THE

# PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.,

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER;

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

WITH

## INTRODUCTIONS

BY THE

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# ROMANS.

Exposition

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Homiletics

By REV. PROFESSOR J. RADFORD THOMSON, M.A.

Homilies by Various Authors.

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REV. R. M. EDGAR, M.A.

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REFERENCE

THE EPISTLE OF

# PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

## INTRODUCTION.

### § 1. Authenticity.

The authenticity of this Epistle is indisputable, and acknowledged; except that Baur has questioned that of the two concluding chapters. The relation of these two chapters to the body of the Epistle, and the evidence of their having been written as well as the rest by St. Paul, will be considered *in loco*. The internal evidence of the Epistle as a whole is in itself convincing. In tone of thought, method of argument, and style, it has all the peculiar characteristics of St. Paul. It may be safely said that no one could possibly have written it but himself. The external evidence is no less complete, including the testimony of such early Fathers as Clement of Rome, Polycarp ('Ad Philip.'), Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and Irenæus.

### § 2. Time and Place.

Equally certain is our knowledge of the time and place of writing, derived from intimations in the Epistle itself, in conjunction with what is found in other Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. It was written from Corinth, in the spring of A.D. 58 (according to the received chronology of the Acts), when St. Paul was about to leave that place to take the alms he had collected to Jerusalem for the relief of the poor Christians there, as related in Acts xx. 3. The proofs of this conclusion are briefly these: It appears from the Acts of the Apostles that St. Paul, after staying for more than two years at Ephesus, "purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome" (Acts xix. 21). He sent Timotheus

and Erastus before him into Macedonia, intending to follow them before long. His departure seems to have been hastened by the tumult raised by Demetrius the silversmith, after which he proceeded at once to Macedonia, and thence to Greece (*i.e.* Achaia), remaining three months at Corinth. His intention at first was to sail thence direct to Syria, so as to reach Jerusalem without unnecessary delay; but, in order to elude the Jews who laid wait for him, he changed his plan at the last moment, and returned to Macedonia, whence he hastened towards Jerusalem, hoping to reach it before Pentecost (Acts xx. 1—6, 13—16). His purpose in going there was, as just stated, to carry the alms from various Gentile Churches which he had long been soliciting from them for the poor Jewish Christians in Palestine; and his previous tour through Macedonia and Achaia had been for receiving these alms. He declared this to have been the purpose of his visit to Jerusalem, in his defence before Felix (Acts xxiv. 17); and in both his Epistles to the Corinthians his design is distinctly spoken of. In the first, written probably during his stay at Ephesus, he alludes to "the collection for the saints" as something already going on, and already urged upon the Corinthians; he directs them to offer for the purpose every Lord's day, so as to have the money ready for him when he comes for it, as he hopes to do before long, after first passing through Macedonia (1 Cor. xvi. 1—8). In the Second Epistle, written probably from Macedonia, after he had left Ephesus and was on his way to Achaia, he refers to the subject at length, saying how liberal the Macedonians had been, and how he had incited them by boasting to them of the Corinthians having been ready a year ago; and he implores the latter not to let his boasting be in vain in this behalf, having sent certain brethren to them to get the contributions ready in preparation for his own arrival (2 Cor. viii., ix.). Now, inasmuch as in ch. xv. 25, *seq.*, of this epistle he speaks of being on the point of going unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, and of both the Macedonians and Achaians having already made their contribution for the purpose, it is evident that he wrote his letter to the Romans after he had been in Achaia, but before going to Jerusalem. And, further, he must have sent it before leaving Corinth, or its port Cenchrea; for he commends to them Phœbe of Cenchrea, who was on the point of going thence to Rome, and who was probably the bearer of the letter (ch. xvi. 1, 2); he sends salutations from Erastus the chamberlain of the city (which, after mention of Cenchrea, must be concluded to be Corinth); and from Gaius, then his host, who was probably the Gaius mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14 as having been one of the two baptized at Corinth by himself (ch. xvi. 23). Further, the time of year may be gathered from the narrative in Acts. The letter was sent, as we have seen, on the eve of his departure for Jerusalem; navigation after the winter season had then begun; for he had first intended to go by sea to Syria (Acts xx. 3): after his journey, in consequence of his change of intention, to Macedonia, he spent Easter at Philippi (Acts xx. 6); and he hoped to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts xx. 16). Thus the time must have

been early spring—the year, according to received dates, having been, as said above, A.D. 58. We may conclude the letter to have been finished and committed to Phœbe before he changed his intention of going by sea in consequence of the discovered plots of the Jews against him (Acts xx. 3); for in the letter, though he expresses apprehension of danger from the Jews in Judæa after his arrival there (ch. xv. 31), he gives no intimation of any plots against him known of at the time of writing; and he speaks as if he were about to go at once to Jerusalem.

Thus our knowledge of the time and circumstances of the sending of this Epistle is exact, and the correspondence between the references to them in the Epistle and elsewhere complete. Further correspondence of this kind is found in ch. i. 10—13 and xv. 22—28 compared with Acts xix. 21. In the Epistle is expressed his fixed intention of visiting Rome after carrying the alms of the Churches to Jerusalem, as well as his desire to do so having been entertained for some time past; and from Acts xix. 21 it appears that the desire had been already in his mind before he left Ephesus for Macedonia. His further intention, expressed in the Epistle, of proceeding from Rome to Spain, does not indeed appear in Acts xix. 21; but he may have had it, though there was no need to mention it there; or he may have enlarged the plan of westward travel subsequently. For consideration of the reason of his strong desire to visit Rome, of his having been "let hitherto" (ch. i. 13), and of his finally determining to take Rome only on his way to Spain, see notes on ch. i. 13 and xv. 21, etc.

## § 3. Occasion of Writing.

Thus the occasion and reason of St. Paul's sending a letter to the Roman Christians at the time he did are sufficiently obvious. He had long been intending to visit them as soon as he had finished the business he had in hand; he had probably been for some time preparing his long and important letter, which could not have been written hastily, to be sent at the first favourable opportunity; and Phœbe's voyage to Rome afforded him one. But why his letter took the form of an elaborate dogmatic treatise, and what was the then condition, as well as the origin, of the Roman Church, are further questions that have been much discussed. So much has been written on these subjects, to be found in various commentaries, that it has not been thought necessary here to go at any length over beaten ground. It may suffice to show briefly what is obvious or probable with regard to these questions.

## § 4. Origin of the Roman Church.

First, as to the origin of the Roman Church. It had not been founded by St. Paul himself, since it is plain from the Epistle that, when he wrote, he had never been to Rome, and only knew of the Roman Church by report.

Nor does the narrative of the Acts allow any time when he could possibly have visited Rome. The tradition, which in time came to be accepted, that St. Peter had already founded it, cannot be true. Eusebius ('Eccl. Hist.,' ii. 14), expressing this tradition, says that he had gone to Rome in the reign of Claudius to encounter Simon Magus, and thus brought the light of the gospel from the East to those in the West; and in his 'Chronicon' he gives the second year of Claudius (*i.e.* A.D. 42) as the date, adding that he remained at Rome twenty years. The probable origin of this tradition is well and concisely shown in the Introduction to Romans in the 'Speaker's Commentary' (pp. 4, 5). Enough to say here that it has no trustworthy evidence in its favour, and that it is inconsistent with the two facts—firstly, that certainly up to the time of the apostolic conference at Jerusalem (A.D. 52) Peter was still there (cf. Acts xii. 4; xv. 7; Gal. ii. 1, *seq.*); and secondly, that in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul makes no mention whatever of St. Peter, as he surely would have done if so prominent an apostle had founded, or even so far visited, the Roman Church. A different and independent tradition, to the effect that St. Peter and St. Paul jointly preached the gospel at Rome, and were both martyred there, is too well supported to be set aside. It is attested by Irenæus, iii. c. i. and c. iii. 2, and by other early authorities quoted in addition to Irenæus by Eusebius, namely, Dionysius of Corinth (Eusebius, 'Eccl. Hist.,' ii. 25), Caius, an ecclesiastic of Rome in the time of Pope Zephyrinus (ibid.), and Origen ('Eccl. Hist.,' iii. 1). Eusebius also quotes the aforesaid Caius as pointing in proof to the monuments of the two apostles in his time existing on the Vatican and on the road to Ostia (ii. 25). Indeed, even apart from this testimony, it would be very difficult to account for the general and early association of the see of Rome with the name of St. Peter, had that apostle had no connection with the Roman Church at some time before his death. But it must have been a considerable time after the writing of the Epistle to the Romans, and after the writing of the Epistle to the Philippians too, which was undoubtedly sent by Paul from Rome during his detention there, in which the history of the Acts leaves him. For in it, though he speaks much of the state of things in the Church at Rome, he says nothing about St. Peter. Further, the statement of Irenæus that Peter and Paul together *founded* (θεμελιούντων) the Church in Rome cannot be accepted in the sense that either of them first planted it there; for St. Paul spoke of it as existing, and even notorious, when he wrote his letter. But still they may, at a later period, have founded it in the sense of consolidating and organizing it, and providing, as they are said to have done, for its government after their own decease. This is not the place for considering why, in after-times, the Church of Rome came to be regarded as peculiarly St. Peter's see, whereas in the early testimonies above referred to the two apostles are spoken of together without distinction. St. Paul at any rate, in point of time, has been seen to have had to do with it before St. Peter, though neither of them can have been its original planter.

It is further highly improbable that any other of the apostles properly so called had planted it. For not only are there no traces of any tradition connecting it with any apostles but Peter and Paul, but also the absence of allusion to any apostle in St. Paul's Epistle is strongly against the supposition. It is true that St. Paul's original agreement with James, Cephas, and John (Gal. ii. 9), and his avowed principle of not building on any other man's foundation (ch. xv. 20; 2 Cor. x. 13—16), cannot properly be pressed as affording a conclusive argument. For if his way of addressing the Roman Church be considered, it will be seen that he carefully avoids assuming personal jurisdiction over it, such as we find him distinctly claiming over Churches of his own foundation. In virtue of his general apostleship to the Gentiles, he is bold to admonish and demand a hearing; but he does not propose in his letter to take the reins, or set things in order among them when he comes, but rather to be "filled with their company" with a view to mutual refreshment and edification, during a short stay with them on his way to Spain. Such a mode of address, accompanying a doctrinal treatise meant doubtless for the edification, not of the Romans only, but of the Church at large, is consistent with the supposition of even an apostle having first founded the Church addressed. Still, for the reasons above given, any personal agency of any of the apostles themselves in the first planting of the Roman Church is, to say the least, highly improbable.

Who had first planted it we have no means of determining. There are many possibilities. The large number of people from all parts of the empire who resorted to Rome would be likely to include some Christians; and wherever believers went, they preached the gospel. "Strangers from Rome" were present at Pentecost, and some of them may have been converted, and so, having, perhaps, partaken of the Pentecostal gift, carried the gospel to Rome. Among those who were scattered abroad after the martyrdom of Stephen, and "went everywhere preaching the Word," some may have gone to Rome. For though in Acts viii. 1 they are said only to have been scattered through the regions of Judæa and Samaria, so as to lead up to the account of Philip's preaching in Samaria, yet some of them are mentioned afterwards as travelling as far as Phœnice and Cyprus and Antioch, and there preaching; and others may have travelled as far as Rome.

Further, though we have seen sufficient reason for concluding that no apostle, properly so called, had visited Rome, yet evangelists and persons endowed with prophetic gifts may possibly have been sent from the company of the apostles. Among the Christians at Rome greeted in the Epistle are Andronicus and Junia (or Junias), "of note among the apostles," who had been in Christ before St. Paul. These may be supposed to have belonged to the circle of the twelve, and may have been instrumental in planting the gospel in Rome. Again, among others saluted, several are spoken of as known to St. Paul elsewhere, and fellow-workers with him, so

that some of his own associates had evidently contributed to the result; among whom were notably Aquila and Priscilla, in whose house a congregation assembled (ch. xvi. 5). In fact, from many sources, and through various means, Christianity was likely to get an early footing at Rome; and it would have been rather remarkable if it had not been so. Tacitus, it may be observed, testifies to the fact; for, speaking of the Neronian persecution (A.D. 64), he says of the Christians, "Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat: repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per Urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque" ('Ann.,' xv. 44). This implies an early as well as extensive spread of Christianity in Rome.

## § 5. Extent of Roman Church.

Against the supposition, which is thus probable, and which the Epistle confirms, of the Christians in Rome being at that time numerous or important, has been alleged the fact that, when St. Paul actually arrived there, "the chief of the Jews" whom he called to him seem to have known little about them. They only say of them contemptuously, "As concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against" (Acts xxviii. 22). But this really proves nothing as to the actual extent or condition of the Church at Rome. It only shows that it was apart from the synagogue, and that the members of the latter scouted it. Their words only express the prevalent prejudice against the Christians, such as Tacitus intimates when he says, "Quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus Christianos appellabant," and when he speaks of their religion as "exitiabilis superstitio;" and, at any rate, notoriety is implied, from which extent may be inferred. Bodies of men are not usually "everywhere spoken against" till they have attained a position which is felt. Further, what is said in Acts xxviii. of St. Paul's intercourse with the Christians themselves when he went to Rome suggests the idea of a numerous and zealous community rather than the contrary. Even at Puteoli, before reaching Rome, he found brethren, who entertained him for a week; and at Appii forum Christians came from Rome to meet him, so that he thanked God, and took courage (Acts xxviii. 13—15).

## § 6. Organization of Roman Church.

The Church at Rome being supposed to have grown up through various agencies, and not to have been formally constituted at first by any apostle, the question has been raised whether it was likely to possess, at the time of the writing of the Epistle, a regular ministry of presbyters, as other Churches did, so as to be fully organized. There is no conclusive reason against the supposition; though in the admonitions and greetings of the

Epistle there is no reference to any of whom it is intimated that they were in an official position, having the rule over others, and to be submitted to. The passage ch. xii. 6—8 does not apparently refer to any regular ordained ministry, as will be seen from the notes *in loco*. For references to one in other Churches, cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 16; Phil. i. 1; Col. iv. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. iii. 1, *seq.*; v. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Titus i. 5; Heb. xiii. 17; Jas. v. 14; Acts vi. 5, *seq.*; xiv. 23; xv. 2, 4, 23; xx. 17, *seq.* But absence of allusion is no sufficient proof of non-existence. It may, however, have been the case that the Roman Christians were as yet an unorganized body, united only by a common faith, and meeting for worship in various houses, the gifts of the Spirit supplying the place of a settled ministry, and that it was reserved for the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul afterwards to organize it, and provide for a due succession of ordained clergy. As to the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit in the early period before the universal settlement of the Church order which afterwards prevailed, see notes under ch. xii. 4—7.

### § 7. Whether mainly a Jewish or a Gentile Church.

Another question that has been much discussed, and this partly with reference to the supposed intention of the Epistle, is whether the Roman Church at that time was mainly a Jewish or a Gentile one. St. Paul's way of addressing it can leave hardly any doubt that he regarded it as the latter. This is shown, to begin with, by his introduction, in which he speaks of his apostleship for obedience of faith among *all the nations*, among which, he continues, those whom he addresses were, and gives as his reason for being ready to preach the gospel to them that he is debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, and that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, though to the Jew first, yet to the Greek also. Then afterwards, in ch. ix.—xi., where the position and prospects of the Jewish nation are under review, when he comes to admonition, it is to the Gentile believers that he addresses it, bidding them not be high-minded, but fear, lest God, who spared not the natural branches of the olive tree, spare not them (ch. xi. 13—24); and in his concluding admonitions (ch. xiv. 1—xv. 16) it is the enlightened and free from prejudice that he mainly admonishes to bear with the infirmities of the weak, the latter being presumably, as will be seen, prejudiced believers of Jewish race. Doubtless, as appears also from the Epistle itself, Jews, who are known to have been numerous in Rome, would be included among the converts, and probably many Gentiles who had previously been proselytes to Judaism. Such may have been the original nucleus of the Church; and the first evangelists may, as St. Paul was wont to do, have announced the gospel first in the synagogues; but it seems evident that, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle, Jews did not constitute the main body of the Church, which is addressed as essentially a Gentile one. The same conclusion follows from what occurred when St. Paul arrived at Rome. At first, in accordance with the principle he always

acted on, he called the chief of the Jews together to his lodging, who seem, as has been seen, to have known little, or professed to know little, of the Christian community. With them he argued for a whole day, from morning till evening, and made an impression on some; but, perceiving their general adverse attitude, he declared to them "that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it" (Acts xxviii. 17—29). From this it seems to follow that his ministrations thenceforth would be mainly among the Gentiles. Later on also, when he wrote to the Philippians from Rome, it is in the palace (or Prætorium), and among those of Cæsar's household, that he intimates that the gospel was taking hold (Phil. i. 13; iv. 22).

The fact of the argument of the Epistle being based on Jewish ideas, and presupposing acquaintance with the Old Testament, affords no valid argument against the Church to which it was sent having been in the main a Gentile one. The same fact is observed in other Epistles addressed to what must have been mainly Gentile Churches. In fact, we find the gospel always announced by apostles and evangelists as the issue and fulfilment of the old dispensation; and for a full understanding of it, as well as of its evidences, it would be necessary to indoctrinate all converts in the Old Testament (see note under ch. i. 2). It is true that, in preaching to the Athenians, who had as yet no knowledge of the Scriptures, St. Paul discourses on what we may call natural religion only (Acts xvii.); and so also at Lystra (Acts xiv. 15—17); but doubtless in preparation for baptism all would be instructed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is observable too that even in this Epistle, though its main argument is based on the Old Testament, yet there are parts which appeal to philosophical thinkers generally, and which would seem especially suited for cultured Gentiles, such as, in ch. i. 14—16, the writer seems to expect to have among his readers at Rome. Such passages are ch. i. 18—ii. 16, where the guilt of the world at large is proved by a review of human history, and appeals to general human consciousness; and the latter part of ch. vii., where the experience of the human soul under the operation of law bringing conviction of sin is analyzed.

## § 8. Purpose of the Epistle.

We may next consider the apostle's purpose, as distinct from the occasion, in sending such an Epistle as this is to the Roman Church. We cannot, in the first place, regard it, as some have done, as written with a polemical intention, either against the Jews, or the Judaizers among Christians, or any others. Its tone is not polemical. It is rather a carefully reasoned theological treatise, drawn up with the view of setting forth the writer's views of the meaning of the gospel in its relation to the Law, to prophecy, and to the universal needs of mankind. The chapters (ix.—xi.) about the present position and future prospects of the Jews have no appear-

ance of being written controversially against them, but rather with the purpose of discussing a difficult question connected with the general subject; and the admonitions and warnings at the end of the Epistle do not seem to be directed against any classes of persons known to be then troubling the Roman Church, but are rather general ones in view of what was possible or probable there. The Epistle to the Galatians, written probably not long previously, resembles this in its general subject, and, as far as it goes, enforces the same doctrine; it shows signs of having been written when the apostle's mind was already full of thoughts which pervade his Epistle to the Romans. Its purpose is avowedly polemical, against the Judaists who were bewitching the Galatian Church; and, in accordance with its purpose, it has a tone throughout of disappointment, indignation, reproof, and occasional sarcasm, such as is wholly absent from the Epistle to the Romans. The contrast between the two Epistles in this respect strengthens the internal evidence of the latter not having been composed with a polemical intention.

The following considerations may help us to understand the apostle's real purpose in composing the Epistle when he did, and sending it to Rome. He had long entertained a deep and comprehensive view of the meaning and purpose of the gospel, such as even the original apostles seem at first to have been slow to follow, or, at any rate, some of them in all cases to act up to. This appears from such passages as Gal. ii. 6 and ii. 11, *seq.* He ever speaks of his comprehension of the gospel as having been a revelation to himself; not derived from man—not even from those who had been apostles before him. It was the clear revelation to himself of *the mystery* of which he so often speaks; even "the mystery of his will, according to the 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, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him" (Eph. i. 9. For a fuller view of what St. Paul means by "the mystery," cf. Eph. iii. 3—11; Col. i. 26, 27; ch. xi. 25; xvi. 25, *seq.*). Full of his grand conception of what the gospel was for all mankind, which it was his special mission to bring home to the conscience of the Church, he had, since his conversion, been preaching in accordance with it; he had met with much opposition to his views, much misconception of them, and much slowness to comprehend them; he has now planted Churches in Gentile centres, "from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum," and fulfilled his appointed mission in those regions; and has formed his definite plan of going without delay to Rome, in the hope of thence extending the gospel westward to the Gentile world. At such a time, he is suitably moved to set forth, in a doctrinal treatise, and support by argument, his views of the far-reaching significance of the gospel, that they might be fully understood and appreciated; and he sends his treatise to Rome, whither he was just going, and which was the metropolis of the Gentile world, and the centre of Gentile thought. But, though thus sent in the

first place to Rome for the enlightenment of the Christians there, it may be supposed to have been intended ultimately for all the Churches; and the evidence there is of the absence of all mention of Rome throughout the Epistle, and also of the concluding chapters specially addressed to Rome, in some ancient copies (as to which, see note at the end of ch. xiv.), may lead us to conclude that it was, in fact, afterwards circulated generally. It may be observed further, with regard to the purpose of the Epistle, that, though based on Scripture and full of scriptural proofs and illustrations, it is by no means (as has been before observed) addressed in its argument to Jews exclusively. It is rather, in its ultimate drift, a setting forth of what we may call the philosophy of the gospel, showing how it meets human needs, and satisfies human yearnings, and is the true solution of the problems of existence, and the remedy for the present mystery of sin. And so it is meant for philosophers as well as for simple souls; and it is sent, therefore, in the first place, to Rome, in the hope that it may reach even the most cultured there, and through them commend itself to earnest thinkers generally. For, says the apostle, "I am a debtor to the Greeks and to the wise," as well as to barbarians and unwise; "I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (ch. i. 14—16).

## § 9. Doctrine.

1. *Meaning of "the righteousness of God."* As to the doctrine of the Epistle, of which detailed explanation will be attempted in the notes, there is one leading idea, which, because of its importance, claims introductory notice—the idea expressed by the phrase, "the righteousness of God." With this the apostle (ch. i. 17) announces the thesis of his coming argument, and he has the thought of it ever before him. It is to be observed, in the first place, that the expression in ch. i. 17 (as afterwards in ch. iii. 21, 22, 25, 26; x. 3) is simply "God's righteousness" (*δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*). It is usual to interpret this as meaning man's imputed or *forensic* righteousness, which is from God—*Θεοῦ* being understood as the genitive of origin. But if St. Paul meant this, why did he not write *ἡ ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη*, as he did in Phil. iii. 9, where he was speaking of the righteousness derived to man from God, in opposition to *ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου*? The phrase, in itself, suggests rather the sense in which it is continually used in the Old Testament, as denoting God's own eternal righteousness. It is indeed contended, as by Meyer, that it cannot have this sense in ch. i. 17, where it first occurs, because of *ἐκ πίστεως* following, and the quotation from Habakkuk, *Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται*. But, as will be pointed out in the Exposition, *ἐκ πίστεως* (not *ἡ ἐκ πίστεως*), which is connected in construction with *ἀποκαλύπτεται*, cannot properly be taken as defining the righteousness intended; nor does the quotation from Habakkuk really of necessity support this idea. Reasons for this last assertion will be found

also in the Exposition. Further, in ch. iii. 22, where the idea, here concisely expressed, is taken up and carried out, *διὰ πίστεως* (corresponding to *ἐκ πίστεως* here) seems intended to be connected with *εἰς πάντας*, etc., following, and perhaps also with *πεφανέρωται* preceding, which corresponds to *ἀποκαλύπτεται* in the verse before us. If so, the phrases, *ἐκ πίστεως* and *διὰ πίστεως*, do not qualify the essential meaning of *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*, but rather express only how it is now revealed or manifested to man. The intended meaning of *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ* is thus rather to be got at, in the passage before us, from the obvious reference of vers. 16 and 17 to Ps. xviii., of which ver. 2 in the LXX. is, *Ἐγνώρισε Κύριος τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ, ἐναντίον τῶν ἐθνῶν ἀπεκάλυψε τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ*; where we observe the same verb, *ἀποκαλύπτειν*, the same parallelism between "salvation" and "his righteousness," and the same inclusion of the Gentile world with Israel as objects of the revelation. Now, in the psalm, God's own righteousness is undoubtedly meant; and so surely in our text, in the absence of any insuperable objections to so understanding the expression. And not only from the reference to the psalm in this particular passage, but from the very fact of the constant use of the same phrase in a known sense in the Old Testament, we should expect St. Paul to use it in the same sense, with which he would be so familiar, and which his readers also, whom he so continually refers to the Old Testament, would understand. It is maintained in this Commentary (with all due deference to the distinguished ancients and moderns who have held otherwise) that not only in this opening passage, but throughout the Epistle, *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ* does mean God's own eternal righteousness, and that even in passages where a righteousness that is of faith is spoken of as communicated to man, the essential idea beyond is still that of God's own righteousness including believers in itself.

For a better understanding of the subject, let us first see how God's righteousness is regarded in the Old Testament with reference to man. The Hebrew word rendered in the LXX. by *δικαιοσύνη* denotes moral excellence in perfection—the realization of whatever the mind conceives, and the conscience approves, of what is right and good. It is indeed sometimes used for such moral excellence as man is capable of; but this only in a secondary or comparative sense; for the Old Testament is as emphatic as the New against any perfect righteousness in man. As Hooker says, "The Scripture, ascribing to the persons of men *righteousness* in regard to their manifold virtues, may not be construed as though it did thereby clear them from all faults." Absolute righteousness is ascribed to God alone; and, in contrast with the unrighteousness prevailing in the world, his righteousness is a constant theme of psalmists and prophets. We find them at times perplexed in view of the unrighteousness prevalent and often dominant in the world, as being inconsistent with their ideal of what should be under the sway of the righteous God. But they still believed in the supremacy of righteousness; their innate moral sense, no less than their received religion, assured them that there must be a reality answering to

their ideal; and they found this reality in their belief in God. And thus their undying faith in the Divine righteousness sustains them in spite of all appearances; and they look forward to God's eventual vindication of his own righteousness, even on this earth below, under a "King of righteousness" to come. But the righteousness of the Messiah's kingdom is still to be God's own, manifested in the world and reconciling it to him—flooding it (as it were) with its own glory. "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. . . . My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation" (Isa. li. 5—8).

Now, St. Paul ever views the gospel as being the true fulfilment, as of the Old Testament generally, so of all those inspired prophetic yearnings; and, when he says here that in it the righteousness of God is revealed, his language must surely bear the sense of that of the ancient prophets. In the gospel he perceived God's own eternal righteousness as last vindicated, and in Christ manifested to mankind; vindicated with regard to the past, during which God might seem to have been indifferent to human sin (cf. ch. iii. 25), and manifested now for the reconciliation of all to God, and the "salvation for ever" of all. (It may be observed, in this connection, that the common idea of Christ's personal righteousness being imputed to believers is not scriptural. It is, of course, scriptural to say that in the Person of Christ the Divine righteousness was humanly manifested; he was peculiarly ὁ δικαίος; but we find nowhere in the New Testament the phrase, "the righteousness of Christ," but always "the righteousness of God.") But, further, we find such expressions as Λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην (ch. iv. 5); Τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως (ch. iv. 11); Τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης (ch. v. 17); Ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη (ch. x. 6); Τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει (Phil. iii. 9). In these modes of speech a righteousness attributed to man himself, derived to him through Christ from God, is certainly denoted; and thus comes in the idea of man's *imputed* righteousness. But it is submitted that such conceptions do not interfere with the essential meaning of Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, when used as a phrase by itself; and also that all along God's own inherent righteousness is still in view as the source of the justification of man; the idea being that man, by faith and through Christ, is embraced by, and made partaker in, the eternal righteousness of God.

Thus the main contention of St. Paul as against the Jews of his day is pregnantly expressed by "God's righteousness," opposed to "mine own righteousness," or "the righteousness of the Law." It was that man, being what he is, cannot possibly raise himself to the ideal of the Divine righteous-

ness, but that, for his acceptance, the righteousness of God must come down to him and take him into itself. And he maintains that this is the very thing that the gospel means and accomplishes for man. The Jew went about to establish his own righteousness by imagined strict conformity to Law. But the apostle well knew the vanity of this pretension; how it was a delusion, put man in a false position before God, and lowered the true ideal of Divine righteousness. He himself had once been "touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless." But he was painfully conscious how, when he would have done good, evil was present with him. The Jew might trust to sacrifices to expiate his own shortcomings. But St. Paul felt, and Scripture itself confirmed his feeling, how impossible it was for the blood of bulls and goats to be in themselves of avail in the spiritual sphere of things. He had, we may suppose, long been on such grounds dissatisfied with the religious system he had been trained in, and may possibly have thrown himself into the fierce excitement of persecution the more eagerly in order to drown uneasy thoughts. And he may have been impressed by what he had heard of Jesus and his teaching, and of what his followers held about him, more than he acknowledged to himself. For his sudden illumination on his conversion implies surely some preparation for receiving it; the material that burst into a flame must surely have been ready for the kindling spark. On that memorable journey to Damascus the spark fell, and the illumination came. Jesus, whose voice at length penetrated his soul from heaven, now rose clearly before his eye of faith as the King of righteousness, foretold of old, who was to bring the righteousness of God to man. Thenceforth (his creed in its completeness becoming, we may suppose, further settled and matured during his sojourn in Arabia, and through subsequent "visions and revelations of the Lord") he saw in the human life of Jesus a manifestation at last even in man of Divine righteousness; and in his offering of himself a true atonement, not made by man, but provided by God, of a character to avail in the spiritual sphere of things: in his resurrection from the dead (the evidence of which he no longer resisted) he perceived him declared the Son of God with power, ordained for accomplishing the perpetual reconciliation of mankind; and in his gospel, proclaiming pardon, peace, regeneration, inspiration, and immortal hopes, to all alike, without distinction of rank or race, he saw opening before him the glorious prospect of a realization at last of the prophetic anticipation of a kingdom of righteousness to come. To complete our view of his conception, we must further note that the full manifestation of God's righteousness is regarded by him as still future: the gospel is but the dawning of the full day: "the earnest expectation of the creature" still "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;" "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body" (ch. viii.); it is not till "the end" that "all things shall be subdued unto him," "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv.). But meanwhile believers are regarded as already partaking in the righteousness of

God, revealed and brought home to them in Christ; faith, aspiration, and earnest endeavour (which are all man is capable of now) being accepted in Christ for righteousness.

The above is by no means intended as a full exposition of St. Paul's doctrine of God's righteousness, such as to make his lines of thought in all places clear, or to remove all difficulties; but only to set forth what is conceived to have been his fundamental conception. There had, we may suppose, been in the first place borne in upon him a grand idea of a realization in Christ of the predicted Messianic kingdom, as at length vindicating and exhibiting to man God's own eternal righteousness. To him, as a devout Jew and a student of the Scriptures, this conception would naturally first present itself, so soon as he came to recognize the Messiah in Jesus. But then, the ordinary Jewish conception—as of the purport of the promise to Abraham, so also of the character of the Messianic kingdom—having to his mind become enlarged and spiritualized, he seems to have interwoven with Jewish ideas others suggested by his own contemplation of human consciousness, of the condition of the world as it is, and the general problems of existence; and to have found in Christ an answer to his various difficulties and his various cravings. But it is not always easy to trace or define exactly his lines of thought; and hence arises one main difficulty in the way of a clear interpretation of this Epistle, in which there are certainly, as is said of his Epistles generally in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, "some things hard to be understood." Perhaps even he himself could hardly have defined exactly all that "the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify" on a subject so transcendent; while his style of writing—often abrupt, unstudied, and pregnant with undeveloped thoughts—increases our difficulty in the way of a clear interpretation.

2. *Universalism.* The doctrine as above set forth seems to lead logically to *universalism*, i.e. the reconciliation in the end of *all things* to the righteousness of God. Without such sequel it is not easy to see how the supposed ideal of God's righteousness embracing all can be regarded as fulfilled. Nor can it be denied, except by the prejudiced, that St. Paul, in some passages of his writings, does more or less distinctly intimate such an expectation; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28; Eph. i. 9, 10, 22, 23; Col. i. 15—21; and in this Epistle ch. v. 18, *seq.*; xi. 26, 32, *seq.* (see notes under these two passages). Without here entering on this mysterious subject (at present occupying so many minds) we may observe, as to the intimations respecting it found in this Epistle (which are all that concern us here), firstly, that, whatever hope may seem to be held out of the salvation of all at last, it must be in the undefined ages of eternity, beyond the range of our present view; faith and walking in the Spirit being, at any rate for enlightened Christians, insisted on as the condition of partaking in the eternal life of God; and secondly, that punishment after this life is as distinctly spoken of as reward (ch. ii. 8, 9), and death in a spiritual sense as distinctly regarded as being the proper result of sin, as is life as being the result of holiness (ch. viii. 13).

In fact, just retribution is essential to the apostle's conception of the display of the righteousness of God; and the Divine wrath has to him a real and awful meaning. Thus he by no means ignores or abates the force of whatever is meant by the πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, and the κόλασις αἰώνιος, spoken of by our Lord (Matt. xxv. 41, 46); as to which expressions the question is—What is implied by the word αἰώνιος? One view, entertained by some, is that, though such expressions as ὄλεθρος αἰώνιος (2 Thess. i. 9) and ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια (Phil. iii. 19) preclude hope of any restoration of the utterly lost, yet that their perdition may be reconciled with the idea of the final triumph of universal good by supposing such lost ones to cease in the end to be as individual souls at all, like things hopelessly blighted which come to nothing. And it has been argued that such words as ὄλεθρος and ἀπώλεια in themselves suggest the idea of final destruction rather than of endless suffering. Enough here to draw attention to this view, our purpose in this Commentary being not to dogmatize on mysterious subjects which are evidently beyond our grasp, but rather to present conceptions of them that may be considered tenable.

3. *Predestination.* This Epistle having been a principal battle-ground of the predestinarian controversy, and often regarded as a stronghold of Calvinism, special attention may be directed to the sections that bear upon this subject. These are especially ch. viii. 28—39; ix. 6—24; and, in a more general way, ch. ix., x., xi., throughout. In the exposition of these passages an honest attempt has been made to view them apart from the battle-field of controversy, so as to get at their real meaning in view simply of their context, their apparent purpose, and the language used. It will be seen, among other things, that ch. ix., x., xi., though they have been used in support of theories of the absolute predestination of individuals to glory or damnation, do not really bear on individual predestination, but rather on the election of races of men to positions of privilege and favour; the present rejection of the race of Israel from the inheritance of the promises, and its prospect of restoration to favour, being in view throughout these chapters. In ch. viii., where the predestination to final glory of such as are called to faith in Christ is undoubtedly spoken of, all that need be here said is that in the Exposition an attempt has been made to discover what the apostle really teaches, and his purpose in so teaching, on this mysterious subject, which is in its depths inscrutable.

4. *Law.* One idea pervading the doctrinal part of the Epistle, and evidently deeply fixed in St. Paul's mind, is that of *law*. What is often specifically meant, and what had probably suggested the whole idea to him, is the Law given from Mount Sinai; but he uses the word also in a wider sense, so as to denote generally requirement of obedience to a moral code, appealing to the conscience. We may suppose that he had long, even before his conversion, wondered how it was that the Law given through Moses, holy and Divine as he had ever esteemed and never ceased to esteem it, should have proved so inoperative for conversion of the heart, nay,

should seem rather to intensify the guilt of sin than to deliver from it. He had thus been led to consider what the office and purpose of the Law really was, and hence of law generally, as expressing the principle of exaction of obedience, under threat of punishment, to moral behests. And he found that all that law in itself could do was to restrain from overt transgressions such persons as would not be restrained without it; but that it had also a further office in the economy of grace, viz. to define and bring out the sense of sin in the human conscience, and so to prepare for the deliverance of redemption. This his view of the meaning and office of law it is important to keep in mind. As to the difference of meaning of ὁ νόμος and of νόμος without the article, as used by St. Paul, see note on ch. ii. 13.

## § 10. Summary of Contents.

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[1] The original position of the Doxology is considered *in loco*. That which is there regarded as most probable is assigned to it here.

# THE EPISTLE OF

# PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I.

Vers. 1—16.—I. Introductory.

Vers. 1—7.—A. *Salutation*, with long interposed parenthesis, suggested by "gospel of God." The parenthesis, expressing thoughts of which the writer's mind is full, intimates the purport of the coming treatise. It also intimates his claim, afterwards more fully asserted (ch. xv. 15, *seq.*), to demand a hearing from the Roman Church. It is St. Paul's way, when full of an idea, thus to interrupt his sentences at the suggestion of a word. Somewhat similar interpositions are found in the opening salutations of Galatians and Titus, especially in the latter; but this is peculiar for its length and fulness.

Ver. 1.—**Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle.** In his salutations to the Philippians and to Titus also St. Paul calls himself δοῦλος (*i.e.* "bond-servant") of Jesus Christ; but usually only ἀπόστολος, or, as here, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, which is rightly translated in the Authorized Version, "called *to be* an apostle," Divine vocation to the office being the prominent idea. St. Paul often elsewhere insists on the reality of his vocation from Christ himself to be an apostle to the Gentiles; and this with regard to disparagement of his claim to be a true apostle at all on the part of some (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 12; Gal. i. 1, 12; ii. 8). It does not follow from his thus asserting his claim here and afterwards in this Epistle that he was aware of any disparagement of it at that time among the Roman Christians; still less that he wrote his Epistle with a polemical purpose against the Judaizers, as some have supposed. Still, he may have suspected that some might possibly have been busy there, as they were in other places; and, however that might be, writing as he was to a Church not founded by, and as yet unvisited by, himself, he might think distinct assertions of his claim to be heard desirable. **Separated** (or, *set apart*) **unto the gospel of God**; *i.e.* to the preaching of the gospel, not the reception of it only, as is evident from the context. The word ἀφωρίσμενος here, as well as the previous κλητὸς, is best taken, in pursuance of the line of thought, as referring to the Divine counsels, not to the agency of the Church. It is true that the word is elsewhere used with the latter reference, as in Acts xiii. 2, Ἀφορίσατε δή μοι τόν τε Βαρνάβαν καὶ τὸν Σαῦλον εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς, where the ἀφορισμὸς spoken of was subsequent to the Divine κλῆσις, and effected by human laying on of hands. But we have also St. Paul's own words (Gal. i. 15), Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου, καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, where the ἀφορισμὸς is that of God's eternal purpose, and previous to the κλῆσις (cf. Acts ix. 15 and xxvi. 16, 17).

Ver. 2.—**Which he promised before through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son.** Here the parenthetical passage begins, extending to the end of ver. 6. It is unnecessary to complicate it by connecting περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ with the previous εὐαγγέλιον Θεοῦ. It goes more naturally with προεπηγγείλατο, denoting the subject of the Old Testament promises. By προφητῶν are meant not only the sacred writers distinctively so called, but (as in Heb. i. 1) all who spoke of old under Divine inspiration, as by γραφαῖς ἁγίαις is signified the Old Testament generally. This intimation of the gospel being the fulfilment of prophecy is fitly introduced here, as preparing the reader for the argument of the Epistle, in

the course of which the doctrine propounded is shown to be in accordance with the Old Testament, and in fact anticipated therein. This is, indeed, a prominent point in the general teaching of apostles and evangelists. They announce the gospel as the fulfilment of prophecy, and the true completion of all the ancient dispensation; and it is to the Old Testament that, in addressing Israelites, they ever in the first place appeal. Thus St. Peter (Acts ii. 14; iii. 18; iv. 11); thus Stephen (Acts vii.); thus St. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia, at Thessalonica, and before Agrippa (Acts xiii. 16; xvii. 2; xxvi. 6, 22); thus Philip to the Ethiopian proselyte (Acts viii. 35); thus Apollos at Corinth (Acts xviii. 28). Our Lord himself had done the same, as in Matt. v. 17; Luke iv. 21; xxiv. 27, 44; John v. 39. All this is important as showing how the old and new dispensations are regarded together as parts of a whole, the old one being but the needful preparation for a fulfilment in the new, and so becoming intelligible; and thus how "through all the ages one eternal purpose runs." There was also a providential preparation in the Gentile world, though not so direct and obvious, and though, of course, not similarly noticed in addresses to disciples of the Law. But St. Paul intimates it; as in his speech on Areopagus, and also, as will be seen, in this Epistle. Even the gospel (it may be further observed) is set forth as but a further stage of progress towards a final consummation, as the dawn only of a coming daybreak. We have still but an earnest of our inheritance; the "earnest expectation of the creature" still awaits "the manifestation of the sons of God." Meanwhile, in the revelation already made through Christ, and the redemption accomplished by him, we are taught to cling to our faith in a Divine purpose throughout the world's perplexing history—that of resolving at last all discords into eternal harmony, and making manifest "one great love, embracing all." This grand view of a providential order leading to a final consummation (though how and when we know not) pervades St. Paul's writings, and should be kept in mind for a proper understanding of this Epistle. God's promises through his prophets in Holy Scripture are said to have been "concerning his Son;" and a question hence arises as to the exact sense in which "his Son" is to be here understood; a consideration of which question may help our interpretation of the expression in the following verse, which is not without difficulty, *Τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει.* We may distinguish between three senses in which Christ is called "the Son of God." (1) With reference to his Divine pre-existence, the term expressing his relation to the Father from eternity, like the *Λόγος* (and probably the *μονογενὴς υἱὸς*) of St. John. (2) With reference to his incarnation, as being conceived by the Holy Ghost; as in Luke i. 35, *Διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς Θεοῦ.* (3) With reference to the position assigned to the Messiah in psalm and prophecy, as the *Son* exalted to the right hand of God, and crowned with glory. It is with the last of these three references that the title is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews; where the ideal of sonship, found in the Old Testament, and imperfectly typified by the theocratic position of the theocratic kings, is regarded as prophetic, and pointing to Christ, in whom alone it is shown to be fulfilled. Hence in that Epistle his exaltation to the rank and dignity of *Son* is regarded as subsequent to his human obedience, and even the consequence and reward of it. It was "*because of* the suffering of death (*διὰ τὸ πάθημα θανάτου*)" that he has been "crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9); it was after he had made a purification of sins that he "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," having "inherited" that "more excellent name"—the name of *Son* (Heb. i. 4). It is by no means implied that the said Epistle does not recognize a true Sonship of Christ *before* his exaltation; he was all along "the Son" (cf. Heb. v. 7, *Καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς, ἔμαθεν*, etc.), though not enthroned as such over mankind and all creation till after his resurrection; and, further, the essential doctrine of his pre-existent and eternal Sonship, in the first of the senses noted above, is distinctly taught (as in ch. i. 3), though not there by the use of the term "Son." All we say is that this word is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to denote Christ's position and office as the royal High Priest of humanity, exalted, after suffering, to the right hand of God, rather than his original Divine Personality; such being the significance of the title in the prophetic anticipations of the Messiah. Now, this being so, and it being the promises made "through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son" that are being spoken of in the passage before us, it may seem at first most probable that the idea here implied by the word "Son" is the same as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and no more. We ought, however, to take further into account what St. Paul himself seems to signify by the term when he uses it elsewhere. It does not follow that his own conception of its significance was confined to what was apparent in "the prophets." Reading them in the light of the gospel revelation, he may have seen in their language more implied than it distinctly expressed, and himself intended to imply

more. The passages in his Epistles, apart from this chapter, where Christ is called God's Son are these: (1) ch. v. 10, "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son;" (2) ch. viii. 3, "Sending his own Son (*τὸν ἑαυτοῦ υἱὸν*) in the likeness of flesh of sin;" (3) ch. viii. 29, "To be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren;" (4) ch. viii. 32, "Spared not his own Son (*τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ*);" (5) 2 Cor. i. 19, "The Son of God . . . was not Yea and Nay;" (6) Gal. iv. 4, 6, "God sent forth his Son,"—"sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" (7) Col. i. 13, "Translates us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." In all these passages—except (3), in which the reference may be only to Christ in glory—the term "Son" denotes a relation to the Father, peculiar to our Lord, previous to the death and exaltation, and in some of them, (2), (6), (7), previous to the Incarnation. Such previous relation is especially apparent in the sequence to (7), where "the Son of his love" is defined not only as "the Head of the body, the Church," and "the Firstborn from the dead," but also as "the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation; for in him all things were created, the things in heaven, and the things on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible; all things through him and unto him have been created." With this may be compared Phil. ii. 6—12, where an existence *ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, anterior to incarnation, is undoubtedly declared, though the exaltation after human obedience, and the receiving then of "a name that is above every name" (cf. Heb. i. 4), is spoken of as well. One other passage remains to be noticed, occurring, not in an Epistle, but in the sermon at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts xiii. 33), where the view of Christ's Sonship which is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (no more being expressed) appears as present to St. Paul's mind. For there God is said to have "fulfilled the promise which was made unto the fathers, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Here the Sonship assigned to "the Christ" in the second psalm is regarded as exhibited in the Resurrection. From this review of St. Paul's usage it may be inferred that *περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ* in the text before us carries with it in his own mind the idea of pre-existent eternal Sonship, though what we may call Messianic Sonship may be all he means distinctly to intimate as declared by prophets. The bearing of this distinction on the interpretation of ver. 4 will appear under it. It may be observed here that the absence of a fixed and definite usage in the application of the term "Son" *to* Christ, which (as has been seen) is found in the New Testament, is what might be expected there. Formal definitions of theological conceptions by means of language used uniformly in a recognized definite sense had not as yet been made. Among such conceptions that of the Holy Trinity though implied, is nowhere distinctly formulated as a dogma. It was reserved for the Church, under the guidance of the Spirit, to preclude misconception by precise dogmatic definitions.

Ver. 3.—**Which was made**; or, *was born*. But the word in itself, *γενομένου*, need only mean that *he became* a Man of the seed of David; implying, it would seem, a pre-existence of him who so became. This, however, is more evident from other passages, in which *ὤν*, or *ὑπάρχων*, is opposed to *γενόμενος* (cf. John i. 1, 14; Phil. ii. 6, 7; cf. also Gal. iv. 4, *Ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικὸς*). **Of the seed of David according to the flesh.** *Κατὰ σάρκα* is here, as elsewhere, contrasted with *κατὰ πνεῦμα*. Here *κατὰ σάρκα* denotes the merely human descent of Jesus in distinction from his Divine Being (cf. Acts ii. 40; ch. ix. 3, 5; 2 Cor. v. 16). His having come humanly "of the seed of David" is suitably noted here, where "the Son" is being set forth as fulfilling the Old Testament promises; for they uniformly represent the Messiah as thus descended, and it was essential to the Jewish conception of him that he should be so (cf. Matt. xxii. 42; John vii. 42; and for the stress laid by the writers of the New Testament on the fact that Jesus was so—of which fact no doubt was entertained—cf. Heb. vii. 14, *πρόδηλον γὰρ*, etc. See, among many other passages, Matt. i. 1; Luke ii. 4, 5; Acts ii. 30; xiii. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 8). Meyer, commenting on the verse before us, goes somewhat out of his way to set forth that only Joseph's, not Mary's, descent from David was in St. Paul's mind, saying that "the Davidic descent of the mother of Jesus can by no means be established from the New Testament," and also that "Paul nowhere indicates the view of a supernatural generation of the bodily nature of Jesus." As to the first of these assertions, it may be observed that, in the opening chapters of our Gospel of St. Luke (representing certainly the early belief of the Church) our Lord seems to be regarded as actually descended from David—not legally so accounted only—though, at the same time, his supernatural generation is distinctly asserted (comp. Luke i. 32 with i. 35). Hence we are led to infer Mary's, as well as Joseph's, descent from David, whether or not either of the genealogies given in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels

represents hers. Further, with respect to those two genealogies (evidently independent ones, and both probably got from genealogical records preserved at Jerusalem), a probable way of accounting for the two distinct lines of descent through which Joseph seems to be traced to David is to suppose one of them to be really Mary's, the legal representative of whose family Joseph had become by marriage, so as to be entered in legal documents as the son of her father (see art. on "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," in 'Dictionary of the Bible,' W. Smith, LL.D.). As to Meyer's second assertion above alluded to, it is true that St. Paul nowhere refers to our Lord's supernatural conception spoken of in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. But it does not follow that it was not already included in the Church's creed, or that St. Paul himself was unaware of it or disbelieved it. This is not the place for enlarging on the evidence, at the present day increasing in force, of the early origin of our existing Gospels, and of their being a true embodiment of the Church's original belief. St. Paul's silence as to the *manner how* the Son of God became incarnate may be accounted for by his not having had occasion, in his extant Epistles, to speak of it. He is occupied, in accordance with his peculiar mission, in setting forth the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation rather than its mode, and in preaching rather than catechetical instruction; and on the essential idea involved he is sufficiently explicit, viz. the peculiar Divine paternity of Christ, notwithstanding the human birth.

Ver. 4.—**Who was declared** (so Authorized Version) **the Son of God with** (literally, *in*) **power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of** (not as in Authorized Version, *from*) **the dead.** Supposing the intention here to be to declare the Son's essential Deity, notwithstanding his human birth, we might have expected ὄντος after the γενομένου preceding. But the word used is ὁρισθέντος; and, further, the Resurrection is referred to, not a pre-existent state. The verb ὁρίζειν means properly to "appoint" or "determine;" and if this meaning be retained, the whole passage would seem to preclude the idea of Sonship previous to the Resurrection being in view. Hence commentators ancient and modern agree generally in assigning an unusual meaning to ὁρισθέντος here, making it signify "declared," as in the Authorized Version. So Chrysostom, Τί οὖν ἐστιν ὁρισθέντος; τοῦ δειχθέντος, ἀποφανθέντος, κριθέντος, ὁμολογηθέντος, παρὰ τῆς ἁπάντων γνώμης καὶ ψήφου (Hom. ii. p. 432, D). It is maintained that this use of the word, though unusual, is legitimate; since a person may be said to be appointed, or determined, to be what he already is, when his being such is declared and manifested. Thus, it may be said, a king may be spoken of as appointed king when he is crowned, though he was king before; or a saint determined a saint when he is canonized; and the classical phrase, ὁρίζειν τινὰ Θεόν, in the sense of *deify*, is adduced as parallel. Thus the expression is made to mean that "the same who κατὰ σάρκα was known only as the descendant of David, is now declared to be the Son of God" (Tholuck); Ὁρίζεται δὲ εἰς υἱὸν καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον" (Cyril); and St. Paul's reason for thus putting it, in pursuance of his course of thought, is thus explained by Meyer; "Paul gives the two main epochs in the history of the Son of God as they had actually occurred, and had been prophetically announced;" also by Bengel thus, "Etiam ante exinanitionem suam Filius Dei is quidem fuit: sed exinanitione filiatio occultata fuit, et plene demum retecta post resurrectionem." This interpretation would be more satisfactory than it is if the verb ὁρίζειν were found similarly used in any other part of the New Testament. It occurs in the following passages, and always in its proper and usual sense: Luke xxii. 22; Acts ii. 23; x. 42; xi. 29; xvii. 26, 31; Heb. iv. 7. Of these especially significant are Acts x. 42 (Ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ ὡρισμένος ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κριτὴς ζώντων καὶ νεκρῶν) and Acts xvii. 31 (Διότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ᾗ μέλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισε, πίστιν παράσχων πᾶσιν, ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν). In both of these texts the word denotes God's *appointment* or *determination* of Christ to the office of Judge, not merely a *declaration* or *manifestation* of his already being so; and it is to be observed that in the second the language is given as that of St. Paul himself, and that it corresponds with the passage before us in that the Resurrection is spoken of as the display to the world of Christ being so appointed or determined. Surely, then, there ought to be cogent reason for giving ὁρισθέντος a different meaning here; and, in spite of the weight of authority on the other side, it is submitted that we are under no necessity to do so, if we bear in mind what appeared under ver. 3 as to the different senses in which Christ is designated Υἱὸς Θεοῦ. In the sense apparent is Messianic prophecy, and pervading the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the sense which seems intended by St. Paul himself in Acts xiii. 32, 33, it was not till after the Resurrection that Christ attained his position of royal Sonship; it was then that the Divine ὁρισμὸς took effect in that regard. It is true that St. Paul (as was seen under ver. 3) himself conceived of Christ as essentially Son of God from eternity;

but here, while speaking of the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy, and desiring to point out what was patent to all who believed that Christ had risen, he may fitly refer to his exaltation only, in virtue of which, further, he had himself received his apostolic commission, of which he proceeds to speak, and the assertion which he has had all along in view. The above interpretation of *ὁρισθέντος* appears, further, to have the weighty support of Pearson, who, speaking of Christ's fourfold right unto the title of "the Son of God"—by generation, as begotten of God; by commission, as sent by him; by resurrection, as the Firstborn; by actual possession, as Heir of all—refers thus to ch. i. 4: "Thus was he defined, or constituted, and 'appointed to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead'" (Pearson on the Creed, art. ii.). Ἐν δυνάμει (to be connected with *ὁρισθέντος*) denotes the Divine power displayed in the Resurrection (cf. Eph. i. 19, "the exceeding greatness of his *power*, . . . according to the working of the strength of his might, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead;" cf. also 1 Cor. vi. 14; xv. 43; 2 Cor. xiii. 4). In the last two of these passages, *power* evidenced in resurrection is contrasted with human *weakness* evidenced in death: Σπείρεται ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ, ἐγείρεται ἐν δυνάμει; Καὶ γὰρ εἰ ἐσταυρώθη ἐξ ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ ζῇ ἐκ δυνάμεως. To *κατὰ σάρκα* in ver. 3 is opposed, not simply *κατὰ πνεῦμα*, but *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης* ("the spirit *of holiness*"), so as to denote the Divine element that was all along in the Incarnate Son, in virtue of which he rose triumphant over human *ἀσθένεια*. We too are composed of *σάρξ* and *πνεῦμα*; but the *πνεῦμα* in Christ was one of absolute *holiness*—the holiness of Deity; not *ἁγιότης*, holiness in the abstract, attributed to Deity (Heb. xii. 10), nor *ἁγιασμός*, "sanctification," of which man is capable; but *ἁγιωσύνη*, an inherent quality of Divine holiness ("Quasi tres sint gradus, *sanctificatio*, *sanctimonia*, *sanctitas*," Bengel). Because of this "spirit of holiness" that was in Christ, "it was not possible that he should be holden of" death (Acts ii. 24). Through this, which was in himself—not merely through a Divine power external to himself calling him from the grave, as he had called Lazarus—he overcame death (cf. Acts ii. 27; xiii. 35, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"). It was through this too (*διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου*) that he "offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14); and in the same sense may be understood *ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι* (1 Tim. iii. 16). Neither in these passages nor in the one before us is the *Holy Spirit* meant, in the sense of a distinct Person of the Holy Trinity. Further, the preposition in *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως* does not denote (as explained by Theodoret, Luther, and Grotius) the *time* from which the *ὁρισμὸς* began in the sense of *ἐξ οὗ ἀνέστη*, but the *source* out of which it proceeded. "Ἐκ non modo tempus, sed nexum rerum denotat" (Bengel). Further, the phrase is not "*resurrection from* the dead," as in the Authorized Version, but "*of* the dead," which may be purposely used so as to point, not only to the fact of Christ's own resurrection, but also to its significance for mankind. The same expression often occurs elsewhere with a comprehensive meaning (cf. Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 12—21; Phil. iii. 11; also 1 Cor. xv. 22; Phil. iii. 10). The resurrection of Christ expressed "the power of an endless life," here and hereafter, for mankind, carrying with it the possibility of the resurrection of all from the dominion of death in the risen Son. One view of the meaning of the whole of the above passage—that of Chrysostom and Melancthon—may be mentioned because of the weight of these authorities, though it cannot be the true one. They take *κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης*, *ἐν δυνάμει*, and *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν*, as co-ordinate, regarding them as the three proofs of Christ's eternal Sonship, *i.e. miracles, the communication of the Holy Ghost*, and *the resurrection*. Jesus Christ our Lord; thus in conclusion distinctly identifying the Son of prophecy with the Jesus who had lately appeared, and was acknowledged by the Christians as the Messiah, and commonly by them called Κύριος. The force of the passage is weakened in the Authorized Version by the transposition of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν to the beginning of ver. 3, as also by the inclusion of ver. 2 in a parenthesis, so as to separate it from *περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ* which follows. (See explanation given above.)

Ver. 5.—**Through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his Name's sake.** "We" here means, not Christians generally, but Paul himself (though probably, as also in all other cases where he similarly uses this plural, with the intention of including others, here his fellow-apostles); for the "grace" spoken of is evidently from what follows a special grace for the apostolic office to which he had been called. The word *ἀποστολή* occurs in a like sense in Acts i. 25. Εἰς *ὑπακοὴν πίστεως*, etc., denotes the purpose of his apostleship, viz. to bring men everywhere, of whatever race, to believe and obey the gospel; not to a belief in it only, but to the obedience which comes of faith, or which faith renders. "Accepimus mandatum Evangelii ad omnes gentes proferendi, cui illæ per fidem obediant" (Calvin). Some take the phrase, *ὑπακοὴν πίστεως*, to

mean "obedience *to* faith," faith being regarded, not as *causa efficiens*, but as a commanding principle exacting obedience to itself. So Meyer, who refers to passages where a genitive after ὑπακοή has this meaning: 2 Cor. x. 5 (ὑπακοὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ); 1 Pet. i. 22 (ὑπακοὴ τῆς ἀληθείας); and also to Acts vi. 7 (ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει). The last of these quotations would have been peculiarly apposite in support of the interpretation contended for, were not πίστεως in the text now before us anarthrous, so as to suggest *subjective* faith, rather than "the faith delivered to the saints," as in Acts vi. 7. The question is, after all, of no importance with regard to the essential idea intended to be conveyed. Ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν seems to point especially to St. Paul's own apostleship (cf. Acts xxii. 21; Gal. i. 16; ii. 8, 9; Eph. iii. 1, 8), though, of course, the apostleship of all wherever exercised, had a similar world-wide purpose. In using the expression here, he anticipates what he is about to say as to his not shrinking from addressing even the Romans with authority; his mission being to *all* the nations. Ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ is best connected with "obedience of faith." The phrase is of frequent occurrence (cf. Acts v. 41; ix. 15; xv. 26; xxi. 13; also 2 Thess. i. 12). It is most usually connected with the idea of suffering in behalf of Christ.

Ver. 6.—**Among whom are ye also, called ones of Jesus Christ**; and therefore included in my apostolic mission. Here the parenthetic passage ends, ver. 7 being the sequence of ver. 1.

Ver. 7.—**To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints** (cf. κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, in ver. 1). Bengel's view, that by ἠγαπημένοις Θεοῦ are specially meant the Jewish Christians, as being "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (ch. xi. 28), and by κλητοῖς ἁγίοις the Gentile converts, is untenable. Both phrases are applicable to all. The word ἁγίοι, be it observed, is elsewhere used to denote all Christians, without implying eminence in personal holiness (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 9, ὑμεῖς δὲ . . . ἔθνος ἅγιον). **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** The union, here and elsewhere, of Jesus Christ with the Father as imparting heavenly blessing, implies his Deity no less than any dogmatic statement could do; for it is surely impossible to conceive the apostle thus associating with the Godhead one whom he regarded as a mere human being. The same form of benediction is found at the beginning of all St. Paul's Epistles, and there can be no doubt that its meaning is as given above. For, though in here, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon, this collocation of words might allow the rendering, "Grace . . . from God, the Father of us and of the Lord Jesus Christ," yet in Galatians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, it is obviously inadmissible. And even without these instances the true meaning would have been probable from ἡμῶν coming *before* Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. If the apostle had intended to express a common Fatherhood of God, he would surely not have written, "Our Father and Christ's," but rather, "Christ's and ours" (cf. John xx. 17).

Vers. 8—17.—B. *Introduction, in which the writer expresses his strong interest in the Roman Church, his long-cherished desire to visit it, and the grounds of this desire.*

Ver. 8.—**First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of** (rather, *proclaimed*) **in the whole world.** We observe here, as in other Epistles, St. Paul's way of beginning with complimentary language, and expression of thankfulness for the good he knew of in his readers. He thus intimates at the outset his own good feeling towards them, and predisposes them to take in good part any animadversions that may follow. "The whole world" is not, of course, to be taken literally, but as a phrase denoting general notoriety. Similarly in 1 Thess. i. 8, ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ. Any considerable number of converts in so important a place as Rome would be likely to become notorious in all Christian circles, and even outside them might have already begun to attract attention.

Ver. 9.—**For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers.** A like solemn asseveration is made with a like intention (Phil. i. 8; cf. also 2 Cor. xi. 31). It expresses the writer's earnestness, and is in place for attestation of a fact known only to himself and God. The word λατρεύω ("I serve"), when used in a religious sense, most usually denotes "worship," and specifically the priestly services of the temple (Heb. viii. 5; ix. 9; x. 2; xiii. 10). St. Paul's λατρεία intended here is not ceremonial function, but a spiritual one (ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου)—an inward devotion of himself to God's service in proclaiming and furthering "the gospel of his Son." A similar view of the essential λατρεία of Christians is found in ch. xii. 1; xv. 16; Phil. iii. 3; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. ix. 14.

Ver. 10.—**Always** (to be connected with δεόμενος following, not, as in the Authorized Version, with the preceding μνείαν ποιοῦμαι) **in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length** (in some way at length some day) **I may be prospered to come unto**

you. The word *εὐοδωθησόμαι*, translated in the Authorized Version, "have a prosperous journey," though rightly so rendered with regard to its etymology and original meaning, does not necessarily imply being prospered in a *journey*. It was commonly used to denote being prospered generally (cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 2; 3 John 2).

Ver. 11.—**For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.** Bengel, taking *χάρισμα* as the special gift of the Holy Ghost consequent on apostolic laying on of hands (cf. Acts viii. 17, 18), argues from this verse that neither St. Peter nor any other apostle could have been at Rome so far. Though his conclusion is probably true, it does not follow from his premiss; for *τι χάρισμα πνευματικὸν* evidently means generally *any* gift of grace. All St. Paul implies is that he hopes to do them some spiritual good, so as to settle and strengthen them; and in the next verse, with characteristic delicacy, he even modifies what he has said, so as to guard against being supposed to imply that the benefit would be all on their side.

Ver. 12.—**That is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by each other's faith, yours and mine.** The spirit of delicate courtesy here evinced, in addressing persons over whom one less of a Christian gentleman than St. Paul was might have assumed a lordly tone, is apparent elsewhere in his Epistles (cf. ch. xv. 15; xvi. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 3; iii. 1, *seq.*; viii. 8; ix. 2), and especially the whole Epistle to Philemon.

Ver. 13.—**But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.** Some take the "but" at the beginning of this verse (*οὐ θέλω δὲ*) as the apodosis to *πρῶτον μὲν* in ver. 8, with the meaning, "I am aware, and am thankful, that your faith is already notorious; *but* still I wish you to know that I have long had a desire to visit you." But the *μὲν* and *δὲ* are too far separated to commend this view. It is more after St. Paul's style that there should be no apodosis to *πρῶτον μὲν*; his train of thought carries him on so that he forgets how he began his sentence; and ver. 13 comes naturally as the sequence of ver. 12, whether we render *δὲ* by "but," or (as in the Authorized Version) by "now," or (as in the Revised Version) by "and." The long-cherished intention here spoken of had been expressed by him when at Ephesus, before his departure to Macedonia (Acts xix. 21). Feeling himself to be peculiarly the apostle to the Gentile world, and having already been the first agent in carrying the gospel into Europe (Acts xvi. 9, 10), and having established it there in important centres of population, he ever kept in view an eventual visit to the imperial city itself, in the hope of its thence permeating the whole western world. What had so far hindered him appears from ch. xv. 22 to have been principally missionary work which had first to be accomplished elsewhere. At last Providence carried him there in a way not of his own choosing. Thus man proposes, God disposes. In this verse the Roman Church seems certainly to be regarded as a Gentile one. What classes of converts probably at that time composed it has been considered in the Introduction. Whatever its nucleus, St. Paul plainly feels that, in sending this Epistle to it, he is carrying out his especial mission of extending the gospel to the Gentile world, though at the same time he writes mainly from a Jewish standpoint, appealing frequently to the Jewish Scriptures, with which he presupposes an acquaintance on the part of his readers. But the latter fact is not inconsistent with the supposition of their being, either then or prospectively, mainly of Gentile race. The gospel was everywhere preached as the fulfilment of Judaism (see note on ver. 2); and for understanding both its purport and its evidences, all would have to be to some extent indoctrinated in the ancient Scriptures. It is to be observed, too, that in the next verse the apostle implies a sense of now addressing a peculiarly civilized and cultivated community; he seems to have before him the prospect of his address reaching the educated and intelligent classes of society in the imperial city. And the Epistle, as it goes on, is in accordance with such an aim. For its arguments are addressed, not merely to believers in the Old Testament, but also generally to philosophical thinkers. The state of the world is reviewed, human consciousness is analyzed, deep problems which had long exercised the minds of philosophers are touched on, and the gospel is, in fact, commended to the world as God's answer to man's needs.

Vers. 14, 15.—**Both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to wise and unwise, I am debtor. So, as much as is in me, to you also that are at Rome, I am ready to preach the gospel.** The two divisions of mankind into (1) Ἕλληνες καὶ Βάρβαροι, (2) *σοφοὶ καὶ ἀνόητοι*, are intended to include all, independently of nationality and culture, regarded from a Greek or Roman point of view. The Greeks, as is well known, called all others than themselves Βάρβαροι, so that Ἕλληνες καὶ Βάρβαροι included the whole world. Here the Romans are in-

tended to be included among Ἕλληνες, being partakers in Hellenic culture, and in fact at that time its prominent representatives (cf. "Non solum *Græcia* et *Italia*, sed etiam omnis *barbaria*," Cicero, 'De Fin.,' ii. 15). Of course, σοφοί also includes them. The obvious intention of the writer is to place them in each of the higher categories, and so, while after his manner he pays his expected readers a delicate compliment, to insist that his mission is to the highest in position and culture as well as the lowest, and that, bold in his convictions, he is not ashamed to preach the cross even to them. "Audax facinus ad crucem vocare terrarum Dominos" (Alex. More. quoted by Olshausen).

Ver. 16.—**For I am not ashamed of the gospel** (*of Christ*, in the Authorized Version, is very weakly supported by manuscripts; neither is it required), **for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and to the Greek.** In saying he was "not ashamed," St. Paul may have had in his mind our Lord's own words (Mark viii. 38 and Luke ix. 26.) We are reminded in this verse of the passage, 1 Cor. i. 17—31, where the idea here shortly intimated is enlarged on. He was fully aware that the pride of Greek philosophy would be likely to despise the message of the cross as "foolishness." It would be strange to them at first, and out of accord with their intellectual speculations. But he was convinced too that in it was contained the one view of things to meet human needs, and such as to commend itself in the end to thinkers, if their consciences could be roused. In preaching to the Corinthians he had indeed purposely refrained from presenting the gospel to them in "words of man's wisdom," lest the simple message, addressed alike to all, should lose any of its essential power, or be confounded with the human philosophies of the day. But to them also, in his First Epistle, he declares that this was not because it was not "wisdom," as well as "power," to such as could so receive it. Among the more advanced, and therefore more receptive (ἐν τοῖς τελείοις), he does, he says, "speak wisdom" (1 Cor. ii. 6), Christianity having, in fact, its own philosophy, appreciable by them. As is well said in the Exposition of 1 Corinthians in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' "No contrast is here at all between reason and revelation, as some think, but strictly between two philosophies—the philosophy of God and the philosophy of the world." Therefore to the Greek, as well as to the Jew, he is not ashamed to preach the cross; and in this Epistle, suitably to its purpose—more, it may be supposed, than his ordinary preaching—he does set forth the Divine philosophy of the gospel. But the message, he adds, is "to the Jew first," because it was to the people of the covenant (cf. ch. ix. 4, etc.) that the salvation in Christ was in the first place to be offered. Hence also, in all his missionary work, he first addressed himself to the synagogue, and only when he was rejected there, turned exclusively to the Gentiles. So at Rome too, when he afterwards went there (Acts xxviii. 17—29).

Ver. 17—ch. xi. 36.—II. THE DOCTRINAL PART OF THE EPISTLE.

Ver. 17—ch. viii. 39.—C. *The doctrine of the righteousness of God propounded, established, and explained.*

Ver. 17.—This verse, though connected in sequence of thought with the preceding verse, may properly be taken in conjunction with the doctrinal argument which follows, serving, in fact, as its thesis. **For the righteousness of God is therein revealed from** (or, *by*) **faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous by** (or, *from*) **faith shall live.** It is to be observed that ἐκ is the preposition before πίστεως in both clauses of the sentence, though our Authorized Version makes a difference. Further, we render, with the Authorized Version, "*the* righteousness of God," rather than "*a* righteousness," as in the Revised Version, notwithstanding the absence of the article. For what is meant is the definite conception, pervading the Epistle, of *God's righteousness*. If there were room for doubt, it would surely be removed by ὀργὴ Θεοῦ, also without the article, immediately following, and with the same verb, ἀποκαλύπτεται. The Revisers, translating here "*the* wrath," have given in the margin as tenable "*a wrath*," apparently for the sake of consistency with their rendering of δίκαιοσύνη. But "*a* wrath of God" has no intelligible meaning. The expressions seem simply to mean *God's righteousness* and *God's wrath*. This expression, "the righteousness of God," has been discussed in the Introduction, to which the reader is referred. Its intrinsic meaning is there taken to be God's own eternal righteousness, revealed in Christ for reconciling the world to himself, rather than (as commonly interpreted) the *forensic* righteousness (so called) imputed to man. Thus there is no need to understand the genitive Θεοῦ as *gen. auctoris*, or as equivalent to ἐνώπιον Θεοῦ. The phrase is understood in the sense that would be familiar to St. Paul and his readers from the Old Testament; and it is conceived that this intrinsic sense pervades the whole Epistle even when a

righteousness imputed to *man* is spoken of; the idea still being that of the Divine righteousness embracing man. It is not clear in what exact sense ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν is to be understood. Most commentators, taking δικαιοσύνη to denote man's imputed righteousness, connect ἐκ πίστεως with it, as if ἡ ἐκ had been written (as *e.g.* in ch. x. 6). But the absence of ἡ, as well as the collocation of words, seems rather to connect it with ἀποκαλύπτεται. It may be meant to express the subjective condition for man's apprehension, and appropriation, of God's righteousness. The revelation of it to man's own soul is said to be ἐκ πίστεως, while εἰς πίστιν expresses the result; viz. faith unto salvation. A like use of the preposition εἰς is found in ch. vi. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16; iii. 18. In the last of these passages ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν has a close resemblance to the expression before us. The quotation from Hab. ii. 4 seems mainly meant to illustrate what has been said concerning *faith*, though the word δίκαιος, which occurs in it in connection with faith, may have also suggested it as apposite, as is evidently the case in Gal. iii. 11, where St. Paul quotes it in proof of the position that ἐν νόμῳ οὐδεὶς δικαιοῦται παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ. The prophet had in immediate view the trials of faith peculiar to his own time, and had cried, "LORD, how long?" But he had stood upon his watch to look out for what the LORD would say unto him; and an answer had come to him to the effect that, in spite of appearances, his prophetic vision would ere long be realized, God's promises to the faithful would certainly be fulfilled, and that *faith* meanwhile must be their sustaining principle—"The just shall live by his faith." So in the Hebrew. The LXX. has Ὁ δὲ δικαιός μου ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (A), or Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως μου ζήσεται (B). The variations do not affect the general sense of the passage. Now some, supposing St. Paul to connect ἐκ πίστεως with δίκαιος, as part of the subject of the sentence, would accuse him of giving the quotation a meaning not intended by the prophet, who evidently meant ἐκ πίστεως to go with ζήσεται, as part of the predicate. But there is no reason for attributing this intention to St. Paul, except on the supposition that he had previously connected ἐκ πίστεως with δικαιοσύνη, in the sense of ἡ ἐκ πίστεως. But we have seen reason for concluding that this was not so. The quotation, in the sense intended by the prophet, is sufficiently apposite. For it expresses that *faith* is the life-principle of God's righteous ones, while the whole passage at the end of which it occurs declares the salvation of prophetic vision to be entirely of God, to be waited for and apprehended by man through faith, not brought about by his own doings.

Ver. 18—ch. ii. 29.—(1) *All mankind liable to God's wrath.*

Vers. 18—32.—(*a*) *The heathen world in general.*

Ver. 18.—**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold back the truth in unrighteousness.** Here the argumentation of the Epistle begins, the first position to be established being that all mankind without exception is guilty of sin before God, and therefore unable of itself to put in a plea of *righteousness*. This being proved, the need of the revelation of *God's righteousness*, announced in ver. 17, appears. "The wrath of God" is an expression with which we are familiar in the Bible, being one of those in which human emotions are attributed to God in accommodation to the exigencies of human thought. It denotes his essential holiness, his antagonism to sin, to which punishment is due. It expresses an idea as essential to our conception of the Divine righteousness as do the words, "love" and "mercy." Wrath, or indignation, against evil is as necessary to our ideal of a perfect *human* being as is love of good; and therefore we attribute wrath to the perfect Divine Being, using of necessity human terms for expressing our conception of the Divine attributes. When the Name of the LORD was proclaimed before Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 5, etc.), it was of One not only "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," but also "that will by no means clear the guilty." This last attribute is the same as what we mean by the Divine wrath. This "wrath of God" is said in the verse before us to be "revealed from heaven." How so? Is it in the gospel, as is God's righteousness (ver. 18)? Against this view is the change of expression—ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ instead of ἐν αὐτῷ—as well as the fact that the gospel is not in itself a revelation of wrath, but the very opposite. Is it in the Old Testament? Possibly in part; but the marked repetition of ἀποκαλύπτεται in the present tense seems to point to some obvious revelation *now*; and, further, the first part of the proof, to the end of the second chapter, does not rest on the Old Testament. Is it what the apostle proceeds so forcibly to draw attention to—the existing, and at that time notorious, moral degradation of heathen society, which he regards as evidence of Divine judgment? This may have been before his view; and, as he goes on at once to speak of it, it probably was so prominently. But the revelation of Divine wrath against sin seems to imply more than this as the argument goes on, viz. the evident guilt before God of all mankind alike, and not only of degraded

heathenism. It is difficult to decide, among the various explanations that have been offered, on any specific mode of revelation which the writer had in view. Perhaps no particular one exclusively. Commentators may be often unduly anxious to affix an exact sense to pregnant words used by St. Paul, who so often indicates comprehensive ideas by short phrases. He may have had before his mind various concurrent signs of human guilt, and the Divine wrath against it, at that especial time of the world's history; all which, to his mind at least, brought conviction as by a light from heaven. And the gospel itself (though in its essence a revelation of mercy, so that he purposely avoids saying that wrath was *in it* revealed) still had been the most powerful means of all for bringing home a conviction of the Divine wrath to the consciences of believers. For its first office is to convince of sin and of judgment. Cf. the words of the forerunner, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" On all such grounds we may conceive that the apostle spoke of the wrath of God against human sin being especially at that time plainly revealed from heaven; and he desires to bring his readers to perceive it as he did. For now was the time of the Divine purpose to bring it home to all (cf. Acts xvii. 30, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"). "All ungodliness and unrighteousness" (*ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν*) comprehends all evil-doing, in whatever aspect viewed, whether as impiety or as wrong. The phrase, *τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν κατεχόντων*, is wrongly translated in the Authorized Version, "who hold the truth." If the verb *κατέχειν* allowed this rendering here, it would indeed be intelligible in reference to the knowledge of God, even by nature, which all men have or ought to have, though they do not act upon it, and the very potential possession of which renders them guilty. This is the thought of what immediately follows. Thus the sense would be, "They *hold*, i.e. possess, the truth; but they *do* unrighteousness." But whenever *κατέχειν* means "to hold," it denotes a *firm* hold, not a loose hold, such as would be thus implied. It occurs in this sense in 1 Cor. xi. 2 ("I praise you that ye *keep* the ordinances"); and 1 Thess. v. 21 ("*Hold fast* that which is good"). We must, therefore, have recourse to a second sense in which the verb is also used—that of "keeping back," or "restraining." Thus Luke iv. 42 ("The people *stayed* him, that he should not depart from them") and 2 Thess. ii. 6 ("Ye know what *withholdeth*"). The reference is still to the innate knowledge of God which all men are supposed to have had originally; but the idea expressed is not their *having* it, but their *suppressing* it. "Veritas in mente nititur et urget: sed homo eam impedit" (Bengel).

