:11-15; 19-22; 28-31.

"How unsearchable (are) his judgments" — The word "unsearchable" (Gr. *anexereunetos: not searched out; inscrutable; unable to be fully investigated)* emphasizes the inability of mankind to rise to the heights of the divine understanding, either in "goodness" or "severity". We can but stand in awe of the absolute wonder of the divine abilities and qualities.

The word for "judgments" is *krima,*

which suggests judgment to condemnation (the same word is translated "damnation" in 1Cor. 11:29, and "condemnation" in Jas. 3:1). God's judgments to that end are divine and produce results such as human wisdom would find impossible to conceive or search out. For example, the condemnation on flesh given in Eden brought into play the divine attributes of mercy, grace, love, forgiveness, reliance upon God as a Father. If salvation was to be effected after the fall of Adam, these attributes had to be manifested, and therefore, with infinite skill, God was able to use even sin to fulfil His purpose. For, without sin, there would not have been any scope for grace, mercy, forgiveness and so forth. Divine wisdom condemned the sin, but also revealed the grace, and this, in turn, manifested the divine character for the emulation of man. So, also, with the condemnation that was carried out on Israel. It opened salvation for Gentiles without setting aside the divine purpose with Israel. In this there is revealed a superhuman skill, a wisdom such as mere man would find unsearchable, if it were not proclaimed unto him.

"And his ways past finding out" — The word for "ways" is *hodos*, meaning *a way; highway; method of proceeding.* It thus signifies: "the roadway upon which one travels" (cp. Acts 13:10; Heb. 3:10; Psa. 77:19), and points to the plan of salvation for mankind, upon which God is traversing to accomplish His purpose. Apart from the divine revelation of God's proposals, it would be beyond man to understand the divine procedures.

God declared through Isaiah: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Yahweh. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (ch. 55:8-9).

We know theoretically the steps God has already taken for the redemption of mankind, but we are left with Paul: in a state of humiliation and wonder at the magnitude of His plan of reconciliation and restoration. Man is therefore absolutely dependent upon the Word of God if he would be saved.

VERSE 34

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" — God's counsels are profound and inscrutable. Paul cites Isa. 40:13, "Who hath directed the spirit of Yahweh?" — a challenging statement showing that none have known the mind of Yahweh in the sense that they have dominated or governed it. The context of Paul's quotation is the complete humiliation of the flesh: "All flesh is grass... all the nations before Him are less than nothing... comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" (Isa. 40:1-9).

We cannot change the purpose of the Almighty. Divine grace and forgiveness have never been dictated to God as something He should or must do — instead, all these condescending qualities have come spontaneously from Him.

"Or who hath been his counsellor?" — The word *sumboulos* only occurs in this place, and indicates "a fellow-counsellor", who assists in the determination of policy. The quotation from Isa. 40:13 has: "(Who) being His counsellor hath taught Him?" None of flesh could be such a powerful adviser since "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (ch. 3:23).

VERSE 35

"Or who hath first given to him" — Citing Job 35:7, to show that God is the author of both creation and salvation. He first proposed; and secondly provided, and therefore is under no obligation to His creatures.

Job 41:11 expresses similar principles, and here the Almighty challenges Job on the basis of His omnipotence: "Who hath prevented Me that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is Mine". The Hebrew word translated "prevented" is *qadam*, and means *to project; precede; anticipate.* Thus God asks: "Who has anticipated Me; who has conferred favors on Me before I have on him; who has thus laid Me under obligation to him?" The Jewish mind put God under obligation to grant salvation on the basis of his conformity with the Law, and therefore put

God in debt to His chosen people. This was certainly a wrong concept, and the question remained unanswered in the Jewish heart.

"And it shall be recompensed unto him again?" — The Greek word *antapodidomi* signifies *to requite; to give back as an equivalent;* thus to repay in full as a settlement of debt.

VERSE 36

"For" — Paul now sweeps into a final burst of praise for the supremacy and glory of God, the original source and fountain of all goodness and blessing, suitably concluding with the word *"Amen", So be it!* Brother Thomas comments: "...in turning to the Bible, which we regard as the only reliable source of information concerning God, we are met by the inquiry of Zophar, the Naamathite, saying, 'Wilt thou find out Eloah by searching? Or to perfection, wilt thou find out Shaddai? The height of the heavens, what wilt thou do? Deeper than sheol, what wilt thou know? The lengthening out is more than earth's measure, and broader than the sea' (Job. 11:7-9). The subject is indeed great, for God is great; and when we come to contemplate it aright, we are led with the apostle to exclaim: "For out of Him *(ex autou)* and through Him, and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory for the aions. Amen" (*Phanerosis*, p. 45).

"Of Him" — The word *ek*, signifies *out of.* All things are "out of God" having been formed by His spirit, which fills heaven and earth. Thus His spirit, or energy, is the substratum of all creation, and He is the author of all.

"And through Him" — Here the Greek word is *dia* with the genitive case, and signifies *by means of;* as "proceeding from". God is not only the first cause of all things, in that they are "out of" Him, but He is also the intelligent designer of them all, and has created them with purpose in view.

"And to Him" — The word "to" is *eis*, and implies motion towards an object, which, in this case, is God. The DIAGLOTT has "for Him". His purpose is to attract mankind to Him, as the Lord declared: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (Jn. 6:44). God seeketh such to worship Him.

"(Are) all things" — In this short statement, therefore, we have epitomised the fact, means and purpose of creation. It is all *"out of"* God; by His design, or *"means";* and with the object of reflecting to His glory. The fulness of that purpose will not only be revealed in the ecclesia and in Israel during the millennium, but ultimately, in all creation, when God will be "all in all" (1Cor. 15:28).

"To whom be glory for ever. Amen" — See notes ch. 1:25; 9:5; 15:33; 16:20, 24, 27. *"Amen"* appears seven times in the epistle. The word has the basic idea of "faithfulness", from the Hebrew *aman*, and is translated in Isa. 65:16 as "God of Truth (Heb. *amanah*)" — a title which acknowledges the faithfulness and dependability of the Father. Thus, in using the word *"Amen"* Paul does not only close this section, but emphasizes that all the great works of Yahweh can be absolutely depended upon, and are an expression of His trust and certainty. When, at last, we are gathered into the divine presence, having experienced the great mercy and forbearance of the Father in our times of weakness, we will fully understand this remarkable title, and realise that God has performed all that He declared.

Paul's Praise of God's Purpose
— Rom. 11:33-36

As Paul surveys the infinite skill with which Yahweh has vindicated Himself in Israel, has caused the gospel to be proclaimed unto the Gentiles without setting aside His purpose with His ancient people, and has offered grace and salvation to all without setting aside the principles of righteousness, or abdicating His just and holy status, he bursts forth into a spontaneous paean of praise. He is like a traveller standing upon the mountain peak and seeing the glory of the panoramic view stretched out before him, for from his lofty position of exaltation, he surveys the work of salvation, and breaks into unstinted praise of the Creator. The difficulties of laboring to the top, as he has considered the problems associated with the relative positions of Jew and Gentile before God, are seen to be worthwhile, for the view that is now stretched before him is one that only the divine Creator could produce. Such a system of salvation as he now views, is quite beyond the ability of flesh to either conceive or execute. It reveals the depths of wisdom and knowledge, and shows that the very judgments to condemnation proclaimed by God are so wise and purposeful of good as to be quite beyond human ingenuity to develop. No one has aided God to that end (v. 34); He is in debt to no one (v. 35), for out of Him, by means of Him, and for His glory have all these things been provided, that in Christ He revealed Himself to that end (Rom. 8:3; 2Cor. 5:19). So Paul concludes with a fervent ***Amen — So be it!***

ROMANS:
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Section Four:

PAUL'S

PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

How the Gospel

Relates to

Conduct

Chs. 12 to 15:13

PAUL *now comes to the concluding expositional section in his epistle. It is appropriate that, having clearly set out the doctrinal basis for the redemption of mankind, as revealed in the atoning work accomplished by God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the prophetic work of God in the nation of Israel, Paul should now explain the personal responsibilities of discipleship, and how the foregoing principles should cause a person to respond to the practical issues of life (see analysis on page 10).*

Thus the Truth is a balanced, logical and wise provision for the harmony of mankind, and a means of developing the character of the Father in those He chooses to call to His service.

The conduct of believers must therefore be based upon the divine wisdom, and not upon human sentiment, or the feelings of individual justification. It is a life of sacrifice to which we are called, and the benefit of such sacrifices is seen first in the reconciliation which God brought about in the service provided by His Son. Thus, it was important for Paul to first reveal the way of divine salvation from the condemnation that man's actions of transgression have brought about, and the process by which sanctification and glorification would be achieved (Rom. 1:16-8:39).

These principles should then be seen in the way God worked with the nation He selected out of all the peoples of the earth. Therefore in his second section of this epistle, the apostle Paul drew attention to the privilege of Israel's calling (ch. 9), and the sad results of their failure to maintain the standards of the Spirit of Life. They enjoyed the ritual of the sacrificial laws, but neglected to apply those principles in

their own lives. So the nation was rejected (ch. 10), and must await the conclusion of the "times of the Gentiles" before the promised restoration will come to Israel (ch. 11).

Now Paul looks at the individual responsibilities of believers, for it is important that we should understand "what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2Pet. 3:11). By this means we can "put off concerning the former conversation [lifestyle] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:22-23), and thus honor the great principles of God's work already seen in the former two sections of this epistle. Paul now sets before us three appropriate steps for our personal happiness, and for the development of the Christ-mind in our personal lives:

***(1) Social Responsibilities** — The way in which believers should reveal the principles of God manifestation in their association with their contemporaries: ch. 12.*

***(2) Civil Responsibilities** — The obligations we have in the community in which we live, by which we demonstrate the high ideals of our faith to the authorities of the land: ch. 13.*

***(3) Ecclesial Responsibilities** — The care and attitudes that must be shown within the Household of Faith, so that Christ's example is elevated: ch. 14—15:13.*

These three areas of responsibility provide opportunities to apply very practical and personal decisions, and the outworking of these principles in our lives will reveal how much we understand of the former two sections of the epistle.

Doctrine and Duty

To this point in his exposition, Paul has emphasized the absolute necessity for correct doctrinal understanding. Upon this basis he has demonstrated the way in which sound doctrinal understanding can result in the establishment of a covenant relationship between Yahweh and mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. He now proceeds to deal with practical issues of manifesting the Truth as a way of life in daily living. There is clear connection between these three stages of spiritual development. It is necessary for believers to understand that to please God it is not sufficient merely to *know* the Truth. Doctrinal purity is not simply a question of what one knows, but also of what one thinks and does. Theoretical knowledge in itself does not create a saint. Every fundamental doctrine in scripture must find its outworking in a way of life. For example, it is a fact that "there is one God" — but what does this mean in a practical sense? It means that every believer, in proclaiming the unity and oneness of Deity, must take great care to see that *there is room in their life only for one God,* and that no other object or objective must be permitted to occupy an equal or superior place in their life to that which they must ascribe exclusively to Yahweh. The knowledge that man is mortal is of little value, academically, unless the believer firmly understands that he will die without hope unless he perceives his need for forgiveness of his sins and a change of nature, and lives a way of life in accord with these ideals. The doctrine that Christ will return to the earth will not be of value to a believer unless he recognises that this hope must not only shine brightly in his thoughts daily, but his endeavors and sacrifices must be designed to prepare himself for that event. Similar lessons may be drawn from every fundamental doctrine taught in scripture. ***Doctrine*** and ***Duty***. The two are inseparable. It is therefore logical and scriptural that, at this stage in his exposition, Paul should be moved to recognise the need for all believers to be united in *committing themselves to a way of life* in conformity with their doctrinal understanding of the Truth, and their willing acceptance thereof. ***Precept and Practice.*** These two elements will actively demonstrate that the Truth is known and understood, and morally manifested with a zeal and diligence that will be pleasing to the Father. ***—J. Ullman.***

PART ONE: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

How the Gospel is Applied in the Circumstances of Life

Chapter 12

Yahweh's Characteristics Seen in His Spiritual Family

This chapter is divided into two main sections. Firstly Paul establishes the ***Root*** *upon which our lives should be based; then he sets forth the* ***Fruit****, by revealing what we should become:*

(1) ***The Root****: Consecration and Renewal of Life: vv. 1-2.*

(2) ***The Fruit****: Service and Love to Others: vv. 3-21.*

Both are very practical issues, and bear heavily upon the doctrinal issues expounded in the former eleven chapters of this epistle. It is of no value to understand the deep things of the Spirit in regard to the atonement, unless the effect of that knowledge is applied to reflecting the atonement principles in the circumstances of life. The Master not only subjected himself to the waters of sacrificial baptism in the Jordan, he also manifested those principles in his daily actions amongst the people. His sacrifice was not merely theoretical, nor merely a parade upon a stake on Golgotha's hill. It was a daily humiliation of the desires of the flesh to conform to the divine Will, and in so doing, he was a living testimony to the perfection of sacrifice, and became the "firstfruits" of salvation.

Now Paul shows that believers must "follow him" (Mat. 16:24) in ways of life which reveal the qualities of sacrifice. So he first sets forth the principle in vv. 1-2; then shows the practical outworking of those characteristics in particular areas of experience. In fulfilling these principles, we honor the work of God in Christ, and demonstrate that the Master's work in us is not in vain. Ultimately, when the Lord returns, he will then "see the travail of his soul": his sacrifice by which he provided for a faithful seed, "and shall be satisfied" in the joy and honor of his second advent (Isa. 53:11). That is the benefit and joy of a living sacrifice.

The Root of Faith: Consecration and Renewal — vv. 1-2.

A living manifestation of the Truth must be seen in the lives of disciples. Doctrine is of little value if it is only theoretical; to be effective it must be applied. Thus the atonement must be seen in daily life, in the sacrificing of the body, that the work of God might be seen in us. But since we will not conquer in our own strength, we must seek a source of power outside of ourselves.

VERSE 1

"I beseech you" — This introduction to his third section, is the connecting link with the former two. Because of what he has expounded previously, Paul now shows the absolute importance of applying those principles in individual experience. The word "beseech" is from the Greek *parakaleo; to call near, to call to one's side,* from *para: alongside,* and *kaleo: a call;* in the sense of identifying with the other; to be a companion and supporter; hence to be an advocate and adviser. The word is best rendered here as "entreat" in view of the fact that his exhortation is in the form of a moving appeal, based upon his revelation that God will exercise

unmerited goodness and mercy in providing forgiveness for the sins of mankind (cp. Ex1. 32:26; 34:6). Thus, Paul was not merely instructing, but urging the brethren to identify themselves with him, and support him in his upholding of the Truth (cp. Exod. 32:26). The word is used elsewhere as "exhort" (2Cor. 9:5; Rom. 12:8), "desired" (1Cor. 16:12) and occurs four times in this epistle: 12:1, 8 ("exhorteth"); 15:30; 17:17. It literally means "to call to one's side" with the idea of assisting or comforting (see its use in 2Cor.1:4-6).

Rom. 12:1 is an important appeal. In view of the wonderful doctrines of chs. 1-8, and of God's dispensational dealings with Jews and Gentiles in chs. 9-11, disciples must reveal a practical application of the gospel to men. The opening phrase in this verse is not an unusual form of speech for the apostle (cp. Eph. 4:1; 1Tim. 2:1; 1Cor. 4:16). Here he wishes to move the Roman believers to action and endurance.

The *parakletos* (the Comforter: Jn. 14:16, 26; 16:7-13) was sent to teach the disciples "all things". Now Paul, as a spirit-endowed apostle (Acts 9:17) was extending the work of the Spirit-Comforter, as he directed his readers to consider their responsibilities.

The DIAGLOTT has: "I intreat you therefore". Paul appeals for their attention, urging the disciples to deeply consider what is to follow.

"Therefore" — Chs 9 to 11 are in the nature of a parenthesis. At ch. 8:39 Paul broke off his declarations concerning, and exhortations towards, the brethren, to comment on the place of national Israel in the divine plan. The "therefore" of ch. 12:1 consequently refers back to what he had said in ch. 8 — nothing but we ourselves can separate us from "the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ". He now proceeds to develop his expositions upon the obligation of believers to accept and devote themselves singularly to the work of God — first as seen in Christ; then manifested in their individual lives.

"Brethren" — Paul's characteristic term of endearment. He wants them to remember his identification with, and understanding of, their needs. The word occurs fourteen times in this epistle.

"By the mercies of God" — The preposition *dia* is used in the genitive case, signifying *through; as proceeding from; by means of;* and denotes the instrument of action, and the reason why they should act as Paul suggests. God is the reason for our actions of faith; He first moved to save us by "his mercies" (ch. 5:8), and we should respond accordingly. It is only the mercy and grace of God which will provide us with strength through His Word to conquer, and offer forgiveness of sins when we fail.

For "mercies" see notes on ch. 11:32. The word *oiktirmos* implies compassion or pity for others. God is the "Father of mercies" (2Cor. 1:3), and only in Him is such comfort to be found. By contrast under the Law, those who set aside the explicit commandments died "without mercy" (Heb. 10:28). However, Paul's use of the word demonstrates above all else, that it is an acknowledgement of God's compassion and pity for us, in our undeserving state as convicted sinners, which has brought us to a knowledge of the Truth, that we might be partakers of the blessings He will bestow upon His faithful sons and daughters. Since we have access to such a wonderful privilege of divine mercy, it is only right that we should seek to please Him who provides it. Therefore Paul now explains the reasons for that mercy.

"That ye present" — The word does not merely mean to stand before, but its Greek form, *paristemi,* is the technical term for presenting a sacrificial victim as an offering in worship. In this respect the word is the equivalent of the Hebrew *qarab, to cause to come near,* found in Lev. 1:2 ("bring") and v. 3 ("offer"). See use of *paristemi* in Lk. 2:22. The offering we are called upon to *present* is our own body (i.e., our life) as a "living sacrifice", but instead of presenting ourselves before the Mosaic altar with our sacrificial victim, we come before a "living altar" (Heb. 13:10) with a "living sacrifice".

See the usage of this word in its sacrificial sense: The presentation of Christ as

a babe in the temple (Lk. 2:22); Paul presenting his converts (Col. 1:28); Christ holding forth his ecclesia (Eph. 5:27); the believers offering themselves (Rom. 6:13).

"Your bodies" — The "body" of every believer will either become a bond-slave to "the mind of the flesh" or "the mind of the spirit". The "body" will be given over to the fulfilling of sensual appetites, unlawful lusts, and the general demands of the fleshly mind, or it will be brought, though imperfectly, into obedience to the mind of Christ (2Cor. 10:5).

"A living sacrifice" — The first of three positive principles of sacrifice: living, holy and acceptable. Here is the essential difference between the Mosaic and Christ's sacrificial codes. Under the Law, an animal was killed in sacrificial offering — and it remained dead since it represented the effect of Adamic condemnation upon humanity. But the saving work of Christ was seen in a sacrificial life of perfection. The sacrifice true Israelites are required to make, is based upon that of the Lord, who was "brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20). It represents a life of daily sacrifices, as Paul testified to the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Again, he said: "I die daily" (1Cor. 15:31). Thus, as a living sacrifice, in contrast to the slain animals of the Law, we die to sin that we may live wholly unto Christ, who died for us and rose again (Rom. 6:11; 2Cor. 5:14-15).

Thus the whole body must be involved in sacrifice: heart, mind, emotion, being, intellect (Mat. 22:37). When the parts of an animal sacrifice were laid upon the altar, they were not only set in order to emphasize the principle of dedication stressed by the Lord, but were separated so that the divine fire could more easily pass between the pieces to consume them (Lev. 1). So the disciple must become amenable to the divine influence, and give his body once and for all to the service of God — in every part. In urging his readers to "present" their "bodies" Paul stresses that mere theoretical acceptance of service and worship is not sufficient: it requires the devotion of every part of oneself in every aspect of life. It is therefore more than a surrender to sacrificial death: we are to be *consumed* upon the divine altar of service. This involves us in constantly making sacrifices for the sake of the spiritual development of "Christ in us", in the sense that Paul refers to in 1Cor. 9:24-27.

"Holy" — Continuing the language associated with the offering of sacrifices under the Law, Paul uses this word immediately after the mention of "sacrifice". Why does he do so? "Whatsoever toucheth the *altar* shall be *holy*" (Ex. 29:37). By laying down our lives upon the Christ-altar our bodies now become sacred, "an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:3). Such an offering should be "unblemished" — "ye shall be *holy:* for I Yahweh your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2; cp. 11:44).

Therefore the sacrifices we offer to God must not only be "living" but also "holy". *Hagios* signifies: *sacred; blame-*

A "living sacrifice" is somewhat of a paradox. The sacrifices offered under the law were dead ones. Yet the law has something to say about what might be called living sacrifices. In the ritual of the Day of Atonement two goats played a conspicuous part. One was slain and the other was sent away alive. They represented two aspects of one sacrifice. So also in the arrangements for the cleansing of leprosy, two birds were provided; one was slain and the other set free. The substance is Christ who was slain and raised from the dead, in his resurrection corresponding to the living goat and the living bird. The believer dies with Christ in baptism, and rises with him to walk in newness of life. The life now lived is one of service to God. Hence he has to be a "living sacrifice" in this challenging language of Paul.

— J. Carter.

A Living Sacrifice!

What may be regarded as something of a paradox is really a profound statement of truth. A sacrificial death (ch. 6:4-6) involves ***living*** *a life of dedication to the will and purpose of God. The language here is clearly based upon the Mosaic Law. Under the Law, the offering was put to* ***death*** *— never to live again! The power of Paul's statement lies in the fact that the animal sacrifices which were put to death, were but types, and "could never take away sin" for the animals had never sinned or possessed a nature capable of producing sin (Heb. 10:11). The force of these words is seen in that, so far as true believers are concerned, they are not to offer to God* ***something outside themselves****. On the contrary, they are to offer themselves to Yahweh as men and women who are* ***living*** *proof of the Truth at work in* ***themselves****, transforming them to "conform to the image of His Son" (ch. 8:29). In considering the antitype, it should also be borne in mind that no animal could be brought as an offering to Yahweh if it had been accidentally killed. Animals were to be* ***brought to the altar alive****. "We have an altar", said Paul (Heb. 13:10), "who is Christ". God's saints are "dead unto sin, but* ***alive*** *unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord... as those that are* ***alive*** *from the dead" (Rom. 6:11, 13). This type of sacrifice — apparent under the ritual of the Mosaic system only in type, and therefore hidden from all except those who sought the spirit of the Law — is a spiritual sacrifice, resulting from the enlightenment of the mind to the divine will; the conviction gained therefrom providing the motivation to strive to perform "the acceptable and perfect will of God".* ***— J. Ullman.***

less; consecrated. In this context the word means "separated unto God". This demands the sacrifice of self, that divine principles might be inwrought into our characters. See these principles stressed in 1Pet. 1:16; 2:5.

"Acceptable unto God" — The word *euarestos* signifies *well pleasing.* It appears again in v. 2 concerning the divine will. Thus a "living sacrifice" must conform to the divine standards, and seek to please the Father (cp. Phil. 4:18; 1Pet. 2:5). Sacrifices for personal prestige, or gain, are not of this nature; thus Cain's sacrifice did not conform to the divine ideal and was therefore rejected (Gen. 4; cp. Heb. 11:4). Acceptable offerings under the Law were to ascend as a "sweet savor" to Yahweh (Ex. 29:18, etc.) Sacrifices that were mere ritual offerings were not "well pleasing" to Him (Isa. 1:10-16), but sacrifices which truly represented the offerers as being of a "broken and a contrite heart" were acceptable (Psa. 51:16-17). All self-will, all desire for personal advantage, every selfish thought, must be eradicated from the heart of the offerer.

"Which is your reasonable service" — The Greek word for "reasonable" is *logikos*, meaning *rational; springing from reason:* "logical, rational..." Thus: "a service of reason". It identifies our worship as being that which pertains to the mind; that which is spiritual and is based upon a comprehension of the will of God. Sacrifices made under the Law were not necessarily accompanied by "rational" thought as to the reason for the action. There was always the danger of merely fulfilling the ritual required by the Law. In coming to God through Christ, thoughtless, undiscerning offerings are not wellpleasing to Him. A "holy priesthood" (1Pet. 2:5) must offer a "holy" sacrifice, which requires an understanding of what is being done, and the purpose and objective thereof.

Our sacrifices must therefore be based upon an intelligent understanding

of the gospel in contrast to those offered under the Law by mere ritual and compulsion — and certainly in contrast to the worship of worldly idols, such as described in Rom. 1:25. When we "present" ourselves before God as a "living sacrifice" we must bear in mind who He is, and who we are, and what service to Him demands. In view of all that God has done for us as expounded by Paul in this epistle, the principle of grace and of salvation offered to us obviously demands the dedication of self in sacrifice. It would be quite unreasonable to imagine that salvation is possible without this. To do so would be to teach that God is unjust.

• *A PARAPHRASE OF VERSE 1.*

Bearing in mind the various meanings and applications of the words used by Paul in this verse, his words may be understood more accurately and informatively when rendered in the following way:

"I exhort and strongly entreat you, therefore, brethren, through the compassion which comes from God [evidence of which you have seen in the great goodness and mercy He has extended to you], that you should offer up your bodies, with all your faculties, a living, breathing sacrifice — holy, sanctified, consecrated, well-pleasing to God — which is your reasonable, rational and logical service and worship".

VERSE 2

"And be not conformed" — Lit., "be not fashioned or shaped in harmony with this present age, either in your thinking or your way of life". Thus, having dealt with the significance of offering our *body* to God, with all its thoughts and actions, aims and objectives (v. 1), Paul now emphasizes that it is "the mind of the Spirit" which must control and direct our lives.

This is a challenge to believers to remain separate from the environment of the Gentiles, and to refuse the way of life seen in society today. In this respect Christ's disciples are non-conformists, although that is only in regard to worldly things. We must conform to the "image of Christ" (Col. 3:10) after whose pattern we govern our behavior. This willingness to be different from the ways of the world may incite the hostility of the people about us, but this has ever been the experience of true followers of God. Peter warned believers against conforming to the fashion of the world out of which they had been called (1Pet. 1:14).

The word in the Greek is *suschematizo: to fashion alike,* and is translated as "fashioning" in 1Pet. 1:14 (the only other occurrence of the word). People today hanker after fashions, and seek to imitate their "idols" in all kinds of strange ways. Even those who claim to be different in lifestyle are really only maintaining the same attitude towards fashion as those they condemn. There is a tendency in the Brotherhood to imitate the social attitudes, and casual fashions of a transient generation. Some recommend that even at public addresses brethren lower standards in order to dress like the society from which we have separated. There is a danger in such suggestions. If we lack the courage to be different, and fail to demonstrate that difference to the world about us, we may well find our efforts to truly convert others to become faithful disciples are ineffective. The example of Christ should remain constantly before us. He was different

Six things that constitute the acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1-2):

(1) Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God (v. 1; 1Cor. 3:16-17; 6:20). **(2)** Making the body holy (v. 1; 2Cor. 7:1); **(3)** Making self acceptable to God (v. 1); **(4)** Rendering a service according to reason (v. 1); **(5)** Refusing to conform to the world (v. 2); **(6)** Being transformed by developing the mind (v. 2).

Three Principles Of Our Calling:

(1) Consecration: *"Present your bodies".*
(2) Separation: *"Be not conformed".*
(3) Transformation: *"Be ye transformed".*

from those about him. Of his doctrine they said: "Never man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:46). To the leaders of Israel he said: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only" (Jn. 5:44). They sought the praise of men, to conform one with another; the Lord remained separate and different: he refused to "conform" to current trends in Judea, rejecting the ways of life in society about him. We should maintain that same difference.

"To this world" — Gr. *aion, the age.* Paul refers to the present times in which the works of the flesh predominate in the ways of mankind, which are antagonistic to the ways of the Spirit (Jn. 7:7), and from which believers had separated in order to serve the Truth (Gal. 1:4). Paul told the Ephesians that "in time past ye walked according to the course *(aion)* of this world *(kosmos)*, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). It was the "princes of this world *(aion)*" that "crucified the Lord of glory" in their ignorance of the divine purpose (1Cor. 2:8), for the wisdom of this *aion* is deceptive (ch. 3:18), and it blinds "the minds of them which believe not" (2Cor. 4:4). Therefore, believers should not seek identification with the aims and objects of an "age" that is destined to pass away in ignominy. By not conforming to this age, we must concentrate our spiritual gaze upon the age to come, which will replace this sorrowing, sinful present existence (Eph. 2:7). There is a great danger that we might forget our "high and holy calling" and become again enmeshed in the ways and aspirations of the present world, as did Demas to Paul's great sorrow (2Tim. 4:10). The only way to prevent a repetition of Demas' folly is to separate ourselves from the way of life that is doomed to be destroyed at Christ's coming (1Jn. 2:15), and to positively set our spiritual sights upon the glories of the kingdom about to be revealed.

Men's opinions of themselves should be in proportion not to natural capacities of their own doing, but to God's gifts; if this is so they will never (even though God calls them to be apostles) be boastful, for they will remember that they have nothing they have not received from Him. This acknowledgement cuts the taproot of pride.

"But be ye transformed" — After warning against the negative "be not conformed", Paul now expresses the positive attitude: *"but..."* We are not to *conform* but to be *transformed!* To conform is to manifest outward show or to capitulate; to be transformed is to be changed from within. To conform is to imitate, or assume an outward expression contrary to the dictates of a heart governed by Truth; to be transformed is to be changed by the influence of the more powerful Word of God (Rom. 1:16). The word "transformed" is from the Greek *metamorphoomai* (from *meta, to change,* and *morphoo, a fashion, form;* thus, to change into another form), from whence is derived the term *metamorphosis,* describing the remarkable process of a physical change which converts an uncomely grub to a beautiful butterfly, a change which takes place within the hidden interior of the cocoon. It is only at the end of that process that the real beauty of the insect is revealed, as the butterfly comes forth to reveal its glory. Thus it is subject to an *outward change that is wrought within.*

The natural illustration appropriately symbolises the principle of spiritual metamorphosis. So Paul contrasts the two great forces which would "fashion" us according to one or the other. One translation paraphrases: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mould, but let God remould your minds from within". The true beauty of the saintly character will not be fully revealed until the change is complete at the coming of Christ, and the final important process of judgment is completed. But, if the beauty is to be then revealed, the change must commence from within, now; thus: "be ye transformed". The transformation is first mental, as we imbibe the Spirit-Word: "My son, give Me thine heart,

The Butterfly Metamorphosis

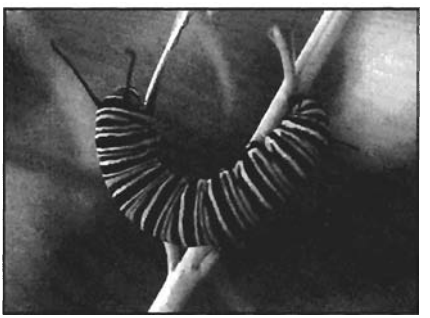
Its life cycle is: **(1)** Egg; **(2)** Larva: *caterpillar;* **(3)** Cocoon; **(4)** Pupa: *chrysalis;* **(5)** Adult moth.

With the hatching of the egg, a tiny caterpillar emerges. It feeds voraciously and continuously, periodically shedding its skin, as it grows to hundreds of times its original size. Finally it reaches a certain stage in its development and spins a cocoon, inside which it becomes a pupa. During pupation, the structures of the larva totally transform internally; the internal systems are reorganized, and adult external structures develop. At the appointed time the cocoon breaks open, and the adult butterfly emerges in all its beauty. The transformation from an ugly worm to a beautiful butterfly has taken place in a separated, protected environment — the cocoon — cut off from the destructive influences of outside elements. Hormones within the grub have effected the change from within its body; the effective glands being located in the head and chest.

The spiritual application is clear and compelling. If the egg **(1)** represents the individual, the emerging grub **(2)** represents the stirrings of knowledge and conscience as the individual first comes into meaningful association with the gospel message. The growth stage is the increasing knowledge as the Word is studied, masticated and imbibed. Next comes the cocoon **(3)**, the point of baptism, when the world is shut out and the protection of the ecclesial environment is entered. It is here that the metamorphosis takes place. The hormones — latently present, but until now inactive — take over the whole body; the mind of the Spirit-Word working within the head and heart to bring about a permanent and dramatic change, breaking down the elements of the "old man" and substituting those of "the new man" (Rom. 12:2).

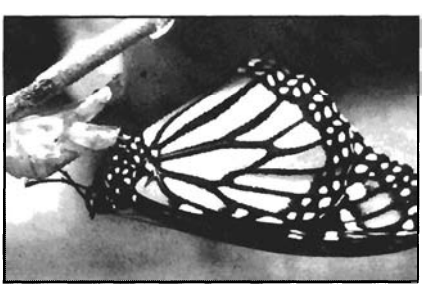
Meanwhile, the individual is "dead" to the influences of the world outside, which knows nothing of the fierce activity taking place **(4)** in the individual within the (ecclesial) cocoon. If the cocoon is not broken, in due time it will open to permit the emergence of the adult butterfly **(5)** in all its glory — when, in a moment in a twinkling of an eye... this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality" (1Cor. 15:51-55). ***— E. Wilson.***

Metamorphosis: the Remarkable Transformation from Grub to Butterfly



The Adult Caterpillar: beginning the process of change.

Butterfly begins to emerge from cocoon; drops down; legs, feelers and tongue will all be moved for the first time.



The wings complete. The butterfly will hang like this for several hours to dry out, and then will be ready to fly off — a glorious creature of beauty.

and let thine eyes observe My ways" (Prov. 23:26; see also Tit. 3:5; 2Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:23). Then, there will be a moral change, as the power of the Truth grips us, and directs us along a pathway of life that reflects our inner spiritual strength. Ultimately, when the change is complete, we shall be transformed physically: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan *within* ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*" (Rom. 8:23). Then, "when he (Christ) shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1Jn. 3:2). He will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned *(summorphos: shaped* or *formed together)* like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21), and the process of spiritual metamorphosis will be completed.

The Greek construction of this phrase is in the present continuous tense: "go on being transformed". Thus: "instead of yielding to the influences which tend to shape us into the likeness of things around us, we must day by day undergo a change in the opposite direction". Our "transformation" does not conclude at baptism; rather it commences a continual inner process (such as seen in the experiences of the grub) that will gradually change the basis of our thinking: replacing the mind of the flesh with the mind of the spirit (see Rom. 7:23). The only other place this verb appears in the N.T. is in 2Cor 3:18, where Paul declares that believers "are changed" (a continuing process: "being transformed") into the likeness of Christ "from one degree of glory to another", by the operation of the Spirit-Word (NASB, RSV). This is the process of sanctification.

The word occurs only four times: here in Rom. 12:2; twice in relation to Christ's transfiguration (Mat. 17:2; Mk. 9:2); and in 2Cor. 3:18. In each case it appears in the passive tense, indicating that the change is not one that we can effect ourselves; it is a work of God, and can only be accomplished by believers surrendering their lives to the Father's will as revealed in His Word. This is what the Lord Jesus did, becoming the Son in whom the Father was "well pleased" (Mat. 3:17).

"By the renewing of your mind" — This renewal comes by knowledge of the Word (Col. 3:10), so that Paul exhorted: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (v. 16). By the constant reading and study of the Word, the "inward man is renewed day by day" (2Cor. 4:16). The power to transform one's life comes from a mental comprehension and acceptance of the principles of the Truth. We cannot hope to have the ability to "renew our minds" if we ignore the daily reading of and meditation upon the Spirit-Word, which is "the power of God" (Rom. 1:16) that can bring about the desired transformation. So Paul says: "Let *this mind [*"*disposition*", DIAG.*]* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

"That ye may prove" — Gr. *dokimazo, to put to test; to approve.* When the Word of God governs the believer's mind he is able to put his life to the test with the object of comparing it with the divine specifications. The word here is commonly applied to metals when they are tested by fire for purity. It speaks of the careful examination and skilful judgment of the real value of the metals. So with spiritual principles. We apply the "spiritual fire of judgment" to all the circumstances, attitudes and teachings that confront us, in order to ascertain "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God".

