

Josephus cannot well have strayed. But the consideration of this inference belongs to the constructive side of our enquiry, and this we reserve for a later occasion.

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DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN ROMANS.

II. ST PAUL'S THEORY OF ETHICS.

AFTER a distinctively Christian greeting in Romans i. 1-7, St. Paul goes on in verses 8-15 to express his deep interest in his readers. He never ceases to give thanks to God for them, and prays that a way may be opened for him to visit them, hoping thus to benefit both them and himself, and eager to pay a debt which he owes to all men of whatever nationality and degree of culture. The debt he wishes to pay is to preach the Gospel.

Then follows a description of the Gospel. It is a power of God for salvation, for every one who believes, for Jew first, and for Greek. For in it a righteousness of God is revealed, from faith, for faith. And this is in harmony with an announcement by an ancient prophet, that "the righteous man by faith will live."

At this point, in verse 18, a sudden change comes over the scene. Righteousness and faith vanish from view; and unrighteousness and anger take their place. The hinge on which the discourse turns is the word *revealed*. Righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel is now confronted by *anger of God revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness*. The specific reason of this anger is stated, viz. that *men hold back the truth in unrighteousness*. And this St. Paul explains by saying that in the material universe *God has manifested to men His power*, and that which distinguishes God from man, *i.e.* His *Godhead*. But men turned from the Creator and worshipped the creature, even

irrational animals. Because of this *God gave them up* to shameful passions : notice the emphatic repetition in verses 24, 26, 28. The deep degradation of the heathen is here represented as a punishment for their forgetfulness of God and their idolatry. The awful picture concludes with a catalogue of their sins.

In chapter ii. 1 is another sudden turn in the discourse. Hitherto the writer has spoken of the heathen, as a whole, in the third person plural. He now suddenly accosts, in the second person singular, one man apparently standing before him, and representing a whole class of men : *inexcusable thou art, O man, whoever thou art that judgest*. The man addressed judges others, yet himself commits sin, and nevertheless expects to escape the judgment of God. Against this vain expectation St. Paul asserts the *righteous judgment of God, who will give back to each one according to his works*. This indiscriminate retribution will divide mankind into two classes ; those who do right and will receive *eternal life*, and those who disobey the truth, and on whom will fall *anger and fury*.

Across these two divisions runs another division, made conspicuous by repetition in consecutive verses : *of Jew first, and also of Greek*. This cross-division St. Paul sets aside as not affecting the primary division, and thus supports his earlier assertion that God will give back to each one according to his works, by adding, *for there is no respect of persons with God*.

The cross-division is, however, sufficiently serious to need further discussion. St. Paul goes on, in verses 12-15, to show that, in spite of the great distinction between man and man involved in the gift of the written law to Israel only, sin will be followed in all men alike by judgment and destruction. He does this by treating separately, in verse 12, each side of the cross-division.

The one class is described as *so many as have sinned*

apart from law : ἀνόμως. The word *law* in this verse, and in the phrase *who have no law* in verse 14, refers evidently to the law of Moses. For only in this sense can men be said to *have no law*, and only in this sense does law divide men into two separate categories. St. Paul asserts that they who have sinned without having heard the Law of Moses will not, on that account, escape. They *will perish*. But their ruin will have no connection with the law they have not heard : it will be, like their sin, *apart from law*.

Others have *sinned in law*. A written prescription of conduct, viz. the Law of Moses, has been the mental and moral environment of their life and sin, moulding their thought, and giving significance to their actions. The absence of the article leaves us to look at the Law of Moses qualitatively ; as in the phrase *holy writings* in chapter i. 2. Another view of the Jews' relation to the Law is found in 1 Corinthians ix. 20, 21, *those under law* ; where the Law of Moses, also without the article, is represented as a crushing load under which they lie. They whose sins have had a written prescription for their moral environment will be judged by means of a written prescription, viz. the law in which they have sinned : διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται. It will be the instrument, i.e. the standard, by which they *will be judged*. This statement is followed by a universal principle underlying all law, but here used with special reference to a prescription of conduct given by God. Not the hearers of such prescription are counted just in the presence of God, but they who translate it into action *will be justified*.

This use of the word *justify* sheds light on its meaning elsewhere. It cannot here mean to make actually righteous. For it is needless to say that the doers of law will be made righteous. They are already so, in virtue of what they are doing. Evidently the word is equivalent to the parallel phrase *righteous before God* ; and denotes that the persons referred to will be accepted and treated as

righteous. A good definition of the word *justify* is found in 1 Kings viii. 32: "To condemn the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and to justify the righteous, to give to him according to his righteousness." In my next paper we shall see that this is the use of the word throughout the New Testament.