Ver. 19.—**Because that which is known** (not, as in the Authorized Version, "*may be* known;" for, though the force of the word *γνωστὸν* suggests this sense, it certainly means *known*, not *knowable*, in the many passages of the New Testament where it elsewhere occurs) **of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it to them**; rather than *hath manifested*, as in the Authorized Version. He manifested it, as appears from the following verse, in creation. In it *to* them from the first he manifested it; but *in* them (*ἐν αὐτοῖς*) also, through the capacity of the human soul to see Divine power in creation.

Ver. 20.—**For the invisible things of him from** (*i.e. since*, *ἀπὸ*) **the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Divinity** (*θειότης*, not *θεότης*); **so that they are without excuse.** The concluding clause is rendered in the Revised Version, "that they may be without excuse;" and it is true that *εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς* does not express the *fact* that they now *are* so, but the subjective *result* of the manifestation, if disregarded. "Paulus directe excusationem adimit, non solum de eventu aliquo loquitur" (Bengel). It is, however, a question of importance, which has been much discussed, whether (as the rendering of the Revised Version might be taken to imply) the idea of Divine *purpose*, and not *result* only, is involved in *εἰς τὸ εἶναι*. The difference between the two conceptions is apparent from the Vulgate, *ita ut sint inexcusabiles*, compared with Calvin's *in hoc ut*. The bearing of the distinction on the doctrine of predestination is obvious, and it was consequently a subject of contention between the Lutherans and Calvinists. Meyer among moderns contends strongly that "the view which takes it of the *purpose* is required by the prevailing use of *εἰς* with the infinitive," referring in this Epistle to ch. i. 11; iii. 26; iv. 11, 16, 18; vi. 12; vii. 4, 5; viii. 29; xi. 11; xii. 2, 3; xv. 8, 13, 16. A comparison, however, of these passages does not seem to bear out his contention, it being apparently dependent on the context in each case, rather than the phrase *εἰς τὸ*, whether the idea of *purpose* comes in. Chrysostom among the ancients expressly opposed this view, saying, *Καίτοιγε οὐ διὰ τοῦτο ταῦτα ἐποίησεν, ὁ Θεὸς, εἰ καὶ τοῦτο ἐξέβη. Οὐ γὰρ ἵνα αὐτοὺς ἀπολογίας ἀποστερήσῃ διδασκαλίαν τοσαύτην εἰς μέσον προὐθηκεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀκινγνῶσιν.* *So that they should be* may be suggested as an adequate rendering, so as to avoid the idea of God's manifestation of himself to men having been from the first delusive,

having condemnation, and not enlightenment, for its purpose.

These two verses, 19 and 20, carry out the thought of *τὴν ἀλήθειαν κατεχόντων* in ver. 18, their purport being to show that the *ἀσέβεια* and *ἀδικία* of men have been in spite of *knowledge*, and therefore involve them all in *sin*. For *sin* implies knowledge of good and evil; it is not imputed to the brute beasts, who but follow their natural instincts, having no perception of God or a Divine law. Now, to man, even without any special revelation, God manifests himself in two ways—*outwardly* in nature, and *inwardly* in conscience. In these verses the outward manifestation is spoken of, the other being more especially noted in ch. ii. 14, etc. But here, too, an inward manifestation is implied by the word *νοούμενα*, as before by *ἐν αὐτοῖς*. To the animals below us the phenomena of nature may be but a spectacle before their eyes, making no appeal to a mind within. But to man they have a language—they awake wonder, awe, admiration, a sense of infinite mysterious power, and, to the receptive of such impressions, of ideal beauty indefinable. To the psalmists of old they spoke irresistibly of God; of one infinite and eternal Being, above and beyond all; and their consciences, owning the supremacy of good in the moral sphere, concurred with their sense of the evidences of beneficence in nature, so as to convince them also of the *righteousness* of God. All men (the apostle would say) were originally endowed with a like capacity of knowing God; and their failure in this regard, shown in the various forms of idolatry prevalent throughout the world, he views as the first stage in the development of human sin. The next stage is general moral degradation, regarded as the judicial consequence of the dishonour done to God. It is, indeed, a necessary consequence; for low and unworthy conceptions of Deity bring with them moral deterioration; when man's Divine ideal becomes degraded, with it he becomes degraded too. Witness, for instance, the debauches and cruelties that so commonly accompanied idolatrous worship. Lastly, the final stage of this moral degradation is represented in an unveiled picture of the utter wickedness, and even unnatural vice, at that time prevalent; and condoned in the heart of the boasted civilization of the heathen world. Such is the drift of the remainder of this first chapter. The argument suggests the following thoughts. (1) There is no mention here of Adam's transgression as the origin of human sin. The reason is that the apostle is arguing from a philosophical rather than a theological point of view, having Gentile as well as Jewish thinkers in his view as readers. His appeal in this chapter is not to the Old Testament at all, but to facts by all acknowledged. He is offering the world a philosophy of human history to account for the present perplexing state of things—for the undoubted discord between conscience and performance, between ideal and practice,—his purpose being to show universal guilt on the part of man. But his position here is quite consistent with what he says elsewhere (as in ch. v.) of Adam's original transgression. For his whole argument in this chapter involves the doctrine of the *fall* of man, who is conceived to have been originally endowed with Divine instincts, and to have forfeited his prerogative through sin; and this is the essential meaning of the picture given us in Gen. iii. of the original transgression. (2) The entire drift of the chapter is against the view of the condemnation of mankind being due simply to the sin of the progenitor being *imputed* to the race. For all men are represented as guilty, in that all have sinned against light which they might have followed. This view does not, indeed, preclude that of an inherited infection of nature predisposing all to sin; nay, it rather necessitates it; for why should the sin have been so universal but for such predisposing cause? Still, the distinction between the two views is important in regard to our conception of the Divine justice. 3. It may, however, be said that the distinction is without a real difference in this regard; for that, if the inherited infection is such that sin becomes inevitable (as seems to be implied by its alleged universality), it may appear as inconsistent with the Divine justice to condemn men for it, as it would be to impute to them their progenitor's transgression. In reply to this difficulty, it may be said that Scripture nowhere says that men are *finally* condemned for it. On the contrary, the gospel reveals to us the atonement, preordained from the first, for the avoidance of such final condemnation; and this retrospective as well as prospective in its effects (ch. iii. 25, 26), and as far-reaching as was the original transgression (ch. iv. 12, etc.). And our apostle (ch. ii. 7, 14, 15, 16) expressly asserts the salvation of *all* who, according to their light, have done what they could. The fact is, that in the argument before us (as in other passages of similar purport) it is only the *principle*, or the *ground*, of man's possible justification before God that is under review. The intention is to show that this cannot be man's own "works or deservings," as of debt, but is another which the gospel reveals. Be it observed, lastly, that a clear view of this position is important, not only for our apprehension of the truth of things and of the meaning of the gospel, but also for our right moral tone of mind and atti-

tude before God. For not to be convinced of sin is to belie the true ideal of our conscience, and implies acquiescence in a moral standard below that of the Divine righteousness to which we are able to aspire.

Ver. 21.—**Because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful** (rather, *gave thanks*); **but became vain in their imaginations** (διαλογισμοῖς, elsewhere more correctly rendered "thoughts" or "reasonings;" cf. 1 Cor. iii. 20, "The Lord knoweth the *thoughts* of the wise, that they are vain"—*μάταιοι*, as here, ἐματαιώθησαν), **and their foolish heart was darkened.**

Vers. 22, 23.—**Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the similitude** (literally, *in similitude;* cf. Ps. cvi. 20, whence idea and words are taken) **of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.** The expression, γνόντες τὸν Θεὸν, refers to what has been said of τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, having been "manifest in them." It implies actual knowledge, not mere capacity of knowledge. Mankind is regarded as having lost a truer perception of God once possessed, idolatry being a sign of culpable degradation of the human race—not, as some would have us now believe, a stage in man's emergence from brutality. Scripture ever represents the human race as having fallen and become degraded; not as having risen gradually to any intelligent conceptions of God at all. And it may well be asked whether modern anthropological science has really discovered anything to discredit the scriptural view of the original condition and capacity of man. The view here presented is that obfuscation of the understanding (σύνεσις) ensued from refusal to *glorify* and *give thanks to* known Deity. "*Gratias assere* debemus ob beneficia; *glorificare* ob ipsas virtutes divinas" (Bengel). Hence came *ματαιότης*, a word, with its correlatives, constantly used with reference to idolatry; cf. Acts xiv. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 20; Eph. iv. 17; 1 Pet. i. 18; also in the Old Testament. 1 Kings xvi. 26 (ἐν τοῖς ματαίοις αὐτῶν, LXX.); 2 Kings xvii. 15 (ἐπορεύθησαν ὀπίσω τῶν ματαίων, LXX.); Jer. ii. 5; Jonah ii. 8 (φυλασσόμενοι *μάταια* καὶ ψευδῆ). Two forms of idolatry—both involving unworthy conceptions of the Divine Being—are alluded to, suggested, we may suppose, by the anthropomorphism of the Greeks and the creature-worship of Egypt, which were the two notable and representative developments of heathen religion. The expression, φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ, with the previous ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς, have led some to suppose in this whole passage a special reference to the schools of philosophy. But this is not so. The degradation spoken of was long anterior to them, nor is this charge, as formulated, applicable to them. The idea is, generally, that boasted human intellect has not preserved men from folly; not even "the wisdom of the Egyptians," or the intellectual culture of the Greeks (cf. 1 Cor. i. 19, etc.; iii. 19, etc.).

Ver. 24.—**Wherefore God** (καὶ, here in the Textus Receptus, is ill supported) **gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies between** (rather, *among*) **themselves.** So τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι, etc., is rendered in the Authorized Version. The verb, however, is probably passive, a middle use of it not being elsewhere found. In either case the general meaning is the same. The genitive, τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι, seems most naturally taken as denoting what the ἀκαθαρσία consisted in, rather than either the *purpose* or the *results* of their being given over to it (cf. ver. 26, where παρέδωκεν εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας is followed by a description of what these were). Here is noticed a further stage of judicial degradation; the *ματιαότης* of idolatry, itself judicial, had its further judicial consequence in the ἀκαθαρσία of abominable sensuality. Similarly, in Eph. iv., the ἐργασία ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ, prevalent among the nations, is traced to their *ματαιότης*, in that they had become "alienated from the life of God." It is notorious that idolatrous worship was not uncommonly accompanied by debauchery; notably that of the Phœnician Astarte, and of Aphrodite and Dionysus (see Livy, xxxix. 8, for an account of the Dionysia at one time in Rome; and Athen., xiii. pp. 574, 579, and xiv. p. 659, for the Aphrodisia at Athens and Corinth); cf. Numb. xxv., etc., "The people joined themselves unto Baal-peor," and the allusion to it, 1 Cor. x. 8. On that occasion no more is intimated than promiscuous intercourse between the two sexes, sinking men in that regard to the level of the brutes; but still worse "uncleanness" is in the apostle's view, such as sinks them even below that level; and how common such unnatural vices had become, and how lightly thought of, no one conversant with classical literature needs to be reminded.

Ver. 25.—**Who** (rather, *being such as*, the word is οἵτινες, equivalent to *quippequi*) **changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.** This verse repeats the source and cause of the moral degradation spoken of, which is described without reserve in what follows. "In peccatis arguendis sæpe scapha debet scapha dici. Gravitas et ardor stili judicialis proprietate verborum non violat verecundiam" (Bengel).

Ver. 26.—**For this cause God gave them up** (*παρέδωκε*, as before) **to vile affections** (*πάθη ἀτιμίας, i.e.* "passions of infamy;" cf. above, *τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι*). For the use, on the other hand, of the words *τιμὴ* and *τίμιος* to denote seemly and honourable indulgence of the sexual affections, cf. 1 Thess. iv. 4 (*Τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σκεῦος κτᾶσθαι ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ*) and Heb. xiii. 4 (*Τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσι, καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος*). **For their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature.**

Ver. 27.—**And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.** By the "recompense" (*ἀντιμισθίαν*) is meant here, not any further result, such as disease or physical prostration, but the very fact of their being given up to a state in which they can crave and delight in such odious gratifications of unnatural lust. It is the *ἀντιμισθία τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν*, the final judgment on them for going astray from God. And surely to the pure-minded there is no more evident token of Divine judgment than the spectacle of the unnatural cravings and indulgence of the sated sensualist.

Ver. 28.—**And even as they did not like to have God in their knowledge, God gave them over** (*παρέδωκεν*, as before) **to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient** (*i.e. unfitting* or *unseemly* things). It is difficult to render in English *οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν* and *ἀδόκιμον νοῦν* so as to retain the apparently intended correspondence between the verb and the adjective. The verb *δοκιμάζειν* is capable of the senses (1) "to prove" (as in assaying metals), and, generally, "to discern," or "judge;" (2) "to approve," after supposed proving. Jowett, in his commentary on this Epistle, endeavours to retain in English the correspondence between *ἐδοκίμασαν* and *ἀδόκιμον* by translating, "As they did not *discern* to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to an *undiscerning* mind," thus taking the verb in sense (1), and the adjective in the same sense actively. But it is at least doubtful whether *ἀδόκιμος* can be taken in an active sense, which is not its classical one. In the New Testament it occurs 1 Cor. ix. 27; 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Titus i. 16; Heb. vi. 8. In the first of the above passages the word obviously means "rejected" (in the Authorized Version *a castaway*), with reference to the comparison of a competitor in athletic contests being proved unworthy of the prize—a sense cognate to the common one of the same adjective as applied to spurious metals, rejected or worthless after being tested. In 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6, either sense seems admissible—*ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε . . . εἰ μήτι ἀδόκιμοί ἐστε*. But not so in Heb. vi. 8, where the word is applied to barren land. The passages from 2 Timothy and Titus may in themselves admit the sense of *undiscerning*, but the passive one is more probable in view of the common usage of the word. On the other hand, ch. xii. 2 may be adduced in favour of the active sense; for there the consequence of the renewal of the mind in Christians is said to be that they may *prove*, or *discern* (*εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς*), what is God's will; and hence it may seem probable that the want of such *discernment* is denoted here. The same passage also favours the verb *δοκιμάζειν* being taken here in sense (1) given above, and Jowett's rendering of the whole passage. It is, after all, uncertain; nor does it follow that the Greek *paronomasia* can be reproduced in English.

Vers. 29—31.—**Being filled with all unrighteousness, [fornication], wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hated of God, despiteful** (rather, *insolent*), **proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection [implacable], unmerciful.** Here not personal uncleanness only, but general and utter disregard of moral restraints and obligations (too prevalent, doubtless, at that time in civilized heathendom), is pointed out as the final judicial issue. The words used do not seem to be arranged on any exact system, but to have been written down as they occurred to the writer, being intended to be as comprehensive as possible. Among them those put above within brackets rest on weak authority. *Πλεονεξία*, translated here, as usually elsewhere, "covetousness," means generally "inordinate desire," not necessarily of riches; and St. Paul seems generally to use it with reference to inordinate *lust* (cf. Eph. iv. 19; v. 3; Col. iii. 3; also 1 Thess. iv. 6 and 2 Pet. ii. 14; and, for *πλεονέκτης*, Eph. v. 5, The word *θεοστυγεῖς*, both from its formation (compare *θεοφιλὴς* and *φιλόθεος*, with other instances), and its ordinary use in classical Greek (it occurs here only in the New Testament) must certainly be taken to mean "God-hated," not "God-haters." It seems suggested here by the previous *καταλάλους*, being (we may suppose) used commonly of the *delatores* who are known to have been a special pest of society at that period of Roman history. Alford quotes Tacitus, 'Ann.,' vi. 7, where they are called "Principi quidem grati, et *Deo exosi*;" also Philo, 'Ap Damascen.,' *Διάβολοι καὶ θείας ἀποπέμπτοι χάριτος, οἱ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκείνῳ διαβολικὴν νοσοῦντες κακοτεχνίαν, θεοστυγεῖς τε καὶ θεομισεῖς πάντη*. In ver. 31 the collocation of *ἀσυνέτους* and *ἀσυν-*

θέτους seems to have been suggested by similarity of sound, there being no apparent link of ideas. The latter word is rightly translated in the Authorized Version, as is also ἀσυνθέτους; ἀσυνθέτους being one who breaks treaties, "faithless;" ἀσπόνδους, one who refuses to enter into a truce or treaty, "implacable."

Ver. 32.—**Who** (οἵτινες, with its usual significance, as before) **knowing the judgment of God, that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also have pleasure in them that practise them.** In this concluding verse the main point of the whole argument, with which also it began (ver. 19), is repeated, viz. that all this sin was in spite of better knowledge—the original knowledge of God revealed, as above set forth, to the human race, and (as is implied further) an inward witness of conscience still remaining, however stifled, even in the most corrupt society. By ἄξιος θανάτου is not meant "deserving of capital punishment;" Divine judgment is evidently implied. There is no need to inquire what conception of future retribution the heathen themselves may be supposed to have had, or to have been capable of entertaining. St. Paul constantly denotes by θάνατος, in a general and comprehensive sense, the penal consequence of unatoned sin due to the Divine δικαιοσύνη (cf. ch. vi. 21—23; viii. 6, etc.). It is to be observed that in the latter part of this verse the distinction between πράσσειν, meaning habitual *practice*, and ποιεῖν is not shown in the Authorized Version. The evidence of the "reprobate mind" is not simply that such things are done occasionally under temptation, but that they are the habits of people's lives. And still more: such habits are not only participated in by those who have knowledge enough to perceive their guilt (αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν), but even condoned and approved (συνευδοκοῦσι τοῖς πράσσουσι); there was no general protest or indignation in society against the prevalent abominations; and those familiar with the writers of the Augustan age must be well aware that this was so. Here we have the final proof of the prevalence of the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς, the climax of the picture of general moral degradation. "Ideo autem sic interpretor, quod video apostolum voluisse hic gravius aliquid et sceleratius ipsa vitiorum perpetratione perstringere. Id quale sit non intelligo, nisi referamus ad istam nequitiæ summam, ubi miseri homines contra Dei justitiam, abjecta verecundia, vitiorum patrocinium suscipiunt" (Calvin).

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—*Apostolic credentials.* Greetings are often merely formal, or merely friendly. Not so this salutation, with which the apostle of the Gentiles opens his Epistle to the Christians of renowned, imperial Rome. It is sincere and hearty, and it is also dignified and authoritative. St. Paul writes as one who feels the responsibility of his position and vocation, as one who is justified in claiming from his readers respectful attention and submissive obedience. At the same time, the consciousness of his apostleship does not interfere with, but rather deepens, his prayerful and brotherly interest in the welfare of those who are the representatives of Christ in the world's metropolis.

I. THE APOSTLE'S NEW NAME IS IN ITSELF A CREDENTIAL. At the commencement of his apostolic career, Saul's name was changed to Paul; and to all who thought upon the matter even for one moment, this fact must have been very significant. The old name had been left behind with the old nature. The Jewish persecutor had become the Christian preacher. Whether or not the apostle assumed the name of his convert, the Proconsul of Cyprus, in any case the new name was associated with the new calling, the new covenant, the new life, the new hope. The change reminds us of the promise of the victorious Redeemer to his faithful soldier, "I will write upon him my new Name."

II. THE APOSTLE'S SPIRITUAL SERVICE IS A CLAIM UPON CHRISTIAN RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE. The open assertion by St. Paul, that he is "bond-servant of Jesus Christ," proves that a fresh idea has been introduced into the world. Here is a Jewish rabbi, a Roman citizen, glorying in his subjection, his serfdom; owning as his Master, not the emperor, but the Crucified! In inditing official letters, the great are wont to name their titles of honour. Observe, on the contrary, the lowliness of the apostle's attitude, as evinced in the "style and title" he here assumes. To him it is an honour to be Christ's slave,—"whose I am, and whom I serve." It is the glorification of spiritual humanity, when a noble nature like St. Paul's boasts of vassalage to Jesus. Redeemed by Christ's pity and sacrifice from the thraldom to sin, the first use which the emancipated bondman makes of new freedom is to bind himself to the service of

his Liberator and Lord. Though the apostles put forward their special claim to be Christ's bond-servants, this is a relation which every Christian claims to hold toward Christ, a designation which every Christian delights to appropriate.

III. THE APOSTLE CLAIMS FOR HIS MINISTRY A DIVINE AUTHORITY. Whatever men thought then, and whatever they think now, about the validity of the apostles' claim, it is not to be denied that they advanced it, and it cannot reasonably be questioned that they were sincere in their professions when they asserted themselves to be commissioned by Divine authority and qualified by Divine inspiration for a special service on behalf of mankind. Paul declared himself to be a "called apostle," *i.e.* called by the Lord Jesus himself, none the less really than were those who were summoned and commissioned during the Lord's ministry upon earth. As an apostle, Paul was "sent," *i.e.* selected, authorized, and made an ambassador, by the King himself. There is here a singular and instructive combination. Very lowly, very far from self-assertion, is Paul's designation of himself as "servant of Christ;" at the same time, very bold, confident, and unhesitating is his demand (for such it is) to be received as the minister, the herald, the ambassador, of the Lord. Doubtless, by using such language at the outset of this treatise, Paul required his readers to bear in mind what manner of document they were about to peruse; the form of it, indeed, given by the intellect, the heart, of a *man*, yet the substance of it proceeding from the mind of *God* himself.

IV. THE APOSTLE INCLUDES AMONG HIS CREDENTIALS THE GLORIOUS AND BENEVOLENT OCCUPATION OF HIS LIFE. "Separated," marked off from other men, and even from his former self, St. Paul is conscious that he is entrusted with a congenial work of evangelization. In a sense, he has been "separated" from his very birth; but this consecration, itself a Divine purpose, has been now actually effected. When Saul was arrested on his way to Damascus, he was not only enlightened from above, and so brought to see in the Jesus whom he had persecuted a Saviour and a Lord, but he was assured of his own selection by Christ as an ambassador to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. That was the first step; the second followed after an interval of years. When Saul and Barnabas, in connection with the Church at Antioch, were designated for an evangelistic mission, this was at the express instance of the Holy Spirit, who directed the prophets and teachers to separate these two for the work whereunto he had called them. By "separation unto the gospel of God" must be understood complete and lifelong devotion to the work of proclaiming the good news which was from God, and which regarded God. Now, this devotion to the publication of that gospel which—in its doctrines and in its bearings upon practical and social life—was the theme of this Epistle, was more than an introduction to the Roman Christians; it was a commendation to their confidence, and a demand upon their faith and obedience. Coming from such a man, so specially and supernaturally qualified, this Epistle claims the attention, not of the Romans only, but of the world.

Ver. 2.—*A promised gospel.* It sometimes happens that a blessing long promised, loudly heralded, and warmly extolled, loses thereby something of its charm, and suffers in the warmness of its welcome when it appears. That must be a vast and priceless boon which will bear to be promised and expected generation after generation. Expectation is aroused, the flame of hope is fanned, desire stands on tip-toe and strains her eyes. And when the gift comes, it must be of surpassing value, if no disappointment follow. The gospel of Jesus Christ was foretold for centuries. It had become "the desire of all nations." But when it came, it was more glorious and welcome than all hope, all imagination, could have dreamed.

I. IT WAS TAUGHT BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES THAT THE GOSPEL WAS A BLESSING PROMISED FROM ANCIENT TIME. Here are three direct proofs of this. 1. *Our Lord*, in his conversation with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, reproached them as "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken;" and, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." 2. Upon the Day of Pentecost *Peter* instanced the resurrection of Christ as a fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy; David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to raise up his descendant to sit on his throne, "seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ." 3. When before Agrippa and Festus, *Paul* affirmed that, in his witnessing, he said "none other things than those which the

prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Add to these the many instances in which the writers of the New Testament declare the gospel to be the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and it becomes apparent that the Founder and first preachers of Christianity all claim that the Hebrew Scriptures testified beforehand to their glorious theme.

II. THE MEN BY WHOM THE GOSPEL WAS FORETOLD WERE GOD'S PROPHETS. They were so called because they uttered forth, as his representatives, the mind and will of God. And they fulfilled this office, not only with a view to the time then present, its circumstances and duties, but with a view to a time to come. Thus prophecy and prediction were closely linked together. With God is neither past, present, nor future. The promise was first made to our first parents, and through *Adam* to his posterity. The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. *Abraham*, in whom the human race took a new departure, was assured that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. This declaration, made to the father of the faithful, was believed by him, and his faith was accounted as righteousness. Through him it became the property of his descendants; for it was evidently so understood by *Jacob*. To *Moses* the promise was given, and by him it was recorded, that God should raise up a prophet like unto himself. But Moses prophesied of Christ rather in the ordinances he instituted than in the words he uttered. The sacrifices especially of the Jewish dispensation were an earnest of him who in due time should die for the ungodly. In the Psalms of *David* are several passages in which the Holy Spirit assured to the Israelitish monarch a successor to more than his own dignity and dominion. *Isaiah* spoke of a suffering and victorious Messiah. And others of the goodly fellowship, especially Jeremiah, Zechariah, Malachi, and Daniel, announced beforehand the advent of Israel's and the world's Deliverer.

III. THE SCRIPTURES WERE THE RECORD IN WHICH THE PROMISE OF THE GOSPEL WAS PRESERVED. Admire the wisdom of God manifested in this provision. Men have sneered at a "book-revelation;" but it should be remembered that the only alternative to this, so far as we can see, was tradition—shifting, untrustworthy tradition. The Hebrews valued their sacred writings, and they had good reason for doing so. The Lord Jesus bade his opponents "search the Scriptures," knowing that these testified of him. The apostles always appealed, when reasoning with the Jews, to the books they justly deemed inspired. These books contained a treasure which those who knew only their letter, not their spirit, often failed to discern and value. "Holy," because inspired by the Holy Ghost; because written by the pens of holy men; because containing holy doctrine; because tending to foster a holy character and life, to leaven society with holy doctrines and principles. Above all, holy because witnessing to him who was the "Holy One and the Just," God's "holy Child Jesus." The Scriptures are the casket, and Christ the Divine Jewel within.

IV. CONSIDER THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE GOSPEL WAS THUS FORETOLD AND PUBLISHED, with growing clearness in the centuries before the coming of the Christ. There was Divine reason in this arrangement; and Paul saw this to be so, or he would not have put this forward in the forefront of this document. Observe these three evident intentions. 1. Thus the hopes of God's people were sustained. How needful must express promises have been to the godly who lived in the twilight of Judaism, surrounded by the dark night of heathenism! Often must their hearts have sunk within them, only to be revived by the gracious declarations of the universal Lord and King. 2. Thus were displayed the wisdom and the benevolence of God. He would be known, not only as the moral Ruler, but as the gracious Saviour, of mankind. The glowing language of inspired prophets depicted the attributes of the great Redeemer in such colours as to inspire the nation with a lively and a blessed hope. 3. Thus was provision made for establishing the credibility and authority of the gospel, when revealed. Much that was written aforetime could not at that period be fully understood. These things were written, not for those who then lived, but for us. Looking upon the prophecy, and then upon the fulfilment, recognizing the wonderful correspondence, we see the presence of the same God in the old covenant, and in that new covenant which is in truth more ancient than the old.

APPLICATION. The great practical lesson conveyed in this passage is obvious enough.

If the gospel was the matter of a Divine promise, repeated by prophet after prophet through a long course of ages, and if the fulfilment of that promise was the greatest event in the history of mankind,—how immensely important must this gospel be to us! A stranger to the Christian religion might naturally think it an unaccountable, even an unreasonable, thing, that an assembly of English people in the nineteenth century should spend an hour in solemnly meditating upon words spoken by religious teachers who, thousands of years ago, lived in a remote strip of land in Asia, between the desert and the sea. He might naturally ask—What possible bearing can such words have upon the principles which govern your life, the aims and hopes that inspire your heart? Our answer is plain. God, in the ancient days, gave to mankind a promise which their circumstances rendered unspeakably timely, welcome, and precious. A sinful race, in rebellion against the Divine authority, deserving and daring punishment, needed nothing so sorely as an assurance of the King's compassion, as the revelation of a way of salvation, of reconciliation, of loyal obedience, of eternal life. Under the prophetic dispensation, this want was met; this declaration, this promise, was given. In the coming of Christ, in his life of benevolent ministry, his death of sacrifice and redemption, his victorious rising, his spiritual reign, the ancient words of prediction and promise found an echo corresponding with, but stronger than, themselves. And now the gospel is preached—that the counsel of God has been fulfilled, the grace of God has been displayed, the power of God has been put forth. We have not to tell of what God *will* do, but of what he *has* done. We have not now to raise men's hope, but to require their faith. To receive this revelation is to come under a new principle, a new power, to become a new creation, to live a new life. Remember that the promise refers, not only to the facts which, in one sense, constitute the gospel, but to the blessings which the gospel secures to those who accept it. If the gospel of Christ has, as we believe and teach, Divine authority, then there is, by the Lord Jesus, forgiveness for sins, renewal for the heart, grace for all need, and immortal life and joys; there is all that man can ask and God can give. In Christ provision is made for every want of sinful, ignorant, and helpless man. All the blessings of the gospel are offered of God's free mercy to the repenting and confiding applicant. What spiritual need is there which experience does not show may be satisfied by the gospel of Christ, by Christ himself? None! All blessings are assured to his faithful people.

Vers. 3, 4.—*The theme of the gospel.* Observe how the apostle's mind is burdened with the one great subject of his ministry. He has proceeded only a very few words with his Epistle, and behold! already he is introducing, by the force of an overmastering impulse, a full statement of the main facts and doctrines regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. We have here a complete and concise DESIGNATION OF THE BEING who was the theme of the gospel which Paul preached. The human name, "Jesus," "the Salvation of the Eternal," is followed by the official name of the Mediator, "Christ," "the Anointed of God," and this by the title denoting his just relationship to his Church, "our Lord."

II. The HUMAN NATURE of Christ is clearly asserted. If, according to the flesh, he was born of the seed of David, he was (1) of *human descent*. His humanity began to be at his birth. He was "very man," passing through human experiences, and undergoing human weaknesses and griefs, though sinless. But we are here reminded (2) that he was of *royal lineage*. This was in accordance with the predictions of Old Testament Scripture. And, as he himself assured the people, he was not only David's Son, but David's Lord.

III. The DIVINE DIGNITY of the Saviour is simply but gloriously affirmed. In the very same sentence in which he is called the Son of an earthly king, he is designated "Son of God." This he was manifested, declared, as being. We cannot fathom this mystery; but it may be reasonably received, and cannot be reasonably rejected. This combination of the two elements in our Redeemer's nature renders him an all-sufficient Mediator between God and man.

IV. Here is SUPERNATURAL ATTESTATION to Christ's nature and mission boldly asserted. Resurrection from the dead was not only a miracle wrought by him as an accompaniment of his mission; it was exemplified in his own Person, for he was the

Firstfruits of them that sleep. Spiritual resurrection is the pledge of that which is bodily; and the resurrection was always mentioned by the first preachers of Christianity, in connection with the authority and Lordship of Christ. The lesson is polnted by the added clauses, "with power," and "by the Spirit of holiness."

APPLICATION. 1. Let us take a just and complete, not a partial, inadequate view of our Saviour's wondrous nature. 2. What a justification and encouragement may be found in this representation for the sinner to commit his eternal interests to One so qualified, so sufficient, to care for and to save the believing soul!

Ver. 5.—*The apostolic aim.* There was great dignity in the character, demeanour, and language of the Apostle Paul. This was not inconsistent with the modesty and humility which were the ornament of his Christian character. But whilst he felt his personal unworthiness, feebleness, and utter insufficiency for the vast and arduous work entrusted to him, his sense of the grandeur of the work raised his conception of his own high vocation. It were well that all Christian ministers should cherish lowly views of self, and, at the same time, lofty views of the ministry they have received from God.

I. OBSERVE THE QUALIFICATIONS BESTOWED UPON PAUL. He describes these in order both to justify himself in the tone of his Epistle, and to secure the respectful attention of his readers. 1. Whence were they derived? They were not the ordinary gifts which Providence bestows upon men to fit them for the work of life. They were traced to Christ ("by whom"), the Giver of all blessings to his Church. It was the prerogative of the glorified Redeemer to confer gifts upon men. "He gave some, apostles," etc. Having redeemed his Church at a cost so great, he could not leave it without providing for the supply of all its needs. 2. In what did they consist? Paul uses two terms. One of these denotes the more general gift, "grace." By this may be understood, not only the enlightening and quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, which bring the soul into the enjoyment of the new and higher spiritual life, but all that distinguishes Christian character, and fits for an effective and beneficent witness to the Saviour. The other term is "apostleship." The apostles occupied a place so prominent and so honourable among the servants of Christ, that we cannot be surprised that a special word is here employed. Paul was "called to be an apostle;" and he often refers to the memorable occasion when he was arrested upon his errand of persecution, converted to Christ's faith and service, and commissioned for the great and holy work of his life. He claims to be not behind the chiefest of the apostles, and glories in the grace of God which was manifested unto and in him.

II. OBSERVE THE END SOUGHT BY PAUL. "Spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues;" and such endowments as were conferred upon Paul must have been in preparation for no ordinary service. 1. The character of this end was moral, spiritual. It was to overcome the disobedience and rebellion of sinful men; to vanquish these by the grace of the cross of Christ, and by the power of the Spirit of God. The obedience which our King and Father requires, he has resolved to secure by means devised by infinite wisdom and provided by infinite love. The gospel of Christ, received by faith, is to be the means of reconciling man to God. 2. Faith, then, occupied a place of immense importance in the teaching of the apostle. This Epistle to the Romans is, in itself, sufficient proof of this. Justification with God, and subjection and consecration to God, are secured by faith in the Mediator, Christ. Christian obedience is prompted, not by constraint or fear, but by this intelligent and lofty motive. 3. The sphere of this apostolic mission was unlimited, save by the boundaries of humanity. "All nations" were comprehended within the commission he received. A great modern preacher, John Wesley, is said to have claimed "the world as his parish." It was a sublime view of his ministry which Paul took; and it was taken, not under the influence of enthusiasm or self-importance, but upon the highest of all authority—that of the Saviour and the Lord of all. 4. The ultimate issue of the apostleship of Paul seems to be implied in the expression, "for his Name." It was the glory of the Son of God which his servant faithfully and consistently sought; there was nothing personal or selfish, nothing petty or unworthy, in his aims. The Name of Christ is in itself above every name, and at that Name every knee shall bow. This assurance was enough to animate and sustain the apostle in all his labour and in all his suffering. In all, "Christ should be magnified."

APPLICATION. 1. All hearers of the gospel are summoned to the obedience of faith. 2. All who have received the gospel have received also some trust and some grace, which render them responsible for making known the revealed means of salvation to their fellow-men.

Vers. 6, 7.—*The Roman Christians.* In the great capital of the empire and of the world there was thus early constituted a congregation of Christian worshippers and disciples. Amidst the grandeur, the opulence, the vice, that prevailed in this, as in every metropolis; amidst proud patricians, turbulent plebeians, and wretched slaves,—there existed already an obscure but, to us, notable society, composed of Jews, Romans, and foreigners resident in the city, to whom Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, wrote this letter. The members of this society were not characterized by any outward marks of distinction which would render them interesting to the inhabitants of Rome generally. Yet, whilst the great and learned and wealthy, who either never heard of the Christian Church in their midst, or who, if they heard of it, despised it,—whilst they, for the most part, are forgotten, that Church is still remembered with deepest interest. Notice the marks by which it was distinguished to the view of the inspired apostle. He wrote "to all that be in Rome," who were differenced from those around them in certain respects.

I. THEY WERE CALLED OF CHRIST. They had, for the most part, never seen the Lord Jesus; but their souls had heard his holy, gracious call. 1. They had been addressed by the audible voice of his uttered Word. The call of the gospel had reached their understanding. 2. They had experienced the inner call of his Spirit. To each one of them might the apostle say, "The Word is nigh thee, even in thy heart." 3. They had responded to the call by their faith and obedience; they had not received the grace of God in vain.

II. THEY WERE BELOVED OF GOD. 1. In common with all mankind, they were the objects of Divine pity. "God so loved the world," etc. 2. But there was a special sense in which they were partakers of the love of God. He had revealed his love to them, and they loved God, because he first loved them. He loved his own image reflected in their character and life. 3. This love was especially manifested in their adoption. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!"

III. THEY WERE SEPARATED UNTO HOLINESS. The word "saint" is now appropriated to personages of peculiar and distinguished piety. But it serves to remind us that Christians were intended to be pure amidst a sinful world and a sinful generation—a condition of the Divine favour, as well as a result of the privileges enjoyed by the people of God. The term may be thus unfolded. Saints are (1) distinguished from sinful society by which they are surrounded; (2) distinguished from their former selves; (3) filled with the Spirit of holiness; (4) and in character, as well as by profession, witnesses unto a holy God and Saviour. Such "notes" of true, experimental Christianity were, indeed, not peculiar to the Roman Christians; but their conspicuous presence in the society addressed by the apostle was an earnest of the fruits of true religion which should abound wherever the gospel was proclaimed and received.

Vers. 13, 14.—*A yearning heart.* The ministry of the gospel of Christ may be fulfilled in either of two ways—by personal visitation and oral teaching and preaching; or by written communications, in the form of letter or of treatise. Paul, like many since his time, adopted both methods, and it would be hard to say in which he was the more effective. When he could not himself visit a city he could write to those who dwelt there. This difference between the two methods is observable—that by writing he could only reach those already favourably disposed towards Christian doctrine, whilst by word of mouth he often gained access to the hearts of unbelievers.

I. BENEVOLENT PURPOSES MAY BE PROVIDENTIALLY HINDERED. God often in mercy frustrates the wicked counsels of malicious men. But not only so; he sometimes hinders his servants from carrying out designs good in their motives. It happened now and again to Paul that, wishing to visit some country or city on an errand of mercy, his way was in that particular direction hedged up, and his steps were turned elsewhither. The apostle's wish to visit Rome was natural, disinterested, and praiseworthy,

and, in God's time, was fulfilled. But, up to the date of writing this Epistle, he had been hindered from carrying that wish into effect. We are taught that all our plans, even those of special evangelistic services, should be formed with submission to the wisdom and the will of God.

II. SPIRITUAL EFFORT IS WITH A VIEW TO SPIRITUAL FRUIT. The apostle looked forward to some result of toil. He had reaped a harvest, more or less abundant, in other fields of labour, and his purpose in visiting Rome was to gather fruit unto God. What was this "fruit"? The conversion of men to the faith and obedience of the gospel, and the growth of Christian character in those who professed to be followers of Christ. In these spiritual results the evangelist, the pastor, reaps the harvest of his toil. To this end the Lord of the harvest thrusts forth labourers. "Herein is the Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Barrenness and unfruitfulness in the spiritual domain are a source of grief and distress and disappointment.

III. THE CHRISTIAN LABOURER IS A DEBTOR UNTO ALL MEN. Paul felt that, in preaching the gospel to his fellow-men, he was paying them what was their due—that necessity was laid upon him. What was, and is, the ground of this obligation? In the case of Paul, the signal conversion from the career of the persecutor to the life of the Christian, and the Divine commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, formed peculiar reasons and motives urging such devotion. Yet every Christian, having received spiritual blessings through the agency of his fellow-men, is thereby bound to transmit to others what he himself has received. And Christ's own authority sanctions our regarding spiritual service rendered to men as some fulfilment of the great debt we all owe to him. The extent of this obligation is universal. It includes all nations and races, Greek and barbarian; all classes and characters, wise and unwise. Paul was ready to minister to Hebrews and heathen, Romans and Greeks, bond and free. He knew that the reception of his message would bring the true wisdom and the true liberty to men of every tribe and of every type, and therefore he sought to discharge his debt to all mankind.

APPLICATION. The Christian labourer should seek that his labour may be directed by the distinctively Christian spirit; that it should contemplate the special Christian aim and result; and that it should display true Christian comprehensiveness and charity.

VERS. 15, 16.—*Glorying in the gospel.* It was not through any shrinking from either publicity or persecution, criticism or cruelty, that Paul had not, up to the date of writing this letter, visited Rome. Circumstances, in which he recognized the action of Divine providence, had hitherto hindered him from carrying his wish into effect. And now it was the holy ambition of his daring and benevolent heart to publish the gospel of Christ in the metropolis of the empire, of the world.

I. THERE WERE REASONS WHICH WOULD HAVE RENDERED SOME MEN ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Now, indeed, in our day, when Christianity can point to the triumphs of eighteen centuries, when Christianity has received the homage of the noblest intellects and the purest hearts, when Christianity commands the reverence of civilized humanity, it is not easy to understand how, at the first, there should have been any temptation to be ashamed of the religion of Jesus. But let us put ourselves in the position of those who lived in the first century of our era, and we shall feel that, for them, confidence and courage in no ordinary degree were needed in order to profess and promulgate the faith. 1. There were such reasons connected with the religion of Christ, in itself considered. Its origin in Palestine; the birth of its Founder as a Jew, and as the Offspring of lowly parents; his ignominious death upon the cross; the mean condition of many of his first adherents and missionaries;—these were circumstances damaging to the religion in the eyes of carnal men. The religion itself, demanding contrition and repentance from all men as sinners, demanding faith in a crucified Saviour as the Mediator of Divine mercy, demanding a new heart, a child-like spirit, a life of self-denial, must have been repugnant to human pride. To this must be added the reproach that Christianity did not come among men recommended by the fascinations of philosophy, or the persuasiveness of eloquence and poetry; and the further reproach that it provided no gorgeous temples, no splendid ritual, no imposing priesthood. 2. There were reasons personal to the Apostle Paul, which, some might have supposed, would have made him ashamed of the gospel. He was a Hebrew and

a rabbi, one held in high esteem and repute among the learned and the powerful of his countrymen: was he likely to devote himself to a doctrine which regarded Judaism as a preparatory dispensation, whose purpose was now answered, and which was to pass away; a doctrine which depressed the letter and the form which Judaism so dearly and so blindly prized? He was a scholar, versed to some extent in Greek learning, and with an intellect capable of expounding and adorning Greek philosophy: was he likely to accept crude and unlettered instructors and colleagues, and to abandon as worthless the wisdom of this world? He was a Roman citizen, entitled to the privileges and immunities attaching to that proud position: was he likely to ally himself with a religion the profession of which would be regarded with contempt by the civic authorities, unless, indeed, it might prove politically convenient to visit its propagation with penalties?

II. PAUL HAD, HOWEVER, MORE POWERFUL REASONS FOR GLORYING IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Though he simply said that he was "not ashamed" of it, the language and spirit of the passage imply that it was his joy, his glory, his boast. And in this he was not cherishing fanatical and unreasonable feelings; he had reason for his glorying. 1. The nature of the gospel was, to the apostle, sufficient ground for holding it dear, and for extolling its claims upon the respect of men. The Divine means for reconciling rebellious, guilty men to God, the righteous Judge and Ruler; the tidings of the Redeemer's advent, ministry, sacrifice, and glorification, was not only tidings to be received with devout thankfulness: it was a gospel of good news, to be diffused with the earnestness of cordial benevolence. A heart touched with the spectacle of human sin, misery, and helplessness, and capable of appreciating the marvellous provision of infinite wisdom and love, in the redemption by Jesus Christ, could not but be filled with joy, when entrusted with the privilege of offering to the dying sons of men a remedy so Divine. 2. Paul gloried in the gospel as the highest exhibition of God's power. Men are not wont to be ashamed of association with power; they rather pride themselves in and boast of their strength or the greatness of their resources, the might of their party or of their country. Now, the power of the gospel wore the guise of weakness; yet the weakness of God was stronger than men. A thinker, a philanthropist, may have more power than a king or warrior. Certainly, Christianity has shown how the weak things of the world confound the mighty. Spiritual alike in its origin, its instrument, and its sphere, the reality of its power is shown in its overcoming obstacles, in its achieving moral transformations, in its renewing the usages and principles of society. 3. Paul gloried in the special results which proved the power of the gospel. He saw in it the power of God "unto salvation." The prowess of the warrior is admired, as the means of human destruction. Too often, men most revere what they most dread. It is the glory of God that he is "mighty to save;" of Christ that he is "able to save to the uttermost;" of the gospel that it brings "so great salvation." Bringing salvation from sin, from condemnation, from all that sin involves, of moral mischief and misery, the gospel is emphatically Divine power. The apostle had felt this power in his own heart and life; he had witnessed unnumbered instances of this power, which were only less surprising and startling than that which his own life exhibited. 4. Another ground of confidence and boasting in the gospel was, to the mind of the apostle, its varied and widespread efficacy. In the expression "to every one that believeth," we have a statement of the condition upon which the delivering and healing power of the gospel is exercised—faith; and we have also an assertion of its universal adaptation. Although writing to the Romans, the apostle of the Gentiles puts prominently forward the fact that the offer of the gospel was first made to the Jew. This was not only the obvious course pointed out by God's providence; it was the express direction of the Author and Founder of Christianity. Yet there was in the gospel nothing limited or local; it was, and is, adapted to the spiritual necessities of the whole family of man.

APPLICATION. 1. Every hearer of the gospel should inquire of himself whether he has experienced its power over his heart and life. 2. Christians should so consider the glory of Christianity as to keep themselves from all danger of being, in any circumstances or in any society, ashamed of their religion. 3. No opportunity should be lost of commending the gospel, with its claims and privileges, to the acceptance of men, without respect to their race, their class, or their character. Unbelief alone is impervious

to the power of the religion of Christ. All who sincerely believe will experience its renewing, delivering, and quickening power.

Ver. 17.—*The new righteousness.* The apostle was justified in his boasting in the gospel, because of the high end it was the means of securing—nothing less than the salvation of men. This salvation it is his aim, in this Epistle, to set in its true light. It is a moral, a spiritual deliverance; an enfranchisement of the soul; an opening of the prison doors; a healing radical, thorough, and lasting. A righteous God can only be reconciled with sinful, disobedient men by communicating to them his own righteousness. The inner nature, the spiritual being, the moral character, is the sphere of the great salvation which Christ brings, which the gospel announces. There are in this verse three ideas.

I. FAITH. Like his Divine Master, Paul insisted strenuously upon the importance, the necessity, of faith. This is a sign of the spirituality of our religion, which begins with the heart, and works from within outwardly. But Scripture gives no countenance to the mystical doctrine that faith is a mere sentiment, having no definite object. On the contrary, it reveals God and his promises, and especially his Son and the truth relating to him, as the objects of faith. Paul's aim, like that of every Christian teacher, was to awaken faith; and to this end he made known the glad tidings, that those who heard them might have an appropriate object upon which to place their confidence. If we are to believe, we must have something worthy of belief; if we are to trust, it must be in One who has a just claim upon our trust. Christianity responds to this requirement, and satisfies the desire of the soul for a sufficient ground and a suitable object for faith, in offering salvation through the Divine mercy extended through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS. This Epistle may be said to be chiefly concerned with two themes—sin and righteousness; the sin being man's, and the righteousness God's. It shows us how the Divine righteousness becomes man's. It is faith which is the link that attaches the human soul to the just and holy Lord; the wing by which man soars from the foul atmosphere of sin into the clear and upper air of fellowship with God. The gospel, says the text, reveals the righteousness of God. It does this, first, by making known the perfect obedience of Christ, who "fulfilled all righteousness," and was "obedient unto death." It does this, further, by declaring the reason of Christ's unmerited sufferings and death. These, which, superficially regarded, seem rather opposed to the belief in the justice of God's government, are, to the Christian's mind, the highest illustration of that justice. Though innocent and holy, our Lord, becoming the Representative and Redeemer of the race whose nature he assumed, submitted for our sake to the pains and the death he did not deserve. He thus displayed, not merely the heinousness of human sin, which brought him to the shameful cross; not only the magnitude of the world's sin, the penalty of which he thus accepted and endured; but the righteousness of God, which, in the very act of providing for the pardon of the sinner, most signally and effectively condemned the sin itself. Nowhere does sin appear so sinful as in the cross of Christ, where righteousness stands in striking and sublime contrast with iniquity, revealing in all its enormity the evil which it vanquishes and slays. Christ not only revealed, he also imparted, the righteousness of God. And this in two ways—by righteously forgiving, acquitting, and accepting the penitent believer in his Son; and by infusing into him a new principle of righteousness. Thus Christianity at once provides that man may be right and just with God, and that he may possess the righteousness of impulse, habit, and principle, which will produce righteousness of action in his relations with his fellow-men.

III. LIFE. "The just by faith"—such is the teaching alike of the prophet and of the apostle—"shall *live*" This life is opposed to spiritual death; it is the special gift of God in Christ; it is the effective principle of renewed and hallowed activity. It includes within itself the fulness of all spiritual blessings. It is the beginning and the earnest of immortality; it is "the *eternal* life."

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. The highest good must be sought from God, and from him only; in him alone are righteousness and life. 2. To the revelation of God in and by Christ must correspond the approach of the soul to him by faith. This is the way of God's own appointment, marked by God's wisdom, and proved by actual experience to be divinely efficacious.

Vers. 24—27.—*Evil passion.* A more frightful exhibition of sin and its consequences than that given by the apostle in the latter part of this chapter could not have been presented; yet to have said less than this would have been to fall short of the facts of the case, which needed to be stated in order to prepare the way for the publication of a gospel of pardon and of purity.

I. THE ROOT OF EVIL PASSION, OR LUST, IS IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CREATURE. The beginning of all evil is in departure from God. His works, and especially the most honourable and beautiful of all his material constructions—the human body—are intended to lead the thoughts and aspirations of men to the great Creator himself, whose attributes they in some measure display. The symmetry and grace and beauty of the human form and features are the crown of the physical creation. And to the Christian the body of man has this higher interest—it was tenanted by the human mind, it was possessed by the Divine nature, of the Son of God himself. The attractiveness of the body is not only a fact indicative of the Divine delight in form; within lawful bounds it is intended to subserve the high purposes of social and especially of conjugal life. But when the interest centres upon what is corporeal, and does not pass beyond and above it, then the Divine intention is frustrated. Evidently the nobility, the enchanting loveliness characteristic of the human body in its grandest and fairest types, are designed to suggest the infinite and eternal spiritual excellence.

> "Thus beauty here points up to that above,
> And loveliness leads on to perfect love."

But when this great and precious lesson is missed, what follows? Inevitable degradation. The creature is worshipped, and the Creator is forgotten or despised. The mind and heart seek to rest in what can never satisfy them. The emblem is mistaken for the reality, the shadow for the substance.

II. THE FRUIT OF EVIL PASSION, OR LUST, IS UNNATURAL AND DEBASING VICE. Readers of the ancient literature of Greece and Rome, students of anthropology, travellers and residents in heathen lands in our own time, are well aware of the lengths to which sinful passion can lead those whom it masters. There is no need to go into detail, and it is better for Christian people to remain ignorant of corruptions with which, happily, they are never brought into contact. But it remains true that, with idolatry, the filthiest rites and orgies have often been, and still are, associated. Those abandoned to "fleshly lusts" appear to exhaust their ingenuity in inventing forms of unlawful indulgence.

III. THE PUNISHMENT OF EVIL PASSION, OR LUST, IS ASSURED BY THE RETRIBUTIVE ACTION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT. There is a natural belief in retribution. Nemesis is no mere invention of the human imagination; it springs from convictions and fears from which humanity can never free itself. Revelation confirms the natural utterances of human reason, assuring us that after death is the judgment, and that every man shall give account of himself to God, when evil deeds shall not go unpunished. The laws of nature to a large extent ensure some measure of retribution even here and now. Tribes and nations which have practised debasing and unnatural vices have paid the penalty in national deterioration, and individual sinners have reaped the bitter fruit proper to evil seed. And there is every reason to believe that the righteous judgment of God is not confined to this present earthly state.

IV. THE REMEDY OF EVIL PASSION, OR LUST, IS PROVIDED IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is the purpose of the apostle, in this Epistle to the Romans, to show that the mercy of God our Father has abounded to sinful men, in the provision of (1) pardon for even heinous sin, upon the sinner's repentance and faith; and (2) purity of heart and life such as the Spirit of Christ alone can create.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—7.—*Paul's description of himself; or, the story of a noble life.* An autobiography, the story of our own life, is a dangerous thing for a man to write. We are partisan judges of our own character. We conceal our own faults and exaggerate our own virtues. An autobiography, too, is often very dull and very dry. But the

autobiography of St. Paul is at once interesting and truthful. As Paley, in his 'Horæ Paulinæ,' has so clearly shown, Paul's account of his own personal history, as given in his writings, is borne out in the fullest manner by the account given of him in the Acts of the Apostles, written by a different person and at a different time. The irresistible truthfulness of the story of Paul's conversion and apostleship is so strong, that the study of it led the celebrated Lord Lyttleton, who had been for many years a sceptic, to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ and become one of its ablest advocates. In these opening verses of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul gives us, in brief but weighty words, the story of his life.

I. AN APOSTLE'S TITLE. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ" (ver. 1). St. Paul's titles are not numerous or high-sounding. He gloried in the title of "servant"—a servant of Jesus Christ. *Consider what it meant for Paul that he became and lived a servant of Jesus Christ.* It meant to him loss of worldly prospects. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things." It meant to him bodily suffering. "I bear about with me in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." It meant to him—a man of high mental endowments, a man of unblemished character—a life spent largely in the prison-cell, with the chains bound upon his wrists. It meant to him—and he knew it well—a life ended on the scaffold, or, like his Master's, on the cross. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." But he had counted the cost. Three things sustained him as he trod that lonely path of service and suffering. He looked back to the cross of Jesus. He had the love of Jesus and the spirit of Jesus in his heart. And he looked forward to the crown of glory that awaited him. Therefore he was able to say, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." *It means much the same to be a servant of Jesus Christ in our own day.* You may not meet with bodily suffering as a consequence of your faithfulness to Jesus. But there are other sufferings, perhaps just as bitter and as hard to bear, which must be endured by the faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Make up your mind to this—that you are not the servant of the world, and then what the world may say of you will affect you very little. *A servant of Jesus Christ.* St. Paul was what he professed to be. The world has confirmed the description. Could the same be said of us? Could we look up to God, or look into the faces of our fellow-men, and say, "Yes, I am a servant of Jesus Christ"?

II. AN APOSTLE'S WORK, AND HOW HE DID IT. "Called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (ver. 1). The word "apostle" means a messenger, or one who is sent. *This was Paul's work,* to be an apostle or messenger of Jesus Christ. This was the form of service he rendered to his Master. His work, the great ambition of his life, was to win men to Christ. General Lew Wallace, in that beautiful story of his, 'Ben Hur; a Tale of the Christ,' speaks of Jesus Christ as "the one Man whom the world could not do without." That, too, was St. Paul's firm conviction. *This was one of the things that carried him on in his work. He realized the power of the gospel.* He felt that it was something more than human. Heart and conscience and intellect told him it was Divine. He, who was so well instructed in the Jewish Scriptures, knew that the prophets spoke of Christ. "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures" (ver. 2). He knew that Jesus had come. He knew that he had died upon the cross. Yes, and he knew that he had risen again. Look at the fourth verse: "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Had he not seen him? Had he not heard his voice—that voice that spoke to him on the way to Damascus, and changed for ever the whole current of his life? Yes; Paul knew whom he had believed. He had no doubt about it. He knew what Christ had done for him. And he knew what Christ could do for the world. He knew how much the world needed Christ. And so he went forth on those great missionary journeys of his, burning with the one overwhelming, overmastering desire, to preach Christ crucified, and to persuade men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. *This is one of the great secrets of successful work for Christ still.* We must have a personal knowledge of Jesus as our own Saviour. "An educated ministry is desirable," said the late Dr. Cooke, of Belfast, "but a converted ministry is indispensable." And we must then go forth in the conviction that men need Christ, and that he will save them if they come to him.

"I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee."

Another great secret of Paul's success was this. *He realized a Divine plan and purpose in his life.* He felt that he was "separated unto the gospel of God" (ver. 1). Unknown to himself, the Divine hand had been moulding his character, drawing out and developing his gifts, from his childhood up. How the various circumstances of his life fitted him for his great life-work! Born and brought up in Tarsus, he there became a Roman citizen, thus receiving civil rights and privileges which were of great service to him afterwards in his mission. There also he came in contact with Greek civilization and culture—an acquaintance useful to him afterwards at Athens and at Corinth. Then, coming to Jerusalem, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, he there received a training and a position which were of immense advantage to him in dealing with the Jewish people, his kinsmen according to the flesh. All this process of training and development culminated when one day that Divine hand suddenly arrested his career on the way to Damascus. The light from heaven shone about him then, and shone into his heart. After those days of outward blindness, but inward questioning and growing spiritual vision, the scales fell from his eyes indeed. He saw it all then. Henceforth there was a new meaning and a new purpose in his life. He saw then that he was "called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." He saw the unseen hand. He saw how it had led him. He saw that it was a hand of power—how foolish to resist it! He saw that it was a hand of love, moulding him for high and holy and eternal purposes. From that moment Paul was Christ's. Not as a slave, but as a devoted servant. Not in any sense as a mere machine, but Christ's with all the persuasion and conviction of his mind, with all the love of his heart—*separated by his own voluntary act, as he had already been separated by God's purpose, unto the gospel of God.* In the seventh verse we see what the message was which Paul took with him wherever he carried the gospel. It is the message which the gospel brings still wherever it finds an entrance. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." *Grace—the favour or mercy of God.* "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). And where the gospel comes with its message of mercy and of love, the result is peace—peace in the conscience, peace in the home, peace in the nation. Such was the character, such were the life and work of St. Paul. He was a servant of Jesus Christ. He went forth as a messenger for Christ, believing that he had been separated unto the gospel of God. And the message which he brought was the message of grace and peace. So may it be with every one of us, if we will only consecrate our lives to God.—C. H. I.

Vers. 14—17.—*The gospel a message for every one.* Narrow views of the gospel are very common. Amongst the very wealthy, what an erroneous idea often exists about the gospel and its claims! They think that religion may do very well for the poor, but *they* have no need of it. Amongst the very poor, on the other hand, you will often find the idea that religion may do very well for respectable people, but that it has nothing to do with *them*. Then, again, you will meet with a certain class of intellectual men—not always the most cultured or most thoughtful—who imagine that the gospel may do very well for commonplace, ordinary people, but that they have got far beyond such a childish belief. Even among Christian people what narrow views of the gospel and its scope! How slow the Christian Church has been in realizing its mission to the heathen world! There are many who still think that the heathen are well enough off; that there is no need to send the gospel to them. There are many who will tell us that there is "no use" in sending the gospel to the Mohammedan or the Jew. But the Apostle Paul took a very different view. In his view the gospel is a message for

every one; and it is the work and duty of the Christian Church to bring it within the reach of every one.

I. A FACT STATED. "The gospel of Christ," says St. Paul, "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (ver. 16). This was the cause of his readiness to go and preach the gospel at Rome also (ver. 15), just as he had already preached it to bigoted and fanatical Jews, and to the cultured and sceptical Greeks. He knew no difference of nation or of language, of creed or class, so far as the need of the gospel and the power of it were concerned. His message was that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and he knew that he would find sinners everywhere. 1. *The gospel is a message for the rich.* It tells them of a treasure that is incorruptible, that fadeth not away. It shows them how to become rich toward God—first, by having Christ, and having him, we have all things; and then, by making a good use of the earthly possessions which God has given them. 2. *The gospel is a message for the poor.* It teaches them to be industrious and contented. It shows them in the earthly life of Jesus Christ himself, and in the lives of hundreds of his followers, how a peaceful and happy mind may exist, and how a useful life may be spent, even amid circumstances of outward poverty. 3. *The gospel is a message for the men of intellect and learning.* What sublime ideas it puts before us! with what pure and lofty motives it inspires us! and with what a glorious hope it cheers us on! Contrast the future to which the atheist or the agnostic looks forward, with the future which is the Christian's hope, an eternity of conscious enjoyment of what is noblest and best. The gospel has a claim upon the ignorant and poor because of its simplicity and its comforts. But it has just as strong a claim upon men of giant intellect and vigorous understanding. And observe how some of the foremost men in science, in literature, and in statesmanship have recognized that claim, and responded to it. What names in literature and science stand higher than those of Newton and Faraday, Thomas Chalmers and Hugh Miller, Sir John Herschel and Sir David Brewster, all humble believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? Or to take one case only from our British statesmen, that of the late Lord Cairns, Lord Chancellor of England. During the term of office of the last Conservative administration a Russian war was felt to be imminent, and much excitement prevailed both within and without the cabinet. One day the wife of a junior member of the cabinet inquired of Lady Cairns, "What is the secret of the lord chancellor's constant and unruffled calmness, which my husband tells me pervades the whole place so soon as Lord Cairns appears?" "It is this," was the reply; "he never attends a cabinet meeting without spending half an hour immediately beforehand alone with his God." Upon young men of education and learning, upon young men of thoughtful minds, we would press home the claims of the gospel; yes, the personal claims of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The gospel is a message for every one. It is a message for the sorrowing. It is a message to the sinner. It has melted the hardest heart; it has made the impure man pure, the intemperate man temperate, the dishonest man honest; and changed the proud and haughty man into a man of humble and gentle spirit. Over and over again it has proved itself to be "the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth.*"

II. A REASON GIVEN AND AN OBLIGATION FELT. 1. St. Paul gives *a reason why the gospel is a message for every one.* "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (ver. 17). A gospel that tells of a perfect righteousness is the universal need of the human heart. In the opening chapters of this Epistle the apostle enlarges on that idea more fully. He shows how the heathen needed a righteousness. Then he shows how the Jews needed a righteousness, condemned as they were by that holy Law whose requirements they failed to fulfil. And then, having shown the universal need—"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (ch. iii. 23)—he speaks of the universal righteousness which is unto and upon all them that believe. There is no difference in the need. There is no difference in the gospel message. 2. We have here also *an obligation felt.* "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (ver. 14). There are few statements so sublime as that from any human pen. The old Latin poet represents one of his characters as saying, "Homo sum, nihil humanum a me alienum puto" ("I am a man, and everything human has an interest for me"). This is a fine sentiment; but here, in the case of St. Paul, we have a man expressing

his personal obligation to seek the spiritual good of every man whom he could reach. He, a Jew, counted himself under obligation to do something for the barbarians; he, a learned and intellectual man, counted himself under obligation to do something for the unwise and ignorant as well as for the wise and the cultured. We, too, need to think more of our own personal indebtedness to Christ. Then we too, like St. Paul, shall be anxious to carry the gospel to rich and poor, learned and unlearned, Jew and Gentile.—C. H. I.

Ver. 16.—"*Not ashamed of the gospel.*" When these words were written by St. Paul, Christianity did not occupy in the world the position that it does now. In the mind of the ordinary Roman, the Jew was regarded almost always with contempt. And when the Christian was at all distinguished from the Jew, it was only to be the subject of more reproachful terms. Some of the most eminent and well-informed of the Roman writers speak of the Christian religion as a pernicious and detestable superstition. The humble origin, too, of the early founders of Christianity was not calculated to impress favourably the worldly mind. If the gospel which told of Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jew, it was indeed foolishness to the Greek and to the Roman too. Yet Paul had not been ashamed of this gospel at Athens; he was not going to be ashamed of it at Rome. He had proclaimed the message of the Nazarene in the city of Plato and Socrates; he would preach it also in the city of Cicero and Seneca. Paul is not afraid to teach where they have taught. He was right. The name of Jesus is a greater name than Plato's. The religion which Jesus taught has moulded and purified the world. *The apostle assigns two reasons why he is not ashamed of the gospel.* These are—

I. ITS PURPOSE. This is indicated by the words "unto salvation." The Greek preposition which is translated "unto" expresses purpose, or tendency, or aim. The purpose of the gospel is the salvation of all who will receive its message. To effect this purpose, the Son of God left the glory of the eternal, and descended into the misery and weariness of a life on earth. For this, he suffered the assaults of the tempter; for this, he passed through the agony of Gethsemane; for this, he bore with patience the lingering torments of the cross. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The purpose of the gospel is *salvation.* Let us understand fully the meaning of that great word. Salvation is indeed deliverance from guilt, deliverance from condemnation. But the purpose of the gospel is something more than this. It is to save us also from the power of sin in our hearts and lives. Many professing Christians forget this. They think that faith in Christ is simply to deliver them from punishment in the day of judgment, while they do not allow it to have present, practical influence upon their lives. Let us not deceive ourselves. There is no true salvation where there is not an evidence of present departure from sin and present following after holiness. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Faith, if it is real, will show itself. Salvation is a present thing. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, *cleanseth* us from all sin." The purpose of the gospel is to save us *now* There are many who long for some power that might save them from themselves, from some evil propensity or passion, from the influence of bad companionships. This salvation it is the purpose of the gospel to effect. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. ITS POWER. The gospel, says the apostle, is "the power of God." Here is an encouragement for our faith. This is the second reason why St. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel. Its purpose, no doubt, seemed a very difficult one, but the apostle had no fear for its success. Its earliest messengers were humble men. But the success of their message was in higher and mightier hands than theirs. That sin should be overcome, and men delivered from its power, was the purpose of the Almighty God, and his purpose never fails. In the history of nations we see the gospel proving itself to be the power of God. The moral miracles of Christianity, as Prebendary Row has shown, are the strongest evidence of its Divine origin and power. It has changed barbarism to civilization. It has emancipated the slaves. It has put an end to the cruel sacrifices performed in honour of the heathen gods. It has accomplished moral and social revolutions that to the human eye seemed utterly impossible. So also in the history of individuals. Men who have sunk so low beneath the power of degrading

vice that their friends despaired of rescuing them, by the power of the gospel have been brought from death unto life. Jesus, and Jesus only, can cure men of sin's power. If we but touch his garment, we shall be made whole. *No one has any reason to be ashamed of the gospel.* Its purpose is a high and noble one, the highest and noblest mission ever undertaken. Its power is not the power of a feeble or a puny arm. It is the power of the living God. These are thoughts to inspire, and not to make ashamed.—C. H. I.

Vers. 18—32.—*The inexcusableness of the heathen.* In the twentieth verse the apostle speaks of the heathen as "without excuse." These words describe the condition of those who have wilfully rejected light. They do not, indeed, describe their condition from their own standpoint or from the standpoint of men generally. From their own standpoint men are seldom "without excuse." No matter how gross or glaring the offence is, the offender has usually some excuse to offer. Adam and Eve had their excuses ready when the Lord God said, "What is this that thou hast done?" Saul had his excuse ready when he returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites without having fully carried out the commandment of the Lord, when Samuel asked him, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and this lowing of the oxen which I hear?" It might be taken as on the whole a fair description of the human race to say, "They all with one consent began to make excuse." However slow we are to excuse others, we are always remarkably ready to excuse ourselves. But these words describe the condition of those who reject light from the standpoint of him who is the great Searcher of hearts. He makes no mistakes. He makes no uncharitable judgments. In his sight those to whom he has given light, and who have chosen to reject it, are "without excuse." They are inexcusable. They have no valid reason for their ignorance about the way of salvation and the path of duty if God has given them light about both. This is the condition described by Christ in that parable where he represents the king as coming to one of the guests at the marriage-feast, and saying to him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment?" And the Saviour tells us, "And he was speechless." He knew that he was *without excuse.* He knew the laws of the feast; he knew that the wedding-garment was provided, and he neglected to put it on. So shall it be in the great day, of judgment with all those who had the opportunity to know God's will, but who neglected to do it. May we be enabled, in considering the inexcusableness of the heathen, to think of this solemn subject with reverence and with fairness.

I. LIGHT GRANTED. If God expects men to know him, we may be sure that he has given them the means of knowing him. God will judge every man according to the opportunities he has had. Paul's statement is definite and clear. They are without excuse, he says, "because that, *when they knew God*, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful" (ver. 21). They knew God, says the apostle. How, then, did they know him? And what did they know about him? They knew him by means of his works, and they knew at least two things about his character—that he was a Being of power, and that his power was more than human. It is inferred also that they knew themselves to be dependent upon his bountiful providence and care, else they could not have been accused of being ungrateful. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even *his eternal power and Godhead;* so that they are without excuse" (vers. 19, 20). Here, then, it is clearly taught that it is possible to obtain a knowledge of God from his works, and that such knowledge the ancient heathen had. St. Paul knew very well what he was talking about when he said that the ancient heathen had a knowledge of God. He was well acquainted with the literature of ancient Greece. On Mars' Hill we find him quoting to the philosophers of Athens a statement from Aratus, one of their own poets. "As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." *The light of nature*—this is the light which was granted to the ancient heathen. Two things that light of nature taught them about God—his power and his Godhead. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Behind the stars and the sea, there must be some power that made and controls them all. The order of the seasons,

the succession of day and night, the ebb and flow of the tides—all these things require a controlling force, and that force must not only have almighty power, but must have intelligence and reason and will. Such a being must be a Person. Such a Person is more than human—is Divine. The same light of nature is granted to us all. *But how much more light has been granted to us!* We have the light of God's written Word. What mysteries that Word opens up to us, concerning which the voice of nature is silent! What a light it gives us about the mercy of God, and the Saviour's redeeming love! What a light it gives us about immortality and heaven, after which the best of the ancient heathen were groping and searching in darkness! How thankful we should be, amid the darkness which sorrow brings, and as we look forward to the darkness of the grave, for the light which God in his Word has mercifully granted to us! *But that great privilege*, that unspeakable blessing, *brings with it a solemn responsibility.* We who have the Bible in our hands are without excuse if we live in godlessness or unbelief, if we reject the offer of salvation.

II. LIGHT REJECTED. "They are without excuse, because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful" (vers. 20, 21). And then, further on, the apostle says, "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (ver. 28). *How often have nations acted thus*—rejecting the light which was their best possession, their safety and their shield! The Jewish nation rejected the heavenly light, notwithstanding God's repeated warnings as to the consequences of doing so. France rejected the light when it expelled the Huguenots, the God-fearing portion of its population. Spain did the same when, by its Inquisition and its *autos-da-fé*, it exterminated all who dared to prefer the pure light of the Divine Word to the darkness and superstitions of Rome. Such nations were plainly without excuse, for they had the light, and deliberately rejected and quenched it when they could. *So also we find rulers rejecting the light.* That was the case with King Saul. He rejected the commandment of the Lord, and God rejected him from being king over Israel. Belshazzar, King of Babylon, had plenty of light given him in the career of Nebuchadnezzar his father about the power and justice of God. But, as Daniel reminded him, he had disregarded the solemn lesson; though he knew all this, he had not humbled himself, but had lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven (Dan. v. 21, 22). And so on that night of revelry the fingers of a man's hand came forth and wrote upon the wall, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." *He was without excuse. He had rejected the light which God had given him.* Do we not see a similar infatuation in the case of the unhappy Mary Queen of Scots? Though she had faithful men of God in her capital and often heard the truth from the lips of John Knox, she chose rather to be guided by her own caprices and by the influence of her frivolous courtiers. She, too, rejected the light which God had placed within her reach. *We are not to think that it makes no difference whether we accept the Divine light or not.* There is a danger that we may become too liberal as to the attitude men take up regarding God's Holy Word. It is well to be broad—broad as the mercy and the love of God. But, on the other hand, we may be broader and more indulgent towards error than God's Word permits of. God deals with men as intelligent and rational and moral beings, with a free will, capable of free choice. He puts before them life and death. He tells them that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." He tells them that there is no other way of salvation except through Jesus Christ alone. *Upon them* rests the responsibility and the guilt if they reject his salvation. It is worse than a matter of indifference; it is a sin in the sight of God, it is a sin against their own soul's destiny, for men to reject or neglect the message which the great Creator has mercifully sent them. It may be done in the name of science. It may be done in the name of advanced thought. But it is moral guilt nevertheless. "They are without excuse."

III. WRATH REVEALED. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (ver. 18). *And how could it be otherwise?* If light has been granted to beings of intelligence and reason and conscience, and they have deliberately chosen to reject it, is it not fair and just that they should take the consequences? It is in the very nature of things that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A man cannot violate a natural law with impunity. The most liberal-minded scientific man

will see no unfairness in a man suffering if he disregards or violates the well-known laws of nature. Fire will burn, water will drown, pitch will defile, bad air will poison. If a man acts in defiance of these natural and elementary laws, he suffers the consequence. No one sees any unfairness in it. *Why should there be any more unfairness in suffering as the result of disregarding and defying moral laws?* On the contrary, is it not of more importance that a moral law should be vindicated, that men should learn to obey a moral law, than that even a natural law should be vindicated? But here, at any rate, is the fact, written clearly in God's Word, written over and over again on the page of history—*light rejected means wrath revealed.* Was it not so with ancient Israel? Has it not been so with France and Spain? Was it not so with Saul and Belshazzar? It is a terrible thing when men so harden themselves against God's Word, so shut their eyes against the light of his commandments, yes, even against the light of the cross, that God says, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Let him alone! Light granted. Light rejected. Wrath revealed. "Without excuse." Such is St. Paul's description of the ancient heathen world. To a world in such a state Jesus came. He came to reveal the righteousness of God in contrast to the abominable deities of heathenism. He came also to reveal the mercy of God. The trumpet-note of judgment is loud and terrible. But the trumpet-note of mercy is equally loud. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1, 5—7.—*Paul's first contact with the metropolis of the world.* But its empire and splendour and wealth are forgotten in the absorbing interest of his mission. For he is the messenger of a Diviner empire, and his message is one which makes the splendour and wealth of the world seem worthless things. They may be few and poor, and he but a travelling tent-maker; but they are Christ's people, and he is Christ's servant; there will, therefore, be words spoken to which angels might hearken. But first he introduces himself, addresses them, and gives them his greeting. We have, therefore, in these opening words, the man, the Church, the message.