"What is that good" — Gr. *agathos,* lit. "the good". The word describes that which is good in character or constitution, and is beneficial in its effect. That which is good is God's will, because it is designed to elevate His majesty and achieve the divine purpose. The Master declared to one who addressed him by the title "Good Master": "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mat. 19:16), for all goodness proceeds from Him.

"And acceptable" — Gr. *euarestos,* as in v. 1; thus, "well-pleasing", in conformity with the divine purpose. The word also appears in ch. 14:18; 2Cor. 5:9; Heb. 13:21.

"And perfect" — Gr. *teleios*, that which has *reached its end; mature; finished; completed.* It emphasiZes that the divine will is not only right and proper, but will achieve its ultimate intention (see use of the word in Mat. 5:48; 1Cor. 13:10).

The Word of God will not only reveal to a person that which is "good" or appropriate; that which is "acceptable" or according to the stated will; but it will also enable us to bring the divine purpose of salvation to completion in our life. It is the "power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth", and that power has the ability to achieve its purpose. Thus, *teleios* speaks both of the assurance that the divine purpose will come to pass; as well as the truth that the will of God is essential to bring about our redemption. The idea of the word is seen in the words of Isaiah: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). Mankind can reject the divine will; they can ignore it — but they cannot destroy or frustrate it. What God has declared will come to pass, and in that sense it is "perfect".

"Will of God" — Gr. *thelema*, literally with the emphatic article: "the will of God" (see Eph. 5:17). Weymouth translates these verses: "I appeal to you, then, by all these compassions of God, O my brothers, bring your lives, and set them by the altar as a sacrifice, a living one, a hallowed one, acceptable to God. The necessity of this rite of consecration follows from all the argument. Do not conform to the externalities of this world; nay, let your characters be transformed by the birth of a new life purpose, so that you may put God's design to the test of your own experience, and so prove how kind, how gladdening, how flawless it is".

The Fruit: Service and Love to Others — vv. 3-21.

Having shown that the consecration of a person's life, and the constant renewal of his mind, provide the foundation of acceptable living in the sight of God, the apostle now reveals what fruit will be revealed from this Christ-root (see summary, p. 420).

VERSE 3

"For I say" — Paul commences a new thought based upon his previous exhortation. He now proceeds to provide warnings of possible misuse of spiritual privileges as well as how we should use opportunities to manifest the process of "transformation" (v. 2) that should be occurring in our lives.

This expression recurs in this epistle to emphasiZe the statements that the apostle desires to bring to attention: "To declare, *I say*... " (ch. 3:26). "*I say* the truth in Christ" (ch. 9:1). "But *I say*, have they not heard?" (ch. 10:18). "But *I say*, did not Israel know?" (ch. 10:19). "*I say* then, hath God cast away His people?" (ch. 11:1). "*I say* then, have they stumbled that they should fall?" (ch. 11:11). "For *I say*, through the grace given unto me" (ch. 12:3). "Now *I say* that Jesus Christ was a minister..." (ch. 15:8).

"Through the grace given unto me" — The grace given unto Paul in this context is the divine mercy extended to him, by which he was appointed to preach the gospel. See 1Tim. 1:11-16, where he extends this thought. Paul reminds the brethren in Rome that he wrote by authority of the divine power vested in him.

The word *charis* ("grace") appears 24 times in this epistle; it comes from the root *chairo, to be cheerful*, demonstrating that joy and gladness come from the favor of Almighty God.

"To every man that is among you" — None are exempt from the self-examination that is required of those who would seek the divine grace.

"Not to think (of himself)" — A follower of the Lord Jesus must struggle to repudiate fleshly pride. It is natural to man's vanity to regard himself as the most important being in the world. In Christ, however, self-importance must be sacrificed for the godly principles of self-abasement and humility. God's grace is the channel through which men and women

may humble themselves to the point of offering themselves to Yahweh upon the Christ-altar. Self-centred thoughts can destroy the Christ-character within individuals. God-centred thoughts can make clear the need for personal sacrifice in service to God, and the ultimate glory that will be manifested in all who prove faithful to Him.

"More highly" — The Greek *huperphroneo* comes from *huper (over)* and *phroneo (the exercise of the mind);* hence "to be overproud, highminded, vain, arrogant". This is a common failing of humanity. Cp. 1Cor. 10:12.

"Than he ought to think" — At the same time as a person should deny his sense of self-importance, he needs also to avoid the other extreme of mock humility. Paul advocates that a person take careful stock of himself, recognising any gifts that he might have as coming from God, and quietly assessing them in the light of that knowledge. By that means we learn to exercise ourselves in the service of the Truth without hesitation (Mat. 25:25) that God might be honored with all our "strength". To go beyond this is to take the honor due to the Father and to elevate ourselves in pride.

"But to think soberly" — The margin has "to think to sobriety". The Greek word *sophroneo* signifies: *to be of sound mind;* thus, to clearly recognise the issues. Both conceit and mock humility come from an unsound mind. On the other hand, Paul would have us make a sensible appraisal of ourselves in the light of the Word of God, recognising that God has granted us certain abilities to use in His service. Vine comments: "the play on words may be expressed by a literal rendering somewhat as follows: 'not to *over-think* beyond what it behoves him to think, but to think unto *sober-thinking*'."

"According as God hath dealt"

The "Measure" of Faith (v. 3).

Paul is not exhorting brethren to prize their gifts or talents as being of greater value or importance than those of their brethren. Whatever gift or talent is possessed, all believers should understand that they should exercise them with modesty and humility. Since all are members of the One Body of Christ, no invidious distinctions should be made, exalting some "more highly" than is wise, and failing to respect the labors of more humble brethren. It is incongruous for brethren to set their talents against one another, as it is for members of the ecclesia to boast that "one is of Paul", another "of Apollos", and so forth (1Cor. 1:12). It is God who gives the various talents and abilities in the Truth; the principles set forth here are therefore applicable to every generation, and should be respected by all members of the ecclesia. In the absence of direct guidance by the Holy Spirit, it is out of harmony with the spirit of the Truth for brethren to be moved more by personal ambition within the ecclesia than a consideration of the best interests of the flock and the stability and advancement of the Truth. Even the apostles, in their immaturity, were not exempt from this weakness (cp. Lk. 22:24). This weakness, a desire for special prominence in certain fields of ecclesial activity, can endanger the spiritual progress of the ecclesia when the brother concerned does not possess the necessary qualification or ability for the particular responsibility to which he so ardently aspires. "All members have not the same office" is the short, succinct counsel of Paul (v. 4). If members of ecclesias would observe the proprieties of this exhortation, there would be fewer ecclesial problems, especially those involving conflict of personalities. Paul's advice, if observed, will nullify much distress related to such problems.

— J. Ullman.

— Therefore the "sober-thinking" of the serious individual will be directed Godward, recognising that his various abilities and characteristics are granted him by God. The word "dealt" (Gr. *merizo*) signifies *to divide into parts;* hence to distribute, apportion, bestow. Such qualities God has "distributed to us": 2Cor. 10:13, in order that His purpose in us might be achieved.

"To every man the measure of faith" — "Measure" (Gr. *metron*) signifies a limited portion (see Jn. 3:34; Eph. 4:7, 13, 16). Whatever proportion of faith a person might have comes from God, for "faith cometh by hearing the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith will govern thought, humble self, and provide a true perspective; whereas unenlightened man has nothing to guide him in these directions.

VERSE 4

"For" — Paul illustrates from a natural example the reason for the point just made, and to show the value of individual co-operation that the whole ecclesia might benefit.

"As we have many members in one body" — The word "members" is from the Greek *melos*, by definition: *a limb or part of the body.* Paul takes an analogy from the natural creation, observing that the physical body is made up of many different parts. Each part has been selected according to "the measure of its ability" (cp. v. 3), so that all might work in harmony for the good of the whole body. In 1Cor. 12:12, he extends his exposition of the various members in the multitudinous Christ. In the Body of Christ believers have various functions which nevertheless are essential to the proper working of the body of which they are merely parts. Each member of an ecclesia should play an important part in its development, but whether they become eye, ear, hand or foot is governed by the "measure of faith" that they have received from God working upon the natural gifts that they likewise receive from Him. Paul makes the point that the more prominent members of the body are not necessarily the most vital (see 1Cor. 12:21-24), therefore, in faith, a man ought not to think of himself more highly than is appropriate to his particular case. As "many members" in "one body" there should be mutual co-operation and submission that the unity of the Christ-Body be preserved.

"And all members have not the same office" — The same function; they are not all appointed to the same duty. The Greek word *praxis* (from *prasso, to practise; perform repeatedly*) meaning *an act, function,* is translated "deeds" in ch. 8:13, and is frequently translated in this epistle as "do" or "commit". Thus, not every member is appointed for the same thing; one is to see, another to hear, a third to walk, and so on (1Cor. 12:14-23). Although we should seek to extend our usefulness in an ecclesia, we need to recognise that some are more suited to public speaking, others to hospitality, to comfort, etc.

VERSE 5

"So we, (being) many, are one body in Christ" — An ecclesia is composed of numerous individuals, but constituted as one body, being led by only one "head" (1Cor. 11:3; Eph. 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18).

"And every one members one of another" — Individuals are joined together to be mutually dependent upon each other in the development of the ecclesial Body. We can no more spare the hand or the foot any more than we do the eye; though the latter might be more curious and remarkable in its creation; the loss of any part is defective to the proper harmony of the whole. When every part is appropriately working together there is seen "his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

The NASB renders this verse: "So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another". This rendering aptly sets forth the apostle's carefully chosen words. The body of Christ is not to be likened to the machinations of a motor vehicle or some kind of appliance. All members retain their indi-

viduality; their character and their personality; their varying talents for numerous forms of labor in the service of Christ. This leaves room for the spiritual development of every individual, for every person has their own special characteristics which God can mould into the pattern of His Son, through the influence of His Word. Individuals will be clearly recognisable as such amongst the immortal saints in the Kingdom (Mat. 8:11; 19:28; Lk. 13:28). This does not mean, however, that individual members of the One Body of Christ should assert themselves other than in humbly and self-effacingly fulfilling their particular role as members of the Body. Although Paul states that believers are "members one of another", strictly speaking every member is in this state only because of the relationship of all to the one Body. Conybeare captures the idea in this last phrase: "and fellow-members one of another".

Therefore, we are primarily *members of the Body*, apart from which we would not be "members one of another". Whilst each carefully and thoughtfully remembers their place and part in the Body, they will, by ministering to one another, minister to the general welfare of the *whole* Body. The Body, if correctly developing, will continue to "*grow up*" into the "head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

VERSE 6

"Having then gifts" — In all, seven gifts are here listed (vv. 6-8). The Greek word is *charisma*, and signifies "a gift of grace". It is used for spirit-gifts in 1Cor. 12:4 as well as for gifts coming from instruction (Rom. 1:11). Even natural ability is described as a gift from God (1Pet. 4:10, where the definite article should be eliminated, and the term rendered "a gift"). Whatever the nature of the gifts a person might have, they should be used for the general good, co-operating with the other members of the one Body.

"Differing according to the grace that is given to us" — God never intended that all should be identical. He designed creation in wonderful diversity, that His glory might be enhanced. God exercises a sovereignty, and bestows His favors as He pleases and in accordance with His will. He injures no one by conferring greater gifts on another, for His wisdom sees that such is important to the glory of the whole. Such distinctions are not made haphazardly; they are given "according to the grace" (mercy) that should keep us from pride and illustrate the purpose for such gifts: the development of godliness amongst His people.

"Whether prophecy" — The apostle now specifies a number of different "gifts" to illustrate his point. The gift of prophecy was the ability to interpret the purpose of God and thus to speak to edification and comfort (1Cor. 14:3) upon the basis of the declared will of God.

"(Let us prophesy) according to the proportion of faith" — The word "proportion" is *analogia* in Greek, and in this context signifies: the agreement demanded by faith ("*the* faith" in the literal Greek). Therefore to prophesy, or speak to edification and comfort, must be analogous and consistent with *the* faith. Exposition that is otherwise is harmful. Of such were Hymenaeus and Philetus whose teaching was destructive of faith (2Tim. 2:16-17). Those who would "speak forth" (prophesy) have an onerous responsibility to ensure that their expositions are consistent with the holy Oracles; otherwise they not only fool themselves, but might affect other parts of the Body — like a "broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Pro. 25:19).

VERSE 7

"Or ministry" — Gr. *diakonia: attendance as a servant; aid; service*, with emphasis on the work to be done rather than on the relationship between master and servant. Thus service of any kind: Lk. 10:40-42. Those who seek to serve the Body should give themselves completely to it in a single-minded dedication to whatever field of activity is available.

"(Let us wait) on (our) ministering" — Be ready and eager to perform necessary activities. The illustration is of a servant anxious to perform his master's wish,

and awaiting his instructions. There needs to be a keenness and diligence about the work of service, and such discipline is greatly commended. It formed the basis of the Lord's exhortation at the Memorial Table in Jerusalem: Jn. 13:4-17.

"Or he that teacheth, on teaching" — The careful and diligent instruction of the Word given to one another. Teaching takes many forms: by study classes; by parents to children; in the Sunday School; to the stranger. Teaching does not need to be restricted to the ecclesial platform, but can be performed in all circles of association. But in order to properly teach for the good of the Body, we must first *be* taught: "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6).

VERSE 8

"Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation" — The Gr. word is *parakaleo,* which means *to call to one's side;* hence to aid, assist, comfort, encourage. This can take many forms, and is translated "comfort" (Rom. 15:4; 2Cor. 1:4), "exhort" (1Tim. 6:2), "desire" (Acts 8:31), "call for" (Acts 28:20), "beseech" (Rom. 12:1; 15:30; 16:17). True exhortation should include appeal, entreaty and encouragement, so as to develop the Body in sound spiritual health and vigor.

"He that giveth, (let him do it) with simplicity" — The Gr. word *haplotes* signifies *singleness; sincerity without self seeking; generosity.* Acts of service and generosity should be given in sincerity and not with a double motive. The Truth requires an openhanded and openhearted response, a giving out of compassion and singleness of purpose. Cp. Acts 20:35.

"He that ruleth" — The word *proistemi* means *to stand before* (from *pro, in front of;* and *histemi, to stand*); thus: "he who is placed in front", relating to those who are elevated to positions of authority or overseeing, whether in the ecclesia or in the family: 1Thes. 5:12; 1Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17. They are to grace their office "with diligence", demonstrating not only their capacity to direct, but also their wisdom by being such an example to others. They must rule with care, knowing that they have a Master in heaven who is observing their actions: cp. Acts 20:28; 1Pet. 5:2. The principle is demonstrated in the exhortation of the Master: Jn. 13:14-15.

"With diligence" — Gr. *spoude: speed; eagerness.* Those who are appointed to positions of authority and guidance are to show enthusiastic energy and effort in their labors, to be attentive to the responsibilities of their position and to manifest an ardor in performance, so as to encourage others to do likewise. Paul told Timothy to observe his actions as an example for his own service: 2Tim. 3:10.

"He that sheweth mercy" — Gr. *eleeo: to be compassionate by word or deed,* thus, to feel sympathy with others in their distress and misery. The word suggests the cheerful, amiable approach of those who seek to help others, being aware of their needs. Each member of the ecclesia has important functions to perform, as such co-operation is a unifying force in the one multitudinous Body of Christ.

"With cheerfulness" — Not grudging the obligation evident in another's need: 2Cor. 9:7. To a true believer, following in the example of the Master, such opportunities will be a continual delight and not merely a duty.

The Gr. word *hilarotes: alacrity,* is a cognate word to *hilasterion* translated "propitiation" (Rom. 3:25), "mercy seat" (Heb. 9:5), and *hilasmos* translated "propitiation" in 1Jn. 2:2; 4:10. Thus the work of redemption provided by Yahweh for those in need is done in the spirit of *hilarotes,* with joy and pleasure that He can redeem fallen man by the means presented in His Son.

VERSE 9

Notice the subtle change in Paul's line of reasoning at this point. Whilst vv. 3-8 have emphasized the correct *performance* of particular duties, the apostle now indicates from this verse to the end of the chapter, that the outwardly successful carrying out of various duties amongst our brethren will prove of little value unless

Paul enumerates twenty commands to regulate brethren and sisters in their association with one another, in order to develop the qualities of godliness in practical manifestation: vv. 9-16

they are undertaken in a right spirit and with a correct attitude. Hence the change of emphasis at this point from things which *should* be done, to the *spirit* in which they should be done. "Love" (Gr. *agape*) is the first dominant word used by Paul in this section. There is a danger that "love" may be manifested in a way which is merely hollow profession. True love for our brethren is only exhibited in a way acceptable to Yahweh when based upon sound moral qualities, summarised here as a genuine *hatred* of evil and an unstinting *love* for all that is good and godly. Thus, "abhor" the one and "cleave" to the other. It is possible to practise "love" in a way which is a mere ritualistic acknowledgement of duty. Similarly, we may come to "hate evil" in a purely judicial manner, without a true comprehension of that which Yahweh desires to see in our characters in regard to these matters. In the balance of this chapter the apostle shows us "a more excellent way" in which to manifest loving service to one another, to the glory of Yahweh. Development of the Christ-like character is not through the honoring of formal obligations and a ritualistic rejection of evil, it is the development of a disposition based on a genuine desire to please Yahweh.

"Let love be without dissimulation" — The word "love" is the Gr. *agape,* describing a sacrificial love that is governed by an intellectual comprehension of the divine will, and not merely by emotion. It aims to provide the greatest good for the object of it, and has for its ideal the love which God willingly manifested in providing for the sins of humanity in the offering of His Son (Jn. 3:16). Frequently this love is misunderstood because it is not governed by fleshly feeling or personal emotion, so that Paul could write to the Corinthians: "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2Cor. 12:15). For Paul, as for John (1Jn. 4:7-10) *agape* is the essential quality of the Father, and can only really be understood when seen in Him. Thus *agape* is not vapid sentimentality; it is a vigorous mental and moral quality. In Gal. 5:22, Paul mentions *agape* first in his list of "the fruit of the Spirit", not because love is simply the first in a series of comparable virtues to be manifested by the disciple, but because it is the comprehensive manifestation of the Spirit (Gal. 5:6; 1Tim. 1:5). If love is sincere, Yahweh will be honored, for it expresses His qualities.

Words of so-called love may be uttered, yet not be reflected in action: Ezek. 33:31. Such a pseudo love is actually destructive of good, and a perversion of that which is honorable. This is the hypocrisy against which Paul argues. The words "without dissimulation" (from a single Gr. word *anupokritos: undissembled; sincere*) indicate a refusal to speak falsely or hypocritically. It is sometimes necessary to discipline or condemn, but this should also be done in love, seeking the good of the one involved.

"Abhor that which is evil" — The word "abhor" is the Gr. *apostugeo* which is compounded of *apo, away from,* and *stugeo, a hatred.* It is a strong word indicating an intense hatred of evil, to detest utterly that which is offensive. Thus it is in contrast to the characteristic of love just mentioned, and yet the quality of love derived from God will develop such an aversion to that which is against Him. It is an attitude that will cause a person to separate from the evil, and to have nothing to do with its works: 2Thes. 3:6; 1Tim. 6:5; 2Cor. 6:17. Of Christ it is written: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity" (Heb. 1:9).

The Gr. word for "evil" in the phrase before us, is *poneeros,* which only occurs here in the epistle. It literally means "to cause pain", thus "wicked, malicious" indicating an opposition to all that is good. The word describes sin in action, as distinct from *kakos,* which relates more to the evil nature itself, and which occurs 16

times in Romans (cp. ch. 7:21).

"Cleave to that which is good" — A further intensive expression. To "cleave" is to firmly adhere without a fracture, as in the marriage covenant: Gen. 2:24. This should be a continual application in the outworking of life. The "good" is the Truth and all it represents, and to so completely unite with its principles will fulfil the terms of this command.

VERSE 10

"(Be) kindly affectioned" — The Greek *philostorgos: fond of natural relatives*) is derived from *phileo* (love) and *storge* (love of kindred), words stressing the strong family bond which should unite the family of God on earth; and hence signifies "brotherly love".

Natural relations experienced in family associations are designed to teach spiritual principles, and Yahweh recognises such a bond as the "brotherly covenant" (Amos 1:9). Provision was made for this under the Law by appointing one as the *goel,* or redeemer, of the family. Israel was exhorted to "show mercy and compassions every man to his brother" (Zech. 7:9, where the Hebrew word translated "compassions" comes from a root signifying *the womb*). Thus, this close relationship among "brethren in Christ" should be developed with tenderness and care.

"One to another with brotherly love" — Brotherly love (Gr. *philadelphia,* from *phileo, love* and *adephos,* brother) is set forth by Paul as a basic principle of true morality. The word emphasizes that agape-love must be accompanied by tender and affectionate phileo-love. When these forms of love are practised, believers will be united in strong ties of unity and peace which the world could never understand. If we are of the "same mind" (v. 16), this state may be maintained without undue difficulty. If these divine ideals fail in ecclesial life, it is because we are not of one mind as we should be. If all members of the ecclesia dedicate themselves to constantly renewing their minds in the basic principles which unify Christ's body, difficulties arising from lack of true unity will be examined, corrected and overcome.

Paul declared that if a person did not provide for one's own, "specially for those of his own house" (1Tim. 5:8), he denied the faith. This principle should be maintained in the family of God, binding His children together as one (Jn. 17:20-23; 2Pet. 1:7).

"In honour preferring one another" — "Preferring" (Gr. *proegeomai: to lead the way for others*) has the idea of setting an example that should be followed. WEYMOUTH translates it as "in point of precedence, defer to one another"; the RSV has: "outdo one another in showing honor". Rather than manifest a spirit of competitiveness, such as is the common way of life in society, believers should strive to "outdo" one another in sacrificing *themselves* for the benefit of each other. Paul practised what he preached: "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2Cor. 12:15). The difficulties we may encounter in trying to manifest these qualities are very often of our own making. For example, if we feel a sense of bitterness towards our brother, will it not engender in him a similar feeling towards us, in return? If we are coldly aloof towards him, will such an attitude not invite an equally discouraging response?

Compare the words of the Master: Jn. 13:14-15. Brethren should show consideration for one another, that they might demonstrate the respect that is due to them and their activities in the Truth. An example to avoid is that of Diotrephes (3Jn. 9), who loved the pre-eminence, and refused to acknowledge "the brethren".

If every individual was to set the correct example, in following this wonderful, heart-warming instruction of Paul, many problems in brotherly relationships would disappear.

VERSE 11

"Not slothful in business" — The Gr. word *okneros* signifies *tardy; indolent; irksome,* and has the idea of a slackness seen in those who are slow in mind and idle in action. The word "business" is bet-

ter rendered "diligence" (Gr. *spoude: speed; eagerness*) as in v. 8. The DIAG. lit. text has: "In the study not idle ones". The RV gives the word as zeal or keenness. Such a zeal comes from the effect of *agape*. There is no room for sloth in the things of God, as demonstrated in the attitude of the Lord, when but 12 years of age: Lk. 2:49. See also: Jn. 2:17; Psa. 69:9. Eagerness in the work of the Truth will be blessed of God, and develop the singleminded attitude that is pleasing before Him. In an age when leisure and relaxation are promoted, and indulged in by so many, this principle should be upheld in the Brotherhood.

"Fervent in spirit" — The Gr. word *zeo*, rendered "fervent" signifies *to boil with heat*. The RSV has: "be aglow with the Spirit". We need to develop an abounding enthusiasm for the Truth, maintaining "zeal to boiling point", refusing to be deterred or discouraged by the attitude of friends or the opposition of enemies.

The word "spirit" here relates to the spirit of the Truth which is a unique disposition, developed through the influence of the Word.

"Serving the Lord" — Submitting oneself to Christ as a bond-slave. The Gr. *douleuo* identifies the slave as one who submerges his will in that of another; so, denying ourselves, we should seek to serve him. To do so is acceptable with God (ch. 14:18). Some refuse to be a *douleuo* for Christ inasmuch as they "serve" themselves in personal gratification: ch. 16:18 (cp. Tit. 3:3). See use of the word in Gal. 5:13; Eph. 6:7; Col. 3:24; 1Thes. 1:9;

VERSE 12

"Rejoicing in hope" — The lit. Gr. has the definite article: "*the* hope". The DIAGLOTT has: "In the hope be joyful" (see ch. 5:2). It is not merely being a visionary, but of finding special pleasure in *the hope of Israel*. This is the "spirit" referred to above. Such rejoicing results from knowing that living a life in harmony with the divine commandments is to "follow" in the "steps" and teachings of the Master (1Pet. 2:21). What greater cause for "rejoicing" could there be than this?

It was this principle that confirmed Brother Thomas in his search for Truth: see notes on ch. 8:24. Believers should never be too busy in labor nor "fervent in spirit" to ignore the prophetic picture of future glory. The hope of the coming kingdom should be the basis of all joy: Isa. 62:7: Psa. 137:5-6. It is this characteristic which causes one to shun the stagnant attitude of those who see little need for the prophetic vision: Pro. 29:18.

"Patient in tribulation" — The word for "patient" is *hupomeno*, signifying to stay under; thus to remain, to have fortitude, perseverance (see Jas. 5:11; Mat. 10:22; 1Cor. 13:7). "Tribulation" is from the Gr. *thlipsis*, meaning *pressure*, a principle that must be accepted by the faithful disciple: Acts 14:22.

The NEB has "in trouble, stand firm"; whereas the JB has: "Do not give up if trials come". To fulfil this instruction requires that we remain constantly aware of the "rejoicing" which is associated with "the hope". Being moved by a spirit of rejoicing in the great privilege of serving Yahweh, we will be motivated to continue patiently in the face of all forms of trial and pressure. The extent to which the word "patient" should be understood in this context, is expressed by Bullinger: "to remain behind when others have gone", thus expressing the idea that we should *never give up!* By accepting the necessity and value of trials and difficulties, one's character is developed, and the real value of the Truth is experienced. The example is seen in Christ (Heb. 12:2). He never surrendered the struggle, despite the most adverse circumstances. Similarly Paul told the Corinthians of his determination to remain "steadfast" and "unmoveable" when he wrote: "Therefore, since we do hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of God (granting us favor, benefits, opportunities, and especially, salvation) we do not get discouraged, spiritless and despondent with fear, or become faint with weariness and exhaustion" (2Cor. 4:1, AMP. BIBLE). When we might feel dis-

heartened or bowed down with the pressures of life, the solution is to open the Word and be encouraged by the faithful and unswerving devotion of so many worthy men and women of the past — who will receive joy for evermore, at the coming of their Lord and King.

"Continuing instant in prayer" — This appropriately follows the exhortation on tribulation. The words "continuing instant in" are one word in the Greek text *(proskartereo)*, meaning *to be strong or firm towards anything; to be earnest towards; constantly diligent.* The DIAGLOTT has "in prayer persevering". Prayer becomes intensely personal and of great benefit in times of affliction and distress. We will never gain the victory over "tribulation" if we refuse recourse to prayer. The Master realised the great value of communion with heaven: Heb. 5:7-8, and thus leaves us an example of how to overcome: v. 9. Prayer must be a continuing experience, after the pattern of Nehemiah, the man of prayer and action: cp. Neh. 1:4-5. Christ exhorted his disciples to diligence in prayer: "men ought *always* to pray, and not to faint" (Lk. 18:1). Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing" (1Thes. 5:17), by which he teaches the need for regularity and consistency in prayer. Communing with the Father strengthens our faith, renews our courage, gives new life to our sense of dedication. Drawing closer to God causes us to lean more fully upon Him for all the necessities of life, including the determination to continue steadfastly in the "steps" of His Son.

VERSE 13

"Distributing to the necessity of saints" — The NIV has: "Share with God's people who are in need"; the DIAGLOTT has: "Contributing to the wants of the saints". The word in the AV: "Distributing", is from the Gr. *koinoneo*, signifying *to fellowship; to partner; to share in common;* thus to help because one personally feels the need of others, and desires to mutually share the joys and sorrows of life. Hospitality is not only performing a duty, but of entering into an understanding of, and sympathy with, the needs of others. Rom. 15:27 teaches that those who enjoy the spiritual benefits of the Truth should respond in material matters. This is a practical fellowship.

It is extended to "saints": those who are associated with a "separate community", for the word does not indicate a moral standing, but a group selected and brought apart from the general community. It is our duty to first consider the needs of the Household: Gal. 6:10.

"Given to hospitality" — The DIAGLOTT has "pursuing hospitality". A believer must seek means of fulfilling such obligations without complaint (1Pet. 4:9). He should readily and cheerfully entertain the humble and unfamiliar members of the Brotherhood (Heb. 13:2). See 1Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8, Mat. 10:40-42.

VERSE 14

"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" — This command requires a good understanding of the spirit of *agape* (v. 9), for the *natural* man finds it very difficult to bless those who would do us harm, by word or deed. *Agape* will engender a willingness to assist those we might prefer to avoid. Often such an action will convert an enemy into a friend: Rom. 12:20. Paul, himself, was once an enemy of the Truth, but was converted because of the *agape* of the Master: 1Tim. 1:13.

The word "bless" (Gr. *eulogeo*) means *to speak well about.* This does not suggest puerile and hypocritical eulogies, but seeking the best for those who might be our enemies; to not unduly condemn and criticise those who set themselves against us, remembering that we have a great Judge who observes all things, and will take vengeance on our behalf in due course: Heb. 10:30; Mat. 25:41. Christ's servants must continue to uphold the joys and privileges of the Truth, no matter what our adversary may do to aggravate or demean us. Do not be provoked to anger, cursing or reviling, such as our enemy might manifest: Mat. 5:44-45.

The word "curse" is *kataraomai* mean-

ing, *to execrate, doom.* It expresses that which is devoted to destruction, and implies abuse by reproachful words, to calumniate or express violent and profane condemnation against another. Paul's exhortation is to ignore such wickedness, and to pursue the principles of godliness. Such an example was shown by Nehemiah in his attitude to the abusive Sanballat who tried to detract him from his labors for God: "I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:3).

VERSE 15

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" — Identify with the joys and sorrows of others; enter sympathetically into their feelings, taking a lively interest in their blessings and prosperity without grudging, or in their trials and sorrows without unfeeling condescension. The Master rejoiced with his disciples in their experiences (Lk. 10:20), and sorrowed with those in distress (Jn. 11:33-36).

VERSE 16

"Be of the same mind one toward another" — Manifest a mutual respect and oneness of mind, especially on matters related to the unifying and wellbeing of the One Body of believers. Avoid argumentation and division; live in harmony and compatibility.

The word "mind" is the Gr. *phroneo,* which properly means *to exercise the intellect; to regard or care for;* thus it is not the mind or attitude as such, but the intellect in action, allowing the Word of Truth to direct the issues of life. Diag: "the same disposition"; Weymouth: "have full sympathy with one another". The lit. Gr. has the sense: "Regard and seek for the same thing for each other"; whatever we desire for ourselves, we should also seek for the brethren. Do not have divided interests; do not pursue different aims; do not indulge counter plans and purposes; do not seek honors and opportunities for ourselves which we would not seek for others. Correct attitudes in the service of the Truth will seek the spiritual good of the Body, and not demand individual gratification. In this we must act as of the "same mind", and the standard set is the "mind of Christ": Phil. 2:5.

Artificial divisions between older and younger, between brethren and sisters, between leaders and members, sometimes encouraged in the Brotherhood, should be avoided, so that ecclesial activities become the opportunity for mutual labor involving all sections of the meeting, in a united endeavor.

Because of the vagaries and weaknesses of the nature we possess, this is one of the most difficult principles to be consistently practised. It is possible to achieve this state by exhibiting a humble consideration for one another, based upon a mutual reverence for *all divine precepts and commandments.* Oneness of mind amongst brethren begins and ends with the divine oracles. That is the basis upon which Christ's character was formed, for he was "the Word made flesh". Thus, when we do godly things for godly reasons, we also become a manifestation of what the Word requires. When this principle is practised, brethren will become "of one mind" or disposition, to the glory of the Father and for the unifying of the body of believers.

The following verses amplify this thought, and show how we are to humble ourselves, and to be of one mind with others similarly disposed.

"Mind not high things" — "Do not cherish a spirit of pride" (TCNT); "Do not let your thoughts be high-flown" (WEY.). Pride, particularly when resulting from a sense of superiority in regard to supposed social status, ability or material standing, has a devastating effect upon the One Body, making shipwreck of true spiritual unity. It may be even more destructive when brethren cannot agree, or are in open conflict, regarding fundamental principles of the Truth, or in regard to policies which will either build-up or undermine the spiritual development of the ecclesia. In all these matters brethren must exercise great

care in their dealings with one another, remembering that if the entire ecclesia co-operates together upon the *foundation of the Word*, a true state of humility and mutual respect will result.

Additionally, in society we should not concern ourselves with lofty aspirations, such as is seen in the attitude of Gentiles, who seek for personal achievement above all else — for otherwise the previous injunctions would be frustrated. Our "kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36), and we are not to be involved in its politics or objectives. We should therefore not seek for personal aggrandisement or material advancement: a perspective very evident in the spirit of this age.

"But condescend to men of low estate" — Note the contrast with the former phrase: "Do not be *haughty* in mind, but associate with the *lowly":* thus to be humble in mind and attitude. This phrase describes a positive action of humility that must replace the fleshly assertion in the negative part of the phrase just expressed. The margin renders this: "be contented with mean things", or persons. The word "condescend" (Gr. *sunapago;* meaning *to take off together; yield*) has the idea of "being conducted away by", thus to yield to or be directed by "men of low estate": those who are little regarded in society. We should be "led by" the Lord Jesus who was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3; Mk. 9:12; Acts 4:11; Jn. 7:52; Mat. 8:20; Dan. 4:17, where the word "basest" can be rendered "lowliest").

"Be not wise in your own conceits" — Do not be self-centred, conceited and vain. This is an introverted kind of conceit, whereby we judge ourselves according to our *own* estimation of ourselves (the Gr. *par heautois* signifies "*with* yourselves"). Weymouth has: "do not be self-opinionated"; the NEB: "Do not keep thinking how wise you are".

The Diaglott renders "conceits" as "estimation"; that which we grant to ourselves; our own opinion. This is a reference to Prov. 3:7 (cp. vv. 5-6), which emphasizes the positive disposition we should develop. We are "wise" only inasmuch as we are guided by the wisdom of Yahweh.

VERSE 17

Paul now enumerates seven commands to regulate brethren and sisters in their conduct with the world, in order to manifest the principles of the Truth before the unbeliever, and bring honor to the Lord we serve: Vv. 17-21.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil" — The Greek word is *apodidomi*, meaning *to give back;* to retaliate. The DIAGLOTT translates this phrase: "To no one return evil for evil". See Mat. 5:33; 1Thes. 5:15. This is one of the most difficult of characteristics to develop, but in practising care and consideration for others the believer exemplifies nobility of spirit and a control over the flesh.

It is a further allusion to the discourse on the Mount (Mat. 5:39), but the basis for the commandment is found in the Law: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18). The matter of taking vengeance is entirely the prerogative of Yahweh (v. 19), and His sovereign rights must not be contravened by flesh (cp. 1Cor. 13:5-6; 1Pet. 3:9).