Verses 14 and 15 support verse 13 by showing how the principle there stated applies not only to Jews, to whom its application is obvious, but also to Gentiles.

The word *ἔθνη* denotes here, not *nations* as wholes, but individual members of the various nations of the world, who are spoken of in the English Bible as *Gentiles*. So 1 Corinthians xii. 2, "ye were *Gentiles*"; Galatians ii. 12, "with the *Gentiles* he was eating"; verse 14, "how dost thou compel the *Gentiles* to Judaize"; and elsewhere frequently. No nation as a whole has ever been known to obey the moral law. But here the argument implies that the case mentioned is actual. See below. And, if so, St. Paul can refer only to individual Gentiles. *Not having law*: τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα. The individual Gentiles, taken together, form a definite group characterized by not having an authoritative written prescription of conduct. Hence the article. Yet occasionally they *do by nature the things of the Law*, i.e. the actions prescribed in the Law of Moses: ὅταν . . . ποιῶσιν.

The word *φύσει* stands in contrast to *having no law*. We *do by nature* that which we do prompted by influences born in us, as distinguished from education or external pressure. By nature the bee collects honey and builds cells. St. Paul here assumes that sometimes Gentiles, moved only by moral influences born in them, without any external and authoritative law, do nevertheless the actions prescribed in the Law of Moses. The same is implied again in verse 27, where we read that *the uncircumcision from nature*, i.e. concrete persons described by a charac-

terizing quality, whose moral position is a result of influences born in them (*ἐκ φύσεως*), *fulfilling the Law, i.e. accomplishing the purpose for which the Law of Moses was given, viz. right conduct, will judge thee, who with letter and circumcision, with written law and bearing in thy body the mark of the covenant of God, art a transgressor of law.*

The above passages are illustrated and justified by many virtuous and noble actions recorded in ancient history. These claim our respect, and are facts in the moral history of our race which must not be overlooked. The obedience to law referred to by St. Paul was imperfect and fragmentary, and therefore insufficient for justification on the ground of works. But, as we shall see, it was abundantly sufficient for his argument.

From this occasional obedience of some of the heathen, St. Paul draws a most important inference. The conspicuous repetition in one short sentence of the words *not having law* lays bare the nerve of the argument. Inasmuch as the Gentiles have no written law, and yet occasionally do, prompted only by moral influences born in them, the actions prescribed in the Law of Moses, we are compelled to infer that they *are to themselves* what the written *law* was to Israel; *i.e.* that there is something in their inborn nature which does for them what the moral teaching of the Old Testament did for the Jews. For not otherwise can we account for their obedience to a law they had never seen.

Notice that this inference is drawn *whenever Gentiles . . . do the things of the Law*. If they never did the things commanded by Moses, this inference would not be drawn.

Next follows, by way of a comment on the action of these Gentiles (*οἷτινες κ.τ.λ.*), a restatement, in a slightly different form, of the foregoing argument. They *show in themselves: ἐνδείκνυται*. The middle voice calls attention

to the reflex action, and the preposition *ἐν* to its inwardness. These men by their occasional obedience point to something in themselves. *The work of the Law*: equivalent to *the things of the Law* in verse 14. The singular number, *the work*, looks upon the moral code as a unity, its various precepts forming one whole. The code is *written*, not like the decalogue, on tables of stone, but *in their hearts*. For the code of morals revealed in their occasional obedience, inasmuch as they have no code external to themselves, can be found only in their hearts, in that inmost chamber whence come their actions.

The above main argument is supported by two collateral arguments added in two participial clauses. These *bear joint-witness*: *συνμαρτυρούσης*. As here St. Paul appeals for confirmation of what he has said to the conscience of the Gentiles, so he appeals in chapter ix. 1 to his own conscience. And in chapter viii. 16 the Spirit of God and the believer's own spirit bear joint testimony, viz. that St. Paul and his readers are children of God. The word *witness* is not infrequent in the New Testament in this argumentative sense. So Acts xv. 8, "God bore witness to them, by giving the Holy Spirit"; Hebrews ii. 4, "God bearing witness with and upon their witness by signs and wonders": *συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος*. It is specially appropriate here where St. Paul appeals to the voice of conscience and the mutual accusations of the heathen.