I. THE MAN. 1. We have called him the man, for as such he steps frankly into the foreground: "Paul." The necessity for sympathetic helpfulness in the work of man's salvation. Not a voice from afar, but a fellow-helper by our side. So the Captain of our salvation: "taken from among men." And so the true minister—a man first, one of the sinful, struggling mass of men, and saved with the common salvation. 2. But this brings us naturally to the second characteristic: "A servant of Jesus Christ." The word is literally, "bond-servant." And though the expression is to be applied very cautiously, lest the harsher suggestions should mislead us, yet there are elements of meaning which are full of force. Absolute proprietorship on the one hand, and obligatoriness of service on the other; but the relationship transfused with blessedness, for the claims are claims of love, and the service is a service of love. All true Christians, like Paul, bear about with them the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. vi. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 10), and the brand-mark is this, "He died for me" (see 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; vii. 22, 23). 3. Christ's service is manifold, and to all departments the true introduction is by "call." What dignity this throws over the humblest work! For the meanest toil that is sanctified by Christian motives is a service of Christ, and to that service the toiler is "called" by Christ. The labourer in the field, and the hardworked wife in household cares, as well as the man of letters, the statesman, or the prince, is "called of God." But while such are called to a service which is the exemplification of Christian principle in the conduct of common life, others, nay, all, are called to service, more or less, which bears directly on the extension of the kingdom of God. And to some the call is an exclusive one; their life is to be spent in the fulfilment of this mission from heaven. Such a one was Paul. Called to Christian service, in common with all his brethren; called to exclusive service, in common with many of his brethren; called furthermore to apostolic service, in common with a few selected ones, who led the van of the new faith, and testified authoritatively of the crucified and risen Christ. "By call an apostle." The distinctive call was made in connection with one special crisis of his life—the Damascus journey, and the voice from heaven. But was this, with its ratification of Acts xiii. 2, the only "separation unto the gospel" of which Paul goes on to speak? Nay, we are rather led to think of the phrase in Gal. i. 15, "separated . . .

from my mother's womb." For there is a certain Divine fatalism which is in perfect harmony with moral freedom; every one born into this world is predestined from the first for some special work for God. The work may be marred, or altogether left undone, by man's perverseness; but the work is the Divine destiny of the man. And the after-life is an equipment for the fulfilling of this destiny. The circumstances of our lot, and the events that befall us; our joys and our sorrows; and all our natural and moral education, combine with our original constitution and temperament at once to indicate God's purpose and to fit us for its fulfilment. And was not Paul "a chosen vessel"?—marked out from the first for the conspicuous part which he afterwards played in the world's history; "separated unto the gospel of God." Such was the man.

II. THE CHURCH. And his apostleship was to "the nations;" the Gentile "world was his parish." Therefore the little Christian band at Rome, though not gathered, directly at least, by his labours, might well receive his message. They formed a Gentile Church, and as such he writes to them. They are threefoldly designated. 1. "*Beloved of God.*" "God's love is the source of all his benefits, and the sure ground of our hope. Our consciousness of his love is the basis of the Christian life. Of this love all men are objects, but only believers are conscious objects. To them it is real and living. It moulds their thoughts and life" (Beet, *in loc.*). Yes; "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us" (1 John iv. 16): that is the inspiration of the new life. 2. "*Called to be Jesus Christ's . . . called to be saints.*" Or, "Jesus Christ's . . . saints, by call." For the summons had been responded to; the love of God in Christ had changed their hearts. And now they were his people (see Titus ii. 14), and for his Name's sake they were living consecrated lives. For this is our only sainthood: "Whether we live," etc. (ch. xiv. 8). 3. *And this by "obedience of faith."* The spring of the new life, on the human side, even as God's love is the spring of life on the Divine side. We yield to Christ's claim, and live to God as saints, only in so far as we receive Christ into our hearts by faith, and believe the love God hath to us. And in all the manifold departments of the Christian life, we "live by faith." We receive, or more actively we grasp, the goodness of God and the life which is through Christ. And this "obedience of faith" is the end of all apostleship and ministry (John vi. 29; 1 John iii. 23).

III. THE MESSAGE. 1. "*Grace.*" God's favour, and all the saving help which he gives because he loves us. A continuous and increasing realization. 2. "*Peace.*" The abiding calmness of a conscience which has yielded to be justified by faith (ch. v. 1), accepting the grace of God's favour, rejoicing in the light; calmness of heart also, in view even of fierce conflict and trial, by reason of the voice which says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Grace and peace." So the old Gentile and Jewish salutings were transfigured by the gospel of Christ.

In conclusion, the keynote is the "call." God calls you, calls you through Christ, calls you to be Christ's, calls you in your own minor apostleship to be servants of Christ. And the true response to this call is by obedience of faith; for, from first to last of the Christian life, "by grace are ye saved, through faith" (Eph. ii. 8). Oh, be it ours to respond, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth"!—T. F. L.

Vers. 2—4.—*The characterization of "the gospel of God," to which Paul was separated.* The awfulness of a commission of doom. Jonah. But to herald forth God's good tidings to a sorrowing world! This is the crown of all Christian ministry. The angels might well sing and be glad when ushering this gospel into the world (Luke ii. 9—14); and Paul is rejoiced that he can strike this note of gladness. There might well be preludes to this burst of joy: so the words, "which he promised afore," etc. For all the indications of God's purposes of love, from Gen. iii. to Malachi, did but prepare the way for the completed announcement in "the fulness of the time." And so virtually they all were Divine promises of a fuller gospel. The two main thoughts—God's gospel; its contents.

I. GOD'S GOSPEL. 1. A gospel carries the implication of a want, and, it may be, of a sorrow and a loss. So do the good tidings of God to man assume that man has lost his God, and with God all things good. (1) Man knew not, surely, the reality of his sin; was deceived by the tempter; but awoke from his dream to find that God was gone! And this is the great loss of the world. The voices cry, "Where is thy God?" And

he? The Good One—the light, the joy, the song of his creation. So man has blotted out his own heavens, and the earth thereby has lost its lustre and its grace. (2) But the estranged God is a condemning God. He may not abdicate his essential relationship to the world as God, and if the love be lost it is replaced by wrath! So man's conscience testifies: stricken, sore, and bleeding. 2. A gospel carries the implication of a desire to have the want supplied, the sorrow and the loss removed. So man's sin has not hopelessly ruined him, else there could be no salvation. Room for God to work, and God does work. (1) The historical preparation: God teaching the world to desire salvation. The Jews by direct dealings, a positive discipline; the Gentiles by indirect, a negative discipline. So, "the desire of all nations." (2) The individual preparation: God's Spirit in the heart. Only the grace of God can bring us to God. And now God's gospel means, in general, that the condemning God will pardon, and the estranged God be a Father and a Friend again; that the yearnings towards himself which he has called forth shall thus find their full satisfaction, which is nothing other than the peace of forgiveness and the joy of adopting love.

II. ITS CONTENTS. But this general message has special terms. God's love is manifested, proved, accomplished, in his Son. 1. "His Son." For it is God's own love, his other self, which stoops to save us. Let us hold fast to this, for herein is the supreme pledge of our salvation. 2. His Son becomes "Jesus Christ our Lord." (1) By the assumption of human nature. "Born of the seed of David according to the flesh." That it may be one of ourselves who saves us. (*a*) A Man, making atonement to God for men; (*b*) a human High Priest and Captain of salvation, himself "perfect through sufferings," and therefore "touched with the feeling of our infirmities"—the oneness with human-kind necessary for both the Godward and the manward aspects of the redeeming work. A Son of David, according to mere historical lineage and local appearance: "for salvation is of the Jews." But, grander and more royal than this, a Son of man—*the* Son of man, in his true human fashioning and for his world-wide work (Heb. ii. 14). (2) By the glorification of human nature. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." A Redeemer of men must assert their redemption in his own Person first. "We see not yet all things put under him [*i.e.* man]. But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 8, 9), the archetypal Man. His resurrection, which the apostle here links on to its world-wide correlative and consequence, "the resurrection of the dead," demonstrates the redemptive power of Jesus, who is therefore the Christ, our Lord, and therefore Son of God; for only he who has life in himself can give life to dying men—life from the death of sin, life from all death which sin has more indirectly wrought.

Oh, let us hearken to such a gospel! God's good news to a dying world, spoken forth with all the power of One who was God's very Son, and with all the tender sympathy of One who is our very Brother. And for a proper hearkening to this good news may God, in his love, prepare our hearts!—T. F. L.

VER. 8—15.—*Ministerial sympathy.* The apostolic commission has been presented; in this section it is interfused with the sympathy and service of a brother. He is still pre-eminently the preacher of the gospel (ver. 15), but he speaks as to those whose faith is one with his own, and who are therefore brethren in a most sacred brotherhood. We may consider, as in some sort distinct though mutually involved—his prayers, and his purpose.

I. HIS PRAYERS. Does Paul for one moment here strike a happy comparison between his work and that of the priestly intercessor in the elder covenant? For the "service" of which he speaks now is the service as of a temple, and it is as though he said, "In the gospel, as under the Law, there is a holy of holies, and worshipful intercession there. The holy of holies is the shrine of the innermost spirit, where converse is held with God, and the priestly worship is the pleading for brethren in Christ, and concerning the things that touch the kingdom of God." Yes, he "serves" God "in his spirit in the gospel of his Son." 1. *A thanksgiving.* "That your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." It was fitting that he should use such language as this, hyperbolical though it was, to those who lived in the world's metropolis. Wherever he went he heard of their good name, and he thanked God for it. He thanked

God for it? Yes; for was he not spiritually identified with all who were identified with Christ his Lord? (1) Doubtless the faith itself which was so eminent was the chief cause of gratitude. That there should be such a light shining in a dark place filled his heart with joy. They were alive unto God! (2) That the faith of the gospel should have taken such hold on the world's central and imperial city was no small cause for joy. What visions of the future might not open up before his mind! (3) The wide proclamation of their faith was gratifying, for if others were stimulated it would be for the furtherance of the gospel. 2. *A longing.* "To see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift," etc. The grace of God that was in him was to be operative towards others; he lived not unto himself. And was it not even so with them? A mutual duty, and a mutual blessing. (1) The interaction of their common faith: intensity by contact. (2) The special aspects of the common faith: "yours and mine;" "some spiritual gift." Thus their establishment. The fulfilment of what promised so well, and the supply of any lack. 3. *A request.* "If by any means now at length," etc. As Paul taught the Philippians afterwards (Phil. iv. 6), so he practised now. And doubtless, with all the wrestlings of that impetuous spirit, there was peace. For God's will was *gouvernant.* "By any means." He learned in the issue (Acts xxviii.) that his ways are not as our ways. But it would still be "prosperity" (see ver. 10), if it were God's doing; so ch. viii. 28.

II. HIS PURPOSE. 1. *The great constraint of the gospel.* "I am debtor." Nothing in the universe so free as the spirit of Christianity; nothing, on the other hand, which lays so commanding a grasp on love and life. A blessed yoke. (1) All our possessions and powers are held in trust for the world; we all are "debtors," according to our several capacities and circumstances. (2) In an eminent degree are we stewards as being entrusted with the gospel of God's grace. And the law—here, as in the former case—is, that being unused it ceases to be possessed. 2. *The personal aim.* "That I might have some fruit." Were the words of our Lord in mind, John xv. 8? Or was he rather regarding the world as a great field, and himself as a sower? (see John iv. 35—38; 1 Cor. iii. 7—9). (1) The commission was to the Gentile world (Acts ix. 15; xxii. 21; so vers. 13, 14). (2) Must not the central purpose, then, be the evangelization of the great metropolis of the Gentile world? Doubtless this filled his mind, and hence his intense interest in these Roman Christians. What visions! Realized in history. How? and how may it yet be?

Let us realize our stewardship (1 Pet. iv. 10); and that the fulfilment of our stewardship may become a freedom and gladness, let us realize our oneness with Christ, and with Christ's people.—T. F. L.

Vers. 16, 17.—*Not ashamed!* Why should he be ashamed? The great metropolis of a world-empire, with its wide-reaching power and permeating law; and he and his gospel! What a contrast it might seem! and how the supercilious Romans might overwhelm him with contempt! For they were not, as the Athenians, ever desirous to hear some new thing. And his gospel? it would be their laughing-stock. Nay, he shall not be ashamed. He will take his stand in the very centre of Rome's power, and at her fountain-head of righteousness, and there present his gospel. For it was a power, and in it was revealed a righteousness—the power of God, the righteousness of God. Let us regard these two aspects now.

I. GOD'S POWER. Man plumes himself with pride on the possession of might, but how impotent he is in the grasp of the great God! So, too, the "great powers" of the world's history: Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision (Dan. ii. 31—45). And "the powers that be are ordained of God." God's power is manifold. The governance of nature, the control of the affairs of men, the influence on the heart. And of this manifold power of God the gospel of Christ is a pre-eminent display. 1. *Its aim.* "Unto salvation." No narrow restriction of this term; coextensive with the loss: the man, the life, the world. See ch. viii. for this wide meaning of the word. Man's very self: ignorant, enslaved, corrupt, and withal estranged from God, and under condemnation. The gospel of Christ works light and liberty and love; it brings pardon and God. Man's life-history: the gospel of the resurrection. Man's world: the gospel of the new creation. What splendid visions were these! and how, in comparison, the splendour of Rome's power paled! 2. *Its condition.* To him "that believeth." (1) A

reception of the power. Man's power of resisting God's grace, through sin; the humble acceptance of God's grace, through faith. (2) A realization of the power. God's grace not merely accepted by the obedient will, but transfused through the whole consciousness. 3. *Its range.* "To every one;" "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." God's large love, whether there had been privilege (the Jews) or non-privilege (the Gentiles), polity or non-polity (ver. 14), culture or non-culture (ver. 14). And all had been prepared of God. Oh, if he might but help towards making the potential into the actual! Rome's cosmopolitanism was as nothing to this. Was it not a "power of God" that he might be proud to preach?

II. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. The imperial law of Rome. It could not command all the complexities of social intercourse, nor the governance of the man's self; much less could it lay its grasp on the heart. Nor can man himself make himself righteous; he lacks the heart and the power. But what an empire's laws can never do, what a man's own strength can never do, is done by the gospel of Christ: "For therein is revealed," etc. 1. *The Divineness of the righteousness.* "Of God." (1) Divine in its origin. All true good from the Creator to the creature. Especially for recovery from a fall. (2) Divine in its inspiration. Only as having God with us can we be right with God. (3) Divine in its aim. God the supreme end of all thoughts, desires, purposes, and works. 2. *The distinctions of the righteousness.* To be brought out more fully in the sequel of the Epistle. (1) A status: by the atonement of Christ's redemption. Objectively. (2) A state: by the constraining love of the redemption. Subjectively. Man seeks to work out his righteousness in the reverse order; from a state to a status. Whole Epistle combats this false principle. 3. *The reception of the righteousness.* "By faith unto faith." (1) Of the prerogative of righteousness through Christ: acceptance pure and simple. (2) Of the power of righteousness through Christ: assiduous, increasing, strong. So all is of faith: the beginning, the progress, the perfecting. "As it is written, The righteous shall live by faith:" by believing with all his heart in the saving love of God. Was it not a "righteousness of God" that he might be proud to preach?

What is God's gospel to us? A name? so many words? so many truths? Or a living power, already healing, and working towards the perfect life? "Not in word only, but in power" (1 Thess. i. 5). Again, is it a veil, covering our deformity, and a cloak for our sins? Or a purifying power, making us right that it may make us righteous? "In power, and in the Holy Ghost" (1 Thess. i. 5). Yes; a gospel of holy power, so shall it be a gospel of "much assurance;" and, as Paul was not ashamed to preach it, we also shall learn what those words mean, "Whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed" (ch. ix. 33).—T. F. L.

Vers. 18—32.—*The revelation of wrath.* "For." Note the transition. The introduction into a status of righteousness presupposes a status of unrighteousness, involving wrath. So, then, we have here—man's guilt, God's wrath.

I. MAN'S GUILT. Man's guilt, which is his obnoxious relation to the judgment of God, is established by reference to the well-known state of the Gentile world, branded by its own doings as "ungodly" and "unrighteous." 1. *Ungodliness.* The deepest root of man's corruption. (1) A suppression of the truth of God (vers. 18, 21, 28). God may be known by man; this is man's high prerogative. Not comprehended, but apprehended; we comprehend nothing. This knowledge of God is conditioned on two facts—man's God-related nature (conscience), and God's self-revealing will. And God does universally reveal himself through his works; let us not minimize this fact. Again, the law of the knowledge of God is—"To him that hath shall be given." So γνῶσις may become ἐπίγνωσις. But the converse is equally true, and is illustrated in the history of the world. "Hold down the truth in unrighteousness." (2) A conversion of the truth into a lie (vers. 23, 25). Man's God-related nature must work, even if inversely. The essence of idolatry—a self-submersion in the creature. The lie of idolatry—a deification of the lawless, the riotous, the sensual. 2. *Unrighteousness.* Cause and effect of ungodliness. Catalogued here so terribly that merely to read it is enough. (1) The utter dishonour of their own nature (vers. 24, 26, 27). (2) The extremest perversion of all social relations (vers. 29—31). (3) The reprobate rejoicing in evil deeds (ver. 32). Such the sin which wrought guilt; guilt, because there was knowledge. And so, "without excuse."

II. GOD'S WRATH. This truth is burnt into the Bible, from first to last, that God is angry with sin, and with the sinner who identifies himself with sin. But it is burnt into the very history of sin itself, and that is the insistence of the apostle here. 1. *Sin working folly.* (Vers. 21, 22.) Man will not bow to what is above him; he therefore bows to what is beneath him. An effigy (Greece)! an eel (Egypt)! And this with all their wisdom: Greece, Rome, Egypt (ver. 22). 2. *Sin working shame.* (Vers. 24, 26, 27.) Man realizes his dignity when he realizes his God; loosing himself from God, he sinks into a degradation degraded beyond all words. 3. *Sin working sin.* (Vers. 28—32.) An utter reprobacy, so that the man becomes a devil! This the ultimate result of confirmed apostasy from God. Short of this, there is hope. What laws are these! Yes; God's laws. The revelation of his wrath. The heavens are speaking daily while we sin, and this is their voice: "Deeper, deeper, deeper! Folly, shame, sin!" And the thrice-told truth of it all (vers. 24, 26, 28) is, "God gave them up." And all because they gave up God. So the ultimate punishment of the ultimate sin is, "They reprobated God; God reprobated them" (ver. 28, literally).

Let us learn, from these sad words, our danger: the suppression of the truth which is in us, its conversion into a lie—for all this is possible still; and the consequent wrath of God. And our safety: for as it is the loosing of ourselves from God which works folly, shame, and death; so it is the laying hold of God by faith in Christ that works wisdom, dignity, and life.—T. F. L.

Vers. 1—4.—*The gospel a fulfilled prophecy.* The apostle loved to dilate on the characteristics of the gospel, especially those which he "received by revelation," and his aspect of truth became so essentially a part of his being and preaching, that he speaks of it as "my" gospel. Sometimes he terms it the "gospel of Christ," whilst here the title is significantly the "gospel of God," since he is about to prove it a design purposed of God from the beginning of revelation.

I. THE GOSPEL AS PROMISED. 1. He *alleges as proof of the promise* the Scripture prophecies. Note the phrase, "the holy writings," emphasizing the quantity and quality of the literature of the Old Testament. 2. *Such a promise rebuts the charge of novelty.* The Jews were conservative, and the only way to remove their prejudice against Christianity was by persuading them out of the Scriptures that it was no new-fangled doctrine which the apostles preached. The difficulty in controversies is to find a common court of appeal. The position of the Jews as custodians of the genuineness of the Old Testament has weight in argument to-day. 3. *Shows the gospel to have been no after-thought in the mind of God.* The Lamb was "slain from the foundation of the world." The plan of Providence is gradually unfolded as the centuries pass. Looking back, we can see how the beautiful petals of the mature flower were foretold by the markings of the bud. 4. *The predictions which animated the breasts of men of old have their confirmatory value for modern faith.* The patriarchs "died in faith." The prophets "searched diligently what time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." And the fact that they were "heralds" proclaiming the advent of the King, prepares us to receive him with less fear of delusion. It is seemly that so grand a Monarch and kingdom should not be established without the pomp of previous notice. The battle of criticism rages most furiously at present around the Old Testament prefigurations of the new covenant, for men discern the impregnableness of Christianity unless the outworks of Jewish history and expectancy can first be stormed and demolished.

II. THE PROMISE REDEEMED. 1. *In the Man Christ Jesus.* In answer to the inquiry of Herod, the scribes were able to give the place where the Messiah should be born, and the royal house of which he should be a direct descendant. The genealogies of Matthew and of Luke alike accredit the claims of Jesus to be of the stock of David. At the birth of Jesus was there great "joy that a man was born into the world." Incarnation is more than temporary residence amongst men; it is "taking part of the children's flesh and blood." The Epistle to the Hebrews reasoned from the statement respecting the "seed of David" that the priesthood was intended to be transferred from the tribe of Levi to that of Judah, and therefore changed in character. 2. *In the risen Son of God.* Here is the true gospel, the Divine humanity of Christ, the conjunction of heaven and earth. Either apart would have no adaptation to our needs.

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it."

Attention is directed to the Resurrection as a proof of the Deity of Christ. The word "dead" is in the plural, since Christ's rising involves the rising of his people. He is the "Firstfruits" presaging the harvest; where the "Head" is, there must the members be. *Two attributes in particular manifested in the Resurrection.* (1) *Power*; viz. the mighty operation of God, who outshines the glory of his first creation in the wonders of the new. See the enthusiasm and boldness of the disciples after they realized the meaning of that event, and the force and possibilities opened up before them by the triumphing over death, and the authority granted to their once-despised, now exalted Master. The bands of the grave were like "the green withes" of Samson when Christ awoke from his slumber. He "made a show of adverse principalities and powers," the eclipse of immortality by death but preluding a far more effulgent splendour. (2) *Holiness.* The penalty of atonement was exhausted, or the Sin-bearer had never appeared again with lustre out of the wilderness of death. Christ tabernacled in "flesh," but his "spirit" was not fleshly. The Holy One could not see corruption, any more than gold perishes in the fire. The resurrection of Christ was a great object-lesson, teaching the immutableness of all who, like the "Ever-living One" (Rev. i. 18), are consumed by the zeal of God's house. Whatever in us is consecrated, God himself will preserve from the fatal touch of time. *The future resurrection shall be the sealing testimony to the dignity of Christ.* When his voice shall wake the dead, and the last enemy shall have been utterly abolished, then, in the fulfilment of his own declaration and the consequent array of trophies to his marvellous grace, shall he be universally adored as the "strong Son of God, immortal Love." May each rejoice in the consciousness of a personal relationship to this glorious gospel!—S. R. A.

Ver. 7.—*An honourable class.* Describe Rome, and compare it with our modern cities. The metropolis of the world, with two millions of people in about sixteen square miles; every trade, nationality, and religion represented there. The apostle knew the strategic importance of a Christian stronghold in Rome. What a mighty influence might radiate thence to every quarter of the globe! To energize the heart of the empire was to quicken with Christian life the whole world.

I. A SPECIAL CLASS SINGLED OUT. The "all" in Rome are restricted by the subsequent designations. It is useless to ignore the New Testament line of distinction. Men are *distinguished by their relationship to the gospel*, not by their social standing or intellectual ability, but by their moral qualifications, as possessors of good hearts which have received the seed of the kingdom. To speak of Christians is to mark them off from all besides, as a straight stick differentiates crooked ones. Would Christ send his messengers to our houses as to those "who are worthy"? *This distinction creates a bond of union.* The superficial diversities amongst the followers of Christ are merged in the one great feature of similarity. All are "one" in Christ Jesus, whether they live in the East or the West End, in the great rooms of a palace or the attic of a lodging-house. And in the primitive Church, as to-day, the uniting power of the gospel was a striking proof of its Divine origin—that he who made the key to fit so many hearts was the same who first constructed those human wards. If Christ appeared to-day, it would be as when a magnet is introduced into a box of iron filings; the affinity of his people would be discovered by their instant attraction to him, and the closer they pressed to him the nearer they would draw to one another. Christianity is healthful socialism.

II. THEIR HAPPY CONDITION. "Beloved of God." The Almighty is good to all his creatures; he "is great, and despiseth not any;" his sunshine and rain benefit all indiscriminately. Jesus weeping over Jerusalem exemplified God's infinite pity towards rebellious subjects, sorrowing over their distresses and grieved at their sins. But the *love of the text is that of complacency*, where God can rest in his love with satisfaction, rejoicing in the renewed nature and the evidences of restored sonship. Love must be strongest and most delightful when reciprocated by its object, as the mirror increases light by reflection. It is *an animating designation*; for men need love as plants need sunshine and warmth. The loneliest heart may be cheered by the assurance of the Divine paternal affection. It is *an ennobling love.* Many a man has risen through

love to the height of his capacity; his powers have been stimulated and developed. How strong for noble deeds must those be who think of the mighty heart of God pulsating to the rhythm of their feeble souls! Stunted lives may blossom and grow fruitful under the "light of his countenance," seeking to live worthy of his wondrous love. It *implies the well-being of those loved.* Not necessarily exemption from hardship and trial, not miraculous interposition every day; but unfailing guidance and succour, and the certainty of a blessed issue to all events. Our God never intended us to dwell all our lives in suspense concerning our relationship to him, but to come out into the unclouded day by accepting his declarations, and we honour him when we arm our breasts with these magnificent truths as with triple steel against all vexation, and flood our dwelling with the benignant splendour of his promises.

III. THEIR DIGNIFIED VOCATION. "Called to be saints." The word "called" has become so theological that to enter into its meaning with any freshness we must strip it of its technical clothing. A man's calling is his occupation in life—that by which he earns his livelihood. The main business of the Christian is *to cultivate holiness.* He is set apart, like the priest, with anointing oil for the service of God. This aim is in no wise incompatible with the fulfilment of his ordinary worldly avocation. Every situation is adapted to the pursuit of holiness, disciplining the soul, calling for endurance or activity. The "saint" is "separate from sinners," not by reason of bodily absence, but through his consecrated thought and endeavour and behaviour. The same action may be performed from higher motives and with a regard to vaster issues. The saints are *furnished with all requisite aids* to holiness. The written Word, the Spirit, the house of prayer,—these are all helps to a godly life. We are not set to make bricks without straw. *The manner of our call enforces the obligation to sainthood.* We have been called by Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, our Pattern and Power, who called the disciples by the sea-shore, and Matthew at the toll-bar; and his summons reaches us from his cross of anguish, and from his throne of victory on high. The title of "saints" is expressly assigned to the followers of Christ, and it behoves us to walk worthy of our high calling and of the name by which we are called. Mistrust disowns such high, grand titles; faith claims and justifies them. Will not some respond to Christ's call to-day? "Harden not your hearts, if ye should hear his voice."—S. R. A.

Ver. 9.—*An appeal and a parenthesis.* To the full and ardent mind the statement of one fact or thought calls up many associated ideas, and a parenthesis is the result. In the widespread recognition of the faith of the Roman Christians (ver. 8) Paul discerned an answer to his prayers. How constant those intercessions were only God could know, and to him the apostle appealed, justifying the appeal by a parenthetical reference to his life of faithful service. The text, therefore, suggests reflection on three topics.

I. THE PROPRIETY OF INVOKING THE TESTIMONY OF GOD. Too frequently have public utterances and conversation been interlarded with the mention of the Divine Name, violating the third commandment and the Saviour's instructions. The tendency of modern legislation to restrict the occasions on which the taking of an oath is obligatory should be welcomed. It is *allowable to call God to witness in solemn matters,* befitting the dignity of the Most High. Especially *in matters that lie within God's cognizance* only, as here respecting the frequency of the apostle's petitions at the mercy-seat. The invocation of the Divine witness *is seemliest from the lips of his servants.* With what show of reason can others demand his presence to confirm their statements? Profane swearers convict themselves of inconsistency. Even a regard for others' feelings will sometimes lead men to abstain from trifling with the sacred Name of our Father and Friend.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER. Largeness of heart contributes much to the enjoyment and prevalence of our prayers. When we seem dull in respect of our own needs, the remembrance of another's wants may "unlock the sealed fountain." *We may gauge our interest in our fellows by the regularity of our petitions* on their behalf. If we pray not often for them, how can we be said to care for their welfare? Speak of them where it shall be of most avail.

> "For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

The apostle evidently thinks of *praying as a real part of Christian service.* Like the incense which it was the honourable duty of the priests to offer, so did Paul daily "lift up holy hands" as his continual sacrifice and ministration. It is a law of God's paternal government that his children's requests should, though so simple and feeble in themselves, link them with Omnipotence, and achieve mightiest effects. What ails us that we are so slow to visit this "wishing-gate"? *God measures the constancy and fervency of our prayers.* They are not a small performance soon forgotten. They constitute a revelation of our condition, a spiritual thermometer whose readings are registered.

III. THE QUALITIES THAT RENDER SERVICE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. *It must be spiritual,* that is, not formal or ceremonial, but an expression of the inner life; not rendered as a burdensome task, but according to "the spirit that giveth life rather than the letter which killeth." The apostle was constrained by love, for Christ had laid hold of his heart's affections and made him conscious of a new inward impulse, which transfigured obedience and made it liberty, and altered wearisome duty into gladsome service. It was the difference between the mechanical elevation and motion of a kite by the wind, and the soaring flight of the bird joying in its vital powers. Spiritual service is not blind, unreasoning devotion, but a ministration approved of by the noblest faculties of the soul. *It is evangelical,* arising from and moving in the sphere of the glorious revelation of the Son of God. Through Christ had the apostle "received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his Name's sake" (ver. 5). The knowledge and reception of the gospel imply privilege and responsibility. The true Christian life is filled with gospel motives and aims, nor is any condition inapt for gospel service, its priesthood and sacrifices.—S. R. A.

Vers. 11, 12.—*Longing to meet.* The vehement desire of the apostle cherished through many years was at length gratified; but the manner of entering Rome how different from the anticipated voluntary visit! He was to arrive, after a tempestuous, perilous voyage, as a prisoner to plead for his life before the emperor. It is well that a veil hides the future, or our wishes for some event might die away in silence.

I. LOVE IS NOT SATISFIED WITHOUT A MEETING. Augustine would have liked to see Christ in the flesh, Paul in the pulpit, and Rome in its glory. The apostle thought little of the outward magnificence of the metropolis; his heart turned to the company of Christians there. Some were his kinsmen, others had been his fellow-workers and prisoners, yet all who were knit in Christian fellowship were dear to him, and he longed to see them face to face. The ties of attachment in the early Church may have been cemented by the cold wind of opposition and persecution, which drove the members closer together for warmth and sympathy. Still Christianity proves itself able to banish worldly distinctions to-day, breaking down barriers of race and caste and language. The friends of the Saviour can feel no jealousy, since his love is large enough to embrace all, and a regard for his honour impels his friends to increase the number of his adherents. Love to Christ is the antithesis of narrowness of spirit. We may form an opinion of our discipleship from observing the degree of our longing to "assemble ourselves together." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." There is a natural desire to look upon the face and form of famous men, that names may become persons to us, and that our weak imaginations may henceforth be assisted in picturing their voice and gesture and appearance. And this yearning leaps up into a sacred hope of the consummation of our bliss, when we shall be permitted to behold the Saviour and "see him as he is." Christ is "with us" now, but at death we depart to be "with Christ" for ever. Proximity and affection are correlative ideas.

II. THE MEETING OF CHRISTIANS HAS EDIFICATION AS ITS OBJECT. Paul was supremely anxious to be the medium of spiritual benefit to the Christians at Rome. He believed that *a spiritual gift was the most valuable present* he could bestow or they could receive. It ranked higher than scientific communications or almsgiving. Hours of pleasant chat and recreation are not despicable, but if our societies set these in the foreground they miss their proper mark. The cross of Christ flashes solemn light upon

a pleasure-loving age. To this touchstone we must bring our Church engagements and our individual plans of living. Let congregations rightly value the ministration of spiritual things. We may not suppose the apostle to care most about miraculous endowments, gifts of healing, and of tongues, but rather a growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and in love, the pre-eminent attainment. Do parents always convey to their children the impression that they set greater store by their progress in the Divine life than by their success at the bar or in the senate, in the exchange or the fashionable world? Note the apostle's *desire to confirm the faith* of these Christians. To establish them, not to unsettle their opinions and practices, was his intent. It is no light matter wantonly to disturb men's convictions and tear them away from their old beliefs. "Men" are not to be "carried about by every wind of doctrine," but to feel their feet firm upon the unchanging rock. The Greek word in the text reminds us that "stereotyping" is good when we are dealing with the first principles of Christianity. The frequently shifted plant grows with difficulty. There is a hint here that *oral would be more effective than written communications.* In spite of recent assertions, pulpit and platform speech holds its own as the engine that moves the masses. Even "the weighty and powerful letters" of the apostle could not equal the effect of his personal presence. Only enemies would term the latter "weak and contemptible." The Scriptures depict the coming *advent of Christ as giving a mighty impetus* to the perfection and triumph of his Church. He "shall appear in his glory," and "build up Zion."

III. A MEETING ENABLES ALL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMON GOOD. The apostle looked forward to a mutual benefit. He was not so self-opinionated or proud as to imagine none could enlighten him or comfort him. *Ministers need the consolation of their flock.* Recall the inspiriting exhortation of the Israelites to Joshua, "Only be thou strong and of a good courage: the Lord be with thee," etc. (Josh. i. 17, 18). Nor was the apostle so selfish as to wish to get all and to give nothing. *Christian Churches are designed to be Mutual Improvement Societies.* Some only inquire—What good will such a gathering do us? forgetting that their remarks or their attendance even may stimulate their brethren and aid in the success of the meeting. It cheers the weak and supports the wavering to witness the steadfast confidence of the strong. *The faith spoken of implies visibility* in order to its full effect. Secret disciples unconnected with any organization miss much comfort and work through their isolation. Come, join our Church ranks! Christians are like the stones of an arch, strengthened in position by their joint presence and pressure. Bunyan beautifully portrays this mutual comforting in Christian and Hopeful as they ford the river of death. What a testimony to the work of any man that his presence helps, not mars, the piety of his friends! Let not "brethren cause the heart of the people to melt"! (Josh. xiv. 8). We are responsible for the influence we exert.—S. R. A.

Ver. 16.—*Glorying in the gospel.* For many reasons the apostle might be supposed ashamed to preach the gospel at Rome. He had been long delayed from fulfilling his purpose to visit that city. The "good news" centred in the mission of a Jew, belonging to a race despised by their masterful conquerors. The story of the cross could not fail to excite ridicule when the Romans heard that this Messiah had been rejected by his own countrymen, and handed over to an ignominious death, and that his disciples seriously believed that he had risen again from the dead. A kingdom founded on humility and love would seem a fanatical dream. Nor could the preachers point to many of the upper classes who had imbibed this new "superstition." Yet the apostle wavered not; he felt that the gospel could bear strictest scrutiny and comparison, and that it contained a moral force worthy of recognition even by the most slavish worshippers of power. He gloried in the gospel—

I. AS OVERCOMING MEN WITH MORE THAN HUMAN MIGHT. The desire of power is innate in the breast, and an exhibition of it is eagerly witnessed. The apostle had the intense conviction of the power of the cross, which arose from its mastery over himself and the changes he had seen it effect in his converts everywhere. As the magicians said of old, "This is the finger of God," and as the Samaritans said of the sorcerer, "This man is the great power of God," so the apostle still more logically discerned in the peace of mind, the spiritual liberty and gladness, the lofty aspirations and renewed

nature which came to Christians, the demonstration of a supernatural energy, a miraculous power whose source could only be Divine. Believing that Jesus Christ was God's lever for raising men from death to life, how could the apostle be ashamed of calling attention to this mighty instrument of human elevation? To speak and teach and live with this consciousness of wielding a Divine power is to lose faint-heartedness, and to let the ring of conviction in our tones beget acceptance in the listeners. The cure for many doubts is to note historically what Christianity has achieved. Then the very peculiarity of its introduction to the world, of its principle of operation and of its tenets, will the more strongly evidence its origin from above. It is at every point unlike the workmanship of man.

II. AS SECURING AN EMINENTLY DESIRABLE RESULT—the salvation of men. We may be terrified and disgusted at a force which threatens cruelty and oppression. But the might of the gospel of love is only beneficent in its design and effects. It aims at saving men from the wrath to come, at present deliverance from evil passions, at the development of all that is fairest and most lovely. Its triumph means the healing of the sin-sick soul, the entrance of light into the understanding, and holy joy into the heart. The Romans hated slavery, and proudly exulted in their freedom. They cultivated dignity of manner, and gloried in their world-wide empire and the privileges of their citizenship. Surely they too might perceive that the gospel promised and procured membership in a heavenly indissoluble kingdom, whose subjects were not only guarded from instability of happiness and the domination of mean desires in this life, but should also receive (what their favourite stoical philosophy never proposed) a blissful immortality radiant with honourable service under the King of kings.

III. AS OPERATING BY A METHOD UNIVERSALLY AVAILABLE, viz. by faith. It is essential to a panacea intended to bring help and strength to our race, that it should touch the plague-spot of universal disease and recognize the deepest need of man, however his customs, clothing, and language might differ. It is equally necessary that the remedy should assume such a form as to permit of its being received and applied by all, whether learned or uneducated, wealthy or poor, old or young, civilized or barbarous. To hear of the Saviour's life and death and resurrection as the revelation of Divine holiness seeking the reconciliation of man, to respond to the appeal by simple trust in the Redeemer,—this requires no more than the use of the common faculties with which all have been endowed. The news might be long in travelling from Jerusalem to Rome; pride, or gaiety, or intellectualism might stumble at the tidings; but, the Spirit showing the things of Christ to men, the responsibility rested with themselves if by unbelief they barred the heart against the truth. "To every one that believeth" does the gospel prove the spiritual "dynamite," not of destruction, but of salvation. Embrace it, own it, preach it!—S. R. A.

Ver. 20.—*The revelation of God in nature.* To come into contact with the fearless writing of the Apostle Paul is like inhaling a breath of mountain air. He was not alarmed at the presence of any inquirer, though ancient as a Jew, learned as a Greek, or imperious as a Roman. He held up the gospel as a lamp whose rays, shining in all directions, search every system, refusing to allow error to pass for truth, vice for righteousness, or imperfection for completeness. He implied that what the Law did for the Jews, convincing them of sin, was effected for the Gentiles by the glories of creation, taking away all excuse for ungodly immorality, and thus shutting all up equally to the sense of the need of such a righteousness, through faith unto salvation as the gospel of Christ proclaims.

I. A PARADOX—INVISIBLE THINGS CLEARLY SEEN. The possibility of such a seeming contradiction is allowed, when we distinguish between the outer vision of the body and the inner perception of the mind. Properly speaking, it is only the mind that ever sees. The mind arranges and digests what is carried to it by the optic nerve. Like a chemist, the brain has its laboratory, into which the senses convey the colours, sounds, impressions, facts, and figures of the world around us; and there in private it analyzes, synthetizes, manipulates, the products till they seem invested with new attributes. Think of our abstract conceptions, such as those of beauty, of time, of character; these have no sensible existence—they are qualities superadded by the mind which gazes. They may arise necessarily upon certain objects being presented to our

view; they affect us powerfully, and, though unseen by the bodily eyes, become clear to the eyes of the soul.

II. THE PARADOX APPLIED TO THEOLOGY. 1. *The works of nature manifest a mighty Power.* This world, so wonderfully framed, exhibiting such unity in diversity, furnishes to the attentive mind abundant traces of a Force which has been at work other than ourselves. The declarations of past investigators, such as Buddha, Plato, Cicero, are amply confirmed by scientists to-day, who confess themselves in the presence of a glorious, awful Force, whose laws are to be ascertained and obeyed. The attempt is made to resolve demonstrably all phenomena into manifestations of the one indivisible force. Such thinkers we may claim as buttressing the declaration of the text that the invisible power of God is clearly seen, being understood through his works. Those regularities they call "laws" are his habits; those numerous analogies indicate the one mind influencing similarly all realms. Note especially that epic of natural theology, the Book of Job. 2. *This Power discerned to be everlasting.* There is the proper word in the text to denote "endless duration"—that which is always existent. The Power which originated the universe is needed to sustain it. Evolution is perpetual creation, whereby "things that are seen were not made of things that do appear." Man has from of old contrasted his brief life with the everlasting mountains, the perpetual hills. Astronomy is making us familiar with the countless millenniums of God's lifetime, and geology reveals the measureless ages through which his power has been working. The doctrine of the conservation of force, which Tyndall calls "the gift of science to the nineteenth century," echoes the same truth, that though the animals die, and even the hills crumble and decay, yet the Power which made them continues; they assume other shapes and do other work. Herbert Spencer writes of the "infinite and eternal energy whence all things proceed and by which they are sustained." 3. *Such power reveals Divinity.* The "Divinity" of the Revised Version is preferable, since here the apostle is speaking, not of the incommunicable essence of God, as in Col. ii. 9, but of his nature as distinguished from our mortal humanity. The works of God show that he can originate life; man can only propagate it. And reflection proves that this power of God acts in favour of righteousness and in punishment of wickedness. He stands forth as the Holy One. We do not forget the dark problems of life nor the abysses of creation, but we must beware lest we underrate the clearness with which he has written his autograph on the laws of nature, and on his chief product—man. Froude says, "This is the one lesson of history—the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. . . . Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but doomsday comes at last to them."

III. THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION, THAT, MEN'S IRRELIGIOUS, SINFUL PRACTICES BEING INEXCUSABLE, THEY NEED JUST SUCH A GOSPEL AS CHRISTIANITY PROCLAIMS. Such a revelation ought to have prevented all ungodliness. A chief sin is to ignore God, as the greatest civil crime is treason against the ruler of the state. Not to worship and thank him is flat rebellion at court. How clearly the apostle implies that darkened views of the Creator, degrading his attributes, lead men first to base ingratitude, and then to indulge, unchecked and unashamed, the worst fleshly desires! And these flames of ungodly passion, no longer subdued by the rains of heavenly pity leap up into a fierce conflagration, by which the doomed are destroyed. Yet he who formed the world and placed man upon it, has remembered man's frailty—has provided an Advocate for the defenceless criminal, a city of refuge for the despairing murderer. It cannot be an escape through our own merits, or justification by works; but by a transcendent exhibition of Divine power in its noblest garb of love, stooping to bear our sins, and to make his righteousness ours, through our contrite, humble, joyful acceptance of his mercy and help.—S. R. A.

Vers. 22—25.—*Downward evolution.* No charge more acutely stings a man than that of being considered senseless; he would rather be deemed a knave than a fool. The apostle shows that man, whom God created upright that he might behold God and heavenly things, has continually gazed at the earth, and become prone like the beasts. Thus bending, he has wrapped his soul in shadow, and his religion, instead of a blessing, has proved a curse.

I. THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES ORIGINATES IN A NATURAL CRAVING FOR A SENSIBLE EMBODIMENT OF DEITY. Abstract ideas have little charm or power for men, and the worship of force or humanity can never attract the multitudes. The yearning for a visible God was answered in the Shechinah, and in the many appearances of the angel of Jehovah, and has received fullest recognition in the manifestation of God in Christ. The spirituality of Divine worship was to be preserved in Israel by the commandment not to rear graven images, and the ascension of Christ to heaven, withdrawing the Saviour from mortal eyes, is likewise intended to protect Christianity from the dangers liable to a system whose votaries should "walk by sight" rather than by faith. The Scriptures and universal history demonstrate the rapidity with which, as in the Roman Catholic Church to-day, men's homage and devotion are transferred from the Being represented, to the statue or figure which at first stood innocently enough as his symbol. There is a danger of modern literature seeking too much "to know Christ after the flesh," instead of relying upon the assistance furnished by the teaching of the Spirit, the invisible Christ dwelling in the heart.

II. THE TENDENCY OF IMAGE-WORSHIP IS TO DEGRADE RELIGION. The argument of Xenophanes, ridiculing the Homeric theology that if sheep and oxen were to picture a god, they would imagine him like one of themselves, only showed that natural religion, in framing a notion of Deity, rightly attributes to him the highest attributes of personality and intelligence conceivable. And the Apostle Paul accused the Athenians of unreasonableness in fancying that the great Father could be supposed to be less powerful and intelligent than his children. But without supernatural aid man sinks lower and lower in his conceptions; the direction of evolution in religion is downward, not upward, except where there is a manifest interposition of the Supreme Being. Note how strenuously the prophets had to combat the desire of Israel to ally themselves in worship with the abominable idolatries of the nations around. Man, selected as God's representative, becomes man in his lowest moods and merely animal existence; the transition is easy to the wise-looking owl and soaring eagle, then to the cow and the dog, and finally to the serpent and the fish. The unity of God is lost in the multiplicity of idols, and his power and righteousness swamped in bestial stupidity and depravity. Religious rites became scenes of licentiousness. "The light that was in men has turned to darkness, and how great is that darkness!"

III. THE WORSHIPPER GRADUALLY ASSIMILATES HIMSELF TO THE OBJECT WORSHIPPED. Man does not rise higher in thought and life than the Deity before whom he bows and to whom he submits himself; but he may, and too generally does, adopt the worst features of the character and conduct of his gods. What we constantly meditate upon transforms us into its own lineaments. Where the lower animals are deified, there the passions of the brutes are rampant, and a merely animal existence is lived. The lie substituted for the truth shunts man's behaviour on to another line, and a descending plane lands him in moral ruin. "They that make the gods are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." The revelation God gives of himself in his Word operates reversely on a similar principle, so that "we beholding as in a glass the true glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image;" and, the image of God in man being restored, the likeness to God to which we are made to attain grows unto perfection, till "we shall be like him, when we shall see him as he is."—S. R. A.

Ver. 1.—*The author.* Before appreciating any important work, we like to learn all we can of its author. Hence the study of the Acts of the Apostles is the best possible preparation for the study of this great Epistle to the Romans. The history given by Luke is like the portrait of the apostle prefixed to his Epistles; it is better indeed a thousand times than any picture producible by art. Let us, as a suggestive subject, begin with a sketch of the apostle's career, fitted as it is to help us in subsequent homilies. And—

I. PAUL'S HISTORY BEFORE HIS CONVERSION. In these earlier days he did not go by the name of Paul, but by that of Saul. The change adopted betokens the cosmopolitan character which he contracted as apostle. It was the nearest Greek word to his original Hebrew name. While a fanatical Jew, he would have scorned any such accommodation to prevailing custom; but once he became "the apostle of the

Gentiles," he was ready to sink the Jewish title and adopt what was nearest to it in the language which was more largely used. It was a beautiful concession to the spirit of the time.[1] But now we must notice: 1. *His birthplace.* This was Tarsus, "no mean city," as he told the chief captain (Acts xxi. 39). It seems to have been a place of culture—what we should now call a "university"—which could almost enter the lists with Athens or Alexandria. He enjoyed, too, Roman citizenship through some accident of his birth in this proconsular city. How his parents had secured the privilege we know not, but the son made ample use of it afterwards.[2] 2. *His pure Jewish descent.* As he said to the Philippians, he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (iii. 5). Everything, therefore, which pure "breeding" implies would be his. The tribe of Benjamin had supplied the first king to Israel, and now it is supplying a more famous "king of men" in the person of this second Saul. His parents doubtless made him a "child of the Law" at the age of twelve, and later on provided for his education in the Jewish capital. 3. *His training at the feet of Gamaliel.* This meant the broadest culture of the capital, orthodoxy of the most prudential cast, as his master's conduct in the Sanhedrin seems to show (Acts v. 38). That Paul was an apt scholar his own testimony proves, not to speak of the testimony of his great career; for he speaks of "profiting in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation" (Gal. i. 14). 4. *His enthusiasm as a man of action.* It would appear that, setting aside the prudence of Gamaliel, he entered with all the ardour of youth into a crusade against the Christians. The Jewish authorities had perceived the vast capabilities of their instrument; and, from the subsidiary post of holding the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, he rose *per saltum* into the position of arch-persecutor, and the leader of the enterprise even unto strange cities. Not only was he, then, an orthodox, self-satisfied Pharisee, but also he became the chief man of action in connection with his party, the man of most abundant promise.

II. PAUL'S CONVERSION. Damascus was the goal to which he and his accomplices hastened, when lo! he is confronted, not far from the city, with an overpowering light, and hears a voice demanding, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" On asking the name of this brilliant and overpowering Person, he learns that it is Jesus, the risen and glorified Head of the people Saul is persecuting, who has thus appeared to confound and to convert him. Now, regarding this conversion let us notice: 1. *The Lord's personal dealing with the sinner.* The sinner feels himself in the hands of One whom he has wronged in his own Person and in the person of his people. Conviction of sin is just a sense of injury done to an innocent and loving Saviour. Paul imagined that Jesus had passed out of the category of living factors in this world, and now he is confronted by him with the charge of persecution. 2. *Paul dies immediately out of all self-confidence.* As Adolphe Monod has beautifully said, "Saul is converted from the day, from the hour, from the moment that, recognizing that he is in himself wicked, unworthy, lost, and for ever deprived of all righteousness before God, he substitutes the Name of Jesus Christ for his own in all his hopes of eternal life, and throws himself without reserve at the foot of the cross, as a poor sinner who has no other resource in the world but the blood of the Lamb of God."[3] This is what we mean by his death out of self-confidence. He recognizes at once the hollowness of all his previous hopes, and puts Christ into the place once occupied by self. 3. *Paul places himself under the command of Jesus.* He cries out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Henceforth he is Christ's *slave* (δοῦλος), owned and ordered according to Christ's pleasure. This perfect surrender of self to the will of the Saviour is the practical outcome of conversion. It is a parallel to the surrender of Abraham, when he began to be a pilgrim with God. Paul has renounced the service of the chief priests and accepted service under the Nazarene they despised. And: 4. *Paul receives from Jesus a new office.* When he goes blind into Damascus and waits, he is at length told what he is to do. He is to be admitted by baptism into the Christian Church, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and be apostle unto the Gentiles (Acts ix. 15—18). His office is changed from that of Saul the persecutor to that of Paul the apostle.[4] And what is it to be an apostle?

[1] Cf. Godet's 'Commentaire sur l'Epitre aux Romains,' tome i. p. 34

[2] Cf. Lewin's 'Life and Epistles of St. Paul,' vol. i. p. 11; Conybeare and Howson's 'Life and Epistles of St. Paul,' octavo edit., vol. i. p. 27, etc.

[3] 'Sermons,' troisième série, pp. 203, 204.

[4] Cf. Monod, *ut supra*, p. 208.

It is to found the Church of God upon no other basis than that of the risen Jesus. It is to be a witness of Christ's resurrection, and of all which this cardinal fact and doctrine is to men. A mighty office, surely! And notice how singular and distinct Paul stands. The Jews receive twelve apostles, but the Gentiles only one; yet Paul is worth all the others put together so far as the world's conversion is concerned. Like David, he was worth ten thousand common soldiers.

III. PAUL'S SUBSEQUENT CAREER. He began preaching Christ at once, just to try his hand; but it was not intended he should pass at once from the publicity of persecution to the publicity of the apostolic office. He passes into the quiet of Arabia, and is for about *seven years* in an unobtrusive sphere of probation. It is not meant that he spent seven years in silence; doubtless, wherever he was, he made his neighbours feel his presence and know his doctrine. But he was *preparing*, by earnest meditation and communion with his Master, for his tremendous mission. To all in haste to enter the ministerial office, Paul's patient preparation is surely a significant lesson! But next we find him spending *fourteen years* in missionary labours. Into the details of his journeys we cannot here enter; but they were wise seizing of great centres, that from these the light of the gospel might go abroad. And lastly, Paul spent from *five* to *seven* years—we cannot be quite certain—in captivity at Cesarea and Rome, enjoying, perhaps, a short respite between the two Roman captivities, but ending his career by martyrdom. It is believed he was born about the year 7 of our era; was converted when thirty years of age; and died when about sixty.[1] Now, it was as "apostle of the Gentiles" that he wrote this Epistle to the Romans. He wrote it, as is apparent from its contents, before he had visited the Church. He wrote it from Corinth, to lay before the Church occupying the metropolis of the world "the gospel of God." He was not ashamed of that gospel, notwithstanding the philosophy and culture of Greece or Rome. He knew the world's philosophy, and he felt that he had found in the gospel something finer far. But we must not anticipate. Meanwhile let Paul's conversion and apostleship speak to us of personal dealing with the Lord Jesus, and of personal labour for him. It has been said that the apostolic race is like a lost species. Yet have we not had, even in our own time, men of zeal who might even be named along with the apostles? David Livingstone, William Chalmers Burns, George Augustus Selwyn, John Patteson, and many others have exhibited the long-lost apostolic spirit. We want it to come again; and why should it not, in ourselves? Not that we would counsel one another to ambition, but, as Monod so well puts it, to fidelity.[2] Let us humble ourselves, as Paul did on the way to Damascus, through a sense of sin and shortcoming; let us accept of pardon through the Lamb's precious blood; and let our cry be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and the Saviour will give each of us a mission, as he gave Paul, and own us as true servants in the accomplishment of his gracious designs.—R. M. E.

Vers. 2—7.—*The Church at Rome.* We have already got some conception of the author of this Epistle, of his origin, training, conversion, and subsequent career. And now we advance to the second natural inquiry—Who were the people composing the Church at Rome? Let us fancy, then, a great city with, we shall suppose, about half the population of London—two millions of people crowded, of course, into much smaller space than in the modern city. Of these, the half were slaves, the other half citizens. But the really influential or ruling class were a small minority. The slaves catered for their masters, so that the opportunities of making a livelihood were nothing like so numerous as in our modern civilization. A large proportion of the citizens must have been "hangers-on" to the great, and recipients of public charity. A large city, therefore, with vice and pauperism and a thousand evils, while the ameliorations of Christianity were not as yet generally or widely known—such was Rome. But, being the seat of government and the metropolis of the world, it naturally attracted many from the conquered provinces, and among these there would be a goodly number of Jews. With these would associate "proselytes," men and women of Gentile extraction, who were anxious to join the Jewish faith and profit by the Jewish forms. And now let us look at our first fact.

[1] Cf. Godet, *ut supra*, tome i. pp. 74, 75.
[2] Monod's 'Sermons,' *ut supra*, p. 158.

I. JEWS AND PROSELYTES FROM ROME WERE PRESENT AT THE PENTECOSTAL AFFUSION OF THE SPIRIT. This is expressly stated in Acts ii. 10. Some of these, we may assume, received the truth as preached by Peter and the other apostles, and were converted to the new faith (Acts ii. 41). If we further suppose that the *proselytes*, rather than the born Jews, became interested in Christianity, then we can understand how, in the composition of the Church at Rome, the Gentile element seems to have been stronger than the Jewish. The new converts, in returning to Rome, would have affinities with Gentiles more than with Jews, and so the faith would be propagated in the one direction more than in the other. We proceed to a second important fact.

II. GREEK NAMES PREDOMINATE IN THE SALUTATIONS OF THE LAST CHAPTER OF THIS EPISTLE. This throws clear light upon the composition of the Church when Paul wrote his Epistle. The Jewish element was in a minority, while the Gentile element abounded. Now, we can easily understand how populations gravitated from the provinces to Rome, and so converts would be going up from time to time from the Gentile Churches to the metropolis, and so swelling the Gentile element in the metropolitan Church. This seems indicated by salutations in ch. xvi. addressed to some fellow-workers with Paul, who do not seem to have come *from* Rome, like Aquila and Priscilla, but to have emigrated *to* it. A third fact must be noted.

III. THE JEWS WERE EXPELLED FROM ROME BY THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS. Now, while this may not have affected in any great degree the numerical proportion in the little Christian Church, we know that it led to some Jewish Christians, *e.g.* Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii. 2), leaving the metropolis for other places. Upon this providence Paul's knowledge of the Church at Rome very largely depended. As he wrought with Aquila and Priscilla at tent-making, they would have many a long talk about the Church they had been connected with in Rome, and to which they subsequently returned.

IV. THE JEWS, WHEN PAUL AT LENGTH CAME TO ROME, SEEM TO HAVE HAD LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHRISTIANS. This is evident from Acts xxviii. 22. If we remember the population of ancient Rome, also that the Christian congregation had not, as far as we know, any church edifice giving notoriety to them, but were meeting apparently in the house of Aquila (ch. xvi. 5), then we can understand the ignorance of Christianity the Jews possessed or pretended at Paul's advent. The little Christian conventicle would be easily hid in the great city. The Church at Rome, then, from the foregoing facts, seems to have been a congregation of believing Christians, occupying no very commanding position in the eye of the public, isolated in a large measure from other Churches, yet very influential through its existence in the metropolis. Its major portion was Gentile; and on this account it received the special attention of Paul as "the apostle of the Gentiles." Some, who went up from provincial Churches to the capital, seem to have carried Paul's teaching with them, so that he had a kind of spiritual fatherhood towards at least some of them, and a brotherhood towards all. How in the Epistle he fortifies them against the errors by which they should be beset, will appear as we proceed. It was a lady, Phœbe, who carried up the precious document. She seems to have gone up on some business matters, and for her in these circumstances Paul seeks assistance and sympathy (ch. xvi. 1, 2).

V. LET US NOW NOTE THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS OPENING ADDRESS TO THIS CONGREGATION AT ROME. (Vers. 2—7.) And here we notice: 1. *His gospel is that of the risen Saviour.* This is God's "glad tidings" that his Son, who had been made of David's seed according to the flesh, and delivered in human nature unto death for us, had been declared to be his Son by the powerful, resistless demonstration of his resurrection from the dead. Paul and these Roman Christians were, therefore, in the hands of a living, holy Being, no less a Person than the Son of God, whom death and resurrection had *denationalized* and made Lord of all nations, who could and would dispose of them, Gentiles as well as Jews, as he pleased. 2. Paul declares that he had *received from this risen Jesus grace and apostleship.* We saw in our previous homily how he was first converted, and then was called to the apostolic office. Now, this apostleship contemplated the subjection of all nations to the faith of Christ. It was a mighty trust which was thus committed to Paul. This Epistle shows how anxiously he tried to discharge it. 3. These Roman Christians are also *the called of Jesus Christ.* For though there may not be such *éclat* connected with individual conversion, as in Paul's case on the way to Damascus, there is yet as real an interview between the risen

Saviour and the sinner he would save. The words may not be audible as those addressed to Paul, but they are heard within and responded to. Like Abraham and like Saul of Tarsus, we must listen to the call to come out and follow Jesus, if we are to be Christians indeed. 4. *Their privilege is the enjoyment of God's love, their duty the practice of holiness.* "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." This is what we mean by Church-membership; it is, when real, an experience of Divine love, and a practice of holiness. And, indeed, we have here the whole plan of salvation. God's love comes forth first to us, and then we walk in holiness as his grateful people. It has been said somewhere by M. La Harpe that the doctrines of Christianity may be summed up in the words, "God has loved us," and its morals in the words, "Let us love God."[1] Of course, God loves all men with the love of pity, and in consequence he sent his Son into the world to save us (John iii. 16); but when we respond to his love, he proceeds to lavish on us a particular love—a love of complacency and of delight (John xiv. 21). These Christians at Rome were, therefore, the objects of this special love; and they manifested the benefit in holy lives. 5. *Paul pronounces upon them a benediction.* Now, when we analyze it, we find that "grace" is the favour of God, undeserved, and coming down in the shape of *pardon*. "Peace" is the precious effect produced in the heart which receives the grace. The Source from whom this benediction comes down is "God our Father," and the Medium of communication is "Jesus Christ." In pronouncing this benediction, the apostle desires that they should have the supply of the grace as they daily need it. The idea entertained by some, that we receive in conversion all the pardon we shall ever need, is refuted by this benediction pronounced over the Roman "saints." The following practical lessons surely suggest themselves: (1) *A risen and living Saviour has entered upon the government of the world.* Paul's conversion and apostleship, the conversion of these Roman Christians, the conversion of men and women still, all go to prove this. We have not in Christianity a dead man's legacy, like Buddhism or Confucianism, or Islamism, but a living Saviour's wondrous work. (2) *Its magnificent ambition is to bring all nations to the obedience of faith.* It aims at world-wide empire; nothing less will content it. (3) *Our sympathy should enlarge itself accordingly.* Paul did not restrict himself to Churches in the Orient, but in sympathy he embraced the Occident as well. Rome had claims upon him just as well as Corinth and Antioch. Let us be large-hearted too. (4) *Daily grace can alone sustain us in this sympathy.* The closer we keep to the "throne of grace," the wider will our sympathies extend. There is wondrous power in waiting upon God. The work for him will best advance when we have waited on him for his grace and peace.—R. M. E.

Vers. 8—17.—*The policy to be pursued in case Paul came to Rome.* We tried to appreciate in our last homily the character of the *Church* to which Paul directed this Epistle. We now pass to the policy he meant to pursue should he ever reach Rome; and which he embodies also in this Epistle. One or two preliminary matters, however, will prepare us for the climax in the paragraph before us. And—

I. PAUL LIFTS THE VEIL AND SHOWS HIMSELF AT HIS PRAYERS. It is a case of intercession. How noble and broad the views contracted at the throne of grace! The apostle becomes a statesman as he lies before the Lord. 1. *He gives thanks for the world-wide reputation of the Roman Church.* "First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of ['proclaimed,' Revised Version] throughout the whole world." Rome, as the metropolis, had many ways of communication with its provinces, and the Church at Rome had all the advantages of provincial publicity. In this Paul rejoiced before God. It led to much discussion of the new faith on the part of many who would not otherwise have heard of it. Believers are consequently to be witnesses; the world will sooner or later hear of their existence. 2. *He presents ceaseless intercession for the Roman Church, that he may himself be sent on a mission to it.* "For God is my Witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son," etc. (vers. 9—12). Now, this intercession is not only ceaseless, but self-denying. Oftentimes intercession simply commits others to the care of the great Father, without involving us in any personal mission. It is different when it contemplates such a personal inconvenience and sacrifice as a journey to Rome implied to

[1] Cf. Monsell's 'Religion of Redemption,' p. 247.

the apostle. How genuine and sincere intercession proves when it involves us in arduous missions! And then this mission is with a distinctly *spiritual* purpose—that Paul may, as apostle, communicate some "spiritual gift" with a view to their establishment in the faith. How often are missions undertaken for minor and temporal objects, a look after Church organization and such-like, instead of having the revival and establishment of saints steadily in view! *3. Paul expects to get good as well as do good in visiting Rome.* He says, "that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me ['that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine,' Revised Version]." Even an apostle with special gifts to convey expects reaction to follow his holy action; he gets benefit while giving it; it is the law of the kingdom. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

II. PAUL REVEALS HIS MISSIONARY ZEAL TOWARDS ROME AS A PURPOSE LONG CHERISHED, BUT HITHERTO HINDERED. "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles." It was a settled purpose pressing through long years for accomplishment, and the writing of this Epistle was an expedient adopted amid the continued hindrances. It surely shows how *determinedly* sacred work should be set about; not as the outcome of hasty impulse, but as the result of deliberate, prayerful conviction.

III. PAUL PRESENTS US WITH A WONDROUS SENSE OF HIS INDEBTEDNESS. "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Writing in Greek to these Christians at Rome, he doubtless, according to custom, included his correspondents in the term "Greeks," and not in the term "barbarians."[1] This sense of universal indebtedness arose out of his commission as apostle to the Gentiles; but it is also a distinctively Christian conviction. The genius of Christianity makes us do good unto all men as we have opportunity, and especially to such as are of the household of faith (Gal. vi. 10). No other system so lays the burden of the world's welfare on us.[2] Besides, Paul did not choose a certain *class* to whom to minister. He took men as they came, "the unintelligent" (ἀνοήτοις) just as readily as "the philosophers" (σοφοῖς). It is noble to throw off selfishness so thoroughly as to feel through Christ a debtor unto all men.

IV. THE POLICY TO BE PURSUED WAS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also," etc. (vers. 15—17). And here we have to notice: 1. *The method pursued always was preaching the gospel.* It has been said, "Preaching is an institute peculiar to the gospel. It is an agency, previously unknown, which Christianity has created for itself to be its chosen mode of utterance. Jesus and his messengers are, therefore, the only preachers."[3] This method of personal agency, this plan by the pulpit, not by the press, is most instructive. It secures a contact of mind with mind, and heart with heart, which no mechanical substitute can furnish. Even if the pulpit had lost its power, as is insinuated but not proved, the one remedy for this would be the revivifying of the instrumentality.[4] 2. *The subject-matter of the preaching is the gospel of Christ.* It is an announcement of good news, of which Christ is at once Embodiment and Author. Not a newspaper, with startling intelligence of a personal nature, but a message with a personal application, constitutes the subject of preaching. The good news is this, that God, though justly offended with us because of our sins, is yet prepared for Christ's sake to receive us into his favour and fellowship, as if the estrangement had never been. Surely this is what each sinner needs. It suits the Roman and the Grecian and the barbarian.[5] It is a message for the whole human race. 3. *This gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."* God has many powers abroad. What destructive forces may we see around us! But here, in contrast, have we his energy manifested for saving purposes. Every one who believes the good news discovers that salvation is in it.

[1] Cf. the quotation from Cicero given in Godet, *in loc.*

[2] For a quaint exposition of this indebtedness, see Arnot's 'Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life,' p. 370.

[3] 'Sermons,' by Dr. J. O. Dykes, p. 34.

[4] Cf. Rev. Phillips Brooks's 'Lectures on Preaching,' *passim*.

[5] Robertson's 'Sermons,' 1st series, Nos. xi.—xiii.

The Jew got the offer first, and then was it given to the Greek; but Jew and Greek alike experienced salvation through simply believing it. 4. *This gospel is in addition a revelation of God's righteousness from faith to faith.* For the gospel is not a promise merely, but also an act of judgment. It is God declaring from his throne that he is prepared to pronounce the sinner righteous, and to accept him as if he had faithfully kept his Law, because of what Jesus has done and suffered in the sinner's room. It is the pronunciation of a reprieve and the utterance of an invitation to fellowship all in one. It is God's public way of burying our imperfect past and receiving us into immediate favour. It is only faith, of course, which can take such a revelation in. The condition of the soul in sin leads *sight* to suppose that God's righteousness must be always against the sinner; but the proclamation of the gospel leads *faith* to infer that God's righteousness is now *for* him; that God somehow can maintain his character for justice and at the same time be gracious to the sinner. The proclamation is, of course, based upon the satisfaction made by our blessed Saviour on our behalf. "God can be just," as we shall subsequently see, "and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." 5. *The sinner so justified lives by his faith.* Here we have the grand consummation. The faith, which simply receives God's offer of justification, becomes the organ of life. We assure ourselves that we shall never perish out of the Father's hand, but continue through his mercy unto life eternal. Just as, under the old covenant, life was attached to obedience, so, under the new, life is attached to justification, which in its turn comes through faith. As Paul subsequently asserts, "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (ch. v. 9, 10).[1]

The practical bearing of this subject is clear. Have we received the gracious message by simple faith, "the hand of the heart," or have we put it once more from us? May our reply be satisfactory!—R. M. E.

Vers. 18—32.—*God's wrath as revealed among the Gentiles.* In last homily we saw that the gospel Paul meant to preach at Rome, if he ever got there, was a "revelation of justice" on the part of God. By his covenant arrangements "God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." He can proclaim the sinner just on the ground of Christ's atonement. But now we are introduced to another "revelation" made in the constitution of the world—a revelation which is also grounded on justice, but its manifestation is "wrath." The present section deals with this wrath as manifested among the Gentiles, while the subsequent chapter deals with it as manifested among the Jews. As we have seen that the heathen element constituted the major part of the Church at Rome, and that the Epistle was likely to touch at its very centre the heathenism of the world, we can understand Paul's purpose in placing the discussion of the condition of the heathen in the foreground.

I. THE STATE OF HEATHEN RELIGION AS LAID BEFORE US HERE BY PAUL. (Vers. 21—23.) In these verses the apostle sketches in a very masterly manner the religious situation of heathendom. And here we remark: 1. *The heathen deities are degradations.* In some cases they are "corruptible men," as the polytheism of Greece and of Rome was the worship of *man,* and the apotheosis of his evil propensities. The inhabitants of Olympus and of the Pantheon were a "free-and-easy lot." In other cases, as in Egypt and the East, they worshipped animals of all sorts,—"birds, fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." 2. *Every heathen religion has its rationale.* The devotees imagined that they had the best of reasons for their worship. They professed to be wise in the arrangement, and would have repudiated all charge of folly. The lowest forms of fetichism can give some account of itself, and thinks that it rests on reason.

II. THE STATE OF MORALS IS DEGRADED IN PROPORTION TO THE DEGRADATION OF RELIGION. (Vers. 24—31.) It is a natural transition from the deification of human or animal passions to the practice of the most frightful immoralities. Hence in connection with these degraded religions we find: 1. *Licentiousness made religious.* Courtesans thronged the temples of Venus as her priestesses, just as the "nautch-girls" in India

[1] Cf. Liddon's 'University Sermons,' 2nd series, for a good discussion of ver. 16; also Moorhouse's 'Nature and Revelation,' p. 60; and Baldwin Brown's 'Divine Life in Man,' pp. 92—138.

have their recognized connection with the Hindoo temples. The moment man begins to worship the man of genius and of passion, or begins to worship the lower creation, as if endowed with independent attributes, by a natural law he becomes lowered in the scale of being. "They that make them [*i.e.* 'idols'] are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them" (Ps. cxv. 8). They dishonour themselves through licentiousness after having dishonoured God by their ideas about divinities. 2. *Sin tends still further to become unnatural.* (Vers. 26, 27.) In one respect, indeed, all sin is unnatural;[1] its ultimate issue is against nature. It becomes a mystery how minds get infatuated with it (Jer. ii. 12, 13). But what Paul brings out here is the outrageous lengths to which unrestrained licentiousness will go. When the sinner takes rope enough, he goes, as the apostle here shows, to the most debasing and disgusting lengths, being worse in this matter of lust than the beasts that perish. 3. *Sinners tend still further to be reprobate and reckless.* (Vers. 28—31.) The point of the Greek is very beautiful in ver. 28. It might be rendered thus: "And even as they reprobated (οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν) the idea of having God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate (ἀδόκιμον) mind," etc. The judicial element in the reprobate condition is strictly retributive. Since they will have nothing to do with God even in idea, he must return their indignity and permit them to pass into the reprobate condition, *i.e.* the condition which he cannot approve of, but must loathe with his whole soul. The terrible catalogue need not be taken up in detail. It is headed by the generic term "unrighteousness" (ἀδικία), indicating that the spirit of injustice pervades the whole. Society is going morally to pieces. And there can be no doubt about the truth of the dark picture in Greece, in Rome, and in other heathen lands. But then the sinners become *reckless* as well as reprobate. Even with the fate of others staring them in the face, they continue their desperate game, and despise the consequences.[2]

III. IN THIS DEGRADATION WE MAY RECOGNIZE A REVELATION OF DIVINE WRATH. This is the point of the passage. God is angry with the heathen who so degrade him in their thoughts, and all their inconvenient sin is his judgment against them. Paul does not assert the sufficiency or finality of present judgment, but simply asks us to recognize it as clearly from God. It comes about according to natural law, but it is not on that account any the less the sentence of the Lord who ordereth all. Sinners go from bad to worse. They are punished through their sins; these sins are not self-reformatory,[3] but manifestly judicial. It is a vast subject, that of the Divine wrath; we do not understand it in its vast proportions doubtless; we may well exclaim with Moses, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" yet of its reality no impartial observer of man's sins and their consequences can be in doubt.[4]

IV. THE HEATHEN DESERVE TO SUFFER THROUGH THEIR SINS BECAUSE OF THEIR MISUSE OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE. (Vers. 18—20.) Now, what does Paul mean by saying they are inexcusable? Not certainly that "the light of nature" is sufficient for salvation, if properly used. But simply that with "the light of nature" they have no excuse for such a *degradation of God*, and deserve to suffer for it. What, then, does nature teach us regarding God? Now, if you observe the accuracy of the apostle's position, you will find him dividing this revelation about God into two parts—the revelation in our own human nature (ver. 19), and the revelation in the natural world without (ver. 20). And he maintains that God has been speaking to us by both. Now, when I look within and analyze myself, I am conscious of the light of intelligence and of conscience. Human nature is certain of possessing these, if there is such a thing as certainty at all. When, then, human nature begins the study of nature, it expects to find in nature the expression of thoughts like its own. As it has been very accurately said, "God utters his mind in his works, and that mind is like our own. In fact, science would be impossible if it were not so. Science is the observation and interpretation of nature by man. Clearly the world's Maker and the world's observer must have something in common, if the observer is to understand the Maker's meaning. A world put together by a Being utterly unlike me, whose notions of truth, of utility, of purpose, of beauty, bore no manner of relation to mine at all, would be a world I

[1] Cf. Woolsey's 'Religion of the Present and the Future,' p. 87, etc.
[2] On ver. 32, see a characteristic sermon of Dr. South's, 5th folio edit., vol. i. p. 225.
[3] Cf. Isa. i. 5, and Dr. Woolsey's sermon upon it, *ut supra*, p. 102.
[4] Cf. Dr. Dykes' 'Sermons,' p. 205.

could never understand, and could take no pleasure whatever in examining. It would be a chaos where I should fail to trace either method or meaning. But the real world we know, search it at what point you please, answers the intellectual demands of its human student; it satisfies the reason and it gratifies the taste of its human observer. In it a man detects with joy another mind at work similar in its great features to his own; and this is at bottom, I expect, the secret of its fascination."[1] Let us, then, take up nature in this way, and we shall find it conveying to us clear evidence of God's "eternal power and Divinity." The world without and within witnesses to his power; it is an effect, and he is the first and eternal Cause. We also attribute to him those qualities by virtue of which he has become Creator of such a world; we grasp the idea of his Divinity (cf. Godet, *in loc.*). In degenerating into their polytheisms, therefore, the heathen were misusing "the light of nature." Their degradation was quite inexcusable. They deserved the wrath to which God subjected them.

V. WE OUGHT TO CONSIDER OUR GREATER RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE LIGHT OF OUR GREATER REVELATION. God has added to the light of nature. He has given us the Bible. Our conceptions of God should be correspondingly elevated. But oh! if, notwithstanding all this light, we degrade God in our thoughts and descend to real idolatry, the idolatry of money, of ambition, of success, our judgment must be intensified in comparison with that of the pagans. In particular, let us remember how God has assumed human form in the Person of Jesus Christ, and so enabled us to know him through the mild radiance of a perfect life. Let such a revelation have its full effect upon us, leading us to love God and worship him and serve him with our whole hearts. Jesus becomes the great Iconoclast, and before him every Dagon falls.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II.