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men" — The DIAGLOTT has: "Provide honorable things in the presence of all men. The JB renders: "Let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals". Paul would have us ensure that everything is done properly and correctly. Intregrity in the Truth is perhaps the most vital factor in our walk before God. The Lord's life is the greatest example in this. Despite the hatred that was manifested towards him, none could convict him of sin. Believers will manifest integrity in the eyes of Yahweh, despite what men may say, so long as they carefully examine what they *think, say* and *do,* in the light of the Word of God.

The word for "provide" is the Gr. *pronoeo* which means: *to consider in advance;* thus a believer meditates beforehand on the needs of others. By so doing

we avoid the fluctuations of feeling and the influences and pressures of the moment, and therefore respond in a careful and deliberate fashion (cp. 1Cor. 8:13).

The word "honest" is *kalos*, referring to that which is "beautiful, good, valuable or virtuous". The word does not relate to property or provisions, but to conduct, especially towards those who injure us.

VERSE 18

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you" — Paul recognised the difficulty of always being at peace, and maintaining a conciliatory attitude to all. Indeed, the experience of the Lord Jesus himself, showed that it is not always possible. There comes a time when one must speak out, and act with determination, in spite of opposition from others, or hurt that might be experienced from them. Such an occasion occurred when the Lord publicly indicted the Pharisees in the court of the temple, as recorded in Mat. 23. Another occasion is recorded in Gal. 2, where Paul recorded that he had to publicly oppose Peter in Antioch "because he was to be blamed", and was leading others astray by his hypocrisy. Times occur, therefore, when the Truth must be maintained and defended as the first priority, before bowing to the wishes of men. However, "*as far as possible*" we must seek to "*live peaceably with all men*" and Paul emphasizes that the preservation of such peace lies in our willing self-sacrifice. Thus, Paul is not exhorting the believer to keep his anger in check to the best of his ability, but to make sure he is not the source of discord.

The word "possible" is the Gr. *dunatos* signifying *powerful* or *capable*. It is related to the English "dynamo", referring to an instrument which generates increasing power; to give additional influence to the purpose in hand. Thus, exercise yourself to that end; do as much as is in your power to achieve this result.

"Live peaceably with all men" — "If possible, so far as dependeth on you, with all men being at peace" (ROTH). Believers should extend themselves to maintain a harmonious relationship with all. Let us seek the things that lead to peace, and we have done our part, whatever action is adopted by others.

VERSE 19

"Dearly beloved" — An expression of tenderness is especially appropriate at this point, as Paul exhorts his readers to an attitude of peace that is quite foreign to the natural feelings of the flesh.

"Avenge not yourselves" — To avenge is to relish a sense of satisfaction when an injurious experience comes upon one who has harmed us in some way. God is the great avenger of His people and therefore we must leave it to Him to avenge us, as He will do so with justice and wisdom. In refraining from seeking revenge, we fulfil His will as incorporated in His law (Lev. 19:18). Let us exercise faith in Him, and our ultimate vindication is certain. Exercising such restraint as required by Paul's instruction is to develop the character of Christ, who totally committed himself to the care of the Father. He reminded his generation that they live in "days of vengeance" when the judgments of God would be exacted against those who had rejected him, that "all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:22). In this, he spoke prophetically of what Yahweh would do in AD70. Similarly, in due time, God will vindicate and avenge all His faithful servants.

The Greek for "avenge" is *ekdikeo* which means *to vindicate; retaliate; punish*, and is also found in the quotation above advanced by the apostle.

"But (rather) give place unto wrath" — The positive action of the disciple is to leave such cases to God, thus following the example of the Master: Jn. 18:36. ROTHERHAM renders this: "give place unto their anger". However, others suggest Paul is saying that we should "give place (or room) for the wrath of God", thus accepting that we should move away from moments of confrontation, and allow the proper process of divine righteousness to take its course.

Therefore when others are angry with

us, we should try to keep calm and cool. This is difficult with some who are easily aroused, but it will be found to be of benefit ultimately; not only will it often assuage the anger, but it will meet with the Father's approval, as Prov 25:22 declares: "Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and Yahweh shall reward thee".

However, situations sometimes arise when anger is required. For example, the Master looked upon the hypocrisy of the Pharisees "with anger" (Mk. 3:5), and to the Ephesians Paul wrote: "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon thy wrath" (ch. 4:26). These are excellent principles to keep in mind in the development of the godly character.

"For it is written" — Paul cites Deut. 32:35, "To Me belongeth vengeance and recompence". The SEPTUAGINT reads: "In the day of vengeance I will repay". See also Psa. 94:1; Heb. 10:30.

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" — Yahweh declares that He has the authority to determine the final issues of life, and guarantees the protection of His people. Therefore, when we have exhausted all our efforts to live at peace (Rom. 12:18), then Yahweh will avenge our cause.

The verse is illustrated in Lk. 18:7-8 and Rev. 6:9-11. In Luke 18 the lesson is drawn from the parable of the "importunate woman", where the Lord taught his disciples that they should "always pray and not faint", for God will quickly avenge those who call upon Him. In Rev. 6, the act of vengeance is shown, and we learn that God moves in the affairs of men and nations to avenge His own.

In view of this fact, we can rely upon His love, and in faith and conviction await His vindication. He declares: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee", upon which the apostle comments: "We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews13:6).

Note that Christ's disciples are in no way responsible for the administering of law and order in the community at large. They are, in fact, to remain totally separated from the political and legal systems of the world. Thus, these commandments are essentially for a "peculiar people" who have been called out from the Gentiles to become a people for the Name of Yahweh. Yet the responsibilities of the wider society to enforce law and punish evil doers must be acknowledged by disciples, as the apostle will show in chapter 13.

VERSE 20

"Therefore" — In view of the fact that God was good to us when we were estranged from Him (Rom. 5:7-8), we should likewise treat our enemies with goodness and justice. The NIV has "On the contrary"; that is, our responsibility is to respond positively to those in need, whether friend or foe. Certainly, since Yahweh will argue our cause, we need not fear our enemy, and can afford to help him.

"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink" — Paul cites Pro. 25:21-22, to illustrate the practical outworking of the principles already stated in Rom. 12. See Mat. 5:44.

"For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" — The apostle does not mean that we are to be consoled for our kindness by the knowledge that our enemy will be punished. This would be a malicious motive, and an attitude utterly contrary to the meaning of *agape*, and would violate the context of the passage.

Paul's analogy is taken from the method of melting ore. Fire was not only placed underneath the metal, but heaped on top as well. The intense heat thus created, melted that which was normally most difficult to treat. So, to "heap coals of fire on one's head", is to subject him to the treatment of kind actions. Such might help melt the hard-hearted; if not, the divine anger will consume them (Psa. 140:9-10; Pro. 20:22).

VERSE 21

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" — Here Paul summarises that which he has laid down in this chapter, concerning the attitude of

believers in the world about them and in the ecclesia. Good can overcome evil; but it is also possible for evil to overcome good. In the midst of controversy the tendency is to give way to flesh-promptings, and counter anger with anger, invective with invective. Many a good cause has been converted into an evil one by the methods used to defend or extend it. Even the preaching of the gospel can be undertaken out of motives of envy and strife (Phil. 1:15).

Therefore it is important to carefully analyse motives, and so conduct ourselves that we do not disgrace the cause we espouse.

The final words in this chapter are positive, direct and encouraging. Verse 21 provides a brief and succinct summary of all that has been stated from v. 3 onward. Life, for Yahweh's people, is a time of probation. It is a constant struggle between the forces of good and evil; and Paul has shown that the greatest struggle takes place ***within*** *the believer. It is a ceaseless battle to subvert the evil propensities which are inherent in the nature we bear, demanding of both mind and body a greater loyalty and devotion to the higher principles of good which originate only in Yahweh. It becomes a daily challenge to sons and daughters of the living God to order their lives in accordance with God's revealed will. It is only by this means that a character that will be pleasing to the Creator may be developed within each one. Disciples of Christ are dedicated to overcoming sin and manifesting the righteousness of God. Therefore they do not view the daily affairs of life as do the majority of mankind. They are different. They are a people separated from the world by the power of God's Word. They have been called to a destiny which can lead them to the glory of divine nature. They must therefore endeavor to live according to Christ's standards and not those of the world. Their thoughts, ideals, motives, objectives and actions, must be continually examined in the light of this brief, but eloquent, statement with which the chapter concludes: "Do not let evil conquer you, but* ***use good*** *to defeat evil" (NEB). By this means the believer will continue to walk steadfastly in the pathway of Truth, and this will be reflected in glory to Yahweh.*

— J. Ullman.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PART TWO: CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY

How the Gospel Must Be Applied in Society

Yahweh's Characteristics Revealed to the World by Believers

In this second part of the final section of his epistle, Paul sets down the obligations that believers must demonstrate to those in society, from the authorities in control, to the community at large. In manifesting such an attitude, the Truth is elevated from mere theory to the practical outworkings of belief. The call of the gospel is to "take out of the Gentiles a people" for the Name of Yahweh (Acts 15:14), but this does not mean that believers should withdraw completely from the world. They must work out their salvation in society, though they must abstain from its evil (Jn. 17:15). Therefore, whilst saints will stand aside from politics, they will accept the powers that be as the "ministers of God" that execute His purpose in the earth. Recognising that such ministers are subject to the control of God, saints can dwell under the shadow of their power without fear, realising that the authorities cannot go beyond what God permits. In this they follow the example of the Master who declared to the governor Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (Jn. 19:11). That is the principle advanced by Paul in this chapter.

Therefore a high standard of conduct is demanded of Christ's followers, and in light of the significant times in which the brethren then lived there was an urgency in Paul's message.

That same appeal must be accepted by brethren today, recognising that we live in similar evil conditions.

The chapter can be divided into three sections under the general heading of Civil Responsibility —

1. Its Expression: Conscientious Submission — vv. 1-7.

2. Its Foundation: Love to One's Neighbor — vv. 8-10.

3. Its Urgency: The Times Demand its Observance — vv. 11-14.

Gentile Law and Christ's Disciples

The apostle Paul faced momentous problems in persuading believers — both Jew and Gentile — as to how they should relate to Gentile law and discipline. At the time he wrote, civil powers were everywhere under the control of heathens, idolators and polytheists. These powers were hostile to Christianity, and they very often despised Jews. Even in Palestine the Jews had little control over their own destinies, as their power was almost exclusively of an ecclesiastical nature. The Romans exercised total dominance over their subjects. They confirmed or reversed decisions at will, even on matters of life and liberty. In course of time, Roman civil powers looked with contempt and scorn upon those who denied the accepted religious ideas and practices of the empire. With no consideration for their subjects, they condemned all religion but their own as diabolical and injurious. Many of the magistrates were highly superstitious, and made no secret of their hatred of the Lord's disciples. This could make life extremely difficult for the brotherhood, when faced with matters of law which were interpreted by men whose bias against believers was so outrageous that hopes of a fair and just hearing were often difficult to contemplate.

How were believers to deal with such appalling conditions as applied to matters of jurisprudence in those days? For the Jews, it was particularly hard to tolerate. Having regarded themselves as "a special people" for nearly 1,500 years since the Law of Moses had been established, and believing that they were entitled to pre-eminence above all other nations, such deeply ingrained attitudes were not readily cast aside. For example, they despised the Romans and others for their gods of wood and stone. Apart from other considerations, Jewish monotheism stamped them as a people apart from other nationalities. Willing subjection to the Romans was regarded by most Jews as a betrayal of their own national loyalties. It was not an easy thing to expect Jews who had been firmly grounded in their attitudes for so long, to quickly and readily divest themselves of their feelings. Inevitably, this would bring conflicts which had to be resolved in accordance with the principles of the Truth. And what of Gentile believers? Their situation was little better than that of their Jewish brethren. They were to take their stand *against* the world; not by physical force but by a courageous identification with Christ, and a willing submission to whatever evil and unjust rulings might be made against them by the civil authorities of the empire (Mat. 10:17-18). Under these trying and unfair circumstances it was necessary for Paul to show the brethren that submission to worldly authorities could result from either compulsion, or willing submission — the latter being the outworking of an inner disposition. Hence, they were to learn to become "subject unto the higher powers" — or, literally, "to rank *under* the governing authorities".

In this chapter, Paul brings to bear his thoughtfulness, his care, his understanding of the difficulties, and his strong appeal to the brotherhood that they should be willing to accept injustice in this life as part of the process of character development which would fit and equip them for an eternal rewards in the kingdom of God (Mat. 5:38-45).

The Expression of the Gospel: Conscientious Submission — vv. 1-7.

Believers live in the "times of the Gentiles" and must submit to their ordinances, as much as possible. This does not mean that we need to compromise the divine laws. The Truth remains the most important discipline of our lives, and instructs us to demonstrate its power and value by a correct deportment before those of our civilisation. There is a proper balance in life, according to the saying of the Master: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Mat. 22:21). In this section, Paul indicates the believer's attitude towards government in two aspects: Submission to authority (vv. 1-5), and Support of its position (v. 6).

VERSE 1

"Let every soul" — The NEB has: "Every person must submit to the supreme authorities"; the JB has: "You must all obey the governing authorities". The opening words stress *personal* responsibility in these matters. Both Jew and Gentile believers had an individual duty to perform. They both would have felt an enmity against those in power. The Jews had borne the burden of the Roman oppression with great uneasiness. They considered that the whole heathen magistracy was founded in a system of idolatry, opposed to God and an abomination in His sight. The Gentile converts would naturally consider with abhorrence the system of idolatry which they had forsaken. But in Christ both had to understand the higher principles which were now required of them.

"Be subject" — The Greek word *hupotasso* signifies *subordinate, obey, supreme rulers.* It is a military term, which implies the kind of selfless discipline expected by those who are in authority over soldiers. It literally means "to rank *under*"; therefore the phrase is expressive of willing submission, whether the cause of the authorities is just or not. The word also appears in 1Pet. 2:13, 18, and Jas. 4:7, and denotes the kind of submission which soldiers were expected to render to their officers.

Here it refers to those high in authority and rulership within the community. The ecclesia had to accept certain conditions in the present system of things. It is not yet the time when the divine new world order will be established. Therefore, believers had to remain in a passive situation, awaiting the time when Christ with his saints will assume authority over the world. In writing to Titus, Paul emphasises the value of this attitude: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (ch. 3:1).

"Unto the higher powers" — "Higher" is the Gr. *huperecho,* indicating *supreme; those above.* The NASB and RSV have "the governing authorities", whilst Roth. has "protecting authorities", and the Diaglott has "superior authorities". Brethren are called upon to be in subjection to such authorities, even though they stand aside from politics. Instruction in these principles was evidently necessary at that time, for a bad example was frequently given by the fanatical Jewish opposition to the Roman jurisdiction. On a mistaken understanding of Deut. 17:15, which prohibits the elevation of a stranger over the children of Israel, Jews often refused to submit to Gentile authorities. In contrast to that attitude, the apostles consistently taught that saints must submit to those in authority even though they may be evil rulers (Jn. 18:36; 1Tim. 2:1-2; Tit. 3:1-2; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29).

There are ten duties of citizens: **[1]** Be subject to civil governments (Rom. 13:1; Tit. 3:1; 1Pet. 2:13-17). **[2]** Be afraid to disobey civil rulers (Rom. 13:3; Pro. 24:21). **[3]** Do the good (Rom. 13:4; Tit. 3:1). **[4]** Pay taxes (Rom. 13:1-7; Mat. 22:17-21). **[5]** Render dues to all men (Rom. 13:7). **[6]** Honor civil rulers (Rom. 13:1-7; Ex. 22:28; Acts 23:5; 1Pet. 2:13-17). **[7]** Pray for civil rulers (1Tim. 2:1-2). **[8]** Obey civil laws (Rom. 13:1-7; Ezra 7:26). **[9]** Do not curse rulers (Ecc. 10:20). **[10]** Strive for a peaceful way of life (Rom. 12:18).

"For there is no power but of God"

— Note Paul's strong and positive burst of encouragement at the beginning of this section. Such a knowledge will provide tremendous impetus to their faith, especially at times of suffering and tribulation. Yahweh sees all, knows all, and is ever aware of the faithfulness of His saints when under trial. Since He is a "rewarder" of those who diligently uphold His ways, His servants can always have total confidence in the God whom they worship.

God permits the development of powers and authorities (Deu. 32:8; Dan. 2:21; 4:17; Jn. 19:11; Rev. 13:7; Pro. 8:15). Nebuchadnezzar was unwittingly authorised by God to perform His will (Jer. 27:6): of Cyrus, God declared: "he shall perform all My pleasure" (Isa. 44:28). God can appoint or remove such powers according to His will.

However, not all that governments do is necessarily in agreement with God's will, although all are subject to His control. There are reasonable and evil authorities. Some authorities use their powers in accordance with God's purpose (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar, etc), whilst others misuse their powers and trample the will of God under their feet. But the point Paul makes is that Yahweh has supreme authority, and can place or remove rulers according to His pleasure.

*The attitude that a Jew must adopt towards Gentile rulers was a subject that exercised the minds of many Jews in New Testament times. On the basis of Deut. 17:15, "Thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, which is not thy brother", some of the Jews held that it was wrong to submit to the rule of any Gentile. The question put to Christ concerning the lawfulness of giving tribute to Caesar reflects this agitation. The question was a trap: they thought that by his answer Jesus would either come into conflict with the Roman authorities or become unpopular with the people. But Jesus avoided the snare while laying down a principle which provided an answer. The "penny" produced at his request was an acknowledgement of Caesar's rule, for they had accepted Caesar's coinage. Caesar had claims which they must meet; but to God also must be rendered the things which are His. As a result of this unwillingness to submit to Gentile rulership the Jews were bad subjects. And this not only in Palestine, but wherever they were settled, there was constant danger of turbulence. — **J. Carter.***

"The powers that be are ordained of God" — The word "ordained" is from the Greek *tasso*, which signifies *ordered, arranged* or *appointed*, particularly in military array (cp. 2Tim. 2:3-4). However, governmental authority is not an arbitrary invention of man; it was ordained by God in the beginning, when to Adam He declared: "have dominion" (Gen. 1:26).

Paul makes this statement not only to exhort brethren to submit to such powers, but to remind them that even the most tyrannical of governments are under the control of Yahweh, who remains Sovereign Lord over *all* His creation — a principle that must be of great comfort and encouragement to the saints, especially in times of difficulty.

VERSE 2

"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" — Here the word "ordinance" is from the Greek *diatage*, and signifies *arrangement, appointment*, or *the disposing in order*. A follower of Christ must learn to recognise the hand of God in the affairs and arrangements of life. He gives power into the hands of those "unto whom it seemed meet" to Him to do so (Jer. 27:5). Saints must submit, even though the circumstances may not be to their liking. For that reason, we do not agitate in community matters nor participate in political voting, in order to witness that we are not "of this world". We leave such decisions to Yahweh's greater knowledge of what is required.

"And they that resist" — Resistance to governments (unless the commandments of Christ require it) is disobedience to God, and therefore penalties inflicted

have the approval of God.

"Shall receive to themselves damnation" — There is practical wisdom in this advice. The word "damnation" is the Greek *krima*, and signifies "judgment", and in this context "condemnation". The Diag. has "and the opponents will procure punishment for themselves". Those who resist will be punished by the civil authorities, as well as receiving divine disapproval for disregarding His instruction.

VERSE 3

"For rulers are not a terror to good works" — Weymouth has: "Judges and magistrates are no terror to right-doers, but to wrong-doers". Rulership has been ordained of God that evil might be kept in check, so that a person maintaining good works, and obeying the laws of the land, has little to fear. We must not conclude from this, however, that a person maintaining "good works" may not be called upon to suffer for his beliefs. Paul had to endure much for the Faith. His teaching is consistent with that of Peter who wrote: "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evildoing" (see 1Pet. 3:12-17). Peter's words were consistent with his action, for in the confidence that he was doing that which was right, he lost all the fear of earthly rulers that once he had (Acts 5:29). When these rulers exceed their commission, however, and demand of believers that which is opposed to the will of God, the instruction is that we should "obey God rather than man" (Acts 4:19).

The word "terror" is the Gr. *phobos*, from *phebomai: to be put in fear; alarm or fright.* Generally authorities are considerate to those who exercise self-discipline and accept their laws and requirements.

"But to the evil" — Gr. *kakos: worthless;* those who agitate against the *status quo,* and cause distress amongst the community. The authorities are appointed to maintain law and order in the community, and to apprehend and punish evildoers

"Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?" — Or, "Do you wish to lose any fear of authorities?" The DIAG. has: "Dost thou wish not to be afraid of the authority?" The NIV translates it: "Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority?"

"Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" — Obey the laws of civil government, and you will have nothing to fear. Generally authorities exist to restrain the irresponsible exercise of freedom. But the law-abiding person has no reason to be concerned; in fact, in accepting their rule he receives the approval of the authorities. Paul found advantage in the judicial system of the Roman law (Acts 22:25), and used its facilities when necessary (ch. 25:11).

We "do good" in this regard, when we obey laws that are consistent with God's commands, and when we so act, we can live without fear of the authorities. In fact, as they notice our law-abiding way of life, they will praise us for it. This is consistent with Peter's advice: "Governors are sent by Him (God) for the punishment of evildoers, and the praise of them that do well" (1Pet. 2:14). It is true that followers of Christ have had to endure severe persecution at the hands of tyrants like Nero, the Roman emperor at the time of Paul, but generally believers have been permitted to live peaceable lives, particularly when their way of life has been consistent with their beliefs and in accordance with the laws of the land. This was the case with Daniel, whose only "crime" was acknowledged by his contemporaries as being a matter of belief and faith (Dan. 6:5).

VERSE 4

"For he is the minister of God" — Gr. *diakonos, a servant; attendant.* Vine comments: "speaking broadly, *diakonos* views a servant in relation to his work". As such the actions of those in power are always under the supervision of God (Dan. 4:17). Nebuchadnezzar was styled the "servant of Yahweh" (Jer. 27:6-7), and Pilate was told by the Master that he could do nothing unless it were permitted of God (Jn. 19:11). In this regard, such rulers are appointed to perform the purpose of Yahweh in the political and social sphere. They are not to be regarded as His

"servants" in moral matters.

"To thee for good" — That is, to your advantage; therefore do not abuse this God-given benefit (cp. Rom. 8:28, 31). The fact that rulers are the servants of God, demonstrates that He can control their actions for the ultimate good of His people; and He does so, though it is not always apparent to us. The future will reveal that any opposition or trouble that we have experienced from lawful authorities, has been divinely controlled for our good (cp. Ezek. 14:22-23), even though our folly may have incited it. When Nebuchadnezzar uprooted many of the people of Judah, and took them captive to Babylon, it was "for their good" (Jer. 24:5), although it may not have seemed so to the faithful at that time. Faith teaches the need to submit to authorities, recognizing that they are God's servants, and that He is able to use them to further His purpose.

"But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid" — For you will be brought to account! Thus Paul answers the question of v. 3. He is not arguing against the possibility of being "tried for righteousness' sake", or of "enduring grief, suffering wrongfully" for "conscience towards God" (1Pet. 2:19), which might require the believer to remain aloof from the demands of a God-dishonoring law; instead he appeals for restraint in opposing requirements that might be determined for the good of society, or of actively opposing the established authority.

"For he beareth not the sword in vain" — "It is not for nothing that they hold the power of the sword" (NEB). Believers therefore have to remember with whom they are dealing, and the authority vested in those powers. Their authority requires a response from the community, otherwise punishment against enemies will be exacted. The word "beareth" is the Gr. *phoreo* which signifies: *to carry a burden*. Bullinger suggests it means "weareth", pointing to the sword carried on the person as a badge of office to indicate the vested authority, and for use whenever needed.

Dealing with the laws of the land requires spiritual maturity and utmost care, being sure that nothing is said or done to offend against Yahweh's requirements for the behaviour of saints. Though knowing nothing of the Truth, many men throughout history have fought for the rights of "freedom of speech" and "freedom of religion". This has been to the advantage of Christ's disciples, especially in being able to assemble in peace, and to preach the Truth to a perishing world (1Pet. 3:15-16). It is well to remember the words of Brother Carter: "The State has *never* been truly Christian".

By the exercise of authority on the part of those in government, wickedness is generally restrained, and the gospel can be proclaimed more freely. Thus the wicked are described as "Yahweh's sword" by which He executes judgment on others. How would the preaching of the gospel have fared throughout the ages if the excesses of which human nature is capable had not been held in check as they have been by constituted authority? Brother Thomas has shown in both "Elpis Israel" and "Eureka" that it has been the efforts of men, destitute of the Truth, but prepared to fight for freedom of speech and of worship, that have assisted in the proclamation of the gospel. So long as the ecclesia remained faithful to its testimony, and spoke out boldly in exposition thereof, there was always somebody prepared to defend their right to do so. In these latter times we have found this to be so in our stand as Conscientious Objectors against involvement in the forces of the State. — ***H. P. Mansfield***

"For he is the minister of God" — This phrase is repeated for emphasis to remind us to avoid confrontation with the authorities, since Yahweh is in control of all governments.

"A revenger to (execute) wrath upon him that doeth evil" — ROTHERHAM has: "an avenger unto anger to him who practiseth what is evil". This suggests the extent of the "wrath" that the authorities might exercise. The word "revenger" (Gr. *ekdikos*) properly means "the carrier of justice", so as to punish for evildoing. God has permitted such authority in the present dispensation of things, as a restraining influence upon society.

The word "wrath" is the Gr. *orge* (see ch. 2:5, 8) which signifies *violent passion*, and so by implication, physical punishment. Rulers are to be obeyed in matters not affecting faith, not only because they have the power of life and death over their subjects, but also because it is right.

VERSE 5

"Wherefore" — "That is why you are obliged to submit" (NEB). Fear of punishment should not be our motive in subjecting ourselves to civil governments; such submission is based upon conscience, in obedience to God's Word. Disciples are to carefully reason upon these matters, according to the divine revelation, and obey *primarily* because they desire to endorse the Word of Truth and to please God.

"(Ye) must needs be subject, not only for wrath" — "Who are *bound* therefore to obey" (TCNT). Paul has now introduced a strong element of firm direction into his exposition. He lists two reasons as to why we should submit to authority. The first is that we might avoid unnecessary punishment, and to remain free of untoward publicity. In so doing we do not bring discredit upon the Truth on the grounds of insurrection or agitation.

The words "must needs be" (Gr. *anagke*) indicate *a real constraint* and a determined action. It is a strong word signifying more than that which is merely fit and proper; it therefore means that it is a matter of high obligation and of necessity, and not simply because of possible punishment.

"But also for conscience sake" — "On account of our conscience". The second reason is for the development of a faithful attitude; of our duty before God. In accepting the terms of our situation in life (1Cor. 7:18-23) we acknowledge the divine wisdom which overshadows our needs. Paul set an example in this, always exercising himself to have "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16; see also 1Pet. 2:19).

If we flout the laws of the land (when they do not conflict with the commandments of Christ) our consciences will tell us that we have done wrong; therefore we will find ourselves convicted of sin.

VERSE 6

"For for this cause" — Paul emphasizes the reasons *why* we should respect his instruction. The Gr. *dia touto gar* means *on account of this; denoting the ground or reason* (Bull.). Brother Thomas wrote: "We do not pay taxes because we love the government and its policy and deeds; but because we can't help ourselves. We came into this world to be taxed, but not to be held responsible for the malappropriation of the funds" (*The Christadelphian*, 1887, p. 146).

"Pay ye tribute also" — Tribute (Gr. *phoros*, a *load, tax*) represents payments made on demand by a superior force, and imposts made for the support of the government. Most translations render the word as "taxes".

Christ set an example in this very matter of the responsibility of believers (Mat. 17:24-27), and clearly taught it to the Herodians and Pharisees (ch. 22:17-21). He explained to Peter that the authorities had no right to demand tribute of him, and, as Son of God, he could justly refuse it, but "lest we should offend them", he instructed that the money be paid. Sometimes magistrates allege that we are inconsistent in paying such dues to the government, or those placed over us, but here we are specifically instructed to do so, even

though the authorities exercise the sword, and the tribute, or taxes given, might be used for the purpose of national defence. The basis of our application to be registered in the statutes of the State as conscientious objectors is that we owe allegiance to a heavenly king (Jn. 18:36), and obey His instructions, and therefore there is nothing inconsistent in us paying taxes or dues, for we have been so commanded.

"For they are God's ministers" — The word "ministers" is different from that used twice in v. 4. Here it is *leitourgos*, which signifies a public minister, a servant of the State (Rom. 15:16; Phil. 2:25; Heb. 1:7; 8:2). Unwittingly they are God's servants to conduct civil government. Even if they are ungodly men, and yet faithfully carry out civil responsibility, they are to be respected in regard to their duty.

"Attending continually upon this very thing" — Such authorities provide for the protection of life and property, even by the sword (v. 4).

VERSE 7

"Render therefore to all their dues" — Paul now sets forth four obligations which summarise obedience to governmental authority. The Jerusalem Bible has "Pay every government official what he has a right to ask — whether it be direct tax or indirect, fear or honor". This instruction should remind believers that they should not seek means to avoid such obligations. When the Romans began their merciless, brutal persecution of the Brotherhood, disciples would have needed great faith to follow, in all respects, this commandment. In the face of vicious oppression, they might have been persuaded to exercise their "liberty in Christ" (Gal. 5:1, 13; Jn. 8:31-32) to renounce such responsibilities; but Paul makes no allowance for such an attitude, no matter how difficult the circumstances of life might be. Quiet and peaceful obedience must be the daily practice of believers, and whatever the government might determine is their right and according to law, needs to be submitted to without dispute. The only exceptions to this rule should be when governments demand things which conflict with the commandments of Christ — such as military service, voting, jury service — when we should politely and respectfully reject their demands. It is of the utmost importance that Christadelphians, in honoring their obligations to Christ, should be the most law-abiding members of any community in which they live. This situation must be accepted as part of the development of faithfulness until the Lord comes. Then, all human authority will be abolished and replaced with a perfectly just and equitable system such as the world has never yet seen.

The word "render" (Gr. *apodidomi, to give away, give up*) was used by the Lord Jesus to testify that it is proper to "*Render* to Caesar that which is his" (Mat. 22:21). The word "dues" (Gr. *opheile: indebtedness*) relates to any general obligation.

"Tribute to whom tribute (is due)" — Gr. *phoros: a load; tax* (as in v. 7); thus direct taxation.

"Custom to whom custom" — The Gr. *telos* signifies *the point aimed at as a limit; conclusion*, and usually relates to revenue collected on merchandise or services. Thus it relates to indirect taxation. Rotherham simply translates the word as "tax".

"Fear to whom fear" — An acknowledgement of governmental authority, and avoidance of an attitude of belligerent opposition (1Pet. 2:17).

"Honor to whom honor" — Showing respect to those who "wear the sword" and who are appointed to execute the laws of the land.

In the four aspects mentioned in this verse, Paul shows that whatever one truly owes another (i.e., their dues) should be fully paid, whether it is money or respect.

A Foundation of the Gospel:
Love to One's Neighbor — vv. 8-10.

Having shown in vv. 1-7 that there is a need for correct behavior in our attitude towards authorities and governments, and having revealed the form it should take, Paul now considers our obligations to society in general. He demonstrates that it

is founded upon a proper regard for the consideration of others. If we are obligated to pay taxes, we are also obligated to love one another.

VERSE 8

"Owe no man any thing" — Pay debts promptly. Paul moves from his discussion on the obligations we have to authorities and governments, to how we should treat with men in general: "no man", so that we are under no obligation to any.

His words do not mean, as has sometimes been asserted, that we cannot take advantage of the credit or mortgage facilities available for purchase. It does mean, however, that whatever we agree to pay, should be rendered within the date due. Therefore, if one enters into a mortgage to purchase a home, for example, the repayments must be paid before they are overdue. At the same time, it is important in this age of easy credit, to discipline oneself against purchases that might put us beyond our means. Covetousness is very evident in this day of materialism, and saints need to avoid every enticement that can lead them into difficulty. Paul's advice is very relevant. Remain free of debt, and of obligation. Better to have little in this life, and be able to fulfil the requirements of the Truth, than to strive for unnecessary material possessions.

"But to love one another" — This is what we continue to "owe"! It is a debt not constituted by any natural relationship, but is created by God's command, and provided by His mercy. We can never repay this debt we have acquired in accepting the Truth, as John reminds us: "Behold, what manner of love (Gr. *agape*) the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1Jn. 3:1). That debt can never be fully paid (see Rom. 5:8-9). The verb "to love" is *agapao*, and relates to the self-sacrificing love that seeks the highest good for the other; that good being dictated by a knowledge of God's will from whence alone can spring this form of love.

Brother Carter comments: "Love is always owing. Love is an unceasing duty, as continuous as the requirements of God's law. And to love is to keep God's law, for as Paul points out, one who loves is beyond the possibility of doing the things prohibited by the law".

"For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" — See Matt. 22:40. Such self-sacrificing action, born of a knowledge of God's will is the mark of maturity in Christ, and a demonstration that the believer is indeed a child of God (Mat. 5:44-48; Col. 3:14). Thus this form of love is the "end", or objective, of the commandments (1Tim. 1:5).

There is no definite article in the Greek text: lit., "a law has fulfilled". The word "fulfilled" is from *pleroo: to complete* or *accomplish.* This form of agape-love fulfils the end-objective of the commandments. In manifesting this disposition believers show that they understand the *purpose* of law, which is to glorify the Father through knowledge, faith, word and deed. For, otherwise, law is valueless as a sacrificial ritual, since mere external conformity to law can never be fully and perfectly fulfilled (cp. Mat. 22:36-40; 1Tim. 1:5).

VERSE 9

"For this" — Paul proceeds to show the manner in which love fulfils the law, and he cites Exod. 20:13-17 and Lev. 19:18. It is significant that the former is part of the ten commandments, and the latter is part of the general law of Moses, showing conclusively that both are part of the one law, and should not be separated (as some religious organisations do).

He now lists five negative command-

Vv. 9-10: While all the restrictions of the Law are covered by Love, we must not enforce our own restrictions, as Paul elaborates in ch. 14:1-13.

Vv. 11-14: But Love does not entitle licence, and we must not cause others to fall by the liberty we claim, as Paul elaborates in ch. 14:14-23.

"OWE NO MAN ANYTHING..." (v. 8).

There are two basic reasons for this instruction. In fulfilling its terms we exercise a form of self-discipline which is character building and therefore aids the development of faithfulness. In addition, by meeting such obligations in every respect we avoid causing embarrassment or financial injury to our brother. Whilst it is possible to become involved in financial difficulties due to adverse circumstances, perhaps the major reason for this problem is the human weakness of desiring more than we can adequately cover within our financial resources. Such an attitude is not only due to a state of mind which is contrary to the spirit of the Truth, it is also a form of covetousness (Col. 3:5, where the Greek "pleonexia" means "a desire to have more") . If we seek to labor industriously to establish a standard of commitment which does not cause discomfort either to ourselves or others, and if we strive to be economical, to the point of frugality if need be, we will discipline ourselves in harmony with scriptural principles. This will result in an orderly and honest way of life with conscientious habits which leave us greater peace of mind for dedicating our lives more fully to the things of the Truth. This commandment provides a most apt introduction to the words which now follow: "But to love one another".