The word *conscience*, *συνείδησις*, denotes, not knowledge shared with others, but inward knowledge possessed by ourselves only. It is the inner faculty by which a man contemplates and pronounces judgment upon his own thought, action, and character, as these are known to himself only, the faculty of introspection, and especially of moral introspection. It is the eye which reads the law written in the heart. This inward vision supports St. Paul's inference from the occasional obedience of the heathen. The Gen-

tiles are directly conscious, whenever they contemplate their own inner life, of an authoritative code of morals written within. Of this we shall find independent proof.

Then follows a second confirmatory witness. Not only does their inward knowledge of themselves bear witness to a law written within, but so also do, in the outward and mutual intercourse of man with man, their *reasonings when accusing, or even when excusing*. This mutual intercourse, in contrast to the inward voice of conscience, is indicated by the words *μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων* pushed prominently forward. The substantive *λογισμός* is found in the New Testament only here and in 2 Corinthians x. 5. But the verb *λογίζομαι* is frequent, especially with St. Paul. It denotes mental calculation, the process of reasoning. So Romans viii. 18: "I reckon that the sufferings are not worthy to be compared"; ch. ii. 3, iii. 23, iv. 3, vi. 11, ix. 8, and elsewhere. The words *one with another* imply that the reasonings of which St. Paul here thinks revealed themselves in audible discourse.

These reasonings take the form of accusation and of excuse. In their thoughts and talk the Gentiles bring charges one against another; at other times they defend one another against such charges.

The apostle says that these *reasonings, when accusing or even excusing*, in their intercourse *one with another* confirm the testimony borne by the inward voice of conscience, and still further confirm the evidence afforded by their occasional right conduct, that God has written His law in the hearts of the Gentiles. The force of this argument is undeniable.

The literature of the ancient world is full of moral judgments pronounced by men about their fellows. And in non-Christian as in Christian nations men pronounce such judgments to-day. These judgments imply a common standard with which human conduct must be compared:

for otherwise they would be meaningless, and certainly without force.

If the above exposition be correct, the word *συνμαρτυρούσης* dominates the rest of the verse; or rather, grammatically, we must supply, from it, as predicate agreeing with *τῶν λογισμῶν*, another genitive absolute *συνμαρτυρούντων*. We may perhaps render or paraphrase the whole verse: "who show in themselves the work of the Law written in their hearts, while confirmatory testimony is borne by their own conscience, and, in their intercourse one with another, by their reasonings when accusing or even excusing."

We have now found in verses 14, 15 one primary and two confirmatory arguments. (1) The occasional performance by Gentiles of actions commanded in the Law of Moses proves that the Creator wove into the tissue of human nature the moral principles which He afterwards wrote on the tables of stone and proclaimed through the lips of the prophets. This proof is confirmed (2) by their own direct inner consciousness of an inward and authoritative standard of right and wrong. And it is further confirmed (3) by the common principles of morality which underlie their estimates one of another, whether of blame or praise.

We have, in the two verses now before us, St. Paul's theory of ethics, his explanation of the moral facts of humanity and of human life. In his view, the distinction of right and wrong, is no mere accumulation of experiences of the results of certain courses of action, but a voice of God in man speaking with the supreme authority which spoke to Israel from Sinai, and marking out a path in which the Creator requires him to go. In other words, the Moral Sense is a revelation of God to man.

This teaching of St. Paul is in remarkable agreement with many testimonies coming to us from the ancient world. I may quote from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, bk. iv. 4. 19ff. a conversation of Socrates with Hippias: "Dost thou know,

said he, Hippias, any unwritten laws? Those in every country, said he, held binding touching the same things. Wouldst thou then be able to say that men made them? Why, how, said he, could all men come together when they do not speak the same language? Then who do you suppose, said he, has made these laws? I think, said he, that gods gave these laws to men. For with all men it is thought right first of all to reverence gods. Is it everywhere thought right to honour parents? It is, said he." Notice also the following, from Demosthenes *On the Crown*, p. 317: "And not only will these principles be found in the enactments of the law; but even nature herself has laid them down in her unwritten laws, and in the moral constitutions of men."

Very interesting is the following from a Roman statesman. In Cicero's *Laws*, bk. ii. 4, we read: "This then, as it appears to me, has been the decision of the wisest men, that law was neither a thing contrived by the genius of man, nor established by any decree of the people, but a certain eternal principle which governs the entire universe, wisely commanding and forbidding. Therefore they called that primal and supreme law the mind of God enjoining or forbidding each separate thing in accordance with reason. On which account it is that this law, which the gods have given to the human race, is so justly praised. For it is the reason and mind of a wise Being equally able to urge us to good, and to deter us from evil. . . . For even he (Tarquin) had the light of reason deduced from the nature of things, which incites to good actions and dissuades from evil ones; and which does not begin for the first time to be a law when it is drawn up in writing, but from the first moment that it exists: and its existence is coeval with the divine mind. Therefore the true and supreme law, whose commands and prohibitions are equally authoritative, is the right reason of the Sovereign Jupiter."