Vers. 1—29.—(*b*) *Those who judge others, not excepting the Jews.* Here a new stage of the argument, in proof of the position propounded in ch. i. 18, begins, and is continued to the end of the chapter. The position to be proved is that all mankind is guilty before God (see note on ver. 18). So far this has been shown with regard to the mass of the heathen world; its general moral corruption, prevalent and condoned, having been pointed out finally as a glaring proof; the main point of the argument having been to trace this state of things to man's own fault, in that he had refused to retain and act on a knowledge of God originally imparted to him through nature and through conscience. From such refusal had ensued idolatry; thence, as a judicial consequence, profligacy; thence a general prevalence of abominable practices; and at last (in many at least) the "reprobate mind," lost to moral restraint, and approving of vice as well as practising it. Thus it is sufficiently proved that the heathen world, regarded as a whole, is under sin, and liable to the wrath of God.

But the required proof that the whole of mankind is guilty is not yet complete. It might be said that there are many still who disapprove of all this wickedness, and sit in judgment on it, and who are, therefore, not themselves implicated in the guilt. To such persons the apostle now turns, his purpose being to show that their judging others does not exempt themselves, unless they can show that they are themselves sinless. All, he argues, are tainted with sin, and therefore implicated in the guilt of the human race, while the very fact of their judging others condemns them all the more.

It is usually said by commentators that, the sin of the heathen world having been established in the first chapter, the second has reference exclusively to the Jews. But this is surely not so. The expressions, ὦ ἄνθρωπε and πᾶς ὁ κρίνων (vers. 1, 3), seem evidently to include *all* who judge others; and it is not till ver. 9 that any distinction between Jew and Gentile comes in. Nor would the argument have been complete without refutation of Gentile as well as Jewish judgers of others. For the philosophical schools especially claimed superi-

[1] Dr. Dykes' 'Sermons,' pp. 102, 103; see also John Howe's 'Works' for a sermon on ver. 20; and South's 'Sermons,' *ut supra*, vol. i. p. 250.

ority to the mass of mankind, and would be likely to resent their own inclusion in the general condemnation. Notably the Stoics, whose philosophy was at that time, as well as that of the Epicureans, extensively professed by educated Romans. Seneca was a contemporary of St. Paul. The Stoics might be suitably designated as *οἱ κρίνοντες*: for they affected to look down from a position of calm philosophical superiority on those who followed their mere natural impulses, professing to be themselves guided by right reason, and superior to the passions of ordinary humanity. It was a home-thrust at them to ask—Are you, who thus judge others, as exempt as you profess to be from the vices you condemn? If the accounts that have come down to us of Seneca's own life be true, he certainly was not a paragon of virtue. Now, be it observed that the sort of people now addressed are not concluded to be sunk into all the depths of sin spoken of above; their very affecting to judge others implies, at any rate, theoretic approval of the right. Nor does St. Paul anywhere suggest that there is no difference between man and man with regard to moral worth before God; nay, in this very chapter he forcibly declares the moral excellence of some, without the Law as well as with the Law, and eternal life as its reward (vers. 7, 10, 14, 15). All he implies of necessity is that none whatever are so exempt from sin as to be in a position to judge others; and it is the judgment of others that he here especially attacks, as increasing, rather than exempting from, condemnation. For it involves in itself the sin of presumption, unless those that judge are sinless. But it may be said that the universal sinfulness of mankind is still not proved. For (1) it is not actually demonstrated that all of those who judge "do the same things." The answer to this objection is, that this does not admit of rigid proof, and that therefore the apostle deems it enough to appeal to the consciences of the judgers themselves as to how the matter stands with them. But it may be said (2) that the sinfulness of such persons as are spoken of in vers. 7, 10, 14, 15, 29—such, namely, as sincerely strive after good without setting themselves up as judges—is still unproved. So it is in this chapter; and, for logical completeness, the proof must be taken as implied. It was, we may suppose, in the writer's mind, and afterwards, in ch. vii., where the inner consciousness of even the best is analyzed, the missing link of the argument is supplied.

Vers. 1, 2.—**Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou doest** (rather, *dost practise;* the word is *πράσσεις*, see ch. i. 32) **the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit** (or, *practise*, as before) **such things.** As has been observed above, the fact that *τὰς ὁ κρίνων* "does the same things," is not proved; it is incapable of patent proof, and so the argument takes the form of an appeal to the consciences of such persons. "Porro quia ipsos interioris impuritatis insimulat, quæ ut humanos oculos latet, redargui convincique nequeat humanis testimoniis, ad Dei judicium provocat, cui nec tenebræ ipsæ sunt absconditæ, et cujus sensu tangi peccatoribus, velint nolint, necesse est" (Calvin). On *κατὰ ἀλήθειαν*, in ver. 2, Calvin also remarks, "Veritas porro hæc judicii in duobus consistit: quod sine personarum respectu delictum puniet, in quocunque deprehenderit homine; deinde quod externam speciem non moratur, nec opere ipso contentus est nisi a vera sinceritate animi prodeat."

Vers. 3, 4.—**And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which practise such things, and doest the same, that thou** (*σὺ*, emphatic) **shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?** Two possible mental attitudes of *ὁ κρίνων* are supposed—that of really calculating (*λογίζῃ*) on escaping the judgment, or that of obduration, consequent on God's long forbearance towards him, in that "sentence is not executed speedily." (For a similar view of God's merciful purpose in delaying the final judgment, and of man's abuse of his forbearance, cf. 2 Pet. iii. 9.)

Ver. 5.—**But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.** The "day of wrath" is the day of judgment, the final display of eternal righteousness, when the "forbearance" will be over; ever represented, notwithstanding the world's redemption, under a terrible aspect for the persistently impenitent (cf. 2 Thess. i. 9). It may be here observed again that it is *ὁ κρίνων* against whom these indignant denunciations are hurled, and this on the

very ground of his thus setting himself up to judge while being himself guilty. Of him it is implied, not only that he shares the guilt of mankind, but also that he especially will not *escape* the final judgment. Of others who, conscious of their own failings, seek sincerely after good, this is not said, however liable to condemnation on their own mere merits they may be. Indeed, the contrary is emphatically asserted in the verses that follow; nay, even eternal life is assured to such, whoever they may be, and under whatever dispensation, though it does not fall within the scope of the argument to explain in this place why or how. It is important for us to see this clearly for an understanding of the drift of the chapter, and of St. Paul's whole doctrine with respect to human sin and its consequences.

Ver. 6.—**Who will render to every man according to his works.** This assertion is no contradiction of the main portion of the Epistle as it proceeds, as to justification being not of works; the phrase here being, not *on account of* his works, but *according to* them. "Nequaquam tamen quid valeant, sed quid illis debeatur pretii pronunciat" (Calvin.). The *ground* of justification is not here involved. All that is asserted is what is essential to any true conception of God's justice, viz. that he has regard to *what men are* in assigning reward or punishment; it is what is given in Heb. xi. 6 as a first principle of faith about God, "that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It is further evident from ἑκάστῳ, and still more from all that follows, that all such will be so rewarded, whether before Christ or after his coming, whether knowing him or not knowing him. Nor is the inclusion of the latter inconsistent with the doctrine that salvation is through Christ alone. For the effect of his atonement is represented as retrospective as well as prospective, and as availing virtually for all mankind (cf. ch. iii. 25; v. 15, 18, 20). Hence the narrow doctrine of some divines, who would confine the possibility of salvation to those who have had in some way during life a conscious faith in the atonement, is evidently not the doctrine of St. Paul.

Vers. 7—9.—**To them who by patient continuance in well-doing** (literally, *good work*, ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, with reference to ἔργα preceding) **seek for glory and honour and immortality** (literally, *incorruption*, ἀφθαρσίαν), **eternal life. But unto them which are contentious** (so Authorized Version; in Revised Version, *factious*. As to true meaning, see below), **and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth** (rather, *worketh*, ἐργαζομένῳ, with reference again to ἔργα in ver. 6) **evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile** (literally, *Greek*). The expression, τοῖς ἐξ ἐριθείας, is rendered in the Authorized Version "them which are contentious," ἐριθεία being translated "contention" also in 2 Cor. xii. 20; Gal. v. 20; Phil. i. 16; ii. 3; Jas. iii. 14, 16. So, too, the Vulgate, *qui sunt ex contentione;* and similarly Origen, Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Theophylact, Erasmus, Luther, Beza, Calvin, etc. This, however, is not the classical sense of the word, which is not connected with ἔρις ("strife"), but with ἔριθος, which means originally a day labourer, or a worker for hire, being so used in Homer. Hence ἐριθεία meant (1) labour for wages, and came to mean (2) canvassing or intriguing for office, and (3) faction, or party-spirit (cf. Arist., 'Pol.,' 5. 2, 6; 3, 9). Notwithstanding the weight of ancient authority for its bearing the sense of "contention" in the New Testament, that of "faction" seems more likely and suitable in the passages where it occurs; and certainly so here, the idea seeming to be that the persons spoken of *factiously* renounced their allegiance to "the truth," obeying ἀδικίᾳ instead. We observe how expressions are here heaped up, significant of the Divine indignation against high-handed sin, unrepented and unatoned for, of which the apostle, in very virtue of his view of the eternal δικαιοσύνη, had an awful sense (see above on ch. i. 18; and cf. 1 Thess. i. 8, etc.; and also Heb. x. 27; xii. 29). Still, neither this verse nor ver. 5 is of necessity inconsistent with other well-known passages, where St. Paul seems to contemplate God's reconciliation in the end of *all things* to himself in Christ (see ch. v. 15, *et seq.;* 1 Cor. xv. 24—29; Eph. i. 9, 10, 22, 23; Col. i. 20). The "indignation and wrath" spoken of in the passages before us (being, as was said under ch. i. 18, inseparable from a full conception of the eternal righteousness) may still be conceived as having a corrective as well as a punitive purpose. Nor is the doctrine which has been called that of "eternal hope" of necessity precluded by statements which imply no more than that sin, unrepented and unatoned for, must inevitably undergo its doom in the unknown regions of *eternity*. The thought, at the end of ver. 9, for the first time passes distinctly to the *Jew's* assumed exemption from the condemnation of the rest of mankind; and to this exclusively the remainder of the chapter is devoted. The "indignation," etc., it is said, will be upon the Jew *first* (cf. ch. i. 16), which may mean either *in the first instance*, or *principally*. His priority in Divine favour involves priority in retribution, while his pre-eminence in privilege carries with it corresponding

responsibility (cf. Luke xii. 47, 48; also Ps. l. 3—8 and 1 Pet. iv. 17). Then in ver. 10 a like priority is assigned to the Jew with respect to reward, the general assertion of ver. 7 being repeated (with some difference of expression) in order to complete the view of his prior position in both respects. For the covenant was with the Jews; the promises were to them: the Gentiles were as the wild olive tree, graffed in, and made partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree (ch. xi. 17). "Judæi particeps Græcus" (Bengel).

Vers. 10, 11.—**But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile** (literally, *Greek*, as before): **for there is no respect of persons with God** (cf. Acts x. 34). This, with what follows, is important, as bringing out in a striking way the clear doctrine of the New Testament that the Jews had no monopoly of Divine favour with respect to final salvation. Whatever advantages certain races of mankind seem undoubtedly to have above others in this world (and that this has been, and is so, with other races as well as the Jews is obvious), all men are described as standing on an exactly equal footing at the bar of eternal equity.

Ver. 12.—**For as many as have sinned without Law** (*ἀνόμως*) **shall also perish without Law** (*ἀνόμως*). Their perdition, if it ensues, will not be due to transgression of a code they had not, but to sin against such light as they had; if without knowledge of Law they sinned, without reference to Law their doom will be. **And as many as have sinned in Law** (or, *under Law*. Ἐν *νόμῳ* denotes the condition in which they were; cf. *ἐν περιτομῇ* and *ἐν ἀκροβυστίᾳ*, ch. iv. 10) **shall be judged by Law.** The requirements of the Law which they knew they will be held accountable for transgressing—*κριθήσονται* here, instead of *ἀπολοῦνται*, because a definite standard of judgment is supposed (cf. Ps. l.).

Ver. 13.—**For not the hearers of Law are just before God, but the doers of Law shall be justified.** In this verse, as in the previous one, *νόμου* is anarthrous according to the best-supported readings, though the Textus Receptus has *τοῦ* before it. It has, therefore, been rendered above simply as *law*, not as either *the law*, or *a law*, as the same word will be below, whenever it stands by itself without either the article or any modifying genitive. Much has been written by commentators on the senses in which this word *νόμος* is to be understood, as used by St. Paul with or without the article. In an Appendix to the Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans in the 'Speaker's Commentary' will be found a summary of the views taken by critics of repute, with exhaustive references to the usage of the word in the Septuagint, in the New Testament generally, and in the writings of St. Paul. It has not been thought necessary in this Commentary to discuss further what has been so amply discussed already. It may suffice to state certain principles for the reader's guidance, which appear plainly to commend themselves to acceptance. (1) Ὁ *νόμος*, with the article prefixed, always means the Mosaic Law. (2) Νόμος, without the article, may have, and often has, specific reference to the Mosaic Law; but, if so, the omission of the article is not arbitrary, but involves a difference of meaning. The article in Greek is prefixed to a word when the latter is intended to convey some definite idea already familiarized to the mind, and "the natural effect of its presence is to divert the thoughts from dwelling on the peculiar import of the word, and is adverse to its inherent notion standing out as a prominent point in the sense of the passage" (quoted from 'Grammar of the New Testament Dialect,' by T. S. Green, in Appendix to Introduction to Romans in the 'Speaker's Commentary'). Hence the omission of the article, where it might have been used, before a word has often the effect of emphasizing and drawing attention to the *inherent notion* of the word. We may take as an instance ver. 17 in this chapter, where the Textus Receptus has *ἐπαναπαύῃ τῷ νόμῳ*, but where the preferable reading omits the article. In either case the Mosaic Law is referred to; but the omission of the article brings into prominence the *principle* of justification on which the Jew rested—viz. *Law*, which exacts entire obedience. In the following verse (the eighteenth), in the phrase, *κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου*, the article is inserted, the intention being simply to say that the Jew was instructed in the well-known Law of Moses. The same difference of meaning is intimated by the omission or insertion of the article in ver. 23 and elsewhere in other parts of the chapter and of the whole Epistle (see especially ch. vii.). The apostle, who, however spontaneous and unstudied might be his style of writing, by no means used phrases at random, would not surely have thus varied his expressions so often in one and the same sentence without intended significance. (3) Νόμος without the article seems evidently in many passages to be used by St. Paul to denote law in the abstract, without any exclusive reference to the Mosaic Law at all, or to any particular code of law. Doubtless the Mosaic Law, in which he had been educated, and which he had painfully proved the impossibility of keeping perfectly, had been to him the grand embodiment and

representative of law; but he had hence been led to an abstract conception, ever before his mind, of law as representing the principle of exaction of full obedience to requirements; and when he says, as he so often does, that by law no man can be justified, he means that none can be so on the principle of complete conformity being required to the behests of Divine righteousness, whether as revealed from Mount Sinai or through the human conscience, or in any other way; for by law is the knowledge of sin and consequent guilt, but not the power of avoiding sin. Those who ignore the distinction as above explained, saying, as some do, that *νόμος*, whether with or without the article, always means simply the Law of Moses, fail to enter into the depth and generality of the apostle's argument. The distinction will be observed in this translation throughout the Epistle (*ὁ νόμος* being translated "the Law," and *νόμος* "law"), and it will be found always to have a meaning. (For one instance in which it is hardly possible to suppose St. Paul to have omitted and inserted the article in the same sentence without a meaning, cf. Gal. iv. 21.)

Vers. 14, 15.—**For when Gentiles, which have not law, do by nature** (or, *having not law by nature, do*; cf. ver. 27, *ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία*) **the things of the Law** (*i.e.* the Mosaic Law), **these, not having law, are law unto themselves; which** (*οἵτινες*, with its usual significance of *quippequi*) **show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness** (or, *bearing witness therewith*), **and their thoughts betwixt each other accusing or else excusing** (not, as in the Authorized Version, *meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another*, *μεταξὺ* being used as a preposition, governing *ἀλλήλων*). The "for" at the beginning of ver. 14 connects it with the preceding one thus: "Not *hearers* but *doers* of law will be justified." The Jew, therefore, has no advantage in the way of justification over the Gentile from being in a peculiar sense a *hearer*. *For* Gentiles also may be *doers*, though not of a positive revealed law, yet of the law of conscience. It is not, of course, implied that on the *ground* of any such *doing* they "shall be justified;" only that, so far as they *do*, they will, equally with the Jews, be rewarded. Nor is it said that any, in fact, do *all* that law enjoins. We observe the hypothetical form of expression, *ὅταν ποιῇ*, and also, *τὰ τοῦ νόμου, i.e. any* of the Law's requirements. The Law, for instance, says, "Thou shalt not steal;" and if a Gentile, though knowing nothing of the ten commandments, on principle refrains from stealing, his conscientious honesty will have its own reward as much as that of the Jew who refrains in obedience to the revealed commandment. A few of the expressions in these verses call for consideration. (1) What is meant by *τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου*, said to be "written in their hearts"? *Τὸ ἔργον* cannot be pleonastic, as supposed by Tholuck. One view is that it is equivalent to *τὰ ἔργα τοῦ νόμου*, which is an expression frequently used elsewhere (ch. iii. 27, 28; ix. 32; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 2, 5, 10); and the singular number has been explained as *collective*, as in 1 Cor. iii. 13; Gal. vi. 4, and ver. 7 above (so Meyer), or as "applying to each of the particular cases supposed in the *ὅταν . . . ποιῶσιν*" (so Alford). The objection to this view is that it is not the *works* of the Law that can be said to be *written*, but rather the Law itself from which the works proceed. Seeing that *γραπτὸν* implies evident reference to the tables of the Law, it seems best to take *ἔργον* as denoting the *efficacy* of the Law, as opposed to the *letter*, which alone was written on the tables. So in effect Bengel: "Legem ipsam cum sua activitate. Opponitur literæ, quæ est accidens." (2) How do they *show* (*ἐνδείκνυνται*) this *ἔργον νόμου*? Evidently, from the context of ver. 14, by *doing τὰ τοῦ νόμου*; *i.e.* doing them (as is, of course, implied) as being the *right* things to do, and approving them. The very possibility of their doing this is evidence of an innate moral sense in the human heart, which, however it may often be obscured or perverted, remains as a characteristic of humanity, and is more or less operative in all communities. "Nulla enim gens unquam sic ab humanitate abhorruit ut non se intra leges aliquas contineret. Constat absque dubio quasdam justitiæ et rectitudinis conceptiones, quas Græci *προλήψεις* vocant, hominum animis esse naturaliter ingenitas" (Calvin). (3) What is exactly meant by the *conscience* witnessing, and the *thoughts* accusing or else excusing? *Συνειδήσις* is not the Law in the heart, but rather our *consciousness*, whereby wittingly, in accordance with that Law, we approve or condemn. The compound verb *συμμαρτυρούσης* seems to denote a *joint* witness of conscience. In ch. viii. 16 and ix. 1, where alone the word occurs elsewhere, it is followed by a dative, and means certainly *concurrent* witness. But, if so here, with what? Probably with the *ἔνδειξις* already spoken of. Right conduct on principle, and conscience approving, witness together to the inward law; or, conduct and conscience together witness to a man's merits or demerits in accordance with that law. Then, what is added about the *λογισμοὶ* shows how conscience operates. Reason comes into play, evoked by conscience, to reflect on its witness, and definitely condemn or approve what has been done. A kind of court of judicature is supposed. Man calls himself to the bar of his own moral judgment; his conscience adduces

witness to the character of his deeds, or rather, with his deeds bears witness for or against himself; his thoughts are as advocates on both sides, arguing for condemnation or acquittal. "Observa quam erudite describat conscientiam, quum dicit nobis venire in mentem rationes, quibus quod recte factum est defendimus; rursum quæ nos flagitiorum accusent et redarguant" (Calvin).

Ver. 16.—**In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.** About this verse the main question is, what previous assertion the "when" refers to. The time denoted by "when" (whether we suppose *κρίνει* or *κρινεῖ*—*i.e.* the present or future tense—to have been intended by the writer) is certainly the *ἡμέρα* of 1 Cor. iii. 13, and other passages—the day of doom, when "every man's work shall be made manifest." Hence immediate connection of this verse with the preceding one, which would otherwise have been the natural [one, seems to be precluded; for in ver. 15 the present operation of conscience, during this present life, was described. One way of making the connection obvious is by understanding ver. 15 as itself denoting the manifestation reserved for the day of judgment, when all will stand self-convicted. But not only the verb *ἐκδείκνυται* in the present tense, but also the fact of the whole verse being so obvious a description of present human consciousness, seems to preclude this view. Some would connect ver. 16 with ver. 12, of which it is in itself a natural sequence; and this connection is intimated in the Authorized Version, which includes the three verses that come between in a parenthesis. The objection to it is the length of the parenthesis. Probably the apostle, in his characteristic way, paid little regard to precise logical sequence; he only desired to express, in this concluding verse, that in the great day full justice would be done, and all that he had been speaking of would be made plain. *My gospel* means "the gospel committed unto me to preach" (cf. ch. xvi. 25; 2 Cor. iv. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 8). The idea that it means "the Gospel according to St. Luke," said to have been written under St. Paul's superintendence, is too improbable to call for serious notice.

Ver. 17.—**But if** (the true reading being certainly *εἰ δέ*, not *ἴδε*, as in the Textus Receptus) **thou** (*σύ*, emphatic) **art named a Jew.** The Israelites who had remained in Palestine, or who returned to it after the Captivity, seem thenceforth to have been designated *Jews* (*Ἰουδαῖοι*), though they included some of other tribes than that of Judah, notably that of Benjamin, of which St. Paul himself was, and of course of Levi. They are so called, whether resident in Palestine or elsewhere, throughout the New Testament, as well as by Roman writers, the term *Ἑβραῖοι* being applied in the New Testament (usually at least) to distinguish those Jews who adhered to the Hebrew language in public worship, and to national customs and traditions, from those who *Hellenized* (*Ἑλληνισταί*). It was the name on which the people prided themselves at that time, as expressing their peculiar privileges. The apostle, having at the beginning of this chapter addressed himself generally to "whosoever thou art that judgest," now summons the Jew exclusively to the bar of judgment, whose claims to exemption from the general condemnation have come to the front in the preceding verses. By the emphatic *σὺ* he calls on him now to give an account of himself, and justify his pretensions if he can. The point of the argument is that the Jews were notoriously at that time no better than other nations in moral conduct—nay, their national character was such as to bring their very religion into disrepute among the heathen—and therefore *doing*, and not either privilege, knowledge, or profession, being according to the very *Law* on which they rested the test required, their whole ground for national exemption was taken away. **And restest** on law (*νόμῳ*, here without the article, so as to emphasize the *principle* on which the Jew professed to rest for acceptance), **and makest thy boast of God.** The Jew gloried, as against the heathen, in his knowledge and worship of the one true God.

Ver. 18.—**And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent** (*δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα*, a phrase capable also of the meaning, "provest the things which differ," *i.e.* distinguishest between right and wrong; for *δοκιμάζειν* may mean either "to prove," or "to approve" after trial, and *τὰ διαφέροντα* either "things which differ," or "things which surpass." Exactly the same expression occurs in Phil. i. 10, with the same uncertainty of meaning. The difference is unimportant, both interpretations coming to the same thing), being **instructed** (*κατηχούμενος*, which implies regular training, whether catechetically in youth, or through rabbinical and synagogic teaching) **out of the Law.** So far the Jew's own claims on the ground of his own position have been touched on; what follows expresses his attitude with regard to others. We may observe throughout a vein of irony.

Vers. 19, 20.—**And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law.** Here the *form* (*μόρφωσις*) does not mean the mere outward show, but the real

representation in concrete form of knowledge and truth. The Jew *had* that; and the Law itself is by no means disparaged because the Jew presumed on it without keeping it (cf. ch. vii. 12).

Ver. 21.—**Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?** The οὖν here does not involve an anacoluthon after the reading εἰ δὲ in ver. 17, though St. Paul would not have much cared if it had been so. It serves only to sum up the lengthened protasis, and introduce the apodosis: "*If* . . . dost thou *then*," etc.? In what follows it is not, of course, implied that all Jews who relied on the Law were, in fact, thieves, adulterers, etc., but only that the Jews as a nation were no more exempt from such sins than others; and it may be that those specified were not selected by the apostle at random, but as being such as the Jews had a peculiar evil notoriety for at that time. **Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?**

Ver. 22.—**Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?** The word (ἱεροσυλεῖς) thus rendered in the Authorized Version means literally "robbest temples," though it may bear also the general meaning of "sacrilege." Commentators differ as to what is meant. Some, considering that the word would not have been used except to denote something really sacrilegious—some offence against true sanctity—refer it to the withholding of gifts and offerings from the temple at Jerusalem, or of tithes from the priests, or embezzlement of the temple revenues. Mal. iii. 8, etc., is adduced in illustration, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings," etc. (cf. also Mal. i. 7—14). A passage also is quoted from Josephus, 'Archæol.,' B. xviii. c. 5, where certain Jews are said to have appropriated to their own use purple and gold which had been given to them for the temple at Jerusalem by one Fulvia, a proselyte of theirs at Rome, in consequence of which the Emperor Tiberius, having been informed of the transaction by the lady's husband, had banished all the Jews from Rome. Others take the word in a general sense to denote any profanation of sanctity. So Luther, Calvin ("profanatio divinæ majestatis"), and Bengel ("sacrilegium committis, quia Deo non das gloriam, quæ propria Dei est"). Inasmuch, however, as definite malpractices of the Jews at that time, on account of which the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles (ver. 24), seem to be here alluded to, the word may, perhaps more probably, be understood in its proper sense of *plundering temples*, meaning heathen temples—a practice which Jewish zealots, in their professed abhorrence of idolatry, might be addicted to when they had opportunity. A writer, though himself attaching no idea of sanctity to such temples, might still use the current term ἱεροσυλεῖν. So, among the ancients, Chrysostom and Theophylact understand it; the latter, however, limiting it to taking away the ἀναθήματα. He says, "For if they did abhor the idols, yet nevertheless, dominated by covetousness, they touched the idol-offerings for filthy lucre's sake." In doing this, he seems to imply, they broke the very Law which had enjoined their ancestors to "destroy the altars, and break down the images" of idolaters (Deut. vii. 5); for the same Law had forbidden them to "desire the silver and gold that is on them," or "take it unto thee, for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God" (Deut. vii. 25). A strong confirmation of the view that plundering of heathen temples is denoted by ἱεροσυλεῖς is found in Acts xix. 37, when the town-clerk of Ephesus defended the Christians against the popular fury by declaring that they were not ἱεροσύλοι, that is (as he might mean) not temple-plunderers, such as ordinary Jews had the reputation of being. It has been objected against this view that there is a lack of recorded instances of such temple-plundering on the part of Jews, and that they could not have had much chance, as things then were, of thus displaying their zeal. But there may have been instances, notorious at the time, though not recorded; and, if so, the drift may be, "Thou displayest thy abhorrence of idolatry, enjoined by the Law, by acts of violence and greed, such as the very Law forbids."

Vers. 23, 24.—**Thou that makest thy boast in law, through thy transgression of the Law dishonourest thou God?** (or, *thou dishonourest God*). **For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, as it is written.** The reference is to Isa. lii. 5, where the LXX. has Δι' ὑμᾶς διαπαντὸς τὸ ὄνομά μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι. The passage is not quoted as a prophecy now fulfilled, or as in its original reference exactly applicable, but only as serving to express well how the character of the Jews had brought their very religion into disrepute (cf. Tacitus, 'Hist.,' v. 4, etc.). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a clear and final exposition of the principle, involved throughout all the previous verses, that Jewish privileges were of no profit in themselves, or without their meaning and purpose being understood and acted on. The thought now passes exclusively to circumcision, as being the original token of the covenant, and the Jew's rite of initiation into his whole privileged position (Gen. xvii.).

When *Jew* had come to be the peculiar designation of the children of the covenant, persons were said to become *Jews* by circumcision. Thus Esth. viii. 17, "And many of the people of the land became Jews," where the LXX. has, Καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν περιετέμνοντο καὶ Ἰουδάϊζον. It may be here observed that the known fact of other races as well as the Jews having practised, and still practising, circumcision is not subversive of the scriptural view of its being a peculiarly Jewish rite. For to the Jew alone it had a peculiar significance.

Vers. 25, 26.—**For circumcision verily profiteth** (not *justifieth*, but only *profiteth*: it *is* of advantage, and no unmeaning rite, if thou understandest and carriest out its meaning; it introduces thee into a state of knowledge and opportunity, and certainty of Divine favour), **if thou keep the Law: but if thou be a transgressor of the Law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?** Here, again, as in vers. 10, 11, 14, 15, the impartiality of God's dealings with all men alike is distinctly declared.

Vers. 27—29.—**And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature** (*i.e.* men in a state of nature, without any distinct revelation, or sign of a peculiar covenant) **judge thee** (thou presumest, in virtue of thy position, to judge *them*; nay, rather, they shall judge *thee*), **who by** (rather, *with*, i.e. *though in possession of*) **the letter and circumcision dost transgress the Law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter** (or, *in spirit, not in letter*. Both the nouns, πνεύματι and γράμματι, here are without the article, so as to bring out their inherent significance. See above as to ὁ νόμος and νόμος). **Whose praise is not of men, but of God.** In these two concluding verses we observe the double sense in which the term Ἰουδαῖος may be used. It denotes here one possessed of the true spirit of Judaism; in which sense the Gentile might be the better Jew. In a like double sense we may use the word "Christian" (cf. John i. 47, ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης; John viii. 39, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;" also ch. iv. and Gal. iii. 7). So, too, περιτομή for spiritual circumcision (περιτομὴ ἀχειροποίητος, Col. ii. 11), in the sense of inward dedication to God's service, and "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11; see also Phil. iii. 2, 3). Such ethical significance of the rite appears even in the Old Testament. We read there of "uncircumcised lips" (Exod. vi. 12, 30), or "ears" (Jer. vi. 10), or "hearts" (Lev. xxvi. 41); and in Deut. xxx. 6 we find the significant words, "The LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;" and in Jer. iv. 4, "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Cf. Isa. lii. 1, "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.")

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Judgment, human and Divine.* This sudden and impassioned appeal was made, in reality though not expressly, to the Jew. St. Paul imagined himself in the presence of a Hebrew fellow-countryman, whom he supposed to be listening to his burning denunciation of the vices and crimes of heathen society. Now, the distinctive characteristic of Christianity as a moral system was its insistence upon righteousness, purity, and charity of heart, and not merely of conduct; and no one more thoroughly entered into this characteristic than did the apostle himself. With quick perception, St. Paul discerned, in the mind of the Jewish hearer or reader of his first chapter, indignation and disgust springing up at the picture of moral corruption which fairly represented the state of Gentile society. But the apostle wished to prove all men under condemnation—Jew and Gentile alike; and upon the Christian principle that morality is of the heart, he was able to do this, and was justified in doing it. Hence the language of indignation with which he turns upon the Pharisee, who recoils from Gentile iniquity, who pronounces upon those guilty of it the sentence of condemnation. "Thou art inexcusable; thou that judgest doest the same things!" The appeal is instructive, as to judgment passed upon man's conduct by his fellow-men and by his God.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF MAN BY MAN. **1.** It is always fallible. For who has

knowledge sufficient to enable him to sit in judgment upon his fellow-sinners? 2. As a matter of fact, it is often unjust. For who is so perfectly upright and impartial as to be entrusted, not with judicial authority over men as agents, but with moral authority over them as accountable beings? 3. He who judges his fellow-man is liable to have his attention withdrawn from his own sins, errors, and ill deserts. He is troubled by the mote in his brother's eye, and forgets the beam which is in his own eye. 4. In the case of fallible and sinful men, the condemnation of others is always condemnation of self. "Thou art the man!" is the response which is suggested The form of wrong-doing denounced may not be the identical form by which the denouncer is chiefly tempted; but the principle of sin is one, though the forms assumed be many.

II. THE JUDGMENT OF MAN BY GOD. 1. This is always and exactly *just*; for justice is a Divine attribute; and it would be absurd to attribute to the infinitely perfect Being, the Governor of the universe, either imperfection of knowledge or partiality and respect of persons. 2. It is *not to be impugned*. "The judgment of God is according to truth;" it needs no court of revision, no court of appeal; its decisions are final and unquestionable. 3. It is *inevitable*. Foolish and ignorant must be the man into whose mind the thought can enter that the Divine judgment can be escaped.

APPLICATION. Let a man judge, not his fellow-men, but himself, lest he incur the righteous judgment of God.

Vers. 4—6.—*Long-suffering*. It is certain that we live under a moral government administered by a holy and righteous Ruler, of infinite knowledge and irresistible power. Yet there are sinful men who, while admitting this to be the case, live as if they believed that government and retribution had no reference to themselves. The apostle, in this passage, appeals to such persons, expostulates with them, and shows them the guilt and folly of disregarding the Divine Law and authority, and of presuming too far upon the Divine forbearance.

I. THE FACT OF GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING. This may be traced: 1. In human history, which abounds with examples of Divine patience with the sins of nations. 2. In the Christian dispensation, which is certainly the crowning proof of the long-suffering of the Eternal. 3. In individual experience; for no man who will be candid with himself will question that such forbearance has been exercised towards him.

II. THE ABUSE OF GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING. There are many who, instead of gratefully acknowledging Divine forbearance, and using aright the opportunity of repentance and reformation which they owe to it, despise the riches of God's long-suffering and mercy. 1. The facts upon which this abuse is founded are these: God in his nature is kind and gracious, delighting in the exercise of clemency and compassion. God in his retributive action is slow and patient, often withholding the condemnation and penalty threatened and deserved. 2. The false inferences drawn from these facts may be thus stated: *Either*, God will not fulfil the threats which he has made, will not enforce by the awful sanctions of his justice the laws which he has promulgated; *or*, *we* are for some reason exempt from the operations of God's judicial authority. This last seems to have been the belief of many of the Jews, who, because theirs was the chosen and favoured nation, believed themselves secure from the penalties which would befall the unbelieving and impenitent sinners of the Gentiles.

III. THE EXHAUSTION OF GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING. 1. It must not be forgotten that what the apostle calls "wrath," and righteous retribution, are facts in the government of the Eternal. They do not cease to be facts, because God is forbearing and kind. He can have no compromise with sin. He cannot overlook the distinction between the rebel and the loyal subject. He cannot admit to his favour and fellowship those who detest his laws and defy his authority. 2. And it is equally important to remember that the government of God is universal and impartial. It extends to all mankind. There is not one code for the Jew and another for the Gentile; one for the privileged and another for the unprivileged. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." But in this case it is vain for them to hope that they shall escape God's just censure and condemnation. All alike are guilty; and all alike, if saved,

must be saved upon the same terms—terms honourable to God, and beneficial to human nature and human society.

IV. THE PURPOSE AND USE OF GOD'S LONG-SUFFERING. After all that has been said, it must yet be insisted upon that the attribute of Deity here referred to by the apostle is a glorious and blessed attribute, and that we cannot be sufficiently grateful to God for its exercise towards us, who stand so sorely in need of it. How shall we so use it that it may be for our truest and eternal advantage? 1. Believe it, as a truth harmonizing with Divine righteousness. 2. Submit to it, as an influence inducing to repentance. 3. Act upon it, as affording opportunity for practical reformation.

Ver. 11.—*Divine impartiality.* The apostle's immediate intention in thus stating the perfect equity of the Divine government, and the utter absence of partiality from his nature and from his administration, was to remove from the mind of any Jewish hearer or reader the belief that his descent from Abraham could be of any avail in God's sight if moral and spiritual qualifications were lacking. But, as is so often the case, especially in St. Paul's writings, local and temporary references gave occasion for the utterance of broad, general, and eternal principles. The simplicity and grandeur of this assertion must appeal to the moral nature of every reader of the Epistle.

I. DIVINE IMPARTIALITY CONTRASTS WITH HUMAN PARTIALITY. However it may be with God and his government, certain it is that, both in private and in public life, men's treatment of their fellow-men has usually been marked by personal favouritism. No one can read those passages in the Old Testament referring to "gifts," *i.e.* bribes, and to "regarding the face" or the person of suitors, without perceiving how general was judicial corruption in the Oriental world. And there are allusions in the New Testament which prove to us that even the great Roman officials were not free from this taint. The prevalence of the practice of bribery, corruption, and favouritism must have suggested to the minds of ordinary men the possibility that the Judge of all regarded men's persons.

II. DIVINE IMPARTIALITY IS SUPPORTED BY CONVINCING EVIDENCE. 1. There is the testimony of the unsophisticated conscience of man. Crime, no doubt, exists and flourishes in society; and men's interests induce them to connive at its presence. But, explain it how we may, the fact is undeniable that the inner voice of reason and conscience bears witness to the justice and impartiality of God. Idolatry is indeed associated with beliefs and expedients based upon the unfairness and corruptibility of the deities held in honour or in dread. But let the idea of one supreme God take possession of men's souls, and the moral nature with which they are endowed refuses to be satisfied except by a conviction that this Being is far above what are felt to be human infirmities and faults. If there be a God, that God is just. 2. Revelation supports this conviction. There are passages of Scripture which may seem to conflict with it, but these have been misunderstood and misinterpreted, or they would have been seen to be in consistency with what is the general tenor and the express teaching of the Word of God. How many are the passages in which the offerings of the insincere are indignantly rejected, in which we are taught that external circumstances and hypocritical pretences are valueless in the sight of him who "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men"! 3. The ministry of Christ is especially emphatic upon this point. It is sufficient to refer to our Lord's rebuke of those who boasted that they were Abraham's seed; he bade them reflect upon God's ability to raise up even from the very stones of the fields children unto Abraham. And he constrained the acknowledgment from his enemies that "he regarded not the person of man."

III. DIVINE IMPARTIALITY IS EXHIBITED IN CERTAIN STRIKING PARTICULARS. 1. In judgment God is just to all. There is one law by which all are judged. In the application of that standard a righteous regard is had to the opportunities of knowledge and enlightenment afforded by circumstances; but no other consideration is allowed to enter. 2. The salvation which is by Christ Jesus is provided for all alike. God is the "Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." Christ died, not for any class, but for the ungodly, *i.e.* for all mankind, who alike needed redemption and salvation. And the heralds of the cross preached the Saviour to Jew and Gentile alike.

IV. DIVINE IMPARTIALITY AFFORDS MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS TO ALL TO WHOM THE WORD OF GOD IS PREACHED. 1. Here is a rebuke addressed to the proud, the self-righteous, the self-confident, to all who deem themselves the favourites of Heaven, and who indulge the persuasion that they are in possession of some special recommendation to the consideration of the Lord and Judge of all. 2. Here is encouragement for the timid and the lowly. They have good reason to believe that, if they are viewed with disfavour by men, on account of some supposed disadvantage or deficiency, they will not on this account be rejected by him who raiseth up those that be bowed down.

Ver. 13.—*Hearers and doers.* It is impossible to overlook the resemblance which this passage bears to words of the great Teacher uttered towards the close of the sermon on the mount. In this, as in so many places, the apostle is evidently indebted for his thoughts, and almost his very words, to the Divine Fountain of all the streams of spiritual wisdom and life.

I. A PRINCIPLE OF CONDEMNATION. 1. It is possible to hear the Law, and yet not to obey it. 2. In the case of the disobedient, the continued hearing of the Law may be the occasion of continued and even increased insensibility, indifference, and hostility. 3. Thus the very hearing and the familiarity resulting from it may become the ground of condemnation, because an aggravation of the offence. Thus the abuse of what is best leads to the worst results. The Law is holy, just, and good; but it is the severest condemnation of the rebellious and impatient.

II. A PRINCIPLE OF LIFE. 1. In the case of those who perfectly fulfil the righteous Law of God, the consequence of their perfect obedience is justification by works. It is needless to say that no member of the human race has ever fulfilled this condition. There is none whom the Law thus justifies. One only among the sons of men has fulfilled all righteousness—even the Son of God himself, who came to fulfil the Law, not only by his teaching, but in his life. 2. Yet the very violation of the perfect Law of God is the means of calling men's attention to the need and the provision of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus. 3. And in the case of those who are saved by grace, the Law of God becomes the standard of conduct, to attain which is the aim of all who are led by the Spirit of God. The whole moral life of the true Christian is an endeavour to fulfil that Law which was formerly the principle of condemnation, but has now become a principle of life.

Vers. 17—27.—*Tu quoque!* Although himself a Jew, St. Paul shows no favour to his fellow-countrymen. No sooner has he characterized and condemned the sins of the heathen, than he turns upon the Israelites to include them in the same condemnation of sin and unbelief. In this passage, where close reasoning is combined with vigorous irony, he presses home upon those Jews who censure the flagitious crimes of heathenism the sentence which justice compels them to admit as their due.

I. PRIVILEGE IS ADMITTED. 1. Hereditary advantages are undeniable. The Jew entered at birth into a heritage of favourable circumstances, belonging, as he did, to the nation distinguished by privileges at that age of the world unparalleled. 2. Acquired familiarity with the Law of God was a natural result of national privileges. From childhood, the Jew was trained to reverence God's Name, to recite God's Law, to listen to the teaching of God's prophets. 3. There resulted a position of influence and responsibility in the discharge of the obvious duty of communicating and inculcating the Divine will. The Jew was the "guide of the blind," the "instructor of the foolish," the "teacher of babes." He was the witness to the truth and to the commandments of the Eternal. Reflection may show us that we occupy, under the Christian dispensation, a similar position of privilege and responsibility.

II. UNFAITHFULNESS IS IMPUTED. 1. The crimes condemned are committed by those who condemn them. The list is indeed appalling. Upon the religious Jew are charged offences which it can hardly be supposed were all committed by one person, in one human life. Yet there is no limit to the possibility of man's hypocrisy. Theft, adultery, sacrilege, blasphemy,—such are the awful crimes and sins which are charged upon the Jews, who professed so loudly their moral superiority to their Gentile neighbours. 2. The ungodly Jew not only commits the crimes he condemns; he hinders

the cause it is his professed business to further and to advocate. To him is committed, as it were, the custody of monotheism; he is called upon to witness to the Divine nature and character, as contrasting with the conceptions of their deities cherished by the heathen. And lo! he becomes, by his immorality, the occasion of God being dishonoured, of God's Name being blasphemed among the Gentiles. The parallelism may be traced between the unfaithful Jew and the unfaithful Christian.

III. CONDEMNATION IS PRONOUNCED. 1. Privilege avails not. It is in human nature to rely upon the enjoyment of great advantages. But the truth is, that the possession of privileges heightens responsibility. No man can be saved because he pleads that the light shone brightly round about him; the question must be—Did he walk in the light while he had the light? Circumcision did not save the Jew; similarly, mere outward participation in the sacraments of Baptism and Lord's Supper will not save the professing Christian. The possession of privileges is no proof of their due and proper use. 2. The less favoured may, in character and life, excel the more favoured. The uncircumcised may keep the Law which the circumcised allows himself to break. This fact was seen and stated by the Lord himself, who continually warned his fellow-countrymen that many should come from the east and the west, and should sit down in the kingdom of God, whilst they should be thrust out. 3. The highly privileged who are unfaithful to their trust shall, it is foretold, be judged by those whose advantages have been fewer, but who have made a good use of such as they enjoyed. It must have astonished the Jew of repute and standing to be told that he should be *judged* by those of the uncircumcision. Yet this was quite in harmony with the warning of the Divine Saviour that the men of Tyre and Sidon should rise up in the judgment against the unfaithful of his generation.

Vers. 28, 29.—*The religion of the flesh exchanged for the religion of the spirit.* It is difficult for us to understand all that was meant by this assertion. The apostle was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and we know, from the general tenor of his writings, how highly he valued the religion in which he had been trained, and how warmly he was attached to the race from which he sprang. That those who remained Jews in faith, who gloried in having Abraham as their father, and who prized as their own peculiar possession the covenant and the oracles of God,—that they would experience a shock of surprise and resentment upon reading such language as this, is evident. And even those who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah for the most part retained much of their hereditary confidence in the special privileges of their nationality and their religion. Such teaching as this undoubtedly introduced a revolution into the heart of religious society—a revolution in thought, and a revolution in practice.

I. A PROTEST. There is often no possibility of avoiding conflict and opposition in expounding and maintaining the truth. Paul was certainly not the man to shrink from controversy; his was the nature of the warrior, and when he found himself face to face with error and sin, his nature was roused to its depths, his native combativeness found a congenial field of battle. And although Christianity was indeed the development and the fulfilment of Judaism, it could not but come into conflict with much which human nature had connected with Judaism by bonds not easily to be broken. Spiritual as were the intuitions of the inspired psalmists and prophets in whose writings the Hebrew people gloried, it is clear that, at the time of our Lord's ministry, religious formalism was prevalent among the Jewish leaders and the Jewish people. Scribes and Pharisees were too often hypocrites. Religion was too much an affair of ritual and ceremonial observance. Even those who drew near unto God with their lips were deserving of censure, because their hearts were far from him. Now, the four Gospels make it plain to us that the ministry of Christ was a ministry of protest against a religion of form. He would not have directed so much of his teaching against the religion of the letter, had he not seen and felt the necessity of such an attitude of opposition, such action of controversy. And, indeed, he was perfectly aware—for he knew what was in man—that the evil was one not simply of Jewish habit, but of human nature. Where is the religion, however spiritual in the apprehension of its true expositor, which has not degenerated into formalism? Man's nature is bodily as well as spiritual; his religion must express itself, or it will die; words and outward worship, organization and official action, all seem, if not essential, yet contributive to

religious life and efficiency. And it is most natural that, in the minds of the unthinking and the worldly, the symbol should take the place of the truth it symbolizes, the letter should overgrow the spirit, and officialism should substitute ministry. Certainly this is what happened in the case of Judaism. And against this the apostle of the Gentiles, in his Epistle to the Romans, raised the most vigorous protest which has proceeded from any disciple of Jesus. The seed of this protest was, indeed, sown in the teaching of the Master; but here we find that the seed was bearing fruit. The position which St. Paul occupied, the special work to which he was called, threw the burden of the protest and the controversy upon him. His ministry was hindered by the religious pedantry and bigotry of those who had been trained in the same school with himself. His large heart resented with indignation the formality, the narrowness, the pettiness, which he encountered wherever he met his fellow-countrymen in their synagogues. His commission was one which admitted of no terms, of no truce, with a religion of "the flesh," "the letter." If, as a worker, he was called upon to be the minister of Christ to the Gentiles, as a thinker it was his great vocation to exhibit the spiritual character of Christianity; and the identity of a spiritual with a universal religion must be obvious to every reflecting mind. The apostle's detestation of a merely external religion is evident all through this Epistle, equally in the doctrinal and the practical sections. To no compromise upon this point would he for a moment consent. For a Jew who was a Jew only outwardly, he had no consideration, and circumcision merely in the flesh he held in no esteem. Even in our own time there is need of a protest against a religion of forms and of custom; there is no Church which is free from the danger here intimated; for the temptation against which the inspired apostle puts us upon our guard is a temptation which gathers strength from a principle and habit deep-seated in human nature itself.

II. A DOCTRINE. Over against the protest contained in the twenty-eighth verse is the positive assertion of the twenty-ninth. A man might be a descendant of Israel, and yet might not be a Jew, in the deeper and spiritual significance which the apostle attached to the designation. There were many who boasted that they were "Abraham's seed," who had "Abraham to their father," according to natural descent, who yet lacked Abraham's faith, the true "note" of incorporation in the elect race. And, on the other hand, there were many who were deemed by Hebrews "sinners of the Gentiles," who were "children of faithful Abraham," who were numbered among the Israel of God. Circumcision was a badge of nationality, and a sign and seal of the covenant which God entered into with his chosen people; but it conferred no special grace, and the grace which it symbolized was often received in vain, for privilege and prerogative are in many cases misused. But, under the new covenant, the only circumcision which avails is that of "the heart," "the spirit." Such is the peculiar character of Christianity, which commended it to the reason and the conscience of the apostle. There are passages in abundance to be found in the Old Testament which show that the enlightened and pious Hebrews were fully aware of the spiritual nature of religion. But the words of our holy Saviour made these precious truths as "current coin" to pass amongst men. The conception of God must be spiritual; the character of worship must be spiritual; the morality of Christ's disciples must be spiritual; the religious life as a whole must be spiritual. "The letter," St. Paul assures us, "killeth; the spirit giveth life." The letter and circumcision were so largely abused by being regarded otherwise than as intended, that the apostle seems to have regarded them almost with suspicion, if not with aversion; by them, he saw, men transgressed the Law. Hence his insisting so strenuously, as here, upon the purity of the heart and the spirit. It is with the heart that man believes unto righteousness, with the spirit that he worships God; accordingly the supreme concern is that all be well *here*. Repentance, faith, consecration, hope, and love,—all are virtues of the inner nature. Where they are present, they will find expression in deeds and words; where they are absent, all deeds and words are vain. Most beautifully in accordance with this positive teaching of the apostle in this verse is the petition which in the Prayer-book is placed at the opening of the Communion Service, that God would "cleanse *the thoughts of our hearts* by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit."

III. A MOTIVE. How far St. Paul was referring to his own experience in speaking here of the praise of men as following upon the practice of formal and ceremonial

religion, we cannot say; unquestionably he was influenced by his recollection of the spirit and conduct of many with whom he had come in contact. The Lord himself had observed how those who rejected him and his teaching, and clung to the externals of Judaism, were influenced by their love for the praise of men rather than by regard to the honour which cometh from God only. Men may praise those whose professions are loud, whose conformity is rigid, whose piety is ostentatious, whose observances are scrupulous; "they have their reward." But those who are taught by the Spirit of God count it "a small thing to be judged with men's judgment." Such can look away from men's fallacious opinions and men's capricious approval, and can anticipate the acceptance and approval of him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men. For the "Israelites indeed," the "children of faithful Abraham," there is in reserve a meed of blessed recompense when "every man shall have praise of God."

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—4.—*The goodness of God.* The great object of St. Paul, in these opening chapters of Romans, is to show the world's need of a Saviour. In the first chapter he has shown the inexcusableness of the heathen, and their fallen and lost condition. But he remembers that he is writing to Jews and Jewish Christians at Rome as well as to Gentiles. He knows well the human heart. He can imagine some of his Jewish readers saying to himself, "Yes, indeed; those heathen are certainly without excuse." But St. Paul does not allow him to cherish this complacent spirit of self-righteousness very long. He seeks to bring home the truth to himself. "Therefore *thou art inexcusable,* O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou condemnest another, thou judgest also thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (ver. 1). As if he said, "It is quite true that the heathen are inexcusable. So are you. It is quite true that they have not lived up to the light they got. But have you lived up to the light you have got? Have you not come short of the Law of Moses just as much as they came short of the law of nature?" Thus the Divine Word ever seeks to turn us in upon ourselves. Thus it puts its searching questions, and lays down its searching tests. The Gentile is guilty; so is the Jew. The Jew needs repentance as well as the Gentile. It is this, as we have seen above, that makes the gospel a message for every man. It comes to our fallen humanity everywhere, and, with its message of the goodness and mercy of God, seeks to win us from the paths of sin and death to the way that leadeth to everlasting life. Hence St. Paul emphasizes here the goodness of God.

I. THE GOODNESS OF GOD, AND HOW IT IS SHOWN. The goodness of God is no new idea. It is as old as the rainbow, as old as the seasons, as old as the sunshine. So strong and deep is the conviction of the human heart about the goodness of the Supreme Being, that when our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were framing words to express their ideas, the word they chose to describe the Almighty was this very word "God," which simply means "The Good," "The Good One." So even in that early age he was regarded as the personification of goodness. Let us consider how God's goodness is shown to us. *Think of what temporal blessings he bestows upon us. Think of his goodness to our souls.* He has not left us, here on earth, to wander in the dark places of sin and sorrow, of uncertainty and despair. He has not left us, alone and helpless, to meet the king of terrors, and to step out from the darkness of a hopeless life into the darkness of an unavoidable eternity. If, on the one hand, he has given us the light of conscience and the moral law to show us our guilt, on the other hand he has given us the light of the gospel, the light of the cross of Jesus, to reveal to us our hope of safety and peace. And, then, how much he has done for each of us personally! How very mercifully God has dealt with us! We are ashamed of many things in our own lives. The memory of them haunts us like an unbidden guest, like a ghost out of the guilty past. Yet God did not cast us away from his presence, nor take his Holy Spirit from us. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Surely he must have an inexhaustible store of patience, of compassion, of mercy. Ah, yes! Paul was right when he spoke of "the *riches of his goodness* and forbearance and long-suffering."

"I know that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved,
His chastening turned me back.

"That more and more a providence
Of love is understood,
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good.

"That death seems but a covered way
Which opens into light,
Wherein no blinded child can stray
Beyond the Father's sight.

"That care and trial seem at last,
Through memory's sunset air,
Like mountain-ranges overpast,
In purple distance fair.

"That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm."

Yes, "the good hand of God," as the old Hebrews loved to call it, is shown in every circumstance and event of life. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

II. THE GOODNESS OF GOD, AND HOW IT IS RECEIVED. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?" (ver. 4). There are few professing Christians who would admit that the goodness of God is thus received by them. They would not like it to be said that they despise God's goodness. Yet must we not all admit that we do not think as much of God's goodness as we might? We take much of it as a matter of course. We forget that we have no claim on these bounties of God's providence and gifts of his grace, but rather the contrary. How little we praise him compared with what we might! How poor a return we make for his goodness by any effort or service of our lives! How poor are the offerings we make of our wealth and substance for God's cause! What is all this but in a sense to despise God's goodness? It is treating God's goodness with indifference; it is making light of it; it is looking down upon it. How indifferent we are even to Jesus Christ, God's own Son! What an evidence of God's goodness was the coming of Christ into the world—his life, his sufferings, his death! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yet with what amazing indifference and coolness this message of Divine mercy, this message of redeeming love, is received! How cold and apathetic our hearts are to the love of Jesus! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." From Jesus, the Crucified One, the King, who stands with outstretched hands waiting to receive and bless us, we turn away our hearts after the world and the things of it. Deaf to his loving voice, we turn our back upon our Saviour. We stretch forth our hands after money, and we say to it, "I will follow thee." We stretch out our hands after pleasure, and we say to it, "I will follow thee." We stretch out our hands after popular applause and the favour of men, and we say to them, "I will follow you." But, alas! how few have the gratitude and the courage to say, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest"!

III. THE GOODNESS OF GOD, AND HOW IT IS MEANT. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (ver. 4). God's goodness is intended to lead us to repentance. And what more potent influence could he use than the influence of mercy and of love? What influence is so likely to make us repent of a wrong we have done to any person than the kindness of that person toward us? If you have injured a neighbour or a friend by word or deed, and he meets you with angry words, this only tends to make you more stubborn, more hostile, than before. But if, on the contrary, you see him bear with patience your attacks, your unkind remarks, does it not tend to make you sorry for the wrong you have done him? Or perhaps he heaps coals of fire

on your head, and melts down, by deeds of kindness and a forgiving spirit, the hardness of your heart. Is it not a picture of how God deals with men? We have sinned. He has borne with us. We have stood condemned as guilty sinners in the presence of a broken Law. He has sent his own Son to redeem, to justify, to save our souls. All this God has done that he might draw our hearts from sin, that by all his overflowing goodness he might lead us to repentance. He puts before us the guilt of sin and the danger of it, the terrors of the judgment and the agony of the lost. But over and above all he puts the message of mercy. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It is this, the story of a heavenly Father's mercy; it is this, the story of a Saviour's love; it is this, the story of the cross,—that has touched the blunted conscience and melted the hardest heart, and won the most hardened sinners to repentance. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."—C. H. I.

Vers. 5—16.—"*The righteous judgment of God.*" In the previous verses we saw how the goodness of God is too often received; how there are many who despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering. It is especially to such persons that St. Paul addresses his account of God's righteous judgment from the fifth verse to the sixteenth. Those who despise God's goodness have a great fact to face. Those who live as if there was no God, who evade his commandments, who evade his offer of salvation, cannot evade his righteous judgment. As there is one event to all in the universal certainty of death, so we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. It is good even for Christians to be reminded of the judgment to come. We live too little under its power. We realize too imperfectly that one day we shall have to give an account of our stewardship. We realize too imperfectly our responsibility toward those around us. How little we enter into Paul's views of the judgment, when he said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11)! The subject of God's righteous judgment is an important one both for Christian and for sinner.

I. THE JUDGE. *He is a righteous Judge.* It is most important that, in thinking of the judgment, we should think of this aspect of God's character. "The righteous judgment of God" (ver. 5). We are not to think of the judgment as necessarily a terror in itself. It is, what the laws of human society ought to be, a terror to the evil-doer, but a praise to them that do well. If we think of the judgment with terror, the fault lies, not with God, but in ourselves. God is a righteous Judge. His judgment is a righteous judgment. There are some who cherish hard thoughts of God, who think of him as a stern and relentless Judge. For such hard thoughts there is no foundation anywhere in God's dealings with men. His character is what we should call a character of perfect fairness. His judgment will be perfectly fair. There may be some one who will say, "I did not know that such a course of action was wrong; I had not the Law of God to guide me." St. Paul meets just such a case: "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (ver. 12). The judgment will be entirely according to our opportunities and privileges. If God condemns us or inflicts punishment upon us, it will only be because we deserve it. Every man will get a fair hearing. "There is no respect of persons with God" (ver. 11). Every man will get a fair chance. Those who have the Bible in their hands cannot say that they have not had a fair chance. We have all got the offer of salvation. We have all heard of the love of Jesus. We have all heard the invitations of the gospel. What could God have done for us that he has not done? He has done all he could do for our salvation, when "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He has done all he could, so long as man remains a free agent, to warn us to flee from the wrath to come, to win our hearts to himself. He is slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and yet he will by no means clear the guilty. He gives us every chance, that by his goodness he may lead us to repentance. It may be observed here that the idea of righteousness is so bound up in the idea of the judgment of God, that St. Paul uses one word in the original to express what we describe by two words—"righteous-judgment."

II. THE PERSONS JUDGED. That judgment no one can escape. "Who will render to *every man* according to his deeds" (ver. 6). Many escape here on earth the just reward of their deeds. Gross crimes are perpetrated, and the murderer escapes the just sentence of the law; the defrauder and the betrayer and the slanderer occupy positions of respectability in life. But they go down to the grave with their sins upon their soul, to pass on into the presence of that tribunal from which earthly rank and earthly wealth can purchase no escape. As the apostle tells us in the eleventh verse, "there is no respect of persons with God." God looks upon the heart; he looks upon the motives; he looks upon the character. Thus regarding men, thus judging them, he sees but *two classes*. What are these? The rich and the poor? No. The learned and the unlearned? No. The Christian and the heathen? No. The Protestant and the Roman Catholic? No. In God's sight it is character and conduct—not country, or class, or creed—that divide men. St. Paul speaks of the two classes thus: "Every soul of man that doeth evil" (ver. 9), and "Every man that worketh good" (ver. 10). Or, again, he describes them, "Those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality" (ver. 7), and "Those that are contentious [or, 'self-seeking'], and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" (ver. 8). To one or other of these classes every one of us belongs.

III. THE EVIDENCE. Here again we see how righteous will be the judgment of God. There will be no circumstantial evidence needed, however strong its chain of many links may often be. There will be no need to depend on the testimony of others. There will be no danger of the Judge being led astray by the impassioned pleading or the fallible logic of a human advocate. *Our own deeds will be there to speak for themselves.* "Who will render to every man *according to his deeds.*" Ah, how solemn is the thought that we are now writing the evidence by which we shall be judged on the judgment-day! In the red sandstone there are found, in some places, marks which are clearly the impressions of showers of rain, and these so perfect that it can even be determined in what direction the shower inclined, and from what quarter it proceeded —and this ages ago! So also scientific men have been able to trace out from the fossil remains, buried for ages in the earth, the shape and characteristics of animals whose species are long since extinct. So our deeds leave their record behind them, and that record in the judgment-day will testify to what our character was when we were here on earth. *The judgment-day will be a day of revelation* (ver. 5). It will reveal the righteous judgment of God. It will unveil many mysteries in God's dealings which we did not understand before. *It will reveal the true character of men.* Then "God shall judge the secrets of men" (ver. 16). Then shall all hidden things be brought to light, all deceits discovered, all hypocrisies unmasked. Then, too, shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Their character, often here hidden under a cloud, often misunderstood, often misrepresented, shall then be vindicated for all eternity and before all the world. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." This also makes God's judgment a righteous judgment, that the evidence shall be the evidence of men's own deeds.

IV. THE RESULT OF THE JUDGMENT. *To some will be given eternal life* (ver. 7). That will be to those who have lived according to the light they had. No mere profession will save us. Neither will our own good works save us. But our works are the evidence whether or not we are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; those whom God's goodness has led to repentance; those who have kept his commandments; those who have not been weary in well-doing, but "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality;" those who have denied themselves, and taken up their cross and followed Christ;—they "shall have right to the tree of life, and shall enter through the gates into the city" (Rev. xxii. 14). *To others—oh, what a dark future!* "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" (vers. 8, 9). God's judgment is a righteous judgment. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." The apostle speaks of "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath" (ver. 5). That is what every one is doing who goes on in the path of unbelief, impenitence, disobedience, godlessness. What folly to lay up a treasure like that!—C. H. I.

Vers. 17—29.—*True religion.* Most men want to have a religion of some sort. If

they do not want to have it while they live, yet, recognizing the importance of eternity and the judgment, they want to have it before they die. Hence men who never think of religion in their hours of health and activity, will send for the minister when they are on a bed of sickness. Hence you have such cases as that of the great Emperor Charles V. of Germany, who had been a man of war and restless ambition almost all his days, retiring into a convent for the closing years of his life, and seeking within its cloistered walls that preparation for eternity which he had so long put off. But we want a religion not merely to die with, but to live by. After all, it is but a poor religion which a man puts on as if it were to be his shroud. What, then, is true religion? Where is it to be found? The answers are so various and so contradictory as to perplex the earnest seeker after truth. Old ecclesiastical systems contend that theirs, and theirs only, is the true religion, and in consequence of that belief, and in order to make others conform to it, they have persecuted, and imprisoned, and tortured, and burned those who differed from them. Then, in our own day, we have little companies of sincere and well-meaning people breaking away from all existing Churches, claiming for themselves that theirs only is the true religion, and excommunicating all others. But we come here as immortal souls, seeking after truth, and we turn from all human answers on the question of religion to the one infallible guide of faith and practice—the Word of God. That Word is the lamp to our feet, and the light to our path. I come, then, to this Divine Word; I come to the Father of my spirit; I come to Jesus, the Saviour and the Teacher of the world; I come to the Spirit of truth; and, as a humble and unworthy sinner, I ask this question—*What is true religion?* The answer to that question is given by the apostle in the verses now before us.

I. WHAT TRUE RELIGION IS NOT. 1. *True religion is not observance of the sacraments.* "What!" some one may say, "you tell us that the sacraments are of Divine appointment, that a sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, and yet you tell us that religion does not consist in the observance of the sacraments!" Even so. Christ instituted the sacraments. But what for? As a means to an end. As the symbols, the outward signs, of spiritual truths. They are helps to religion. They teach us the foundation of all true religion—the death, the sufferings, the cross of Christ, as set forth in the Lord's Supper. They teach us the meaning of true religion—the cleansing and purity and change of heart, as set forth in the sacrament of baptism. But they are not in themselves true religion. If they were, would not more stress be laid upon them? St. Paul says here, "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the Law" (ver. 25); and again, "Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" (ver. 28). The outward ordinance, though it signified, did not create or cause a change of heart. Observe the attitude of our Saviour himself towards the sacraments. We read that "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John iv. 2). If the sacrament of baptism had such regenerating power as is attributed to it, the Saviour would surely have used it on every possible occasion. We may notice also how St. Paul speaks of baptism in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." St. Paul did not think that religion consisted in the observance of the sacraments, or he would have put the sacraments in the very forefront of his work. Yet how many are resting entirely on the sacraments! They have been baptized. They have been regular communicants at the Lord's table, and therefore they think they are Christians. Ah! religion is something more than this. The sacraments will not save our souls. We need something more than the observance of sacraments, if we are to enter into the kingdom of God. 2. *Religion does not consist in the observance of any outward forms.* "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly" (ver. 28). In the verses from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth, the apostle shows how many who are called Jews, and make their boast in the Law, are among the chief transgressors of the Law. Through breaking the Law they had dishonoured God; so much so, that the Name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by reason of their conduct (vers. 23, 24). Although St. Paul was a Jew himself, he was a candid and impartial observer of human life, and he found that Jews, like other men, were guilty of dishonesty and impurity and other sins. They had the Law, but instead of living up to it, they trusted to the

form of religion instead of the reality. Paul shows them the uselessness of this. *The form is useful along with the reality. But without the reality the form is utterly useless.* "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the Law: but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (ver. 25). It is just as if he said to a professing Christian, "Your profession of religion is right, is useful, if you show the spirit and obey the teachings of Christianity; but if your life is in opposition to that spirit and teaching, then your Christianity is no better than heathenism." "Faith without works is dead." 3. *Religion is not to be regulated by the opinions of men.* "Whose praise is not of men" (ver. 29). The religion which our Saviour found among the Jews in his time was very much a worship of human opinion. Their leaders taught for commandments the traditions of men. The Pharisees and scribes gave their alms and said their prayers to be seen of men. Their object was to have praise of men. And Christ tells us "they have their reward." Such a religion reaches its end in this life. It has no aim, and it certainly will have but poor results, in the life that is to come. It has always been an injury to true religion when it has been influenced too much by the opinions of men. It was so in the history of the Jewish religion, when the kings of Israel corrupted it by their desire of imitating heathen nations. It was so in the early Christian Church. The more the Church came under the control of the state, under the control of human authorities, the more worldly it became, the further it departed from the simplicity and spirituality of apostolic times. Thank God for the clear-headed, Christian-hearted men, who in all ages have resisted the intrusion of human authority and human opinion in matters of religion. Such men were the Waldenses in Italy, the Reformers in Germany and England, France and Spain, and the brave Covenanters of Scotland. It is a great principle, worth dying for, worth living for too, that religion is not to be regulated by the opinions of men. Human influence, human authority, human rank, are of little account in this matter. This is true as regards the Church of Christ, and it is true also as regards the individual.

II. WHAT TRUE RELIGION IS. 1. *Religion is a matter of the heart and spirit.* "He is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter" (ver. 29). Religion, therefore, is a personal matter. The outward form is useless without the internal reality. We want *inward Christians*—Christians in heart, Christians in spirit. All other Christians are useless, and worse than useless. They are deceiving others, and perhaps they are deceiving themselves. We want Christians whose everyday life is a song of praise, who meditate on God's Law day and night, who walk not in the company of evil-doers, who sit not in the seat of the scornful, and who commune with God in silent but earnest prayer. As I stepped one day into the office of a leading man of business in New York, I noticed over his desk a portrait of a citizen who, as he afterwards told me, had been a dear friend of his own. Beneath the portrait were words so beautiful that I got the owner's permission to copy them: "Whose face was a thanksgiving for his past life, and a love-letter to all mankind." It is Christians like that we want, who carry in their heart and on their face love and gratitude to God, and also love to men. Christians like that would soon transform the Church. Christians like that would soon transform the world. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." 2. *Religion is to be regulated by the commandments of God.* There is no true religion where there is not obedience to the Law of God. "Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?" (ver. 23). Whether in doctrine, or worship, or practice, God's Word is to be our guide, and to please God is to be our aim. "Whose praise is not of men, but of God" (ver. 29). We are too much influenced, even in matters of religion, by the opinions of men. While our religion is to influence us in our dealings with our fellow-men, and while we are to influence them so far as we can by the power of true religion, we are not to permit men to dictate to our conscience, or to regulate our doctrines or our worship. That is a matter between God and our own souls. Whether men will praise us or whether they will blame us, matters very little, if we are serving God as his Word and our own conscience direct. From all the clash and conflict of human opinion, let us turn for light and guidance to him who is the Light of the world.

"Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight.
Cease from man, and look above thee;
Trust in God, and do the right."

May we earnestly and diligently cultivate this true religion. "For he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one 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."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—11.—*Without excuse.* Hitherto Paul had carried his Jewish reader with him, for the Jews were glad to condemn the Gentiles. From the high tribunal of their Law they "judged" the misdeeds of the heathen. And, in the exercise of this censorious spirit of judgment, they would perhaps catch at the idea (ch. i. 20) that the heathen were without excuse by reason of their possible knowledge of God. But how quickly does the relentless logic of the apostle turn back this truth upon themselves! "Without excuse," because they might have known God's will? "Wherefore *thou* art without excuse, O man that judgest!" For the very judging implied a knowledge of the wrong, and by that knowledge they were self-condemned. We have here—the false hope of the Jew; the just judgment of God.

I. THE FALSE HOPE OF THE JEW. The Jew was greatly privileged, and God had shown him marvellous mercy. On either of these grounds, or both, he looked for exemption from judgment and wrath. 1. The chief hope of the Jew was founded upon the election of grace; he was called from among the nations to subserve a special purpose of God, and he fondly thought that he was called to security and bliss. He was singled out for service; he thought that he was singled out for inevitable salvation. He reckoned to escape altogether the judgment of God; he proudly deemed himself exempt by his very birth even from an inquiry into character. 2. But if perchance not quite so blind to spiritual claims, yet did not God's very goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, the wealth of which had been lavished upon the Jew, incline him to a careless ease, which was virtually presumptuous contempt? God had taught his wrath against unrighteousness, but he had also shown his mercy. Why not riot in the mercy. The old apology of God of the human heart, "God is good; he will forgive."

II. THE JUST JUDGMENT OF GOD. But "let God be true, and every man a liar!" Neither pride of birth, nor the affluence of God's love, shall be security against just judgment. 1. *God's judgment is true.* (Ver. 2.) It proceeds upon the eternal principles of right; therefore an exemption on the ground of privilege, "respect of persons," is impossible. "The righteous God trieth the hearts" (Ps. vii. 9). 2. *God's true judgment condemns the evil and rewards the good.* (1) Now: "is against them that practise such things." (2) "The day shall declare it:" manifested judgment. There is an "end" towards which all things are tending—an end which shall also be a beginning. Reason and revelation point to this. The law of future retribution is the same with the law of present judgment: "to every man according to his works." According to what a man is in himself shall he be regarded by God. And the deeds declare the man. So, then: (*a*) To the good, "eternal life," "glory, honour, peace;" (*b*) to the evil, "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish." 3. *God's goodness, therefore, does but seek to prepare the way for the exercise of judgment.* He must condemn the evil, both now and then, and therefore he will seek to lead men from their evil that he may not condemn. The doctrine of justification is wrapped up in this; for if God can but change a man's self, the obliteration of the past is provided for in Christ. The deep damnation of those who think to pervert such saving love; instead of a wealth of love, there shall be a wealth of wrath for them!

Let us learn the danger: of a blinded conscience—because we, forsooth, are "Christians," therefore we are saved! and of a hardened heart—God's very love, if we will not read its meaning, may be our death. Eternally, and without any exception, "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7).—T. F. L.

Vers. 12—24.—*Law and guilt.* God, as the Judge, is utterly impartial. But how, then, shall the differences between Jew and Gentile, especially in respect of the Law, be dealt with in that day? Sin shall be judged, condemned, in Jew or Gentile.

The Gentile shall perish according to the measure of his sin; the Jew according to the measure of his. For law must pass into life, otherwise it is void and useless, save for condemnation. We have here—the Gentiles and the Jews in their respective relations to Law; and the supreme sin of the Jews.

I. THE GENTILES AND THE JEWS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE RELATIONS TO LAW. The Gentile might have pleaded that his ignorance should save him; the Jew certainly did assume that his knowledge would save *him*. Paul will lay to their charge "that they are all under sin" (ch. iii. 9), and to this end he now shows that they are all under law before God. 1. *Gentiles.* (1) The law of instinctive impulse: "by nature;" "a law unto themselves." A correct and complete philosophy of the religious nature and relations of man seems almost impossible to us now; but doubtless we must recognize here the fact that man has still, more or less, the native impulses of righteousness moving in the heart, which but for the Fall would have been perfect and all-containing in us, and but for the redemption would have been altogether lost. This, then, is one part of man's primal constitution as a moral and religious being; he is moved to love and serve God, and to work righteousness, by an original instinct of his nature. Hence heroism, generosity, etc., in ancient and modern world. God works in man, and so far forth man does not suppress God's working. (2) The law of reflective consciousness: "their conscience bearing witness therewith;" "their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." Man does not show his true moral nature till the instinct of the heart is obeyed with the intelligent approbation of the reflective consciousness. The instincts of the heart, so far as they approach completeness, afford the essential contents of the moral law; but it is for man to discern, embrace, and obey. And, till righteousness is wrought thus of deliberate choice, it may scarcely be called righteousness. For there are other impulses, which may lead to wrong; and, till the discerning judgment has checked the native impulse, there is hardly moral worth in the one more than in the other. The "thoughts" must excuse or accuse; then the will may act. 2. *Jews.* But man's heart is corrupt and man's mind is dark by reason of hereditary sin; therefore to the Jews God gave, in trust for the world, a Law, to correct and confirm the law of the heart and mind. The coincidence of the Law of Sinai with the true law of the heart and mind; the convincing authority of that Law, in its Divine power of awakening and purifying the law within. Hence to the Jew there was added the Law of revelation. He was doubly taught his duty.

II. THE SUPREME SIN OF THE JEWS. But to what end was the Law given, whether of nature or of revelation? To teach righteousness. And therefore the man who wrought unrighteousness, according to his knowledge of the Law, whether Jew or Gentile, frustrated the purpose of God, was under condemnation, and would "perish." Yet the Jew gloried in his enlightenment, oblivious of its purport and intent! 1. *The Boast.* (1) Personal. (*a*) His name—"a Jew." Called by God, indeed, but for work rather than privilege. He perverted his call by a narrow, selfish exclusion. (*b*) Resting upon the Law. Knowledge was safety, he thought; whereas knowledge was duty (see vers. 18, 20). (*c*) Glorying in God: a merely national God to him, and One who would merely "save." (2) Relative. (*a*) Guide of the blind. (*b*) Light of them that are in darkness. (*c*) Corrector of the foolish. (*d*) Teacher of babes. 2. *The shame.* (1) Inconsistency (vers. 21—23). (2) Crime (vers. 21—23). (3) Blasphemy (ver. 24). *Their* God indeed; what must he be!

Our higher privilege, in the matter of law: Christ, and the Spirit. Our graver peril: orthodoxy, and the name of Christian. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46).—T. F. L.

Vers. 25—29.—*Symbolic religion.* Closely involved in the Jew's boast of his name and Law and God was his glorying in circumcision, the outward sign of the covenant of the Law. This leads the apostle to enunciate the law of symbolic religion, and to assert the supreme value of a true spiritualism.