The word "but" is of profound significance. It links the initial statement of this verse with the second instruction. Hence: "Owe nothing to anyone ***except*** *to love one another" (NASB); "Let no debt remain outstanding,* ***except the continuing debt*** *to love one another" (NIV). We may repay a monetary debt, or a debt of some other kind, thus concluding the matter and satisfying our conscience. Agape-love, however, is something quite different. It is an indebtedness which will always be there; it is a liability which we can never discharge. It is like a bank overdraft that is never cleared during one's lifetime. Paul has shown that we owe submission to Gentile governments and authorities. But there is a limit to what we owe in that direction. On the other hand, love for Christ's brethren is a never ending demand and must be manifested unceasingly. On his last night with his disciples prior to his death, the Lord taught them: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (Jn. 13:34). This appears to be anomalous, in view of the fact that "love" for one's neighbor was an ancient command with roots deeply embedded in the Law (Lev. 19:18; cp. Mat. 22:39). What was "new" about such a commandment? Only its application and the manner in which it was to be practised amongst the brethren: "as I have loved you..." The reality of the Lord's meaning would not have been understood by the disciples until later. That night he was to go out to meet "the prince of this world" (14:30), and allow himself to be crucified that the "ungodly" and "sinners" might have opened up to them the way leading to eternal salvation (Rom. 5:6, 8). This was what Christ required of his disciples, with his "new" commandment: that his followers learn to love one another to the point of total self-sacrifice if need be. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13).*

In these present times, the necessity of literally giving one's life for the brotherhood is no longer common. But that does not obviate the principle of spiritually sacrificing ourselves in the cause of Christ and for the wellbeing of his brethren. Christ is the "forerunner" and "example" (Heb. 6:20; 1Pet. 2:21); it is for every disciple to "deny" himself and to "take up his stake" of self-sacrifice and "follow" the Son of God (Mat. 16:24). This is the way which leads to the kingdom of God. ***— J. Ullman.***

ments (compare the five principles of v. 7), to remind his readers of the extent of their obligations.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" — Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18. The Lord Jesus extended the principle to include the contemplation of any sin through the exercise of the carnal mind, as being a trespass against God: Mat. 5:27-28. Spiritual adultery with the world will destroy the *agape* love that should exist between Christ and his Bride: cp. Rom. 2:22; Jas. 4:4; 2Pet. 2:14; Rev. 2:20.

"Thou shalt not kill" — Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17. Cp. Mat. 5:21. Mental hatred might be hidden in the heart, but it is as deadly as murder: 1Jn. 3:15.

"Thou shalt not steal" — Exod. 20:15; Deut. 5:19. Spiritually a person can steal from God, by denying Him his rightful position and service: Mal. 3:8.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness" — Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20; 19:18-19. Cp. Pro. 25:18. This attitude emanates from an evil heart (Mat. 15:19), and was manifested in the actions of the leaders against Christ (ch. 26:59; Mk. 14:56).

This clause is omitted by most other translations.

"Thou shalt not covet" — Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21. The Greek word *epithumeo* means *to set the heart upon; to lust after.* Spiritually, this comprises "loving" the things of this world (1Jn. 2:15), and being guilty of the sin of covetousness, "which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

"And if (there be) any other commandment" — Weymouth has "and all other commandments are summed up in this". Paul refers to any commandment (Gr. *entole; an injunction, authorisation*) necessary for the believer to obey, thus bringing every other divine instruction into the same ambit of obligation. James declares, in listing in his epistle the same commandments as Paul does here: "Whosoever shall *[claim to]* keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all... become a transgressor of the law" (Jas. 2:10-11).

"It is briefly comprehended in this saying" — Gr. *logos;* thus: "in this word", and Paul directs his readers to the Word of God (Lev. 19:18). The thesis stated in v. 8 would have been considered heretical by Judaisers, but Paul proves its reliability and authenticity by demonstrating that the Law of Moses showed that we have continuing obligations towards one another.

"Namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" — Repeating the words of the Master: Mat. 22:39; Mk. 12:31. The word "comprehended" is from the Gr. *anakephalaiomai,* which indicates *to sum up; to gather together in one* (cp. Eph. 1:10). The meaning is emphasised: if we love our neighbor (the "other" of v. 8) we will not offend against him in any way.

VERSE 10

"Love worketh" — The Greek word *ergazomai* means *to toil,* thus, to labor incessantly. *Agape* will not permit one to tire in the work, continuing to maintain its effectiveness (1Cor. 13:7-8). Love seeks only the good of others, though the manifestation of a truly godly love does not always seem like it, for, "faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Pro. 27:6). Frequently, in the service of the Truth, one must be seemingly harsh to be kind. That was the case of the Master with Peter who experienced rebuke (Mat. 16:23), and of Paul when he publicly opposed the apostle (Gal. 2:11). Paul experienced the unfriendly attitude of those who should have known better: "The more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2Cor. 12:15). They misunderstood his *agape* love, and rebelled against his well-intentioned exhortations, treating him as an enemy. Paul's love was such that he could not bear to see them acting in a way that would jeopardise their entrance into the kingdom, and therefore, he vigorously opposed them. But this was in true love, for he desired to turn them from the pathway of folly, and that required vigorous discipline. Many imagine love to be a boundless tolerance that sees no evil nor will ever administer a rebuke. On the contrary, the Scripture teaches: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that

loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24), and this is the experience of every child of God (Heb. 12:5-8).

A careful consideration of the words "love" and "hate" as used in scripture will reveal the folly of much that passes current today for love, particularly in relation to child upbringing. Yahweh's way is best, and love is best seen when we seek to help others to the kingdom of God, even by way of a kindly rebuke.

"No ill to his neighbour" — The word "ill" simply means *bad* (Gr. *kakos*). The JB has: "Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbor"; the NEB: "Love hurts nobody". Mere sentimental and accommodating love is often the cause of much distress and trouble, because it is based entirely on emotion. On the other hand *agape* love is that which helps men and women gain the kingdom.

"Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" — As in v. 8 there is here no definite article. WEYMOUTH has: "Love avoids doing any wrong to one's fellow man, and is therefore complete obedience to law"; ROTHERHAM has: "Law's fulness therefore is love". The word rendered "fulfilling" is the same as that rendered "fulness" in ch. 11:12, 25; 15:29. Love "fills up" every requirement of all God's laws for mankind. *Agape* love of God and His Word leads to complying with His will in our conduct towards others, for our attitude will be based upon reverence for God's commandments (2Jn. 6).

The Urgent Need to Observe These Principles — vv. 11-14.

Because of the difficult circumstances in which the brethren then lived, it was needful to bring to their attention these matters of civil responsibilities and the obligations that they should render to their fellowmen. We live in similar times, and should accept the same exhortation.

VERSE 11

"And that" — Compare this phrase with "for this" in v. 9. Paul's point continues, that, having shown that love should motivate the believer in his actions both in society and toward one another, he now draws attention to the urgency of the times, which would prompt them to recognise the present day of opportunity.

Note the Eight Commands for Christ's Disciples:

1. *Cast off the works of darkness: v. 12.*
2. *Put on the armor of light: v. 12.*
3. *Walk decently and be well behaved: v.13.*
4. *Stop revelling and drinking: v. 13.*
5. *Quit all immoral living: v. 13.*
6. *Refrain from quarrelling, contention and jealousies: v. 13.*
7. *Clothe selves with the character of Jesus Christ: v. 14.*
8. *Make no provision for lust: v. 14.*

"Knowing the time" — The Greek word is *kairos* which properly refers to *an occasion; season; period*, thus signifying "divine timing", rather than the usual word for "time": *chronos*. The DIAGLOTT and ROTHERHAM both translate the word as "season", indicating the opportune time when anything is due to be achieved. The season of enlightenment had then recently arrived for the Gentiles, as salvation was being preached on an individual basis. It was necessary for believers to recognise the season, or epoch, in which they were found. The word is also found in 1Cor. 4:5 (the season of the Lord's appearance); 2Cor. 6:2 (the day of salvation); Gal. 6:9 (the period of salvation).

"That now (it is) high time to awake out of sleep" — With the preaching of the Truth to Gentiles, those who had believed were "walking in the light" (1Jn. 1:7), and for them the period of sleep (i.e., of the darkness of ignorance and wickedness) was gone. They were "children of the light and of the day" (see 1Thes. 5:5; Eph. 5:14; Jn. 8:12). In that regard, the believers had a responsibility to act according to that "light" whilst the opportunity remained.

The words "high time" is the Gr. *hora, an hour.* Vine comments that it means "primarily, any time or period fixed by

nature" (see Mat. 14:15; 1Thes. 2:17). The word is in the continuous tense, as though to indicate that the hour of opportunity is always present for us, until the "new day" arrives.

No matter in what age believers may live, it is always important that they be aware of their responsibilities and the dangers which may threaten their faith. But why should those of the first century have a need to remember the times? It could not have related to the second coming of Christ, nor could it have referred to the impending judgments of AD70 in view of the following verse. Therefore, Paul's exhortation is directed to the effects of apostolic preaching in many parts of the Roman world. Increasing numbers of men and women were hearing and accepting the Truth. Consequently this was no time for those ecclesias to become spiritually drowsy or complacent. They had, in fact, a great responsibility to be an example to others, by walking in the light and manifesting the Truth in their lives (cp. 1Thes. 1:6-8). This exhortation applies to believers in every age. It is always "high time" to awaken from a state of moral sloth and indifference. Though "seasons" may change, Paul's message remains unchanged.

"For now (is) our salvation nearer" — Paul is not stating that we are nearer to the coming of the Lord, than when we were baptised. That fact is so obvious as to be meaningless. The word "nearer" is the Greek *egguteron* which can signify *nearer* in time, position or place. The expression, therefore, means that the *principles of salvation* had been brought closer and became clearer to Gentiles since the gospel had been proclaimed at Pentecost. Through the Truth being openly proclaimed and witnessed unto all mankind, Gentile believers were brought much closer to the those principles of salvation than when they had been first preached to the Jews at Jerusalem by the apostles. See Acts 10:28; 15:10, 12, 28-29; Eph. 3:1-7.

Indeed, as we continue in service and dedication in the work of the Truth in this "light of day", we come to more fully appreciate the hand of Providence in our lives, and in that regard, we become "closer" to "salvation" than we were previously. It is, of course, necessary to continue to "*grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2Pet. 3:18). The process will only be completed when the Lord Jesus returns in power and glory to reward his faithful servants with a change to divine nature.

"Than when we believed" — In the use of the personal "our" and "we" in this section, Paul gladly links his own life in the Truth with that of all believers. Like them, he was still growing and maturing in faith, and would continue to develop his spiritual progress, growing closer to Yahweh, so long as he continued to live. But what of the brethren to whom he wrote? Did they follow his wonderful and encouraging example? And what of ourselves in this present evil generation? Are we, daily, "being changed" more fully into the "same image" as that which is seen in the perfection of Christ's character (2Cor. 3:18)?

VERSE 12

"The night is far spent" — The night of ignorance and darkness that for centuries had excluded the Gentiles from the

When Paul refers to the "time" in Rom. 13:11, he does not refer to the second coming of Christ because he elsewhere states: "let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2Thes. 2:2-3). Paul clearly understood that the prophetic Word demanded many things before Christ should return in glory. He was, however, also aware of the limited opportunities for the brethren of that age, in view of the impending judgments upon the Jewish State. His message was urgent to the believers of his day: how much more significant for us, living in these closing days of the Gentile times, when Christ is at the door. — ***J. Knowles.***

benefits of the Law delivered to Israel. But now through the preaching of the apostles, the day of illumination had arrived. Paul reminded the Athenians that God had overlooked the Gentiles' "times of this ignorance... but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

"The day is at hand" — This is not the day of Christ's coming, for that was still some centuries ahead of the apostolic times (cp. 2Thes. 2:2-3). The Greek word for "is at hand" is *eggizo* which means *to make near; approach.* It is found here in the Greek Perfect tense, concerning which one authority explains: "The Perfect tense does not occur very frequently in the New Testament. Its use denotes that the action of the verb is to be regarded as brought to its appropriate conclusion at the time of speaking in such a way that its results still remain in action. The Perfect tense has therefore as much to do with present as with past time, since it describes the present result of a past action" (*The Elements of New Testament Greek*, p. 91). Paul is thus referring to the "day" when the doors leading to salvation were thrown open to Gentile believers throughout the Roman world, which he also describes as the "day of salvation" for Gentiles (2Cor. 6:2). The clarity of the light of Truth has been increasingly spread abroad since the resurrection of Christ and the day of Pentecost, and was being extended further with every passing day.

"Let us therefore cast off" — Gr. *apotithemi,* signifying *to put away.* Vine indicates that the word "denotes, in the Middle Voice, to *put off from oneself, to cast off*" and "in the aorist tense *[here used]*, denoting a definite act". The meaning is illustrated in Acts 7:58, "the witnesses *laid down* their clothes" at the feet of Saul. The sense of the word can be understood in relation to the casting off of clothing worn in the night whilst one is sleeping, so as to replace the nightclothes with those suitable for daily labor. The clothing to be used by the believer is the "armor of light" for active day-time duty.

"The works of darkness" — The word for "works" is *erga,* signifying *toil,* as an effort or occupation. They had previously been completely involved in fleshly activity, such as is indicated in v. 13. Their former life had revolved around "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21), which belong to the night. This change from darkness to light is forecast in Isa. 42:7; cp. Mat. 4:16.

Compare the "works of darkness" with the "good works" of v. 3. See also the exhortations of Jn 3:20 and Eph. 5:11.

"And let us put on the armor of light" — Paul's appeal is that they should come to a better understanding of the divine purpose, for this knowledge would act as armor against the shafts of the enemy. See 2Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:11, 13; 1Thes. 5:5, 8. The expressions Paul here uses, remind us that there is a warfare to be fought, and a battle to be won, and that we need the weapons provided for that purpose. The Truth can fortify us as nothing else in the warfare of life, and being a strong and protective armor of light it can destroy every force of darkness. The latter cannot exist where the former is found.

VERSE 13

"Let us walk honestly" — The margin renders this as "decently". To walk honestly, or decently, is to witness to the society in which we live concerning the Truth that activates and dominates us. This principle is the theme of this chapter.

The Greek word for "walk" is *peripateo,* which describes a thorough walk, thus: "to tread all around, walk at large, or figuratively, to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion). Thus, it indicates the importance of being consistent with our profession of faith wherever we might be found in the circumstances of life.

The word "honestly" is the Greek *euschemonos* which signifies *becomingly; decently;* thus "with propriety of outward conduct" (see use of the word in 1Cor.14:40; 1Thes. 4:12). Such a harmonious and appropriate walk would be a contrast to that which is normal in the lives of most Gentiles, and would demonstrate the outworkings of the power of the Truth within (Phil. 4:8).

"As in the day" — In the full view of the light, so that all can see our consistency of action, as Paul exhorted the Thessalonians: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1Thes. 5:5). Therefore although we remain in the midst of Gentile darkness so far as the general environment is concerned, we should "walk" as though the Sun of Righteousness has already arisen, thus manifesting to all our firm conviction in the certainty of his coming. Let us strive to maintain our integrity before God, so that we joyfully anticipate the coming of the "day" when the earth will be flooded with the glorious light of Christ's personal presence.

"Not in rioting" — Gr. *komos: to let loose,* from *keimai: to lie outstretched.* The word is rendered "revellings" by ROTHERHAM and RSV, and in Gal. 5:21 and 1Pet. 4:3. It particularly relates to rowdy, undisciplined, flamboyant conduct. Such occasions were not uncommon in those times (as in ours!), generally degenerating into extremely raucous and dissolute affairs. Paul's exhortation indicates that brethren might be influenced to imitate such conduct. Therefore, when brethren and sisters gather together socially, and a degree of feasting and relaxation forms part of the activity, we must remember the necessity for good conduct and respectful attitudes. Even in mutual enjoyment of some of the lighter things in life, disciples must always retain the inner and outward dignity which is an integral part of the Christ-like character. If we are striving to develop such a disposition, we will not act in a way that makes fools of ourselves, thereby denigrating the spiritual standards we claim to uphold.

"And drunkenness" — Gr. *methe: an intoxicant.* To become involved in drunken festivals, and to be irresponsible for one's own actions. The Master declared that such folly would be a characteristic of social conditions in the last days: Lk. 21:34. Drunkenness will exclude from the kingdom (Gal. 5:21). Spiritually it speaks of indulgence with the teachings and "festivities" of apostate christendom (Eph. 5:18; Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:2).

"Not in chambering" — Gr. *koite,* signifying *couch, bed* from *keimai, to lie outstretched;* indicating lewd, immodest behaviour. Translated "sexual immorality" (NIV); "debauchery" (RSV). A condition that existed in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), and was widely prevalent in the Roman environment.

"And wantonness" — Gr. *aselgeia: licentiousness;* thus "sensuality, unbridled lust". Such behavior was common in the Roman environment (ch. 1:22-32), as it is today. The word also appears Mk. 7:22; 2Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1Pet. 4:3; 2Pet. 2:7, 18; Jude 4.

"Not in strife" — Gr. *eris: to quarrel.* Thus, rivalry, contention, disputes. See Phil. 2:3; Jas. 3:14.

"And envying" — Gr. *zelos: heat; zeal; jealousy.* The word can be used in a good sense, as "ardor", but here it is used as "jealousy, malice", displaying the unsavory characteristics of human nature. To be avoided by the saints: 1Pet. 2:1.

VERSE 14

"But" — Paul summarises his entire exhortation in one illuminating sentence. In the previous verse he listed six major weaknesses of the flesh, all of which may be manifested in different degrees and ways. Now he provides the answer to all behavioral problems and weaknesses of character.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" — This is a complete action, by which the principles of the flesh are denied, and the way of righteousness is exalted. Paul seems to revert to the argument of ch. 6, as though to remind the believers to renew the commitment they made at their baptism. Such a renewal process is only begun with baptism, and must be continued daily throughout the period of our probation (2Cor. 4:16).

The words "put on" are derived from a Greek word meaning "to go in, to enter as into an envelope or a garment". When clothed with Christ, his spirit and disposition stands between ourselves and the

world, so that we will avoid the sins described in the previous verse.

To be "clothed" in the sense of this verse is a Greek expression signifying to take upon one the complete interests of another; to enter into his views; to be wholly on his side, imitating him in all things. Thus Paul appeals to his readers to renew the principles that they had endorsed at their baptism (cp. Rom. 6:3-4; 12:2; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; Gal. 3:27). Brother Carter comments: "Again we observe that the evil is put away by the good being put on. We rid the evil by exchanging it for the good. We put on Christ by 'not making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof'... The 'flesh' (alias, the 'old man') must die. He must not be fed, looked after, thought about. But God must be the model, and Christ the example".

"And make not provision for the flesh, to (fulfil) the lusts (thereof)" — The word "flesh" is here used to denote the corrupt propensities of human nature, as seen in the examples given (v. 13). However, Paul now asserts that our nature will constantly assert itself, as he also experienced (ch. 7:14-24). It is therefore necessary to positively control the propensities of the flesh. Do not excuse conduct on the grounds that fleshly actions are natural and therefore to be accepted.

In their speech, attitude and way of life, the brethren at Rome were to manifest a great contrast to that revealed by the other citizens of Rome (Rom. 1:8).

The words translated "make provision for" are from the Gr. *pronoia*, signifying *forethought,* from *pronoeo, to consider in advance.* Having an inherited bias to fleshly things, the carnal mind naturally seeks gratification, and chooses ways in which that might be achieved.

It is important that believers not even contemplate alternatives to righteousness, and this is evident in the words of the Master addressed to the Satan who accosted him in the wilderness (Mat. 4): "*It is written...* " His mind being filled with the Spirit-Word, he was able to successfuly combat the temptations presented, and did not allow the proclivities of the flesh to take control.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
PART THREE: ECCLESIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

How the Gospel Must Be Applied within the Brotherhood

Yahweh's Characteristics to be Revealed by Each Member in the Ecclesia

Having dealt with SOCIAL (ch. 12), and CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES (ch. 13), Paul now turns to ECCLESIAL OBLIGATIONS. Each feature of the believer's life — both within and without the Brotherhood — is thus given due consideration by the apostle in his systematic presentation of the Truth. He thus reveals that the gospel is more than a mere set of doctrines; it is a way of life, in which the principles of Christ's sacrifice and atoning work find expression in every aspect of behavior. This section outlining ECCLESIAL RESPONSIBILITIES can be divided into two parts: [1] The Principle: Mutual Consideration (ch. 14); and [2] The Incentive: Christ's Example (ch. 15:1-13). The rules that Paul lays down for ecclesial conduct are such as would provide for the smooth and effective working of any ecclesia, notwithstanding the different environments and conditions that might affect it. Putting into practice the line of action suggested, would remove much friction that otherwise exists in ecclesial life, and allow for the better exposition of the Truth in word and deed.

In this chapter Paul settles some delicate questions regarding the eating of meats and the observance of days. He shows the need to accept differences of opinion (vv. 1-6); to avoid censuring others over non-essential matters (vv. 7-11); and to avoid giving offence by the careful restriction of personal privileges (vv. 12-15). Such questions that were concerning the brethren doubtless arose out of the fact that the ecclesia in Rome consisted of Jewish and Gentile converts. The Jew would find it difficult to adopt the liberal conscience of the Gentile relating to such observances, even as the Gentile would resist Jewish pressure in these matters. The apostle's intention here is to put a stop to all contention on the basis of peace, kindness and love. This he does by the following considerations:

[1] That we have no right to judge another man in this case, for he is the servant of God (vv. 3-4).

[2] That whatever course is taken in these matters, it should be done conscientiously, and with a desire to glorify God (v. 6).

[3] That we must stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account there; and that we, therefore, should not usurp the office of judging (vv. 10-13).

[4] That there is really nothing unclean of itself (v. 14).

[5] That the Truth consists of more important matters than such questions (vv. 17-18).

[6] That we should follow after the things of peace (vv. 19-23).

The principles of this chapter are applicable to all similar questions involving difference of opinion on non-essential or trivial matters, and if properly applied, they would settle much unnecessary controversy between brethren and sisters. Paul therefore deals with two broad divisions to be found in the ecclesia: the "weak brother" and the "strong brother", and explains how each must co-operate with the other, to the general edification of the Body of Christ.

The Principle: Mutual Consideration — vv. 1-23.

The apostle exhorts that formalism, self-righteousness, selfishness and mutual recriminations that might flow from "making provision for the flesh" (ch. 13:14) must be excluded, and mutual consideration and love manifested instead.

VERSE 1

"Him that is weak in the faith" — The RV renders this: "weak in faith", omitting the definite article. ROTHERHAM has "weak in his faith". The expression does not refer to a person who is faulty in his understanding of the fundamental doctrines of the Truth, or who does not appreciate the importance of faith, but to one who is full of doubts as to his own conduct, so that he becomes over-scrupulous in such matters as "eating" and "drinking". The word translated "weak" is from the Greek verb *astheneo*, indicating *strengthless*. Such a person is uncertain in his mind as to what should be done in certain situations, and therefore is "weak in his faith", being unsure of the conviction he should manifest. This leads him to impose restrictions on himself, and others, that go beyond the requirements of the law of Christ, and therefore to sin.

It is important to realise that the most common word for "sin" in scripture signifies "to miss the mark". It indicates the failure of a person who misses the mark by falling short of it, or aiming beyond it. Those who make demands on others that go beyond what Christ requires, miss the mark just as do those also who fall short of his standard in the matter of transgression. Faith is developed from an understanding of the Word (ch. 10:17). Law or ritual that is established in the absence of such is "weak" in that it lacks any real foundation. Advice should not be sought from those who base their concept of what is right upon personal opinion; nor should their views be received in matters of doubtful disputation, for they are not governed by the Word, but by "the precepts of men" (Isa. 29:13).

"Receive ye" — Gr. *proslambano*, from *pros: towards*, and *lambano: to take, or receive.* Hence, "to take to one's self". The word is always in the Middle Voice, signifying some special interest on the part of the one who is receiving. The person to be accepted in friendship is a member of the Body, who, whilst basically sound in the Truth, is in need of special help and guidance in understanding how certain aspects of the Truth must be applied in his or her life, and the limited demands they may make upon others. Such should be received in love, and helped with sympathetic consideration.

"(But) not to doubtful disputations" — The margin renders: "not to judge his doubtful thoughts". The Greek phrase means: "but must not pass judgments on his thoughts".

The word "doubtful" is from the Gr. *diakrisis*, signifying *a judicial estimation.* The "doubts" here mentioned include judgement as to whether or not to eat meats (v. 2); the observance of certain days (v. 5); questions concerning meat and drink (vv. 17, 21).

The word "disputations" is from the Greek *dialogismos,* signifying *distinguishing, discerning, to deliberate.* The expression relates to a mind that wavers, hesitates and is uncertain; and yet which may reach a decision over such matters which is quite unbalanced. Such inability to see issues clearly may prove dangerous and disputatious. The ecclesia is to receive those who are troubled by these conflicting thoughts and doubts, not, however, to judge or condemn them for such, but to help them reach a full conviction of faith.

On this matter, Brother Carter commented: "It is not a question of wrong doctrine that is involved. Neither is it a question of disorderly life. 'Weak in the faith' means, as the context clearly shows, that some were sensitive in conscience concerning eating certain foods. They had not been able to shake off the idea that the eating of certain meats was morally wrong, or that the meat which had been offered to the idol was sacrificial meat, and eating it involved an acknowledgement of the idol. To certain minds asceticism makes a potent appeal, and such would be most influenced".

Paul's following comments indicate that those "strong in their faith" had to understand the convictions of the "weak", and to assist them to a fuller understanding of their responsibilities in Christ. The object was that all parts of the ecclesia might seek a common position in the "Body of Christ" and act in conformity with the divine Head.

VERSE 2

"For one believeth" — Gr. *pisteuo: to have faith* from *pistis, to be persuaded.* This man, in contrast to the "weak" brother, has a firm conviction that he is right, and acts in conformity with the liberty he enjoys in Christ. He knows, for example, that there is no prohibition upon what a person might eat, and therefore he has complete freedom in that regard. On the other hand, the "weak" brother is not so convinced, and therefore "believing" that meat should be excluded, he eats as a vegetarian. Both views (or similar variations) may be found within the ecclesial family, and as long as they are not made a matter of fellowship, might well be permitted. When any such "belief" interferes with ecclesial responsibilities, however, it becomes a matter of fault, and should not be allowed to develop.

"That he may eat all things" — Having freedom to act, providing it did not contravene scriptural instruction. Paul placed himself in the category of those who have liberty in this matter (1Cor. 6:12); however, he refused to exercise his liberty if it were a cause of stumbling to others (see his attitude in 1Cor. 8:4-13).

"Another, who is weak, eateth herbs" — The apostle is not dealing with brethren who have a preference for a certain diet for health reasons, but to those who make it a matter of religious principle and conscience before God.

VERSE 3

"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth" — The "weak" were censorious of the "strong"; the "strong" were contemptuous of the "weak". Both were moved by pride.

The "strong" "despised" their weaker contemporaries. The Greek word is *exoutheneo,* meaning *to consider as nothing,* for they felt that those with a certain conscience were acting in ignorance of the liberty now granted them in Christ. In that attitude they denigrated their brethren.

The "weak" "judged" (Gr. *krino: to distinguish; decide; try; condemn*) their brethren, claiming that such liberty as they enjoyed put them beyond the divine mercy.

How often does the "weak" brother, who sets himself barriers and standards that are not required by the Word, act as an autocrat in an ecclesia, and causes strife by intimidating others in demands of personal matters that cannot be sustained by the instructions of the Spirit. On the other hand, there exists the contemptuous attitude of the brother who is thoroughly convinced that he is right in his freedom, and sustains it by the Word, but goes out of his way to offend the scruples of the "weak", thereby also plunging an ecclesia into discord. Paul advocates that both should show respect and regard for the other.

"For God hath received him" — Gr. *proslambano; to take to oneself,* thus indicating the great privilege of discipleship, through the grace and election of God.

Although "weak" and "strong" have both been "received" by God, the context here appears to refer to the "strong" brother whose faith permits him to eat all things. The "weak" brother held him up for censure, but Paul reminds such that God has received him, and therefore he is beyond the criticism of his fellows, for the Word endorses his action in refusing to conform to various restrictions, not necessarily required by divine instruction. If God had received him, then so should his brethren!

VERSE 4

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" — The "weak" and overly scrupulous are inclined to be critical of all who do not share their views on non-fundamental issues. They forget that God is judge as to who is faithful and who is not. As indicated in earlier verses, the "weak" brother fails to discern that faith in Christ and obedience to his commandments are all-sufficient for salvation. There is no need to append additional rituals or observances to his teachings. Otherwise, the result would be ecclesial chaos, as individual brethren strive to have their particular crotchet incorporated into ecclesial life.

The JB has: "It is not for you to condemn someone else's servant". The word rendered "servant" is not the common *doulos* ("bondslave") but *oiketes,* from *oikeo: to dwell* and *oikos: a house;* thus a household companion. The "weak" brother should accept without argumentation that the "strong" brother is a "household companion" *in the house of God,* and should be acknowledged as such.

"To his own master he standeth or falleth" — That is: "He is answerable to his Master, who is God; and not to the 'weaker' brother." The scriptures warn against judging another man's servant (Pro. 30:10; Jas. 4:12), how much more God's servants! The servant is responsible only to his master (Gr. *kurios: lord, authority; controller*), and receives his approval or censure according to how he

Weak or Strong?

Whether a brother suffers from the kind of "weakness" described in verse 3, or whether he considers himself to be numbered among the "strong" because he has right on his side, one fact remains clear. Differences amongst brethren which result from such disparate points of view will never be resolved from the lofty heights of self-righteousness. Of all the sins which "so easily beset us", pride is probably the most common and is an ever present danger. Here are two aspects of this example of waywardness at work. On the one hand a brother may fully understand the Truth but exhibit weakness by incorrectly applying the ideals and principles involved, thus causing uncertainty in his own mind and discordancy within the ecclesia. On the other hand, a brother, knowing what is correct, may demand his right to do as he pleases in such matters, meeting the objections of his weaker brother with belligerent, thoughtless opposition. Which of the two is the greater transgressor? Surely, both are at fault. It is God whom we are called to serve, not Self. For the latter usually is motivated by personal pride. Therefore, we should "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28).

reacts to his master's instructions.

Paul's exhortation shows that he was very much aware of the tyranny and dictatorial demands of the "weak" who might throw ecclesias into turmoil through their insistence upon strict rules of personal conduct that are not endorsed by the Word. In Gal. 5:15 he warned of the evil effect of the backbiting that inevitably follows such a course of action.

"Yea, he shall be holden up" — He will not be allowed to fall into temptation, or to displease his Master, merely on the grounds of his freedom of service. The Greek word *histemi* means *to stand*, and also appears in the next phrase. God will support his position, and on behalf of the Father the Lord Jesus will approve him in the day of assize (Lk. 12:8).

"For God is able to make him stand" — It is his own Master who determines the issues of salvation, and who offers the power and liberty of His grace to those he selects. The RV has "Lord" instead of "God"; ROTHERHAM has "his Master". This suggests the principle of ownership. His Lord will commend the "strong" brother who is moved by what the Word requires, notwithstanding the judgment of the "weak". We ought not to demand of our brethren unnecessary restrictions which are not specifically expressed in the scriptures. The Master censured the Pharisees for this very attitude: Mat. 23:4, 23.

VERSE 5

"One man esteemeth one day above another" — To illustrate the principle just enunciated, the apostle brings forward the question of the religious observance of special days, such as sabbaths, feasts, fasts and holy days, which were a feature of the Jewish ritual of worship (cp. Gal. 4:9-10). The JB has: "One man keeps certain days as holier than others, and another considers all days to be equally holy". Many Jewish believers desired to retain the customs of the Law, since they found it difficult to "esteem every day alike" because they had been taught to observe certain days as sacred (Acts 21:20). They were at liberty to continue their former practice (1Cor. 9:20), though not to the neglect of regular meetings of the ecclesia (Heb. 10:25), nor to demand it of others as necessary for salvation. They were not to violate any other commandment of the Lord by desiring to continue their practice of putting aside certain days for worship. Paul took a severe stand against any who taught with such lack of wisdom (Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:18).

"Another esteemeth every day alike" — The word "esteemeth" (Gr. *krino: to distinguish; decide; judge for oneself*) indicates that the Gentiles believers, not having been brought up according to Jewish customs, did not regard those days as of any special significance, and therefore chose to consider every day similarly. It does not mean that he treated every day as secular; he may regard every day as dedicated in service to Yahweh. Notwithstanding this principle, however, the believer would be expected to conform to the apostolic practice of fellowship every "first day of the week" (Mt. 26:17; Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 16:2), and to support the

"One man esteemeth one day above another" (v. 5).

*Whilst Paul is careful not to condemn the scrupulous, he does not forbid the liberty. What he does do is to insist upon the upholding of genuine moral principles. It is true that believers should count every day of their lives as holy unto Yahweh, and dedicated to the service of God. If this was not correctly understood, Paul knew there would be pitfalls. He recognised the danger of legalism becoming a force within the Brotherhood, which could add fuel to the argument of the Judaizers who insisted on upholding the principle of law. Wherever this was accepted, the paramount importance of faith became gravely endangered. Paul would strongly oppose any philosophy which basically denied the principle: "By **grace** are ye saved through **faith**; and that **not of yourselves**: it is the **gift** of God" (Eph. 2:8).* ***— J. Ullman.***

ecclesia in any special activity.

"Let every man" — These words indicate that Paul stood in defence of *freedom of choice* in regard to non-essential matters. This ruled out the right which some felt they may have possessed to impose their will upon others in regard to these questions.

"Be fully persuaded in his own mind" — The margin has "fully assured". The Greek *plerophoreo* is an expressive and definite word signifying *to carry out fully; completely convince; entirely accomplish.* It is in the Passive tense, indicating that each one should surrender themselves to their own personal conviction and not be dominated by others. In v. 1 Paul warned against sowing seeds of doubt in a brother's mind; here he urges each one to be fully convinced in their service to Yahweh. To the apostle, the observance or otherwise of the holy days was a matter of no importance in itself. He was content that each person should act according to his own conscientious convictions on the subject, so long as one did not try and impose his will on the other, nor superimpose these matters of personal opinion on the gospel as being necessary for justification.

VERSE 6

"He that regardeth the day" — The word "regardeth" is the Gr. *phroneo: to exercise the mind;* thus he exercises his conscience in selecting certain days in which he might give special attention to matters of his faith and worship.

"Regardeth it unto the Lord" — He puts aside certain days in order to give special emphasis to worship or prayer. The scrupulous Jewish believer might desire to observe the Jewish sabbath or other feast and fast days on the Jewish calendar, and does so because he believes that this assists his spiritual development.

The word "regardeth" is translated "observes" in the NASB.

"And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard (it)" — He does not observe specific days, realising that the sacrifice of Christ has removed "the law of ordinances" (Col. 2:13-17; Eph. 2:11-22), and that such formalism is not essential to salvation.

"He that eateth, eateth to the Lord" — This concerns primarily the dietary instructions of the Law, and the scruples that a Jewish believer might have concerning clean and unclean meats (see Acts 10:14). However, for whatever reason, the believer might wish to exercise discretion concerning that which he eats, and this is to be accepted, provided that the matter does not become a principle essential to belief and salvation.

"For he giveth God thanks" — For that which he received, recognising that Yahweh has provided for his needs.

"And he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" — He makes a different decision, determining to refuse certain meats on the grounds of his conscience, but remains just as consistent in his service and worship as his fellow-believer who "eats".

Both he who observed the day and he who abstained from so doing gave thanks to God; the former for providing the day and the food; the latter for providing liberty in such matters. Both desired to serve God, each in their own way, and this motive on the part of both should be mutually respected. Both needed to manifest the outworkings of faith in themselves, without involving or condemning others (see ch. 14:22). These principles must be applied to all decisions of life, so that "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1Cor. 10:31).

The Roman Apostasy has perverted this instruction, repeating the spirit of Judaism in restricting the liberties in Christ, as Paul prophesied of it in 1Tim. 4:3. In this the church demands of its followers an adherence to its unreasonable demands, and thereby denies them the way to life after the fashion of the Pharisees (cp. Mat. 23:13).