The above quotations bear witness to a widespread belief that the principles of morality which underlie human laws are universal, and of superhuman origin; and that they are the voice of an authority against which there is no appeal. And they are confirmed by the entire literature of the ancient world. In them, the conscience and the moral reasonings of the Gentiles lie open to our inspection. And they not only justify St. Paul's appeal, but anticipate his argument.

The above teaching, in which St. Paul is in agreement so remarkable with the best writers of antiquity, is the only explanation of the essential similarity, in spite of differences in detail, of the codes of morality of all nations, and of the supreme and supernatural authority with which in all nations moral distinctions have been invested. In other words St. Paul's Theory of Ethics is the only one which will account for the facts of the case.

It is interesting to note that the supernatural origin and divine authority of the moral sense of man, important truths known to the wisest men of Greece and Rome, are taught clearly in the Bible only by St. Paul, the apostle who came most into contact with the heathen. Probably his own thoughts on this all-important subject were quickened and moulded by his intercourse with thoughtful Gentiles. They are an example of Christian teaching influenced by pre-Christian and Gentile thought.

Verse 16 cannot be joined directly to verse 15, or to verse 14. It must therefore be joined to verse 13, asserting that the doers of law will be justified in the day when God will judge the secret things of men. This justification in the day of judgment is in close agreement with Matthew xii. 37: "in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." It is an important link between the different schools of New Testament thought repre-

sented by the letters of St. Paul and by the First Gospel. The above-suggested connection of thought makes verses 14, 15 a parenthesis explaining how the general principle asserted in verse 13 can and will be applied to Gentiles as well as Jews. Notice that the judgment of the great day was a part of the *Gospel* preached by St. Paul; and that, as of creation (Col. i. 16) and salvation (Rom. v. 1), so also of judgment, *Jesus Christ* is the divine Agent.

In verse 17, as in verse 1, Paul turns suddenly to a man who seems to stand before him; and whom he now accosts as a *Jew*. Then follows a sustained and withering rebuke. The man to whom St. Paul speaks exults in his knowledge of God and his possession of the Law, which he teaches others to obey; yet by breaking the Law he dishonours God. This personal appeal recalls that in verses 1-5; and is probably directed to the same class of persons. But the earlier appeal is valid against any who while committing sin condemn sinners and expect themselves to escape punishment. This one is directed specifically to a Jew who, while boasting about the Law yet breaks its commands.

At verse 24 another element is brought in, viz. *circumcision*. The Jews not only have a written law not given to the Gentiles, but bear in their bodies the sign of God's covenant with their father Abraham. The apostle asserts that this advantage benefits only those who obey the Law, and that to others it is worthless. From this general principle he derives an important inference, viz. that a man's real relation to God does not depend on the distinction between Jew and Gentile. If the uncircumcised *guard the decrees of the Law, i.e.* if they carefully keep the moral precepts commanded by Moses, their lack of circumcision will not exclude them from the covenant of God. Nay more. By fulfilling the Law, *i.e.* by obeying it and thus attaining the purpose for which it was given,

they will, by revealing the inexcusability of many Jews who break it, pronounce on these last, in the day of judgment, the sentence of God.

A close parallel to this verse is found in Matthew xii. 42: "The queen of the south will arise in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it: because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold more than Solomon is here." Her eagerness to learn the truth will reveal by contrast the culpable indifference of the men of Christ's day.

Then follows the great truth that the real distinctions of men are to be found not in the outward and visible, but in the inward and spiritual.

Verse 27 implies that some heathen will be saved. For saved and lost will be the ultimate distinction between man and man. And the only sentence we can conceive devout heathen to pronounce on wicked Jews is for the former to enter into heaven while the latter are cast out. We may well believe that, just as now God receives into His favour, in spite of their past sins, all who put faith in Christ, so in the great day He will welcome into eternal life those who, having never heard either the Law of Moses or the Gospel of Christ, have yet followed, in some measure approved by God, the guidance of the moral law inwoven by the Creator into the nature of all men. By asserting this principle in reference to the heathen, the apostle opens a door of hope for many in Christian lands who have not heard the Gospel in its fulness and power. He thus warns us not hastily to condemn others who have not had the religious advantages for which some of us will have to give account.