I. SYMBOLIC RELIGION. The law of all symbolism in religion is wrapped up in the words, "Circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the Law." That is, the sign is of worth just in so far as it leads to, and attests, the thing signified. 1. *Personal value.* Man's nature is complex, and the spiritual and the sensuous react on each other. Hence a definite, tangible sign may help the spirit. So circumcision: God's

people. So baptism and the Lord's Supper now. 2. *Relative value.* An attestation of spiritual truths can be emphasized by an outward sign. So circumcision spoke forcefully to the heathen around, and so perhaps baptism and the Lord's Supper have such use now.

II. A TRUE SPIRITUALISM. That, however, which is educative and attesting has no intrinsic worth. Hence: 1. *The unvalue of mere symbolism:* a childish trifling. Nay, worse—a perpetual condemnation, mocking the reality with the shadow. 2. *The supreme value of true spiritualism.* If the lesson is learnt, and the witness borne, the work is done; for "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him," etc. So the man of circumcised heart was the true Jew; the man of baptized spirit, and who feeds upon Christ by faith, is the true Christian.

Let us learn, in the best sense, "Thou God seest me."—T. F. L.

Vers. 4, 5.—*Long-suffering abused.* How prone we are to censure others for what we ourselves are guilty of without remorse! Men delude themselves, either hoping somehow to escape condemnation, though others shall be judged, or else making light of judgment because it has not fallen on them as yet. The apostle wonders at the prevalence of this strange alternative. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

I. THE KINDNESS OF GOD TO SINNERS. *Its abundance.* The apostle uses his favourite word to exhibit the munificence of God; his "riches" of every sort, and enough for the whole creation, are ceaselessly, profusely bestowed. His *temporal bounties* enrich their lives. The children are so engrossed with the enjoyment of the gifts as to forget to uplift thankful smiles to the parental Giver. His *spiritual mercies* should be remembered. The Gentiles have the warning voice, the guiding light of conscience, to preserve from error and ruin; yet is this token of Divine care frequently slighted and even hated, as Zechariah was slain by Joash. It was no slight favour that blessed the Jews with the "lively oracles;" and Christians may well prize the unsearchable riches of gospel truth. 'Tis when we are anxiously seeking the right way we are most sensible of our helplessness, and welcome the aid of the Word and Spirit. God's kindness is especially visible in *the length of the day of grace* vouchsafed. The apostle puts it negatively and positively—God's "forbearance" in restraining his thunderbolts of wrath, and his "long-suffering" in the painful endurance of sin in his dominions. We have tried his patience. He bears long with an evil generation, suffers their manners to go unpunished all these years. Even the souls under the altar echo the complaint of earth, "How long, O Lord, holy and true?"

II. THE INTENT OF THIS KINDNESS. None of God's gifts is without meaning. To use them rightly, to improve them, is the recompense he seeks. His *forbearance is designed to change men's lives.* Reflection begets repentance, the grieving over past follies, the resolution to forsake them, and the actual turning to a godly life. *He gives men time to alter.* He is "long-suffering, not willing that any should perish." See this in years while the ark was a-preparing, in the period of prophecy before the Captivity, and in the interval between the Day of Pentecost and the day of judgment. Men have prayed God to spare their lives in the hour of peril, and the moments after rescue have blotted out the memory of his mercy and their vow. *He employs agencies adapted to this end.* His revelation and the admonitions of the Spirit, preachers, and providences, have been directed towards arousing the lethargic, rebuking the careless, forcing them to trace a connection between sin and destruction. *He woos them to a better life by his goodness.* He is drawing them as with a magnet, so that if they repent not it is because they resist his "leading."

III. THE TREATMENT THIS KINDNESS TOO OFTEN RECEIVES. *Contempt.* Men scoff at the idea of retribution awaiting them, arguing final impunity from the arrival of present donations that speak of the Creator and Preserver's benevolence. They mistake his slowness to strike for incapacity. His unwillingness to destroy is imputed to inability. *Contempt is a sign of ignorance.* "Not knowing that," etc. It is the foolish who display brazen hardihood; the wise man makes light of no threatening storm. *Such ignorance is blamable.* The source of it is the "hardness and impenitence of the heart." "Their eyes have they closed, and their ears are dull of hearing, because the heart of this people is waxed gross." The Scriptures would drive us from every refuge of lies,

would make us ashamed of our behaviour that we may mourn and amend. There is no hope of reformation as long as the pachyderm of self-complacency is not pierced with the compunction of responsibility.

IV. THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCE TO THE IMPENITENT. *They aggravate their punishment.* The pent-up storm bursts with the greater fury. The more the advantages, the weightier the account demanded; the longer the time granted for amendment, the severer the castigation for wasted opportunities. Men "treasure up" wrath for themselves. Character indurates, like the writing on clay tablets hardened in the sun. No possible excuse can be found where the day of grace has passed unused. *A dreadful contrast*, to accumulate a store of wrath instead of profiting by the riches of God's goodness. The money of heaven was placed at men's disposal; but, throwing this away as rubbish, they made their own counterfeit coins, and are punished for their treason against the King's government. Trifle not with sin when thou seest its present disastrous results, but calculate thence the "wrath of the Lamb," when gentleness has been spurned and maltreated, and goodness must give place to severity. The smoothly gliding river of God's long-suffering, if barred out of thy heart by closed gates, will swell to a mighty torrent, sweeping thy frail obstructions away to ruin.—S. R. A.

Vers. 6—11.—*A righteous Judge.* That the anticipation of a judgment rises naturally in the mind is shown by the present testimony of conscience—a law recognized as in, yet above us, and by the utterances of heathen writers on morals. The Scriptures corroborate and clarify this conception. The apostle asserts of the future what Abraham felt of the present Providence, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Will he slay the righteous with the wicked?" Note some particulars confirming the righteousness of God's judgment.

I. THE RECOMPENSE WILL BE PROPORTIONED TO MEN'S DEEDS. Not their professions, but their acts, will determine their destiny. And the character and number of their acts will be reckoned. There is no conflict between this statement and other Scripture passages which speak of the reward as one of grace, not of merit, and as a gift bestowed on all Christians. For the reward will be immensely greater than men's deeds deserve, and will not be earned by them, but conditioned by their conduct. The gospel comes not as a substitute for, but as a help to realizing, practical righteousness; and whilst every justified believer will be saved, each will have the praise that is his, according to his works of faith and labours of love.

II. THE JUDGMENT WILL TAKE ACCOUNT OF MEN'S AIMS IN LIFE. The one class seek "glory, honour, and incorruption," and also "peace." Their choice does them credit; they selected what is fair and lovely and permanent, what is opposed to the rule of the flesh, and is unaffected by the ravages of time. Their goal is not the "vain pomp and glory of the world;" not simply success, but to reach a position of pure, lasting excellence. And they shall receive in fullest measure what they desire. "Eternal life" comprehends all blessedness—deliverance from the thraldom of sin; no need to gather up the skirts lest defilement ensue, for the very streets of their city shall be of pure gold; enwrapment with the Divine splendour; walking in the light of God; manifested as his sons by the likeness they wear; elevated to princely employments and regal dignities. The objects for which the other class strive are not definitely stated, but may be gathered from antithesis and from the unrighteousness to which they yield themselves. They seek not "peace" and "truth," and their harvest likewise is the multiplied outcome of the seeds they have sown. No description of hell can transcend the awful picture of "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish," resting upon the soul; that, clasping unrighteousness to its bosom as a prize on earth, finds it sting like a serpent and burn with fiercest remorse when allowed full sway in its "own place."

III. THE AWARD WILL BEAR RELATION TO THE METHODS BY WHICH THE OBJECTS OF EARTHLY ENDEAVOUR HAVE BEEN PURSUED. A righteous aim can be permanently attained only in righteous ways. The recognition of this stamps the government of the universe as moral. The "patient continuance" of the one class could only be practised by the well-doing. It includes passive endurance and active perseverance; the stationary posture of the caryatides, and the carrying of a burden in the face of wind and storm. The other class are described as "factious," quarrelling with their lot, coveting pleasure and notoriety, "working evil." Refusing to bow to the yoke of truth,

they become the slaves of unrighteousness; and a hard master and terrible paymaster does unrighteousness prove. The judgment of God will proceed on easily intelligible principles. It is not difficult for men to decide whether they are working good or working evil. It is not reaching a conclusion after abstract speculation, nor holding a creed with multitudinous details. Only an omniscient Judge, however, could bring to light the hidden deeds of darkness, the secret thing, good or bad.

IV. THE JUDGE WILL OBSERVE RIGOROUS IMPARTIALITY. With him "is no respect of persons." Jew and Greek shall be tried with due regard to the presence or absence of religious light (cf. Acts x. 35 in the history of Cornelius). It is impossible to bribe the almighty Arbiter or to overawe his tribunal. The anticipation of a Divine judgment has been a comfort to the oppressed, remembering that "One higher than the high regardeth;" and it will be a terror to the worker of iniquity, and an incentive to all noble deeds. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." None can complain that their condition makes it impossible to be patient in well-doing. Christ, our Pattern and our Power, offers his "very present help" to all who find the stress and strain of life too severe for mortal strength.—S. R. A.

Ver. 21.—*A sermon to teachers.* The apostle supposes a Jew to have listened complacently to the long catalogue of crimes of which the heathen world has been guilty—crimes which blacken the lip to mention. And then the apostle turns strategically round upon the self-satisfied possessor of a Divine revelation to put the scathing inquiry, why he has not been freer from violations of the moral law. Advantage entails responsibility; it was inconsistent to eagerly proselytize to a religion which the preacher observed more by precept than by example. A lesson here for all teachers of the Word: let their instructions mould their own lives!

I. THE WORK OF TEACHING. 1. *Its possibility.* It presumes that some are able and willing to teach, and that others are equally in a position to learn. Knowledge begets the desire of communication to others; truth by its dissemination enriches all, leaves none the poorer. The possession of the Scriptures constitutes a capacity in those who study to explain their meaning to others less happily situated for meditation. Besides the preachers of the gospel from the pulpit, we have a noble army of volunteers sacrificing their ease each Lord's day to impart to the young what they themselves have learned of Christ. And the youthful mind is plastic, its heart easily impressed. 2. *Its importance.* Education is a work of beginnings, of seed-sowing, of filling the pockets with treasure in the shape of facts and principles to be afterwards used, applied, recognized, in fulness of meaning. The mind must be fed as well as the body, or we have dwarfed, stunted souls, miserable and corrupt. To neglect the garden is to fill it with weeds. We insufficiently value acquisitions whose worth cannot be tabulated in monetary figures. Of what priceless value is a new happy inspiring thought of God! To be led where we can get a better sight of Christ and his salvation, is surely a service for which we can in no wise adequately thank or pay our guide. 3. *Its difficulty.* Some hesitate to teach unless they can answer every objection which may be urged against the truth they enforce. And on religious subjects there is no end to the queries which may be started. There are many adverse influences preventing the ready reception of the facts and doctrines of Christianity, or checking the subsequent advance in learning. Recall our Lord's parable of the sower, and its picture of the multiform ways in which sin works against the leaven of the truth. There is a roseate and there is a practical view of Sunday school work. Yet, whilst we would not forget the restlessness of the young, and the far aim of making them "wise unto salvation" so frequently hindered by unlovely homes, neither should any despair, but remember they are wielding the sword of the Spirit, and that to God all hearts are open. Let preachers think of the Lord and his apostles as failing to conquer the opposition and win the assent of all their hearers, and, instead of renouncing toil, remember that they are not responsible for success, but only for effort.

II. THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF TEACHING ON THE TEACHERS. 1. *Incites to their own culture.* There is the felt necessity of being in advance of the learners. The more we know and the more thoroughly and clearly we understand it, the greater the enjoyment and the success of the work. We often take pains for the sake of others which we should reject for ourselves. How can we teach if we do not instruct ourselves?

There ought to be no sad hiatus between our declarations and our spiritual conduct. We must not only be finger-posts, but guides—"lest, having preached to others, we ourselves become castaways."

"The lore of Christ and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himself."

If we are the channels of good to our fellows, it behoves us to clear away all that might impede the flowing, and defile the purity of the stream of truth from God. 2. *Necessarily promotes their own improvement.* Earnest sincere teaching not only demands self-culture and progress, but is certain to result therein. All Christian service is self-rewarding.

"Thou shalt be served thyself, by every sense
Of service which thou renderest."

Teaching clarifies our own views, enforces truth upon our own souls. Many a teacher has enjoyed prayer and realized the sweetness and significance of the Scriptures most when preparing the lesson for his scholars. The Divine plan for oblivion of our own sorrows is to become saviours to the helpless, physicians to the sick. The outrush of Christian benevolence protects against the inflow of corroding cares or pleasures.—S. R. A.

Vers. 28, 29.—*Heartfelt religion.* Religion may be conceived of as external or internal. According to the former view, we regard the religious man as one who in the sight of others observes the ceremonies of religion, attends Divine service, and conforms to the outward ordinances of Scripture. According to the latter view, we think of the heart of the man as moved by inward impulses, affected by certain sentiments, forming religious resolves, and conscious of holy affections.

I. A GENERAL MISTAKE CORRECTED: THE PRONENESS OF MANKIND TO LAY THE STRESS OF RELIGION UPON OUTWARD OBSERVANCES. The Jew grounded his self-satisfaction upon his initiation into the covenant by circumcision; upon his religious dress, with its phylacteries and fringes; upon his prayers, fasting, and tithes. The heathen religion consisted mainly in superstitious ceremonies, sacrifices, and incantations. And the people's query to John the Baptist, "What shall we *do*?" like the jailor's request of Paul, "What must I *do* to be saved?" shows this natural tendency, which begets in our day nominal Christianity; that contents itself with baptism and the Lord's Supper, reading the Bible, and subscribing to societies. Their religion ends there—mere formalism. Its causes may be found in the following circumstances. 1. We are under the governance of the senses. We like, and need to a certain extent, the visible signs and seals of religion, and thus run the risk of exalting unduly their importance. Resting in the embodiment, we neglect the spiritual significance. 2. It saves the trouble of investigating our spiritual condition. Definite rules please us, by relegating to codes or authorities the difficulty and weariness of understanding principles, and deciding as to times and degrees and dispositions of religious service. 3. The rites may be performed without necessarily renouncing pleasurable vices. There is a sort of compromise effected, such and such duties condoning such other laxities. Even asceticism is easier than rigorous inward control and mortification. To depreciate internal religion is evidently wrong: (1) From the whole tenor of Scripture in many places. Even the Law of Moses affirmed the necessity of loving God with all the heart and soul. The prophets constantly denounced sacrifices which represented no moral feeling, no inward confession of sin or respect to the glory of God. (2) The intent of religious observances is as means to an end, and to stop at the means is to frustrate the aim of ceremonies, which are designed to purify our conceptions of righteousness, to strengthen our aspirations after the noble and the good, and to leaven the whole life with godliness.

II. A WRONG CONCLUSION OBVIATED: THAT EXTERNAL OBSERVANCES MAY BE DISREGARDED. It is man's habit, as Butler has remarked, when two things are compared, to fancy that the one adjudged less preferable may be wholly neglected. "These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." The practice of religion demands some outward rites. 1. Expression is helpful to our thoughts. Singing increases thankfulness; written vows stamp themselves on the memory. And the

symbolic acts of a religion thus lend impressive definiteness to our inward decisions. 2. The union of Christians is assisted by participation in the same rites. Attending the same gatherings, affixing the same badge to the breast, cements the conviction of brotherhood, and renders co-operation possible. 3. The honour of God is subserved by outward worship and confession. His glory is in revelation, and by visible adoration the Church reflects his radiance and becomes the light of the world. There is a moral obligation resting on the disciples of Christ to respect the institutions he himself established.

III. THE TRUE RELATION OF EXTERNAL TO INTERNAL RELIGION. 1. *The external observance must be the outgrowth of the inward condition.* The sign of a change of heart or disposition. The profession is designed as an index to the soul, a dial-plate of the inner workings; otherwise it is false and worthless, a mockery and an injury. Hence the anxiety of the gospel method to reform and renew the heart, that from a pure spring pellucid rills may flow. "Make the tree good, and its fruit will be good also." Even moral acts have no beauty in them if performed from unworthy motives. To give merely because we are importuned, or to head a subscription list, is not liberality. 2. *When there is a conflict between moral duties and religious observances, then only can the latter be neglected.* Whilst both are commanded, the moral obligations have the additional sanction of arising from the light of nature. Our Saviour showed that it was better to rescue an ox or a sheep than to keep the sabbath. He declared the Pharisees not to understand the statement, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." They did not perceive that the general spirit of religion consists in piety and virtue, as distinguished from outward forms and regulations. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

IV. THE DIVINE APPROVAL WHICH CROWNS A TRULY RELIGIOUS LIFE. "Whose praise is not of men, but of God." The supreme object is to please him who alone can really see our thoughts and aims, and judge righteous judgment. Men praise where they should blame, and censure when they ought to approve. As Paul cried, "I appeal unto Cæsar," so we may appeal unto God. His praise is worth having. The degrees in his university mean merited honours. All our inward strivings against temptation and struggles to hold fast to faith in his Word he has witnessed. Human eyes can only discern our failures or our seeming successes, but Christ's "eyes of flame" test the gold of our actions. And the commendation of the Lord implies blessed reward, to be publicly conferred hereafter. With him is no inadequacy of testimonials to express his sense of his people's services.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—16.—*The leading principles regulating the general judgment.* Having stated so clearly the state of the Gentile world as under God's wrath, the apostle now introduces to us a critic who endorses the Divine dealings. He is a *severe* critic, as guilty men will often be. His spirit towards the heathen world, so manifestly under the Divine curse, is, "Serve them right." He is evidently a *Jew* (cf. ver. 17). Criticizing the heathen world from the platform of superior privileges, the Jew concluded that they had got no more than they deserved. The apostle, however, ventures to tell him he is as "inexcusable" as his Gentile brother. If the Gentile had so misused "the light of nature" and of "conscience" as to become so degraded, why has the Jew so misused the additional light of God's Law as to become so self-righteous? God will not judge the secrets of men upon any narrow and partial grounds, but will dispense judgment fairly. The section now before us presents the leading principles of the Divine judgment in a most masterly fashion.

I. GOD'S JUDGMENT IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH. (Ver. 2.) The apostle declares to his self-righteous critic that he is sure—the Revised Version gives it "know"—that God's judgment in the cases already referred to is according to truth (κατὰ ἀλήθειαν). By this we are to understand that it is according to the reality of the things in question. That is to say, the Divine judgment is not based on appearances, it does not rest on superficial grounds, but goes down to the very nature of things. And this is a general principle characterizing God's judgment always. Men may judge according to the appearance, but God looketh on the heart, and dispenses to each individual what he deserves. Now, we could have confidence in no other judgment than this one which conforms to the reality and nature of things. If we are able to analyze fairly God's

dealings with sinful men, we shall find that his *severe judgments* have always had *sufficient reason*. In the present instance, the critic vindicates the Divine procedure. As he declares the Gentiles to have suffered rightly, he really becomes the champion of God, although in doing so he, as the apostle shows, condemns himself.

II. GOD'S JUDGMENTS MAY BE PRECEDED BY A DISPENSATION OF FORBEARANCE. (Vers. 3—5.) While God's judgments when executed are truthful and thorough, they may not be executed immediately. In the case of the Jew under review by the apostle, God has been exercising amazing forbearance. Although the recipient of superior privileges, he has been sinning just as really as his Gentile brother, and wholly misinterpreting the Divine forbearance. God, by his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, has been leading him to repentance, to a thorough change of character and heart (*μετάνοια*); but he will not be led, but insists on regarding all this forbearance as *merited* on his part. His heart still continues hard and impenitent (*ἀμετανόητον*), so that he is really treasuring up wrath for himself which shall be revealed at the day of judgment. And this solemn warning should be heeded by many. There are many still who interpret forbearance as approval; who think highly of themselves because they have been exempt from suffering; who base upon their good health, good fortune, and general comfort the mistaken conclusion that God must contemplate such people with a large amount of complacency. But it is forbearance he is exercising, and no justification could be extended to such self-righteous individuals.

III. REWARD AND PUNISHMENT WILL BE METED OUT EVENTUALLY ACCORDING TO EACH MAN'S DEEDS. (Vers. 6—10.) To the apostle's eye men resolved themselves into two classes: one class was seeking, by patient continuance in well-doing, glory and honour and immortality; the other class was contentious, not obeying the truth, but obeying unrighteousness (*ἀδικία*). Now, to the one, reward will be given in the form of all that is implied by "eternal life;" while to the other shall be meted out in strict proportion "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Just as, in a well-ordered state, the doer of evil is punished and the doer of good rewarded, so will it be, only with infallible accuracy, under the government of God. Now, at first sight, it seems hard to reconcile a judgment according to works with a justification by faith alone; but if we will only consider the fruits of justification, in those good works which God hath before ordained that his people should walk in them (cf. Eph. ii. 8—10), we can see that the scheme of grace can yet include a reward proportional to work. Let us grant at once that all the work got out of the believer is divinely prompted, that it is the outcome of grace, nevertheless it has its moral value in the universe of God and deserves reward. Besides, as the judgment-scene in Matt. xxv. shows, the servants that are welcomed and rewarded receive their reward with wonder. Just as magnanimous minds, when some acknowledgment of their valuable labours is offered, declare it to be beyond their deserts, and feel what they declare, so the rewarded well-doer at the last will be the first to acknowledge that the reward rests, not on any absolute merit, but on abounding grace. On the other hand, the evil-doers will acknowledge that the "indignation and wrath, the tribulation and anguish," have been fully earned and richly deserved (cf. Jonathan Edwards's 'Works: Occasional Sermons,' Nos. vii., viii.). And if we inquire how those who have died in infancy, and those who have been saved as by fire at life's last moments, like the dying robber at the side of Christ, are to fare at a judgment based upon works, we have only to reply that their history *after death* has doubtless attested the gracious Spirit which was given them, and will justify their reception into the joys of eternal life.

IV. GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL BE WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS. (Ver. 11.) In speaking of this reward and punishment according to works, the apostle is careful to note that each will be "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (*Ἕλληνι*): for there is no respect of persons (*προσωπολημψία*) with God." The reason why the Jew comes first in the order of judgment is that he has had all along such superior privileges as make his judgment all the more serious matter. If he has not profited by these privileges his judgment shall be all the more severe—he shall be beaten truly with many stripes; and if he profited, his reward shall be all the more glorious. The Gentile, or Greek, on the other hand, with nothing but natural light, shall find himself judged fairly, although it must needs be a *secondary* matter under a beneficent government like God's. For he does not accept the persons of men. He is not influenced in his judgment by

personal claims. He puts away the idea of merit in individuals, because all are guilty before him, and bases his judgment upon the one consideration of *state*, with its resultant outcome, either good works or bad. Now, this was what a Jew found it hard to accept. He thought, as a thorough-bred Jew, he ought to be accepted. It must have been a great humiliation to have to take up a position beside ordinary men, and have no store set by his person at all.

V. GOD'S JUDGMENT WILL BE ACCORDING TO THE LAW, WRITTEN OR UNWRITTEN, WHICH EACH MAN HAS RECEIVED. (Vers. 12—15.) The Gentiles shall not be held accountable for an outward and written revelation which has never come into their hands, but only for that law of conscience which God has written on their hearts. For this law revealed in their nature, and the use they made of it, they shall be justly held responsible. Nor shall the tracing of the law of conscience to utilitarian or animal sources in the least degree diminish human responsibility. The question is not—How has this inward law and monitor come into existence? but—What use has each man made of it, come as it may? And so the heathen shall be beaten, though with few stripes, for their neglect of the inward law. They shall in many cases perish, even though they had not the privilege of a written law. Conscience has had a Divine source, no matter how long it has taken to develop; and God will call all men into judgment for the use of it. On the other hand, those who have had the Law written and delivered shall be judged by it. For the Scriptures come to reinforce the conscience, and to reveal the mercy of the Lord. In such circumstances it is surely just that those who receive "the oracles of God" should be held responsible for the use and profit they have made of them. If they have been a dead letter to them, then God will justly punish their neglect of them. Such men shall be beaten with many stripes, because they might have known and ought to have done their Lord's will.

VI. THE GENERAL JUDGMENT WILL BE CONDUCTED BY JESUS CHRIST. (Ver. 16.) God the Father will commit to his only begotten Son the duty of judgment. And here we see the wondrous equity of the Divine Being. This Second Person of the Trinity has added to his Divine knowledge a human experience. He has been in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He knows the human problem *experimentally*. He can consequently enter into our case more thoroughly than if he had never assumed our nature. And so he does not judge from above, or from outside, but from within, and can enter into the secrets of the human heart. Hence this general judgment is to be upon the most equitable principles, and by the most capable of judges. How important, then, that we cultivate the acquaintance of him who is to have us at his judgment-bar! Not that we may bribe him, but that he may prepare us for that thorough investigation which lies before us. If we make a "clean breast" of all to him, if we acknowledge our sin and shortcoming, if we ask him for a clean heart and a baptism of his Holy Ghost to enable us to live for his glory and our fellows' good, then he will help us to a better life, and enable us, so far from dreading his judgment-bar, to "love his appearing." May the day of judgment break brightly on us all, for his own Name's sake!—R. M. E.

Vers. 17—29.—*The Jewish world.* In our last section we saw how the apostle takes the Jewish critic through the leading principles of the Divine judgment. In doing so, he had a practical end in view. He meant to bring home to the Jewish heart the fact of sin and danger, and thereby to lead the censorious, self-righteous Jew to humiliation and salvation through Christ alone. The present section contains the pointed application of the principles to the Jewish case. And here we have to notice—

I. THE POSITION ASSUMED BY THE JEWS AS THE DIVINELY ENLIGHTENED LEADERS OF MANKIND. (Vers. 17—20.) The apostle states the Jewish assumption admirably. They were proud of their *name*: "Thou bearest the name of a Jew" (Revised Version). But this was because they had received the Law; and so they "rested in" or "upon the Law;" they made their possession of the Law the basis of their confidence and tranquillity. Their notion was that men entrusted with such a literature had nothing in the world to fear. Moreover, it was from God, and why should they not regard themselves as his favourites, and "make their boast" about him? And the book did not remain unread; they sought from it a "knowledge of his will;" were able, consequently, to exercise judgment "regarding things that differed" (δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα); and

received a general enlightenment through the Law. Not only so, but they believed in their mission; they were to be guides of the blind, lights to those in darkness, correctors (παιδευτὴν) of the foolish, teachers of babes, having at least the form (μόρφωσιν) of knowledge and of truth in the Law. In short, the Jews set themselves at the head of humanity as the qualified leaders and instructors of mankind. Now, it is a great assumption for any men to make. Yet the Jews were not singular in their assumption. It is made daily by men with far less reason, perhaps, than they. The leaders of thought, "the men of light and leading," who profess to know how much is given us to master, and how much remains "unknowable and unknown," must accept of the reasonable judgment of their less pretentious fellows, and, as superior persons, must be amenable to morals. By their fruits we shall know them. By their lives we shall be able to estimate the value of their principles. If they are benefactors of their species, if they promote the real welfare of mankind, well and good. If they are hindrances, then they cannot resist being condemned. It is this line the apostle adopts in this passage.

II. THE PRETENTIOUS TEACHERS WERE, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE GREAT HINDRANCE TO THE DISSEMINATION OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE. (Vers. 21—24.) The first fact Paul dwells on is that these Jews preached too little to themselves. They fell into the error of teaching others what they did not feel inclined to practise themselves. And so he catalogues certain sins of which he knew them to be guilty. It would seem that they stole, committed adultery, were guilty in heathen temples of sacrilege, and, in short, led such unworthy lives as to make God's Name a reproach and ground of blasphemy among the Gentiles. The morality of the teachers thus became the great hindrance to the acceptance of Divine truth. Now, there can be little doubt that the crimes of professed Christians constitute in heathen lands to-day a chief obstacle to the reception of the gospel; missionaries meet this difficulty constantly. But we ought to apply the canon to the pretentious teachers of our time, and it will be found that their lives are morally defective when judged by the standard of the gospel they affect to despise. The morality of a George Eliot, a G. H. Lewes, or a J. S. Mill, who affected to be moral teachers of their time, will not bear any very close inspection; and even those of the same school, whose lives are outwardly blameless, fall far beneath the self-sacrificing enthusiasm which Christianity fosters, and in multitudes of cases secures. The test is sure and infallible. Men and women that are morally easy-going, that are practically selfish and indifferent in large degree to the circumstances and suffering of their fellows, are unfit to be the teachers of their generation. And their teaching is as sure to prove a failure in the end, as the teaching of Judaism was among the Gentiles.

III. THE JEWS HAD A FALSE CONFIDENCE IN THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION. (Ver. 25.) Their notion was that circumcision constituted something like the "hall-mark" on real silver, and distinguished them from all the mere electro-plating of the Gentiles. They thought that immoral conduct could not obliterate the value of the fleshly rite. This is the mistake made by all who lay undue emphasis upon rites and ceremonies. They fancy they have a value altogether independent of moral states and moral living. The apostle has consequently to draw attention to the fact that circumcision only profited one who kept the Law. It was then a sign of the covenant, and was taken along with the perfect obedience to the Law which had been rendered. But if a circumcised person turned out a Law-breaker, the circumcision really passed into uncircumcision. In other words, the Jew could break the covenant seal by breaking the Law of the covenant. This is a very solemn and weighty truth. It has its application to the covenant signs of the Christian dispensation. It is perfectly possible for persons who have become members of the visible Church, by a course of reckless living to break their covenant sign, and to be in God's sight disfranchised. Let no undue value be assigned to rites and ceremonies. They cannot be separated from moral states and conditions.

IV. THE JEWS IGNORED THE POSSIBILITY AND EXISTENCE OF THE CIRCUMCISED IN HEART. (Vers. 26—29.) If a circumcised person may forfeit his position as in covenant with God by breaking the Divine Law, on the other hand, an uncircumcised person, a Gentile, may so keep God's Law as to be entitled to a position in covenant with him. His uncircumcision in such a case, Paul maintains, should be counted or "reckoned for circumcision." Here the apostle is contending for the admission of Gentiles to the visible Church without the necessity of circumcision. Many a Gentile,

like Cornelius, or like the centurion in the Gospels, put to shame the less earnest and less devout Jews. The high morality of such men was a standing condemnation (κρινεῖ) of the pretentious Jew. Accordingly, Paul proceeds to affirm that the circumcision of the heart, not the mere circumcision of the flesh, is the all-important matter. There is a circumcision of the heart which checks the unholy tendencies within, and secures the reality, of which outward circumcision is but the type. Of it God, the Searcher of hearts, is the true Judge. He rejoices in it, and regards those whohave submitted to it as his true people. The circumcised in flesh may secure praise from men, but the circumcised in heart look for approbation to God only. It is for us all to seek the inward and spiritual circumcision, the true sign of membership in God's invisible kingdom.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1—8.—(2) *Certain objections with regard to the Jews suggested and met.* In this passage, before proceeding with his argument, the apostle meets certain objections that might be made to what has been so far said. Some difficulty in determining his exact meaning arises from the concise and pregnant form in which the objections are put and answered, and from fresh ones arising out of the answers, which have also to be met. The objections are from the Jewish standpoint, though not put into the mouth of an objecting Jew, but rather suggested as likely ones by St. Paul himself. To the original readers of the Epistle, who were familiar with the tone of Jewish thought, the sequence of the ideas would probably be more obvious than to us. Reserving special consideration of successive clauses for our exposition of each verse, we may, in the first place, exhibit thus the general drift.

*Objection* 1 (ver. 1). If being a Jew, if circumcision itself, gives one no advantage over the Gentile, what was the use of the old covenant at all? It is thus shown to have been illusory; and God's own truth and faithfulness are impugned, if he is supposed to have given, as conveying advantages, what really conveyed none. (This last thought, though not expressed, must be supposed to be implied in the objection, since it is replied to in the answer.)

*Answer* (vers. 2—4). (1) It was not illusory; it did convey great advantages in the way of *privilege and opportunity;* this advantage first, not to mention others, that "the oracles of God" were entrusted to the Jew. And (2) if some (more or fewer, it matters not) have failed to realize these advantages, it has been their fault, not God's. It is man's unfaithfulness, not his, that has been the cause of the failure. Nay, though, according to the hasty saying of the psalmist, *all men* were false, God's truth remains; nay, further, as is expressed in another psalm (Ps. li.), man's very unfaithfulness is found to commend his faithfulness the more, and redound to his greater glory.

*Objection* 2 (ver. 5). Based on the last assertion. But if man's unfaithfulness has this result, how can God, consistently with his justice, be wrath with us and punish us for it? Surely the Jew (whose case we are now considering) may claim exemption from "the wrath" of God spoken of above, his unfaithfulness being allowed to have served only to establish God's truth and to enhance his glory.

*Answer* (ver. 6—8). I have suggested this objection as though the matter could be regarded from a mere human point of view, as though it were one between man and man; for it is true that a man cannot justly take vengeance on another who has not really harmed him. But such a view is inapplicable to God in his dealings with man; it does not touch our doctrine of his righteous wrath against sin as such. I can only meet it with a μὴ γένοιτο. For (1) it would preclude God from judging the world at all, as we all believe he will do. Any *heathen* sinner might put in the same plea, saying, Why am I too (κἀγὼ) judged as a sinner? Nay, (2) since it involves the principle of sin being evil, not in itself, but only with regard to its consequences, it would, if carried out, justify the

odious view (which we Christians are by some falsely accused of holding) that we may do evil that good may come.

Vers. 1, 2.—**What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much** (πολὺ, a neuter adjective, agreeing with τὸ περισσὸν) **every way** (not *by all means;* the meaning is that in all respects the position of the Jew is an advantageous one): **first** (rather than *chiefly*, as in the Authorized Version. One point of advantage is specified, which might have been followed by a *secondly* and a *thirdly*, etc. But the writer stops here, the mention of this *first* being sufficient for his purpose. Others are enumerated, so as to elucidate the purport of κατὰ πάντα τρόπον, in ch. ix. 4, 5) **for that they** (the Jews) **were entrusted with the oracles of God.** The word λόγια (always used in the plural in the New Testament) occurs also in Acts vii. 38; Heb. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 11. Of these passages the most apposite is Acts vii. 38, where the Divine communications to Moses on Mount Sinai are spoken of as λόγια ζῶντα (cf. Numb. xxiv. 4, 16, where Balaam speaks of himself as ἀκούων λόγια Θεοῦ). Some (as Meyer), in view of the supposed reference in the following verse to the Jews' rejection of the gospel, take the word λόγια here to mean especially the revealed promises of the Redeemer. But neither the word itself nor its use elsewhere suggests any such limited meaning; nor does the context really require it. It may denote generally the Divine revelations of the Old Testament, which, for the eventual benefit of mankind, had been entrusted exclusively to the Jews.

Ver. 3.—**For what if some** (τινες. The expression does not denote whether many or few; it only avoids assertion of universality of unbelief (cf. ch. xi. 17; 1 Cor. x. 7), though it is implied in the following verse that, even if it had been universal, the argument would stand) **did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?** Alford renders ἠπίστησαν "were unfaithful," taking it in the sense of being "unfaithful to the covenant, the very condition of which was to walk in the ways of the Lord, and observe his statutes;" and this on the ground that the apostle is not as yet speaking of faith or the want of it, but, in accordance with the idea of the preceding chapter, of ἀδίκια (ver. 5) and moral guilt. But the meaning of words must not be forced to meet the views of interpreters; and we observe that ἀπιστεῖν and ἀπιστία are ever elsewhere used in their proper sense to denote want of *faith* (cf. Matt. xiii. 58; xvii. 20; Mark vi. 6; xvi. 11, 14, 16; Luke xiv. 11, 41; Acts xxviii. 24; ch. iv. 20; xi. 20, 23; 1 Tim. i. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 13). Still, it is to be observed that in the passage before us ἀπιστία in man is opposed to πίστις in God, so as to suggest a more general sense of ἀπιστία than mere *unbelief*. In view of this opposition, we may adopt the rendering of the whole passage in the Revised Version: "What if some were without faith? Shall their want of faith," etc.? Meyer and others, understanding (as said above) by λόγια the Divine oracles which were prophetic of Christ, refer ἠπίστησαν exclusively to the disbelief in him on the part of the majority of the Jews at the time of writing. But the aorist tense of the verb, as well as the context, is against the idea of such reference, at any rate exclusively. The context, both in ch. ii. and the latter part of this chapter after ver. 9, certainly suggests rather reference to the failure of the Jews throughout their history to realize the advantage of their privileged position; and this failure might properly be attributed to their want of faith, to the καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας (Heb. iii. 12); cf. Heb. iii. 19; iv. 2, together with ch. iv. 11. Ἀπιστία in these passages is regarded as the root of ἀπείθεια. On the other hand, the whole drift of ch. xi. in this Epistle—where the *present* ἀπιστία of the chosen people shown in their rejection of the gospel is spoken of as not hindering, but furthering, the righteous purpose of God, and redounding in the end to his glory—suggests a like reference here. And it may have been in the apostle's mind, though, for the reasons above given, it can hardly be the only one in the passage before us.

Ver. 4.—**God forbid** (there is no better English phrase for expressing the indignant repudiation of μὴ γένοιτο): **yea, let God be true** (γινέσθω ἀληθὴς; *i.e.* "let his truth be established;" "*Fiat*, in judicio," Bengel), **but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.** We can hardly avoid recognizing a reference to Ps. cxvi. 11 in "every man a liar," the words of the LXX. being exactly given, though the general purport of that psalm does not bear upon the present argument. The apostle takes this phrase from it as expressing well what he wants to say, viz. that though *all* men were false (in the sense expressed and implied by the previous ἠπίστησαν), yet God's truth stands. But it only leads up to the second quotation from Ps. li., which is the important one, introduced by καθὼς γέγραπται. In its final words, νικήσῃς ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε, the LXX. is followed (so also Vulgate, *cum judicaris*), though the Hebrew may be more correctly rendered, as in the Authorized Version, "be clear when thou judgest." The κρίνεσθαι

of the LXX. may be understood passively in the sense of God being called to account, as men might be, for the justice of his dealings; or, perhaps, in a middle sense for entering into a suit or controversy with his people. Κρίνεσθαι means "going to law" in 1 Cor. vi. 1, 6 (cf. also Matt. v. 40), and in the LXX., with especial reference to a supposed *controversy* or *pleading* of God with men, Jer. xxv. 31; Job ix. 2; xiii. 19. (See also Hos. ii. 2, Κρίθητε πρὸς τὴν μητέρα ὑμῶν.) The meaning of this concluding expression does not, however, affect the main purport of the verse, or its relevancy as here quoted. Occurring in what is believed to be David's penitential psalm after his sin in the matter of Uriah, it declares, in conjunction with the preceding verse, that, sin having been committed, man alone is guilty, and that God's truth and righteousness can never be impugned. But it seems to imply still more than this, viz. that man's sin has the establishment of God's righteousness as its *consequence*, or even, it may be, as its *purpose*; for the conclusion of ver. 4 in the psalm, naturally connected with "against thee only have I sinned" preceding, is so connected by ὅπως ἄν (in Hebrew, לְמַעַן); and it is not out of keeping with scriptural doctrine that David should have intended to express even Divine *purpose* in that he had been permitted, for his sins, to fall into that deeper sin *with the view of* establishing God's righteousness all the more. It does not, however, seem certain (whatever some grammarians may say) that the conjunction need of necessity be understood as *telic*; it may be *embatic* only. However this be, it is the inference from ὅπως ἄν that suggests the new objection of the following verse.

Vers. 5, 6.—**But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?** (so the Authorized Version; rather, *brings the wrath upon us* (ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν), with reference to the Divine wrath against sin, spoken of above). **I speak after the manner of men. God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?** The purport of this reply appears sufficiently in the paraphrase given above. But the intended bearing on the argument of ver. 7 is not at once apparent.

Ver. 7.—**For if the truth of God in my lie abounded to his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?** One view is that this is a continuation or resumption of the question of ver. 5 on the part of the Jew, its drift being the same. But the word κἀγώ, as well as the position of the verse after πῶς κρινεῖ, etc., suggests rather its being intended to express that any one throughout the world, as well as the Jew, might plead against deserved judgment, if the Jew's supposed plea were valid. Nay, in that case, the apostle goes on to say, he, or any of us, might justify all wrong-doing for a supposed good end. Why not?

Ver. 8.—**And not** (*i.e.* why should we not say), **as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose** (*i.e.* of those who do say so) **condemnation is just.**

Vers. 9—20.—(3) *The testimony of the Old Testament to human sinfulness.* Objections having been thus raised and met, the apostle now confirms his position, that all mankind, Jew as well as Gentile, are under sin, by adducing the Scriptures of the Jews themselves.

Ver. 9.—**What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved** (or, *charged*, as in the Vulgate, *causati sumus*) **both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.** The meaning of the first part of this verse has been much discussed. We may observe: (1) Τί οὖν seems to be rightly separated (as in Authorized Version) from προεχόμεθα because of the form of the answer to the question, οὐ πάντως: after τί προεχόμεθα; we should expect οὐδέν. (2) The Jews, with whom St. Paul identifies himself, must be supposed to put the question; not the Gentiles, as some have supposed. For there is nothing in the context to suggest the Gentiles as the speakers, nor does what follow suit the supposition. (3) The main question is as to the sense of προεχόμεθα, which occurs here only in the New Testament, and has, therefore, to be interpreted from consideration of the sense of which the verb is capable, and the probable drift of the argument. Some have taken it as a passive verb, with the meaning, "Are we surpassed?" *i.e.* are we Jews in *worse* case than the Gentiles on account of our greater privileges? The active verb, προέχειν, in the sense of "to excel," being both transitive and intransitive, its passive may be used in the same sense. An instance quoted in commentaries is κατ' οὐδὲν προεχομένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Διός (Plut., 'Mor.'), "cum Jove minores non sint." So the recent Revisers, though dissented from by the American Committee. The strong objection to this interpretation is that there has been nothing so far even to suggest any *superiority* of the Gentile to the Jew, and that what follows does not bear upon any such idea. Thus to interpret would be to sacrifice the sense to supposed grammatical exigence, which, after all, is uncertain. Taking, then, προεχόμεθα as the middle voice, we have two interpretations before us: either, with Meyer, to render, *Do we put forward*

(anything) *in our defence*?—which he maintains (though not conclusively) to be the only proper sense of the middle verb—or (as in the Authorized Version), *Are we better* (i.e. in better case) *than they*? This rendering, though it gives essentially the same sense as if προέχομεν (intransitive) had been written, is commended by its suitableness to the course of argument, and the middle voice may, perhaps, be accounted for as denoting the Jews' supposed claim of superiority for themselves. Thus the connection of thought is plain. The conclusion of ch. ii. had left the Jews on the same footing with the Gentiles before God in respect of sinfulness. But then objections had been raised on the ground of the acknowledged privileges of the chosen people; and such objections have been met. The apostle now sums up the result: What, then, is the state of the case? Have we any advantage to allege? No, not at all in the sense intended; the previous argument stands; and he proceeds to confine his position from the testimony of the Old Testament itself.

Vers. 10—18.—**As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one** (Ps. xiv. or liii.). **Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit** (Ps. v. 9); **the poison of asps is under their lips** (Ps. cxl. 3): **whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness** (Ps. x. 7): **their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known** (Prov. i. 16 and Isa. lix. 7): **there is no fear of God before their eyes** (Ps. xxxvi. 1). These texts are from various unconnected passages of the Old Testament, quoted from the LXX., though not all accurately. They seem to be put together from memory by way of showing the general scriptural view of human depravity. It may be said that they do not establish the apostle's position of *all* men being guilty; for that they are for the most part rhetorical rather than dogmatic, that most of them refer only to certain classes of men, and that the righteous are spoken of too, and this in the sequence of even the most sweeping of them all (that from Ps. xiv. or liii.), which does, literally understood, assert universal sinfulness. Any such objection to the cogency of the quotations may be met by regarding them as adduced, not as rigid proofs, but as only generally confirmatory of the apostle's position. See, he would say to the Jew, the picture your own Scriptures give you; observe their continued testimony to human depravity: and the main point of all the quotations is that which is brought out in the next verse, viz. that they had reference, not to the Gentile world, but to the chosen people themselves.

Vers. 19, 20.—**Now we know that what things soever the Law** (ὁ νόμος here for the Old Testament generally as the embodiment and exponent of the Law) **saith, it speaketh to them that are under the Law** (not to the world outside, but to those within its own sphere): **that every mouth** (the Jew's as well as the Gentile's) **may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Because by works of law** (νόμος here suitably without the article; see on ch. ii. 13) **shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for through law is knowledge of sin.** In this concluding verse the apostle briefly intimates the reason of law's inefficacy for justification, anticipating, after a manner usual with him, what is afterwards to be more fully set forth, as especially in ch. vii. The reason is that law in itself only defines sin and makes it sinful, but does not emancipate from it.

Vers. 21—31.—(4) *The righteousness of God, manifested in Christ and apprehended by faith, is the sole remedy, and available for all.* The position enunciated in ch. i. 18 being now sufficiently established, the apostle enters here on his main argument, announced in ch. i. 17.

Ver. 21.—**But now** (νυνὶ here may have either its temporal sense of *at the present time*, or its logical sense of *as things are*. For its use in the latter sense, cf. ch. vii. 17; 1 Cor. v. 11; xiii. 13; xv. 20) **the righteousness of God without law** (*i.e. apart from law*) **is** (or, *has been*) **manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets.** On the essential meaning of *God's righteousness* (Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη), see on ch. i. 17, and Introduction. This passage, in which the thesis of ch. i. 17 is formally enunciated, is consistent with this meaning; in confirmation of which observe vers. 25, 26, where δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ evidently means God's own righteousness, as also above, ver. 5. If this view is correct, there is no need to follow commentators into their discussions of the significance of χωρὶς νόμου in supposed connection with the idea of man's *imputed* righteousness; such as whether it is meant to declare justification through Christ to be *without the aid* of the Law—"sine legis adminiculo" (Calvin)—or to exclude all legal *works*, done before, or even after justification, from any share in the office of justification. However true these positions may be, what is said here seems simply to mean that God's righteousness has been manifested in Christ in a different way,

and on a different principle, from that of law. The principle of law is to enjoin and forbid, and to require complete obedience; but law, even as exhibited in the Divine Law of the Jews, has been shown to fail to enable man thus to attain to δικαιοσύνη; therefore, apart from this exacting principle, the righteousness of God is now revealed to man, embracing him in itself. The absence of the article before νόμου here, and its insertion in the latter clause of the same verse, where the Mosaic Law is definitely referred to, is fully explained by what has been said above under ch. ii. 13. *Being witnessed*, etc., is introduced parenthetically by way of intimating that this manifestation of God's righteousness, though "apart from law," is not in any opposition to the teaching of the Law and the prophets, being, in fact, anticipated by them. The proof of this appears afterwards in ch. iv.

Ver. 22.—**Even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ unto all** (*and upon all* is added in the Textus Receptus, but ill supported) **them that believe: for there is no distinction.** We observe that the expression here used is not ἡ διὰ πίστεως, but simply διὰ πίστεως. Thus διὰ πίστεως does not naturally connect itself with δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ as defining it, but rather with εἰς πάντας which follows, and perhaps with reference to the πεφανέρωται of ver. 21 understood. The idea, then, may be still that of God's own righteousness, manifested in Christ, *unto* or *towards* all believers, who through faith apprehended it and became sharers in it. When St. Paul elsewhere speaks of the believer's *imputed* righteousness, his language is different, so as to make his meaning plain. Thus ch. iv. 6, ᾧ ὁ Θεὸς λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην; iv. 13, διὰ δικαιοσύνης πίστεως; v. 17, τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης; ix. 30, δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ πίστεως; Phil. iii. 9, τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. What we contend for is simply this—that the phrase δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ means God's own righteousness, which, manifested in the atoning Christ, embraces believers, so that to them too righteousness may be imputed (ch. iv. 11).

Ver. 23.—**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.** The "glory of God," of which all men are here said to come short (ὑστεροῦνται), has been taken to mean (1) *honour or praise from God.* "Dei favore et approbatione carent" (Schleusner). So decidedly Meyer, Tholuck, Alford, and others. In this case Θεοῦ would be the *gen. auctoris*, which Meyer argues is probable from its being so in Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη. This argument (which is not worth much in any case) tells the other way if, as we hold, it is not so in the latter phrase. For the New Testament use of δόξα in the sense of "praise" or "honour," 1 Thess. ii. 6 is adduced (Οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐν ἀνθρώποις δόξαν); also John v. 44 (Δόξαν παρὰ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες, καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου Θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε); and especially John xii. 43, where δόξα is, as here, followed by the genitive Θεοῦ without any connecting preposition: Ἠγάπησαν γὰρ τὴν δόξαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων μᾶλλον ἤπερ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ("the praise of God," Authorized Version). But, even apart from the different, and in itself more obvious, meaning of the phrase, δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ, where it occurs elsewhere, it is at least a question whether in the last cited passage it can be taken to mean praise or honour *from* God. It comes immediately after the quotation from Isa. vi. 9, etc., followed by "These things said Esaias, when he saw *his glory* (τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ), and spake of him." Hence the meaning of John xii. 43 may probably be that the persons spoken of loved *mundane* glory (cf. Matt. iv. 8; vi. 29) rather than the *Divine* glory, seen in the vision of faith, manifested to the world in Christ (cf. John i. 14, "We beheld his glory," etc.), and "loved" by those who have not the eyes blinded and the heart hardened. So, even in the previous passage of St. John's Gospel (v. 41, 44), ἡ δόξα ἡ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ may denote man's participation in the Divine glory, rather than praise or honour, while δόξα παρὰ ἀλλήλων may mean the mundane glory conferred by men on each other. These considerations commend, in the passage before us, the interpretation (2) "Significatur ipsius Dei viventis gloria, *vitam* tribuens (cf. ch. vi. 4); ad quam homini, si non peccasset, patuit aditus: sed peccator ab illo fine suo excidit, neque jam eum assequitur, neque gloriam illam, quæ in illo effulsisset, ullo modo tolerare potest: Heb. xii. 20, *et seq.*; Ps. lxviii. 2; quo fit ut morti sit obnoxius: nam gloria et immortalitas sunt synonyma, et sic mors et corruptio. *Absunt a gloria Dei*, i.e. a summo fine hominis aberrarunt. At justificati recuperant spem illius gloriæ. Vid. omnino c. v. 2, 11, 17; viii. 30, etc." (Bengel). Further, the sense which the same expression seems evidently to bear in ch. v. 2 of this Epistle is of importance for our determination of its meaning here. We are not justified in understanding, with some interpreters, any specific reference to the "image of God" (cf. 1 Cor. xi. 7, εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) in which man was created, and which has been lost by the Fall, there being nothing to suggest it, or, with others, *exclusively* to the future glory, since the present ὑστεροῦνται seems to denote a present deficiency. The general conception appears sufficiently plain in Bengel's exposition above given, according to which "the glory of God" means the glory of the Divine righteousness ("complurima ejus virtus et

divinitas," Bengel on Heb. i. 3), which man, through sin, falls short of.

Vers. 24—26.—**Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.** Δικαιούμενοι agrees with πάντες in ver. 23. "Repente sic panditur scena amœnior" (Bengel). Δωρεὰν and τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι are opposed to the impossible theory of justification by *law*. And, as *all* sinned, so *all* are so justified *potentially*, the redemption being for *all*; cf. especially ch. v. 18. But *potential* justification only is implied; for the condition for appropriation is further intimated by διὰ τῆς πίστεως following. The means whereby it becomes *objectively* possible is "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Here, as throughout St. Paul's Epistles, and in the New Testament generally, the doctrine of *atonement* being required for man's justification is undoubtedly taught, Christ being viewed as not only manifesting God's righteousness in his life, and reconciling believers through his influence on themselves, but as *effecting* such reconciliation by an atoning sacrifice. The word itself (ἀπολύτρωσις) here used may indeed sometimes denote *deliverance* only (cf. ch. viii. 23; Luke xxi. 28; Eph. i. 14; iv. 30; Heb. xi. 35); but certainly, when used of the redemption of man by Christ, it implies *atonement* by the payment of a *ransom* (λύτρον or ἀντίλυτρον); cf. Eph. i. 7; 1 Cor. vi. 20; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Rev. v. 9; Matt. xx. 28; the ransom paid being said to be *himself*, or (as in Matt. xx. 28) *his life*; Τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. It does not follow that all conceptions of schools of theology as to *how* the atonement was efficacious for its purpose are correct or adequate. It must, from the very nature of the subject, remain to us a mystery. It may be enough for us to believe that whatever need the human conscience has ever felt of atonement for sin, whatever human want was expressed by world-wide rites of sacrifice, whatever especially was signified by the blood required for atonement in the Mosaic ritual,—all this is met and fulfilled for us in Christ's offering of himself, and that in him and through him we may now "come boldly to the throne of grace," having need of no other. Προέθετο in ver. 25 ("set forth," Authorized Version), may bear here its most usual classical sense of *exhibiting to view* ("ante omniam oculos possuit," Bengel); *i.e.* in the historical manifestation of the Redeemer. It may, however, mean "decreed," or "purposed" (cf. ch. i. 13; Eph. i. 9). The word ἱλαστήριον seems best taken as a neuter adjective used substantively, there being no instance of its application in the masculine to a person. Its ordinary use in the LXX. (as also Heb. ix. 5) is to designate the lid of the ark (*i.e.* the mercy-seat), the noun ἐπίθεμα (which is added Exod. xxv. 17; xxxvii. 6) being supposed to be always understood, though the usual designation is simply τὸ ἱλαστήριον. Hence most commentators, including the Greek Fathers generally, understood ἱλαστήριον in this sense here, Christ being regarded as the antitype of the mercy-seat, as being the medium of atonement and approach to God. The main objection to this view is that it involves an awkward confusion of metaphors, it being difficult to regard him who was at once the Victim whose blood was offered, and the High Priest who offered his own blood, *at* the mercy-seat, as being also the Mercy-seat itself. (Thus, however, Theodoret explains: "The mercy-seat of old was itself bloodless, being without life, but it received the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice. But the Lord Christ and God is at once Mercy-seat, High Priest, and Lamb.") The difficulty is avoided if we take the word here in the sense of *propitiatory offering*, which in itself it will bear, a noun, such as θῦμα, being supposed to be understood (cf. 4 Macc. xvii. 22; Josephus, 'Ant.,' xvi. c. 7; Dio Chrys., 'Orat.,' xi. 1). Whatever its exact meaning, it evidently denotes a true fulfilment in Christ of the atonement for sin undoubtedly signified by the type; as does further ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, which follows. For a distinct enunciation of the significance of blood under the ancient ritual, as reserved for and expressing *atonement*, see especially Lev. xvii. 11. The meaning of the whole sacrificial ritual is there expressed as being that the life of man being forfeit to Divine justice, blood, representing life, must be offered instead of his life for atonement. Hence, in pursuance of this idea, the frequent references in the New Testament to the physical *blood-shedding* of Christ (cf. Heb. ix. 22, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission"). It is not, however, implied that the material blood of Christ, shed on the cross, in itself cleanses the soul from sin, but only that it signifies to us the fulfilment in him of the type of an atoning sacrifice. As to the construction of ver. 25, it is a question whether ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι is to be taken in connection with διὰ τῆς πίστεως, meaning "through faith in his blood" (an unusual expression, though grammatically correct, cf. Eph. i. 15), or with ἱλαστήριον. The emphatic position of αὐτοῦ, such as apparently to signify "in his own blood," favours the latter connection (cf. Heb. ix. 12—25, where the offering of Christ is distinguished from those of the Law in being διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, not ἐν αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ). Thus the

meaning will be that he was set forth (or purposed) as an ἱλαστήριον, available for us through faith, and consisting in the offering of himself—in the shedding of *his own* blood. **For showing of his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God, in order to the showing of his righteousness in the time that now is, so that he may be righteous, and justifying** (the word is δικαιοῦντα, corresponding with δικαιωσύνην and δίκαιον preceding) **him that is of faith in Jesus.** This translation differs materially from that of the Authorized Version, which is evidently erroneous, especially in the rendering of διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν by "for the remission." Our translators, in a way very unusual with them, seem to have missed the drift of the passage, and so been led to give the above untenable rendering in order to suit their view of it. It is to be observed that two purposes of the *setting forth* (or *purposing*) of Christ Jesus as ἱλαστήριον are here declared, both denoted by the word ἔνδειξιν, which is repeated, being governed in the first clause of the sentence by εἰς, and in the second by πρὸς. Some say that the preposition is changed with no intended difference of meaning. But it is not St. Paul's way to use his prepositions carelessly. Εἰς in the first clause may be taken to denote the immediate purpose of the propitiation, and πρὸς in the second to have its proper significance of *aim* or *direction*, denoting a further intention and result, consequent on the first. The first purpose, denoted by εἰς, was the vindication of God's righteousness with regard to the ages past, in that he had so long *passed over*, or left unvisited, the sins of mankind. The propitiation of Christ, at length *set forth* (or, as may be expressed by προέθετο, all along *purposed*), showed that he had not been indifferent to these sins, though *in his forbearance* he had passed them over. Cf. Acts xvii. 30, Τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ Θεὸς; also Heb. ix. 15, where the death of Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, is said to have been "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant," the meaning and efficacy of the "death" being thus regarded, in the first place, as retrospective (cf. also Heb. ix. 26). But then there was a further grand purpose, expressed by the πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν of the second clause—that of providing a way of present justification for believers *now*, without derogation of the Divine righteousness. Such appears to be the meaning of this passage.

Ver. 27.—**Where then is the boasting?** (that of the Jew, referred to in ch. ii., of his superiority to the Gentile with regard to justification). **It is excluded. By what manner of** (νόμου) **law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.** Is it, then, here implied that the law of works would allow of boasting? Not so *practically*. But its *theory* would leave room for it, on the supposition of its conditions being fulfilled; it is a *kind* of law (observe νόμου νόμου;) which does not exclude it; for if a man could say, "I have fulfilled all the righteousness of the Law," he would have something wherein to glory. But the *principle* of the law of faith, which has been shown to be the only one available for the justification of either Jew or Gentile, in itself excludes it. It will be observed that the strict sense of the word νόμος, hitherto preserved, is extended in νόμος πίστεως. (For the various applications of which the word is capable, see especially ch. vii.)

Ver. 28.—**For** (γὰρ here, rather than οὖν, as in the Textus Receptus; though either reading rests on good authority, γὰρ suits best the course of thought, as introducing a reason for the assertion of the previous verse) **we reckon that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law;** *i.e.* the law of works, as a principle of justification, is, in fact, according to our reckoning, nowhere. It is to be particularly observed that χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου implies no *antinomian* doctrine, nor any opposition to James (ii. 14, etc.). Its reference is not at all to works required or not required from man for acceptance, but simply to the *ground* or *principle* of his justification.

Ver. 29.—**Is God the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also.** This verse is in support of the doctrine, already asserted, and pervading the Epistle, of justification through Christ being for all mankind alike without distinction or partiality; and it comes in here in pursuance of the thought of the preceding verse. In it justification was said to be by *faith*, and *apart from works of law*, and therefore in itself available for the Gentiles, who had no revealed law, as well as for the Jews, who had. And why should it not be so? Is not the God of the Jews their God too? Yes.

Ver. 30.—**If indeed** (εἴπερ rather than ἐπείπερ, as in the Textus Receptus) **God is one, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.** Here the *unity* of God is given as the reason of his being the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. So also, 1 Tim. ii. 5, εἷς γὰρ Θεὸς is the reason why he wills all men to be saved. It is of importance to grasp St. Paul's idea in his assertions of the *unity* of God. It is not that of *numerical* unity, but what may be called the unity of *quality*; i.e. not a mere assertion of monotheism as

against polytheism, but that the one God is one and the same to all, comprehending all in the embrace of his own essential unity. God's unity involved in St. Paul's mind the idea of "One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him" (1 Cor. viii. 6); "who made of one blood every nation of men" (Acts xvii. 26); in whom we (all of us) "live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). Thus exclusion of the Gentiles from the paternal embrace of the one God is incompatible with the very idea, so conceived, of his unity. In the latter part of this verse it is said that God will justify the circumcision ἐκ πίστεως, and the uncircumcision διὰ τῆς πίστεως, the preposition being changed, and the second πίστεως being preceded by the article. The difference is not of essential importance, "faith" being the emphatic word. But it is not unmeaning. Ἐκ expresses the principle of justification; διὰ, the medium through which it may be had. The Jew was already in a position for justification through the Law leading up to Christ. He had only to accept it as *of faith*, and not *of works of law* (ver. 20). The Gentile must attain to it *through faith*; i.e. his faith in the gospel now revealed to him. Ἐπὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τὸ "ἐκ πίστεως" τέθεικεν ὡς ἂν ἐγγύτων μὲν καὶ ἑτέρας ἀφορμὰς πρὸς δικαίωσιν, οὐ δυναμένων δὲ αὐτῆς μετέχειν πλὴν ἐκ τῆς πίστεως. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων "διὰ τῆς πίστεως" (Theodorus).

Ver. 31.—**Do we then make law void through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish law.** The question naturally arises after what has been said about justification being χωρὶς νόμου. Do we then make out our revealed Law, which we have accounted so holy and Divine, to be valueless? Or, rather, as the question is more generally put (νόμον being without the article, and therefore translated as above), "Do we make of none effect the whole principle of law, embodied to us in our Divine Law? Regarded erroneously as a principle of *justification*, the apostle might have answered, "Yes, we do." But any disparagement of it, regarded in its true light and as answering its real purpose, he meets with an indignant μὴ γένοιτο. On the contrary, he says, we establish it. Law means the declaration of righteousness, and requirement of conformity to it on the part of man. We establish this principle by our doctrine of the necessity of atonement for man's defect. We put law on its true base, and so make it the more to stand (ἱστάνομεν) by showing its office to be, not to *justify*—a position untenable—but to *convince of sin*, and so lead up to Christ (cf. ch. vii. 12, etc.; Gal. iii. 24). In pursuance of this thought, the apostle, in the next chapter, shows that in the Old Testament itself it is *faith*, and not *law*, which is regarded as *justifying*; as, in the first place and notably, in the case of Abraham; thus proving the previous assertion in ch. iii. 21, Μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν. In ch. vii. he treats the subject subjectively, analyzing the operation of law in the human soul, and so bringing out still more clearly its true meaning and purpose.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Prerogative.* The differences in men's circumstances and advantages are great, and are altogether inexplicable by human wisdom. We may not, probably we cannot, in all things "justify the ways of God to men." There is much in the inequality of the human lot that is perplexing to the reflective and sensitive mind, which we cannot reconcile with our belief in God's perfect justice, and his omnipotent and universal rule. This, however, is an insufficient reason for doubting the conviction of our moral nature, for questioning the declarations of Scripture, that the Judge of all the earth doeth right.

I. IT IS POSSIBLE TO OVERESTIMATE THE ADVANTAGE OF PECULIAR PRIVILEGES. This was the case with many of the Jews, who relied upon ancestral, hereditary advantages, and who even believed that, as children of Abraham, they were certain of Divine favour and of eternal life. Just as many in human society lay stress absurdly great upon their family, the status they enjoy in consequence of hereditary title or wealth, so is it in religious life. Not a few, like the Jews, rely far too much upon the Church with which they are connected, the ministry by which they are served, the sacraments to which they are admitted, the opportunities of knowledge, fellowship, and service with which they are favoured. It is too often forgotten that these privileges are only means to an end, and that the right and reasonable use of the means is necessary in order to the desired end.

II. IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISPARAGE ADVANTAGES WHICH, IT IS DISCOVERED, HAVE BEEN OVERVALUED. It is a tendency of human nature to fly from one extreme to the other.

St. Paul supposes some reader, convinced by what he has said of the possibility of gaining no benefit by advantages enjoyed, to turn completely round and to ask what advantages accrue to those who enjoy what seem to be remarkable privileges. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision?" And it is still, no doubt, often the case that men, convinced that it is vain to rely upon their religious privileges, question whether they are in any better position for possessing such privileges. Social advantages are so evidently serviceable, that men suppose the same must be the case with religious advantages; and when they find that the possession of these last is compatible with censure and condemnation, they are apt to turn round, and to say, "Better to be without privileges which may lead to nothing!" Yet this is an unreasonable way of regarding such matters. For—

III. IT IS POSSIBLE SO TO USE RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGES AS TO MAKE THEM THE MEANS TO SPIRITUAL GOOD. The apostle points out that the Jew occupied a position peculiarly favourable. "First of all, because they were entrusted with the oracles of God." This was evidently a sacred prerogative, and there were many of the favoured nation who made so good a use of their opportunities that they became, not only intelligently acquainted with Divine truth, but penetrated by the Divine Spirit, and consecrated to the Divine service. Similarly, although the possession of the Scriptures and the privileges of the Christian Church will be occasion of condemnation to those hearers of the gospel who are negligent, unbelieving, and impenitent; on the other hand, these will be means of grace, and they actually are such, to all who use such opportunities of knowledge, fellowship, and improvement in a right spirit and method. There is obvious justice in this arrangement; the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. "To whom much is given, of him much will be required." Those who are "entrusted with the oracles of God" may well be summoned seriously to consider what is becoming on the part of those so favoured, and diligently to use opportunities so precious, privileges and prerogatives so momentous and so unparalleled.

Vers. 19, 20.—*The purpose of Law.* Although it is the main intention of the apostle, in speaking of the Law, to show its insufficiency for the purpose with which its introduction and publication were commonly credited, his teaching would be misunderstood were he supposed to disparage it; for St. Paul held the Law of God in the highest reverence, although he did not attribute to it all with which it was connected in the mind of the unchristian Jew.

I. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE LAW. This was unquestionably the revelation of the Divine character, attributes, and will. God is not only the perfectly holy Being; he is also the perfectly righteous Ruler. Truth declares what he is; Law declares what he will have his subjects to be. Accordingly, revelation takes the form, not only of the indicative, but of the imperative. Law is the expression of God's justice, and of his will that all the subjects of his moral government should partake of his holiness, and, in their relations to one another and to him, should do those things that please him. His commandments, statutes, ordinances, are the utterance of his judgment as to what is good, what is best, for his intelligent creatures.

II. THE SECONDARY PURPOSE OF THE LAW. It is upon this that the inspired apostle lays stress in the passage now before us. 1. The Law *reveals* sin. It is a standard beside which the deficiencies and errors of men's conduct become plainly manifest. 2. The Law *condemns* the sinner. It is not simply a declaration of what is right; it exposes and censures what is wrong. It speaks the sentence against the violators of its rules. 3. The Law *silences* the sinner. It leaves him without justification, apology, or excuse.

III. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE LAW. This is unquestionably, in the case of our humanity, to prepare the way for the gospel. The Law is the pedagogue, the slave who attends and conducts the pupil, and it leads unto Christ. "By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." Yet we cannot believe that a merciful God publishes the Law simply for the condemnation of men. It does reveal the heinousness of sin, making it appear exceedingly sinful. It does reveal the helplessness of the sinner. But all this is preparatory to a remedial and redemptive intervention. What the Law could not do, God does by the gift of his Son, who obeyed and magnified the Law in his own Person, and at the same time secured for sinful men, upon com-

pliance with the conditions of faith and repentance, their exemption from the Law's penalties, and their enjoyment of the Divine favour, participation in the Divine nature and life, and inheritance in the Divine and eternal blessedness. Thus that which appeared the instrument of wrath has been converted into the occasion of salvation.

Ver. 22.—*The distinctively Christian righteousness.* The apostle has clearly shown that righteousness by the Law is not possessed by men, and that in this way is no hope for the salvation of the human race. Such is the negative conclusion to which facts and reason compel him. Yet it is not his vocation to preach a doctrine of despair. True, without righteousness there can be no salvation. Therefore, if light is to be cast upon human darkness, it must come elsewhither than from the Law. So it is that St. Paul preaches the new and distinctively Christian righteousness, to be secured by conditions that may be fulfilled by men of every race—a righteousness that avails before God, and ensures the acceptance and the spiritual welfare and elevation of men.

I. THE CHARACTER AND DESIGNATION OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: IT IS OF GOD, OR DIVINE. 1. It has its source in God. In this it is distinguished from the rectitude which is "by works;" that in a sense is of human origin. It is shown to be "of grace," i.e. to be the provision of Divine favour, free and undeserved. And further, this expression, "of God," implies the perfection of this righteousness in comparison with all beside. 2. It is divinely adapted by God to man. There is presupposition of man's helplessness and dependence; it is presumed—which is indeed the fact—that man cannot work out a righteousness of his own. Hence there is a ground for this new righteousness in a Divine provision of substitution. The apostle would be misunderstood were his teaching upon this point to be interpreted, as some have interpreted it, as representing God as indifferent to the person by whom suffering is endured and obedience rendered. Yet Christ, by his suffering the consequences of sin in this humanity and by his perfect obedience and holiness, has laid the foundation for the acquisition by man of the distinctively Christian righteousness. 3. It avails and is acceptable before God. According to the representations of the context, it consists in the remission of sins, and acquittal and acceptance before the Divine tribunal, and in the manifestation of positive Divine approval; which may be regarded as the two parts of "justification." It is evident that such righteousness is imputed, and not inherent—a theological expression which must not, however, be interpreted to imply its unreality. Thus the Divinity of the Christian righteousness may be made apparent, as an object of admiration and of aspiration.

II. THE MEANS OF THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS—THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. In order to the fulfilment of this condition upon which the Christian righteousness may be attained, there must be: 1. Belief in the Scripture testimony concerning Christ, that he is the Son of God and the appointed Saviour of mankind. This is indispensable; for faith is not a vague sentiment—it has an Object, and an Object which justifies and deserves it. Yet, though indispensable, this is not sufficient. There must be also: 2. Trust or confidence in Christ as a personal Saviour. Faith is not merely intellectual assent; it is the consent of the heart and the will. It is capable of degree, and there is strong faith and weak faith. But the important point is that the soul, in the attitude and exercise of faith, is brought into personal relation with the holy Saviour.

III. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: IT IS UNTO ALL, AND UPON ALL, THEM THAT BELIEVE. The rectitude itself is a possession which men may share, whatever their nationality, their condition in life, their individual history. And the condition of its attainment is equally universal; there is nothing in faith which limits its exercise to any special members, or any section of the human race. In this Christianity proves itself to be—and this is its glory, its Divinity—the universal religion.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—8.—*The difficulties of Divine revelation, Jewish unbelief, and Divine justice.* The apostle, in the two preceding chapters, has now shown that both Jews and Gentiles stand on the same platform as regards their need of a Saviour. Both are alike sinners

in God's sight. The Gentile, who has not the Law, if he does by nature the things contained in the Law, will be justified before God. "Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" (ch. ii. 14, 26). The Jew's circumcision will profit him if it be a religion that affects the heart and the spirit (ch. ii. 29). St. Paul, so quick to see the bearings of every statement, notices at once that a difficulty naturally arises here, and he is prompt to meet it. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"

I. THE DIVINE REVELATION A GREAT PRIVILEGE. Notwithstanding all that had been said about the sins and shortcomings of the Jews, the Jews were still a privileged people. Nothing could ever destroy the fact that they were the chosen people of God, the people chosen to be the channel of God's revelation to the world by the patriarchs and lawgivers and prophets, chosen also to be the channel through which the Divine Word become flesh and tabernacled among men—"of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." The chief privilege which Paul mentions here was that "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (ver. 2). It is an advantage to have a Divine revelation entrusted to us. The possession and knowledge of God's Word is a privilege not to be despised or lightly esteemed. There are degrees of nearness to the kingdom of God. While the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," while there are such events as sudden conversions, yet there are some who are in a more favourable condition for receiving the gospel than others. St. Paul, though he was suddenly converted, had a long and thorough training previously in the Word of God. The scribe who came to Christ, and whom the Saviour pronounced to be "not far from the kingdom of God," was one who had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and who had been living a life of obedience to the Law of God. Such men were certainly more likely to be influenced by the personal power of Christ than those who had no previous knowledge of Divine truth. God works by miracles; but his ordinary method is to work by means. In these days of sensational evangelism it is well that we should not undervalue the importance of a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. Paul wrote to Timothy, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." They who are well instructed in the Holy Scriptures are, as a rule, more likely to become true and permanent Christians than those who, under the influence of sudden excitement or emotion, without any previous religious knowledge, profess their readiness to follow the banner of Jesus. There are exceptions, but this would seem to be the rule. *And those who are so highly privileged incur a serious and solemn responsibility.* If unto us are committed the oracles of God, if we have the Bible in our hands and its truths treasured up in our minds, terrible indeed will be our guilt if we disobey its precepts, reject its invitations, and neglect its warnings. "To whom much is given, of them shall much be required."

II. DIVINE FAITHFULNESS NOT AFFECTED BY HUMAN UNBELIEF. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (vers. 3, 4). The promises of God will be fulfilled, even though there are some who do not believe on them. The Law of God will assert its claims, even though there are some who repudiate them. It will not save men from the punishment of their sin that they did not believe God's Word when it says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." *God's faithfulness is not affected by the unbelief of his own people.* Some persons argue against the Bible because of the unbelief of those who profess to regard it as their guide. They argue against Christianity because of the inconsistencies of its professors. The argument is false. Christianity is to be judged by its own teachings and spirit, and not by the imperfect way in which even its professors have received and practised them. Christianity is the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, combined with the influence of his death upon the cross. No inconsistency of professing followers can ever mar the beauty and sinlessness of that perfect Example. No unbelief can ever do away with the inherent power that is in the cross of Jesus to save sinners. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to them that are saved it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

III. DIVINE JUSTICE IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN SIN. "But

if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" (vers. 5, 6). 1. *God judges not consequences, but character.* He looks at the heart and at the motives. The Jews' unbelief was overruled by God for his own wise and gracious purposes. He brought good out of evil. But that did not make their unbelief the less guilty. In the eyes of the law, the guilt of a fraudulent person is not always estimated by the consequences of his acts. A man may forge his employer's signature to cheques; but the employer may receive such information as will enable him to stop the cheques in time, and prevent the loss which would otherwise have resulted. But the forger's guilt is not diminished because the consequences of his acts have been overruled. The law is not considered unfair or unrighteous if it punishes him, though his employer may not have suffered one penny of pecuniary loss. And even though the criminal's conduct served in some way to bring out more clearly the integrity or kindness of his employer, yet even this would not be regarded as any mitigating circumstance in his guilt. So it is right that I should still be judged as a sinner, even though the truth of God hath abounded through my lie unto his glory (ver. 7). 2. *Man is not justified in using sinful means to gain a good end.* From the fact that God overrules sinful actions for his own glory and the good of humanity, it might appear to be a natural inference that it matters not what the morality of the action itself is so long as its object or result is good. "Let us do evil, that good may come" (ver. 8). Stated in this broad way, the immorality of the principle is apparent. And yet it is a principle which is too commonly acted upon. If you oppose some method of raising money for religious or charitable purposes, you will be constantly told, "Oh! it is for a good purpose." That is, simply, it does not matter *how* you get the money so as you get it. It does not matter what the means are so long as the end is good. Now, it is time that the Christian Church and Christian teachers should set themselves resolutely against such demoralizing ideas. How can the Christian Church rebuke the dishonest practices too common in the commercial world, money-making by unfair or questionable methods, so long as its own hands are not clean, so long as almost any method of making money is considered justifiable if it is in connection with a Church bazaar? The end does not justify the means. Let us not do evil, that good may come.—C. H. I.