VERSE 7

"For none of us liveth to himself" — The words "none of us" embrace all

believers: both Jew and Gentile. Thus Paul reminds his readers that "the middle wall of partition" between Jews and non-Jews no longer exists, if they are united in the one Body of Christ. The words also allude to the possibility of conflict between Jewish and Gentile believers over these matters, because Gentile disciples were often puzzled at the way in which Jews clung to elements of a law to which Gentiles had never been bound, and of which they had little or no knowledge.

Further, in this verse Paul refers to the exercise of liberty as opposed to that of compulsion. In "living" the disciple actively applies the freedom from the rituals of the Law that he now has in Christ. The brother who recognised that he was at liberty to do certain things because he was delivered from the restrictions of the law, saw in this activity a way of life. But he had to live it "as unto the Lord", and this did not permit him to make inappropriate demands on others, or to flout his liberty in such a way as would cause others to offend (cp. 1Cor. 8:13). Thus it is "to himself" (in respect to his own life) that he "liveth" (decides what he may do and acts accordingly).

"And no man dieth to himself" — Paul's care in handling this matter is a great exhortation in itself. "For none of us lives, and equally no one of us dies, *for himself alone*" (NEB). He shows that if we *live* (through freedom from the Law), we live for Christ; if we *die* (self-denial), we die for Christ. Both must be done in the spirit of self-sacrifice in the cause of Christ (1Cor. 6:19-20).

To "die to himself" means to deny himself, imposing restrictions beyond those required in the Word. "For Christ's sake" he denies himself certain liberties, and, as with his companion who "liveth to himself", this man's "dying" was also "to himself". His sacrifices were not to be merely a matter of personal whim, nor was he to impose his restrictions on others.

Paul is not concerned with physical life and death in this passage, but with their figurative meaning, as applying to the exercise or denial of the freedom which is appropriate to the life in Christ. Whatever we do or deny should be motivated by service "unto the Lord".

VERSE 8

"For" — Paul proceeds to elaborate upon this principle, and to emphasize the importance of recognising our responsibility to uphold the status and work of the Lord, and not to merely parade our own supposed righteousness (cp. Mat. 23:5).

"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord" — The "strong" brother believes he has liberty to eat or regard every day as equal in his worship before God. He exercises that liberty as a means of emphasising his responsibility to the Truth, by determining, in whatever he allows himself, to always bear in mind the requirements of Christ's disciples, and to uphold and glorify God in the freedom he enjoys.

"And whether we die, we die unto the Lord" — In the restrictions a "weak" disciple might impose upon himself, he must recognise that his sacrifice of freedom and his "keeping" of certain days as more sacred than others, must be an act of service to Christ. The Truth must be elevated in such sacrifices.

"Whether we live therefore, or die" — Paul revealed both attitudes in his service, being prepared to "die daily" (1Cor. 15:31) and to be "crucified with Christ" and yet be able to say: "nevertheless, I live" (Gal. 2:20), for he enjoyed a freedom from the demands of the Law, and yet recognised the need for discipline in life.

"We are the Lord's" — A simple expression, but of profound significance, and one we must never forget. Whatever our decision in regard to meats or days, we must always uphold the superior position of the Master, and the conscience of other brethren. Being his servants, our actions must conform to his will, and honor his status (cp. Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:17, 23).

How can we allow ourselves to become diverted from the main purpose of the Truth in our lives by concentrating thoughts and actions upon unimportant matters? Christ has not only rescued us from the effects of sin and death, he has

claimed us for his own. We belong to him (1Cor. 3:23), and are responsible to fulfil his will in our lives.

VERSE 9

"For to this end" — Gr. *eis tauto gar*, signifying *for this thing*. Christ perfectly balanced the negative and positive principles in his life and death, that he might be Lord of all (see Acts 2:36; 10:36). These principles are represented in the Memorial bread and wine, that require the believer to appreciate the twin elements of denial and of freedom in the service of the Truth. Those two aspects are revealed in the bread which represents the Word made flesh, and the wine which portrays the Lord's life poured out in will obedience to the divine will. Whilst we have the liberty of action (the "wine" of resurrection) in Christ, we also have to "deny the flesh" (the "bread" of sacrifice and affliction) as he did.

The purpose in mind is that there should be developed a people who manifest both the death and resurrection of Christ in their lives, and who will constitute his "brethren" (Heb. 2:10-13).

"Christ both died, and rose, and revived" — The word "both" is not found in the best Greek texts here, and all later versions omit "and rose" (RV, NASB, DIAG., CONC., NSV, etc). Thus the RV has "Christ died and revived"; the NASB has "For to this end Christ died and lived again".

In his death Christ suffered the greatest humiliation imaginable. But he had an objective in view: that he would rise from the grave and become "revived" with divine nature (Jn. 10:17-18). He lived after dying because of his perfect obedience to the divine will (Acts 2:24), and thus has pre-eminence over his brethren, seeking to lead them to the same glorious end (Col. 1:18). Should not Christ's brethren follow his example? They must be prepared to humble themselves "under the mighty hand of God" in all aspects of life, that "He might exalt them in due time" (1Pet. 5:6). Already Paul has taught in this epistle that Christ "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification" (ch. 4:25). This has established him as both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

"That he might be Lord both of the dead and living" — His victory over death in himself (Heb. 2:14) has given him authority (Rom. 1:4) over all those whom Yahweh has selected for glory, whether they die or remain, for "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (Gr. *phthano, to anticipate; precede*) them which are asleep" (1Thes. 4:14-15). Death does not negate the claim of Christ's authority upon us, for we shall be raised to judgment.

Similarly, in dealing with those who "die" (deny themselves), or those who "live" (exercise freedom), as mentioned in v. 7, Paul reminds both parties that they also must account for their attitudes and actions. Therefore they should be constrained by the divine will, for both shall yet be called to judgment according to their reaction to the requirements of the Truth (Acts 10:42; 2Tim. 4:1; 2Cor. 5:15).

Notice that Paul reverts the usual order of "the living and the dead". Here he speaks of "the dead and the living", to stress a spiritual lesson. We must first *die* (by putting "the flesh" to death: ch. 6:5-6) that we might *live* eternally with Christ in the glory of divine nature (ch. 8:17-18).

VERSE 10

"But why dost thou judge thy brother?" — In view of the fact that they will be required to account before the Lord for their own actions, why exercise undue authority against brethren? Paul now applies the argument of judgment pointedly to the questions he has been discussing. He speaks here to the "weak" brother who chose to judge the freedom in Christ exercised by his "strong" brother. Those who were concerned with the food they ate, or setting one day above another, condemned those who did not manifest the same scruples, and in this way they "judged their brother".

Notice that Paul has progressed from referring to "another man's servant" (v. 4) to speaking of "thy brother", to emphasize the family relationship in the Truth appending to their responsibility for each other.

"Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" — To consider him of no account. The Greek *exoutheneo* means *to make utterly nothing of.* It is translated "despise" in v. 3. The term "brother" in this context implies the need to promote an affectionate "family" bond, based upon mutual respect for the good of all (cp. v. 15).

Paul now speaks to the "strong" brother who despises the scruples of his "weaker" companion. Not having such scruples of conscience the "strong" were "setting at nought" the more scrupulous by going out of their way to do the very things that caused offence to their brethren.

Both were wrong in their attitude, although both may have claimed scriptural warrant for it, and therefore both were in danger of condemnation at the judgment seat of Christ.

"For" — Since we will all face the same tribunal, being servants and subjects alike, what right have we to sit in judgment on each other in the place of the Lord? Christ will commend both the "strong" and the "weak" if both have been motivated by a desire to glorify God, and to uphold His principles of truth and service.

"We shall all" — A dramatic choice of words! Paul indicates that he also will be included among those who must face Christ's judgment. Therefore all who are amenable to the Judgment Seat of Christ should think carefully before passing judgment upon their brethren concerning unessential matters (cp. v. 4).

"Stand" — Gr. *paristemi* (from *para, near,* and *stemi, stand*) signifying *to stand by or beside.* Here it is used in the middle voice to emphasize that which is done for oneself. This will be a solemn moment in our life, when we come close to the judgment seat, and witness the wonderful array of divine beings surrounding the Lord Jesus Christ in the future Court of Assize. This will be the final step in our redemption, at which all imperfections will be clearly manifested (2Cor. 5:10), acknowledged and removed according to the forgiveness and mercy of the Great Judge. Thus, the judgment seat is not merely a place of decision, or of reward, but an essential element in the final "redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23), properly fashioned by the removal of every "blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

"Before the judgment seat of Christ" — Paul clearly taught that the judgment seat will be set at a specific location (2Thes. 2:1), so that both righteous and unrighteous will be gathered together for judgment (Jn. 5:29; 2Cor. 5:10). This will be a crucial and important part of the refining process for the redeemed, in which sin will be utterly condemned, and in the rejection of the wicked the righteousness of Yahweh will be upheld, and the perfection of His beloved sons achieved.

Christ is the subject of the sentence, since he is the one who will judge. When we stand before that awesome throne of decision, there will be no place for the censoring of our brethren, or for defiance of their scruples. The Lord will be the sole judge in that day. Instead of being concerned about the seeming "deficiencies" of another; each will be concerned with his own fate, and conscious of his own inabilities and failings. That being the case, reasons Paul, let us cease from undue criticism or defiance of others, and concentrate together upon preparing for the future, with constant examination of self.

VERSE 11

"For it is written" — Paul cites Isa. 45:23, which is set in a prophecy speaking of a coming deliverer who would effect the divine purpose in destroying the enemies of Israel, and saving the nation. Against the background of the defeat of Babylon by Cyrus (v. 1), the prophet declares that Yahweh will demand compliance to His will by all peoples. As the greater antitype, the Lord Jesus will fulfil

the prophecy concerning Cyrus, recover the people of Israel, and establish his universal control over a world at peace.

"As I live, saith the Lord" — A significant statement drawing attention to the solemnity and absolute assurance of the prophecy cited. This declaration was usually announced at a time of national transgression, as in Num. 14:21, 28. See also Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; 46:18; Ezek. 5:11; 14:16, 20; 16:48, etc.

"Every knee shall bow to me" — Citing Isa. 45:23, where the prophet speaks of the humility and homage due to Yahweh, the great Sovereign of the heavens. Paul alludes to the same passage in Phil. 2:10-11, relating it to the Lord Jesus Christ, teaching that he is the manifestation of his Father, confirmed through the principle of his perfect service, atoning sacrifice, and ultimate exaltation (vv. 6-9). It is "at the name of Jesus *[Yah shall save]*

*Note the terms "**every** knee... **every** tongue" in verse 11. This refers to the Kingdom Age, when "all families of the earth shall be blessed" and when "the earth shall be filled with the **knowledge** of the glory of Yahweh" (Gen. 12:3; Hab. 2:14). In that day, men and women throughout the earth will come to a sound, clear knowledge of the Truth, and learn to walk in the ways of Yahweh. The implication is clear: if such conduct will be manifest when the kingdom has been established, should not these principles be foremost in the minds of believers in this present evil age? It is interesting to note that when Paul appeals to this same passage from Isa. 45:23 in his epistle to the Philippians (ch. 2:10), he applies the quotation to Christ personally: "... at the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow". He changes the original because "God hath highly exalted him (Christ), and given him a name which is above every name" (v. 9). That is, the **Name of Yahweh:** "Yah Saves" (Jesus, Yahoshua). In the Kingdom Age, as now, the Lord Jesus will be a perfect manifestation of Yahweh.*

that every knee shall bow", for the fulness of the Deity will be seen in one who sacrificed the flesh, and was raised to glory.

"And every tongue shall confess to God" — The Gr. word rendered "confess" is *exomologeo,* signifying, *to acknowledge; profess from the heart; to praise.* The NEB has: "every tongue acknowledge God"; Bullinger defines the word: "to speak out the same things with or as another; to confess fully". The phrase is in the Middle Voice, signifying that people will *readily acknowledge* the greatness and goodness of Yahweh. They will acknowledge the reality of the divine glory seen in the personage of His Son, as Paul declares in Phil. 2:11. In doing so they will testify to the means used to achieve that glory: through the crucifixion of the flesh and the elevation of the principles of truth and righteousness. This will occur as a result of the just and equitable judgment that will then be manifested (Isa. 26:9).

Thus, if all mankind will in the future exalt the Father and acknowledge His righteousness, then it is proper for believers to do so now, thereby rejecting personal gratification, recognising the supremacy of the risen Christ, and obeying his expressed will (see v. 9).

VERSE 12

"So then" — A significant word: *ara,* meaning *accordingly; therefore, consequently.* The Old Testament references Paul quotes (Isa. 45:23) are given a present application, teaching that disciples must face the reality of their accountability to God. This means that a time and place for judgment is inevitable.

"Every one of us" — All those responsible through knowledge; thus both groups referred to in this chapter (the "weak" and the "strong") will be required to similarly submit to the process of judgment at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

"Shall give account of himself to God" — To reveal the extent to which their actions have been governed by the fact that Christ is their Lord, and the one whose will they should obey. The word "account" is the Gr. *logos:* defined as *a*

word spoken; a thought; speech; eloquence; doctrine; reason; thoughts gathered together in the mind and expressed in words; a conception or idea. The word expresses the thoughts and impressions of the mind as well as the actions that result from those thoughts. The NEB has: "answer for himself". In view of the context, we could paraphrase this statement: "Each of us will have to *answer* as to whether we have responded to the *words* of instruction which the Lord Jesus has endeavored to teach us". An awareness of these things should cause every believer to look *inwardly* upon themselves, rather than unjustly denounce their brethren (cp. Mat. 7:1-5).

The judgment seat will reveal how much of the "mind of the spirit" (Rom. 8:27) has been developed in each individual, and whether their names appear in the "Lamb's book of life" (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12).

The account is said to be "given to God", although it will be His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who presides over the judgment seat (Rom. 14:10), for transgression is an affront to the divine law (cp. Psa. 51:4), and needs to be removed from sight by forgiveness (Mat. 12:36). By confession and abjuration of sin, Yahweh will be upheld and honored, and His people will be finally perfected, freed from all blemish and made ready for the kingdom (Eph. 5:27).

VERSE 13

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more" — The NIV has: "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another". This does not refer to judgment on whether matters are right or wrong, but as to whether certain non-essential issues were critical to salvation or not. Both classes in the ecclesia were adversely judging the other: the "weak" brother because the "strong" were not observing the restrictions he laid down: and the "strong" because the "weak" were moved by the observance of days, meats, etc., which he knew were of no consequence. Neither "strong" nor "weak" are in a position to adopt the superior attitude of the judge, and all critical and censorious feelings must cease.

The terms used in this verse indicate that this question had been a real problem within the ecclesia at Rome. Paul urges that such conduct should cease because it is quite unjustified. Let them exercise mutual tolerance towards one another on matters of unimportance, putting away bitter disputation and warped judgmental conduct. Let the brethren concentrate their minds upon vital issues, uniting and supporting one another on matters of major importance, preserving the purity of the Truth, maintaining sound standards of belief and practice, preaching the Truth to a perishing world. They had been called to the Truth to imitate the life and works and self-denial of the One who had died for them. This was the great work in which they should have been totally involved. Let them concentrate fully upon their commitment to the cause of Christ, and they would disentangle themselves from these other matters of argumentation which were profitless and destructive.

"But judge this rather" — "If you wish to exercise judgment, do so wisely and soberly, examining the effect your *own words* and your *own actions* may have upon others".

"That no man put a stumbling-block" — Gr. *proskomma: a stub; to cause to stumble.* The word is also used in 1Cor. 8:9. In Rom. 9:32 this term is used of the Jews who sought justification by works. In imposing restrictions on "days", etc, the "weak" brother was tainted with principles of Judaism, and though there was nothing wrong in him observing such rituals for himself, it became wrong when he demanded that others do so.

"Or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" — The phrase "occasion to fall" is from the Gr. *skandalon: a trapstick (bent sapling); snare* from the root *kampto, to twist* or *bend.* Vine says that "the word is always used metaphorically, and ordinarily of anything that arouses prejudice, or becomes a hindrance to others, or causes them to fall by the way". In this

appeal the apostle refers to the "strong" who, by their contemptuous disregard of the scruples of others, offended the conscience of those who were "weak" (1Cor. 8:10). The "strong" brother enjoyed a certain liberty in conscience, but ought not to insist that his brother "defile his conscience" (1Cor. 8:7) by following his example. To do so would be to "set at nought" (Rom. 14:10) his brethren, and lead them into transgression. True love avoids such attitudes; real respect for Christ as Lord causes brethren to look with sympathy and understanding on others.

VERSE 14

"I know" — Gr. *eido: to see; know, perceive;* used in the sense of being fully observant; to look closely at a matter.

Paul turns to the "strong" who were enlightened as to the insignificance of ritual and ordinances, recognising that salvation is not dependent upon mere law and injunctions. He appeals to them to avoid harming the "weak" by tempting them, either by word or example, to disobey their own consciences, and thereby fall from the standards of action which they had set themselves.

"And am persuaded" — Gr. *peitho,* which means *to convince; assent; to bind together.* Thus, to induce and seek to win to one's view. The NEB has: "I am absolutely convinced". Paul's unequivocal assurance results from his strong identification with the teaching of Christ.

"By the Lord Jesus" — On the road to Damascus, Saul had been miraculously visited by the Lord Jesus, and his life dramatically changed. Previously a devoted "Pharisee of the Pharisees" (Acts 26:5), he now realised that the Jewish regulations were of little account in the matter of salvation. Instead, he saw in the Lord's life and words a consistent attitude to conscience, and must have been aware of the Master's teaching, as in Mk. 7:14-23. The Lord's example of faithful persistency should motivate all disciples.

"That (there) is nothing unclean of itself" — This must not be wrested out of its context; Paul is speaking of meats considered under the Law of Moses (see Acts 10:15). The word "unclean" signifies that which is *common* or *unhallowed* (from the Gr. *koinos* meaning *common*). Note that at this stage of his exposition Paul aligns himself with the conviction exhibited by the stronger brother, but insists that the stronger brother must exercise his liberty in Christ in a legitimate and loving way, showing great care for the welfare of the weaker brother. Paul had no option but to take this position; to do otherwise would have been to give the impression that he was ready to return to "the weak and beggarly elements" of the Law (Gal. 4:9). His only other course would have been to "sit on the fence" on the issue. But the apostles did not so act; they stood firmly in defence of that which was right whenever the occasion required such a commitment.

"But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him (it is) unclean" — See Paul's further explanation in 1Cor. 8:7-10. The word "esteemeth" is *logizomai,* meaning, *to take an inventory, estimate, to reckon.* It has the idea of carefully considering the situation. In this regard, the conscience of the "weak" brother is to be respected. If this brother were to eat certain foods he considered to be "unclean", he would be defiled, not because the food is in itself offensive to God, but because his action would be an offence against his conscience. To this person "it is unclean", for as a "doubtful eater" he cannot give God thanks (v. 6). If a person continues to do that which he believes to be wrong, his conscience is defiled thereby. Such actions will affect him practically, for it will break down principles in his mind.

The weak brother, though defective in his understanding of these issues, was basically sound in the Truth. Until he could be more correctly educated to a better understanding, the stronger brother should bear with his weaker brother, taking care not to offend his conscience. We should remember that the word "unclean" *(koinos)* in this context would shock any

Jew who had been steeped in the traditions of Jewish religious life.

VERSE 15

"But" — Paul introduces a danger that might occur by a false action against the "weaker" brother.

"If thy brother be grieved" — Gr. *lupeo: to distress*, from *lupe, to be sad.* "If you brother is outraged by what you eat, then your conduct is no longer guided by love" (NEB). The "weak" brother would be scandalised at the action of the brother who considered himself to be "strong". If he continued to eat in defiance of the *obvious* reaction of his brother, he would do so from a thoughtless self-righteous motive. Such inconsiderate conduct defied the Lord's command: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love *(agapate)* one another; *as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another" (Jn. 13:34).

"With thy meat" — Gr. *dia broma:* "through food", especially those things allowed or forbidden by Jewish law.

This could include a reference to the incident involving Esau, who through his desire for food set at nought the will of God. There was a danger that the "strong" brethren might act like Esau in their contemptuous disregard for the scruples of their weaker brethren.

"Now walkest thou not charitably" — The word "walkest" (Gr. *peripateo: to trample around*) figuratively signifies the whole ambit of a person's activity. The word "charitably" (Gr. *agape*) indicates an attitude of sacrificial love by which the concerns and feelings of another are brought into account. Such a law of consideration should govern all the actions of the "strong" brother (cp. Rom. 13:10; 5:8). Thus the text should be "according to love", as in the NASB.

Paul makes a serious charge against the "strong". Such a brother was violating the commandments of the Lord in regard to brotherly love *(agape).* He was obviously moved by self-justification, rather than out of concern for another.

"Destroy not him with (thy) meat" — Gr. "to destroy *utterly*" (Bull.). The weak brother could become so deeply offended in these circumstances that he might harden his heart irrevocably, and even be caused to leave the Truth. Thus, because of the seriousness of this question Paul has patiently expounded the matter with the objective of giving a clear explanation as to how this problem should be resolved.

"For whom Christ died" — See 1Cor. 8:7-12. In dying, Christ sacrificed his own will to serve others. He had died for the "weak" brother as well as for the "strong". The "strong" brother who had a greater understanding of the Word and thus the capacity to clearly perceive the implications involved in this issue, was to remember that all those for whom Christ had died were "weak" and "erring"; that Christ has sacrificed *his own life* in service to others. Therefore the "strong" should follow the example of the Master, in striving to teach his weaker brother the same principles (1Pet. 2:21-24).

VERSE 16

"Let not then your good" — The Gr. *agathos* signifies that which is good in character or constitution, and therefore beneficial in its effect. It thus defines God's will which is revealed in His Word. The "strong" had a knowledge of that will, but it was possible that their uncharitable action towards brethren with lesser knowledge could cause it to be ridiculed. We are exhorted to prove God's "good" will (Rom. 12:2); to cleave to it (ch. 12:9); to do it (ch. 13:3; Gal. 6:10); to work for it (Rom. 2:10; Eph. 4:28; 6:8); to follow it (1Thes. 5:15); to be zealous of it (1Pet. 3:13); to imitate it (3Jn. 11); to overcome evil with it (Rom. 12:21). Governments are guided by God to perform it (Rom. 13:4). It stems exclusively from God (Mat. 19:17; Jas. 1:17).

"Be evil spoken of" — That which was considered good was their understanding of God's will, but this could be ridiculed if they manifested an uncharitable attitude towards others. The Greek word is *blasphemeo: to speak impiously* and has the idea of that which is scurrilous

and critical of good. A tremendous responsibility rests upon all who have a knowledge of the divine way to reveal it in love, as God Himself has commended to us (Rom. 5:8). Inconsistent action by disciples can cause the Truth to be blasphemed, and held to ridicule by others (see 2Sam. 12:14).

VERSE 17

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink" — The attainment of the kingdom is not dependent upon discrimination in matters of eating and drinking (vv. 14-15). Instead it is concerned with the much weightier matters of principles relating to righteousness, joy and peace, in a spirit of holiness.

"But righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" — Three great blessings of the Truth. ***Righteousness*** (Gr. *dikaiosune: equity of character; a performance of that which is just and right)* speaks of justification by faith (ch. 5:1) as being the *basis* of our hope. It has its token in baptism and is revealed in a consistent and faithful way of life. ***Peace*** (Gr. *eirene,* from *eiro, to join*) indicates the benefit of fellowship, both with one another and with God and Jesus Christ, a unique condition which comes only from an understanding of righteousness (see Jn. 14:27). ***Joy*** (Gr. *chara: cheerfulness, delight*) "in a holy spirit" points to the rejoicing that stems from a true understanding and appreciation of the Word, and its application in fellowship. The expression "Holy Spirit" in this context refers to the influence of the Truth when its power is evident (Jn. 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1Jn. 5:6). There is no definite article in the text *(pneuma hagio),* and should read: "in a holy spirit", or "a spirit of holiness", as seen in an attitude of mind and outworked in "righteousness and peace".

The three principles describe three stages in spiritual development: commencing with a recognition of what is right, moving to the manifestion of such an attitude in harmonious relationship with God and with fellow-disciples, and concluding with the vision of exquisite joy that comes from the power of the Spirit. The first was referred to by the Lord Jesus in Mat. 6:33; the second was granted to his disciples in Jn. 14:27; the third was promised to his faithful followers in Jn. 14:17.

Thus *Righteousness* speaks of **Justification**; *Peace* speaks of **Reconciliation;** *A spirit of Holiness* speaks of **Sanctification.**

VERSE 18

"For he that in these things serveth Christ" — The word "serveth" (Gr. *douleuo*) signifies to serve as a bondslave (cp. ch. 12:11). A slave is one who subjects his will to that of another. When we serve Christ in the "things" mentioned in v. 17, our service will honor his Father, and benefit His people. In such a spirit of harmony, when brethren and sisters are of one mind, considering the benefits they can bring to one another, rather than pursuing aims related to self-justification, the ecclesia will become united in bonds of fellowship and joy.

"(Is) acceptable to God" — The first and foremost objective of our service: Mat. 6:33. Service given for the benefit of man without the acceptability of God is of little value. The word *euarestos: fully agreeable* is also found in Rom. 12:1, 2.

"And approved of men" — Here the word *dokimos* has the idea of testing for approval. It signifies *to assay; examine; test;* hence to approve. Brethren of faith will examine our stand in the light of the Word, and approve us, and will be encouraged to follow such an example. Seeing the wise and godly attitude of the brother who promotes "righteousness, peace and joy" they will be intellectually moved by a desire to also serve Christ acceptably. Brother Carter comments: "Here is a beautiful use of liberty, refraining from its exercise, to serve — as a bondslave who has no liberty — Christ. Men who see the act approve; God who knows the motive, is well-pleased".

VERSE 19

"Let us therefore" — In order to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God

(v. 17), and acceptance by Christ and men (v. 18), we must seek for whatever brings them about. All bickering over meats, drinks, days and non-essential things must be stopped, and that which edifies others must be taught (v. 19).

"Follow after" — The Greek *dioko* has the idea of actively pursuing; to "run swiftly in order to catch". Vine states that its primary meaning is "to put to flight". It does not suggest the idea of lagging behind, but rather hastening eagerly towards, in order to acquire its objective. Thus, to imitate the action of the Psalmist: "seek peace, and pursue it" (Psa. 34:14). The word *dioko* also appears in Phil. 3:12 as "follow after", to describe the intense desire of the apostle to attain to his Lord; and in v. 14 as "press" to emphasize the energy and determination he applied to that project.

"The things which make for peace" — The things of the Truth are those which we should "follow after (diligently pursue), for they reveal the wisdom which is from above, being "first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. 3:17). The word "peace" (Gr. *eirene*) signifies *to unite; to join together as one;* thus suggests the idea of fellowship, as in Rom. 14:17 (see notes).

Bullinger comments that this word *eirene* is influenced by the Hebrew *shalom*, which signifies "untroubled, undisturbed wellbeing; oneness; unity; fellowship" and therefore describes a state of being joined together in one (see Jn. 17:21). This is the *peace* which "passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), concerning which Paul adds: "The *lessons* I taught you, the *tradition* I have passed on, all that you heard me say or saw me do, *put into practice;* and the God of *peace* will be with you" (v. 9, NEB).

"And things wherewith one may edify another" — The word "edify" is from the Greek *oikodome* (from *oikos, a home,* and *demo, to build*) and relates to "architecture" or "formation". Thus, Rotherham has: "the things which belong to the *upbuilding* of one another". It is used to describe the construction of a house, to erect a building (such as in 1Cor. 3:9 and Eph. 2:21 where the same word occurs), or to promote growth (such as in 1Cor. 14:3). Thus it is opposite to "tearing down", which is what the "strong" and "weak" brethren were doing to one another without any Scriptural justification. The house we must build up is "the house of God", "whose house are we" (Heb. 3:6). Many activities are involved in building a house. There must be a careful and thorough examination of plans and specifications, a gathering together of necessary materials, a painstaking fitting together of the materials. When the work is completed to the owner's satisfaction, there is great satisfaction and rejoicing.

Paul urges the need to establish, build up and strengthen the ecclesia, that the owner (Yahweh) might be pleased. This work is not limited to preaching to others, but includes co-operating with brethren and sisters, developing warmth within the ecclesia towards the Word, welding it together as a healthy body before Christ. Each individual member has a responsibility to this end, and must play his or her part in the "edification" needed (Rom. 15:2).

The word *oikodomeo* appears in 1Cor. 8:10 as "be emboldened", thus to become prominent, obvious, strengthened in desire.

VERSE 20

"For meat destroy not" — The DIA-

On the noun "edify" (verse 19; Gr. oikodome), Brother Carter wrote: "To edify is to build up. It is easy to break down and destroy, but it requires thought and care and industry to build. The word is a favorite one with Paul. His aim was to build, but he had the opposition of many who strove to break down his work. Destruction could be wrought in many ways... a thing right in itself may be wrong through its effects. The way of self-denial is the noble way."

GLOTT has "Do not, on account of food, demolish the work of God". The NASB: "Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food". Notice the contrast between "edifying" (building up: v. 19) and "destroy" (demolishing: v. 20). It is not the decision to have or refuse certain meats, but the argumentation that might result, to which Paul refers. The "strong" brother who insists on his liberty tears down the work of God by causing his "weak" brother to stumble. The words "destroy not" are from the Gr. *kataluo,* which means *to loosen down; demolish;* thus to oppose the work that God desires to develop in His people.

"The work of God" — It is not so much the individual who is now under discussion (as in v. 15), but the ecclesia as the construction of the Deity (see 1Cor. 3:15-16; 1Tim. 3:15). Disputes over foods might affect the whole ecclesia. Experience over the years has shown that this can happen in regard to many non-essential matters. However, in "building" up one another spiritually, we are furthering the work of building a house for the glory of Yahweh (1Pet. 2:5).

"All things indeed are pure" — Gr. *katharos, clean.* Paul returns to a former matter in regard to foods. The "weak" were claiming that certain meats were "unclean" (v. 14); Paul here concedes the "strong" brother's point of view, that all edible things are pure and lawful, and therefore good for food. See use of the word in Tit. 1:15.

"But (it is) evil for that man who eateth with offence" — "With offence" (Gr. *proskomma: a stub; occasion of apostasy;* the same word as is translated "stumblingblock" in v. 13) means that his conscience is defiled by such an action. The RSV has "so as to give offence"; the NIV: "to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble". In such a case, even that which is "pure" (the privilege of liberty in choice of foods) becomes "evil".

VERSE 21

"(It is) good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor (any thing) whereby thy brother stumbleth" — It is better to deny self of personal pleasures than to cause brethren to stumble towards sin. In this regard, discipline is better than liberty. The word "stumbleth" is Gr. *proskopto,* meaning *to strike the foot against;* thus to err from the Truth (Jas. 5:19-20). It is translated "beat upon" until the thing is destroyed (Mat. 7:27); "dash against" (Mat. 4:6; Lk. 4:11); "stumble" (Jn. 11:9-10; Rom. 9:32; 1Pet. 2:8). To so act will bring a brother *down* rather than build him *up;* hence it is essential to guard against any behavior which may undermine, or even destroy a brother's confidence in the Truth.

"Or is offended, or is made weak" — These words are eliminated in the RV, and the texts do not include them. They are, however, consistent with the exposition. The word "offended" is from the Gr. *skandalizo* (see the use of a cognate word in v. 13 and ch. 16:17); and the word "made weak" is from the Gr. *astheneo, to be enfeebled*; thus to be shaken and unstable in opinion and conduct, and unable to distinguish sufficiently between that which is appropriate and that which is forbidden.

VERSE 22

"Hast thou faith?" — The last question posed in the epistle. The word "faith" is here used in the sense of vv. 1-6: understanding. The "strong" were claiming that, as they were justified by faith there was no need to observe days, or avoid certain meats, but Paul taught that their faith should be practised in a way pleasing to God — namely, with consideration for others.

"Have (it) to thyself before God" — The blatant boast of faith is not pleasing to God or to man, and is usually an evidence of lack of faith. The NASB translates it: "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God"; the NIV: "So whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God". In other words: "Let Yahweh see the evidence of your faith, rather than proudly parading it before your weak brother, to his hurt".

"Happy is he that condemneth not

himself in that thing which he alloweth" — The word "alloweth" (Gr. *dokimazo, to put to the test*) signifies to approve after examination to see if it meets the specifications desired. The TCNT translates the section: "He is a happy man who never has to condemn himself in regard to the very thing which he thinks right!"

The "strong" brother is happy with the knowledge and conviction which he holds, free from doubts — that he was completely delivered from all restrictions of the Law. He can enjoy the liberty of his conscience in such matters. However, Paul warns that such a brother needs to exercise care lest he demands a liberty of action from the "weak" which is inadmissible and cruel because of their conscience on such matters.

Additionally a man may "allow" himself an indulgence for which his own conscience may later condemn him. For this reason the "strong" believer must "take heed lest he fall" (1Cor. 10:12; cp. Gal. 6:1).

Notice Paul's tactful yet compelling play on words. The word rendered "alloweth" is the verb of the same word which occurs as an adjective in v. 18, rendered "approved". Therefore he says in effect: "As you must so act that your brethren who are sound in the faith will *approve* your conduct in the ecclesia, so you must learn to approve *your own behavior* by ensuring that your words and actions are in accord with the sound principles of a sound faith".

VERSE 23

"And he that doubteth" — The word is *diakrino* in the Greek middle voice, and therefore signifies *to contend with; to be in strife with oneself.* Thus to argue, hesitate and waver within oneself: the evidence of the "weak" brother, who is concerned with scrupulosity regarding customs and eating. The TCNT has "Those, however, who have misgivings *stand condemned* if they *still* eat, because their action is not the result of faith".

"Is damned if he eat" — The NASB has "condemned". The word means self-judged (Gr. *katakrino: to make a judgment against*). Paul warns that a person who has scruples regarding the eating of meats, or the observance of special days, will be distressed if he ignores his state of mind, merely to follow the lead of some dominant personality. He would feel uneasy within himself as he wondered whether his course of action was really the right one to follow, and so he might well be afflicted with a sense of inconsistency within himself. If he is to ignore his previous scruples it must be upon the basis of faith, so that when eating meats which he once avoided, he will "eat in faith".

"Because (he eateth) not of faith" — Faith "cometh from hearing the Word" (ch. 10:17), and such enlightenment must be the motivating power in any decision or action contemplated. The matter of this "faith" is defined in Mic. 6:8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God".

The "weak" brother must not be pressured into changing his attitude merely to win the approval of the "strong" brother or to escape his scorn. Nor must he submit to the "strong" brother simply because he *is* "strong". The "weak" must be won over by the principles of the Word, for no other form of persuasion will be able to clear his conscience on these matters.

The word rendered "faith" is from the Gr. *pistis,* which means *trust; confidence; firm persuasion; conviction.* Some suggest that the word is better rendered "conviction" in this verse, as in this context it is the conviction of the individual which is at stake.

"For whatsoever (is) not of faith is sin" — Any demands upon a person's conscience, if not based upon a proper exposition of the Word, will cause him to sin (Tit. 1:15). The word "of" is from the Gr. *ek,* thus: "*out of* faith"; that is, the direct result of faith. Hence: "whatever is without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful" *(Amplified Bible).* The word is *hamartia* (from *hamartano: to miss the mark; to err*), and signifies that the

"weak" believer has condemned himself of transgression, and the "strong" has aided that result. Even following the example of a "strong" brother, when not motivated by "faith" (the Word) will result in the "weak" brother sinning against his conscience. The "weak" brother is not condemned for being weak, but he falls into sin if he acts without conviction, or against the dictates of his conscience.

This advice is important to follow today in resolving questions other than those of observing special days, or avoiding particular meats.

Paul now summarises the whole principle in Ch. 15:1 — the burden of responsibility lies with the "strong" brother, for "We who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves" (NASB).