The whole teaching of chapter ii. seemed to put Jews and Gentiles on the same level. St. Paul therefore asks in chapter iii. 1, *What then is the advantage of the Jew?* The answer is, *Much, in every way*, especially in the

possession of the written revelations, *the oracles, of God*, an advantage not destroyed by the unbelief of part of the nation. The apostle then sums up the result of chapters i. 18–iii. 8, by saying that he has convicted both Jews and Greeks that they are *all under sin*. This charge he supports by quotations from the Old Testament; and adds that these were written to place the whole world silent and guilty before the bar of God.

In chapter iii. 21 we have another transition as sudden and complete as that in chapter i. 18, but in an opposite direction. The writer passes now as rapidly from darkness into light as he there passed from light into darkness. And when we emerge from the deep shadow which during the whole section, chapters i. 18–iii. 20, has rested upon us, we find ourselves where we were before we entered it. In close agreement with the preliminary statement of the doctrine of salvation through faith in chapter i. 16, 17, we have in chapter iii. 21, 22 another statement of the doctrine of justification through faith, followed in verse 23 by a short summary of the teaching of the section before us, and in verses 24–26 a statement of the great doctrine of justification through the death of Christ. Then follows a full exposition and defence of these doctrines and of other primary elements of the Gospel. The section before us is a dark background of ruin on which the apostle writes, in brilliant characters, the glad tidings of salvation.

In this section the name of Christ appears only once, in chapter ii. 16, and then not as the Saviour but as the Judge of mankind. The whole is a picture of the world “without Christ,” consisting of Jews and Gentiles. On each of these elements in its relation to God, St. Paul sheds light. The Jews have great advantages, especially the trust of the written revelations: but these will permanently benefit only those who obey the commands therein contained. Moreover the Gentiles also possess

important revelations of the nature and will of God. For the Creator has manifested to them, in the works of creation, His unseen power and Godhead. And He has written in their hearts a prescription of conduct identical, in its most important elements, with the law given through Moses to Israel. In short, in this section we have St. Paul's account of Natural Theology.

Notice here a universal revelation in nature, standing in definite relation to the subsequent historic revelations given to Israel through Moses and the prophets, and to the supreme historic revelation given to the world in Christ. To this earlier revelation, the later revelations pay homage, and from it they receive homage. So St. Paul in 2 Corinthians iv. 2: "commending ourselves to every man's conscience." For all subsequent revelations are in harmony with the law written in the hearts of men. The homage paid by the moral sense of man to the character and teaching of Christ is the most powerful witness to His divine authority. It is to-day the strongest weapon in the hand of missionaries to the heathen, and of preachers at home. It is the voice of God in man answering to the voice divine which speaks to us through the lips of Christ from the pages of Holy Scripture.

This voice from within cannot save. For it is a voice of condemnation only, not of pardon. Nor has it power to break the fetters of sin and enable us to obey in the future. Consequently, although some men may occasionally do *by nature* the things bidden in the law, they are none the less, as we read in Ephesians ii. 3, "by nature children of wrath, like the rest." For none can so obey as to obtain, on the ground of works, the favour of God. Consequently, although human nature is not all bad—for the law written in the heart is good—it is, apart from a supernatural salvation, altogether lost.

As a voice of God in man, the law written within speaks

to him with supreme authority: *i.e.* he is bound, under penalty of loss of self-respect and of moral degradation, to obey at any cost the voice of conscience. This is to him, until better instructed, the law of his being. But erring human nature is very apt to misread both the letters written within and the words of Holy Scripture. Consequently, the moral sense needs education and development. This it receives from all external and sound moral teaching, and especially from the teaching of the Bible. The word within and the words of the sacred volume need each to be read in the light of the other. Each is supreme in its own sphere, the one is our subjective rule of action for the moment: the other is the objective and historical basis of the Christian Faith. Each needs the other. For full intellectual and spiritual certainty, the testimonies must coincide. But we must not impatiently reject either because it seems to contradict the other. Apparent discord should prompt suspension of judgment until the obscured harmony appears.

In my next paper I shall discuss St. Paul's statement of his fundamental doctrines of justification through faith and through the death of Christ.

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THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

II.

In the Fourth Gospel, as I have already said, there are many instances in which Christ speaks of God as "the Father," though not "your Father," when addressing men who were not His disciples, and some of whom were His open enemies. In a very large number of these cases, however, you will find that He first speaks of Himself as the Son, or of God as being in some great and wonderful