Vers. 9—18.—*Total depravity of human nature.* Here we have a dark picture of human nature in its fallen and unregenerate state. (The Bible view of human nature is more fully enlarged on below, on vers. 21—26.) Here the apostle, as it were, calls up before him the different parts of human nature, and obtains from each of them an admission and an evidence of the moral corruption with which they are tainted.

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a different tale,
And every tale convicts me for a villain.
. . . . .
All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all—Guilty! guilty!"

I. A DEPRAVED HEART. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (ver. 18). There is no motive-power to regulate the life. There is no reverence for God's Law within their spirit. There is no fear of offending the great Judge. There is no filial fear of grieving the heavenly Father. The conscience and heart have become seared and blunted. Remove the fear of God from heart and conscience, and what influence remains to check evil passions and to resist the insidious allurements of temptation? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

II. A DEPRAVED UNDERSTANDING. "There is none that understandeth" (ver. 11). It is fashionable in some circles to speak as if it was a sign of weak intellect to be a Christian, to believe in the Bible, or to regard with reverence the Law of God. Yet assuredly it may be claimed without any presumption or prejudice that there has been at least as much of the world's best intellect arrayed on the side of Christianity as on the side of its opponents. If there be credulity anywhere, there is credulity displayed

in accepting as scientific truths what very often are pure speculations. If there is weakness anywhere, it would seem to be in disregarding the evidence in nature that points to a great personal and intelligent First Cause, or the evidence in history that points to a wise and overruling Providence. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." It is sin, and not godliness, that is the evidence of a weak and depraved understanding.

III. A DEPRAVED WILL. "There is none that seeketh after God" (ver. 11). Nowhere is the depravity of human nature more painfully shown than in the exercise of the human will. How many deliberately choose evil rather than good! How many, with the experience of others to warn them, deliberately choose impurity rather than purity, intemperance rather than temperance! Life and death are put before them, yet they deliberately choose death. They reject the highest ideal of character, and follow poor and weak and wicked examples. They reject the inspiring hope of heaven and immortality, and only live for worldly pleasure or for worldly gain. They reject the fountain of living water, and seek out for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water. To all such God appeals, in mercy, to make a right exercise of their will. "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

IV. DEPRAVED SPEECH. 1. *Untruthfulness.* "With their tongues they have used deceit" (ver. 13). Truth is essential to the well-being and happiness of society, to the very existence of commercial dealings. Yet how many there are who "use deceit" as a means of obtaining advantage or profit in business, as a means of obtaining some desirable object of their ambition! We have society deceitfulness, commercial deceitfulness, political deceitfulness. Against all such deceit the Bible sets itself. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." 2. *Slander.* "The poison of asps is under their lips" (ver. 13). The sin of evil-speaking is a very widespread one, and it hardly receives sufficient discouragement from Christian people. Men and women who would shrink from doing their neighbour a bodily injury, who would be shocked at the idea of taking his property dishonestly, think it no harm to injure his character and reputation. "The poison of asps is under their lips." "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." 3. *Profanity.* "Whose mouth is full of cursing" (ver. 14). Here is a widespread evil of the present day. Everywhere one hears the profane use of the sacred Name. Just as the suicide acts

> "As if the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter,"

the profane person acts as if it had not been written with the finger of God, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain."

V. DEPRAVED LIFE. "Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known" (vers. 15—17). What a sad but true description of human life in its unregenerate and unchristianized condition! It is but the ordinary picture of what heathen nations were before the gospel entered into them. And where large communities throw off the restraints of religion, is it not what may be witnessed still, even in professedly Christian nations? Where there is no fear of the Law of God, there will be little fear of the law of man. Let the heart and conscience be godless; let the reason and understanding fail to respond to the claims of the Divine Being and of his moral Law; let the will cease to be influenced by heavenly and upward motives; let men in their common speech be accustomed to speak lightly of sacred things and of their neighbour's character and reputation; and the step is but a short one to the disregard of human life and the disregard of human virtue. The nation that ceases to be influenced by the fear of God has entered on the broad way to its own corruption and decay.—C. H. I.

Vers. 21—26.—"*No difference.*" The Bible presents us with three pictures of man's condition and character. They are very different, and yet they are all true pictures. There is the picture of man before the Fall, as he walked with God in primeval innocence of heart and sinless purity of life. There is the picture of man after the Fall, with the Divine image marred and stained by sin. And then there is the picture of man renewed again—man an object of Divine mercy, man a subject of Divine grace, man prepared

for sharing once more the Divine glory. Two of these views of human nature concern man as he is now. The one humbles, the other exalts him. On the one hand, man is put before us as he is by nature—fallen, sinful, lost. On the other hand, he is put before us as God wants him to be, and as God has done all he can to make him—a pardoned sinner, a holy character, an heir of everlasting life. These two views are brought together in these verses. The apostle speaks of the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe (vers. 21, 22). And then he adds, as a reason for this broad, all-embracing statement, "For there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (vers. 22, 23). There is no difference as to the fact of universal sin. And there is no difference as to the fact of universal mercy: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24). There is no difference as to the need of salvation. There is no difference in the way of salvation. Christ is the Saviour of all men who come to him in faith.

I. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE FACT OF UNIVERSAL GUILT. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." This is not a mere cynical statement. The Bible is not a cynical book. It does not look down with contempt upon human nature. But it deals with facts as they are. And yet, if it speaks of human nature as sinful, it is in terms of pity and compassion and desire to save. You will often meet with cynical views of human nature. You will meet some who will tell you that all men are equally bad, or that one man is as good as another. You will meet some who will sneer at the idea of virtue, or unselfishness, or honesty being found in any one. They will tell you that no such thing exists. They will tell you that selfishness is the ruling principle of human nature, and that, if men or women are honest, or virtuous, or charitable, it is because it is their interest to be so. Now, it will generally be found that those who speak thus of human nature have not a very high moral character of their own. They judge others from their own standpoint. They look at everything from a selfish point of view, and they think that every one else does the same. But this is not the way in which the Bible speaks of human nature. It paints it very black, it is true—because it paints it in its true colours. But it speaks of human nature as it is, not to depreciate it, but to elevate it. Moreover, it allows for the good that is in human nature. It meets human nature half-way. It recognizes that there is sometimes even in the most fallen nature a desire for better things. It represents the poor prodigal as coming to himself and saying, "I will arise, and go to my Father." Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The Bible is no cynical book. And yet it says that "all have sinned." This does not mean that all are equally bad, that all have committed sins of the deepest dye. But it does mean just what is said, that *all have sinned*—that there is sin in some degree in all, sin enough to condemn, to destroy. How humbling this is to human pride! And this was just how the apostle meant it. His whole desire in these opening chapters of Romans is to show the need of a Saviour, of a perfect righteousness. He first of all showed that the heathen needed a righteousness. Then, turning to the Jews, whom he knew so well, he saw at once their self-righteous spirit. They made their boast in the Law, and yet all the while they were transgressors of the Law. And so he proves that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin (ver. 9). "For there is no difference: for all have sinned." It is amazing to see how one professing Christian can look down upon another, just because the other is of a humbler class in society or wears a poorer dress, when, if they were true Christians, they would remember that they are all sinners saved by grace. Yes; the Bible is a very democratic book. It teaches that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth. It teaches that the rich and poor meet together, and that God is the Maker of them all. But it does not, like many democratic leaders, give the people a false idea of themselves. It does not say, as I once heard a popular speaker say in Glasgow, that "the democracy is always wise and true and just." It places all men upon a common platform, as sinners in the sight of God. It says, "*There is no difference:* for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

II. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE OFFER OF UNIVERSAL MERCY. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." It is when we come to look at the cross of Jesus that we can see how God looks at human nature. It was certainly no depreciation of human nature that caused the Son of God to come

and die upon the cross. It was no desire to depreciate human nature that caused God to give "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Ah no! When we speak of the depravity of human nature, of the fall of man, of universal guilt and sinfulness, some persons would charge us with taking low views of human nature. They are Bible views, at any rate; and the cross of Jesus shows us that, if God looks upon human nature as fallen, he does not look upon it with contempt. No! He looks upon it with infinite compassion. He looks upon it with redeeming love. He looks upon it, helpless, sinful, fallen; and as he looks, he stretches down the hand of mercy to save, to save for ever! On the porch of an old house in England is this inscription cut in stone, "*Dextram cadenti porrigo*" ("I stretch out my right hand to him that is falling"). That is just what God does. He stretches out the strong hand of mercy, and not only to him that is falling, but to him that is fallen. He does not exclude the profligate, or there would have been no place in the kingdom of heaven for St. Augustine or John Newton. He does not offer salvation only to his friends, or where would the Apostle Paul have been? *There is no difference.* "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." How, then, is this, that the guilty sinner is an object of Divine mercy? He is guilty, and yet God not merely pardons, but *justifies* him, declares him just. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24). It is on account of what Jesus did and suffered that the sinner is accepted in God's sight. This is to be remembered, that Jesus not only bore our punishment (which one human being might do for another), but he bore *our guilt.* "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It is thus that the sinner is looked upon as justified in God's sight. Thus God's righteousness is shown: "That he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (ver. 26). *And hence there is no difference.* It is no merit in man, no penances, no good works of his own, that obtain his justification, his salvation. It is free grace. It is the righteousness that is in Jesus Christ. What large-hearted charity, what universal brotherhood of Christians, this large view of God's universal mercy ought to teach us! "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." How this view of the universal mercy, the universal love of God, should break down all narrow views of creed and party and class! The day is long in coming, but surely, under the influence of this Christian gospel, it will come at last—

"When man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brithers be for a' that."

Yet it is to be observed that *there is a great difference in man's treatment of this universal offer of mercy.* Some accept the message. The goodness of God leads them to repentance. The love of Christ melts their hearts. Some reject this message. They put it away from them. They neglect it. They are too much occupied with other things—with pleasure, money-making, and the like. Now, this difference in the way in which men receive the offer of salvation will make a vast difference in their condition throughout eternity. How could it be otherwise? If Christ died *to save* those who take him as their Saviour, it must be a sad but stern reality that those who do not believe on him must perish. There is no difference in the universal guilt. There is no difference in God's universal offer of his mercy. But there is a difference in man's treatment of this offer. And there will be an awful difference throughout eternity. —C. H. I.

Vers. 27—31 (with Jas. ii. 24).—*Faith and works.* One of the most fruitful sources of discussion and strife among Christians has been the selection of particular passages of Scripture and building doctrines upon them, without at all considering what other passages of Scripture may have to say on the same subject. Truth is many-sided. Two views, which appear contradictory, may both be right. There may be an element of truth in both; and they may both be different sides of the same truth. The statements of Paul and James on the subject of justification are an instance of this. They appear at first sight contradictory, but they are in reality two sides of the same great truth. This great truth is *justification by Jesus Christ.* One side of this truth is found in the words of St. Paul, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law" (ver. 28); that is to say, faith in Jesus Christ is sufficient to justify a man in

God's sight. That is very true, says James, but let us be sure that we have a real faith. There is no real faith except works go along with it. Thus James brings out his side of the truth: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." It is the exaggeration of this latter truth that mainly divides the Roman Catholic Church from the Protestant Church as a whole. This exaggeration was the immediate origin of the Reformation. Instead of teaching men to put their faith in Christ, the Church of Rome taught them to place their confidence in their own good works. By the performance of certain penances and mortifications merit was laid up for them in heaven. By the payment of certain sums of money absolution was obtained for past sins. Clearly this was very far from being the teaching of Scripture. Then Martin Luther arose, and, in words that soon rang throughout all Europe, proclaimed the doctrine of justification by faith. It was time that a check should be placed on the progress of error; that men should be taught to rest their hopes of salvation no longer on a priest, on works of merit, or on sums of money, but on the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the doctrine of justification by faith has been so much insisted on that there has sometimes been a neglect of good works. This error has not been committed by any Protestant Church as a whole, in its formal teaching at any rate, for all the reformed Churches have insisted on the necessity of good works and a holy life as the evidence and fruit of true faith. But there has been sometimes an undue attention to beliefs combined with an undue neglect of practice. It is a well-known fact that very often the persons who are most dogmatic in their assertion of certain doctrines, and most fierce in their denunciation of those who differ from them, are among the most irreligious and most godless persons in their parish. With them the belief is everything; the practice is nothing. But this is not Christianity. To believe certain doctrines is not true faith. If the life is not changed, it matters little what we believe. When a man says that he believes in Christ, meaning that he believes certain doctrines about him, and is confident that therefore he is justified and safe for ever, while at the same time he lives in the practice of sin, that man's justification is very doubtful. It is important to keep before us the twofold meaning and influence of the doctrine of justification.

I. THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL. "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." We are to remember that Paul, in this Epistle, was writing to a Church largely composed of Christians of a Jewish origin. In the Christian Church at Rome there was, consequently, a considerable tendency to magnify the importance of good works—a tendency which was fostered by Judaizing teachers. It is easy to see, from many expressions in the Epistle, that Paul has Jewish Christians largely in his mind. He speaks, for instance, of "Abraham our father;" he deals with positions which were peculiarly Jewish—as, for instance, the necessity of circumcision, and the exclusion of the Gentiles from the Church of God. "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles?" (ver. 29). It was natural, therefore, for the apostle to lay special emphasis on the necessity for faith in Christ. He wants to show that something more than good works was needed for justification. Abraham, it is true, was a good man; but the works he did would not have saved him, were it not for the faith that he exhibited. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." We cannot be justified by our own deeds, says Paul, because our best deeds come far short of the standard of righteousness which the Law lays down. Our own deeds are powerless to justify us. We need the righteousness of Christ. If we take hold of that righteousness believingly, and trust in it, we are justified. We are justified by faith, is the clear teaching of the apostle. But does he therefore do away with good works? Certainly not. Most forcibly he himself repudiates such an idea. "Do we then make void the Law through faith?" he asks (ver. 31). "God forbid: yea, we establish the Law." That is to say, the necessity for good works, for holy life, is still as great as ever. So, also, in the sixth chapter he protests against the idea that any one who professed faith in Christ should continue in sin. If we are made free from the guilt of sin, because we have believed on Christ, then we have become the servants of righteousness (ch. vi. 18). In the eighth chapter he brings out even more fully the duty of holy life. We are not to rest content in the assurance that there is no condemnation to us. There must be active life. The spirit is life because of righteousness, and through the Spirit we must mortify the deeds of the body. Hence we see

that, by the faith which leads to justification, the apostle plainly means only such faith as directly results in good works. True justification implies sanctification.

II. THE TEACHING OF ST. JAMES. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." From what we have seen of Paul's teaching, it is clear that this statement, which at first sight appeared to contradict it, is really in harmony with it. The teaching of James is, in fact, the complement of the teaching of Paul. What St. Paul brings out in the sixth and eighth chapters of Romans, namely, the necessity of good works as the evidence and fruit of faith, that is the purport of the whole Epistle of St. James. James, noticing the inconsistency which prevailed in his time, and which still prevails in the Christian Church, between the profession of many Christians and their daily conduct, especially in regard to others, in very clear and forcible language calls attention to the necessary connection of faith with practice. A faith which does not influence practice is useless. It is dead. Such faith cannot save a man. It may be said that Abraham was justified by faith. That is true. But was his faith a mere belief in a particular doctrine, such as the mere belief in the existence of a God? No. Even the devils believe that; but it brings them no confidence, but rather fear. Something more than that is necessary, if we are to be sure that we have true faith, and that we are therefore justified. We must act. And so Abraham's faith was a faith that included action. He offered Isaac his son upon the altar. Thus by works was faith made perfect. In this sense it is evident that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only (Jas. ii. 14—26).

To sum up: *Paul shows the uselessness of works without faith; James shows the uselessness of faith without works.* Both are agreed that Christ alone can deliver us from the condemnation which our sins deserve. Both are agreed that he who is truly conscious of this salvation will strive against sin; that he who believes that Christ can save him from the guilt of sin must believe also that Christ can save him from its power in his heart. Both are equally strong in insisting upon the uselessness of profession without practice. The two sides of this great truth both need to be strongly emphasized in our own day. On the one hand, the necessity for a living, personal faith in Jesus Christ alone, needs to be emphasized in opposition to the substitution of forms and ceremonies for the gospel. And, on the other hand, the necessity for a life of practical godliness needs to be emphasized where there is so much of barren profession—orthodox belief, but fruitless and sometimes careless life.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—8.—*Religious advantages, their use and abuse.* If the Gentile and the Jew shall alike come under judgment according to their works, of what profit was the election of the Jew, and his endowment with spiritual privileges? This leads to the question of religious advantages, their use and abuse.

I. USE. The very name, "religious advantage," which springs so readily to the lips, attests the profit of being a people called of God. This profit is manifold, and in the forefront stands the fact that they have the living utterances of God amongst them. 1. *For themselves.* Who shall estimate the strength and sanctity accruing to individual, domestic, and national life from the contact of that living will? (1) Indirect advantage—to vitalize morals, law, and the manifold civilization of a people. So the indirect advantages of Christianity. (2) Direct advantages—the infinite felicity of union with God. 2. *For others.* "Intrusted." To grasp at our own good not the chiefest felicity of life. And the Jew was God's chosen messenger to the nations. Oh, the honour! A nation of preachers, re-uttering the words of that living voice! But how sadly they had misconceived their calling!

II. ABUSE. Instead of heralding God's will among the nations, they learned to hate all who were not of themselves; and, instead of embracing God's will for themselves, they relied on mere knowledge, and lived in sin. Then were God's words made void? was there no gospel for them? and, because of their unfaithfulness, were the Gentiles to be unsaved? 1. *God's truth in spite of man's falseness.* They resisted his will, but the will remained firm and strong; they neglected his promises, but the promises remained faithful; they rejected his Christ, but he was nevertheless the Christ of the Jews and of all the world. Over against their unholy conduct the holiness of God shone spotless and supreme. 2. *God's truth through man's falseness.* If man will not yield to God, God will make even man's disobedience ministrant to his own purposes.

So they rejected the Christ; and his death was the world's life. They would not live by him: and "by their fall salvation came unto the Gentiles." Perhaps sooner than would otherwise have been; perhaps more effectually. So were they, all unknowing, drawing the chariot of his kingdom; so, even now, is the "wrath of man" made to "praise" him. 3. *God's truth in condemnation of man's falseness.* Might they not say, "If God's holiness shines the more brightly in contrast with my unholiness, if God's purposes are more effectually worked out by reason of my perverseness and sin, shall I not therefore be approved rather than condemned? Nay, shall I not even make my lie to abound that his truth may abound?" Such are the jesuitries of every age; such is the utter untruth of the heart of man. But man is a witness against himself; and therefore the apostle almost disdains reply. "Man! if the overruling of evil for good were ground of acquittal, then would all be acquitted; if evil were thereby justified, it might be therefore deliberately wrought! Let the conscience of each speak out against such utter immorality; let the acknowledged fact of a final judgment teach the futility of such a plea. The condemnation of the condemned is just!" So does he shear away their vain pleas, and the case for their arraignment is complete. It only remains that, for Jew and Gentile, the express testimony of God's Word be adduced, as supplementary of the moral considerations of ch. i. and ii., and all the world will be shown guilty before God.

Our Christian privileges, are they used or abused by us? Oh, let us take to heart those words, "Not every one that saith to me," etc. (Matt. vii. 21—23).—T. F. L.

Vers. 9—20.—*Every mouth stopped.* The charge has been made against Gentiles and Jews; it is now forced home, and especially against the self-excusing Jews, by the unimpeachable verdict of God's own Word. We have here—universal sin and universal guilt.

I. UNIVERSAL SIN. Some of the quotations referred in the first instance more particularly to Gentiles, some to Jews. But the fact that any of them referred to Jews is of itself sufficient for the apostle's purpose, viz. to cut away from under their feet the vain hope which they cherished on account of their privileges. And further, as the apostle urges in ver. 19, all the quotations have a very proper bearing on the Jews, inasmuch as the words of the Law are for those who are under the Law, designed to show them their danger even when speaking expressly of the sin of others. There was that in them which might so develop itself, and being so developed, it was under the same condemnation. 1. *A state of sin.* (Vers. 10—12; Ps. xiv. 1—3.) (1) The *unrighteousness.* "None righteous;" "none that doeth good." There was (*a*) no discerning of the will of God (ver. 11); (*b*) no aspiration after God (ver. 11); (*c*) an utter deviation from the right way—an utter corruption (ver. 12). Two positives, these latter, corresponding to the two negatives. (2) Its *universality.* "There exists not," four times repeated; "no, not one," repeated twice. There is forcefully implied here that the germ of the same evil, which wrought itself out so flagrantly in special cases, is in every man's heart; οὐκ ἔστι—that is the charge which comes home to each man's heart, and the truth of which each man's conscience attests. 2. *A practice of sin.* (Vers. 13—17; Ps. v. 9; cxl. 3; x. 7; Isa. lix. 7, 8.) (1) *Speech.* (Vers. 13, 14.) (*a*) Deceit—words of suave beguilement, but an inward ravening for the prey; (*b*) venom—swift, cutting words, shot like the poison of serpents; (*c*) wrath—blatant fury and oaths. (2) *Deeds.* (Vers. 15—17.) (*a*) Violence and bloodshed are their aim; (*b*) desolation and calamity mark their path; (*c*) the path of peace they never tread. 3. *A source of sin.* (Ver. 18; Ps. xxxvi. 1.) The only effectual, permanent safeguard of morality is religion. Are the bonds not being loosened in our day, even by the apostles of ethics themselves?

II. UNIVERSAL GUILT. 1. *A fact of history*—to every one that has eyes to see. But attested, as above shown, by the verdict of the Law itself. 2. *A fact of consciousness*—wrought in the individual by the Law. The Law cannot justify; a mirror in which we see ourselves, and in that mirror fallen man sees himself fallen and corrupt. This the intent for which the Law was given, to bring us to self-knowledge, that then we might yearn for God's salvation through Christ. For law and promise are ever intertwined—in Judaism, in Gentilism, in Christianity. The great result then: "every mouth stopped"—conscious guilt; "all the world brought under the judgment

of God "—objective, historical guilt. Before God's tribunal, in the heart and in history, man is condemned.

Let us thank God for his severe dealings, for they are in love. As in Tennyson's 'May Queen,' "He taught me all the mercy, *for he showed me all the sin.*" When the throne has become to us palpably the throne of judgment, then, and not till then, it is transformed into the throne of grace.—T. F. L.

Vers. 21—26.—*Redemption working righteousness.* A whole system of theology is compacted into these few words. The keystone of the arch. We have here—redemption; righteousness.

I. REDEMPTION. The redemption centres in Christ; it touches on either side God and man. Originating in the purposes of God, and actualized in the work of Christ, it is appropriated in the consciousness of man. These verses deal with one aspect of Christ's work and of man's salvation—justification through Christ's atoning sacrifice. Hence we have—God's grace, Christ's sacrifice, man's faith. 1. *God's grace.* (Ver. 24.) This is the fountain-head, whence all salvation issues. Importance of holding forth this truth; not that God loves us because Christ died, but that Christ died because God loved us. So John iii. 16. And yet the error has some element of truth. It was God's compassionate love which prompted the bestowal of the gift, and the "setting forth" of the Propitiation (ver. 25); but only when the gift has been received, and the propitiation made ours through faith, does God, can God, love with an intimate, complacent love. First the pitying Father, then the forgiving Father, and then the reconciled, rejoicing Father. 2. *Christ's sacrifice.* (Ver. 25.) We are in the presence of a mystery, which we may not analyze too closely. In Christ, God and man are one, and therefore the sacrifice of Christ represents a sacrifice of God and a sacrifice of man. In him, man expiates his own sin; in him, the Infinite Love stoops and suffers and dies. It was a real atonement of the race; it was a real atonement for the race; and what God hath joined we may not put asunder. 3. *Man's faith.* (Vers. 22, 25, 26.) To reduce it to its simplest, ultimate form, it is but the acceptance of what God gives, of what can only come to us from without, apart from any efforts of our own (ver. 21), "freely" (ver. 24). And such faith is virtually included in true penitence—the penitence of the "poor in spirit;" and, we doubt not, such true penitence is therefore virtually in possession of the pardon which hovers round every repentant heart. But, for a consciousness of pardon, there is required a conscious faith, *i.e.* an intelligent, glad acceptance of the gift of God in Christ. And the more vivid and realistic the consciousness of faith—or, may we say, the more strong and energetic the laying hold of life?—the stronger and more joyous will be the experience of salvation, and the resultant love for God through Christ.

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS. Redemption and righteousness are not at variance, but rather redemption is the great instrumentality whereby the righteousness of God works the righteousness of man. 1. *Man's righteousness.* Man's righteousness is wrought by the redemption of Christ, and therefore it is all Divine (vers. 21, 22). And yet it is truly man's. The righteousness which is expressly spoken of here is a relative, not an actual, righteousness; *i.e.* a condition of acquittal in presence of Law and judgment. Hence the specific term, "justification." Such relative righteousness may be the adjunct of actual righteousness; the Law must acquit those who have perfectly fulfilled the Law. But can it be so with man? "All have sinned." And even one sin destroys all possibility of acquittal this way. Therefore only by some extraneous, some substitutionary satisfaction of Law, can man be justified. Such satisfaction the redemption of Christ provides. He represents us all in the great atonement before God, and when we penitently acknowledge his representation and accept it, the satisfaction made by him is ours. The Law of the Jews was the discipline by which God was leading them to feel their need of a righteousness "apart from Law;" the prophets promised it. But since all need it, Gentiles as well as Jews, it is for all; "there is no distinction." 2. *God's righteousness.* Man's righteousness and God's are intervolved. Mere pardon would not set aside the claims of Law; justification respects those claims. The righteousness of God is his executive holiness—the active upholding of Law. It can only be manifested in the case of sin by punishment. This punishment must be of the individual offenders, or of some proper substitute. In Christ the great Head of the race

is smitten—smitten that the race may be justified. But only a relative righteousness, as productive again of actual righteousness, can be wrought by the righteousness of God; and therefore the justification is for penitents, believing in Christ. And the very faith itself of penitents in a Christ who died for sin, is the germ of a new righteousness of life. So, then, does God justify himself in justifying the ungodly; and so does he justify his past forbearance, whether as respects the world or the individual offender.

Thus in Christ is the great problem solved. God is "just, and the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." Is it more than a problem of the intellect to us? has it wrought itself out in our heart and life?—T. F. L.

Vers. 27—30.—"*Where is the glorying?*" The Jews were a glorying people; they gloried in God (see ch. ii. 17), and they gloried in the Law (ch. ii. 23). But now? All glorying was shut out.

I. THE FALSE GLORYING. Man's almost universal perversion of religion. Religion should humble him, but he makes it the occasion of boasting. So eminently with the Jews. 1. *In the Law.* The Law was designed to teach sin, and quicken their longings for holiness. It had become an apparatus of self-righteousness. 2. *In God.* God made himself known to them, that through them he might be made known to others. And God was one. They, however, rested in him as theirs alone; and the very doctrine of the oneness of God was made the badge of separateness, and an instrument of bigotry.

II. GLORYING EXCLUDED. God will teach man humility; as towards himself, as towards man's fellow-men. And the gospel is a potent instrumentality to this end. So, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." 1. *The law of faith:* to which "*the* Law" must logically lead. We receive, as suppliants, on bended knee. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). 2. *The God of all.* The very truth they held belied their pretensions; the God of all must be a God to all. So, then, the gospel was God's gift of grace to men, to be accepted by man's faith. None could do more; none might do less.

Our Christian knowledge and belief, our name of Christ, an occasion of glorying? Yes, in a true sense (Gal. vi. 14), but not boastfully. For the one should teach us a deep humility, with faith; the other a large, unfailing charity. "He is Lord of all."—T. F. L.

Ver. 31.—*The harmony of Law and faith.* God's dispensations cannot possibly disagree; they may not have the same immediate purport, but they must harmonize. This verse is a triumphant challenge at the close of a conclusive argument. The harmony of Law and faith.

I. LAW. The great aim of the dispensation of Law was to teach man his sin and helplessness. 1. "Through the Law cometh the knowledge of sin" (ver. 20). The Law within man fades in proportion as his disregard of it increases, and only by an objective Law can he then be taught his guilt. So did God, by a presentation of righteousness in the demands of the Law, bring home to man's conscience his condemnation. 2. This objective holiness, by its claims upon man's endeavours, not merely wrought condemnation in the conscience, but was designed to produce an intensest consciousness of incapacity. This not so directly intended by the apostle's words now, but falls legitimately within their scope. We see, we desire; we cannot attain.

II. FAITH. When the dispensation of Law has done its disciplinary work, the dispensation of faith shall take its place. 1. A universal condemnation prepares for the reception of the gift of grace. The world is brought to its knees before God, stricken with guilt; and now he may speak words of pardon, to be received by faith. God the Giver, man the recipient at his hands; this the relation now. Faith annulling the Law? Nay, supplementing it, and justifying its work. 2. And so the new life of faith—faith in the forgiving love of God, a faith which brings hope and inspiration—does but supplement, in no wise contradicts, the state of helplessness realized through the Law. We are at one with God; the chasm is bridged; and by his own loving help we can do his will.

To us Christians? Christ's perfect life serves for Law. How great our guilt! How

utter our impotence! But he stoops to die for us, and we receive forgiveness by faith; and, being in trustful and loving fellowship with him, we now can live by him. The "Law" of his life is established, not annulled, by faith.—T. F. L.

Vers. 1, 2.—*A sacred trust.* Questions break the even flow of a course of argumentation, and, by diversifying the stream, quicken the sluggish interest of the spectators. The catechetical method is characteristic of the Apostle Paul in his most vehement moods.

I. EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE QUERY IN THE TEXT. It might seem strange for any to question the unexampled privileges enjoyed by the Jews, but the apostle has been laying the axe to the root of some barren trees of Jewish pretensions. He ruthlessly exposed the pleas of those who tried to shelter their non-compliance with God's statutes behind the fact that they belonged to an elect race, as if to be an Israelite were in itself a guarantee of salvation. He showed that only the doers of the Law are justified by the Law; that the initial rite of circumcision could only profit if it were followed up by inward consecration and outward obedience. The apostle affirmed that even the heathen world had its law of conduct, according to which it would be judged. Every man who worked evil would be visited with retribution—"wrath and anguish," on the Jew first, and also on the Greek. The rabbis would not be absolved on the ground of their status and functions; let them instruct themselves, and abstain from every violation of the Law. These were plain statements; there was no mincing of the matter, and to many readers, accustomed with self-gratulation to pride themselves on their descent from Abraham, these remarks would prove highly offensive. And further they would be led to inquire, with complaining indignation, "Well, then, what has been the good to us of our Jewish religion? If our condition of national priority is not to ensure the ultimate favour of God, where is our boasted advantage over the Gentile, who may equally obtain the rewards of the judgment-day?" The objector asks not only what his ordinary profit has been, but *what has been the surplus, the excess of privilege*, above other nations. Observe how easily the hearer of the gospel may adopt the same line of questioning. Indeed, this is assigned by many as a reason for not preaching the gospel to the heathen, inasmuch as they shall be judged according to the degree of light they possess, and greater light may increase their condemnation.

II. THE EMPHATIC REPLY. The Jew had reason for devout gratitude in every respect, answers the apostle; and primarily, that to him it had been given to receive direct, unmistakable communications from Heaven. The Jewish nation were permitted to hear voices from the shrine, and the record of these Divine instructions was committed to their care as a valuable treasure. There was the Law from Mount Sinai—a political, priestly, ethical, sanitary code; there were prophecy and history, and the strains of men who swept the harp of religious feeling with divinely guided fingers. *Consider the high honour implied in such custodianship.* The isolation of the land of Palestine bespoke a Divine library, whose contents were to be guarded against contaminating, destructive touch. It is by their possession of the Scriptures that the Jews have won their place in the estimation of the world. Not by their deeds or character, but by their writings. Nor is it that they have displayed a special genius for literature; there is the mark of the inspiration of God. The prophets were conscious that this was and would be the glory of the nation, "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Neither Greece, nor Rome, nor Babylon has embalmed like Israel the story of its rise, its progress, and its fall. To-day the Jews are silent witnesses to the truth of Scripture—an unwilling comment on the threats and predictions of their own Bible. *This librarianship was a real help towards righteousness and the obtaining of the blessing of God.* Men will dare anything for the attainment of mere empty honour, titles of distinction, or posthumous fame. But it was surely no slight advantage to have in these oracles such a revelation of the nature of God. The existence of one God was plainly taught. And from the conception of him as almighty there was an advance to the conception of an ever-living, holy, all-pervading Spirit. Then he was revealed as sympathizing with the woes of his creatures, and the "Angel of his face" was predicted as making his soul an offering for the sin of man. It was no small advantage to have the searching requirements of morality so vividly enforced, and attested with such august sanctions. The sincere reader could say, "Thy Word is a

lamp unto my feet," etc. They were "lively oracles," as contrasted with the dim, uncertain, impotent instructions of the unillumined world. They imparted hope, intimated the mercy of God, and the possibility of pardon through sacrifice. They taught a future life, so that Martha could say to our Lord, "I know that my brother shall rise again." The very fact that these oracles were committed to writing was no little aid towards their intelligibleness and influence. Heathendom questioned in its childhood, and still doubted in its old age. Spiritual truth may be said to have been unknown except to Israel. Into what lofty regions of spiritual vision could the psalmists and prophets soar, on wings of knowledge and faith nourished by the writings they possessed!

III. AN APPEAL TO MODERN READERS. Analogous reasoning may be applied to our condition. The cheap multiplication of copies of the Scriptures, and the many seasons and media of exposition available, vastly augment our advantages. Besides, we have the light which the New Testament throws upon the attributes and fulfilled purposes of God. Our function, like that of Israel, is twofold—to learn and to teach. 1. *Let us utilize the written Word for our own behoof.* Picture the folly of a sailor not consulting his chart, or the traveller failing to guide his steps by his manual. Too many a sexton cares for the material fabric, and overlooks the doctrines and worship to which the temple is subservient. Without disparaging other literature, how dark were the world of letters if this sun were blotted out! The following verse (ver. 3) speaks of *the chief hindrance to profiting by the oracles*, viz. a want of faith. Faith is the practical employment of gospel truth; not the comprehending of all its connections and relationships, or the sounding of its fathomless depths with our tiny plummet, but the utilization of its plain declarations and directions. The road to the cross no wayfarer can mistake. 2. *We too have the Bible as a sacred charge for the benefit of our fellows.* Israel was to serve all generations and all races of mankind, and the Church of Christ exists for no exclusive selfish ends, but for the enlightenment of every home and land. The very position of Great Britain in the carrying-trade of the globe marks our glory and responsibility. To have a deposit entrusted to our care involves vigilance lest it suffer damage. A mutilated library condemns its guardians, and closed doors mean the flight of the glory of the Lord from the sanctuary.—S. R. A.

Vers. 5—8.—*False conclusions concerning sin.* Like human works, Divine operations are liable to misconstruction. The serpent secretes poison from wholesome food. And the redemptive love of God may be perverted into a justification of sinful conduct by those who wish for an excuse, and fancy they find it in the very universality of unrighteousness which the apostle has demonstrated. For this universality, they say, shows that to sin is natural, and therefore not blameworthy. And they derive a further reason for the irresponsible and inculpable character of man's sin in the splendour of the vindication of Divine righteousness, which is the outcome of human depravity. Let us state the truth in three propositions.

I. SIN IS OVERRULED BY GOD TO GREATER GOOD. The work of the Law evidenced in man's accusing conscience, and in the state of degradation and misery to which a sinful career reduces man, becomes a convincing testimony that the Governor of the universe sets his face against evil. The dark background throws into bright relief the holiness of the Most High. Man learns more of his own nature through sin than he could otherwise have known, and perhaps realizes better the vast interval between the creature and the Creator. But especially in the gospel scheme of salvation, and in its effects upon those who heartily receive its benefits, does the righteousness of God shine out conspicuous. Our weakness and folly are the theatre for the display of his transcendent grace and power. The loss of Eden is naught compared with the gain of a heavenly paradise. Like the oyster whose fretting at the noxious intrusion produces the lustrous pearl, or like the clouds which reflect and magnify the effulgence of the setting sun, so has man's fall furnished scope for the exhibition of love that stoops to suffering in order to redeem, and righteousness that triumphs over all the ravages of sin and death. Man redeemed is to be raised to a higher plane; having tasted the knowledge of good and evil, he is thereby disciplined, renewed, through a more glorious manifestation of his Maker's wisdom and self-sacrifice, to a nobler end. Like a crypt opened under an organ, deeper notes and a richer harmony shall result

from the pit of destruction that yawned beneath the feet of our sinful race. Holy beings who have kept their first estate may detect a wondrous pathos in the songs of ransomed saints. The sentence, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," has become a blessing to our fallen humanity, for by toilsome effort we gain experience, humility, and strength. And so, by the habit of wrestling against sinful impulses, we can acquire a security of position which innocent integrity could never guarantee. Which justified believer could really wish never to have had the necessity for gazing at the cross, which melts his soul and transforms his being? Thus is man's unrighteousness made "to commend the righteousness of God."

II. WILFUL SIN IS NOT, THEREFORE, TO GO UNPUNISHED. Mark the deceitfulness of sin, trying to find a cloak for its existence, and even a motive to its further commission, in the very method whereby God demonstrates his grief at its prevalence, and his determination to root it out of his dominions. No traitor could expect to escape judgment on the plea that his rebel designs, being detected, exposed, and defeated by his sovereign, had really only contributed to his monarch's glory. Perhaps the direction in which the apostle's argument needs chief application to-day is in respect of practical antinomianism. They mistake the intent of the atonement who can live as if the superabounding grace of Christ gives liberty to the recipient to neglect righteousness of behaviour. Full forgiveness for past conduct does not imply that all the natural consequences will be averted. The wound may be healed, but the scar shall remain. Men receive in themselves the harvest resulting from their seed-crop of thoughts and practices. The reasoning of the supposed objector in the text reminds one of the self-justifying query of a thief to the policeman, "What would you do for a livelihood if it were not for the likes of us?" Paul never hesitates to bring complacent sinners into the presence of the great white throne of judgment, in whose searching light delusive pretences fall away and leave the soul naked before God.

III. NOR IS SIN IN ANY FORM TO BE PERPETRATED WITH A VIEW TO GOOD EFFECTS. The condemnation is just of those who say, "Let us do evil, that good may come." Modern preachers should not be surprised if their utterances get misinterpreted, since even the apostle's clear statements did not prevent opponents from twisting his declarations into a proposition abhorrent to his mind. To permit sin in his children would be for God to allow the roots of his moral government to be cut. The casuistry of the Middle Ages was a trifling with the plain utterances of the inner judgment. Our only safe guide is morality. To do what we know to be wrong is always hurtful, though sometimes we may do harm by what we believe to be right. Man's reason soon begins to spin out of itself a cocoon wherein it lies in dark imprisonment. The prevention of sin is better than its cure. An unrighteous policy is never expedient. Sweet at first, it turns to bitterness at the last. For Churches to seek by unrighteous methods to further the kingdom of God is like the action of the Irish agent, who, when ordered to take measures for the preservation of a certain ancient ruin, proceeded to use the stones of the ruin for a wall of enclosure to protect it against further harm. Righteousness alone can establish any throne and exalt any people. We have need of prayer and converse with Christ, that the spiritual vision may be keen enough to detect Satan, though appearing as "an angel of light."—S. R. A.

Ver. 23.—*A remedy for a universal need.* To assert that the righteousness of God manifested in Christ was "apart from the Law" relegated the Law to its proper position, as the servant, not the master, of religion. And the apostle's substantiation of his further assertion, that this new method of righteousness was not so entirely unheard of as that its novelty should be a strong prejudice against its truth, but that, on the contrary, the Law itself and the prophets contain intimations of such a Divine manifestation,—this cut the ground entirely from under the feet of objectors jealous of every innovation which could not be justified by an appeal to the sacred writings. And this righteousness through faith recognized Jew and Gentile as alike in their need of a gospel, and their freedom of access thereto.

I. THERE IS NO DISTINCTION AMONGST MEN IN RESPECT OF THEIR NEED OF THE GOSPEL. Men are declared faulty in two respects. 1. *By positive transgression.* They "sinned," they have done wrong, and they wander continually from the right

way. They are not adjudged criminal merely on the ground of Adam's fall, but they themselves cross the line which separates obedience from disobedience. Scripture, history, and conscience testify to this fact. 2. *By defect.* They "fall short of the glory of God." Their past behaviour has been blameworthy, and their present condition is far below what was intended when man was formed in God's image, to attain to his likeness. Compare the best of men with the example set by the Saviour of love to God and man, and of conformity to the highest standard discernible. Now, unless perfect, man cannot claim acquittal at the bar of judgment. Perfection is marred if one feature be distorted or one limb be missing or weak. This is *not to be taken to signify that all men are equally sinful*, that there are no degrees of enormity, and that all are equidistant from the kingdom of God. But it means that, without exception, all fail in the examination which Divine righteousness institutes, though some have more marks than others. Left to themselves, all men would drown in the sea of their iniquity, though some are nearer the surface than their fellows. The misunderstanding of this truth has done grievous harm to tender minds, fretting because they had not the same sense of awful misdoing that has been felt by notorious malefactors. We need not gauge the amount of contrition requisite; it suffices if the heart turn humbly to God for forgiveness. Thus *the gospel does not flatter men.* Soothing messages may comfort for a while till the awakening comes. Then we realize that it is of no use to be in a richly decorated cabin if the ship is sinking. *To reveal the true state is the necessary preliminary to reformation.* There is a downrightness about the gospel assertions which, like the deep probing of the surgeon's lance, wounds in order to thorough healing. Alas! that the disease of sin should so frequently produce lethargy in the sick! they feel no need of a physician! *Lax notions of sin lessen our sense of the necessity of an atonement.* We fail to discern a rebellion against the government of God, and an offence against the moral universe. We treat it as if it only concerned ourselves and our neighbours. No sprinkling of rose-water can purge away the evil; it can be cleansed only by the blood of the Lamb.

II. THERE IS NO DISTINCTION IN RESPECT OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION. 1. *Justification comes in every case as a gift*, not as a prize discovered or earned. "Being justified freely." Part of the beneficial influence of the gospel is the blow it administers to human notions of desert, and pride is a chief obstacle to enrichment by this gift of God. 2. *To all men the kindness of God is the source of their salvation.* God first loved and sought the sinner, not contrariwise. His "grace" is the fountain of redemption. 3. *The same Divine method of deliverance is employed for all.* "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." There is but one way to the Father, whether men walk thereon consciously or unconsciously, in heathen twilight or gospel noontide, in Jewish anticipation or Christian realization. The one atonement can cover all transgression. 4. *The same human mode of entrance into the kingdom is open to all*, viz. by faith. Weakness, ignorance, degradation, cannot be pleaded as obstacles to salvation. The study of the philosopher is no nearer heaven than the cottage of the artisan. The capacity of trusting is possessed by every man; the remedy is not remote, therefore, from the reach of any of the sin-sick race.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—8.—*Jewish privileges and Divine judgment.* From a consideration of the attitude of the Jewish world to God, the apostle proceeds in this section to state the privileges enjoyed by Jews, and to point out the corresponding danger of commensurate condemnation in case the privileges were neglected or abused. The Jew might be inclined to say, "If circumcision be not a seal of special privilege, if I am not to be accepted because of my circumcision and descent: what possible advantage is there in being a Jew?" Now, to this Paul answers that the Jew has many advantages, but in the mean time he will only emphasize one—he is the custodian of the Divine revelation. It is round this fact that the thought of the present section circulates. Let us try to grasp the truths as the apostle suggests them.

I. THE REVELATION CONFIDED TO THE CARE OF THE JEWS. (Ver. 2.) Into the large subject of the Old Testament revelation we cannot, of course, enter. But it may be noted that the revelation is in foundation historical; it gives the history of a peculiar people; it brings out the meaning of their history—how they had been

under a Divine discipline and education from the days of Abraham down to the days of Christ. Not only so, but the revelation turned the minds of its possessors towards the future, speaking of a suffering as well as glorified Messiah, who was coming to set up his kingdom. The revelation was thus a fountain of hope for all who possessed it. Besides, it was a means of self-examination, for it analyzed the motives and exposed the depravity of the human heart. To say that there was no literature possessed by other nations to be compared for a moment with the Hebrew literature is to state the case tamely. The nation possessing such "holy oracles" ought to have been the holiest, most humble, and most hopeful of all the nations. God was clearly calling them as a people into an exceeding great and glorious inheritance. A pure and inspiring literature is a chief national possession. Beside this, all other advantages are trifling. And so the circumcised Jew might well rejoice in being the custodian of the most splendid national literature existing in the world.

II. SOME, WHILE PRESERVING THE BOOK, DID NOT BELIEVE THE MESSAGE THAT IT BROUGHT. (Ver. 3.) It is admitted on all hands that the Old Testament was preserved by the Jews with scrupulous care. Texts and even letters were counted, and nothing was left to be desired so far as custody is concerned. But many, alas! of the custodians did not appreciate the message which the book brought them. It did not undermine their pride; its utterances about the deceitfulness of the human heart were referred to other people. Its statements also about the sufferings of Messiah were largely ignored, so that when Messiah came as a Man of sorrows they rejected him, and continued to look for another Messiah, who would pose in triumphant majesty at the head of an emancipated nation. Accordingly, they did not believe either in the book or in the Messiah it promised. They thought, indeed, that they had eternal life in the book, but they refused to come to the Person the book pointed out, and who alone had eternal life to bestow (cf. John v. 39, 40). They thus gave the lie to revelation, and took up arms against God and his Son. Yet such unbelief did not invalidate the Divine revelation or interfere with God's faithfulness. The book contained threatenings as well as promises; it has its Ebal as well as its Gerizim. If, therefore, souls insist on disbelieving God's promises and threatenings, he can still abide faithful, and does not need to deny himself. He can execute judgment on the unbelievers, and so secure his glory in their despite.

III. THE EXPEDIENCY DOCTRINE OF DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME MERITS THE STRONGEST REPROBATION. (Vers. 4—8.) Unbelief does not, as we have seen, invalidate God's faithfulness. God preserves his glory in man's despite. In these circumstances, the objection is easily raised that unbelief, and indeed unrighteousness in all its forms, contribute to God's glory; his righteousness is seen to the more advantage through this foil. The sinner is consequently contributing to the Divine glory, and so should not suffer for thus co-operating. In the light of God's providential plan, every evil-doer is contributing to the display of the Divine righteousness. Now, this doctrine of expedient evil, with its resultant good, has been the continual resort of the unscrupulous. But it is worthy of the very strongest reprobation. For, in the first place, it overlooks the fact that evil-doers are *not* voluntary contributors to the Divine glory. Evil-doing is really the running counter to God's will in all things. If evil-doers are contributors to God's glory, it is in spite of themselves. They deserve no consideration, therefore, on this account. And, in the second place, while God overrules their evil-doing for his glory, he is in no sense the Author of sin, and so in no sense does evil that good may come. For, in granting freedom to his creatures, God was granting the one condition of the existence of virtue, and has no responsibility when his creatures diverted it into the channel of waywardness and sin. The evil is the act of his creatures entirely; with them the responsibility rests; all that God does is to transmute the evil into good by his wondrous wisdom, justice, and love. Consequently the doing of evil can only be under the pretence of good resulting from it. Evil-doers wax worse and worse; they may pretend to seek good, but their spirit gives the lie to their profession, and warrants their condemnation. It is diabolical doctrine, and its damnation is just.

IV. GOD'S RIGHTS AS JUDGE CANNOT BE DISREGARDED. (Vers. 5, 6.) A general judgment is expected by all impartial minds. It is seen by all not blinded by good fortune that good and evil are not distributed in this life according to desert. We are

in a dispensation where much is reserved, and a judgment to come can alone afford the opportunity of putting things right. Suppose, then, that the right to punish evil-doers is denied on this ground of their contributing to God's glory; it is plain that the whole idea of judgment, either present or to come, must fall to pieces. In these circumstances we should have no judge to appeal to, and no hope of even checking triumphant wrong. Faith in the Divine administration would be lost, and society would really relapse into barbarism. Hence God's rights as Judge must be respected, and evil-doers prepare themselves for wrath, if they refuse to be reconciled to him. This guarantee of God's rights as Judge is one of the marks of the Old Testament revelation. There we see, sooner or later, judgment overtaking evil-doing. Even when the evil-doer is, like David, an Oriental despot, God's judgments search him out; so that the one hope of the sinner is to betake himself to penitence, and if he can, as in the fifty-first psalm, acknowledge his sin and justify God, as he condemns and visits with displeasure the sin (Ps. li. 4; ch. iii. 4), then the pardon and the peace and the joy of believing may be his. But the Judge must be recognized and his rights respected, else the individual and society itself must remain unsaved.—R. M. E.

Vers. 9—20.—*Knowledge of sin through the Law.* Having described the Jewish privileges and the Divine judgment for the abuse of these privileges, the apostle now proceeds to ask and to answer the question, "Are we [Jews] preferred (προεχόμεθα)?" This means, in God's esteem; and it is answered without hesitation, "No, in no wise." And the proof has already been given: "For we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin" (Revised Version). We are, consequently, face to face in this section with the truth of universal guilt—a fact proclaimed alike by the heathen conscience and the Jewish Scriptures.

I. JEWS AND GREEKS ARE ALL UNDER SIN. (Ver. 9.) It is here that a gracious work must begin in the soul. All possibility of self-righteous confidence must be taken away; the soul must be brought low through a sense of sin. Instead, therefore, of Jews being put into a class of Divine favourites, accepted because of their descent or circumcision, they are put by Paul into the one universal class of guilty men. They have as little ground of hope in themselves as the most abandoned heathen. It is here, accordingly, that we must all come. We must take our stand with the race and realize that we are all guilty before God. We come under a law of condemnation, and no amount of Pharisaic self-righteousness will make any of us an exception. God will not respect the persons of any; all must first humble themselves before him under a genuine sense of sin.

II. UNIVERSAL GUILT IS ASSERTED IN THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES. (Vers. 10—18.) Paul, in making his quotations, gives us some from the Psalms, some from Proverbs, some from the Prophet Isaiah; but the sad chorus is in perfect unison about human guilt and its accompanying depravity. The psalm from which he quotes first, the fourteenth, represents God as looking down from heaven to see, if possible, some righteous man; but the verdict to which he is compelled to come is that "there is none righteous, no, not one." Instead of the knowledge of his Name, and its corresponding righteousness, there was nothing visible but guilt and corruption. Human history was one long catalogue of selfishness and crime. There were no redeeming features in humanity, wherever left to itself. Hence the "oracles" possessed by the Jews were no flattering unction for Jewish souls. So far from this, the Old Testament Scriptures demonstrated the guilt and waywardness of the chosen people, as well as of the surrounding heathen, and made the most sweeping charges against one and all. If Jews hope for consideration and acceptance on the ground of their possession of the book, they were entirely mistaken, for they were simply custodians of their own condemnation. And, indeed, this is one of the wonders of the world, that a literature which is so faithful with guilty men, that is always knocking down their self-righteousness, and flattering them never, should, notwithstanding, be so popular among them. The severest censor of all has, nevertheless, become the most revered. It is in this light a great encouragement to all who have the desire to be faithful with their fellows, that faithfulness will sooner or later be appreciated!

III. NO HOPE CAN CONSEQUENTLY BE PLACED IN HUMAN MERIT. (Ver. 19.) The severe judgment expressed in the Jewish Law is not meant merely for heathens, but

especially for Jews who had the Law, in order that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world brought in guilty before God. By the deeds of the Law, consequently, no flesh need expect to be justified in God's sight. One unvarying tale it has been of guilt and condemnation. All notion of merit must, consequently, be cast to the winds. Now, this is the greatest service which can be rendered to any soul. If we compare Phil. iii. 7, 8, we shall see that the idea of merit cost the Apostle Paul many painful years. He was going about to establish his own righteousness, by asserting his pure Jewish descent and his ceremonial obedience and his headlong zeal; and he was under the delusion that by such a record he could claim as a just right acceptance and honour before God. But the moment he met his risen Saviour on the way to Damascus, he saw that all these self-righteous years were lost, and that "merit" had only kept him away from Christ. In the very same way, anxious souls are kept oftentimes away from Christ by the delusion that they can render themselves, somehow, more acceptable unto him. Let us bless God when he annihilates our delusions and leads us clear of all fancied merit. It is down in the dust of guilt and felt unworthiness that we are sure to receive our gracious exaltation.

IV. BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN. (Ver. 20.) The Jews took the ceremonial law as a law of life, and by keeping little rites and ceremonies—the more, they imagined, the better—they thought they could earn the Divine favour and glory. Had they looked into the ceremonies with proper care, they would have seen in those given by Moses a constant *note of condemnation*. The moral Law, besides, with its magnificent ideal and standard, only intensified the sense of guilt in the soul of the thoughtful worshipper. In consequence of human sin, the Law ceases to be a way of life, and becomes a tremendous indictment and condemnation. It is this use of the Law which we are to recognize. It is, then, a most wholesome revealer of our real and lost condition. It drives us out of our refuges of lies and fancied merit, that we may betake ourselves to Christ alone. It is the light which exposes the dark chambers of our souls, and brings us to conviction and repentance. Let us make the proper use of the Law, and it will, as a schoolmaster, bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. It will lead us to see that until Christ came there was no real merit in the world on which God could look with complacency. Only when Jesus allied himself with the race was the outlook on humanity in any wise redeemed.—R. M. E.

Vers. 21—31.—*Justification through faith in Christ.* The design of the Law, to intensify our sense of sin, having been made plain, the apostle, in the present paragraph, proceeds to show where justification comes from. It does not come from the Law; for the Law can only give us condemnation. It comes from a source foretold in "the Law and the prophets"—from Jesus Christ, our Propitiation. And more than justification, as we shall now see, proceeds from this marvellous source. Three leading thoughts are presented in this passage.

I. ANTE-CHRISTIAN SIN WAS JUSTLY PASSED BY ON THE GROUND OF CHRIST'S PROMISED PROPITIATION. The picture the apostle gives us of the universal depravity and guilt of mankind suggests the inquiry—How did God deal with it? And one undeniable fact was that in Old Testament times man's wickedness was in many cases "passed by." Instead of executing speedy vengeance on human sin, God only flamed forth upon it occasionally, and during the intervening periods, or in the other places he seemed to "wink at" the wickedness, and passed it over in silence. The result in many cases was this, that because sentence against an evil work was not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men was fully set in them to do evil (Eccles. viii. 11). If such was the result in some cases, how can we vindicate God's procedure? Now, the apostle's position in this passage is this—that the "passing by" of sin, just as well as the pardon of sin, has its justification in the atonement of Christ. It will be well for us to consider for a moment what is secured by the passing by of ante-Christian sin. When we look into ante-Christian history, we see that, though God passed by a good deal of sin, he did not pass it all by. The Deluge, the vengeance taken on Sodom and Gomorrah, the trials of the children of Israel in the great and howling wilderness, the perils in the conquest of Canaan, the Egyptian and Babylonian invasions of Palestine, not to mention other instances, showed that God could, when he pleased, execute fierce vengeance upon man for his sins. But a vast amount of sin

admittedly went unpunished. Now, "strange as it may appear," to quote from a thoughtful writer, "this very *imperfection* [in the execution of justice] seems to be the strongest possible proof that, in the next world, vengeance will be fulfilled to the utmost. For observe, if we found that every man in this life received just what he deserved, and every evil work always brought swift punishment along with it, what should we naturally conclude? There is no future punishment in store: I see nothing wanting; every man has already received the due reward of his works; everything is already complete, and, therefore, there is nothing to be done in the next world. Or if, on the other hand, there were no punishment visited upon sin at all in the world, we might be inclined to say, 'Tush! God hath forgotten;' he never interferes amongst us; we have no proof of his hatred of sin, or of his determination to punish it; he is gone away far from us, and has left us to follow our own wills and imaginations. So that if sentence were either *perfectly* executed upon earth, or *not executed at all*, we might have some reason for saying that there was a *chance* of none in a future world. But now it is *imperfectly* executed; just *so much done*, as to say, 'You are watched,—my eye is upon you; I neither slumber nor sleep; and my vengeance slumbereth not.' And yet, at the same time, there is *so little done*, that a man has to look into eternity for the accomplishment."[1] If God, by passing over ante-Christian sin, provided a chief argument for a world and judgment to come, then we can see how he could *justly* pass by the sin when he had promised in the Law and the prophets a propitiation. It is a difficulty with some to see exactly how "Christ tasted death for every man," even for those who will not accept of pardon. But the respite, more or less lengthy, which all sinners enjoy before the execution of deserved vengeance upon them, is owing to Christ's propitiation. God can justly stay his hand, since the atoning sacrifice has been secured. In view of the promised propitiation, in ante-Christian times God's righteousness was vindicated in passing by the sins of men and postponing their punishment. God's justice was provided for, while he indulged his forbearance and passed over the sins of men.

II. JUSTIFICATION WAS ALSO EXTENDED TO FAITH IN THE PROPITIATION OF CHRIST. Not only does Christ's propitiation justify the Divine forbearance (ver. 25), as we have just seen, but it also justifies the pardon and acceptance of the believer. By trusting in the propitiation of Christ, we find ourselves justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The state of the case, as Paul here puts it, is this. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile as far as condemnation is concerned. We are all condemned, for we all sinned (ἥμαρτον is the aorist, and refers to a previous act, and this was, doubtless, man's fall in Eden), and were destitute of God's glory. But we come to see in Jesus Christ a divinely appointed and promised "propitiation" (ἱλαστήριον), not surely a mere "mercy-seat," but an "atoning sacrifice," in whose shed *blood* we can trust (διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι); and on the ground of the satisfaction thus rendered to Divine justice by a Divine Redeemer, God can be just, and at the same time justify the believer in Jesus. "Perhaps," says Shedd, in his 'Critical and Doctrinal Commentary,' "the force of the middle voice should be insisted upon: 'God set forth for himself.' The atonement of Christ is a *self*-satisfaction for the Triune God. It meets the requirements of that Divine nature which is equally in each Person. 'God hath reconciled us to *himself* (ἑαυτῷ)' (2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Col. i. 20). In the work of vicarious atonement, the Godhead is both subject and object, active and passive. God holds the claims, and God satisfies the claims; he is displeased, and he propitiates the displeasure; he demands the atonement, and he provides the atonement." And here we should be very clear about the perfectly *gratuitous* character of our justification. We are justified "freely" (δωρεάν) by way of gift, as a matter of pure grace, our only possible relation to it being *gratitude* for a free gift. To trust in our propitiation, or rather in our Propitiator, is no more a merit than it it is for a beggar to hold out his hand for alms. We do Christ the greatest injustice, we deny him his rights, so long as we refuse to trust him. Our pardon and acceptance as believers, therefore, are granted for the sake of Jesus Christ.

III. NO BOASTING CAN BE BUILT ON THE LAW OF FAITH. (Vers. 27—31.) Gratuitous justification, the apostle proceeds next to show, excludes all boasting. As we have seen, we have no merit before the Law, but stand condemned. We escape condemnation

[1] Wolfe's 'Remains,' 6th edit., pp. 225, 226.

by a gratuitous justification extended to us on the ground of our Redeemer's merits. Our faith in this loving, self-sacrificing Redeemer is only giving him *his due!* All who accept of justification, therefore, on these terms are excluded by this "law of faith" from boasting. We realize that we must make our boast only in the Lord. He is the sole ground of our confidence. The "deeds of the Law" do not enter into the question of our justification; good works come in the Christian life as the *effect* of our pardon and acceptance; we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). Jew and Gentile have alike, therefore, to accept of justification as God's free gift through the propitiation of Christ, and as grateful penitents to set about proving our gratitude through suitable good works. The Law is thus established, first, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus; and, secondly, through the new obedience of the grateful and lowly minded believer. The magnificent plan of salvation, so far from proving any illegality, is entirely in the interests of law and order.[1] What it secures is a mighty multitude of meek and lowly men, each one of whom feels laid under everlasting obligation through the gratuitous pardon and acceptance he has received through Christ, and bound in consequence to do all he can to prove how grateful he is. May we all belong to this self-emptied and lowly minded company!—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IV.

Vers. 1—25.—(5) *Abraham himself shown to have been justified by faith, and not by works, believers being his true heirs.*

The main points of the argument may be summarized thus: When Abraham obtained a blessing to himself and to his seed for ever, it was by faith, and not by works, that he is declared to have been justified so as to obtain it. Thus the promise to his seed, as well as to himself, rested on the principle of justification by faith only. The Law, of which the principle was essentially different, could not, and did not, in itself fulfil that promise; and that its fulfilment was not dependent on circumcision, or confined to the circumcised, is further shown by the fact that it was before his own circumcision that he received the blessing and the promise. Hence the seed intended in the promise was his spiritual seed, who are of faith such as his was; and in Christ, offering justification through faith to all, the promise is now fulfilled.

Ver. 1.—**What then shall we say that Abraham our father according to the flesh hath found?** The connection, denoted by *οὖν*, with the preceding argument is rather with vers. 27, 28 of ch. iii., than with its concluding words, *νόμον ἱστάνομεν*. This appears, not only from the drift of ch. iv., but also from the word *καύχημα* in ver. 2, connecting the thought with *ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις;* in ch. iii. 27. The line of thought is, in the first place, this: We have said that all human glorying is shut out, and that no man can be justified except by faith: how, then (it is important to inquire), was it with Abraham our great progenitor? Did not he at least earn the blessing to his seed by the merit of his works? Had not he, on that ground, whereof to glory? No, not even he; Scripture, in what it says of him, distinctly asserts the contrary. There is uncertainty in this verse as to whether "according to the flesh" (*κατὰ σάρκα*) is to be connected with "our father" or with "hath found." Readings vary in their arrangement of the words. The Textus Receptus has *Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν εὑρηκέναι κατὰ σάρκα.* But the great preponderance of authority is in favour of *εὑρηκέναι Ἀβραὰμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν κατὰ σάρκα.* The first of these readings requires the connection of *κατὰ σάρκα* with *εὑρηκέναι*; the second allows it, but suggests the other connection. Theodoret, among the ancients, connecting with *εὑρηκέναι*, explains *κατὰ σάρκα* thus: "What righteousness, of Abraham's, wrought *before he believed God*, did we ever hear of?" Calvin suggests, as the meaning of the phrase (though himself inclining to the connection with *προπάτορα*), "naturaliter vel ex seipso." Bull, similarly ('Harmonia Apostolica,' 'Disputatio Posterior,' c. xii. 14—17), "by

[1] See a fine sermon on the "Union of Justice and Grace in God," in Woolsey's 'Religion of the Present and of the Future,' No. x.; also a fine discourse at a Reformation Festival by Auberlen, in his 'Das Geheimniss Gottes in Christo,' ss. 63—76.

his natural powers, without the grace of God." Alford, following Meyer, says that κατὰ σάρκα is in contrast to κατὰ πνεῦμα, and that it "refers to that department of our being from which spring works, in contrast with that in which is the exercise of faith." Difficulty is avoided if (as is the most natural inference from the best authenticated reading) we take κατὰ σάρκα in connection with πάτερα or προπάτορα, in the sense of our forefather in the way of natural descent, the question being put from the Jewish standpoint; and this in distinction from the other conception of descent from Abraham, according to which all the faithful are called his children (cf. ch. i. 3; ix. 3, 5, 8; 1 Cor. x. 18). Among the ancients Chrysostom and Theophylact take this view. For the import of εὑρηκέναι, cf. Luke i. 30 (εὗρες χάριν παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ) and Heb. ix. 12 (αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος).

Ver. 2.—**For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.** Many commentators take this verse to imply that, even if he *was* justified by works, he still had no ground of glorying *before God*, though he might have *before men*. But the drift of the whole argument being to show that he was not justified by works at all, this interpretation can hardly stand. "Not before God" must therefore have reference to the whole of the preceding sentence, in the sense, "It was not so in the sight of God." Before God (as appears from the text to be quoted) he had not whereof to glory on the ground of being justified by works, and therefore it follows that it was not by works that he was justified.

Ver. 3.—**For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.** This notable text (Gen. xv. 6), declaring the ground of Abraham's acceptance, is similarly quoted in the cognate passage, Gal. iii. 6. It has a peculiar cogency in the general argument from being in connection with, and with reference to, one of the Divine promises to Abraham of an unnumbered seed; so that it may be understood with an extended application to those who were to inherit the blessing, as well as to the "father of the faithful," and so declaring the principle of justification for all the "children of the promise." Further, it would be peculiarly telling as addressed to the Jews, who made such a point of their descent from Abraham as the root of all their position of privilege (cf. Ps. cv. 6; Isa. xli. 8; li. 2; Matt. iii. 9; Luke iii. 8; John viii. 39). The two significant expressions in it are ἐπίστευσε (denoting faith, not works) and ἐλογίσθη εἰς. The whole phrase, the apostle proceeds to say, implies that the reward spoken of was not earned, but granted.

Vers. 4, 5.—**Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt** (literally, *according to grace, but according to the debt*, i.e. according to what is due). **But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.** The expression, "him that worketh" (τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ), evidently means him that works with a view to a reward which he can claim; or, as Luther explains it, "one who deals in works;" or, as we might say with the same signification, "the worker." (For a like use of the present participle, cf. Gal. v. 3, τῷ περιτεμνομένῳ.) So also in ver. 5, τῷ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ means one who does *not* so work. Thus there is here no denial of the necessity of good works. It is the *principle* only of justification that is in view. "Neque enim fideles vult esse ignavos; sed tantum mercenarias esse vetat, qui a Deo quicquam reposcant quasi jure debitum" (Calvin). One view of the meaning of τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ is that it is equivalent to τῷ ἐργάτῃ, being meant as an illustration, thus: The workman's wage is due to him, and not granted as a favour (so Alford). But this notion does not suit the τῷ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ in the following verse. The strong word ἀσεβῆ ("ungodly") is not to be understood as designating Abraham himself, the proposition being a general one. Nor does it imply that continued ἀσέβεια is consistent with justification; only that even the ἀσεβεῖς are justified through faith on their repentance and amendment (cf. ch. v. 6, ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν ἀπέθανε).

Vers. 6—8.—**Even as David also describeth the blessedness** (λέγει τὸν μακαρισμὸν. The noun means properly a *declaring blessed*—*beatitatis prædicatio*—"Eloquitur illud beati præconiam" (Bengel). We might render, "David tells of the blessing on the man," etc.) **of the man unto whom God reckoneth** (λογίζεται, as before. *Imputeth* in the Authorized Version suggests the idea of a different word being used) **righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon** (λογίσηται, as before, and so throughout the whole passage) **sin** (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2). The introduction of this testimony of David to the same principle of justification serves not only to explain it further, but also to show that under the Law too it continued to be recognized; and by David himself, the typical king and psalmist under the legal dispensation. But the argument from Abraham is not discontinued, being resumed in the next verse, and continued to the end of the chapter. If it be said that these verses from Ps. xxxii. do not in themselves declare a general

principle applicable to all, but only the blessedness to *sinners* of having their sins forgiven, it may be replied, firstly, that the way in which the verses are introduced does not require more to be implied. All that *need* be meant is that the ground of justification exemplified in Abraham's case is the same as is spoken of by David as still available for man, and crowned with blessing. But, secondly, it is to be observed that these verses represent and suggest the general tenor of the Book of Psalms, in which human righteousness is never asserted as constituting a claim to reward. "My trust is in thy mercy," is, on the contrary, the ever-recurring theme. St. Paul's quotations from the Old Testament are frequently given as suggestive of the general scriptural teaching on the subject in hand, rather than as exhaustive proofs in themselves.

Vers. 9, 10.—**Cometh this blessedness then** (properly, *is then this blessing*) **upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How** (*i.e.*, as the context shows, *under what circumstances*) **was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.** Faith, and not works, having been shown to be the principle of Abraham's justification, and those who were under the Mosaic Law, represented by David, having been seen to have shared the blessing of being so justified, the question still remains, whether it may not be confined to them only, or to Abraham's circumcised descendants only. That this cannot be is shown in two ways: firstly (vers. 10—13), from the fact that Abraham was himself *uncircumcised* when he was spoken of as being thus justified, so that neither the capability nor the inheritance of such justification can be viewed as dependent on circumcision; and, secondly (vers. 13—16), it is argued that the Law could not appropriate the privilege to his carnal descendants, the very principle of law being the opposite of that on which Abraham is said to have been justified. Thus the *seed*, innumerable as the stars, to be understood as inheritors of the promise made to him, and sharers in his blessing, are not his circumcised descendants, but a spiritual seed—they which are of faith being the true children of Abraham (Gal. iii. 7).

Vers. 11, 12.—**And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had in uncircumcision** (this was all that circumcision was—a visible sign and seal to his own descendants of the righteousness that is of faith; but not confining it to them, or in itself conferring it) **that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be in uncircumcision, that righteousness might be reckoned unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision.** The intention of ver. 12 is to express that, though the faithful who are not of Israel are Abraham's children, yet his circumcised descendants have not lost their privilege. They are already his children according to the flesh, and his spiritual children too, if they walk in the steps of his faith (cf. John viii. 37, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed," compared with ver. 39, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham").

What now follows is to show (as above explained) that the Law could not be the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, or appropriate its blessing to the Jews.

Vers. 13—15.—**For not through law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be the heir of the world, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. For the Law worketh wrath: for where no law is, neither is there transgression.** The point of the argument is that the principle of law is essentially different from that on which Abraham was justified, and which is hence to be understood in the fulfilment of the promise to him and his seed. How this is so is shortly intimated in ver. 15, the idea being more fully expounded in ch. vii. The idea is (as has been already explained) that law simply *declares* what is right, and *requires* conformity to it; it does not give either *power* to obey, or *atonement* for not obeying. Hence, in itself, it worketh, not righteousness, but *wrath;* for man becomes fully liable to wrath when he comes to know, through law, the difference between right and wrong (cf. John ix. 41, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin"). Exactly the same view of the impossibility of the Mosaic Law being the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham is found in Gal. iii., where also the real purpose of the Law, intervening thus between the promise and its fulfilment, is further explained. The expression in ver. 13, "that he should be the heir of the world," has reference to the ultimate scope of the Abrahamic promises (see Gen. xii. 2, 3; xiii. 14—16; xv. 5, 6, 18; xvii. 2—9; xviii. 18; xxii. 17, 18). Now, it is true that in some of these promises the language used seems to denote no more than the temporal possession by Israel of the promised land, with dominion (actually realized

under David and Solomon) over the whole country from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, as in Gen. xiii. 14, 15; xv. 18, etc. But their full scope transcends any such limited fulfilment, as where it is said that the promised seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth that cannot be numbered, and that in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The prophets accordingly recognized a far larger ultimate fulfilment in their frequent pictures of the Messiah's universal dominion; and there was no need for the apostle to prove here what the Jews already understood. The only difference between the view current among them and his would be that they would mostly have in view a universal worldly sovereignty with its local centre on the throne of David at Jerusalem, while he interpreted spiritually, seeing beyond the outward framework of prophetic visions to the ideal they imply. "*Heres mundi* idem est quod *pater omnium gentium*, benedictionem accipientium. Totus *mundus* promissus est Abrahæ et semini ejus per totum mundum conjunctim. Abrahamo obtigit terra Canaan, et sic aliis alia pars; atque *corporalia sunt specimen spiritualium*. Christus heres mundi, et omnium (Heb. i. 2; ii. 5; Rev. xi. 15), et qui in eum credunt Abrahæ exemplo (Matt. v. 5)" (Bengel). It is to be observed that, though Abraham himself in ver. 13 is spoken of as "the heir of the world," yet the preceding expression, "to Abraham or to his seed," sufficiently intimates that it is in his seed, identified with him, that he is conceived as so inheriting.

Vers. 16, 17.—**Therefore it is of faith, that it may be according to grace** (*κατὰ χάριν*, as in ver. 4); **to the end the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all, (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee,) before him whom he believed, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were.** Ver. 16 introduces no new thought, being but a summing up of what has been said, except that, in ver. 17, the text Gen. xvii. 5 is adduced in support of the extended sense in which "the seed of Abraham" has been understood. In ver. 17, too, the thought is introduced of how Abraham evinced his faith; and this with a view of showing it to have been in essence the same as the justifying faith of Christians.

Vers. 18—21.—**Who against hope in hope believed** (*παρ' ἐλπίδα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι*—an oxymoron. For a similar use of *ἐπ' ἐλπίδι*, see 1 Cor. ix. 10; also below, ch. v. 2. Its position in the Authorized Version might suggest its dependence on "believed," which is grammatically possible (cf. ch. ix. 33; x. 11), but unallowable here, since hope cannot well be regarded as the *object* of belief) **to the end he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be** (Gen. xv. 5, viz. "as the stars"). **And being not weak in faith, he considered not** (*i.e. paid no regard to* as a hindrance to faith. The codices relied on by our recent Revisers omit *οὐ* before *κατενόησεν*, and they accordingly translate, "he considered his own body," thus making the idea to be that he *was* fully aware of the apparent impossibility of his having a son, but believed notwithstanding. But the reading of the Textus Receptus has good support, and especially that of the Greek Fathers, and gives the best sense) **his own body now dead** (*already deadened—νενεκρώμενον—i.e.* with respect to virility. So, with the same reference, Heb. xi. 12), **when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; but he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong** (rather, *was strengthened*) **in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.** With regard to the construction of ver. 20, we may observe that, though in the Authorized Version, which is followed above, the prepositions put before "unbelief" and "faith" are varied, both words are datives without a preposition in the Greek, and apparently with the same force of the dative in both cases, the sense being, "With regard to the promise, etc., *unbelief* did not cause him to waver (*οὐ διεκρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ*), but *faith* made him strong (*ἐνεδυναμώθη τῇ πίστει*)." The purport of the whole passage is to show, with reference to Gen. xvii. 15—22; xviii. 9—16, how Abraham's faith in the promise of a seed through Sarah, which seemed impossible in the natural course of things, corresponded in essence to our faith in "him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (ver. 24). It was faith in a Divine power above nature, able to quicken into supernatural life that which humanly is dead. And as Abraham's faith in this promised birth of Isaac involved a further faith in the fulfilment through him of all the promises, so our faith in the resurrection of Christ involves faith in all that is signified and assured to us thereby—in "the power of a Divine life" in him, to bring life out of death, to regenerate and quicken the spiritually dead, and finally in "eternal redemption" and the "restitution of all things!" (cf. John iii. 6; v. 25; ch. vi. 3—12; 1 Cor. iii. 21—23; Eph. i. 18—23; ii. 4—8; Rev. i. 18; to which many other similarly significant passages might be added). It may be observed that, not only in the instance here adduced, but in his whole life as recorded in

Genesis, Abraham stands forth as an exemplification of habitual faith in a Divine order beyond sight, and trust in Divine promises. In this consists the religious meaning of that record for us all. Notably so (as is especially set forth in Heb. xi. 17, etc.) in his willingness to sacrifice the son through whom the promise was to be fulfilled, retaining still his faith in the fulfilment.