THE TWO MINISTRIES — CHRIST AND PAUL

The relationship of the Master and the Apostle to the work before them is illustrated by the use of the word "minister" in Romans 15. Christ is revealed as the "minister" to the circumcision (v. 8), whilst Paul describes himself as the "minister" of Jesus Christ (v. 16). But the Greek words used in both verses are entirely different, and when examined, the strength of Paul's position is seen more clearly. In the case of the Lord, the word used is *diakonos*, and signifies "one who serves". As such he came "to his own", being sent by God to labor in order to turn the nation back to Yahweh. He was thus "sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 10:6) to perform the work to which his Father had committed him. However, when describing his own work of ministry, Paul selects the word *leitourgos*, which signifies a public minister, a servant of state, or a priest officiating in the temple. The verb is rendered "ministering" in Rom. 15:16, and there Paul claims to be performing priestly functions in order that "the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable". In this he beautifully complements the earlier work of the Master; one going to the Jews, and the other to the Gentiles: a procedure Paul followed in his preaching of the gospel. Thus he teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the heavens, over the house of God, and Paul is the manifestation of that priest in his compassionate duties on behalf of others. Here, then, is the strength and example for all who would "minister" in the things of the Truth.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE INCENTIVE: CHRIST'S EXAMPLE ROM. 15:1-13

The principle of mutual consideration of the conscience of one another that the power of the Truth might be understood, and that character might be formed, is to be seen in the wonderful example and attitude of the Master. In this, as in other aspects of the Truth, we are called upon to "follow him". Paul now explains the importance of identifying with the sacrifice of Christ in the service given to one another.

This section is the second of the two sections under the heading "Ecclesial Responsibilities" (see p.459). In ch. 14, Paul expounded on the principle of mutual considerateness; now in ch. 15:1-13, he expresses the incentive seen in Christ. He exhorts us to emulate in our life the example of concern and care for our brethren. The "strong" must act in the spirit of Christ (vv. 1-7), and in that desire both "strong" and "weak" must accept one another, recognising that both have been called to service (vv. 8-12). Paul concludes by seeking the divine blessing upon such actions of mutual devotion (v. 13).

Christ's Example to the Strong — vv. 1-7.

It is not sufficient for the "strong" brother who rejoices in the liberty provided by Christ's gospel, to overlook the scruples of his "weak" companion. If the "weak" are deficient in knowledge, the "strong" tend to fall short on love. Therefore he must actively assist his "weaker" brethren by sacrificing his own desires, that they might be strengthened in understanding, for he will observe that attitude in his Master.

VERSE 1

"We then" — Paul identifies himself with this group, knowing that meats and days are of no consequence in the matter of salvation.

"That are strong" — These are those referred to as "having faith" (ch. 14:22), that is, understanding of the privilege of liberty in Christ in contrast to those "weak in faith" (v. 1), whose conduct is restricted by considerations of details of diet and of observance of days. The Greek word *dunatos* means *capable, powerful,* and is translated "able" in Rom. 14:4.

"Ought to bear the infirmities of the weak" — The "strong" are called upon to "lift up" the burden of their fellow brethren by curtailing the freedom which they recognise would normally be permissible.

"Ought" is *opheilo* in the Greek, and signifies *to owe; to be bound; a debtor.* ROTH. translates it as "are bound to". The word speaks of moral obligation; some-

thing that should be paid. This moral obligation to help others who are "weaker" stems from the debt that the "strong" owe to God, for in their weakness they had to seek His help (Rom. 5:8-10).

The word "bear" (Gr. *bastazo: to lift up; to carry*) has the idea of sustaining, and enduring the obligation to each other that we assume as brethren of Christ. The same word appears in Gal. 6:2, with respect to our responsibility to assist others in their time of need.

"Infirmities" is *asthenema*, and signifies *want of strength; weakness;* thus "a scruple of conscience" (Strong), such as would indicate the inability to produce any results. Being feeble, they are therefore unable to help their own condition of weakness. In this context the word relates to those scruples which arise through weakness of understanding. The "strong" have a responsibility to support brethren with such infirmities, by submitting to self-restraint in their obligation to bear with the "weak".

The word for "weak" here is *adunatos*, which signifies *without power.* It is a different word from that used in Rom. 14:1 *(astheneo).*

"And not to please ourselves" — Eating and drinking may please the palate, and the exercise of liberty that is allowable in Christ may be a form of personal joy, but the greater pleasure is to be found in serving one another (Phil. 2:4; 1Cor. 13:5; 10:24). The burden of the "weak", induced by their "infirmities", or scruples, is one that the "strong" must share. They are not at liberty to avoid doing so, for they should not please themselves in a way that might destroy their brother (Rom. 14:20).

The apostle associates himself with the strong ones; he shares with them the obligation to follow the advice given. We owe this duty to them, he says. The infirmities of the weak are borne when the strong willingly adopt that self-denial which removes from the weak the burden they would suffer if the strong insisted on their liberty. This indeed meant that they would not please themselves. But when was that a duty? In another place Paul says that the law of Christ is fulfilled when "ye bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2) — ***J. Carter.***

VERSE 2

"Let every one of us please (his) neighbor" — The word "please" (Gr. *aresko: to be agreeable towards*) is an overstatement. It does not mean that we must submit to the will of the "weaker" brother, merely to satisfy his conscience. We must seek to carefully assist in mutual consideration for his spiritual development. The word "neighbor" is from the Gr. *plesion* and refers to *one close by.* It is the word used by Christ in his parable to describe the Samaritan (Lk. 10:29) who assisted "one close by" on the road to Jericho, because he was in need of care and assistance, suffering "infirmity" through the ravages of thieves.

"For his good to edification" — This must be the object of our mutual service, whether we are of a "strong" or "weak" disposition. When we "edify" (Gr. *oikodome: architecture; confirmation;* thus to construct, as in ch. 14:19), we build up in understanding, and thereby carefully lead the brother who was subverted by his misguided discrimination to a better and stronger condition.

VERSE 3

"For even Christ pleased not himself" — The example of Christ must be ever before his followers: his was a life of sacrifice and service, and in fulfilling this purpose, he overcame the natural feelings of self-preservation and personal gratification inherent in the flesh. Instead he positively determined to manifest the divine mind in his actions: "I seek not mine own will" (Jn. 5:30); "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example... (he) committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1Pet. 2:21-23).

"But, as it is written" — Paul cites Psa. 69:9, to indicate that the willing sub-

mission of Christ to "pleasing not himself" was in order to fulfil the mission for which he was sent. His attitude stemmed not merely from a natural disposition to doing good for one's "neighbor", but was the manifestation of a godly mind, even when subject to the persecution of others. The Psalm is therefore Messianic, predicting the sufferings of the Lord experienced as a consequence of the zeal he displayed for the things of Yahweh.

"The reproaches of them that reproached thee" — Yahweh Himself was reproached when the Jews walked contrary to His commandments; their hostility towards Him was finally demonstrated when they crucified His Son (Jn. 8:19; 8:38; 14:7). Zechariah describes Yahweh as being "pierced" through the sinful action of the Jews in crucifying Christ (ch. 12:10), for Christ was the manifestation of the Father amongst men (2Cor. 5:19). What men did to the Son, they did to the Father also.

"Fell on me" — Christ's sufferings were because of his evident righteousness and "good works" (Jn. 10:32). If self-pleasure had been the guide in his life, the Master would have escaped the shame and reproach heaped upon him; but living as he did to please God, and to serve His Father's will for the salvation of men, these reproaches came upon him in fulfilment of the Psalm.

VERSE 4

"For" — Paul refers to Psa. 69:9 as the basis for his following statement. This one verse is culled from the scriptures by the apostle to show that every part of the scriptures was written for the same purpose: that we might "learn". The inference to be drawn is that if Christ made so great a surrender of his personal desire, should not his followers be willing to deny themselves those liberties which give offence to their "weak" brethren?

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime" — This includes the whole of the scripture (2Tim. 3:16). In Paul's day that comprised the Old Testament Scriptures which were given to mankind by Yahweh to provide His people with wisdom and hope. They included the dietary and daily laws that formed the basis for the "weak" brother's conscience, but which had to be understood in the "spirit" and not applied only in the "letter" (2Cor. 3:6). The power of the scriptures will only provide hope when its principles are followed as a way of life (cp Prov. 6:22-23).

"Were written for our learning" — The scriptures are not provided as a means to win an argument, or to show one's knowledge of the Word, but to teach and educate the servant of God in divine principles. The Greek word *didaskalia* means *instruction*, and is translated "teaching" in Rom. 12:7, and "doctrine" in Eph. 4:14. The Scriptures abound with examples of self-denial in the lives of Yahweh's servants in many different circumstances.

"That we through patience" — Gr. *hupomone: an abiding under*, hence endurance, constancy. In the context of this verse it points to the need of submitting to the requirements of scripture, whatever they may entail.

"And comfort" — Gr. *paraklesis; a calling to one's side, to summon, to encourage;* hence exhortation, consolation, comfort. The scriptures encourage such endurance under affliction and pressure, for they reveal that faithfulness will be rewarded, and sacrifices made for the honor of Yahweh will be repaid. Thus they provide encouragement by calling on the faithful to draw near and receive the aid that Yahweh will always provide to such. Self-denial in order to "please one's brother" (v. 2) brings a person closer to God through the power of His Word.

The words "patience" and "comfort" now become key words in the chapter: patience towards those who are "weak" to strengthen them in their restrictions, and comfort for those "strong", and who might suffer in their endeavor to sacrifice their liberty for the sake of their brother.

"Of the scriptures might have hope" — Gr. *elpis: expectation; confidence* (from *elpo: to anticipate*, usually with pleasure). The Greek text has the definite article: "the hope" (see Diaglott). Such a

hope "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5), and provides salvation (ch. 8:24).

VERSE 5

"Now" — After digressing on the matter of the purpose and power of the Scriptures, Paul returns to his subject of mutual consideration between brethren, with a prayer to the Father on behalf of both the "weak" and the "strong", bringing together all elements of the divine family.

"The God of patience and consolation" — Paul uses the two words advanced in verse 4 to emphasize that these qualities derive from Yahweh. He is the *God of Patience (hupomone)* because He remains true to His promise in spite of the failings of His children. He is the *God of Consolation (paraklesis)* because all true comfort stems from Him, as He declared to Moses in revealing His memorial Name (Exod. 34:6; Psa. 86:15). In turn His children are called upon to manifest His characteristics, to His honor and glory. Brother Carter wrote: "With the help of God, the example of Christ, the guidance of the Word of God, all difficulties would be overcome, unity of mind would result, and God would be glorified" (see v. 6).

"Grant you to be likeminded one toward another" — This mutual disposition, based upon a willing self-denial, is a "gift" from God, inasmuch as the reason and value of such an attitude comes from an understanding of Him and His purpose, revealed in the Scriptures.

Through diligent study of the Word, we become familiar with the divine mind, and will seek to emulate it in our actions (Phil. 2:5).

This "likemindedness" does not mean that both "weak" and "strong" will agree on certain questions of meats, sabbaths, etc., but that they will, in unanimity of spirit, accept the wisdom of working together for the development of the Truth, and for the manifestation of unity of mind to the glory of God.

"According to Christ Jesus" — Notice the margin: "after the example of Jesus Christ". The way in which he showed consideration to others, and extended himself constantly on their behalf, was a reflection of God's care for His children (Mat. 5:44-46; Jn. 5:17), and should be our example in our dealings with one another (cp. Phil. 2:5).

VERSE 6

"That ye may with one mind" — The first of two characteristics that must reflect the constitution of the divine family. The "one mind" (Gr. *homothumadon: unanimously*) means to be united in thought and understanding on the principles of the Truth and its application (cp. the unity of the early ecclesia where the same words is used: Acts 2:46; 4:24; 5:12. The object of the "strong" bearing the infirmities of the "weak" in matters of no real doctrinal significance is that unity might prevail in the ecclesia to the glory of God.

"(And) one mouth" — The second characteristic. That which is in the mind will be expressed with the voice. The only way brethren can speak with one voice is when the mind is exercised and influenced by that which is written in the Word (see Rom. 10:8; Mat. 12:34). *Patience* is exercised in the mind; *comfort* is expressed with the mouth, and both virtues originate in the Father.

"Glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" — Gr. "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". The unity between the Father and Son is here implied. Consequently Christ's "brethren" (Heb. 2:12) should be so similarly, that the divine family in heaven and earth (Eph. 3:15) is united in principle and policy.

VERSE 7

"Wherefore" — In view of all that Paul has earlier advanced, and the scriptural principles involved, he now makes an appeal to the whole ecclesia.

"Receive ye one another" — Accept the standing of each other; cease any contention on non-essential matters that might exist between you; close the ranks in the ecclesia so that you are all laboring together toward the one aim of our calling: that the grace of God might be experienced by all.

"As Christ also received us" — For the third time in this chapter, the perfect example of Christ is set forth as the standard to which brethren should strive to attain (cp. v. 3, 5). Christ's disposition and total dedication to the cause of his Father, moved him to sacrifice himself for those who had not in any respect proven themselves worthy of his love and suffering on their behalf (cp. 6:5). As believers have been called to "follow his steps" (Mat. 16:24; 1Pet. 2:21), should they not manifest this attitude towards one another?

The plural "us" suggests the two great families to whom the Truth has been extended: Jew and Gentile (see Eph. 2:11-14), as well as the two groups in the ecclesia, the "strong" and the "weak". As Christ has accepted both Jew and Gentile, the latter must not view with contempt the scruples of the former in regard to eating of meats or observance of special days; and the former must not despise the latter because of their Gentile background.

"To the glory of God" — The word "to" is from the Gr. *eis*, and in this context signifies "with a view to" bringing glory to God (Bull.). We must follow Christ's example with the objective in view that God might be glorified in what we think and do. After all, Christ has received *us* that God might be glorified in us. This must be the motivating factor in all our actions; not seeking personal justification in controversy. When "God's glory" is sought, then both the "weak" and the "strong" will be united in a common cause, and rejoice together in a mutual hope (Rom. 5:2).

Christ's mission is to draw all men to God, in unity and harmony, through the power of the Word of God. How clearly, then, could Christ's work be contrasted with those messengers of destruction within the ecclesial world who were prepared to divide and sow seeds of bitter antagonism, all for no other reason than to give vent to their personal prejudices (ch. 14:20). This is, in effect, Paul's final word on the question of the strong and the weak.

Benefits that come from the Example and Sacrifice of Christ — vv 8-13.

The "weak" and the "strong" must be united together because of a common understanding of the purpose of Christ and the work Yahweh performed in him.

VERSE 8

"Now I say" — The Diag. and Roth. have "For I affirm". Weymouth gives "My meaning is". Paul makes an emphatic assertion concerning the work of Christ with both Jews and Gentiles, so that they might understand that Christ totally surrendered his own will, and even life itself, to draw all believers into one Body, thoroughly enlightened with the power of the Truth, and co-operating together to the glory of God.

"That Jesus Christ was a minister" — Gr. *diakonos: to attend on another;* from *diakoneo, to run on errands.* This noun signifies one who serves as a deacon (cp. Mat. 23:10-11). In that subordinate position the Master served both Jew (v. 8) and Gentile (v. 9) in his ministry amongst mankind and through his saving sacrifice on behalf of both.

"Of the circumcision" — Paul has not used this word since the fourth chapter. Why not here use the word "Jew" or "Israel", which appeared constantly before? Because circumcision, despite the Jewish tradition of associating it with the Mosaic covenant, was originally related to the Abrahamic. It had been introduced to teach that which Christ revealed: that the flesh must be "cut off" before an individual can become truly identified with "the promises made unto the fathers". Christ said: "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; not because it is of Moses, but *of the fathers*" (Jn. 7:22).

The definite article "the" is not in the original Greek text. God's acceptance of the Jews, and their constitution as a "holy nation", was designed to bring glory and honor to His great Name. They failed to uphold His Law and therefore were condemned to exile; nevertheless the ministry of Christ was designed to restore Israel to its exalted status in the divine economy

Jesus Christ as a "Minister".

*This noun **diakonos** occurs thirty times. It has been rendered twenty times as "minister" or "ministers"; seven times as "servant" or "servants"; and three times "deacons" — one of the lowlier positions in ecclesial life. Vine draws attention to the significance of these renderings: "**Diakonos** is, generally speaking, to be distinguished from **doulos**, a bondservant, slave; **diakonos** views a servant in relation to his work; **doulos** views him in relationship to his master..."*

*Therefore, in Paul's careful choice of this word we are not to see the Lord Jesus as a "minister" in the sense of one holding high office — although certainly none could ever attain to a higher office than his. Rather, with this word the apostle depicts the Son of God as a suffering servant, one of Adam's race engaged in a struggle to overcome the flesh and perfectly fulfil God's will. This shows the **work** of the Lord in stark contrast to those within the ecclesia who saw themselves as "**lords** over God's heritage" (1Pet. 5:3), insisting that others should conform to their personal prejudices when there was no ground whatever for them making such demands upon their brethren. Paul's use of this word is a reminder that all brethren and sisters should manifest this same attitude of selfless dedication and humility towards one another. Again, inevitably, Christ is the great example!*

(see Mat. 10:6; 15:24). Through the mediatorial work of Christ, Israel will ultimately be confirmed in its position as the "first dominion" in all the earth (Mic. 4:8).

In fulfilling this aspect of his mission, the Lord Jesus came "under the Law" (Gal. 4:4), submitting to its ordinances and fulfilling its demands (Mat. 5:17), in order to carry out the scheme of redemption. He is thus an example to his followers. If he submitted himself to the restriction of the covenant of circumcision in order to bring about God's plan of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, the Gentile believers should be willing to bear with the overly scrupulous attitude of their less enlightened brethren.

"For the truth of God" — This speaks of the absolute faithfulness of Yahweh in His fulfilment of His declared Word (Psa. 105:8), in which we can safely rest (Psa. 119:42). This truth is seen in the provision and strengthening of His Son in order that the divine will might be accomplished for the glory of Yahweh's Name and the salvation of mankind.

The DIAG has: "on behalf of truth". The TCNT has: "What I affirm about Christ is that *in vindication of God's truthfulness,* he has become a servant to the Jews". Thus Christ came to the Jews as Yahweh's servant, to prove that the promises made to the fathers are totally reliable, and to enable Gentiles to share in the benefits of those "exceeding great and precious promises" (2Pet. 1:4).

"To confirm the promises (made) unto the fathers" — The Gr. *bebaioo* signifies *to make stable, firm; to establish.* The sacrifice of Christ verified the covenants of promise made to Abraham and David, which were dependent upon the "seed" (Gen. 22:17-18), and "son" (2Sam. 7:14-16) completing the work for which he was sent (cp. Lk. 1:68-73; 2Cor. 1:20). The efficacy of Christ's offering for the forgiveness of sins, reaches backward to embrace national Israel (Gal. 4:4-5), as it also moves forward to include those of the Gentiles who should come unto him (see Heb. 9:15).

VERSE 9

"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for (his) mercy" — The Old Testament scriptures testified that the divine purpose would ultimately include all nations (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 11:10; 42:1, 6; 49:6, 22; 60:3, 5, 11, 16; 61:9; 62:2, etc). This "mercy" would be extended to Gentiles through the atoning work of Christ (Eph. 2:11-18), a principle rejected by Jewry at the Lord's first advent, but which will ultimately be appreciated by all mankind. In view of that fact, condemna-

tion of Gentiles by over-scrupulous Jewish believers, because the Gentiles did not observe the formalities of the Law of Moses, should be completely disavowed.

"As it is written" — The inclusion of Gentiles in the gospel invitation is not to be regarded as accidental; it was predicted in the scriptures. In four quotations Paul points to references to the Gentiles, and also to the offering of praise for God's faithfulness and mercy.

He first cites Psa. 18:49, where in a messianic context David foretells that he will praise Yahweh because the Gentiles are subject to him. Therefore it was always the purpose of Yahweh to invite Gentiles to the gospel.

"For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" — This is the first of four citations in harmony with the *Septuagint* Old Testament. These words of the Psalmist rest upon the saving power of Yahweh, which will be demonstrated to all the world (Psa. 18:49). In the spirit of the Messiah, the Psalmist calls upon Gentiles to witness due praise and acknowledgement of the wisdom and power of Yahweh. He first "confesses" (Gr. *exomologeo: to agree fully*) the divine purpose that God performed in His Son; and thus he "sings" in personal response for the divine wisdom that has brought salvation.

VERSE 10

"And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people" — Paul now cites Deut. 32:43 which is prophetic of the time when Gentiles shall unite their voices with Israelites in praising Yahweh for His goodness.

In the previous verse, the Psalm quoted displays Christ leading the Gentile chorus in anthems of praise to Yahweh; in the passage now advanced it shows that a combined congregation of glorified Jewish and Gentile believers will respond in raising united voices to His honor.

VERSE 11

"And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people" — The third reference from the Old Testament, this time from Psalm 117:1, the shortest psalm, and said to be the very centre of the Bible. This psalm predicts the universal preaching of the gospel to both Gentiles ("all ye Gentiles") and Jews ("all ye people"). It then expresses the terms in which the gospel would be announced: through the channel of the divine mercy towards Israel: "His merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of Yahweh endureth for the age". This evinces two responses: "praise" in which expressions of joy and appreciation are given to God; and "laud", which means to

It is Written — Verse 9.

In these four references to the Old Testament Scriptures quoted by the apostle Paul, ***Psalm 18*** *is appropriately the first to be mentioned. In the context of Paul's reasoning, the most telling aspects of the Psalm are twofold: First, that the Psalm is clearly Messianic and therefore deals with the* ***work*** *of Christ, and shows that part of that work was to draw Gentiles within the orbit of the saving power of the gospel; the second is that the Psalm has a twofold fulfilment: the initial work being accomplished during this present dispensation, beginning with Christ's resurrection, but also, as the Psalm states, a later fulfilment was promised, when the Aionian gospel (Rev. 14:6) goes forth to all nations throughout the world in the age to come (cp. Gen. 12:3, etc). If it be wondered why Paul should draw upon four quotations to make his point, when perhaps one may have sufficed, it should be remembered that this was a particularly difficult problem among the Jews, who, nationally, had never been willing to accept Gentiles as equals. In providing four irrefutable references to the Word of God, Paul demonstrates the truth of his case beyond question.* ***— J.Ullman.***

Four Key Quotations: vv. 9-12.

The order in which Paul refers to these quotations, and the way in which he develops his line of reasoning thereby, shows how clearly and unassailably the Scriptures may be used to prove the Truth. Having established that Christ was sent to corroborate the promises made to the fathers, he now quotes from a section of a Psalm which deals with Christ's great victory over all his enemies ***(Psa. 18:50)****. He has now triumphed over the flesh; but there are more victories yet to come. The next words in the Psalm are most significant: "Great deliverance giveth He to His king; and showeth mercy to His anointed, to David (the Beloved), and to his seed for evermore".*

The next reference ***(Deut. 32:43)*** *speaks of Christ's victory over sin* ***in political manifestation****; he will save Israel and deliver God's land from oppressors; and when these things have been accomplished* ***the Gentile nations*** *will rejoice* ***together with Israel*** *when "****all*** *families of the earth" will "be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). There is, then, a picture of Jew and Gentile, rejoicing together in a common deliverance at the Lord's second coming.*

This reference is followed by a quotation from the smallest ***Psa. (117)****. Comprised of only two verses, it speaks of the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant when the gospel is preached throughout the earth, and when Jew and Gentile* ***unite*** *in the one true worship of Yahweh. Observe the emphasis in the Psalm upon which the apostle draws to stress his line of reasoning: "O praise Yahweh,* ***all ye nations****; praise Him,* ***all ye people****"!*

Paul's choice of a fourth quotation ***(Isa. 11:10)*** *is remarkably apt. He has set forth his reasoning in a most careful and unassailable manner: First he has shown that* ***Gentiles*** *would be brought within the compass of the saving power of the gospel; second, he has established that* ***mortal Gentiles*** *will acknowledge the Truth in the kingdom age; third, he has provided scriptural proof that* ***Jew and Gentile*** *will be united in the one true faith in the messianic era; and fourth, he has confirmed* ***Christ's future reign*** *on earth, and that the Lord will reign not only as king of the Jews, but as king over Gentiles also.*

On the basis of these inspired writings, then, Jewish believers were to acknowledge the eligibility of Gentiles to be called to the gospel, and therefore to accept them as equals before God and man. The Word affirms: "In him (Christ) shall the Gentiles trust". In view of this, the Jewish people have no grounds whatever for claiming superiority over Gentiles. All could become participants in the saving power of the gospel. "Ye are all ***one*** *in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).* ***—J.Ullman.***

highly extol, with intensity of feeling.

The Psalm is placed between one that foretells Christ's last supper with his disciples, his death and resurrection (Psa. 116), and one that prophesies of his coming glory and reign, when both Jews and Gentiles shall freely acknowledge him (Psa. 118).

VERSE 12

"And again, Esaias saith" — Paul now cites Isa. 11:10, which forms part of a prophecy concerning Christ's future reign on earth. The prophet revealed that Messiah's labors would not be limited to the Jewish people, but would be extended to include Gentiles also, over whom he will

ultimately reign. Therefore the open preaching of the Truth to Gentiles outside the confines of the Mosaic ordinance, is in accordance with the will and purpose of God, and Jewish believers should accept it as such, not trying to superimpose the formalities of the Law upon their belief of the gospel.

"There shall be a root of Jesse" — The Messiah would be raised up in the Davidic line, and therefore would have an identity with humanity (Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3). The hope of the Gentiles is based upon Yahweh's covenant with Israel.

"And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles" — In the passage cited Isaiah declared: "which shall stand for an ensign of the people", and Paul's interpretation of that scripture indicates that it concerns Gentiles who will seek the safety and privilege of association with the "ensign", or "banner" that Yahweh would erect in the personage of His Son.

The word "rise" is from the Greek *anistemi: to stand up,* and is used in Eph. 5:14 to indicate a resurrection to a new life; in 1Thes. 4:14, 16 to rise from the dead. However in Heb. 7:11, 15 it depicts an elevation to authority. By his exemplary service and willing sacrifice, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and elevated to assume control over all mankind (Mat. 28:18; Rev. 5:5).

Notice that Paul preserved a careful order in his citations of passages in Rom. 15:9-12. He first showed that Christ will sing praises to his Father among glorified Gentile believers; then he revealed that they will be united as one with Jewish believers. He continued by proving that both were to be called to the gospel by its preaching; and finally he quoted from Isaiah to confirm that though Christ is king of the Jews in that he is the root of Jesse, he is also appointed to reign over Gentiles. There is therefore a progression of ideas in the careful selection of passages advanced by Paul, as he first shows that Jews and Gentiles were to be associated in glory together, then revealed the means whereby this will be accomplished, and finally proved that this will form the basis of Christ's universal reign over all mankind in the age to come. — ***H. P. Mansfield.***

"In him shall the Gentiles trust" — The word "trust" is *elpizo,* which means *to hope; expect; confide.* It is translated "hope" in the RV, RSV and DIAG.. The Gentiles discover such a hope as they are brought within the compass of Israel's privilege in the divine purpose.

VERSE 13

"Now the God of hope" — Having referred in v. 12 to the "trust" (Gr. *elpizo*) of the Gentiles, Paul now commences a form of prayer to the Father who provides such a "hope" (Gr. *elpis*) to those in need as He also reveals "patience and consolation" (v. 5). The Greek text supplies the definite article: "the God of *the* hope", for Yahweh provided the "hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20; Rom. 8:24), which is extended to both Jews and Gentiles upon the basis of faith.

"Fill you with all joy and peace in believing" — A true understanding of the gospel leads to firm belief and faith, and this in turn creates *joy* (Gr. *chara: cheerfulness*) as the wonderful privileges of this knowledge are borne in mind, and *peace* (Gr. *eirene: unity*) is experienced in fellowship with one another, and with Christ and God. The prayer of Paul was in contrast to the state of argumentation and antagonism which obviously existed in the ecclesia (see ch. 14:10).

The word "fill" (Gr. *pleroo*) has the idea of "to make replete; to cram full"; thus to fill to the brim. One who is so completely filled with joy and peace is unlikely to perpetrate animosity and antagonism towards his brethren.

"That ye may abound in hope" — The Greek text has the definite article: "*the* hope". Notice the intensity of expression. The word "abound" (Gr. *perisseuo;* see also 3:7; 5:15) means *to superabound; be in excess.* The NIV and NEB have "overflow". When the mind is filled with the hope of Israel, and the principles of the

gospel, this prayer will be effective, and our actions will reflect glory to God.

"Through the power of the Holy Spirit" — The Holy Spirit is the divine power (Gr: *dunamis;* see note v. 19) used for the development of God's people. It is experienced through the Spirit-Word (Jn. 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1Jn. 5:6-7). However, here the words literally are "a holy spirit"; a term which may also be understood as "a spirit of holiness". It is not necessarily related to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, although certainly it is that "the Spirit" is "the Truth". Life in the Truth requires that such a "spirit of holiness" "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14) must accompany the development of God Manifestation, and the outworking of the doctrine of the Atonement. Thus, we are to "receive one another" (v. 7) as Christ has received us. Discipleship does not mean a sterile existence. Life becomes full when the influence of the Word is held supreme within individuals and finds complete expression in their lives. We learn to live after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ, "unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1Cor. 15:58).

In concluding this section, Paul writes with touching warmth, clasping to his bosom, as it were, all to whom he wrote. There is no sign of partiality, whether they be "weak" or "strong". Christ died for them all, and so Paul will *give his "all"* for them also. With the words of this verse, he brings *all* brethren and sisters to the feet of Christ who is their lord, king, saviour — and their example.

PERSONAL EPILOGUE

Chapters 15:14—16:27

The substance of the epistle was completed with the prayer of ch. 15:13, and there remain only the concluding sections of personal explanation, greeting and encouragement. With great tact Paul now explains the reason why he wrote the epistle and outlines his plans for the future, including his desire to visit the ecclesia at Rome, should Yahweh so determine. He expresses a plea for their prayerful support for his activities, a word of warning and exhortation against spiritual adversaries, some greetings from his fellow-workers, and finally, a benediction.

Paul's Purpose in Writing the Epistle — vv. 14-21.

He had heard of the faith and diligence of the brethren in Rome, and desired to encourage them in their stand for the Truth.

VERSE 14

"And I myself also" — A characteristic repetition (cp. Heb. 2:14). He proceeds to explain why he had written to them, and to state his personal confidence in them. He had exhorted them to peace; had opposed some of their strongest prejudices. Now, in order to secure their obedience to his injunctions, he reminds them of the deep interest which he had in their welfare, though he had never seen them, or been involved in establishing their ecclesia.

"Am persuaded of you, my brethren" — The word "persuaded" (Gr. *peitho: to convince; to assent*) has the idea of "to rely upon".

The NIV has "convinced". Paul had opened his epistle with such expressions (ch. 1:10-13), and now reminds them of his confidence that they would take account of his exposition in this epistle and apply its principles in the environment of the ecclesia.

In vv. 13-14 he mentions seven items of confidence: (1) That God would fill

them with joy and (2) peace; (3) That faith would abound in hope; (4) That they had the power of the Word; (5) That they were filled with goodness, (6) knowledge, and (7) were capable of ministering to one another.

"That ye also are full of goodness" — In Rom. 14:16 Paul warned the ecclesia at Rome: "let not your good be evil spoken of". There the word is *agathos;* here it is the noun *agathosune.* The word signifies that which is good in character or constitution and beneficial in its effect. Thus it embraces that which is in accord with the divine will. We are called upon to prove it (Rom. 12:2); cleave to it (v. 9); do it (ch. 13:13; Gal. 6:10); to perform it (Rom. 2:10; Eph. 4:28; 6:8); to follow it (1Thes. 5:15); to be zealous of it (1Pet. 3:13); to imitate it (3Jn. 11); to overcome evil with it (Rom. 12:21); and now to be full of it (ch. 15:14). The context of this verse shows that this goodness stems from knowledge of God's purpose, and therefore, is the development of the believer's faith in the Truth (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; 2Thes. 1:11).

From Paul's comments of Rom. 14:16 and in this verse it appears that the ecclesia at Rome enjoyed a sound reputation throughout the ecclesial world. It would therefore have been a tragedy if, through internal matters which were of little consequence, they should harm their ecclesia and thus become "evil spoken of" by other ecclesias. Paul expresses confidence that the ecclesia was sufficiently mature, and so guided by the principles of the Word that they would handle their problems in a correct and spiritual manner.

"Filled with all knowledge" — Gr. *gnosis: to know.* Vine explains that the word "denotes primarily a seeking to know, an enquiry or investigation... especially of spiritual truth"; thus to maintain an enquiring mind into the principles of the Truth, and to accept its teachings.

As an excuse for not bothering to study the Word, some have argued that "knowledge isn't everything". As a bland statement, the argument is certainly correct (cp. 1Cor. 8:1). Knowledge is *not* everything so far as the Truth is concerned; but without a sound knowledge of the Truth *we do not have anything.* Knowledge is the foundation upon which faith is developed and brought to maturity (Rom. 10:17. See also Col. 1:9; Phil. 1:9). Believers of this present dispensation should never forget that the people of Israel were "destroyed for lack of knowledge" because there was "no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land" (Hos. 4:1, 6).

"Able also to admonish one another" — The word "able" is from the Greek *dunamis* (see notes v. 19). The word "admonish" comes from *noutheteo: to put in mind; to caution; to gently reprove.* Paul asserts his belief that the brethren in Rome were capable to reproving and encouraging one another to their mutual benefit. They could do this only if they were basically sound in the faith, and therefore, although Paul has warned them of false doctrine, in this verse he indicates that he believed them to be fundamentally sound in understanding.

VERSE 15

"Nevertheless, brethren" — A word of warning. Despite *their essential* soundness, there was a need for care. We must ever be on guard against weakening in "goodness and knowledge".

"I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort" — "In some measure" (Gr. *apo meros*). The NASB has "I have written very boldly to you on some points". He had outlined certain teachings and principles, that were essential to their spiritual development.

"As putting you in mind" — Gr. *epanamimnesko: to remind.* The NEB has: "I have written to refresh your memory, and written somewhat boldly at times". Whilst Paul does not assume that they are totally ignorant of these matters, he counsels them to exercise care. Vital principles of the Truth must never be forgotten or treated casually. Sound knowledge and faithful loyalty to the Word must always remain the guiding principles in ecclesial life (1Cor. 4:17; 2Pet. 1:12, 13), otherwise

the ecclesia will become weakened, with distressing results. Paul wrote the epistle in order to remind them of the foundation principles of the Truth. It is important to have our minds constantly exercised on these matters.

"Because of the grace that is given to me of God" — See ch. 1:5. Paul was ever conscious of the favor of God in calling him to apostleship to the Gentiles (1Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:15-16). Because of the position of responsibility that he held among the Gentile ecclesias, he therefore desired to remind them of their commitment to maintain the Truth.

These words also reveal that Paul wrote the epistle under divine inspiration. Here is a wonderful example of Paul's humility and modesty. He does not tell the ecclesia that they must heed his words because of his personal authority; he readily confesses that all he has achieved and now written has been through "the grace... of God".

VERSE 16

"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" — This position of authority had been granted him through the grace of God (Gal. 2:7, 9; 1Tim. 2:7). The word "minister" is the Gr. *leitourgos*. It indicates an official position as a public minister, a servant of the state, being used in Rom. 13:6 of earthly rulers who, though they do not act consciously as servants of God, yet discharge functions which are the ordinances of God. The word also is used particularly of the Levitical priests officiating in the temple (e.g., Heb. 10:11; 8:2).

In Rom. 15:8 Jesus Christ is described as the "minister (deacon, servant) of the circumcision"; here Paul asserts himself to be the "public servant" of Jesus Christ to carry that ministry to the wider field of the Gentiles. As a public servant, in a spiritual sense, Paul would act to support and maintain the work of his Master; in a priestly capacity he would bring the ecclesia as an offering unto Yahweh through the Christ-altar (see Rom. 12:1).

"Ministering" — Gr. *hierourgeo*, to be a temple worker; to officiate as a priest offering sacrifices. The NEB has: "My priestly service is the preaching of the gospel of God".

"The gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles" — Gr. *prosphora: an oblation, sacrifice.* In a spiritual sense, Paul brought the Gentile offering unto the Christ-altar, to be presented before Yahweh. But Gentile believers could only be offered up to God *sacrificially* if they willingly followed in the steps of Christ by putting to death the flesh, thereby presenting their bodies "a *living* sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (ch. 12:1).

"Might be acceptable" — Gr. *euprosdektos; well-received, approved, favorable.* It could only be thus if the offering was "without blemish", and in order that this be the case, Paul had written this epistle to instruct the ecclesia in the elements of sanctification.

"Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" — Sanctification comes by the Spirit Word (Jn. 6:63), as the power given by God to convert mankind to divine use. The DIAGLOTT and literal Greek read "having been sanctified by spirit holy". That is, through "the spirit of holiness" which has been discovered by believers, in the Word of Truth (Jn. 17:17).

The word "sanctified" is *hagiazo; to hallow, purify, consecrate.* As under the Law, a sacrifice was sanctified by preparation with salt, oil and frankincense, according to the nature of the sacrifice, so now the offering up of the Gentile ecclesia was rendered holy by the purifying and cleansing influence of the Holy Spirit in the message delivered unto them (cp. Rom. 12:1). A similar expression is used by Peter in Acts 10:34-38; 11:7-8.

VERSE 17

"I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ" — Paul gloried (Gr. *kauchesis: to boast;* see Rom. 3:27) in the appointment that was bestowed upon him by Christ, and by which alone he had authority to write as he did, concerning the matters of salvation.

"In those things which pertain to God" — Paul's desire was to share with others the principles of salvation that he had received from God, and recognised that it was for this purpose that he was called to service (Gal. 1:15; Acts 9:15).

VERSE 18

"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me" — Better, expressed positively as by Rotherham: "For I will not dare to speak of anything save of the things which Christ hath wrought out for himself through me". He declines to exult in anything other than the work of the Truth, and the commission that he received from the Master. It was to that assignment that Paul gave himself without stint.

"To make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed" — Paul expended himself in both preaching the Truth (Gr. *logos: logic*) and in action establishing the ecclesias (Gr. *ergon: toil;* "deed") in order that the Truth might be extended among Gentile believers. See Acts 20:31-35; 1Cor. 3:6; 2Cor. 11:23-28; Rom. 1:5).

This incorporates the doctrine of God Manifestation. The Truth must be believed and understood intellectually; then manifested inwardly in thought and motive, and outwardly through a standard of morality and humble, loving service to God and fellowman which is in conformity with the Truth believed. The gospel only becomes "the *power* of God unto salvation" (ch. 1:16) when it is understood *mentally* and manifested *morally.*

VERSE 19

"Through mighty signs" — Gr. *semeion: to indicate;* thus that which points towards. The word relates to the sign or reason for which a miracle is performed. Neither the Master nor his apostles wrought miracles indiscriminately; they were performed as a means to teach the Truth. So the man born blind, as recorded in Jn. 9, was used to declare the "works of God" (v. 3). Similar powerful miracles were manifested in the ministry of the apostle to attest to the power of the Truth declared: Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12; 8:13; 14:3; 15:12.

"And wonders" — Gr. *teras: prodigy, omen;* which indicates anything marvellous or outside the normal experience. The "wonders" emphasized the extraordinary nature of the "signs" miraculously performed. For example, the miracle of causing the blind to see is extraordinary in itself, but is also of great spiritual significance illustrating that the one performing it has the ability to bring the light of knowledge to those who are spiritually blind.

"By the power of the Spirit of God" — The medium by which such miracles and teachings were performed and which was possessed by the apostles (Acts 4:10).

Both the words "mighty" and "power" are from the Greek *dunamis: ability; act of power.* It represents the promise of Acts 1:8 in operation.

"So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum" — Paul views Jerusalem as the centre of his ministry to the Gentiles. From Jerusalem the preaching of the Truth extended westwards to the area of Illyricum, which borders the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea — an area which includes modern Montenegro, Albania and Yugoslavia.

Although this incident is not mentioned specifically in the Acts, Paul may have visited Illyricum during his extended stay in Ephesus (Acts 19-20; particularly 20:2). There is an indication that he crossed into Macedonia in the summer or autumn of AD55 (cp. 2Cor. 2:12-13) and spent a year or so in the areas of Macedonia and Achaia. It could have been within this period that he travelled along the Egnatian Way westward to the frontier of Illyricum, probably crossing into that district to preach the gospel.

The ministry of the apostle included Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, the Grecian Islands, Thessalonia and Macedonia. This covered no small part of the civilised world, all of which had heard the word of the gospel by the labors (in "word" and "deed") of one indefatigable man (cp. 2Tim. 4:10).

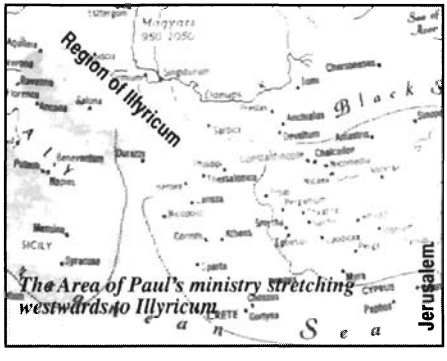
"I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" — The words "fully preached" are from the Greek *pleroo: to make replete* (from *plethuo: to fill*); thus "to cram, finish" (see v. 13; ch. 13:8; Gal. 5:14). He had presented the whole truth, the complete message of salvation (Acts 20:27).

VERSE 20

"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel" — The word "strived" is *philotimeomai* in the Greek (which word also appears in 2Cor. 5:9 as "labor" and in 1Thes. 4:11 as "study"), compounded from *philo; to love,* and *timeomai; to put a value.* Thus: "to be fond of honor", to be eager to give value. It was a point of "honor" with Paul to carry the gospel into regions where it had not previously penetrated. The NEB has: "*It is my ambition* to bring the gospel to places where the very name of Christ has not been heard". With true pioneering spirit, he went into areas where there was no support from established ecclesias, cheerfully facing the problems and difficulties this involved. However, as this epistle reveals, he did not hesitate to build up the brethren in centres where the Truth had been already established by others. But Paul had not been to Rome, so the "honor" of establishing the ecclesia in that city had been that of another; but his desire to set forth the Truth where it had not been heard previously did not prevent him confirming the ecclesias which had been established.

"Not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" — Paul had a specific mission to take the gospel into remote parts hitherto untouched by the preaching of the apostles (Acts 13:2), and constantly asserted his intention to prosecute that work (2Cor. 10:13-16). Although he visited areas in which others had labored, in order to "confirm the ecclesias" (Acts 14:22; 15:41), his prime objective was to extend the knowledge of the Truth. He saw this work as "laying the foundation stone" (1Cor. 3:10).

This statement does not imply that Paul would not work in harmony with other brethren; it rather expresses his determination to press ahead with the work of the gospel into new areas.



VERSE 21

"But as it is written" — Paul cites Isa. 52:15 as the basis of his own personal commission, and providing the authority to take the atoning work of Christ to the nations. Thus the extension of the Truth to the Gentiles was seen to be a work of God predicted in the Old Testament scriptures.

"To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand" — These words in Isa. 52:15 are prefaced by the declaration: "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him". The context speaks of the work of redemption upon the basis of an atoning sacrifice, as the word "sprinkle" (Heb. *naza: to spurt forth*) is used in the sense of cleansing (Ex. 29:21; Lev. 8:30), and of expiating sin (Lev. 14:51; 16:14; cp. Heb. 9:19). As a result of such confession by the nations, and acceptance of the authority of Christ, mankind will ultimately be guided into the way of salvation. Paul uses the prophecy for his special commission to take the Truth to the Gentiles, that the saving work of Christ might be both "seen" and "understood" by the nations.

Paul's Proposed Intentions — vv. 22-29.

Having completed the work set him to do, Paul hoped to visit Rome on route to Spain (vv. 22-24), and then to return to Jerusalem (vv. 25-29) in order to assist the

brethren who were experiencing practical distress because of the difficulties in that city. It was at Jerusalem that the apostle was taken prisoner to appear before Caesar in Rome.

VERSE 22

"For which cause also" — Because he had sought to fulfil the duty of proclaiming the Truth in areas where others had not ventured, he had been unable earlier to visit the ecclesia in Rome, though he had long desired to do so (ch. 1:8-13).

"I have been much hindered from coming to you" — For some time Paul had earnestly desired to visit the ecclesia at Rome. The words "much hindered" are in the intensive tense in the Greek: "I have been greatly and altogether hindered..." The Gr. *enkopto* means *to cut into; impede; detain.* The circumstances brought about by his preaching work in other parts had detained him from his previous intention. The same word is used in 1Thes. 2:18 of the actions of the pagan authorities.

VERSE 23

"But now having no more place in these parts" — Having completed his labors in all the areas allotted him (Acts 9:15; 26:20) he was now free to visit Rome (ch. 19:21). The word "parts" (Gr. *klima*) signifies "regions".

"And having a great desire these many years to come unto you" — He had heard of the ecclesia in Rome by repute and had met some of the brethren personally in other places, and thus had a warm regard for them, to which he gives expression in his greetings listed in ch. 16.

VERSE 24

"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain" — It is not known for certain whether Paul ever reached Spain. However, there is a strong indication that he did so after he was released from his first imprisonment in Rome. His second (and final) epistle to Timothy hints at a hurried trip that the apostle took back to the capital, which must have been some time after his release, and which probably was made to assist the ecclesia there in view of the terrible persecution that had broken out under the emperor Nero.

Tradition indicates that Paul did visit Spain. Clement, writing towards the close of the first century, stated: "Paul... having taught righteousness to the whole world, and having gone to the limits of the West, and having given testimony before the rulers thus passed from the world". Clement wrote from Rome, then considered the centre of the empire, and the reference to the West probably refers to Spain. Eusebius wrote: "Luke, also, who handed down the Acts of the Apostles in writing, brought his narrative to a close by the statement that Paul spent two whole years in Rome in freedom, and preached the Word of God without hindrance. Tradition has it that the apostle, having defended himself, was again sent upon the ministry of preaching, and coming the second time to the same city, suffered martyrdom under Nero..."

In view of such evidence, we strongly incline to the view that the apostle Paul did visit Spain. The epistle is the work of inspiration, and doubtless Paul would have been permitted to accomplish the purpose so definitely stated in this verse.

"I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey" — This was to be on his way to Spain. There was no need to stay long in Rome, since the ecclesia there appeared to be strong and flourishing, but he wished to personally meet them.

"And to be brought on my way thitherward by you" — The NASB has: "helped on my way there". Paul looked for the brethren to assist him in his journey to Spain by the encouragement of their love and enthusiasm for the Truth.

"If first I be somewhat filled with your (company)" — The RV renders "filled" as "satisfied" (Gr. *empiplemi: to fill in; satisfy*, from a root meaning "the largest number"). Paul anticipated the great joy of fellowship and a period of mutual encouragement with the faithful community in Rome, that would come "first", before he moved on towards Spain.

VERSE 25

"But now" — There is a further reason that might cause some delay in his visit to Rome, and his work in Spain.

"I go unto Jerusalem" — This journey is referred to in Acts 19:21. Paul had taken up a collection on behalf of the poor brethren in Jerusalem (1Cor. 16:1-3; 2Cor. 9:2; Acts 24:17), perhaps hoping that this act of kindness on the part of Gentile believers would help to unite the two groups of believers more completely. This would also be strengthened by his visit to Jewish Jerusalem, and then to Gentile Rome.

"To minister unto the saints" — The word "minister" is the only occurrence of this verb (Gr. *diakoneo: to attend; to wait upon; to render service*; see v. 18) in Romans. Its use is further evidence of Paul's humble and selfless disposition. "I am going to Jerusalem, *being employed* in a ministration to the saints" (Conybeare and Howson). Paul viewed his commitment to carry the collection to Jerusalem as a very important service on behalf of others.

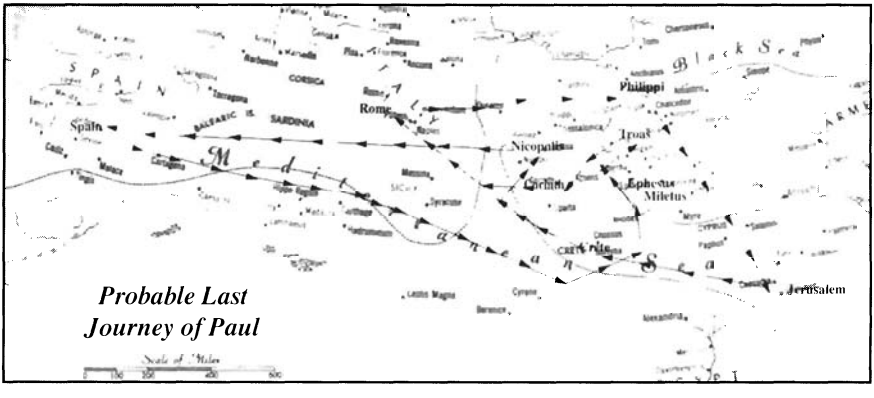
VERSE 26

"For it hath pleased them" — Paul was reluctant to use the generosity of brethren and sisters in certain places because of their own extreme poverty (cp. 2Cor. 8:1-4), but acknowledged that they had freely given to assist the needs of their Jewish brethren. Because the contribution was voluntary ("pleased them") it was an expression of support and goodwill for the sizeable number of brethren in Jerusalem (cp. Gal. 2:10).

"Of Macedonia and Achaia" — The northern and southern provinces of Roman Greece (see p. 490). Macedonia contained Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, whilst Achaia included Athens and Corinth.

"To make a certain contribution" — The word is from the Greek *koinonia: partnership; sharing*, and signifies an act of fellowship and association with their affliction.

"For the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" — The Gr. *ptochos* expresses the destitute condition of the brethren and sisters at Jerusalem. The word means "one who crouches and cowers... a beggar"



Tracing first his journey from Rome, Paul visited Philippi (Phil. 2:19-24), moved on to Colosse (Philem. 22), called at Crete where he left Titus (Tit. 1:5), wintered in Nicopolis (Tit. 3:12), then, probably, moved on to Spain (Rom. 15:24). The next we learn of Paul is that he is back in Asia, and there are indications of a hurried trip, as though he is driven on by great anxiety. His desire is to help his brethren in Rome, but evidently important work in Asia prevented him returning direct to the capital from Spain. Nevertheless, apart from essentials, he allowed nothing to deter him. He left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2Tim. 4:20), absent-mindedly left some of his belongings at Troas with Carpus (2Tim. 4:13), visited Corinth (2Tim. 4:20), and moved on to Rome where he was promptly imprisoned (2Tim. 1:16-17; 2:9).

(Vine); "crouching, cringing, in the manner of beggars" (Bull.). They were not necessarily literally begging, but had been, by force of circumstances, reduced to this pitiable state of abject poverty. This condition was increased by the oppressive circumstances of the times. They were condemned by the Sanhedrin, opposed by the rulers, and persecuted by the people (cp. Acts 8:1; 12:1).

Such conditions are virtually unknown in the western world today. The present generation tends to take for granted the everyday provisions and luxuries of life, and therefore has little understanding or appreciation of what it would be like to live under such appalling conditions. It is a humbling exhortation to realise that, despite the difficulties engendered by their dire circumstances, the poverty-stricken brethren and sisters at Jerusalem remained faithful to the Truth.

VERSE 27

"It hath pleased them verily" — Paul repeats the word "pleased" (Gr. *eudokeo: to think well of; approve*) he used in v. 26 to emphasize the fact that they had contributed for the ecclesia in Jerusalem willingly and cheerfully.

"And their debtors they are" — "They have resolved to do so, and indeed they are under an obligation to them" (NEB). Not only was the contribution of the Gentile believers an expression of their goodwill for their afflicted brethren in Jerusalem, but also a recognition of the privilege of their hope. The Gentiles should acknowledge a great debt to the Jews who had been chosen by God to receive the scriptures, and through whom Christ came according to the flesh. Paul tactfully reminds them that it was only right that in "fellowshipping" the affliction of the Jewish believers, Gentile believers should also recognise the great privileges received through them.

Within the Brotherhood of Christ we have an obligation of mutual appreciation and assistance, and should be ever aware of those requirements (Mat. 7:12). Thus, all members of the Body should be interdependent upon one another (1Cor. 12:25-27; Rom. 12:15).

"For if the Gentiles have been made partakers" — The word *koinoneo: to share with others*, is the verb of the noun "contribution" which occurs in v. 26.

These words appear to be an allusion to ch. 11:18, "If thou *[Gentiles]* boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee..." There is evidently a play-on-words as indicated in the following rendering: "A general contribution, as it should be, since it is really repaying a debt: the pagans who share the spiritual possessions of these poor people have a duty to help them with temporal possessions" (JB). This was an example of "fellowship" in a most practical and realistic way.

"Of their spiritual things" — Gr. *pneumatikos* (as in ch. 1:11 and 7:14). The hope of the gospel they enjoyed had come through the testimony of God delivered first to the Jew.

"Their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" — To assist their brethren in the ordinary matters of life (cp. 1Cor. 9:11). This is a practical application of the principles expressed in Rom. 11:18. Even though the Jews have proved to be "enemies" because of the gospel, they are, as a nation, called by God "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (ch. 11:28). Now, however, since the nation had refused the saving work of Christ, that duty to "minister" (Gr. *leitourgeo: to be a public servant*, and which indicates one who ministers to others at his own expense. See also comments in v. 16) was to be focused on the Jewish believers in Jerusalem (Gal. 6:10).

VERSE 28

"When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit" — Paul viewed his responsibility in recommending ecclesial assistance for those in Jerusalem, as placing his own personal seal upon the gift provided. This Gentile liberality, the "fruit" thus sealed, came as a result of Gentiles embracing the hope of Israel, in which work Paul had been foremost (1Cor. 9:2).

The word "sealed" (DIAG: "secured". Gr. *sphragizo: to stamp for security or preservation;* see Jn. 6:27) indicates authority and approval. It was a commercial custom of those days to seal merchandise travelling from one place to another, for security. The "fruit" in this case was the collection gathered from the Gentile ecclesias (1Cor. 16:1). Paul placed his own "seal" on the "fruit" inasmuch as he identified himself completely with the gift being provided.

"I will come by you into Spain" — This reiteration of his determined intention to visit Spain after he had been to Jerusalem suggests that he ultimately did so. However, he was first taken as a prisoner to Rome, then later released, and permitted to continue his ministry for a time.

VERSE 29

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" — His intention was to impart to them the spiritual gift to which he makes reference in ch. 1:11, and which related to the comprehensive understanding of the gospel that he would personally provide to them. The "fulness" (Gr. *pleroma: completion*) speaks of his desire to expand upon the exposition provided in this epistle (see the same word in ch. 11:12, 25); whilst "blessing" (Gr. *eulogia: expression of language*) indicates that his discussion upon these "spiritual matters" would be of great assistance and encouragement to them.

However, Brother Carter suggests that the "fulness of the blessing" may relate to the uniting of Jew and Gentile believers, which Paul hoped to accomplish by his ministry to Jerusalem. He writes: "The journey to Jerusalem successfully accomplished, Paul says he would bring a 'blessing of Christ' (v. 29). This may allude to his hope of uniting Jew and Gentile in one body. If successful in his mission to Jerusalem, and the Jews fully acknowledged Gentile fellowship, the fulness of the blessing of Christ, extending to all peoples, would have been recognised by all. Yet the mission was not free from danger. There were many bitter opponents whose aim was to thwart the very object he had in view. He therefore most earnestly requests their prayers that his service might be acceptable, and that he may come in joy, by the will of God, to Rome, and with them to be refreshed".

Paul Pleads for Their Prayers to Assist Him in His Work — vv. 30-33.

Although he is to convey the collection to Jerusalem, and to thereby assist those of the faith in need of practical assistance, the prayers of the ecclesia in Rome were an important element in his labors for the Truth. He asks them to seek the divine blessing on his behalf.

VERSE 30

"Now I beseech you, brethren" — As the reference to his impending visit to Jerusalem reminds the apostle of the dangers and anxieties which that journey implies, Paul now seeks the support of the brethren in that project. The word "beseech" (Gr. *parakaleo: to call near)* is used elsewhere for exhortation and comfort (see ch. 12:1, 8). He appeals to them to "draw alongside him" in prayer, as he faces the dangers of his proposed travels.

"For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit" — The RV renders this: "by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit". His appeal to them is based on their common devotion and mutual love for spiritual things, an attitude generated by the Spirit-Word which provides access to the Father through Christ (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 2:18).

"That ye strive together with me in (your) prayers to God for me" — The word "strive" (Gr. *sunagonizomai: to struggle together*) signifies "to agonise in partnership" and is used in relation to similar circumstances in Col. 4:12 (see also 2Cor. 1:11). To agonise in prayer is to personally feel the things we utter; to have an emotional involvement in what we declare, confessing our need of the Father's help. A Pharisaical prayer is one in which the things presented are merely theoretical or academic without true per-

sonal feelings, because there is no recognition of personal inadequateness (see Lk. 18:11-13; Mat. 6:5-7). The brethren in Rome could only "agonise" in prayer on behalf of Paul if they completely identified themselves with his aims and objectives, were mindful of his anxieties, and so poured out their hearts to God.

VERSE 31

"That I may be delivered" — The word (*rhuomai: rush; draw; rescue*) signifies "to snatch out of danger; to rescue from; to preserve from" the power and influence of evil men (2Thes. 3:2). Paul knew that difficulties awaited him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23, 38; 21:11), but was determined to continue his mission, believing that this service of love which he felt so keenly for his countrymen (Rom. 10:1) could have a valuable reaction as far as the unity of believing Jews and Gentiles was concerned. Although he was prepared to suffer hardships and imprisonment, he was delivered out of danger, and so ultimately arrived at Rome. Thus this prayer was answered (Acts 21-24).

"From them that do not believe in Judaea" — There were many unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem who sought Paul's life. They regarded him as an apostate and were convinced that he "taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake the law of Moses" (Acts 21:21). The apostle was well aware that in returning to Judea he exposed himself to very real danger. His fears proved to be well founded, for on one occasion he was almost lynched, but was rescued by the Roman guard (Acts 21:20-34). Ultimately he was delivered from their influence by his appeal to appear before Caesar (Acts 25:11), and sent to Rome as a prisoner.

"And that my service which (I have) for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints" — Not only unbelievers opposed Paul, but, to their shame, believing Jews as well. So bitterly was Paul's mission to Gentiles hated by some of the Judaisers that they doubted Paul's gift from Gentiles was even acceptable. As it turned out, the ecclesia apparently received his contribution with gratitude (Acts 21:17-20). His desire to meet the brethren at Rome was achieved, although with difficulty and persecution.

VERSE 32

"That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God" — He desired to avoid any opposition to his intention to meet those at Rome. "God's will" was

Striving in Prayer: Verse 30.

In his humility Paul confessed ***his*** *need of their prayers! He was a man of prayer. In his writings he constantly revealed that he placed tremendous importance upon the exercise and power of prayer. Imagine his strong feelings as he penned these words in this verse. His own fervent prayer ascending to the One who sits enthroned in glory in the heavens; whilst his brethren and sisters at Rome offered up prayers of similar content, with the same attitude of mind as the apostle, and with the same objective in view. Such thoughts are both humbling and spiritually invigorating. But do we really "agonise" in prayer? We do so by concentrating our minds upon prayer that we "strive very earnestly" (Bull.) to give ourselves fully to our communion with the Father. Do we pray with deep feeling and strong conviction? Do we earnestly desire to see the fulfilment of these things with which we supplicate our God? Do we pray upon the basis of praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh? And do we, in our prayers, acknowledge that His will and wisdom must take precedence over our own? On considering our prayers He always knows what is best — both for us, and in regard to His own purpose. Paul is a great example in all these important aspects of prayer.* — ***J.U.***

always recognised by Paul as the ground for his actions (cp. Acts 18:21; Jas. 4:14-15).

"And may with you be refreshed" — The Greek word, *sunanapauomai* signifies *to lie down; to rest with* (see v. 24). The phrase is in the Middle Voice emphasizing that which is done is for oneself. It is thus better expressed: "that I may with you refresh myself". Paul was a man of outstanding humility, and so declared that he would personally benefit from his contact with the brethren, as well as conferring a benefit on them (Rom. 1:12). He acknowledged that such "refreshing" was a privilege he enjoyed from his association with faithful and concerned brethren and sisters (2Tim. 1:16; 2Cor. 7:13).

In an age of rampant materialism and indifference, brethren and sisters need to remember the importance of "refreshing" one another, of extending words of encouragement and stimulation so that the spirit of dedication is strengthened, and the understanding of the Truth is enhanced. Shortly Yahweh will provide "times of refreshing" for all mankind on the basis of converted hearts and covered sins (Acts 3:19). In endeavoring to bring such an influence into our own environment, we do honor to the plan and purpose of the Deity.

VERSE 33

"Now the God of peace be with you all" — This brief but characteristic benediction completes this section of the epistle.

The Greek word for "peace" is *eirene*, the equivalent of the Hebrew *shalom*, which primarily signifies "wholeness; unity", the state of being "at one", when strife and discord have been completely abolished. This is the grand objective of the Truth: to bring us all to oneness and complete unity with the Father and the Son, and with one another, when the warfare of faith will have run its full course, and victory will be gained by all who have remained faithful.

Mankind in general does not understand such peace (Rom. 3:17) but Christ offered it to the apostles upon the basis of his sacrifice (Jn. 14:27), and they proclaimed it in their message of the gospel (Acts 10:36). The Truth is designed to establish such a peace that includes harmony with the Creator, and a uniting in His principles (Jn. 17:21). Paul recognised that the blessing of "the God of peace" would bring success to his impending mission in Jerusalem, particularly in his desire to unite the Jewish and Gentile believers. So the apostle appropriately invoked God by that title.

Paul's invitation to the brethren in Rome to join him in prayer reveals the wonderful humility of the great apostle. It invited the most humble member of the ecclesia to assist him in his labors, and to share with him in all that he did.

"Amen" — The word occurs seven times in this epistle, and signifies "trustworthy; surely; faithfulness". It implies the absolute conviction of the apostle that God would perform His will, notwithstanding the opposition and ignorance of mankind. See notes ch. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36.

The Character of God As Revealed in the Epistle to the Romans

A Witness	1:9
Incorruptible	1:23
Impartial	2:11
A Judge	2:16; 3:6
God of all Men	3:29
God of Patience	15:5
God of Hope	15:13
God of Peace	15:33; 16:20
Only Wise One	16:27

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HELPERS WITH PAUL

Paul concludes his epistle to the Ecclesia at Rome with greetings to individual members and a final admonition and encouragement to all.

Though he had never been to Rome, Paul greets many by name, having possibly met them elsewhere, or having learned of their reputation for faithfulness. Though personal details concerning many of those to whom Paul refers are lacking, they are recorded in the Book of Life, and it may be our great joy to meet these brethren and sisters personally in the presence of our beloved Master.

Paul takes time to encourage each one in their service to the Truth in differing circumstances of life. Some homes were united in the work (v. 15); some divided (v. 10, 11); some co-operated with friends (vv. 12, 14); some labored on their own (vv. 6, 8, 12); some worked together as husband and wife (v. 3); some did so as family groups (v. 15). At least ten sisters are mentioned by name (vv. 1, 3, 6, 12, 13, 15), in addition to the brethren who labored in the work, so that there is tremendous encouragement for all in this chapter.

Paul uses different terms to describe the different forms of involvement. Some were fellow-helpers (Gr. sunergos), welded together by a common labor (vv. 3, 9); others were fondly described as "beloved" (Gr. agapetos) being ready to sacrifice themselves in service (vv. 8, 9, 12); there were those "approved" (Gr. dokimazo) being tested under trial (v. 10); others are described as "chosen" (Gr. eklektos), thus indicating that they were selected for special duties (v. 13).

A notable omission is that of Peter! No mention is made of him, in spite of the claims of the Catholic apostasy that he was Bishop of Rome. If Peter were there, or involved personally in the activities of the ecclesia, Paul would undoubtedly have mentioned him.

It is appropriate that, in this final chapter of an epistle dealing with the principles of divine labor and God's purpose with mankind, there should be such a list of brethren and sisters laboring with Paul, as faithful examples, for the elevation of the Truth. Great encouragement can be derived for present-day laborers in ecclesial service, from a consideration of the comments of the apostle Paul concerning the brethren and sisters at Rome.

Paul Commends the Bearer of the Epistle — vv. 1-2.

Before concluding with his personal greetings to the ecclesia at Rome, Paul adds some comments to introduce an outstanding sister who apparently intended to travel to this city, and who therefore carried the epistle to the ecclesia.

VERSE 1

"I commend unto you" — Paul uses the Greek word *sunistano* (from *sun: together with,* and *histemi: to stand),* to express his personal confidence in this member of the Cenchrean Ecclesia. Such a letter of recommendation was necessary in the case of more obscure members, so that the ecclesia might accept any such stranger arriving and seeking hospitality as being genuine. This practice is still continued today, and should be encouraged as brethren and sisters are able to move freely from place to place. This prevents any difficulty or embarrassment being caused to the ecclesia visited. Contrast Paul's own reputation: 2Cor. 3:1.

"Phebe our sister" — The feminine form of Phoebus, which is a variation of Apollo, the sun god. The name signifies "bright; pure", which could also describe her character. Bearing a pagan name, she was probably a Gentile convert from paganism. She may also have been a widow, or unmarried, with considerable wealth, for, if she had a husband she could not have acted in the independent manner suggested in these verses. Phebe was travelling to Rome, bearing with her to the ecclesia this epistle written by Paul and dictated to Tertius (v. 22) during the apostle's three months stay in Achaia.

"Which is a servant of the ecclesia" — Gr. *diakonos: an attendant;* thus a deaconess, from *diako: to run on errands.* The title of deacon is used of domestic servants (Jn. 2:5-9); civil rulers (Rom. 13:4), Christ (Rom. 15:8) and those who labored in the ecclesial work. Phebe had voluntarily become the servant of the ecclesia in Cenchrea, most likely in the manner described in 1Tim. 5:5, 9-10, but not in contradiction to 1Tim. 2:11-12.

"Which is at Cenchrea" — The port of Corinth, situated about fourteen kilometres from the city. Paul had visited it in company with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:18), and an ecclesia had been established there, where Phebe rendered valuable and helpful service.

VERSE 2

"That ye receive her in the Lord" — Paul had a very high regard for this godly woman, and recognised that she would not abuse any privileges granted her by the saints in Rome. The NEB has: "Give her, in the fellowship of Christ, a welcome *worthy* of God's people".

"As becometh saints" — In a manner worthy of the saints. See Phil. 2:29; Col. 4:10; 3Jn. 5-6. Ecclesias have a responsibility to receive and care for faithful visitors, although this does not necessitate offering friendship and fellowship to those not in unity of doctrine or action (2Cor. 13:5-6; 2Tim. 3:8-9; Tit. 1:15-16).

"And that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you" — This may have been in the matter of accommodation or assisting with her travel proposals.

"For she hath been a succourer of many" — Gr. *prostatis: a patroness; assistant,* from a root meaning "to stand before"; thus it is used in the sense of a legal representative or wealthy patron, called upon to assist another. Vine suggests: "a protectress", the quality of a "mother-hen" who "gathereth her chickens under her wings" — a Christ-like characteristic (Mat. 23:37; cp. Is. 31:5). Phebe was noted for her devotion to the service of Christ, and her assistance to his brethren. She had fulfilled those obligations of hospitality and in those things the apostle himself advocated (Rom. 12:8, 13; Heb. 13:2).

"And of myself also" — Faithful sisters such as Phebe had labored to refresh the apostle, and by their loving ministrations had done much to relieve him in his arduous duties, and to extend the work in which he was engaged. The Lord, also, benefited from similar ministrations (Lk. 8:2-3).

Personal Greetings and Salutations — vv. 3-16.

Paul now sends his personal greetings to a number of brethren and sisters, whom he had known elsewhere in his travels, and who had found their way to the Roman metropolis.

VERSE 3

"Greet Priscilla" — Sig: *Little Old Woman.* If her name provides any clue to the type of person she was, it indicates a small, eager woman, greatly assisted by her more powerful husband. However, since she is listed first in four of the six occasions this delightful and supportive couple is mentioned, it appears that she was the spiritual driving force of the family, in the experience of the apostle (Note that in Acts 18:26 the DIAGLOTT more correctly places Priscilla before Aquila, and not as in the AV). But whether this is so or not, there was certainly the greatest cooperation between these two faithful fellow-laborers in the things of the Truth, and their continued support of the work of Paul is indicated by him mentioning them first in his list of those to whom he sends greetings.

"And Aquila" — Sig. *Eagle*, perhaps indicating his strength and vitality (as the eagle is represented in Psa. 103:5; Isa. 40:31).

"My helpers in Christ Jesus" — The Greek word *sunergos* signifies those who are welded together as one in a common labor. The RV renders it as "fellow workers". Priscilla and Aquila had identified themselves with the labor of Paul, an identification which he, in turn, now acknowledges.

They are always mentioned together as husband and wife, and therefore their labor for the Truth was of mutual support and interest. Priscilla and Aquila were a Jewish couple of Pontus, resident for a time in Italy, but forced to leave through the persecution of the Jews by Claudius. Migrating to Corinth, Aquila set up business as a tentmaker, and possibly employed Paul in that capacity (Acts 18:2), who probably then lived with them and taught them the Truth. In their zeal they identified themselves completely with the work of the apostle, and thus witnessed the arguments, debates and opposition that Paul experienced (Acts 18:5-6), and which ultimately brought the apostle before the authorities (vv. 7-17). They were his fellow-passengers from Corinth to Ephesus, where they stayed. There they set up house which became a centre for the Truth, so that an ecclesia was established in their home (1Cor. 16:19). Here they met and converted Apollos (Acts 18:24-26). They ultimately travelled to Rome (Rom. 16:3), returning again to Ephesus (2Tim. 4:19). Thus they were in the midst of many adventures associated with the establishing and development of the Truth in apostolic times.

VERSE 4

"Who have for my life laid down their own necks" — In some unrecorded incident, this faithful couple had shielded Paul at the danger of their own lives: a token of their sincere love for the apostle and the divine ministry delivered into his hands. Certainly they were involved in many of the difficult experiences faced by Paul in his labor for the Truth. They were with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the riot led by Demetrius (Acts 19), when Luke records that Paul would have entered into the temple of Diana, but "the disciples suffered him not" in an endeavor to protect him from the threatened violence. Paul wrote of his troubles in Asia that "we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (2Cor. 1:8). Here are the recorded incidents in which Priscilla and Aquila would have been involved, and perhaps the reason for them leaving Ephesus and returning to Rome.

"Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the ecclesias of the Gentiles" — Priscilla and Aquila were a Jewish couple, and yet they hazarded their lives to protect the apostle to the Gentiles. Apparently Paul had told many brethren and sisters of the circumstances of their action, and this had won the gratitude of the Gen-

tile believers. In addition, they also accommodated the ecclesia in Ephesus (1Cor. 16:19), and were always earnestly engaged in the work of the Truth in the cities of the Gentiles.

VERSE 5

"Likewise (greet)" — Gr. *aspazomai: to enfold in the arms; salute; welcome.* To recognise each other in a fraternal atmosphere of family association.