Vers. 22—25.—**Wherefore also it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned to him; but for our sake also, to whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification.** It is to be observed that the word here and elsewhere translated "justification" is δικαίωσις, corresponding with δικαιοσύνη. The correspondence is lost in English. The Vulgate preserves it by *justitia* and *justificatio;* and the Douay Version has, here as elsewhere, "justice" for δικαιοσύνη. But "righteousness" expresses the meaning better.

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 11.—*The fatherhood of Abraham.* It is remarkable that the whole of this chapter deals with Abraham—a proof, not only of the greatness of Abraham's character, the conspicuousness of his position in the history of mankind, and the hold the grand figure of the patriarch possessed of the imagination of the apostle, but also of Abraham's real importance in the development of the leading ideas of true religion. We are reminded that Abraham was the father of many nations—the father of the chosen people Israel, the ancestor of the Messiah, the promised Seed. But especially is it brought before us here that Abraham is the father of the faithful, inasmuch as he afforded an early and illustrious example of the virtue upon which St. Paul dilates at length in this Epistle to the Romans—the virtue of faith.

I. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL IN THAT HE IS AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH IN ITS SUPERIORITY TO SENSE AND TO HUMAN JUDGMENT. The ancestor of the Hebrew nation received repeated assurances of the purpose of the Eternal with regard to himself and his posterity. There was no human likelihood of the fulfilment of these assurances; in themselves they were opposed to all reasonable probability, and there were special circumstances which increased a hundredfold their inherent unlikelihood. But they were, in Abraham's belief, the assurances of God himself, and that was sufficient to command his immediate and unquestioning acceptance. The Divine is the proper object of human faith. Let a declaration be from God; then it should be received with an absolute and unhesitating trust.

II. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL IN THAT HIS FAITH WAS INDEPENDENT OF EXTERNAL RITES AND PRIVILEGES. St. Paul lays great stress upon the historical fact that the exercise of Abraham's faith in God preceded the institution of the symbolic rite of circumcision. This may seem to us an immaterial consideration; but from the point of view of the apostle it has great importance. He is arguing against an external, ceremonial view of religion, such as was too customary among the Jews, and indeed is too customary among all people through all time. And he made a "point" when he brought forward the fact that Abraham exercised faith in God whilst still uncircumcised; for this is a proof that the essence of religion does not depend upon external privileges, even though they be of Divine appointment. A lesson which we need to learn to-day, even as did the contemporaries of St. Paul.

III. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL INASMUCH AS HE EXHIBITED THE POWER OF FAITH TO POSSESS THE MORAL NATURE AND TO CONTROL THE LIFE. The patriarch was not a man to yield the assent of the lips, and to withhold the practical acknowledgment which is the best proof of sincere profession. It is enough, in support of this, to remark that his whole subsequent life was affected and governed by his belief of God's promise. He confessed himself a pilgrim in the land, but whilst for himself he sought a heavenly inheritance, he lived as one persuaded that Canaan was the destined property of his posterity. Faith without works is dead; Abraham's faith was living. As Christians, we are called upon, not only to believe, but to live by faith, to show our faith by our works, and, if we believe God's promises, to give them a place so prominent in our heart that they may sway our conduct and govern our actions. The life which we live in the flesh is to be by the faith of the Son of God. Only thus can we prove ourselves to be true children of faithful Abraham.

IV. ABRAHAM IS THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IN HIM FAITH WAS SHOWN TO BE THE SPRING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. We are told by the apostle that Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. This doctrine of imputation has been misunderstood, when it has been inferred from the teaching of the apostle that, faith being present, righteousness may be dispensed with. The real teaching of St. Paul aims at removing religion from outward actions to inward dispositions. The righteousness which God values is not the performance of services or the submission to rites, so much as the pure thoughts and intents of the heart. So far as what is external is valuable, it is as an indication of what is deep-seated within. Faith brings the soul into right relations with God, and these secure habits of obedience and subjection which display themselves in the words, the deeds, and the course of moral life by which a man is judged by his fellow-men.

Ver. 18.—*Hope against hope.* Faith and hope are allied, though separate, exercises and habits of created, finite mind. Neither of the two is possible to God, who is independent and eternal, and can neither confide in a superior nor anticipate a future. Man's highest welfare depends upon faith, which is the principle of a high and noble life. Hope is less necessary, yet it belongs to a complete development of human nature, which looks forward to the future as well as upward to the unseen. Faith must have an object, and hope must have a ground. Faith is in a person; hope has respect to experience anticipated. If there be faith in a Being who has given definite promises, there will be hope in whatever is the matter of those promises. He who believes in God will hopefully expect the fulfilment of Divine assurances.

I. THERE IS HOPE WHICH IS BASED UPON NATURAL HUMAN EXPERIENCES. To some extent, hope is a matter of temperament; circumstances which to a despondent man seem to afford no gleam of comfort in looking forward to the future, will arouse the brightest expectations on the part of the man of sanguine disposition. Still, hope is often precluded by the stern teaching of constant experience; and a man would prove himself mad if, in certain circumstances, he should look forward hopefully to the enjoyment of health, honour, or riches. Abraham, in the circumstances referred to in the context, might hope for many blessings; but, if illumined only by the experience of his own life and by the experience of preceding generations, he could not hope for a posterity which should take possession of the land of Canaan as their inheritance. And we, if enlightened only by earthly wisdom, could not venture to anticipate blessings which the gospel, upon Divine authority, assures to the believing and obedient. Human hope could not so far delude us.

II. THERE IS HOPE WHICH IS BASED UPON THE FAITHFUL PROMISES OF THE ETERNAL. With God nothing is impossible; from God nothing is concealed. Therefore, when he deigns to reveal his purposes to men, and when those purposes are purposes of mercy, those to whom they are made are justified in embracing them and in acting upon them. In the case of Abraham, that which human hope would have had no ground for anticipating was assured by the firm and unchanging promises of the Supreme; and Divine hope justly prevailed. He hoped in God against any hope or failure of hope which might be natural to him as man. And Abraham did not hope in vain. He embraced and believed the promises. He and his family, "not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hope triumphed, even over the bitter trial connected with the sacrifice of Isaac. Looking forward to the future with the bright and piercing eye of hope, our father Abraham saw the day of the Messiah, and he rejoiced and was glad.

APPLICATION. Often the Christian, if reduced to the limits of earthly anticipations, might give way to discouragement and fear. But he has hope, as "an anchor to his soul," by means of which he may ride out the storms of time. Let him hope against hope, and his confidence shall be justified, and his anticipations shall be realized. His is a hope which, in the beautiful language of the Apocrypha, is "full of immortality."

Ver. 20.—*"Strong in faith."* There is nothing upon which men are more given to pride themselves than upon their strength. The athlete boasts of his strength of muscle and of bodily constitution, the thinker of his strength of intellect, the monarch of his

strength in war, the self-confident man of his strength of character. Such boasting is vain. Man's estimate of his own powers may seem absurd to other beings; in the presence of the Eternal and Almighty it is profane. Well did the prophet speak the familiar words of warning, "Let not the strong man glory in his strength." There is one respect, however, in which man may be strong. Weak in body in the presence of natural laws, weak in mind before the difficulties of life, man may nevertheless be "strong in faith." Here no limits can be set; it is faith that

"Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done!'"

I. STRONG FAITH IS REQUIRED BY THE EXIGENCIES OF HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN CIRCUMSTANCES. The apostles drew their examples of virtue, of practical religion, from the history of the fathers of their nation; the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews recounts the triumphs of faith as apparent in the life of their illustrious progenitors; and St. Paul in this passage, with a view to encourage his readers to the exercise of a living and mighty faith, quotes the example of Abraham, whom he terms "the father of us all." Certainly, there seemed, to human judgment, little likelihood of the fulfilment of Jehovah's promise to the patriarch that the land of Canaan should be the possession of his seed. There was an antecedent improbability, so far as man's foresight could penetrate. And there were special difficulties in the family circumstances of Abraham, which seemed insuperable. Yet, St. Paul reminds his readers, Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." There is very much in our character and in our life which can only be successfully dealt with by the exercise of strong faith. Our sins, our sorrows, our privations, our ignorance and uncertainty with regard to the future, all call for faith. Intellectual doubts stand in the way of some men's progress and welfare; temptations to worldliness and selfishness are formidable obstacles in the way of others. All have occasion to complain that the light of nature, of reason, is sometimes dim. All are tempted sometimes to discouragement and to despondency. When our hearts are weak and our knowledge is limited, and all our resources fail us, as must often happen in our human existence, where shall we look? Experience is at fault, reason hesitates, man's help is vain. What we need at such times is "strong faith."

II. STRONG FAITH IS JUSTIFIED BY THE ATTRIBUTES AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. Reflection and reason may teach us something of the Supreme; but the clearest light is shed upon his character and purposes by revelation; and it is in Christ Jesus that he has made himself most fully known to us; for "he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father." If we have the assurance that God is wise and all-powerful, much of our doubt and difficulty will disappear, for we shall enjoy the conviction that our lot is not ordered by chance or fate, but by an overruling Providence. If we are encouraged upon satisfactory authority to believe that God is good and merciful, faithful and compassionate, such belief will relieve us from many apprehensions aroused by a feeling of our own innumerable errors and follies. Such a revelation has been vouchsafed to us. It should ever be borne in mind that the value of faith depends upon the object of faith. Placed upon feeble and fallible men, faith may often fail us; but settled and fixed upon infinite wisdom, righteousness, and love, it can sustain, direct, and cheer us throughout life's pilgrimage. To Abraham certain direct and personal promises were given by God; and Abraham's faith is recorded by the apostle in the statement that he was "fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform." The promises given to mankind through Jesus Christ are no less explicit, and are far more interesting, precious, and far-reaching. We may have, and justly, a very moderate measure of faith in assurances given to us by our fellow-men, a very qualified confidence in themselves. But this ought not to be the case when the eternal and faithful God and his gracious promises are in question. Upon him and his words we may "build an absolute trust." "Believe in God," says Christ; "believe also in me."

III. STRONG FAITH IS RECOMPENSED IN THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE. It was so in the case of Abraham, who became the father of many nations, whose posterity inherited the land of Canaan, and to whom his personal faith was "imputed for righteousness." It has ever been so with Christians who have walked, not by sight,

but by faith. Confidence in an unseen, but ever-present, Divine, almighty Helper, has been the principle of every truly Christian life. It has brought pardon and peace to the heart of the penitent; it has caused many "out of weakness to wax strong;" it has brought light to those in darkness, and leading to those in perplexity, safety to those in danger, comfort to those in sorrow, and hope to those who were ready to perish. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith." Nor is this inexplicable: for by faith we lay hold of the strength that is irresistible and invincible, and the might of the believer is not his own, but God's.

Ver. 21.—*Promise and performance.* How condescendingly and graciously does our heavenly Father deign to communicate with his children! What proofs does he give of his interest in us, his sympathy with us! No better illustration of this can be found than in the promises of the holy Word. Stooping, as it were, to our level, God addresses to us not merely precepts to direct our conduct, but promises to sustain our courage and to animate our hope. Exceeding great and precious are the Divine promises uttered and fulfilled for the benefit of the spiritual family dependent upon the bounty, forbearance, and tender mercy of the Most High.

I. DIVINE PROMISES. The promise given to Abraham was of a special character, but both in itself, and in the way in which it was received and acted upon, it is peculiarly instructive to us as Christians. 1. The *Giver* of the promises upon which we, as believers in God's Word, are called upon to rely, is the Being whose infinite resources, omniscient acquaintance with his people's needs, and unfailing fidelity, place all his assurances apart from and altogether above those of others. 2. The *matter* of the Divine promises deserves our special attention; they have regard rather to spiritual than to temporal good, and whilst varied in their character, they are singularly adapted to the condition and necessities of men. 3. The *receivers* of these promises are creatures dependent altogether upon the Divine favour, with no resources of their own, and no hope save that which is based upon the faithfulness of God. 4. The *purpose* of the Divine promises is to remove natural fear and depression concerning the future, and in place thereof to instil a calm confidence, a bright and peaceful hope. If men were left to their own forecastings of the future, gloomy forebodings would often take possession of their souls; the promises of God are fitted to reassure and reanimate the downcast and cheerless.

II. DIVINE PERFORMANCE. 1. This is assured and certain. We read of God that "he cannot lie." Abraham's confidence was justified, when he was "fully assured that, what God had promised, he was able also to perform." 2. It is complete, satisfactory, and effectual. Abraham was removed from earth before the appointed time arrived for the fulfilment of the promises made to him and to his seed. Yet he foresaw with the clear vision of faith what in due season came to pass. His descendants received and possessed "the land of promise." It is so with all the performances of Eternal Wisdom and Compassion. Not one word that God has spoken shall fail; his promises are "all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus." 3. God's performance of his plighted word of assurance is such as to justify his people's unhesitating confidence. How can we question either his ability or his willingness?

> "The voice that rolls the stars along
> Spake all the promises."

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—25.—*Abraham's faith.* We have already seen how the apostle has prepared the way for the great doctrine of justification by faith. He showed in the first two chapters that man has no righteousness of his own, that he could not justify himself, but, on the contrary, that both Jew and Gentile are all under sin. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Now, in this fourth chapter, he shows that this great fact—the necessity for justification by faith—has already been recognized by Abraham and David. He is writing to Jews, and he takes the case of two men of God with whose lives they were familiar, and whom they held in high respect. He shows that neither Abraham nor David rested in his own righteous-

ness. They rested entirely in the sovereign grace and mercy of God. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (ver. 3). So David also describes the blessedness of those whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered; of the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin (vers. 6—8). No two cases more appropriate or more telling could the apostle have selected in illustration of man's universal need of a Divine righteousness. Here were two saints of God, the one called the friend of God, the other the sweet singer of Israel, and yet they both rested, not on their own good works, but on the mercy and free grace of God. True, David had grievously sinned against God, but he did not trust for forgiveness to any penances or works of merit which he might have done in atonement for his sin, but solely to the pardoning mercy of the Lord. Abraham's faith, however, is the main subject of the chapter.

I. ITS REASONABLENESS. The subject of faith is not merely an abstract theological question. Abraham's faith, in particular, is not something which concerned Abraham but has no interest for us. We are told in the close of this chapter that "it was not written for his sake alone, that his faith was imputed to him for righteousness; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification" (vers. 23—25). What, then, do we mean by faith? *Faith is a strong inward persuasion manifesting itself in outward acts.* We could have no better illustration of it than the life of Abraham. "Abraham believed God." His life was a life of faith in God. He trusted God's word, and he took God's way. Here, then, we have a simple definition of what faith means—*trusting God's word and taking God's way.* Is not this an eminently reasonable course for a human being to take? So Abraham thought. He was a man of experience when we have the first record of God speaking to him. He was seventy-five years old when God's first command reached him—the command to leave his country and his father's house. It would appear as if Abraham had begun before that time to look beyond the seen to the unseen. His spiritual instincts and his reason told him that those idols which the people round him worshipped could not represent the great Creator of the world. He had already a conviction that there was a God—a reasonable conviction based on the evidence of natural laws. He knew something of that almighty Being's power, and wisdom, and immortality, and unchangeableness. And so he reached the conclusion, which became an irresistible conviction, that "what God had promised he was able also to perform" (vers. 18—21). He was "fully persuaded." Upon this Abraham based his faith. For these reasons he trusted God's word and took God's way. Is it not still more reasonable that we should have faith in God? We too have had experience, and not merely our own experience, but the experience of thousands of others from Abraham's day till now, who have trusted God, and found that what he hath promised he is able also to perform. The history of the ages teaches us that heaven and earth may pass away, but that God's words do not pass away; that men will change and die, and mighty empires crumble into dust, but that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. It teaches us also this lesson, that God's way is always best, and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Abraham's faith was a reasonable faith. It is a reasonable thing that we also should trust God's word and take God's way.

II. ITS RESULTS. 1. *Abraham's faith led him to unfaltering obedience.* It was a strange and apparently a harsh command which God gave to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Gen. xii. 1). But Abraham did not hesitate. He knew whom he had believed. It was God, the living God, his heavenly Father, who was speaking to him, and he felt he must obey. He knew that God would provide for him; he knew that God would lead him right. How many of us under similar circumstances would show such unhesitating, unfaltering obedience to God's command? How many of us are willing to trust God to take care of us when we are doing his will? Alas! is it not true that we often hesitate to do his will, just because we cannot trust him to take care of us, to bring us safely through the difficulties and to crown our labours with success? But, then, it must be admitted that there is a real, practical difficulty here which sometimes perplexes God's people. Some one may say, "Well, I am quite willing to do God's will, to follow the path of duty, if I could only tell what it was. There are so many cases where I cannot see my way. If I could only hear God speaking to me as he did to

Abraham, there would be no difficulty about it." I think the way to meet that difficulty is this. Saturate your mind with the spirit of the gospel, with the teachings of the Word of God, with the spirit of Christ. A Christian is one who has the spirit of Christ. And, while there will be inconsistencies, as a rule we can depend upon the Christian. A remarkable illustration of this was given in Abraham's own case. Before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? . . . *For I know him*, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. xviii. 17, 19). God had confidence in Abraham doing what was right, although in one case Abraham acted sinfully and inconsistently. So we can trust the Christian to act in a Christian way. There will be mistakes, inconsistencies, in his life. But *there are some things we know he will not do.* He will not be among the sabbath-breakers, among the profane, the foul and filthy speakers, among the intemperate, among those who defraud or those who defame their neighbour. And all this we know, because we know him to have the spirit of Christ. We must cultivate this spirit, then, if we would know what the path of duty is. 2. *Abraham's faith led him to unflinching self-sacrifice.* There are two grand scenes in his life that illustrate this. One was when he gave Lot the permission to choose what portion of the land he would have. Abraham had the right to choose, but he relinquished his own rights in favour of his nephew. The other was when God called on him to offer up as a sacrifice his son Isaac. What a spirit of faith Abraham showed then! He trusted God, and so he took God's way. He had himself said once before, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25). And now when God, who gave him his son, asks him to give him back again, his faithful servant is ready to do what God asks. It was enough. The Lord himself had provided a lamb for the burnt offering. But Abraham showed the greatness of his faith by the sacrifice he was ready to make. There is a process in mathematics called the elimination of factors. The factor self had been eliminated from Abraham's character and life. So it will be with the true Christian. The spirit of self-sacrifice is the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Christianity. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." We must be ready to make sacrifice of self for Christ's sake. Such, then, was Abraham's faith. It was a reasonable faith, and a faith that resulted in unfaltering obedience and in unflinching self-sacrifice. He trusted God's word, and he took God's way. That is the way of salvation for every sinner. Such faith is the condition of all righteousness. If we are to please God, if we are to get to heaven, we must take God's way. *The manner of Abraham's justification is an encouragement for every sinner, whether Jew or Gentile.* If salvation had been by the Law, only those who had the Law, or who kept it, could be saved. But it is "of faith, that it might be of grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Law, but *to that also which is of the faith of Abraham*" (ver. 16). The Jews' boast that they were Abraham's seed showed a narrow idea of what the promise was. Abraham was "the father of many nations" (vers. 17, 18). *Abraham's true spiritual children are those who imitate Abraham's faith.*—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—8.—*A test case.* Abraham was their father (John viii.)—this they were proud to acknowledge; bnt what was his relationship to God?

I. ABRAHAM'S RIGHTEOUSNESS. Righteousness must be either absolute or imputed; *e.g.* a servant in employ, on the one hand tried and true, on the other hand false, but penitent and received again. Which was Abraham's? 1. *If of works*, it was absolute, and therefore he was in a position of proud integrity before God. Was it so? The whole history proved the contrary. Humble dependence. 2. *If imputed*, it could only be as he accepted God's promises, and lived by faith in them. And so saith the Scripture (ver. 3).

II. ABRAHAM'S FAITH. What was the faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness? 1. *Renunciation of self.* (Gen. xv., xvii.) He could do nothing. 2. *Reliance on God.* (Gen. xv., and implied in xvii.) God could do all things.

Such the general principle: faith is the laying hold of all God's mighty love. Hence the spring of all righteousness. In Abraham's case, faith in promises for the future pertaining to the kingdom of God. Virtually, it was the faith of his spiritual salvation. Was not David's case the same? There are iniquities, sins; man can never undo

them; God can cover them. So with us. Not of debt, but of grace—on God's part; therefore, not of works, but of faith—on man's part. And hence no arbitrary condition; the appropriation of all the wealth of good offered in God and by God. Well is it said, "Blessed are they," etc.—T. F. L.

Vers. 9—22.—*All things are of faith.* The position is now established that righteousness is through faith. But, they might say, through the faith of a circumcised man; and the promise of the inheritance was through the Law; and surely the posterity of Abraham came according to the flesh. He answers—Righteousness, heritage, posterity, by faith alone.

I. RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. *The righteousness of faith without circumcision.* In Gen. xv. we have the record of Abraham's justification; the institution of circumcision is narrated in Gen. xvii., fourteen years after. Abraham, therefore, was justified "in his Gentilehood" (see Godet). Therefore, he is the father of Gentile believers; and in so far as he is the father of Jewish believers, it is because they are believers, not because they are Jews. 2. *Circumcision a seal of the righteousness of faith.* God strengthens man's faith by visible signs and seals of the faith and of its results. So to Abraham circumcision was an abiding pledge that God accepted his faith for righteousness. And likewise the existence of a separated nation was a testimony to the world. But it was the faith alone that was effectual; circumcision did but attest.

II. HERITAGE. The whole world is promised to the heirs of Abraham as a heritage; this of itself might suffice to show that the heirs are not merely descendants according to the flesh. But the condition of such inheritance shall show the meaning. 1. If the heritage were through Law, then faith and the promise fail. (1) "Faith is made void;" for it cannot grasp an impossibility, nor can it rightly lay hold of that which must be worked for. (2) "And the promise is made of none effect;" for an unfulfilled Law works God's wrath towards man, which is in utter contrariety to the fulfilment of a promise of love. 2. Therefore the heritage is of faith, that it may be according to grace, etc. (1) Faith the sole condition of promise, that while God's grace gives freely, man may freely receive. (2) Faith the sole characteristic of the heirs of the promise, that so the seed may be, not merely that which is of the Law (even combined with faith), but that which is of faith (apart from Law), comprising both Jews and Gentiles who are the spiritual children of the great believer.

III. POSTERITY. But it might be objected that an Israel according to the flesh was necessary, in order that the spiritual Israel might be at last accomplished. Truly. But, to cut away the last ground of boasting, even the Israel according to the flesh was the gift of God through faith. 1. *The obstacles to such faith.* "His own body," etc. And this all full in view: "he considered." 2. *The warrant of faith.* While viewing the obstacles, he staggered not. (1) God's promise. "A father of many nations;" "So shall thy seed be." (2) God's power. "Able to perform;" "quickeneth the dead," etc. "Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." As before, it was virtually the faith of his spiritual salvation; yes, the very faith which laid hold of the promise of posterity—a posterity that they deemed according to the flesh.

Let us learn that by faith we may be righteous, by faith we may possess the earth, by faith we may impress for good the generations following. What an heirship is possible through the faith of one believer!—T. F. L.

Vers. 23—25.—*Our faith and righteousness.* Abraham's faith was virtually faith in the saving love of God; the special manifestation of that love to him was the raising up of a holy seed. Our faith is a faith in the ultimate Seed of Abraham which has been raised up as the supreme Manifestation of God's love.

I. OUR FAITH. Our faith and Abraham's are one in this—that they lay hold upon God, and God at work for us. 1. *The one supreme Object of our faith.* God! Whatever God may say to us, whatever he may do for us, the essential Object of our faith is himself. Yes, himself in all his saving love. And though in successive ages he may have revealed more and more of his purposes as men were able to bear it, yet he himself has been ever the same, the Object of man's trust. And though now his purposes and past actions may be variously conceived by men, and though indeed they may be more or less misconceived, yet if he himself, as the Good One, the saving God, be trusted,

all is well. We "believe on him." 2. *The special subject-matter of our faith.* "That raised Jesus," etc. It was not revealed to Abraham how God would eventually work out salvation for mankind, but such salvation as he could grasp was promised—the raising up of a posterity which should possess the world. To us the full meaning of that promise has been made known. (1) The "delivering up" of Jesus "for our trespasses." Man's sin the necessitating cause: "that he might be just," etc. (ch. iii. 26). God's love the efficient cause: "so loved the world," etc. (John iii. 16). (2) The "raising" of Jesus "for our justification." The death did its work; man was justified (*i.e.* potentially). But if so, the justification of man through the death of Christ demanded his resurrection, just as the trespasses demanded his death. God raised him; our Lord of life for evermore. And it is this grandly operative love that claims our faith.

II. OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. *An objective righteousness*, complete now by reason of our faith in the atoning work of Christ. What was potential for all men is actual to us, who have received it with humble hearts—even justification through Christ. 2. *A subjective righteousness*, pledged by the faith which trusts the living Lord. The faith itself the germ also of future righteousness, and therefore "reckoned" for what it will more and more perfectly bring forth.

To us? Oh, simple condition—believe on him!—T. F. L.

Vers. 6—8.—*A happy man.* It is essential in argument to have common ground where the debate can be carried on. The apostle could count on the agreement of his Jewish readers with his reference to the Scriptures as the court of final appeal. And whilst some modern hearers reject the claims of the Bible, the majority receive it as an inspired authority, so that the preacher's business generally is to prove his case therefrom, and to press home its statements showing what is the appropriate action they involve. Having mentioned Abraham as an instance of justification by faith, the apostle proceeded to summon David as a witness to the same truth in the thirty-second psalm.

I. GOD'S MERCIFUL TREATMENT OF PENITENT SINNERS. 1. Three expressions are employed in the verses cited, respecting sin. It is said to be *forgiven*, like a debt remitted, the score against us being erased. It is *covered*, as the mercy-seat hid the Law from view, or as a stone flung into the depths of the sea is buried in its waters, or as a mantle of fleecy snow conceals the defilements of a landscape. Likewise it is *not reckoned* against the delinquents, as if God turned a deaf ear and unseeing eye when complaint is lodged against him concerning the transgressions of the culprits. He smooths the wax tablets so that none can read the bill of indictment. 2. These expressions signify a complete pardon. The king may not care much for the presence of the pardoned rebel at his court, but the father is joyful at the return of the prodigal son. No intermediate state of indifference is possible in God's attitude towards his creatures; when he forgives, there is full reconciliation. No look, no tone, hints at past unworthiness! 3. These expressions teach plainly gratuitous justification. No mention is made of human merit. Man's repentance cannot obliterate or atone for the past; forgiveness means a wrong condoned, not undone. Man is a slave, who cannot purchase his freedom; he has thrown himself into bondage, and his only hope lies in free manumission.

II. THE HAPPINESS OF THE FORGIVEN. 1. The penalties of sin are averted. This does not mean that all the consequences of past wrong-doing are prevented from following, but that the wrath of God rests no longer upon the sinner. The future sentence against evil is withheld, and the burden of guilt is thus removed. 2. Justification brings with it admission into a state of Divine favour. Acquittal includes more than a negative result, that of no condemnation; there is likewise a positive entrance into the kingdom of heaven, with all its sacred privileges and relationships. Filial love takes the place of the spirit of fear. 3. The blissful consciousness of a right condition. Instead of slurring over sin, trying vainly to forget it, the fact has been faced, the truth admitted, and the touch of God has rolled the load for ever from the conscience. The Scriptures assume the possibility of knowing ourselves forgiven. Faith opens the inner hearing to rejoice in the assurance, "Go in peace." The devout Israelite had the ceremonies of the temple to symbolize God's plan of mercy as well as

the declarations of inspired teachers. The Christian has words of Christ to rest upon, as also the apostolic commentaries upon the sacrifice and mission of Christ. "I'm in a new world," said one who realized his altered position God-wards. Peaceful in mind during life, serene in the prospect of death, with God as his Portion through eternity, surely this is happiness worthy of the eulogy of the psalmist.—S. R. A.

Ver. 16.—*Obtaining an inheritance.* An honourable lineage is not to be despised. Many advantages accrue from the law of heredity, by which progenitors transmit distinguishing qualities to their descendants. But the text invites to an unusual course of begetting an ancestry and thus winning a noble inheritance—nothing less than claiming Abraham as our father. The qualification is to exhibit like faith with the father of the faithful. Faith is thus like the horn of Egremont Castle—

> "Horn it was which none could sound,
> No one upon living ground
> Save he who came as rightful heir."

I. THE SIMILARITY OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH TO THAT REQUIRED BY THE GOSPEL. 1. *Each has God as its supreme Object, and rests on some promise of God.* As the patriarch had respect to the word and power of the Almighty, so the Christian's faith regards the wonder-working might of him who "raised up Jesus from the dead." That in the latter case we look back, not forward, makes no difference as to the essence of faith, and this resurrection becomes itself the ground of believing expectancy in relation to our own future salvation. 2. *The subject of faith thereby differentiates himself from his fellows.* Out of a world in a condition of rebellion and distrust, Abraham stood forth a monumental pillar of faith. Sin first entered in the guise of a doubt of God's Word, and faith is the throwing off of all suspicion and the adoption of a right attitude before God. Men find it hard to trust God's assurance of pardon and life. 3. *The effect of faith is the same.* The believer is justified, for God rejoices in the altered state. The implicit credence honours him, and is for his creatures' lasting good. Christ's mission was to show us the Father, revealing his displeasure at sin, and his self-sacrificing sympathy with the sinner.

II. THE PROMINENCE OF GRACE. 1. That the inheritance is won by faith involves the absence of valid merit on the part of the recipient. He receives not the wages of a workman, but the free donation of his King. Pride is pulled up by the roots in this manifestation of the kindness of God. Justification is an exercise of clemency for established reasons. 2. The same truth is recognized in the use of the term "promise." We are entitled to claim the heritage on the ground of God's own declaration, not on the score of our personal worthiness. 3. Only by such a method could the promise to Abraham be fulfilled, that is, "made sure to all the seed." If dependent on physical connection, who but the Israelites could hope for the inheritance? If dependent on obedience to the Law, neither Jew nor Gentile could show conformity to the conditions. A world-wide blessing means the removal of both local and universal restrictions.

III. THIS DIVINE PLAN JUSTIFIED BY ITS RESULTS. Complaints of arbitrariness and indifference vanish before this apprehended scheme of mercy. Faith tends to produce a righteousness of life which the stern threatenings of Law could never effect. The despairing criminal begins to see that past transgressions and failures need not debar him from hope of the prize, and with the entrance of this thought, new energy is infused into his soul. The greater contains the less. If God promise to save, he will not withhold minor temporal blessings. Let us, like Abraham, view the land of promise, look away from all in our surroundings that would check faith in God, and say, "I will trust, and not be afraid."—S. R. A.

Vers. 23, 24.—*The gospel in Genesis.* The story takes us back to that starry night when the twinkling lamps of the firmament were Abraham's arithmetical calculator concerning the numerous posterity that should trace their descent to him. His faith triumphed over all the obstacles of sense, over all the arguments of improbability which reason suggested. He was a true servant of God, a holy man, yet does the historian speak of him as justified, not on account of his devoted life, his blameless conduct, but by his unwavering acceptance of the promise of the Almighty. Faith was indeed the

root-grace out of which his virtues sprang; it was the secret sustaining power which supported him under the trials of a pilgrim and sojourner. The significant statement in Genesis was fastened on by the apostle and triumphantly wielded as a weapon to slay all Jewish prejudices against the gospel doctrine of justification by faith. What could be more convincing than to find the cardinal principle of Christianity in a place where no suspicion could attach to it—in the very account of Divine honour conferred on the great progenitor of the Hebrew nation? It was like finding in an old book an account of an experiment forestalling a modern discovery.

I. THE SCRIPTURES A RECORD OF REVELATION. The distinction between the revelation and its history is important, many theories of inspiration failing to recognize the human side visible in the record. The Bible contains the account of the way in which God has revealed and gradually achieved his great purpose of redemption, selecting the man, the family, the tribe, the nation, to be the channel of blessing to the world, till in the fulness of time there appeared the representative Man, Christ Jesus, consummating the revelation and its gracious effects. The Old Testament is not to be identified with Mosaism; it includes the Law, and more. The patriarchal dispensation and the prophetical teachings must be equally regarded. Nor was there any discrepancy between the grace of the patriarchal covenant and the rigour of the Law. The Law was a stern process of education, necessary to the continuity of development, as the green fruit is acid prior to its maturity. And when the Jew contemned Christianity as a bastard growth, the apostle pointed to the prediction of the gospel clearly presented in God's dealings with Abraham, justifying Christianity as a legitimate scion of Judaism; the grandchild, as often happens, displaying features of likeness to the grandparent not so marked in the intermediate generation.

II. ADVANTAGES OF A WRITTEN RECORD. A particular instance here of the general statement in ch. xv. that "these things were written aforetime for our learning." Writing is the natural complement of articulate utterance, the chief instrument of the progress of the race. It perpetuates the memory of noble thoughts and deeds, enabling each generation to commence where its predecessor left off. Printing is improved writing, facilitating the multiplication of copies. The impression of a speech weakens and fades like the water-ripples caused by a stone, but the written page is powerful to the last, like the inhaling of the fragrance of a rose. Latest readers may compare their ideas with the earliest receivers of a revelation, and misunderstandings are corrected. To peruse the story in Genesis is to note how the bud by its markings afforded promise of the full-grown flower. In the child were seen glimpses of the manhood of religion, when there should be a system freed from burdensome ordinances, and adapted to every clime, race, and age. And since "no man liveth unto himself," the record of Abraham's faith stimulates the faith of every subsequent reader. The patriarchal hero has had posthumous glory from the narrative, beside the comfort of the assurance divinely communicated that his faith was reckoned for righteousness. The unity of the Divine character is attested by the same method of justification being adopted in the olden days. Cf. with the apostle's appreciation of a written record the puerile remarks of Peter Chrysologus, Archbishop of Ravenna: "Let the mind hold and the memory guard this decree of salvation, this symbol of life [the Creed], lest vile paper depreciate the gift of Divinity, lest black ink obscure the mystery of light."

III. MEANS OF PERSONALLY BENEFITING BY THE RECORD. Frequent perusal and the application by analogy of the principle implied in the history will show that the Christian, like Abraham, has demands made upon his faith by the wonders of the gospel narrative, and by reliance on God can he likewise remain steadfast in obedient righteousness. We have a promise to lean on as Abraham had. We have the resurrection of Christ to proclaim God's power and intent to save, his satisfaction with the work of Christ and his ability to give life from the dead to every sinful soul that trusts him. Humbly yet thankfully and firmly clasp this declaration to your breast.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—25.—*Abraham justified by faith alone.* We have just seen in last chapter the utility of Judaism, the universal depravity of the race, the new channel for Divine righteousness which had consequently to be found, and the confirmation of law which is secured by faith. The apostle in the present chapter illustrates his argument from the history of Abraham. He was reckoned by the Jews as "father of the faith-

ful;" his case is, therefore, a crucial one. Accordingly, Paul begins by asking, "What shall we then say that Abraham, our forefather, hath found, as pertaining to the flesh?" By this is meant virtually this: "What merit before God did Abraham acquire in the use of his natural human faculties, or, in other words, by his own works?" (cf. Shedd, *in loc.*). Now, to this a negative answer is expected; and, as if it had been supplied, Paul goes on to state the case thus: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he has a subject for glorification; but, *vis-à-vis*, of God, he has no reason for glorification." This he proceeds to show from the history. Now, there are three things mentioned in this chapter which Abraham got, and in each case it was by exercising faith. These were righteousness (vers. 3—12), inheritance (vers. 13—17), and a seed (vers. 18—25). Let us direct our attention to these in their order.

I. ABRAHAM RECEIVED RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH. (Vers. 3—12.) The apostle begins here with a scriptural quotation; it is from Gen. xv. 6, to the effect that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." We see from the context in Genesis that what Abraham believed was that God's promise about a Seed who would prove a blessing to all nations would yet be fulfilled. He believed God's naked promise, and looked forward prophetically to his Seed as the medium of universal blessing. His faith was thus fixed in a Seed of promise—in Christ to come. Now, this act of faith without works was "reckoned unto him" (Revised Version) for righteousness. Because of this act of faith, he was regarded by God as having fulfilled the Law and secured righteousness through a perfect obedience. Such a reckoning of righteousness to Abraham's credit was a great act of grace upon God's part. Assuming for the moment that God could *justly* reckon faith for righteousness, it must be regarded as a gracious gift on the part of God. But the apostle would leave us in no doubt as to the principle involved. One who *trusts* in his *works* for acceptance claims reward as a debt; he who *trusts*, not in his works, but in his *God* for justification, receives reward as a matter, not of debt, but of grace. This was Abraham's exact position. And David follows his father Abraham in this respect, celebrating in the Psalms the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" (Revised Version). Abraham and David had by faith entered into that blissful position where God not only was felt to forgive them all their iniquities and to cover all their sin, but also would not reckon sin unto them. It was as if they had been transfigured before God into men innocent of all sin. The past was cancelled, and they stood before God accepted as righteous in his sight. But this is not all. The apostle points out particularly that this pardon and acceptance of Abraham on the ground of his faith happened before his circumcision. As a matter of fact, it happened fourteen years before. So that circumcision could constitute no ground of acceptance. It was simply a divinely appointed sign and seal of the previously imputed righteousness. Accordingly, Abraham was in a position to be the father of uncircumcised believers or of circumcised believers, as the case may be; showing us at once faith as exercised in uncircumcision with its resultant righteousness, and faith also exercised after his circumcision with its continued justification.

II. ABRAHAM RECEIVED AN INHERITANCE THROUGH FAITH. (Vers. 13—17.) Now we have to observe that Abraham received not only righteousness through faith, but also an inheritance. As a matter of fact, he became "heir of the world." We must not restrict justification, therefore, to deliverance from deserved penalty, but must attach to it the further idea of inheritance. As one writer has well remarked, "Justification is a term applicable to something more than the discharge of an accused person without condemnation. As in our courts of law there are civil as well as criminal cases; so it was in old time; and a large number of the passages adduced seem to refer to trials of the latter description, in which some question of property, right, or inheritance was under discussion between the two parties. The judge, by justifying one of the parties, decided that the property in question was to be regarded as his. Applying this aspect of the matter to the justification of man in the sight of God, we gather from Scripture that whilst through sin man is to be regarded as having forfeited legal claim to any right or inheritance which God might have to bestow upon his creatures, so through justification he is restored to his high position and regarded

as an heir of God."[1] Now, this designation of Abraham to the heirship of the world was at the same time as the reckoning to him of righteousness. The Law afterwards given to his posterity had nothing to do with this inheritance. It came solely through faith. It was the gift of Divine grace signalizing the patriarch's trust in God as faithful Promiser. Hence the patriarch was called the "father of many nations," because he felt assured that God, who raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, could give him through his seed the inheritance of the world. In the universal triumph of righteousness, the believing descendants of Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile, should "inherit the earth."

III. ABRAHAM RECEIVED A SEED THROUGH FAITH. (Vers. 18—25.) Now, the inheritance centred itself, as the history shows us, in a "seed of promise," and for years this was unlikely. Abraham is ninety and nine, and Sarah ninety, before the promised seed is given. For a quarter of a century it seemed hopeless; but the patriarch hoped against hope, and eventually the God who can raise the dead granted to Sarah's dead womb a living son of promise. Here was the strength of the patriarch's faith in hoping in spite of all appearances. We have thus set before us in Abraham's case, as received through faith alone, righteousness, inheritance, and a seed of promise. But the apostle at once reminds us that all this is written for us also, to whom the same righteousness and the same inheritance shall be secured if we exercise the same faith. And the analogy he traces out in the closing verses is very striking. Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, lay for a season in Joseph's tomb. He was to all appearances hopelessly dead. But God raised him from the dead, just as he had brought Isaac from the dead womb of Sarah. In the God who can thus "call those things which be not as though they were" we ought to believe. Let us believe in the Father who raised Christ from the dead; and then we can rejoice in the two great facts, that Jesus was delivered because of our offences unto death, and then raised out of death as the sign of our justification. Christ's resurrection is thus seen to be the sign and pledge of our personal justification. May we enter into all these privileges through the exercise of faith!—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V.

Vers. 1—21.—(6) *The results of the revelation of the righteousness of God, as affecting (a) the consciousness and hopes of believers; (b) the position of mankind before God.*

Vers. 1—11.—(*a*) *As to the consciousness of individual believers.*

Ver. 1.—**Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Instead of the ἔχομεν of the Textus Receptus, an overwhelming preponderance of authority, including uncials, versions, and Fathers, supports ἔχωμεν ("let us have"). If this be the true reading, the expression must be intended as hortatory, meaning, apparently, "Let us appreciate and realize our peace with God which we have in being justified by faith." But hortation here does not appear in keeping with what follows, in which the results of our being justified by faith are described in terms clearly corresponding with the idea of our having peace with God. The passage as a whole is not hortatory, but descriptive, and "we have peace" comes in naturally as an initiatory statement of what is afterwards carried out. This being the case, it is a question whether an exception may not be allowed in this case to the usually sound rule of bowing to decided preponderance of authority with respect to readings. That ἔχωμεν was an early and widely accepted reading there can be no doubt; but still it may not have been the original one, the other appearing more probable. Scrivener is of opinion that "the itacism of ω for ο, so familiar to all collators of Greek manuscripts, crept into some very early copy, from which it was propagated among our most venerable codices, even those from which the earliest versions were made."

Ver. 2.—**Through whom also we have** (rather, *have had*—ἐσχήκαμεν—referring to the past time of conversion and baptism, but with the idea of continuance expressed by the perfect) **the** (or, *our*) **access by faith** (the words, "by faith," which are not required, are absent from many manuscripts) **into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice** (properly, *glory*, καυχώμεθα, the same word as in the following verse, and most usually so rendered

[1] Girdlestone's 'Old Testament Synonyms,' pp. 259, 260.

elsewhere, though sometimes by "boast." Our translators seem in this verse to have departed from their usual rendering because of the substantive "glory," in a different sense, which follows) in hope of the glory of God. Προσαγωγὴ (translated "access") occurs in the same sense in Eph. ii. 18 and iii. 12; in both cases, as here, with the article, so as to denote some well-known access or approach. It means the access to the holy God, which had been barred by sin, but which has been opened to us through Christ (cf. Heb. x. 19). It is a question whether εἰς τὴν χάριν is properly taken (as in the Authorized Version) in immediate connection with προσαγωγήν, as denoting that *into* which we have our access. In Eph. ii. 18 the word is followed by the more suitable preposition πρὸς, the phrase being, "access to the Father;" and this may be understood here, the sense being, "We have through Christ our access (*to the Father*) *unto* (i.e. so as to result in) the state of grace and acceptance in which we now stand." As to "the glory of God," see above on ch. iii. 23. Here our hoped-for *future* participation in the Divine glory is more distinctly intimated by the words, ἐπ' ἐλπίδι. This last phrase bears the same sense as in 1 Cor. ix. 10, and probably in ch. iv. 18 above. It does not mean that hope is that wherein we glory, but that, being in a state of hope, we glory.

Vers. 3—5.—**And not only so, but we glory in tribulations** (or, *our tribulations*) **also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given to us.** The peace, the joy, the hope, that come of faith might be supposed unable to stand against the facts of this present life, in which, to those first believers, only peculiar tribulations might seem to follow from their faith. Not so, says the apostle; nay, their very tribulations tend to confirm our hope, and so even in them we also glory. For we perceive how they serve for our probation now: they test our endurance; and proved endurance increases hope. And this hope does not shame us in the end, as being baseless and without fulfilment; for our inward experience of the love of God assures us of the contrary, and keeps it ever alive. The word δοκιμὴ ("experience," Authorized Version) means properly "proof," and is so translated elsewhere. The idea is that tribulations test, and endurance under them proves, the genuineness of faith; and approved faithfulness strengthens hope (cf. Matt. xxiv. 13; Mark xiii. 13, "He that *endureth* (ὑπομείνας, corresponding to ὑπομονὴν here) to the end, the same shall be saved"). By "the love of God" is meant rather God's love to us than ours to God. What follows in explanation requires this sense. Of course, it kindles answering love in ourselves (cf. "We love God, because he first loved us"); but the idea here is that of God's own love, the sense of which we experience, flooding our hearts with itself through the gift of the Holy Spirit. It may be observed that, though assurance of the fulfilment of our hope is here made to rest on inward feeling, yet this is legitimately convincing to those who do so feel. As in many other matters, so especially in religion, it is internal consciousness that carries the strongest conviction with it, and induces certitude.

The verses that come next set forth the grounds of our sense of God's exceeding love to us.

Vers. 6, 7.—**For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet** (literally, *for*) **peradventure for the good man some would even dare to die.** The general purport of ver. 7 is obvious, viz. to show how Christ's death for the ungodly transcends all human instances of self-sacrifice for others. But the exact import of the language used is not equally plain. That of the first clause, indeed, and its connection with what precedes, presents no difficulty. The meaning is that Christ's dying for the *ungodly* is a proof of love beyond what is common among men. The second clause seems to be added as a concession of what some men may perhaps sometimes be capable of. It is introduced by a second γάρ (this being the reading of all the manuscripts), which may be meant as *exceptive*, "I do not press this without exception," being understood. So Alford; and in this case the "yet" of the Authorized Version, or *though*, may give its meaning. Or it may be connected with μόλις, thus: "*Scarcely*, I say, for there may possibly be cases," etc. But what is the distinction between δικαίου in the first clause and τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in the second? Some interpreters say that there is none, the intention being simply to express the possibility of human self-sacrifice for one that is good or righteous in some rare cases. But the change of the word, which would, according to this view, be purposeless, and still more the insertion of the article before ἀγαθοῦ, forbids this interpretation. One view is that τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ is neuter, meaning that, though for a righteous individual one can hardly be found to be willing to die, yet for the cause of good, for what a man regards as the highest good, or *pro bono publico* (it might be), such self-sacrifice may be possible. This view is

tenable, though against it is the fact that death in behalf of *persons* is being spoken of all along. The remaining and most commonly accepted view is that by "the good man" (the article pointing him out generally as a well-known type of character) is meant the beneficent—one who inspires attachment and devotion—as opposed to one who is merely just. Cicero ('De Off.,' iii. 15) is quoted in support of this distinction between the words: "Si vir bonus is est qui prodest quibus potest, nemini nocet, recte *justum* virum, *bonum* non facile reperiemus." Tholuck quotes, as a Greek instance, Κῦρον ἀνακαλοῦντες τὸν εὐεργέτην, τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἀγαθόν (Ælian, 'Var. Histor.,' iii. 17). Possibly the term ὁ ἀγαθός would have a well-understood meaning to the readers of the Epistle, which is not equally obvious to us.

Ver. 8.—**But God commendeth his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** The emphatic "his own" is lost sight of in the Authorized Version. It is not in contrast to *our* love to God, but expressive of the thought that the love of God himself towards men was displayed in the death of Christ. This is important for our true conception of the light in which the mysterious doctrine of the atonement is regarded in Holy Scripture. It is not (as represented by some schools of theologians) that the Son, considered apart from the Father, offered himself to appease his wrath—as seems to be expressed in the lines, "Actus in crucem factus es Irato Deo victima"—but rather that the Divine love itself purposed from eternity and provided the atonement, all the Persons of the holy and undivided Trinity concurring to effect it (cf. ch. iii. 24; viii. 32; Eph. ii. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 16; John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10, *et al.*). If it be asked how this Divine love, displayed in the atonement, and therefore previous to it, is consistent with what is elsewhere so continually said of the Divine wrath, we answer that the ideas are not irreconcilable. The wrath expresses God's necessary antagonism to sin, and the retribution due to it, inseparable from a true conception of the Divine righteousness; and as long as men are under the dominion of sin they are of necessity involved in it: but this is not inconsistent with ever-abiding Divine love towards the *persons* of sinners, or with an eternal purpose to redeem them. It may be added here that the passage before us intimates our Lord's essential Deity; for his sacrifice of himself is spoken of as the display of God's own love.

Vers. 9, 10.—**Much more then, being now justified by (literally, *in*) his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by (literally, *in*) his life.** In these verses, the second being an amplification of the first, our relations to God are set forth, as before, by the analogy of such as may subsist between man and man. Men do not usually die for their enemies, but they do seek the good of their friends. If, then, God's superhuman love reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son when we were still his enemies, what assurance may we not now feel, being no longer at enmity, of being saved from the wrath (τῆς ὀργῆς, ver. 9) to which, as sinners and enemies, we were exposed! There is also a significance (ver. 10) in the words "death" and "life." Christ's death was for atonement, and in it we are conceived as having died with him to our former state of alienation from God. His resurrection was the inauguration of a new life to God, in which with him we live (cf. ch. vi. 3, *et seqq.*). The words "enemies" (ἐχθροί) and "reconciled" (καταλλάγημεν, καταλλαγέντες) invite attention. Does the former word imply mutual enmity, or only that *we* were God's enemies? We may answer that, though we cannot attribute enmity in its proper human sense to God, or properly speak of him as under any circumstances the enemy of man, yet the expression might perhaps be used with regard to him in the way of accommodation to human ideas, as are *anger*, *jealousy*, and the like. There seems, however, to be no necessity for this conception here, the idea being rather that of man's alienation from God, and from peace with him, through sin; as in Col. i. 21, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works." So Theodoret interprets: Οἱ ἐχθροὶ δὴ τῶν ἐντολῶν αἷς μηδὲ ὑποκηκόασι, γενόμενοι ὥσπερ φίλοι οἱ ὑπακηκοότες. So too, Clem. Alex., 'Strom.,' l. iii.: Καὶ μή τε καθάπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐδενὶ μὲν ἀντικεισθαι λέγομεν τὸν Θεὸν, οὐδὲ ἐχθρὸν εἶναι τινός· πάντων γὰρ κτίστης, καὶ οὐδέν ἐστι τῶν ὑποστάντων ὃ μὴ θέλει. Φαμὲν δὲ αὐτῷ ἐχθροὺς εἶναι τοὺς ἀπειθεῖς καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ πορευομένους. With regard to "reconciled," it may be first observed that, however orthodox and capable of a true sense it may be to speak of God being reconciled to man through Christ (as in Art. ii., "to reconcile his Father to us"), the expression is not scriptural. It is always man who is said to be reconciled to God; and it is God who, in Christ, reconciles the world unto himself (2 Cor. v. 19; cf. also Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20, 21). Still, more is evidently implied than that God reconciles men to himself by changing their hearts and converting them from sin by the manifestation of his love in Christ. The reconciliation is spoken of as effected once for all for all man-

kind in the atonement, independently of, and previously to, the conversion of believers. Faith only appropriates, and obedience testifies, the appropriation of an accomplished reconciliation available for all mankind. That such is the view in the passage before us is distinctly evident from all that follows after ver. 12.

Ver. 11.—**And not only so, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.** We not only have an assured hope; we also glory already in our restoration to peace with God; our mental state is an exultant one even now. A tacit reference may be supposed to ch. iii. 27 and iv. 2, where all human glorying was said to be shut out. Yes, this remains true—in ourselves we cannot glory; but in God, who has reconciled us, we can and do. It is to be observed that neither this nor other passages (such as ch. viii. 30, *seq.*), where an exultant assurance of salvation is expressed, justify the doctrine of assurance, as sometimes understood; viz. in the sense that an individual believer may and ought to feel certain of his own final salvation, on the ground of having once been justified. The condition of continued faithfulness is all along implied (cf., among other texts, 1 Cor. ix. 27; Heb. vi. 4, etc.; x. 26, etc.).

Vers. 12—21.—(*b*) From consideration of the blessed effects on believers of faith in the reconciliation through Christ, the apostle now passes to *the effects of that reconciliation as the position of the whole human race before God.* His drift is that the reconciliation corresponds to the original transgression; both proceeded from *one*, and both include all mankind in their results: as the one introduced *sin* into the world, and, as its consequence, *death*, so the other introduced *righteousness*, and, as its consequence, *life*.

It may be observed that in ch. i. also he has in one sense traced sin backward through the past ages, so as to show how all mankind had come to be under condemnation for it. But the subject was regarded from a different point of view, the purpose of the argument being also different. There he was addressing the heathen world, his purpose being to convince the whole of it of sin, on the score of obvious culpability; and, suitably to this design, his argument is based, not on Scripture, but on observation of the facts of human nature and human history. It did not fall within his scope to trace the evil to its original cause. But here, having shown Jew and Gentile to be on the same footing with respect to sin, and having entered (at ch. iii. 21) on the doctrinal portion of his Epistle, he goes to Scripture for the origin of the evil, and finds it there attributed to Adam's original transgression, which implicated the human race as an organic whole. This is the scriptural solution of the mystery, which he here gives, not only as accounting for things being as they are, but also, in connection with the stage of the argument at which he has now arrived, as explaining the necessity and the purpose of the atonement for the whole guilty race, effected by the second Adam, Christ.

Ver. 12.—**Wherefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned.** To this sentence, introduced by διὰ τοῦτο, there is no apodosis. One has been sought in the course of what follows, and by some found in ver. 18. But ver. 18 is a recapitulation rather than resumption of the argument, and is, further, too far removed to be intended as a formal apodosis. It is not really necessary to find one. The natural one to the first clause of the sentence would have been, "So through One *righteousness* entered into the world, and *life* through righteousness;" and such may be supposed to have been in the writer's mind. But, after his manner, he goes off to enlarge on the idea expressed in the second clause, and never formally completes his sentence. A similar anacoluthon is found in 1 Tim. i. 3. *Sin* is here, as elsewhere, regarded as a *power* antagonistic to God, which has been introduced into the world of man, working and manifesting itself in concrete human sin (cf. ch. v. 21; vi. 12, 14; vii. 8, 9, 17). Its ultimate origin is not explained. Scripture offers no solution of the old insoluble problem, πόθεν τὸ κακόν: its existence at all under the sway of the Omnipotent Goodness in which we believe is one of the deep mysteries that have ever baffled human reason. All that is here touched on is its entrance into the world of man, the word εἰσῆλθε implying that it already existed beyond this mundane sphere. The reference is, of course, to Gen. iii., as the scriptural account of the beginning of sin in our own world. It is there attributed to "the serpent," whom we regard as a symbol of some mysterious power of evil, external to man, to which primeval man, in the exercise of his prerogative of free-will, succumbed, and so let sin in. Through

sin entered also *death* as its consequence; which (primarily at least) must mean here physical death, this being all that is denoted in Genesis (comp. iii. 19 with ii. 17), and necessary to be understood in what follows in the chapter before us (see ver. 14). But here a difficulty presents itself to modern thought. Are we to understand that man was originally so constituted as not to die?—that even his bodily organization was immortal, and would have continued so but for the fatal taint of sin? We find it difficult at the present day to conceive this, however bound we may feel to submit our reason to revelation in a matter so remote, so unknown, and so mysterious as the beginning of human life on the earth, in whatever aspect viewed, and indeed of all conscious life, must ever be. But St. Paul himself, in another place, speaks of "the first man" having been, even on his first creation, "of the earth, earthy" (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47), with a body, like ours, of "flesh and blood," in its own nature corruptible (1 Cor. xv. 50). Neither is the narrative of Gen. iii. inconsistent with this idea. For it seems to imply that, but for his eating of the mystical "tree of life" (whatever may be meant by it), the first man was in his own nature mortal, and that his liability to death ensued on his being debarred from it (Gen. iii. 22). It may be impossible for us to understand or explain. The following considerations, however, may perhaps help us in some degree. (1) When we pay regard to man's spiritual capabilities and aspirations, even as he is now, death does seem to us an anomaly—a contradiction to the ideal of his inner self. That a beast of the field should die appears to us no such anomaly; for it has done all that it seems to have been meant to do, or to be capable of doing: it has served as a link in the continuance of its kind, not having been conscious, as far as we know, of anything beyond its surroundings. But man (*i.e.* man as he is capable of being, so as to represent the capacity of humanity) connects himself in his inner self with eternity; his mind resents the idea of death, as an unwelcome stoppage to its development and its yearnings. It goes on ever maturing its power, enlarging its range, thirsting for higher knowledge, entertaining affections that seem eternal; and then bodily decay and death arrest its progress as it were in mid-career. Thus death, as it comes to us and affects us now, seems to involve a contradiction between man's inner consciousness and the facts of his existence at present; it is shrunk from as something that ought not to be. It is true that, when faith has once grasped the idea of bodily death being but a transition to a better life, the anomaly disappears: but such is its aspect to the natural man: and thus we can enter into the scriptural idea of death, as it comes to us so inevitably now, being something not originally meant for man, though we may be unable to say how it would have been with him had not sin entered. (2) Though physical death, obvious to men's eyes, and not spiritual death of the soul either in this world or in the world to come, is here evidently in view (see ver. 14), yet we must bear in mind the general idea associated with the word "death" in the New Testament. It is sometimes used so as to imply more than the mere parting of the soul from the body, including in the conception of what it is all the woes and infirmities that flesh is heir to, which are its precursors in the present state of things (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 31; 2 Cor. iv. 10, 12, 16; vi. 9), being thus regarded also as the visible sign before our eyes of man's present alienation from the life that is in God. St. Paul, then, in the passage before us, though alleging mere natural death as sufficient evidence of sin, may be conceived as having in his view Death armed as he has been with a peculiar sting to man through all known time. The main point of his argument is that the doom recorded in Genesis as having been pronounced on Adam had obviously remained in force throughout the ages; and there is surely no difficulty in assenting to the position that the dominion of death, as it has been exercised since that doom, is evidence of its continuance, and consequently of sin. "For that all sinned" (more correctly so than, as in the Authorized Version, "all have sinned") seems to mean, not that all since Adam in their own persons committed sin, but that all sinned in him—were implicated in the sin of the progenitor (cf. ver. 15; also 1 Cor. xv. 22, "in Adam all die;" and 2 Cor. v. 14, where all are said to have died *to* sin in the death of Christ). The doctrine of *original*, as distinct from *actual*, sin, thus intimated, has been, as is well known, the subject of much controversy since the time of Pelagius. It does not fall within the proper scope of this Commentary to discuss the theories of divines, but rather to set forth candidly what the language of the portions of Scripture commented on in itself most obviously means, viewed in the light afforded by general Scripture teaching. With respect to the passage before us, it may suffice to say: (1) That more must be understood than the mere *imputation* of Adam's transgression to his descendants, irrespectively of any guilt of theirs. This notion, which jars on our conception of Divine justice, is precluded by the entire drift of the earlier chapters of this Epistle, which was the actual *culpability* of man-

kind at large, and also by what follows here, sin itself being spoken of—not the imputation of it only—as being in the world after Adam, and universal too, as evidenced by the continued reign of death. All men are said to have sinned in the sin of the first transgressor, because sin was thus introduced, as a power in human nature antagonistic to God, and because this "infection of nature" has continued since. And thus (2) the Pelagian position is also precluded, according to which "original sin standeth (*only*) in the following of Adam" (Art. ix.), *i.e.* in actual imitation of his sin, which man is supposed to have still, as Adam had, the power to avoid. For it is expressly said (ver. 14) that death reigned over—in proof that sin infected—even those who had not sinned after the similitude of his transgression. But (3) we must guard against confusion between the idea of man's natural liability to condemnation on the ground of transmitted sinfulness, and that of God's actual dealing with him. It is nowhere said or implied that the natural infection which they could not help will be visited on individuals in the final judgment. All that is insisted on by St. Paul is that man, in himself, as he is now, falls short of the glory of God, and cannot put in a plea for acceptance on the ground of his own righteousness. But he no less emphatically declares that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Vers. 13, 14.—**For until Law** (*i.e.* all through the time previous to the revelation of law) **sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.** Though νόμος, where it first occurs in ver. 13, refers definitely, as appears from the context, to the Law of Moses, yet it is without the article, as denoting the principle of law, of which the Mosaic code was the embodiment; and it has therefore, in accordance with the rule laid down in this translation, been rendered as above. The purport of these two verses, connected by γὰρ with πάντες ἥμαρτον of ver. 12, is to prove that the primeval sin did really infect and implicate the whole race of mankind. It might be supposed that those only would be implicated who had themselves transgressed, as Adam did, a known command; it being an acknowledged principle of Divine justice that only sin against law of which the sinner is conscious is imputed to him for condemnation (cf. ch. iv. 15; also John ix. 41). Nay, but the universal dominion of death, the doom of sin, over all alike, whether or not they had themselves so sinned, was proof that sin was all along dominant in the world, infecting all. The Mosaic Law is spoken of as the distinct revelation of Divine Law to man; and therefore attention is first drawn to the fact that before that revelation, no less than after it, death had reigned over all. But is it thus implied that until the Law from Mount Sinai men had been without any kind of law, for transgressing which they were responsible? Not so. That Law is indeed regarded as the first definite enunciation of law under evident Divine sanction, after which, to those that were under it, sin became indubitably and exceeding sinful; but that men are conceived as having sinned previously against law of some kind, appears from the phrase, "*Even over those* (καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς) who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," *i.e.* consciously against a known command. This surely implies that some had so sinned; and thus the essential point of the argument is that even over those who had not so sinned (such as the unenlightened and invincibly ignorant, or persons dying in infancy) death had equally reigned. **Who is the figure of him that was to come.** This is added so as to bring round the thought to the main subject of the chapter, viz. the reconciliation of all mankind through Christ, to which the scriptural account of the condemnation of all mankind through Adam had, at ver. 12, been adduced as analogous. *Who* refers to Adam, who has just been for the first time named; *he that was to come* is Christ, who is called, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, "the last Adam." Adam was a type (τύπος) of Christ in that both represented entire humanity; one as the representative and author of fallen, the other of restored, humanity—the transgression of the one and the obedience of the other alike affecting all (see vers. 18, 19). But there is a difference between the two cases; and this is pointed out in vers. 15, 16, 17, which follow.

Vers. 15—17.—**But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died** (not, *be dead*, as in the Authorized Version. Observe also the articles before "one" and "many"), **much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was of one** (ἐξ ἑνὸς) **unto condemnation, but the free gift is of** (ἐκ) **many offences unto justification. For if by the offence of the one death reigned through the one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.** The purport of these verses is (while keeping up the view of condemnation and justification being both derived to all from one) to

show how the effects of the latter for good far transcend those of the former for evil. It is not easy, however, to explain the apostle's exact intention in the contrasts which he draws. He seems to have written, after his manner, full of ideas which he did not linger to arrange in clear form. In ver. 15 the contrast between "trespass" (παράπτωμα) and "free gift" (χάρισμα) seems to be the leading idea. The suggesting thought seems to be—If (as has been shown) one man's *trespass* had such far-reaching effects, much more must the *grace of God* (displayed also in *One*) have no less far-reaching effects. God's grace must be more powerful than man's trespass. And it is here asserted that it was so. The **much more** (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) is best taken (as it must be in ver. 17) in a *logical*, not a *quantitative* sense; *i.e.* as enforcing the conclusion, not as intensifying the verb "abounded." So far the effects are not distinctly contrasted in respect to their *extent*; all that is implied in this verse is that both reach to *the many* (οἱ πολλοί), *i.e.* the whole human race collectively; unless, indeed, the verb ἐπερίσσευσε implies excess of effect. It is to be observed that the phrase οἱ πολλοί does not here mean, as is usual in classical Greek, *the greater part*, but the *multitude*, mankind being regarded collectively. It depends, however, on the writer's mental horizon whether the phrase, taken by itself, is to be understood as comprehending *all*. The consideration is of importance in the case before us. On the one hand, it may be contended that, in the first clause of the verse, "the many" must mean *all*, for that undoubtedly all died (cf. ver. 12, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν), and that consequently *all* must be intended also in the second clause. So also in ver. 19, where it is said that δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί. And it may be said, further, that the drift of the whole argument requires the view of the effects of the redemption being at least coextensive with the effects of the fall. But, on the other hand, it is argued that St. Paul would not have used the phrase οἱ πολλοί in vers. 15 and 19 instead of πάντες as in vers. 12 and 18, unless he had intended some difference of meaning, and that he varied his expression in order to avoid the necessary inference that all would be saved in fact. Certainly he teaches that the redemption is *available* and *intended* for all, as in ver. 18, where it is said to be εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς; and this, it may be said, is enough to satisfy the view of its effects (*i.e.* in purpose and potentially) being coextensive with the effects of the fall. But it does not seem to follow that man's resistance to grace might not come in as a bar to the entire fulfilment of the Divine purpose; and hence these passages cannot be pressed as conclusive for the doctrine of universal final salvation. But in vers. 16, 17 (to be taken together, ver. 16 being introduced by καί, so as to suggest a new idea, and ver. 17 being connected with it by γάρ) the *extent* to which grace thus abounded, so as to *transcend* the effects of the original transgression, is distinctly set forth. The thought of these verses may, perhaps, be expressed otherwise, thus: The one trespass of the one original transgressor did indeed render all mankind liable to condemnation; but the free gift in Christ annulled the effect, not only of that one trespass, but also of all subsequent trespasses of mankind; an immense debt, accumulating through the ages of human history, in addition to the original debt, was by that one free grant obliterated. And further, while the original trespass introduced a temporary reign of *death*, the free gift of righteousness introduced *life*, in which the partakers of the gift themselves—triumphant over Death, who reigned before—shall reign; and, as in ver. 15 the idea was that God's grace must be more powerful than man's sin, so here it is implied that life in Christ must be more powerful than death in Adam. *Life* means here (as elsewhere when the life in Christ is spoken of) more than the present life in the flesh—more than the life breathed into man when he first "became (ἐγένετο εἰς) a living soul" (1 Cor. xv. 45). It means the higher life imparted by "the last Adam," who "became a quickening Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45); eternal life with God, in the life of Christ risen, swallowing up mortality (2 Cor. v. 4; cf. also John xi. 25). Thus the "free gift" not only reverses the far-reaching effects of the original transgression, but even transcends what is intimated in Genesis as given to man in Paradise before his fall.

The next two verses (18, 19), introduced by ἄρα οὖν, are a summing up of what has been already said or implied.

Ver. 18.—**So then, as through one trespass** (rather so than "by the offence of one," as in the Authorized Version) the judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, **so also through one act of righteousness** (so Revised Version. The expression is δι' ἑνὸς δικαιώματος, contrasted with the preceding δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, *i.e.* conferring life. "Declaratio Divina illa, qua peccator, mortis reus, vitæ adjudicatur, idque jure" (Bengel). Here, as was observed under ver. 15, the phrase used is εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους, not εἰς τοὺς πολλούς, thus

indisputably denoting universality of effect, as of the *παράπτωμα*, so also of *δικαίωμα*. But there is no verb to make clear the force of the preposition *εἰς*. It may denote the result to which a cause tends, without implying its inevitable accomplishment. Thus (ch. vii. 10), *Εὑρέθη μοι ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ εἰς ζωήν, αὕτη εἰς θάνατον*, where the same preposition expresses both the intended result of life and the actual result of death.

Ver. 19.—**For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous.** As to the significance of *οἱ πολλοί*, see under ver. 15. The phrase, if taken as equivalent to *πάντες*, would seem here to imply even more than in ver. 15; for there it was only said that "the gift . . . abounded unto the many;" here an actual result is expressed by the future, *δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται*. But even so the universality of final salvation need not necessarily follow. The phrase is, "shall be constituted righteous," and might only mean that all will be put into the position of justified persons, capable as such of salvation, just as all had, through the first transgression, been put into the position of sinners, liable as such to condemnation; and the future tense might be taken to denote the continuance, through all future ages, of the availing effect of the accomplished atonement. Further, it may be remarked that if universal final salvation did seem to follow from the passage before us, it would still have to be understood consistently with the purport of ch. vi., vii., and viii., which follow. In them the practical result to the believer of his justification through Christ is treated; and renunciation of sin, "living after the Spirit," is postulated as the condition for attaining the life eternal. Hence, if the doctrine of "eternal hope" be sound (and who can fail to desire that it should be so?), it must be to some unknown reconciliation beyond the limits of the present life that we must look in the case of those who have not fulfilled the necessary conditions here. Thus, further, the doctrine cannot legitimately be allowed to affect our view of our responsibilities now. To us the only doctrine distinctly revealed on the subject of salvation is that it is in this present life that we are to make our "calling and election sure." Two ways are put before us—the way of life, and the way of death; the one leading to *ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, the other to *κόλασις αἰώνιος*. In vers. 6—10 (as elsewhere, see note on ch. iii. 25) it was through the *death*, the *blood*, of Christ that we were said to have been reconciled to God; here it is through his *obedience*, opposed to the *disobedience* of Adam. Though the doctrine of the atonement, in all its depth, *is* beyond our comprehension now (see above on ver. 9), yet it *is* important for us to observe the various aspects in which it is presented to us in Scripture. Here the idea suggested is that of Christ, as the Representative of humanity, satisfying Divine righteousness by perfect *obedience* to the Divine will, and thus offering to God for man what man had lost the power of offering (cf. Ps. xl. 10, "Lo, I come to fulfil thy will, O my God;" and Heb. ix. 14; x. 9, *et seq.*; also Phil. ii. 8, "became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross").

Vers. 20, 21.—**Moreover Law entered** (rather, *came in besides*), **that the trespass might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound** (or, *did abound exceedingly*): **that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Here *νόμος* (though without the article; see under ver. 13) refers to the Mosaic Law, the purpose of which in the economy of redemption is thus intimated, so as to complete the view. It was God's purpose from the first that grace should in the end triumph over sin; but in the mean time law came in (cf. *προσετέθη* in the cognate passage, Gal. iii. 19). For what end? Not in itself to accomplish the purpose, not to interfere with its accomplishment, but as an intervening dispensation to prepare for its accomplishment, by convincing of sin, and making it exceeding sinful, and so establishing the need of, and exciting a craving for, redemption. This intervening preparatory office of the Mosaic Law is set forth more at length in Gal. iii. 19—26; and the working of the principle of law to this end in the human consciousness is analyzed in ch. vii. of this Epistle.

*Additional Notes on ver. 12.*

The significance of the words "life" and "death," as used in St. Paul's Epistles and elsewhere, demands peculiar attention. They evidently bear a sense in many places different from that of ordinary use; and this in accordance with our Lord's own recorded language, as, for instance, in his memorable words to Martha, given in John xi. 25, 26. The following considerations may aid our comprehension of what is meant. The mysterious principle or potency of life, even in the common acceptation of the term, varies not only in degree, but in kind; and the same living organism may be at the same time alive with respect to its own mode of vitality, and dead with respect to some higher one which vivifies others. The plant, while alive with respect to its own kind of life, is dead to the higher life of sentient beings. The brute beast, while alive with

respect to mere animal life, is dead, as it were, to the higher life of intelligent man. A whole world of environing influences to which the mind of man responds, so as to live in them, are to the brute as nothing; it may be said to be dead to them. Now, Scripture teaches, and we believe, that there is a spiritual sphere of things above and beyond this visible sphere, which man is capable of apprehending, being influenced by, and living a still higher life than his natural life therein. He is thus capable through the higher and diviner part of his mysterious being, called by St. Paul his πνεῦμα (cf. 1 Thess. v. 23, Ὑμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα), when in touch with the Divine πνεῦμα. For man to be in vital correspondence with his spiritual environments is spiritual life; to be out of correspondence with them is spiritual death. And so, as the plant is dead to sentient life, though alive in its own life; or as the brute may be said to be dead to the higher life of man, though alive in mere animal life; so man may be dead as to *spiritual* life, though alive as to *psychical* life; and thus "dead while he liveth" (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 14, "The natural man (ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος) 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." In other words, he is dead to them). Further, this spiritual life, unlike the psychical life, is ever spoken of as *eternal*. For it consists in intercommunion of man's immortal part with the spiritual sphere of things which is eternal. Nor does natural death interrupt it; for it is not dependent for its continuance, as is psychical life, on environments from which we are severed by the body's death, but on such as are eternal. Thus, too, we see how it is that eternal life is regarded, not as one that will have its commencement after death, but as one to be enjoyed at present, and to which we are to rise in Christ even now. This idea is notably expressed in our Lord's words above referred to: "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 25, 26). Doubtless we are bidden to look forward to a fulness and perfection of the eternal life, of which our present enjoyment of it is but an earnest, in the σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor. xv. 44) in store for us hereafter—cf. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet manifested what we shall be," etc. (1 John iii. 2)—but still this is regarded as but the consummation of a life already begun. On the other hand, whatever penal consequences of a state of spiritual death may be spoken of as in store hereafter for the wicked, it is regarded as being itself but the continuance of a state of death in which they are before they pass away (cf. Rev. xxii. 11). In ch. v. 12, etc., to which this note refers, the above view of what is often meant by "death" ought to be kept before us. For, though the apostle seems evidently to be speaking of the natural death that comes to all, he must be taken as regarding it as but the symbol and evidence of the sway of that spiritual death to which all men are now, in their fallen nature, liable.

The thoughts embodied in the above note have been derived from, or suggested by, 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World,' by Henry Drummond, F.R.S.E., F.G.S. (Hodder and Stoughton: 1888).

## HOMILETICS.

VERS. 1, 2.—*Christian privilege.* There has been laid, in the preceding chapters, a firm foundation for the doctrines, promises, and precepts recorded here. The apostle has depicted human sin, misery, and helplessness; has shown how impossible it is that man should be justified by the works of the Law, and that his sole hope lies in the free mercy of God; and has set forth Christ Jesus crucified and raised as the ground upon which Divine favour is extended to the penitent and believing, justifying this method of procedure as in harmony with the universal administration of the Divine government. If we take, with the Revised Version, the verbs in these verses as in the imperative mood, they then contain a summons to all true Christians to appropriate the spiritual privileges secured to them by the Author of eternal salvation.

I. We have here a STATEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION. 1. *What is it?* Justification; a state of acceptance with God, who, for Christ's sake, regards and treats the believer in Jesus as righteous, and not as guilty. Until the conscience is assured of Divine favour and forgiveness there is no solid peace. 2. *Who secures it?* Jesus Christ. Although Paul has already shown this at length, he refers again in both these verses to the Redeemer, to whom we owe justification, and all the blessings which follow in its train. It is through him that we "have had our introduction into

this grace." 3. *How is it obtained?* By faith. Christ has done all that is necessary, on his part, to secure our salvation. But there is needed something upon our part. We have to receive upon the Divine terms, as a free gift, the greatest of all blessings. It is a spiritual act and attitude and exercise, indispensable to the new life. 4. *By what title is it held?* By that of grace; it is gratuitous. This is for our advantage; for no question is raised as to our fitness. The only question is as to God's faithfulness; and this is not only pledged, but absolutely sure.