"The ecclesia that is in their house" — The home of this hospitable couple was always open to those who embraced the Truth (cp. 1Cor. 16:19). In Rome it had become a regular place of meeting, so that an ecclesia had been formed there. In apostolic times there were many such ecclesias established in the home (Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). Sometimes entire households joined the Truth as a group (Acts 10:44-48; 16:5, 30-34; 18:8; 1Cor. 1:16). The household included, in addition to members of the immediate family, slaves and dependants.

"Salute my wellbeloved" — The Greek word, *agapetos*, suggests one who is ready to sacrifice in his love for the Truth. The root word is *agape*, a sacrificial love born of an understanding of what is best for one, in view of God's purpose. It is used of Christ as loved by God (Mat.

The Work of Faithful Sisters

In Eastern countries in apostolic times, as is often still the case in the modern era, women were not generally permitted to mix with men. Even within the home their role was subservient and low-key. As for the idea of women associating with men in relation to any form of work or labor, such would have been considered unthinkable. Women were regarded by men as being inferior and were treated accordingly. (It is recognised, however, that under the Law women held a far better position, than that established by other eastern nations). Paul opposed such unjust disparity amongst Christ's disciples. Whilst firmly teaching that the man is the head of the woman and that wives were to be in subjection to their husbands (1Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22), he also taught that men and women were "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28); they had equal opportunities in the race for life eternal. This teaching added a new and different dimension to the relationship between the sexes, in contrast to that which had been the norm in Eastern countries for countless centuries. Though the man was to be esteemed as "the head", Paul gave husbands no licence to rule tyrannically over wives and children. They were, in fact, to assume their responsibilities as did Christ as "head" of the ecclesia, "giving himself for it". Women were to "keep silence in the ecclesia," and were not permitted to "teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1Cor. 14:34; 1Tim. 2:11-12). This was following the type of Christ and the ecclesia. It did not mean that sisters were to be regarded as little more than chattels. Does Christ look upon his brethren and sisters in such a manner? Hence, Paul taught the need for due recognition of the wonderful attributes, spiritual and otherwise, which are essentially feminine. Though described as "the weaker vessel" (1Pet. 3:7) women may possess a strength of character and a warmth of devotion such at which men can only marvel, and gratefully appreciate.

Paul's tribute to Phebe is followed by greetings to various members of the ecclesia. Among those greeted are nine sisters. He specifically mentions the noteworthy labor and loving sacrifices of five of them. Only two women are mentioned without comment: Julia and the sister of Nereus; but he still remembers them and their worth as servants of the Lord. Sisters have their rightful place in the work of the Truth, whether within the home or the ecclesia. Their love, self-sacrifice, awareness, and unfailing dedication are vital to the unity and oneness of the family unit, and the ecclesia as a body. With an intensity of perception which could only be developed through the power of the Word, Paul fully recognised and acknowledged the significant and essential role of faithful sisters. — ***J. Ullman.***

3:17), for the Father had given of Himself, that through the Son others might benefit (2Cor. 5:19).

"Epaenetus" — Sig. *Praiseworthy.*

"Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" — This brother was the first of Stephanas' house to embrace the Truth (1Cor. 16:15), after which he removed to Rome, and was busy in the ecclesia there.

Achaia was a province on the west coast of Asia Minor.

VERSE 6

"Greet Mary" — Sig. *Bitter.* Hebrew: *Miriam.* All we know about this sister is that she resided in Rome and was noted for her valuable service within the ecclesia.

"Who bestowed much labour on us" — Perhaps she formerly lived in Greece, where she was able to assist Paul in some way. However, the RV has "you" instead of "us", and as Paul had not yet been to Rome (Rom. 1:11), he would have heard of her loving ministrations, and knew of her diligence on behalf of the saints by repute, and therefore sends this public commendation to her.

VERSE 7

"Salute Andronicus" — Sig. *The Victory of Man.*

"And Junia" — Sig. *Yahweh continues.* However in Latin, this word signifies *Youthful.* Some authorities (see DIAG, ROTH.) agree that this should not be in the feminine form, but "Junias" (masc).

"My kinsmen" — Gr. *sungenes: relative; fellow,* from *sun: with, together,* and *genos: kin.* Apparently these two were Jewish, and may have been from Paul's own tribe, or perhaps near relations. See use of the term in Acts 10:24; Rom. 9:3; 16:21).

"And my fellowprisoners" — Apparently they had also suffered, as had the apostle, for the faith, and Paul therefore had a fellow-feeling with them.

"Who are of note among the apostles" — The NIV and NASB have: "who are outstanding among the apostles". This indicates the extent of their labors on behalf of the Truth in Rome. They were held in high repute by the apostles, and also, doubtless, by the ecclesia.

"Who also were in Christ before me" — Probably being converted at Pentecost (Acts 2), thereafter taking the Truth back to Rome. It is possible that they had established the ecclesia in that city; certainly they had labored diligently to strengthen and extend it.

Just a List of Names?

To the casual reader, the long list of names in the first sixteen verses of the final chapter may seem dull, uninteresting, and even boring. It should not be so. These are references to real, living people. Their names were lovingly penned by the apostle. With what warm feelings would Paul have carefully recalled each of them! As the names come forth from the apostle's memory, under Spirit guidance, the reader should gain a picture of the wonderful unity these brethren and sisters shared with one another, and with the great apostle. What singularity of mind and understanding is revealed. The fellowship and compatibility they shared, the mutual sympathy and goodwill which bound them together intimately, are aspects of their relationship not to be taken lightly. Paul shared with these brethren and sisters a concord and fraternity which the unbelieving world could never understand. But look to the future: with what wondrous, unspeakable joy will these faithful brethren and sisters be reunited — in the very presence of their beloved apostle, as well as their Lord and King — at the judgment seat of Christ! There will be made such joyous reunions in that day, when names and characters, identified with deeds of faithfulness and loving service to the Master and his disciples, will culminate in victory over the flesh, and an endless union with the Father and the Son in the pleasure and perfection of divine nature. — ***J. Ullman.***

VERSE 8

"Greet Amplias" — Sig. *Enlarged.* He certainly found "enlargement" in his service for the Truth. An abbreviation of Ampliatus, which appears in most manuscripts. In his book *The Epistle to the Romans,* C. H. Dodd states that in an early Christian tomb the one word *Ampliati* is found in fine uncial lettering of the first or early second century, and comments: "The position and character of the tomb suggest that it belonged to a person held in especial respect. It is quite possible that he is our 'Ampliatus beloved in the Lord'. In any case, we have early evidence of a Roman Christian family bearing this name".

"My beloved in the Lord" — Paul records his personal pleasure in the friendship of this lovely brother in the Truth.

VERSE 9

"Salute Urbane" — A very common Roman name meaning *Of the City* (masc.). It is found in a number of Roman inscriptions.

"Our helper in Christ" — See v. 3.

"And Stachys" — An uncommon Roman name. It signifies *An Ear of Grain,* and he lived up to it by forming part of the harvest of Christ (Mat. 11:15; 13:9; Lk. 8:8).

"My beloved" — See v. 5.

VERSE 10

"Salute Apelles" — Considered to be a common Jewish name among the Jews of Rome. It signifies *Without Receptacle;* thus without a cover, or "unable to hide" — and certainly this brother was prominent in the work of the ecclesia.

"Approved in Christ" — Gr. *dokimazo,* a word used to define the testing of metals by fire; thus signifying one who has been proved under trial (see use of the word in ch. 14:22). Paul may have had in mind some account of persecution that this brother suffered for the sake of Christ, but throughout that experience he had remained faithful to his Master.

"Salute them which are of Aristobulus' (household)" — It is not to Aristobulus personally that Paul sends greetings, but to those of his household. His name signifies *Best Advising,* or *Best Counsellor,* but apparently he had not himself been converted to Christ. The word "of" is *ek,* meaning "out of", and the DIAGLOTT translates this as "out of the family of Aristobulus", as though there were only some of his actual family that associated with the Truth. Possibly he lived up to the significance of his name by having a reputation for worldly wisdom, a wisdom that did not permit him to perceive its foolishness, and so embrace the true wisdom in Christ (cp. 1Cor. 1:19-31). Certainly, at the judgment seat of Christ we shall learn more details concerning some of Paul's comments regarding these individuals.

Meanwhile, we should ponder the dramatic incidents connected with these individuals and families, as implied in the apostle's significant greetings.

VERSE 11

"Salute Herodion" — Sig. *Hero; Valiant* (masc.). It is similar to Herod, the name of the Idumean king.

"My kinsman" — Therefore of Jewish extraction.

"Greet them that be of the (household) of Narcissus" — As in the case of Aristobulus (v. 10), the expression here seems to point to some famous person of this name. It is a common name which means *Drugged* or *Narcotic.* The name belongs to a daffodil from which was obtained a drug. Perhaps the name is an index to the character of this man, whose influence may have been such in his household that only a few had embraced the Truth. There was a certain *Narcissus* who was put to death shortly after the accession of Nero, and therefore a few years before this letter was written. His slaves would probably pass into the emperor's hands, and increase "Caesar's household" as "*The Narcissiani*" (see Phil. 4:22).

As in v. 10 the word "of" is the Greek *ek,* "out of", signifying a divided household.

"Which are in the Lord" — Only

part of the household had embraced Christ.

VERSE 12

"Salute Tryphena" — Sig. *Dainty; Luxurious.*

"And Tryphosa" — Sig. *Delicate; Luxuriating.*

"Who labor in the Lord" — The present tense indicates that they were still at work, when Paul wrote (contrast with Persis). Both these names are feminine, and indicate two spinsters: sisters — perhaps, even twins because of their similar names — or certainly friends in the Truth, who found a great joy in working together for Christ. As they jointly assisted one another in their activities for the Truth, their friendship was given greater purpose and a more profitable objective, for such a friendship, built upon eternal verities, contains the seeds of eternity.

"Salute the beloved Persis" — Sig. *A Persian Woman* (fem.). Paul addresses her as "the" beloved, and not as "my", as he did in vv. 8, 9 in regard to certain brethren concerning whose conversion to the Truth or in the direction of their activities for the ecclesia Paul had personally contributed some assistance. This was not the case with "the beloved Persis" who had labored on her own initiative.

"Which labored much in the Lord" — Since her name signifies a Persian woman, she may have journeyed from that area to be converted in Rome, and in her loneliness dedicated her life to the service of the Truth. She lacked even the companionship of Tryphena and Tryphosa, but nevertheless found a companion in Christ and association in the ecclesia. The adjective "beloved" suggests that Persis was affectionately held in high repute by the whole ecclesia. The past tense suggests that she was now elderly.

VERSE 13

"Salute Rufus" — Sig. *Red.*

"Chosen in the Lord" — "An outstanding follower of the Lord" (NEB). He could have been the son of Simon who carried the stake for Jesus (Mk. 15:21). It is true that Simon was a Cyrenian, a Grecian city of North Africa, but citizens of that city had established a synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9), and members of it who had been converted, extended the Truth to foreign parts (ch. 11:20). Simon was most likely a follower of Jesus, and could have migrated to Rome, where his son Rufus embraced the Truth.

"And his mother and mine" — Paul lovingly greets the mother of Rufus, who at some time had obviously been a "mother" to the apostle in time of need, under circumstances not revealed. As Paul had not been to Rome, evidently the family of which Rufus was a member, had travelled to the capital from other parts, strengthening the suggestion that he was of the family of Simon (Mk. 15:21).

VERSE 14

"Salute Asyncritus" — Sig. *Unique; Incomparable.*

"Phlegon" — Sig. *Burning; Blazing.*

"Hermas" — Sig. *Sand bank.*

"Patrobas" — Sig. *A Father's Walk; Father's Life.*

"Hermes" — Sig. *Bringer of Good Fortune; A Teacher for Gain.* Perhaps from Hermes the Greek god, corresponding to the Roman god, Mercury the Messenger (Acts 14:12).

"And the brethren which are with them" — Here is a group of brethren united together in a common labor, and providing the inspiration for a larger group to work in the extension of the Truth. This is suggested by this phrase, and the fact that they are all greeted together.

VERSE 15

"Salute Philologus" — Sig. *Lover of the Word* (masc.). The names in this verse suggest a family group, and if so, this brother certainly lived up to his name. Not only was his influence widespread, so that Paul was aware of his activities, but his "love of the Truth" had encouraged his son and daughter to embrace the hope of Israel, as well as the saints "which are with them" and whom he probably instructed in the Word.

"And Julia" — Feminine of Julius, and signifies *Downy; Hairy.* Mentioned in association with Philologus suggests that they were husband and wife.

"Nereus" — Sig. *Water Nymph,* from the name of an ancient pagan sea-god of the Aegean. He was probably the son of Philologus and Julia, who, with his sister, had embraced the Truth from paganism.

"And his sister" — Perhaps Paul was not aware of her name, but includes her in his greetings.

"And Olympas" — Rather, "Celestial". Sig. *Excess of Wine.* The name of the mythical god of games. The pagan names of those mentioned in this verse suggest that the household of Philologus had all been converted from paganism.

"And all the saints which are with them" — Evidently the ecclesia at Rome was composed of a number of household groups in different sections of the city.

VERSE 16

"Salute one another with an holy kiss" — When the various groups gathered together in ecclesial association, there was to be an acknowledgement of their unique and special fraternity. A kiss between friends was the common form of greeting in those times, answering to the handshake of today. It is still practised in some eastern and Mediterranean countries, as a form of greeting.

It expressed respect and affection, but, like the handshake, could be used deceitfully (Mat. 26:49; Prov. 27:6). Therefore they had to reveal a different quality of greeting from the cold greeting of convention then current. The apostle Peter terms it as "a kiss of charity" (1Pet. 5:14), in that it represented the sacrificial *agape* love that confers benefit upon the recipient, in a sincerity and thoughtfulness of greeting. The Greek words for "holy kiss" are *hagios: sacred; blameless; consecrated* and *philos: dear; a friend.* Thus any friendship is to be based upon a "blameless" expression of the *phileo love* evident between them. A "holy kiss" would genuinely express the true state of mind between the two parties concerned, being mindful that Yahweh was witness to the sincerity of the action (1Thes. 5:26).

The apostle thus exhorted that all such approaches between members should be genuine and above reproach, indicating seriousness and honesty in greeting, and not a cover for hidden antipathy. His exhortation should be remembered in our greetings one with the other. Let all approaches be "holy" in the sense of being genuine, and a marked contrast to the hypocritical greetings of friendship that are common to the society of the world.

"The ecclesias of Christ salute you" — Paul could express himself as representative of many of the ecclesias, some of whose delegates were with him at the time of writing the epistle (Acts 20:4: 2Cor. 8:19-23).

Paul uses a phrase unique to this verse; lit: "*all* the ecclesias of Christ salute you". No doubt the Brotherhood maintained an interest in Rome, and the things that occurred there, since it was the capital city and hub of the empire, and such affairs would have affected the ecclesia established in that city.

Concluding Warning and Encouragement — vv. 17-20.

In contrast to the helpers whom Paul acknowledged and commended in the previous verses of this chapter, he now warns of certain who should be avoided, and he encourages the brethren to unity and sound doctrine in confidence of ultimate vindication by God.

VERSE 17

"Now I beseech you, brethren" — As a true shepherd, Paul commences this final section with an earnest appeal indicating his great concern for some of the difficulties and challenges facing them. The same expression commenced his exhortation to sacrificial faithfulness: ch. 12:1. The Greek is *parakaleo: to call near;* in which Paul, like a wise and protective father, urges the brethren in Rome to gather around him to listen carefully to the advice he will now present.

"Mark them" — Evidently certain

were endeavoring to impose their pernicious ideas on the brethren at Rome, urging them to separate from association with such as the apostle Paul. He later experienced the opposition of some of Asia (2Tim. 1:15). Therefore Paul warns the brethren to watch for such evidence of unscrupulous behavior. The Greek word is *skopeo: to take aim; to regard carefully;* thus "to look at, behold, watch, contemplate"; to be alert against those who would subvert the Truth. The word is used in Lk. 11:35 ("take heed"), in 2Cor. 4:18 ("look at"), Gal. 6:1 ("consider"), and in Phil. 3:17, to "mark" a good example of faithfulness. There is therefore a need to be aware of contrary doctrines and practices, so as to positively avoid them, and not to merely ignore or disregard such ungodly and evil influences (Rev. 2:15-16). A duty rests upon faithful disciples, to uphold the clear teachings of the scriptures. Those who manifest a zeal for the Truth, but do not apply it in its purity and beauty, mislead their fellows by "another gospel" which perverts and leads away from the Truth (Gal. 1:6-7).

"Which cause divisions" — Gr. *dichostasia: disunion,* from the root *duo: two* and *histemi: to stand; to rise up,* thus, to disunite. The word indicates the encouragement of factions and contrary views, and does not necessarily relate to the actual withdrawal of members. See use of the word in 1Cor. 3:3 and Gal. 5:20 (translated "seditions").

"And offences" — Gr. *skandalon: a trapstick; snare; to scandalise,* thus signifying a trap to which the bait is attached (see comments Rom. 11:9). The word relates to "stumbling blocks" such as the doctrines of the Judaisers which have the appearance of righteousness, but lead away from the atoning work of Jesus Christ as the teaching of Balaam led to the "trapping" of the children of Israel in false ways (Rev. 2:14).

The DIAGLOTT has: "watch those who are making factions and laying snares..." One authority comments: "These two things are different. The first means 'parties'; the other denotes such a course of life as would lead their fellows into sin. The Jew would form parties on the pretence of superior holiness; the Gentile, or some bold Gentile convert might deride the scrupulous feelings of the Jew and might thus lead him into sin in regard to what his conscience really forbade (ch. 14:15). On both sides these persons were to be avoided."

"Contrary to the doctrine" — The word "contrary" is from the Greek *para: near to.* There may have been a similarity between the doctrine that had been declared, and the actions of those who were causing divisions, but such a course would end in serving their own ends (v. 18). The doctrine of Christ is one of peace (Jn. 14:27). However, when false teaching is propagated there arises the need to stand aside from such involvement. Sometimes actual division is required, as Paul taught elsewhere (Gal. 5:12; Tit. 3:10; 2Thes. 3:6, 14; 1Tim. 1:20; 1Cor. 5:11). The factions created by the Judaisers and others were "divisions contrary to the doctrine" set forth by the apostles, and might well cause distress to those faithfully upholding the purity of the Truth.

"Which ye have learned" — They had understood and accepted the gospel preached to them, and therefore were responsible to maintain its principles.

"And avoid them" — This is the best treatment for those who are busy establishing factions to gratify their own desire for popularity or power. The word *ekklina* means *to shun; turn away from; turn aside,* and is conversely used of mankind's departure from righteousness in Rom. 3:12. See also 1Pet. 3:11; 1Tim. 6:3-5.

VERSE 18

"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ" — There was a need for this warning, for there were those who pretended to serve Christ, whilst, in fact, they were intent upon establishing their own principles of power. Service to Christ demands a sacrifice of self, and a desire to provide for the spiritual needs of others by dispensing the cleansing power of the Word, as the Master revealed by

example to his disciples: Jn. 13:12-14.

"But their own belly" — The DIAG. has "appetite".The Greek word *koilia* signifies *a cavity; the abdomen,* but is used more especially to denote the innermost part of man (Mat. 15:7;Mk. 7:19). It is used of the womb, as the place of conception (Lk. 1:41-44; Jn. 3:4), and as the place of new life (Jn. 7:38). However, Paul shows that such unscrupulous brethren exercised a disruptive influence to satisfy their own desires, as though they themselves were gods (Phil. 3:19).

"And by good words and fair speeches" — In this they were like the false prophets in Israel who "spake smooth things, and prophesied deceits" (Isa. 30:10), or like those who sought personal advantage by false words, and yet claimed that "Yahweh is among us, none evil can come upon us" (Mic. 3:11). Paul constantly warned against such smooth words of deceit as spoken by pseudo-Christadelphians of his time, to deceive others: Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:4; Tit. 1:10.

The words in the Greek are significant. "Good words" *(chrestologia: to lay forth favored words; plausible language);* hence to commend, praise, flatter. It signifies plausible teachings that appeal to the "simple". The words "fair speeches" *(eulogia: fine speaking; elegance of language)* relate to the cultivated and fine style of utterance giving the appearance of reasonableness. The English word "eulogise" comes from this root. Thus the teachers indulging in such techniques are not servants of Christ, but slaves to their own appetites. They are smooth and persuasive talkers who are capable of deceiving honest brethren with their specious teachings (1Tim. 6:3-5).

"Deceive the hearts" — The teaching of such appealing speakers is capable of deluding the listeners. The reasoning seems plausible; it is couched in such a compelling way that the hearts of the undiscerning are captivated. How often have the blunt, fearless and forthright expressions of Truth been defeated by the plausible, gilded tongue of deceit. This was the case with Elymas, described by Paul as "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:8-10).

The word "deceive" is the Gr. *exapatao,* signifying *to seduce wholly; to beguile thoroughly.* Such an attitude will turn others completely from the Truth, and repeat the lie of the Edenic serpent, which resulted in sin and death for humanity (Gen. 3:13; cp. 2Cor. 11:3). What the serpent said seemed so plausible to the mind of Eve; it was couched in such reasonable expressions, that she was won over to an action which brought disaster. Faithful disciples must continue to be watchful against such influences today, since the scripture warns of the advent of such teachers in the last days (Col. 2:4; 2Pet. 2:3; 2Tim. 3:5; cp. Isa. 29:13).

"Of the simple" — Gr. *akakos,* literally "without evil; guileless and unsuspecting". It signifies a person who is well-meaning but not well informed. Such are a mark for the cunning of those who seek to dominate in ecclesial circles by insinuation and invective. The "simple" must be carefully instructed through the Word, which alone can make them wise unto salvation (Psa. 19:7; 119:130). Unfortunately, many of the simple prefer to remain in such a condition (Pro. 1:22), and ignore the means to spiritual development (Pro. 1:23; cp. 1Cor. 3:2-3).

VERSE 19

"For" — To connect this verse with verse 18, we might paraphrase as: "I give this exhortation separating you altogether from the false teachers, and from those who are liable to be misled by them".

"Your obedience" — Gr. *hupakoe: to hear under; to listen intently.* They had not listened to the wiles of serpent minds, but were responsive to the declared word. It was important that they continue to develop, and maintain their commitment to the Truth expressed by the apostle, avoiding the dangers already expressed in the previous two verses.

"Is come abroad unto all (men)" —

Their response to apostolic instruction was well known.

"I am glad therefore on your behalf" — Paul was encouraged by their attitude, seeing therein a progression in spiritual matters to the glory of God.

"But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good" — The first of two desires now mentioned by the apostle. The first is a positive intellectual understanding of what God requires of His people, for real goodness only comes from God (cp. Lk. 18:19). Paul told the Galatians that "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing" (ch. 4:18). Such wisdom will be reflected in a responsiveness to the Truth and carefulness in its service (Mat. 10:16; 1Cor. 14:20). Wisdom is developed by discerning, and choosing good before evil.

"And simple concerning evil" — The second admonition in this verse has a negative aspect, and the whole expression seems to be a paraphrase of Christ's words in Mat. 10:16. The disciples were to avoid contamination with "evil". The DIAGLOTT has "harmless with respect to that which is evil". The word "simple" (Gr. *akeraios: unmixed; innocent)* signifies to be harmless, or without guile (see mg). Therefore they were not to imitate the deceiving attitude of those who "serve not our Lord" (v. 18). The word "evil" is from *kakos*, meaning that which is worthless (Heb. "Belial"). The aspirations of men of the flesh are of no lasting quality; nor is there any value in seeking for the things of this world. They are of a "passing" constitution (1Jn. 2:17).

VERSE 20

"And the God of peace" — The word "peace" is the Greek *eirene*, which comes from a root signifying *to be at one; in unity*, and forms one of the titles of the Deity in this epistle (see notes on ch. 15:13, 33). The term signifies the *God Who Unites In One With Himself* through fellowship in Christ Jesus. It corresponds to the Hebrew term *shalom*, which primarily signifies "wholeness" or "oneness" (see its use as "unhewn" in Jos. 8:31; "full" in Ruth 2:12; "finished" in Neh. 6:15; "made perfect" in Isa. 42:19 mg.) The peace that God offers is not merely cessation of war and opposition, but complete unity with Himself (Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15). In using this title of God, Paul revealed that complete peace was possible in spite of such deceptions as are suggested in v. 18.

"Shall bruise Satan" — The word "bruise" is from the Greek *suntribo: to crush completely; to shatter*, and comes from a root signifying to place together in a rut or worn track; thus to weaken and completely defeat any intentions of challenge. This seems an obvious reference to Gen. 3:15, and is appropriate to this context.

The Judaisers and others were deceiving the hearts of the simple by their words and fair speeches (v. 18) as the serpent did Eve in the Garden of Eden. Though false teachers among the ecclesias might enjoy a temporary victory (2Cor. 11:3), the ultimate triumph of the faithful is certain (cp. Rev. 2:9-10).

The word *satan* signifies *adversary*, and in this context refers to the false Judaistic leaders who were influencing the brotherhood against the teachings of Paul, and urging ritual obedience to the Law of Moses as the means of salvation.

"Under your feet shortly" — The power and influence of the opponents over the believers was about to be bruised, in that the serpent generation of Judah, together with the Judaising Christians, were shortly to be crushed in the overthrow of the Jewish State in AD70.

That triumph for the saints was a type of their future victory in the age to come. In Luke 10:18, the Lord Jesus testified to the complete removal of the *satan* power from ruling in the hearts and lives of men, when the power of the Spirit is manifested amongst humanity to heal their spiritual infirmities (v. 17).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" — In ch. 1:7 Paul opened his epistle with this benediction; now he closes it with the same expression.

"Amen" — See notes on ch. 15:33.

Greetings from Fellow-Workers — vv. 21-24.

The letter is complete, but, by way of postscript, Paul adds greetings from some of his companions who are with him in Corinth. This little company of workers which loyally assisted the great apostle in his constant labors amongst the Brotherhood, are united with Paul in their desire to encourage and assist the ecclesia in Rome.

VERSE 21

"Timotheus" — Sig: *A Worshipper of God.* He was first in Macedonia (Acts 16:1) before he came to Corinth.

"My workfellow" — He was Paul's trusted companion in his labors, and faced many of the difficulties of the work with the apostle (Acts 16:1; 2Tim. 1:8).

"And Lucius" — Sig: *Illuminative.* He was an influential brother in the ecclesia at Antioch (Acts 13:1).

"And Jason" — Sig: *Healer.* He was a resident of Thessalonica, and provided lodging for Paul and Silas. When the Jews rioted, he was dragged by them and their abettors before the authorities and charged with disturbing the peace because he gave shelter to Paul. He was only released on payment of bail (Acts 17:5-9).

"And Sosipater" — Sig. *Saving Father.* Perhaps mentioned in Acts 20:4?

"My kinsmen, salute you" — The third reference to "kinsmen", here no doubt indicating that these brethren were Paul's close associates in the work of the Truth.

VERSE 22

"I Tertius" — Sig: *Third,* perhaps the brother of Quartus (v. 23).

"Who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" — The amanuensis, writing the epistle as Paul dictated it. Perhaps as Paul was listing the various names, he turned to Tertius with the enquiry: "Will you send your greetings?", upon which this scribe took up his pen: "I Tertius..."

VERSE 23

"Gaius" — Sig: *On Earth.*

"Mine host" — Gaius was baptised by Paul (1Cor. 1:14), and was probably the one who was in the midst of the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19). If so he was Paul's travelling companion (ch. 19:29). There was evidently a great companionship between the apostle and the convert, so that in his liberality, Gaius acted as a host to Paul, and ministered to his needs. He may also have been the Gaius to whom John wrote in 3Jn. 1 and who may have been elderly at that time (cp. v. 2).

"And of the whole ecclesia, saluteth you" — Gaius was noted for his liberal hospitality so that the whole ecclesia benefited from it. He must have been in comfortable circumstances to be able to afford such generosity, but was obviously anxious to use the material blessings which Yahweh had bestowed upon him to the best advantage in the service of the Truth.

"Erastus" — Sig: *Beloved.* He lived at Corinth (2Tim. 4:20), but also travelled with Paul on missionary work (Acts 19:22), being sent by him with Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia just before the riot at Ephesus (vv. 23-41).

"The chamberlain of the city saluteth you" — The chamberlain (Gr. *oikonomos: a house distributor; manager or overseer.* Erastus was the treasurer of the city, and therefore a man who held a high position of trust. He had probably relinquished this to throw in his lot with Paul, or else he received leave of absence to attend him in his travels.

"And Quartus" — Sig: *Fourth.*

"A brother" — He was evidently the fourth in a family group. The RV renders the statement as "Quartus the brother" — but of whom? Evidently Erastus. Assuming Erastus was the eldest of the group, Secundus ("the second") mentioned in Acts 20:4, could have been next in line; then Tertius ("the third", v. 22) and finally Quartus. This would have been a delightful family group, co-operating in the preaching of the Truth and in assistance to the great apostle.

VERSE 24

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" — This verse is omitted in the Greek texts, and is redun-

dant, being merely a repetition of v. 20.

Paul's Final Doxology — vv. 25-27.

The apostle now concludes his letter with some final words of encouragement and blessing which provide a summary of the preaching and purpose of the gospel.

VERSE 25

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you" — The TCNT renders this: "To him who is able to strengthen you". This strength (Gr. *dunamai: to be able or possible*) comes only from God through Christ (Eph. 3:20; Phil. 4:13; Jude 24), by the Word (Jn. 17:17). The words "to stablish you" comes from the Gr. *sterizo: to set fast; to turn resolutely in a certain direction; to confirm.* This comes from "repentance" (to turn about; cp. Acts 2:38, where the word *metanoeo* means *to think differently*) by which a person is turned from a course of life that leads to death, to one which leads to life. The power to do so is first experienced mentally (Rom. 15:13), then morally as the power is put into action (Rom. 1:16), and ultimately will be experienced physically (Rom. 1:4).

In the Age to come it will be acknowledged of the redeemed that they will then be what Yahweh's power has worked in them (Psa. 100:2; Isa. 60:21). That work commences with the intelligent understanding of the gospel, and continues to work through us, as we allow the influence of the Spirit-Word to mould us according to His purpose (cp. 1Pet. 5:10).

"According to my gospel" — The source of the power is in the declaration of the good news of God through the labors of worthy men and women selected for that purpose (cp. 2Pet. 1:21). Paul recognised his great privilege to bear such tidings to those of his day (Gal. 1:16). The DIAG has: "according to my glad tidings"; the TCNT has: "as promised in the good news". Paul opened his epistle by declaring that such news was evidence of the divine power leading to salvation (Rom. 1:16; 2:16) to those who believed it. He now concludes his letter by repeating and re-enforcing that principle. He terms it "my gospel" not because he claims authorship, nor because others did not preach the Truth, but because he had been called to present it to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), and had been particularly prominent in propounding and defending it before the people of that generation.

"And the preaching of Jesus Christ" — The DIAG has: "and the proclaiming of Jesus Christ". He is the foundation, substance and full manifestation of the gospel of salvation. Thus Paul taught that justification is only available in Christ (Rom. 3:21-26), and set the example of personal devotion in endeavoring to reveal those principles in himself (Phil. 3:8).

"According to the revelation" — Gr. *apokalupsis: disclosure.* The word signifies "the unveiling", for that which was previously seen only in ritual, prophecy, or declaration, had been plainly revealed in the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and confirmed totally in his death and resurrection (1Jn. 1:1-2).

"Of the mystery" — Gr. *musterion: a secret.* The word signifies that which was hidden from others, and only known by those chosen to share the "secret". Previously the "hidden purpose" of Yahweh had not been openly revealed; it had only been declared in ritual or symbol. With the appearance of the Son of God in fulfilment of all the Old Testament declarations, this "secret" had been more openly declared.

The divine purpose has been gradually developed, as additional details of God's will were revealed to following generations. For example, Peter shows that in times past faithful men had been used by Yahweh to proclaim His purpose, but did not always know the exact details of how the sufferings and glory of Christ would be achieved (1Pet. 1:10-12). Even the apostles did not rightly understand that at first, vainly imagining that the kingdom of God was then to be set up (Lk. 19:11). The purpose of God in Christ has since been clearly revealed, and believers are better able to see the significance and need of his sacrifice as a basis for his glory. This is described as "the mystery (secret) of His will" (Eph. 1:9-10). The revelation of the secret also included the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, a dispensation

which was proclaimed by Paul as the result of a divine revelation (Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:26-27). Thus Paul reminded the Gentile believers in Rome of the privileged position in which they stood through the grace of Yahweh in Christ.

"Which was kept secret since the world began" — See 1Cor.2:7. The word "world" is the Gr. *aionios*, and signifies *ages; periods.* Paul was not referring to the days of creation, but to the past ages of history, during which the divine purpose in a Son was "hidden" in ritual, ordinance, law and prophecy and given exclusively to the Jewish nation (Heb. 1:1), but at the end of the Mosaic *aion* (Heb. 9:2-9), God plainly revealed His purpose in the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming it to all nations.

VERSE 26

"But now is made manifest" — Gr. *phaneroo: to render apparent*, from a root signifying *to glisten; to shine*, thus to reveal plainly (2Tim. 1:10-11; Tit. 1:2-3; 1Pet. 1:18-21). The revelation of Yahweh's purpose has been made apparent in the appearing, death, resurrection and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. The means for salvation through him has been clearly demonstrated (Heb. 1:2).

"And by the scriptures of the prophets" — Paul re-emphasizes the importance of the prophetic teaching, with which he commenced the epistle: ch. 1:2. The writings of the prophets had concealed the "secret", as Paul had demonstrated many times throughout his letter (ch. 10:5-8, 11, 13; 15:9-12; 11:25, etc).

"According to the commandment of the everlasting God" — A specific command was delivered to Peter to visit Cornelius, and to proclaim the gospel to him, at which time the power of God was manifested to confirm the work performed (Acts 10:44-45). Similarly Paul was ordained (Acts 26:16) to engage in such preaching (Acts 22:14-15). The title "everlasting (Gr. *aionios; for all ages*) God" emphasises His consistency and unchanging purpose.

"Made known to all nations" — The JB has: "broadcast to pagans everywhere". The scriptures indicated that the gospel message would be extended to all peoples (cp. Gen. 17:4; 22:18; Isa. 2:2; 11:10).

"For the obedience of faith" — In opening his epistle Paul spoke of "obedience *to the* faith" (ch. 1:5), by which he asserted that disciples were required to acknowledge "the faith", and follow the principles set forth therein. Now he concludes by speaking of the "obedience *of* faith": the kind of obedience which flows from an understanding of what "the faith" is and the power by which it leads to salvation (Acts 10:42-43).

This outstanding and unique "Faith" is made known to all mankind through the *gospel* (v. 25), the *preaching* of Jesus Christ (v. 25), the *revelation* of the secret (v. 25), and the *commandments* of God (v. 26).

VERSE 27

"To God only wise" — As in the concluding words of ch. 11, Paul now completes his final exposition with an acknowledgement of He who is the Fountain of Wisdom, and who has revealed His plan of salvation for mankind (cp. 1Tim. 1:17).

"Be glory through Jesus Christ" —The wisdom and glory of God is revealed to mankind through the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the channel of divine grace to man, and of man's obedience to God.

"For ever" — The glory which men can share with God and Christ (see Jn. 17:20-23) is designed for eternity.

"Amen" — *So be it!* This is an appropriate conclusion to Paul's epistle, for the word has its basis in complete faithfulness and trust, asserting that the "God of Wisdom" will certainly fulfil what He has declared. See notes: Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:20. As the manifestation of Yahweh, Christ is the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14), so the fulness of that purpose will be accomplished through him. Whether we shall be there to witness it depends upon whether we faithfully act upon the instructions given in this epistle.