II. We have here a REPRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT PRIVILEGE. "We have," says the apostle, "[or rather, 'let us have'] *peace* with God." 1. This is the peace of *submission*. The sinner is at enmity with God. In becoming a Christian, he lays down the weapons of rebellion, and ceases from his opposition to rightful authority. It is a complete reversal of his former attitude. 2. This is also the peace of *reconciliation*. Concord is established. Divine rule is cordially accepted, Divine principles acknowledged, Divine precepts obeyed. The Christian takes God's will for his will; and this is true peace. 3. It is, further, the peace of *confidence*. Nations are sometimes on the footing, with respect to one another, of an armed truce. Very different is the relation between the God of peace and his reconciled, obedient subjects; for they can rest in the assured enjoyment of his favour. Therefore theirs is a peace which passeth understanding, and a peace which is never to be violated.

III. We have here a REVELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. "Let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God." 1. Observe what it is we are encouraged to hope for. The expression is one which, in the nature of things, we cannot now fully comprehend. God's glory is essentially moral and spiritual. Yet we are assured that Christians shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory; that the Divine glory shall, in due time, be revealed in, or rather *unto*, us. It is a wonderful prospect, compared with which all human and terrestrial hopes are pale and dim. 2. To cherish such a hope occasions present joy. Even though our circumstances are distinguished by much that might naturally depress and dishearten us, even in suffering, weakness, or persecution, such a prospect as is here unfolded may well animate our hearts and sustain our courage. And as the realization of this hope grows nearer and nearer, it behoves the Christian to cherish this rejoicing more and more fondly and happily. Peace here, and glory hereafter, such is the Christian's privilege! What more can he desire? What, comparable with this, can this world impart or proffer?

APPLICATION. Let those who are without peace here, and without hope for the hereafter, consider whether there is any way to these blessings save that here propounded—the way of justification through faith in Christ.

Vers. 2—5.—*Christian discipline.* Christianity is a religion intended both for heaven and for earth. It does not lose sight of the present when gazing into the future, visible to it alone. Beginning with our relation to God, it establishes thereupon our relation to men. It unfolds morality in the act of revealing the spiritual and Divine. It represents heaven, not merely as a compensation for the miseries of time and earth, but as a state attained by the training and the education which, in the order of Divine providence, time and earth are primarily intended to provide for men.

I. THIS EARTHLY LIFE IS HERE DEPICTED AS A SCENE OF TRIBULATION. That human existence is characterized by trouble and sorrow is a trite but indisputable truth. There is no person who has ever lived to whom all things have happened as he would have wished. And with most persons life has been, in many respects, a long contradiction of their natural tastes and preferences. Whether in body or in mind, in circumstances or in relationships, in associations or employment, by bereavement or defections, all men are, and have ever been, in some way or other afflicted. This condition of our earthly pilgrimage is to many an occasion of annoyance, irritation, murmuring, rebellion. Others, of a more reasonable habit of mind, submit, with a certain stolidity, to what they regard as inevitable evil. But true religion teaches a better way of accepting our lot. We are taught to expect tribulation, and we are not taught to regard piety as exempting from the common discipline. "Count it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you." Our great Leader passed through worse tribulation than any of his followers; though he did not merit any of his sorrows, whilst we deserve more than all of ours. He has also given us to understand

what shall be our experience. "In the world," said he, "ye shall have tribulation." There is no discharge from this war. The Jews, indeed, often expected prosperity as a reward of piety; and a great English writer has said, "Prosperity was the blessing of the old covenant, adversity of the new." The cup is passed round in the household of God, and every member of that household must drink of it. Those specially afflicted may be reminded that, though it is no relief to them to learn that others suffer, it is an indication of Divine providence that the universal fact is a law intended to work purposes in harmony with the nature and character of the holy and benevolent Lawgiver.

II. THE PROCESS IS HERE DESCRIBED BY WHICH TRIBULATION PROVES BENEFICIAL. The Apostle Paul took pleasure in showing the reasonableness of religious belief. He might have stood upon the authority of his inspiration, and have required his readers to accept tribulation as certain to benefit such of them as were true Christians. But he chose rather to show them *how* the discipline of Divine wisdom promotes the highest welfare of the faithful. There is a ladder, by the several steps of which the follower of Christ mounts from earthly trial to heavenly joy. The foot of the ladder may be upon the cold soil of earth, but its top reaches to the clouds. Let us bear in mind, however, that it is not a natural and necessary result of tribulation, that the afflicted should profit by it. It depends upon the light in which the sufferer views it, the spirit in which he accepts it, whether affliction is or is not a discipline of good. It must be a fellowship with Christ to be serviceable to so high an end; and the teaching must be that of the Spirit of God. Consider the steps of the process. 1. "*Tribulation* worketh *patience*." This assertion would be contested by many, who are made *im*patient by this experience. Those who see much of their fellow-creatures know that there are many cases in which affliction produces fretfulness and moroseness, which grows as the affliction is protracted. Yet in how many instances is this teaching of the text verified! The naturally impetuous, hasty, wilful spirit is humbled, subdued, and curbed. In suffering, or in a position where it is necessary to contend with unreasonable men, or amidst many disappointments, there may be acquired a habit of self-command and self-restraint, which may both tend to personal happiness and may naturally increase influence over others. By "patience" here is to be understood something more than passive, quiet suffering; endurance and constancy are intended. The patient man is not he who lies down discouraged under difficulties, but the man who holds on his way with cheerful resolution and perseverance. Christian! you are called to patient continuance in well-doing. 2. "*Patience* worketh *experience*;" or, as in the Revised Version, *probation*, or, as in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' *approval*. The man who endures affliction is put to the proof, is tested. And this is a true and scriptural view of temptation. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life." The sword is bent to the utmost to prove the temper of the steel; the gun is heavily charged to prove the strength and soundness of the metal; the precious ore is cast into the furnace to separate the gold from the dross; the wheat is threshed that the flail may, by the literal "tribulation," prove that there is grain as well as straw. So the good man is placed by a wise Providence in circumstances which bring out what there is in him, which give him occasion to call upon the Lord for help and guidance and deliverance. So far from calamity being a sign of God's displeasure, let the afflicted be reminded, for their consolation, that Scripture represents human trouble in a very different light. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Call to mind the experience of the saints of old. Daniel is an example of a man who was tried and proved, and who was shown by his afflictions and persecutions to be a true and faithful servant of Jehovah. Paul himself led a life of labour, hardship, suffering, harassment, and sorrow; but by Divine grace he was thereby made strong for service, quick to sympathize. The story of every good man's life, if truly told, will teach the same lesson. The Lord does not willingly afflict; there is a purpose in tribulation; it is trial which brings out and confirms all Christian virtue. 3. "*Probation* worketh *hope*." Here we seem to be getting out of the shadow into the sunshine. "Hope" is a pleasant, cheery word. Who has not known, in seasons of adversity and in moods of depression, what it is to be comforted by the sight of the rainbow which spans the cloud? The "strength-inspiring aid" of hope has often made the feeble mighty.

Now, of all men, the Christian has most ground for hope. His expectation of direction, guardianship, and happiness rest, not upon the whisperings of fond imagination, or the promises of fallible fellow-men, but upon the word of a faithful and unchanging God. "Hope thou in God!" is the counsel religion offers to the downcast and the sad. Such hope as is based upon the Divine character, as is directed towards objects guaranteed by Divine assurances, is indeed "an anchor unto the soul." Trial may be a bitter medicine; but it works a wondrous, and sometimes a speedy and a perfect, cure for spiritual ills. Probation may seem a harsh, unkindly soil; but the crop of hope it bears proves its adaptation and fertility. There have been persons who in prosperity have known little of the brightness of the Christian's hope, who have then been slow to look upwards to the sunlit hills, but whom adversity has benignly taught to turn their eyes away from things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal. Hope may be despised by the worldly-wise and sensual; but it is a Christian grace in which the Lord of our life takes pleasure, and by which he urges the travellers onwards upon the road which leads to the blessed vision of himself. 4. "*Hope maketh not ashamed.*" A common expression in Scripture. Men often cherish expectations which are never fulfilled, and those so disappointed are said to be put to shame; they have built on a sandy foundation, and in the storm of trial the edifice they have reared is swept away, and, as they gaze upon the wreck and ruin, they are overwhelmed with shame. But those who have hoped in the Lord, and trusted in his Word, shall never be ashamed or confounded, world without end. The apostle may be understood to say, "*Hope* worketh *realization.*" Not that the hope fulfils itself; but that God, in his wisdom and love, fulfils it. We are all, in many respects, in the position of those that hope—that hope in the Lord. We are pilgrims, and we look for a city. We are warriors, and we look for victory. We are labourers, and we look for rest. We are afflicted, and we look for relief and release. We are on earth, and we look for heaven. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The best and purest hopes of the follower of Jesus, those which he inspires and warrants, those which respect himself, shall all be realized. We shall see our Saviour "as he is." We shall be "like him." We shall "serve him day and night in his temple." We shall be "ever with the Lord." Such hopes as these will not unfit us for the common duties of life; they will assist us to discharge those duties with diligence and cheerfulness. Yet, being sons, we are heirs; and the blessedness of inheritance casts the radiant light of heaven upon our earthly lot.

III. WE ARE HERE REMINDED OF THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF REJOICING. In the previous verse the apostle has summoned us to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This seems natural enough; but it does sound strangely to hear him add here, "Let us also rejoice in our tribulations"! This is paradoxical, against all ordinary notions of what is fitting. Yet it is just. If we have followed the steps of that process of discipline here described by St. Paul, we must see that it is reasonable enough that he should admonish us to rejoice in those experiences of human life which Divine providence so wisely and graciously overrules for our spiritual and eternal good. Paul himself exemplified his own lesson. When he and Silas were in prison at Philippi, with their feet in the stocks, at midnight they sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them. When imprisoned in Rome, he could write, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice!" We may rejoice in tribulation, because it is the appointment of our heavenly Father. Our joy should be in our Father's will; for he will support and sustain under the burden which he has imposed. We may rejoice in tribulation, because we are Christ's people, and we share his lot when we suffer with and for him. "Insomuch," says Peter, "as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." We may rejoice in tribulation also, because we are assured that the patient and submissive shall, by the help of God's Spirit, reap the harvest of spiritual profit and eternal life. "I reckon," says the apostle, "that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in [or, 'unto'] us."

APPLICATION. The tribulations of life are common to all. But the profit of tribulation is for those only who receive Divine discipline in submission, and with faith in a Father's wisdom and love. Sad is the position of those who have to

endure the trials of life without the support of God's love, or the prospect of eternal glory!

Ver. 5.—*God's love in the heart.* The process of spiritual discipline which the apostle has described is not a process natural to men, but one supernatural and special to the sincere Christian. The tribulations of this life do not work the good of all who are visited by them; on the contrary, many are hardened by the trials which are sent to humble and soften and improve. But they profit by earthly discipline who cordially receive the gospel of Christ, and whose spiritual nature is brought under the influence of the cross. For to such God is a loving Father, and all things that happen to them are regarded as appointed by him. They are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, who brings before them in their troubles the prospect of the future, inspiring hopes which Divine faithfulness shall surely realize, "because the love of God hath been shed abroad in their hearts." Observe—

I. THE GIFT IMPARTED. "The love of God." This is probably not our love to God, but his love to us, which indeed ever, when recognized and felt, kindles the flame of affection within the breast of the Christian. 1. This love is properly part of the Divine nature and character. So distinctive is this gracious attribute of the Supreme Father, that we are told that "God is love." How different a representation of the Deity from those current among the unenlightened idolaters! How fitted to comfort and encourage the people of the Lord! 2. This love is regarded by Christians as especially revealed in Christ Jesus. In this Epistle, whilst the inspired apostle sets forth the Christ as revealing the righteousness of God, he also exhibits the Divine love as more conspicuously revealed in "the unspeakable Gift" than by any other means. In this representation, indeed, all the apostles are agreed. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins." In this language St. John teaches the same precious lesson. There was love in the advent, love in the ministry, love in the death, love in the ascension, of our Saviour; and there is love in his intercession and his reign. 3. This love becomes, by Divine grace, the possession of the true believers in Christ. It is not merely something to be admired for its unparalleled moral splendour and beauty and excellence. It is to be appropriated and held and enjoyed. This leads us to consider—

II. THE NATURE THAT IS FILLED BY THIS LOVE. It is "shed abroad in our *hearts*." If we believe in the love of a fellow-creature, and return that love, there is in such experience something more than belief; there is strong and joyful feeling. The heart is the home of love. And love constitutes the riches of the heart. It is so, not only in the mutual relations of human beings, but in the relation between the soul and God. No doubt, mystics and sentimentalists, monks and nuns, saints in their ecstasies and revivalists in their fervour, have often used language extravagant, sickly, and sentimental concerning the love of God in the heart. But unquestionably the danger with ordinary English Christians lies in the tendency towards the opposite extreme. We are in no great danger from sentimental raptures. But we are in danger of regarding religion too much as an affair of belief and of duty. Love is not, indeed, to begin and end in the heart; it is to become a motive to action, a principle of endurance, an inspiration to cheerfulness and content. But that it may be all this, it must first be a feeling, a hallowed, spiritual emotion. The heart must contemplate the peerless love of God revealed in Christ, and must rejoice in the revelation. This love must be the most welcome theme of meditation, and must be present in the soul, not only in prosperity and happiness, but in the season of trial and distress. A natural question arises—How can this come to pass? How can a nature, prone to sin and selfishness, come to take such pleasure in the pure love of a benevolent and merciful God? To answer this inquiry, we must observe—

III. THE AGENCY BY WHICH THE GIFT IS BESTOWED. "By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." That the Holy Spirit should have access to our hearts is what we might reasonably expect should be the case. "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirits." This Divine agency of illumination and quickening and renewal ever accompanies the truths of the gospel, and accounts for their exercising an influence so great over human hearts. It would be dishonouring to God were we to claim for ourselves the natural and moral power to appropriate or even to appreciate Divine love. It is

all of grace. For observe "the Holy Ghost is given unto us." This does not mean that the effusion of the Holy Spirit is capricious and arbitrary. On the contrary, laws—though they may not be understood by us—explain all the Divine action; and there is reason, even in the impartation of spiritual influences and the communication of celestial love. But it must be plainly understood that we have no just, legal claim upon God for his Spirit. We may use the means he has appointed. We may ask the Father for his choicest Gift. We may make ready a dwelling-place for the heavenly Guest. We may await the promise of the Father. Yet, when given, the Holy Spirit is given freely, and of sovereign clemency and favour. Let us bear in mind our daily need of the enjoyment of the Divine love in order to our happiness, and in order to the efficiency and acceptableness of our service. And let our sense of need lead us to daily supplications for that Divine and spiritual influence that can make real and sweet to us the love of God in Christ, that we may feel its constraining power, and may learn to live, not unto ourselves, but unto our Lord!

Vers. 9, 10.—*Reconciliation and salvation.* God's love to man has its expression and proof in the gift of Christ. In what way does this gift enrich and bless those for whom it is intended? The apostle answers this question in these two verses. By Christ's death his people are reconciled to him, and by Christ's life they are saved.

I. THE PRIVILEGES OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE IN THE PRESENT. 1. These are described here, in one verse as *justification*, and in the other as *reconciliation*. The first term implies that there takes place, in the case of those who believe, a "reversal" of the sentence of condemnation. Those who were guilty before God are accepted; those who were judged by law are now received into favour. The second term implies that a state of enmity has been replaced by a state of friendship and concord. Those who were in arms against God, and towards whom a righteous Ruler could not turn a look of complacency, are now pardoned, submissive, obedient, and at peace with Heaven. It is the same change presented in different lights. 2. By what means is this state of privilege secured for the people of the Lord? The means are described in one verse as the *blood*, in the other as the *death*, of Christ. The same thing is intended by the two expressions, the shedding of blood being equivalent to the taking of life. The language evidently points back to those sacrifices which were, by Divine appointment, offered under the old covenant. Jesus, the Mediator, was both the Victim and the Priest; he offered himself to the Father for us. "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin;" a great principle this in the government of God; pardon and salvation are secured through suffering and sacrifice and devotion. The blood is the emblem of the life, and consequently the blood-shedding is emblematical, in the case of our Lord, of his willing surrender of himself, his life, with a view to redeem a sinful and guilty race.

II. THE PROSPECTS OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE. 1. What have they to look forward to? The answer of the text is *salvation*. Justification is an act of God; salvation seems to be a process, to be commenced here and perfected hereafter. "Now is salvation nearer to you than when you first believed." There are many ills, trials, temptations, from which Christians have yet to be delivered; and only when beyond this world can their salvation (however now perfectly *assured*) be regarded as actually *accomplished*. 2. From what do Christians expect to be saved? From wrath; by which is to be understood the displeasure and indignation which the righteous Ruler cannot but feel against sin and sinners, and which will be manifested in the future punishment of the ungodly, impenitent, and unbelieving. 3. By what means do Christians hope to be saved from wrath? By Christ's life. His death is represented as the means of present acceptance, his life as the means of future salvation. By Christ's life is to be understood his life after his crucifixion and entombment—the life which now is and will be for ever. The connection between our Saviour's heavenly life and our salvation is unmistakable and binding. His resurrection was the assurance that his mediation was accepted. His ascension and life above are the condition of his sympathetic intercession and his mediatorial reign. His presence on the throne of heaven is the pledge of our immortal fellowship with him. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

III. Notice THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GREATER TO THE LESS. It is the greatest

marvel of the universe, the central mystery of revelation, that God, in Christ, converted foes and rebels into friends and subjects. If we can receive this, we need have no hesitation in receiving the supplementary doctrine that God will eternally save those whom he has graciously justified. If enemies are reconciled, surely friends shall be saved!

Ver. 11.—"*Joy in God.*" Men cherish the most diverse, varied feelings towards God. Some are haters of God, regarding him as their enemy. Others are indifferent to God, utterly forgetting him, acting as though he were not. Others, again, have so far a just apprehension of God that they fear him, standing in awe of his righteous authority. And there are those who love God and rejoice in him. These last are they who appreciate the privileges which have been prepared for the true believers in Christ, the true people of God.

I. Observe THE ELEMENT OF SPIRITUAL JOY. It is joy in God. In God, as their Father, their all-sufficient and eternal Portion. In God, as faithful to his promises, as gracious and benevolent, as wise to guide and strong to keep and save. This is the daily exclamation of the Christian, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God."

II. There is mentioned THE CAUSE FOR JOY. 1. This is to be found in reconciliation. There is no joy in hostility or estrangement; but, when those who have been alienated are brought into harmony, peace brings gladness to the souls of reunited friends. Remembering what momentous issues depend upon our friendship with our Creator and Judge, we may well regard reconciliation with him as matter for gladness and glorying. 2. But this reconciliation takes effect when it is received. God provides it; man accepts it. Man's acceptance does not procure, but it appropriates, the blessing. Alas! men may live in a dispensation of peace, of reconciliation, but may know nothing by experience of this joy, for want of receptive faith.

III. The text reminds us of THE BRINGER OF SPIRITUAL JOY. It is "through our Lord Jesus Christ" that we have received the reconciliation. The Mediator between God and man secures to us this greatest of boons, and, with it, all other good things that can truly enrich and bless us. In the context the apostle magnifies the grace of Christ. We are summoned to recognize in him the means through which true joy becomes possible to us, becomes our possession and inheritance.

IV. It is well to think of THE FRUITS AND EFFECTS OF JOY IN GOD. 1. Joy is strength for service. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." 2. Joy is comfort in outward afflictions and tribulation. "We rejoice, glory, in tribulation also." It is the Christian only who can say this. 3. Joy is attractive to others. The happiness of the Christian often produces a most beneficial impression upon those who remark it, and who ask for an explanation of the fact. 4. Joy is an anticipation of heaven. For we are assured that the faithful servant shall be welcomed into "the joy of his Lord."

Vers. 20, 21.—*Grace abounding.* This passage seems to trace the course of two mighty rivers. The one has its source in the Law; the stream is sin and trespass. As it proceeds it is distinguished by abundance (and is said to reign, to dominate the landscape), and it flows at last into the black ocean of death. The other has its source in Divine grace; the stream is righteousness. And it becomes even more abundant than the other; it flows irresistibly, victoriously, until it is lost in the sea of life eternal. There is a well-known spot in Switzerland, where the Rhone, after issuing from the Lake of Geneva, is joined by the turbid, tawny waters of the Arve, which, after flowing for some distance side by side with the blue waters from the lake, speedily stain and spoil them. The verses before us reverse this scene, for they represent the stream of righteousness as overpowering and purifying the river of sin; where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.

I. THE ABUNDANCE OF SIN. Sin, in the course of ages, multiplied, abounded, exceeded, overflowed. We have many instances of this in the early history of our race. The abundance of iniquity occasioned the Deluge. The exceeding vileness of Sodom occasioned the overthrow of the cities of the plain. The sins of Israel occasioned the Captivity. As for the Gentile world, the apostle, at the opening of this Epistle, exhibits the crimes, vices, and horrible sins of the nations in such an appalling manner that we

do not wonder at his denunciation of the wrath of God against those who do such things. Yet, as Christians, we feel that there is nothing which so amazingly displays the exceeding sinfulness of sin as the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sin of humanity culminated when it brought the holy Saviour to the cross. The greatness of the ransom paid proved the awful nature of the captivity from which men could only at such a price be delivered. In explaining the abundance of sin, it is necessary to refer to the many and various forms which sin assumes; to the reproductive power with which, as a principle of action, it is endowed; to its widespread dominion; to its lengthened sway over mankind.

II. THE SUPERABUNDANCE OF GRACE. Mighty as is sin, the grace of God is mightier still. It is as a breeze which overflows the pestilential air of a city; as the tide of the ocean, which enters a vast harbour and overflows and sweeps away accumulated pollutions. Its victorious superabundance must be explained by referring to its omnipotent Author and Bestower, God; to its Divine channel, Christ, the Mediator; to its appointed means, the gospel, at once the wisdom and the power of God; and to its Agent, the Holy Spirit of God. If we look at sin alone, it appears invincible, beyond all human power to deal with; but when we regard the Divine provision of grace, we can understand how even sin may be vanquished and utterly overcome.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Justification and its consequences.* Here side by side are the most solemn, the most terrible, and the most glorious certitudes of our religion. There is a God. With that God we are not naturally at peace. Enmity toward God means sin; and the wages of sin is death. But how to make peace with him? Blessed be his Name, Christ has died that we might live. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Enmity and death—the results of sin, to which all are condemned; for all have sinned. Reconciliation and life—the results of the obedience and death of Christ. These verses put before us how this wondrous transformation may be effected; how, being dead, we may be made alive; how, being enemies of God, we may be reconciled and have peace with him.

I. THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION. The words in the original mean, "being reckoned [or, 'held'] as just." We do not make ourselves just. Neither by this act are we made just, made perfect in holiness. That is the object of sanctification, and is not completed until we have put off this mortal. If we should say that when we are justified we are made perfectly righteous, that would be the same thing as saying that no Christian commits sin—a doctrine contrary to the Word of God and to the experience of individuals. Paul complained that the evil he would not, that he did. No; justification neither implies that we make ourselves just, nor, on the other hand, that we are made just. It implies that we are reckoned just in God's sight so far as regards the penalty of the Law. He declares that the Law is satisfied in regard to us. Manifestly, this is the grace of God. How could we satisfy the Law? "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified." "In thy sight," exclaims David, "shall no man living be justified." It is by grace alone. We can now point to the cross and say, "He died for me!" Christ's own words are, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is the exact parallel of justification by faith. Just as the simple act of turning the faint and weary eyelids toward that brazen serpent restored the dying Hebrews in the wilderness, so it is still possible for all of us, even for such as are most dead in trespasses and sins, to look with the eye of faith toward Calvary and say, "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." And by that death he paid our debt. "He was delivered for our offences." This is justification. Instead of being debtors to do the whole Law, we plead its fulfilment by our Substitute, accepted by God, while we become at the same time the servants of righteousness. The Law has been fulfilled by a perfect righteousness, and the penalty of a broken Law can no longer be inflicted upon those who appropriate that righteousness as theirs. Thus *justification is the free grace of God shown in a complete pardon of all our sin.* We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; we have received the Spirit of adop-

tion, and are made heirs of eternal life. All this justification secures for us in its very nature.

II. THE MEANS OR INSTRUMENT OF JUSTIFICATION. In plain and unequivocal language we are here told that by faith we must be justified in order to have peace with God. This is the grand central truth of the New Testament. If it be removed, what message does the gospel bring? "If righteousness come by the Law," says St. Paul, "then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). Christ's whole life of doing and suffering, and his awful death, would be a cruel superfluity—the more cruel because superfluous, if by any other means fallen man could procure acceptance in God's sight. Paul cautions the Romans against any other way of justification. "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law" (ch. iii. 28). And when the Galatians showed a tendency to depart from this doctrine, under the influence of Judaizing teachers, in the strongest terms the apostle censures them: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. i. 6). He addresses them as foolish; accuses them of returning to the beggarly elements; and says he is afraid lest he has bestowed upon them labour in vain. The theory of justification by works, therefore, is not one on which nothing has been said, or which has been left doubtful. It is distinctly condemned by the apostle as inconsistent with and prejudicial to the spirit of Christianity. When Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, a self-righteous Pharisee, came to Jesus by night, how did the great Master feed this hungry soul? Did he tell him to go and do some work of merit? No. The way, and the only way, to eternal life which Jesus pointed out to him was faith. If good works were of any avail, here was a man whose training had abundantly fitted him for doing good works. But from the Saviour himself he was to learn that he, a master in Israel, knew not the way into the kingdom of God. Yet are there not many professing Christians who rest their hope of an entrance into that kingdom upon their own righteousness? Are there not many the language of whose heart is, "I have kept all the commandments from my youth up; I have lived a pure life; I have been regular in attendance on the ordinances of God; I have no fear"? Such was the language of the rich young man; and Jesus said to him, "One thing thou lackest." *We must guard, too, against the notion that, if we believe, our faith is the ground on which we are justified.* It is hard, indeed, to see how such a notion could arise, in the face of all that the Scriptures teach against justification by works. For to make faith the ground of our justification—the *propter quod*, to use a legal phrase—is to put faith in the position of a meritorious work. And that such has no efficacy for justification has been abundantly shown. Faith is merely the means or instrument by which we lay hold on the justifying righteousness of Christ. Suppose a man owed you a sum of money, and that, in the days when imprisonment for debt was legal, he had been imprisoned till the debt should be paid. Another man comes and pays the debt. You give him a receipt, and he takes that to the prisoner, who is by it set free. How absurd it would be for any one to say that it was this debtor's act of taking the receipt that cancelled his obligation! Precisely similar is it to say that the act by which we take hold of the great atonement is that which gives us acceptance with God. *We are justified by means of our faith*, and not *because of it*. But without that act of believing, the atonement is not ours, peace with God is not ours. By faith we lay hold of justification; by faith we take hold of the promises—promises for the life that now is, and the promise of a better and unending life in the many mansions of the Father's house. "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (ver. 2).

III. THE EFFECT OF JUSTIFICATION. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace with God has a twofold aspect. It concerns God's relation to us and our relation to God. 1. *Peace with God as it affects God's relation to us.* At first God was at peace with man, until man sinned and thus became at enmity with God. And while God hates sin and must reward it, he willeth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wicked way and live. All through the ages, God, like a loving Father, has been seeking to bring back the wanderers, to reconcile his erring children to himself. At last he sent his own Son. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins." If that Propitiation has any meaning at all, it is that

God's attitude toward those who accept it is one of peace. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John xvi. 27). Thus faith is the means by which we take hold of Christ—our Substitute, our Reconciliation. And therefore, being clothed upon with his righteousness, we are received into the adoption of children. Being justified, we are restored to that blissful state of sonship toward God which made Eden the untroubled garden in which the Father came and walked at eventide. Once more God walks with us. He will be to us a Father, and we are to him as his children. What a gift this is that, weak and sinful though we are, yet we can think of God with calm assurance, being reconciled to him by the death of his Son! 2. *Peace with God as it concerns our relation to God.* (1) *Peace with God means peace in our own conscience.* What a troubler of our peace conscience is! In the silent watches of the night its voice is loud. The darkness dims not its light; nor is its voice hushed by the din of business or the jovial clamour of revelry. But he who is justified by faith has peace of conscience within. The great ocean will not wash away the guilt of sin. But "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (2) *Peace with God means peace amid care and sorrow.* Many trials of body and of mind may afflict us. But if we are justified by faith, then we have peace with God, and we know that, though no chastisement seemeth to be joyous, yet these our "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm."

To those who rest their faith in Christ when in trouble, he will appear as he did to his disciples on the sea, and they will hear through the gloom a voice calling to them, "It is I: be not afraid!" (3) *Peace with God means peace and security from the assaults of temptation and sin.* "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall *keep* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7). It is a bulwark of defence round about those who are justified by faith. To them it is given to be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power. They have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. *Such is the effect of being justified by faith.* "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Here and now peace and fellowship with God; access into grace and strength; no fear of evil in the dark valley; and afterward an abundant entrance into the presence of the King.—C. H. I.

Vers. 3—5.—*Blessed fruit off a bitter tree.* The letters of St. Paul abound in strange and striking paradoxes. In another place he speaks of himself "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Here he speaks of the Christian as "glorying in tribulation." He has been speaking of the effects of justification by faith, and ends by saying, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (ver. 2). Our joy, however, is not confined to the future. True, there are cares and sorrows in this present life. But it does not therefore follow that we are to postpone all joy until we reach the spirit-land. "No!" says the apostle, boldly; "we glory even in our tribulations." The sorrows are there, 'tis true, but the light of the cross of Jesus transforms them with a glory all its own, even as the sunshine makes a rainbow of the shower. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward *it yieldeth the peaceable fruit* of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Tribulation is a bitter tree, but look at the fruits which it is capable of yielding. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

I. THE BITTER TREE. It is hardly necessary to speak of the bitterness of tribulation. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." We all know something of what sorrow means, and how bitter it is. 1. There is *the bitterness of bereavement.* What agony of spirit when one who has been the light of your eyes, the joy and comfort of your home, is taken from you! What bitterness of sorrow is to be compared with the grief of parents for their children? How heart-rending is grief like David's, when he went up to the chamber over the gate, and as he went his sorrow over-

came him, and he cried aloud, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" And so, when the Bible wants to picture grief of the intensest kind, it speaks of mourning as one mourneth for his only son, and being in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn (Zech. xii. 10). Parents who want to avoid the greatest of all grief, mourning over a child of whom they have no hope for eternity, should lose no opportunity of leading their children to the Saviour. 2. *There is the bitterness of bodily suffering.* Sleepless nights and weary days of tossing on a bed of sickness—how they tend to take the sunshine out of life! And then there are those trifling ailments, bodily infirmities, for which, perhaps, you get little sympathy, but which keep your body constantly feeble and your mind constantly depressed. It needs a Divine power to bear a life of constant pain. No human strength could stand it unaided without giving way to irritation or despondency. Even the Saviour of the world tasted how bitter is the cup of bodily suffering. 3. *There is the bitterness of disappointment.* Some cherished possession is taken away from you, some valuable property is lost, your earthly means of support take to themselves wings and flee away, some object on which you had set your heart is snatched away out of your reach, or some friend whom you had implicitly trusted suddenly proves treacherous and unfaithful. The feeling of disappointment which such circumstances produce was in Esau's mind when he came in to receive his father's blessing, and found that Jacob his brother had heartlessly supplanted him. "When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry." Life's disappointments—how much we all know about this kind of bitterness! Yes; *tribulation is indeed a bitter tree.*

II. ITS BLESSED FRUIT. Paul knew what he was talking about when he came to the subject of tribulation. He knew what persecution was. He knew what bodily suffering was. Five times he received thirty-nine stripes. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once he was stoned. Three times he suffered shipwreck. He had been "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." He knew what danger was. He had been "in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." He knew what disappointment was. Like his Master, he too was forsaken in his hour of need by those who made profession of being his friends. He tells us that at his first appearance before Cæsar no man stood with him. But whatever his trials had been when he wrote this, or whatever trials may yet be in store for him, he looks upon them all with a calm and peaceful, nay, with an exultant mind. "We glory in tribulations also." He knew what blessed fruit could be plucked off that bitter tree. 1. First of all, *there was patience.* "Tribulation worketh patience." Patience means really the capacity for enduring. If we speak of a patient man, we may mean one who can endure delay, and we say that he can wait patiently; or we may mean one who can endure suffering, and we speak of him as suffering patiently. The connection, then, between suffering and patience it is easy to see. It is by suffering that one learns *how to suffer*, that is, to be patient. And if we go into practical experience, we are pretty certain to find that the most patient Christian is the one who has suffered most. He was not always thus. Perhaps at first he was like the rough unpolished block of marble which I have seen in the Connemara marble works at Galway. He was disposed to resist the hand that was dealing with him in chastening. But the suffering came. It was repeated over and over again, like the incessant process of rubbing to which that rough-looking block is subjected. But by-and-by he came out of the suffering with the edges rubbed off his temper and the rebelliousness taken out of his spirit, even as the marble comes smooth and shining from the hard process through which it has to pass. Such is the use of suffering, to purify, to brighten the character, and produce patience in the soul. Indeed, the word "tribulation" conveys this same idea. It is derived from the Latin word *tribulum*, the threshing-instrument whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks. That process was described as *tribulatio*. So it is in the spiritual world. Suffering and sorrow cleanse away the chaff—the pride, the selfishness, the disobedience—which is to be found more or less in all our natures. Let us think more of the result of the suffering than of the suffering itself, more of the patience it will develop than of the chaff which it will take away, and then we too

shall learn, with St. Paul, to "glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation *worketh patience.*" 2. *The second blessed fruit off this bitter tree is experience.* "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience." The word here translated "experience" really means in the original "proof," or "trial," or "testing." In the Revised Version it is translated "probation." This does not, perhaps, quite express the full meaning either; but the point is that the apostle had something more in his mind than what we ordinarily mean by the word "experience." His idea probably was that tribulation and our patience under it give proof or confirmation of two things. They afford us *proof of the character of God*—his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, his love in sustaining us, and his power in giving us the victory over trial and suffering. And they afford us *proof of our own character also*—proof that we are the sons of God, proof that we have been justified by faith. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." And then there is the precious promise, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [or, 'trial']: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." In such ways does God confirm us by suffering, and by our own patience under it. So he confirms our faith in him, and confirms our own Christian character. This is another blessed fruit off the bitter tree of tribulation. 3. *The third blessed fruit off this bitter tree is hope.* "And experience, hope." The proof which we have received of God's goodness under past trials leads us to hope for still greater revelations of his goodness yet to come. The proof we have had of his wise and gracious purpose in purifying us by trial and suffering leads us to hope that "he who hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." So the Christian is ever looking forward. When he bears the cross, he is looking forward to the crown. When he is suffering for his Master's sake, he is looking forward to the time when he shall reign with him in glory. This subject of tribulation and its fruit might fittingly be closed with some lines written by a young lady in Nova Scotia, who was an invalid for many years—

"My life is a wearisome journey;
I am sick of the dust and the heat
The rays of the sun beat upon me;
The briars are wounding my feet;
But the city to which I am going
Will more than my trials repay;
All the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

"There are so many hills to climb upward,
I often am longing for rest;
But he who appoints me my pathway
Knows just what is needful and best.
I know in his Word he has promised
That my strength shall be as my day;
And the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

"He loves me too well to forsake me,
Or give me one trial too much:
All his people have dearly been purchased,
And Satan can never claim such.
By-and-by I shall see him and praise him
In the city of unending day;
And the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

. . . . . .

"Though now I am footsore and weary,
I shall rest when I'm safely at home;
I know I'll receive a glad welcome,
For the Saviour himself has said, 'Come.'
So when I am weary in body,
And sinking in spirit, I say,
All the toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way.

"Cooling fountains are there for the thirsty;
There are cordials for those who are faint;
There are robes that are whiter and purer
Than any that fancy can paint.
Then I'll try to press hopefully onward,
Thinking often through each weary day,
The toils of the road will seem nothing
When I get to the end of the way."

"We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."—C. H. I.

Vers. 6—11.—*The love of God commended.* It is a most remarkable phrase, this description which is given in the eighth verse, of God commending his own love. We have, indeed, in other portions of Scripture, the Divine Being represented as a heavenly Merchantman, setting forth the blessings of the gospel as a merchantman might set forth his wares. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." And again in the Book of Revelation, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; . . . and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." But here God is represented as commending, not merely the blessings of the gospel, but his own love, to human observation and admiration. Yes; but this is for no selfish end. God's object in commending his love to us is for our sakes. He sets it before us in all its matchless tenderness and grandeur, that by means of it he may melt our hearts. He sets it before us in all its attractive power, that he may draw our hearts to holiness and our souls to heaven. He sets it before us in order that we may yield ourselves to its influence, and that thus, by what Dr. Chalmers calls "the expulsive power of a new affection," sin and the love of it, with all its withering blight and fatal grasp, may be driven out of our natures.

I. THE LOVE OF GOD IS COMMENDED BY ITS OBJECTS. We have set before us in these verses a description of those who are the objects of the love of God, as shown in the death of Jesus Christ his Son. Was it the angels that were the objects of God's redeeming love? Was it for the angels that Jesus died? No. They did not need his death. Was it for the good men and women of the world that Jesus died? If it was only for the good, then the love of God would be very limited in its range, and the great mass of humanity would be still helpless and hopeless. But one perfectly good person it would be impossible to find. "All have sinned." Who, then, are the objects of the love of God? Just those very men and women of whom it is said that "there is none righteous, no, not one." 1. The apostle describes us as being in a state of *helplessness.* "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (ver. 6). *Surely here is a commendation of God's love.* Very often in this world the weak are left to shift for themselves. But if any of us were left to our own unaided efforts, what would become of us? Are we not all glad, no matter how strong we are, of the assistance of others? If any of us were left to our own unaided efforts to get to heaven, which of us could hope to get there? The gospel is a gospel for the weak—that is to say, for the very strongest of us, physically, morally, and spiritually. In regard to God and eternity, how weak we are in all these aspects! We cannot stay the hand of disease or death; we cannot in our own strength maintain a life of an unswerving moral standard; we cannot work out a salvation for ourselves. But listen to this message: "When we were yet without strength, . . . Christ died for us." 2. But God loves more than the weak. *He loves the ungodly.* "Christ died for the ungodly" (ver. 6). The word here used expresses the indifference of the human heart to spiritual things. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit." If God only loved those who turned to him of their own accord, who then could be saved? If any of us have an interest now in spiritual things, was it not because God, in his mercy, laid his hand upon us, and awakened our minds to serious thought about him and our own souls? If there are those who are godless, ungodly, any who have no interest in spiritual things, to whom God's service is a weariness, let us say to them, "God loves even you." "Christ died for the ungodly." 3. *But God goes a step lower*

*than even the ungodly and indifferent.* He goes down into the depths of sin. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (ver. 8). And not merely sinners, but enemies. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (ver. 10). *Here is the greatest of all commendations of the Divine love.* It was a love, not for the deserving, but for the undeserving; not for the obedient, but for the disobedient; not for the just, but for the unjust; not for his friends, but for his enemies. If you have ever tried to love your enemies, those who have done you an injury, you know how hard it is. But God loved his enemies—those who had broken his Law and rejected his invitations—God loved them so much that he gave his own Son to die for their salvation, in order that he might bring those who were his enemies to dwell for ever with himself. What a description it is of the objects of God's love! "Without strength;" "ungodly;" "sinners;" "enemies." Surely this ought to be enough to commend the love of God to us. Surely, then, there is hope for the guiltiest. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

"In peace let me resign my breath,
And thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

II. THE LOVE OF GOD IS COMMENDED BY ITS OPERATION. 1. *On God's side it involved sacrifice.* God's love did not exhaust itself in profession. It showed itself in action. It showed itself in the greatest sacrifice which the world has ever seen. That was a genuine love. How it must have grieved the Father to think of his own holy, innocent Son, being buffeted and scourged and crucified by the hands of wicked men, in the frenzy of their passion and hatred! What a sacrifice to make for our sakes, when God gave up his own Son to the death for us all! Herein is the proof of the reality of God's love. Herein is its commendation to us.

"Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

2. And then look at *the operation of this love on our side.* Look at the results it produces in human hearts. "Hope maketh not ashamed, because *the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts* by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (ver. 5). "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (ver. 11). What confidence it produces, what holy calm, what peace, what hope, what joy for time and for eternity, when we know that God loves us! Oh! there is no power like it to sustain the human heart. Temptations lose their power to drag us down, when that love is bound around us like a life-buoy. Hatred and malice cannot harm us, hidden in the secret of his presence. Sorrow and suffering can bring no despair, when the Father's face is bending over us with his everlasting smile, and his arms are underneath us with their everlasting strength. His love is like a path of golden sunlight across the dark valley. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." *Thus God commends to us his love.* He commends it to us by showing us our own condition—what we are without it. He shows us the character of the objects of his love—"without strength;" "ungodly;" "sinners;" "enemies." He shows us the operation of his love. He points us to the cross, and bids us measure there the height and depth of his marvellous love. He shows us the operation of his love in human hearts—what peace, what confidence, what hope, what joy unspeakable and full of glory, it produces. For all these reasons it is a love worth yielding to. For all these reasons it is a love worth having. *Christians should commend the love of God.* A consistent Christian life is the best testimony to the power of the love of God. By loving even our enemies, by showing a spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice, let us commend to those around us the love of God.

"When one that holds communion with the skies
Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,

And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
That tells us whence his treasures are supplied."

C. H. I.

Vers. 12—21.—*Grace abounding.* Here the apostle contrasts the reign of sin with the reign of grace, and shows that, while there is a point of similarity between them, there are many points in which they differ, and in which grace is triumphant over sin. All this is for the encouragement of the sinner, that he may be led from the captivity of sin to hope and live under the influence of God's mercy.

I. GRACE AND SIN BOTH CAME BY ONE PERSON. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (ver. 12); "Through the offence of one many died" (ver. 15); "Death reigned by one" (ver. 17); "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (ver. 19). So also with the reign of grace. "The grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ" (ver. 15); "They who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ" (ver. 17); "So by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (ver. 19). Observe here *the power of the individual for good or evil.* Our acts are widespread in their influences, perhaps eternal in their consequences. "None of us liveth to himself." Shall our life be a curse to those around us, or a blessing? Shall we be among those whose aim and errand in the world seem to be to do all the mischief or all the harm they can? Or shall we be amongst those who try to follow in the footsteps of him who "went about every day doing good"?

II. THE INFLUENCE OF GRACE IS TRIUMPHANT OVER THE INFLUENCE OF SIN. 1. *Sin brought condemnation; grace triumphant brings pardon.* "The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification" (ver. 16); "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men to justification of life" (ver. 18). Grace and mercy triumph over the guilt of sin. 2. *Sin brought sinfulness; grace brings righteousness.* "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (ver. 19). One man's sin imposed upon the race an hereditary taint of sin. The depravity of human nature, as already shown, is universal. "All have sinned." But here, too, grace can triumph. Grace can change the corrupt and unregenerate heart. Grace reigns through righteousness. God's purpose in justification is not merely that his people may be saved from sin's guilt, but also that they may be delivered from its power. As St. Paul elsewhere says, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy* and without blame before him in love" (Eph. i. 4). The experience of many a true child of God has shown how grace can triumph over the hereditary sinfulness of human nature, and over the special temptations to which some natures are exposed. 3. *Sin brought death; grace brings life.* "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (ver. 21). It is sin which has cast the gloom over the dark valley. "The sting of death is sin." But Jesus has come to give us light. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57). Truly, if sin has abounded to the corruption and despair and death of human nature, grace has much more abounded to its regeneration and hope and everlasting life.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The Christian privilege.* Justification by faith being assumed as now established, the Christian's consequent attitude towards God and hope in him are next set forth. Salvation is but begun; and the process? the goal? May there not be failure by the way, and catastrophe at last? The apostle, in the first half of this chapter, sets forth the grounds of Christian assurance. In these two verses he exhorts to peace and joyful hope.

I. PEACE. Even the justified Christian may be diffident, and may sometimes regard God with dread. Many causes may contribute to this—constitutional diffidence; ill health; partial and imperfect views of religious truth; intense self-consciousness; failure to realize the ideal. Paul knew it, allowed for it, prescribed for it. "Let us

have peace." 1. *The nature of peace toward God.* (1) A quiet mind in view of God's new relation to us in Christ. (2) A calm assurance of God's help in all our growth and fight with sin. (3) A confidence that all our relations to the world shall be rightly ordered by him. 2. *The grounds of peace toward God.* "Through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1) We have found favour through him (ver. 2). (2) We live through him. (3) We and our interests are controlled and governed by him. So, then, peace in all things toward God, by reason of the great mediation between God and men.

II. GLORYING. It is much to have peace; a quiet heart; freedom from all fear of evil. But it is better to have joy; an eager heart; the exultant anticipation of all good. This joy is ours—a hope of the glory of God. 1. *The hope of glory.* Called God's glory. Because he, the Perfect One, is perfectly blessed. And as we approximate towards his holiness, we shall approximate towards his happiness. He is enswathed in light; he is leading us into light. "The glory of God." More than imagination can conceive or heart desire, he is preparing for them that love him. 2. *The joy of the hope.* The brightness already irradiates us; the new life bounds in our veins. What vigour and hopefulness this lends to the doing of duties now! We are the heirs of a boundless future. What power to ignore the imperfectness and despair of life! Despair? with such a hope? "Let us rejoice!"

Are we justified? Then it is our privilege to have peace and joy. What God has done, is doing for us. It is our duty also; for then what may we do for God!—T. F. L.

Vers. 3—5.—*The joy of tribulation.* Paul has taught us that peace, nay glorying, may be ours, though this be a world of trial. He now teaches that we may glory in the very trials themselves. And this teaching he enforces by a chain of arguments. In other words, he taught in the previous verses that we are conquerors; now he teaches that we are "more than conquerors."

I. TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE. No character can be truly formed without the opportunity of endurance; we must learn to resist. Tribulation affords this opportunity; it calls us to resist.

II. PATIENCE WORKETH PROBATION. Or, as the word means literally, "triedness." We must be as the genuine metal, which rings true. This can only be, in the case of character, as we have become true.

III. PROBATION WORKETH HOPE. Triedness works hope in a double sense: the tested strength we have warrants confidence; and past triumphs are pledges of future. So a veteran soldier, by reason of victories that he has won, and because he is a veteran, looks forward to future victory.

IV. HOPE PUTTETH NOT TO SHAME. The hope of victories to come is merged in the great hope of the crowning victory, the standing approved in God's presence at last. But shall this be? Are we not most unfit for such a presence? And may we not, therefore, when we confront him at last, confront his wrath? So would our hopes belie themselves, and by them we should be put to shame! Nay, but this cannot be. For is not all the spiritual education, upon which partly we build our hope, an education of God? Does not he mercifully suffer tribulation to befall us, that we may endure? and that, enduring, we may be approved? and that, being approved, we may have hope? This hope is of him. But, beyond all this, does not he himself now assure us of his love? Is it not shown to us by the Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God? Nay, is it not transfused through all our nature, "shed abroad" by the Spirit given to us? Yes, truly, all our consciousness pulsates with the assurance of the tender meroy of our God; all the voices of our experience say to us, "God loves you." And can such a hope be put to shame? Never, while God's Word lasts!

God is educating us; but in and through all, and above all, God loves us! Let us hold fast to this blessed fact. While yielding to the discipline, let us at the same time hold his hand, and be strong in his mighty love.—T. F. L.

Vers. 6—8.—*The great love.* The realization of the love of God in the Christian consciousness is the crowning Christian evidence; and it is the work of God himself by his Spirit. But an historical fact is used by the Spirit of God as the instrumentality

of his work of love; and it is because we believe in the fact that we realize the love which gives us such a blessed life. Yes, "God commendeth his love toward us;" and the great fact of commendation is this, "Christ died for us."

I. THE LOVE. We may never forget that it was because God loved us we were saved. The originating impulse to salvation was in him. Wrath and love were mingled, but the love strove so to act that the wrath should be put away. The claims of righteousness on account of sins that were past were strong; but what if, by a supreme self-sacrifice, he himself should meet those claims? Even so it was; thus God's love worketh all in all.

II. THE SELF-SACRIFICE. Some object to the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, that to punish the innocent for the guilty is not just. But here we behold God himself stooping to death for man! And may not love make such a sacrifice? Nay, this is the only sacrifice which true love can make—to sacrifice itself. "God commendeth *his own* love toward us, in that Christ died for us." The son of a father, dearer than self: Abraham; William Tell. But such illustrations utterly fail; for God's Son is indissolubly One with him—the Communication of himself.

III. THE SACRIFICE FOR SINNERS. Such love the great prototype of all self-sacrificing human love. There may be the sacrifice of husband for wife, of mother for child. But this, in a sense, is self for self; God's was God for man. There may be more disinterested sacrifice: subject for monarch, friend for friend. Yes, there may be self-sacrifice even unto death "for a righteous man," "for the good man"—*there may be:* "peradventure," "scarcely." But God's love—for the weak, for the ungodly, for sinners! For such as were averse from himself, transgressing the laws of holiness, impotent to attempt or desire the good—for such he died! A love which not merely pitied the victims of weakness, but gave itself for those who were most repulsive in their love of sin, most unblushing in their hate of God: herein is love indeed! And such was his love to us, in Christ.

Our faith in him, then, must be a faith which shall never let go its hold, which shall trust unto the uttermost. Also, our love must be a reflex of his. Even for those who are most distasteful in their sin, a redeeming love must be felt and shown.—T. F. L.

Vers. 9—11.—*The assurance of redemption.* But what an argument of assurance is such a love! If the love itself works hope, how does this assured love work an assured hope! It is an *à fortiori* of the strongest kind.

I. THE RECONCILIATION. 1. *We were enemies.* God was opposed to us; we were opposed to God. Something terribly real in this twofold opposition. We know its reality on our side; conscience, nature, revelation testify to its reality on God's side. The wrath of God. 2. *Christ died for us.* Justifying us by his blood, reconciling us to God through his death. The great demonstration of righteousness; the Divine concession to its claims. Also a great demonstration of love; the Divine provision for its claims. Yes; God sacrificing himself for man. 3. *We are reconciled.* God's love has free course now through Christ; our love is won for God in Christ. So then peace, amity, mutual love; identification in Christ! "Behold, what manner of love," etc. (1 John iii. 1).

II. THE REJOICING. A reversion to argument with which chapter opened, and which is more or less maintained through all these verses. We look forward and fear. Nay, says the apostle, look to the past; think how great things God hath done for you; think of the conditions under which all that deliverance was wrought. And now contrast: see conditions of present salvation, and be glad as you look to the future, assured that your salvation shall be unto the uttermost. Follow the *à fortiori*. 1. *Not enemies, but friends.* What we were! But he loved us then, laid down his life for us then. What we are! how much more shall he save us now! "Thou art mine!" 2. *Not his death, but his life.* Two sides of Christ's saving work. Think of the suffering and death: that did so much! Think of the exaltation and life: how much shall not that do! 3. *Not only reconciled, but rejoicing.* The new-found love; the living Friend.

Let us take this Divine "much more" into all our life. The dark background of rebellion and death; the present love and life: much more! The overcoming of the

great evil once for all; the overcoming of our temptations now: much more! The gift of the Son; and now the gift of all grace through him: much more! And so, "saved from wrath through him."—T. F. L.

Vers. 12—14.—*The reign of death.* The summing up of this first division of the Epistle: Christ has undone what sin has done, as regards our objective relation to God. In these three verses—Sin through one works death to all.

I. SIN WORKING DEATH. "Death" a word with many meanings in Scripture. Dissolution of complex nature; corruption of spiritual nature; and final abandonment by God. Here the first. An objective punishment of an objective transgression; a manifest sentence of condemnation. Hence symbolic of condemnation itself, showing forth God's wrath. May well lead thoughts to death that must reign in the inner man, through the withdrawal of God's favour—a spiritual paralysis. Also might well be premonitory of the total casting-off. Such, then, the triple death—condemnation, helplessness, and the culmination of both in the hereafter. And this the death which "entered into the world" through sin.

II. DEATH REIGNING OVER ALL. But this sin the sin of one. How, then, the universal death? Look around—death, death, death! Yes, might answer, because sin, sin, sin! True; but carry thought back to time anterior to Law. Death still! And no sin then such as Adam's was, such as yours is—so conscious, so deliberate. There was the presence and working of sin, indeed, but the working was the spontaneous working of a corrupt nature. No law, and therefore, strictly, no transgression. Argument might be reinforced by similar consideration of heathen now, and infants: death reigns! So, then, the death even of those who have the Law is not on account of their individual transgressions of the Law, but must be traced to the same cause as operates in the case of those who have "not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression."

III. THE SIN OF ONE THE SIN OF ALL. Therefore, if death be an objective punishment for an objective offence, it can be for none other's than his offence who first transgressed God's manifested will. And therefore, if the condemnation be imputed to all, the sin was imputed to all. Or, in other words, in him "all sinned" (ver. 12). The marvellous solidarity of all things—species, genus, world, system, universe. So in respect of mankind, and the spiritual history of mankind: the act of one, the act of all.

So, then, all rest under a shadow—the shadow cast by Adam's sin! All bear a brand—the brand of his punishment! Where is the path from darkness into light? Justification through Christ! Can this be coextensive in its range with the results of sin? Is there a solidarity here also? Yes; for Adam was "a figure of him that was to come." We have another Head, a second Adam!—T. F. L.

Vers. 15—17.—*The abounding life.* It is evident that all are condemned, because death reigns; and it is proved that the condemnation of all is through the sin of one, because even where no express law is, there is death. But we have hope in Christ. Is our hope valid? Does the justification through Christ reach over as wide a range as the condemnation through Adam? And is the consequent life to prevail coextensively with the death? The argument here is to prove the certainty of each coextension.

I. AN ABOUNDING GRACE. 1. The originating cause of the condemnation was the (1) severity of God; (2) working because of trespass—a trespass which was (literally) a fall through weakness; (3) and working, for one trespass, death to all. 2. The originating cause of the justification is the (1) grace of God; (2) working by a gift of grace—viz. Christ; and by the grace of this Christ—a love unto death; (3) and working because many trespasses call forth compassion. Surely, "not as the trespass, so also is the free gift."

II. AN INDIVIDUAL APPROPRIATION OF THE ABOUNDING GRACE. 1. The participation in the sentence of condemnation was passive on the part of the many, for the sin of one—the unchoosing heirs of a sad inheritance. 2. The participation in the decree of life is active on the part of many, for the sacrifice of the One—they "receive" the grace of righteousness, laying hold of it by the voluntary activity of faith.

Infinite love is the fount of our life; and Jesus Christ, a Man, is he in whom all fulness dwells. The certainty is irrefragable. Do we make it ours? "As many as received him" (John i. 12).—T. F. L.

Vers. 18, 19.—*The two antitheses.* The equal solidarity with Christ as with Adam reaffirmed, from the implication of vers. 12—14, in the strength of the arguments of vers. 15—17. Affirmed in two antitheses, the one pointing in either case more to historical events, the other to moral causes.

I. THE HISTORICAL ANTITHESIS. 1. One trespass unto condemnation—the condemnation that is marked by death. 2. One act of righteousness (*i.e.* one decree of righteousness) unto justification—the justification that brings life.

II. THE MORAL ANTITHESIS. 1. One man's disobedience making the many sinners: it being imputed to them for sin. The sinfulness of perverted will also bound up in the same sad heritage. 2. One Man's obedience—obedience "unto death" (Phil. ii. 8)—making the many righteous: it being imputed to them for righteousness. The power of a holy will also involved in the restored heritage.

We see here the immense importance of moral acts; the immense influence also of moral factors. Never to be repeated on such a scale: but not on a lesser scale? "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it."—T. F. L.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The economy of law.* A return to the mention of the Mosaic Law, and its part in the great economy of the world's history. Its immediate, remoter, and ultimate effects.

I. IMMEDIATE EFFECT. 1. A side-economy: among one people, for disciplinary purposes. 2. "That the trespass might abound," *i.e.* that men might be compelled to the consciousness of that which wrought in them unconsciously. Working thus twofoldly—as revelation, and as repression. In the latter way, obviously to the intensifying of the consciousness of sin, as when a torrent is dammed. The former has an analogue in the growing knowledge of the Christian life, and the increased arduousness of Christian effort which is consequent upon it. So the moral law, the ceremonial, the prophets, and John Baptist. The climax of its effect towards sin in the crucifixion of Christ, in which man's wickedness, driven to desperation by the holy law of the life of Christ, showed its utmost evil. Truly, "the Law came in, that the trespass might abound."

II. REMOTER EFFECT. "Grace did abound more exceedingly." 1. The very economy of law was an economy of mercy, in all its parts: so the "This do, and live," which in some sense was verified even to their imperfect doings; and so the double significance of their sacrifices, revealing indeed their guilt, but prophetic of expiation. 2. The climax of sin, wrought through the Law, was a climax of grace: the death of him who must die to take away sin. "More exceedingly?" Ah, yes!

III. ULTIMATE EFFECT. Extension of effects, to all the world: and they? A contrast once again. 1. "Sin reigned in death"—the dread sign of its sovereignty. Seen everywhere—the dark sign-manual stamped on all the world. 2. "That even so might grace reign," etc. (1) *Grace.* God's favour shown in spite of sin. (2) *Through righteousness.* The favour being shown through Christ, and through the justification which is by him. God's favour at once the originating cause, and the realized effect, of the "righteousness." (3) *Unto eternal life.* The everlasting sign of the sovereignty of love, as contrasted with that death which was the sign of the sovereignty of sin.

This, then, the pæan which shall resound through all the ages—"Death is swallowed up in victory!" Shall we have part in that immortal song?—T. F. L.

Ver. 2.—*A state of privilege.* It seems as if the apostle was delighted to turn from demonstrations of the credibility of the gospel plan to consider the happiness of those who had embraced it and were realizing its privileges. His pen glows as he exhorts himself and his readers to taste the full comforts of the condition of reconciliation towards God. When our right to the estate is challenged, we may spend time in examining the title-deeds and verifying our claims; but in general it is healthier and more satisfactory to settle down calmly on the property and reap the benefit of its treasures. Let us confidently enter the dwelling which Divine love has secured us, and not always stay justifying the scheme of its foundation and architecture.

I. THE PALACE INTO WHICH WE ARE ADMITTED. It is *a house of grace*, where the favour of God is enjoyed, and which is furnished from the stores of Divine goodness,

He saw the needs of his creatures, pitied their forlorn wretchedness, would shelter them from the storm, and lavish on them proofs of kindness. *Peace reigns there*, a sense of blissful security. Every article of furniture, every picture on the walls, every robe worn, every meal provided, speaks of Divine mercy, of a changed attitude towards those received within the sacred precincts. *It is a permanent home*, which we enter to go out no more for ever. Grace alters not, is not fickle; therefore "we stand" (abide) therein without fear of one day losing our situation from the arbitrariness of the Master.

II. THE GATE OF ENTRANCE. "Through our Lord Jesus Christ." He is "the Door of the sheep," a living Way to the holiest of all. He is our introduction ("access") to the court of the King. His work of mercy and righteousness has availed to procure free entry into the inheritance. The cherubim and flaming sword no longer bar the way to the Paradise of God. Man's own moral power availed naught to force a way into the temple. He could make no breach in the walls of governmental justice.

III. THE ONLY PASSPORT REQUIRED. "By faith" we enter into this state of grace. The inquiry at the gate is, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" To trust in Christ is to feel the longing for a renewed heart, for Divine forgiveness, and to recognize in him "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Scepticism may keep men at a distance, unbelief may turn the back upon the mansion, timid doubt may remain gazing wistfully at the portico, but the believer is impelled to march humbly yet fearlessly through the appointed entrance into the halls of light and song.

IV. THE JOY OF THE INMATES. They are filled with exultation because of their present condition; they are already encompassed with so many marks of Divine favour. They are constantly finding new beauties in the construction of the rooms, and new evidences of Divine skill, forethought, and love. But they know that this is but the foretaste of further bliss; they *triumph in the expectation of coming glory*. They have the promise and many a sign of a fuller revealing of the character and purpose of God. He comes nearer to his guests, till at last the veil of sense shall be removed, and every occupant of the palace be enwrapped in the radiance of his throne. All the dust of the journey to the home, every vestige of defilement, vanishes from the pilgrims crowned with the brightness of God's heavenly presence.—S. R. A.

Vers. 3—5.—*Tribulation made subsidiary to hope.* Trouble is usually considered antagonistic to joy. A ready objection might occur, therefore, to the apostle's declaration of Christian rejoicing. How was this possible, seeing the many hardships to which the profession of Christianity exposed its votaries? The text refutes such an objection.

I. THE CHRISTIAN FACTORY. Tribulation is God's method of disciplining his people. Sin having entered the world, bringing sorrow in its train, the very afflictions of life are forced by Divine grace to contribute to the improvement of those who undergo it religiously. This was evident in Old Testament times, but is still more visible under the dispensation of the Spirit, where chief stress is laid upon graces of character. The faith of the Christian is the material on which *the machinery of trouble* operates, spinning out of it *the thread of patience*. In the school of trouble are the meaning and the mercy of pain learnt; only those who have experienced opposition have been taught true resignation to God's will, content not to hurry events or to quarrel with them, but confidently to await his time and issue. With the threads of patience is woven *the cloth of probation*. He who continues steadfast in the will of God proves for himself the truth of the promises, the accuracy of the Divine forecasts, and the success of the Divine methods. The long succession of days and nights produces its glad harvest, when the fruits of patience attest that not in vain did the sower sow. And the mill of God's training ceases not its work, till out of probation is constructed *the beautiful garment of hope*, in which the Christian is gloriously arrayed. What can he do who has tested the faithfulness of God, but entertain unshaken confidence respecting all that yet awaits him? The evolution of grace is seen to produce ever better results as time passes, and the sure expectation is begotten of a grandeur of glory casting all past experience into the shade. Thus the apostle has returned to and demonstrated his previous statement. 1. Observe that tribulation is not in itself the object of rejoicing. The machinery seems often hard and cruel apart from its aim. Only when

we look through the things seen to the unseen and eternal can we welcome trouble as working out a weight of glory, and it loses its fearsome aspect. 2. Then tribulation must have the Christian spirit to work upon, or its results may be disastrous. Not every substance will pass unharmed through the wheels and rollers, the spindles and shuttles. It may be torn in the process, or reduced to pulp. Trouble does not necessarily improve the worldly minded. Instead of softening, it may harden the heart; the man may become peevish and morose, soured by disappointment. 3. And the Christian may dread the allurement of prosperity more than the endurance of hardship. The chilling blast causes the traveller to wrap his cloak the closer around him; it is the heat which leads to throwing off his garment. Troubles drive us to the appointed Refuge; in our joys we are like Hannibal's soldiers at Cannæ, relaxing the bonds of vigilance and soberness. Times of persecution have often proved an invigorating, bracing season to the Church. Perhaps the hope of future glory appears more lustrous and enviable when in contrast with present danger.

II. THE VALUE OF THE PRODUCT. Hope is cheerful, like the light wherewith God decks himself and adorns the landscape. Hope is the eye of the soul; its clearness and brightness tell of good health. But the point on which the apostle here insists is *the reliable character of Christian hope.* It is a robe of which the wearer will never have cause to be ashamed. *It suits the wearer.* There has been an inward preparation for the outward adornment. God's love has been diffused through his breast. Assured that he is a beloved child, the anticipation of bliss and perfection is an appropriate vesture for his peaceful, happy spirit. The man excluded from the wedding-feast because of an unsuitable dress showed thereby that his heart was not right; pride or obstinacy had rejected the garment freely offered. *The workmanship of the robe displays the same gracious design that has filled the heart already with assurances of reconciling, redeeming love.* The Spirit showing to the believer the things of Christ reveals the character and purpose of God, and the hope of glory is recognized as corresponding in every particular to this experience of the wondrous love of God. *It is a durable garment,* not flimsy in texture, looking well for a season, then suddenly giving way. The hope of many is like a palace of ice, glittering, but yielding to the rays of increasing light, or like a torch extinguished by the wind of death. But this hope, amid every change of circumstance, shall subsist in undecaying, yea, growing, splendour. —S. R. A.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The certainty of salvation.* The doctrine of justification by faith may be said to be hinted at in the first chapter, implied in the second, distinctly proclaimed in the third, proved scriptural in the fourth, and openly exulted in in this present chapter. Its consequences are now being emphasized by the apostle.

I. THE APPEAL TO A FACT. The "if" of the tenth verse does not signify doubt, but introduces the major premiss of the proposition, and one which is matter of instant acknowledgment. Translate it "since," or "seeing that." 1. *The previous state,* one of enmity against God. The human race as such had revolted against its Sovereign. The apostle considers Christ's work as effected for all generations, the ancient saints profiting by anticipatory faith, and subsequent believers being attracted by the plain preaching of the cross. Modern experience attests the reality of this unnatural condition, the hostility being evident both in thought and word and deed. What a blight must have fallen upon the creation, for the creatures to set themselves against their Creator, the children against their Parent! The remembrance of a God in heaven, instead of inspiring delight, is excluded as far and as long as possible. Witness the exclamation of the woman by the dying-bed of Falstaff, "Now I, to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." 2. *The change effected.* Reconciliation means the bringing together in happy agreement of parties formerly at variance. It matters not whether we can definitely state the time and manner of our individual conversion, provided we are conscious that there is now no estrangement, that we are not "alienated in our mind" from the almighty Author of our being. Does peace reign? Do we love and not dread God, desiring to serve him as our chief glory? 3. *The instrument.* The death of Christ is declared by the apostle to have removed every barrier to man's return to fellowship with God. We are "justified by his blood," which allays the

fears of conscience and inspires us with new motives and desires. The law of condemnation was nailed to the cross. Sinners recognize in the Father's surrender of his beloved Son his intention and willingness to forgive the penitent.

II. THE ARGUMENT BASED THEREON. 1. *If a dying Christ reconciled us, surely a living Redeemer will avert from us Divine wrath.* The contrast was great between the lifeless form taken down by the disciples from the cross, and the risen Saviour declaring, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." And in proportion did the disciples rise from chilling despair into a condition of fearless triumph. The resurrection was the seal of the pleasure of God in the obedience of his Son, and an ascension to honour could mean nothing less than continued aid and blessing for those on whose behalf the Son had suffered. 2. *If Christ endured the cross for the sake of his enemies, surely he will now save his friends.* By his death he transmuted foes into friends, and friendship involves help in every time of need. The exalted Saviour places his priestly resources at the disposal of his weak and tempted followers. His perpetual intercession is a guarantee of their full, complete salvation. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loves them unto the end." 3. *If Christ overcame the initial difficulty in salvation, no other obstacle can arrest his redemptive career.* It might well seem the crux of the problem to bring man into the way of salvation; but once his feet are guided into the way of peace, to sustain him therein is the joyful function of him who "ever lives to save." The bridging of the chasm between sin and righteousness, love and holy indignation, having been accomplished, none can doubt the ability of the Divine Architect to lead the wayfarer across in safety. Our Shepherd trains and feeds his flock. The angel with the golden censer perfumes and offers our prayers before the throne. The living Saviour is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" of his people.—S. R. A.

Ver. 19.—*Ruin and redemption.* By itself the first clause expresses a fact of deepest gloom. It calls attention to the prevalence of sin and death. The history of the world is traced in darkest colours. We see the race from Adam till now marching to the grave, with the taint of corruption upon all. We are confronted by that profound mystery, the existence of moral evil, with its widespread, deep-seated effects. The possibility of man made upright and free yielding to temptation does not exhaust the explanation of the actual Fall. And when the Scriptures point to the influence of an external agent, the serpent, employed to bring about the downfall of the first pair, the pall of mystery is not removed; its corner is lifted a little that we may see how our difficulties relate to questionings concerning the origin and continuance of evil in beings superior to man. This appears to be God's mode of dealing with us. Enough is said to allow faith a foothold, not enough to place the whole territory at our disposal. Instead of unlocking the house of previous being and inviting us to its darkened halls, to explore for ourselves the tragedy with which our own world-tragedy is connected, the Scriptures point to a Sun that has risen to shine upon our moral firmament, and bid us note its blissful tendencies, kindling fresh life and beauty, arresting decay, reviving hope, attesting the interest of the Almighty in his creatures, and showing that the permission of evil is not to be ascribed to any lack of Divine love. The subject of sin cannot be beneficially studied unless combined with the antidote which the wisdom and affection of the Most High have provided. Faith may waver as it contemplates the inroads made by sin upon the intelligence and happiness of the human family, and faith must be strengthened by meditation on the remedial work of Christ. Do you wonder at the transmission of contagion from generation to generation, at the long-drawn-out penalty of the race? and does the law seem inequitable that lays many of the acts of the guilty as a burden on the shoulders of the innocent? Then notice the operation of the same law in redemption, where the Son of God sheds his blood to save sinners, and observe how from him is perpetuated the blessing of peace and godliness. Separate the two hemispheres, and the mind becomes a prey to chilling doubts and oppressive fears; unite them, and hope asserts its beneficent vivifying power. Whilst we declare in amazement, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" we can add, "To whom be glory for ever;" "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

I. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE SIN OF ADAM AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

To disobey the particular prohibition was to listen to the tempter, and to substitute human will for the Divine. Therein was contained the germ of the worst vices. To Jesus was assigned the more difficult task of remaining holy amid a world of evil, and the slightest deviation from rectitude had marred his perfect offering. Our sin is disobedience, and we are righteous in proportion as we obey the dictates of God from the heart. Disobedience, as Adam found, does not enlarge, but restricts our liberty. Not knowledge, but obedience, saves the soul.

II. THE CONTRAST FURTHER SHOWN IN THE EFFECTS WROUGHT BY EACH. The apostle assumes the truth of the story in Genesis. He proves the universality of sin by a reference to the fact that all have died, showing that even the ancients prior to Moses must have transgressed some law, and so incurred the penalty for disobedience. The principle of heredity confirms the truth of the doctrine that our progenitors have transmitted a vitiated nature to their descendants. Jesus, the second Adam, is the Head of a new race, to whom he imparts a new birth, with its issue sanctification. By the *model* of his flawless obedience, and by the grace which flows into us from that *spring* of obedience, the curse is removed from believers, and righteousness is imputed and imparted.

III. THE COMPARISON OF THE NUMBERS INFLUENCED. This passage should enlarge our estimate of the kingdom of the saved. In each case it is "the many" who are affected. The obedience of Christ is sufficient as a meritorious cause to justify the whole world, though only those who "receive the Word" are consciously gladdened and sanctified thereby. No man is condemned on account of Adam's transgression; it is his own disobedience to the written or innate law which determines his sentence. The millions who have died in infancy are redeemed by Christ; multitudes in the Jewish and heathen world were saved by virtue of his atonement, though not explicitly revealed to them, and the Apostle John saw in heaven a number beyond the arithmetic of earth to calculate.—S. R. A.

VERS. 1—11.—*The state of the justified.* We saw in last chapter how Abraham was justified by faith alone, and how his case really covers ours. The promise of blessing through a seed, which Abraham believed so implicitly, has been fulfilled in Christ. We accordingly believe in the faithful Promiser who raised up Jesus from the dead, and we regard his death and resurrection as being a deliverance *to* death for our offences, and a deliverance *from* death for our justification. Faith enables us to draw the assurance of our justification from the resurrection of our Saviour. But now we pass under the guidance of the apostle to the consideration of the delightful state into which the justified come. And here we notice—

I. THE ASSURANCE THAT WE ARE THE OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE LOVE. (Vers. 1—5.) By nature and by reason of our sin we are the objects of God's righteous wrath; but when we are enabled to believe in a Saviour who died for us and rose again, we find ourselves passing out of the condemned condition into an assurance of God's love. And the apostle here gives us the stages in the blessed process. 1. We pass into a state of *peace with God.* We prefer the indicative (ἔχομεν) adopted in the Authorized Version to the subjunctive (ἔχωμεν) adopted by the Revised Version after Westcott and Hort. For the state of peace is not some uncertainty into which we may come, but it is a state which results from justification if it has really taken place. We cease from war, we are no longer enemies, we have entered into a state of peace. The believer, as he calmly meditates on the atoning work of Jesus Christ, sees that he has been led thereby out of the storm into the calm, out of war into peace. Enmity is over and peace is proclaimed. 2. We realize that *Christ conducts us into a standing in grace.* By his gracious mediation we pass into a new relation to God; we realize that we are justified, as believers, from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses. We can now stand before God, and realize our pardon and acceptance in the Beloved. 3. We are enabled to *rejoice in hope of God's heavenly glory.* For the justified condition into which we have come through Christ is intended to reach through the present life and issue in the glory of the life to come. It is no mere temporary frame of mind, but a permanent state, into which our Saviour has brought us. 4. We are enabled to *profit by life's tribulations.* So much is this the case that we are enabled to congratulate ourselves upon (καυχώμεθα) our tribulations;

for through these we reach the power of patient endurance (ὑπομονή), and through the power of patient endurance we reach experience (δοκιμή, which means the *result* of the probation, as well as the "probation" itself, and the former gives here, notwithstanding the Revisers, the better sense);[1] and through experience we reach hope—the hope of heavenly glory, since as its earnest there is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost a consciousness that we are the objects of the Divine love. The hope can never be disappointed. We have a "present heaven" in our happy assurance of God's love. We have passed out of the gloom into the gladness, and beyond us and awaiting us there lies the glory. Thus our tribulations conduct us to assurances of Divine love such as we could not otherwise enjoy.

II. THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE DIVINE LOVE. (Vers. 6—10.) The apostle, to confirm believers in the assurance of God's love, proceeds to exhibit its history. 1. And he shows its *sovereign character*. That is to say, it was when we were without strength, when we were helpless and hopeless in our guilt, that God gave love's greatest proof in Christ dying for the ungodly. It was, therefore, no reason in us, but solely the exercise of God's sovereign love, which led to the death of Jesus for the ungodly. 2. *The death of Jesus is the great demonstration of God's love.* Men have occasionally sacrificed their lives for good men, never for a merely just one; but God in Christ sacrificed his life for those who are yet sinners. No mightier demonstration of Divine love can be imagined than this dying of God's Son for sinners. And it is well here to notice that as a "trinitarian transaction," as Shedd has happily put it, God in Christ's death exhibits "his own love" (Revised Version). Through the unity of Father and Son in the Divine essence, the death of Jesus is really the self-sacrifice of God. It is, therefore, the most marvellous of all exhibitions of love. 3. *The resurrection-life of Jesus is the great guarantee of our salvation from Divine wrath.* Jesus died to secure our justification. We are justified by his blood. In this God has reconciled us to himself. The resurrection of Jesus is accordingly the proof that God is satisfied with his own self-sacrifice in Jesus Christ, and so his wrath is turned away from us through the spectacle of a risen Saviour. "The highest form of love," says Shedd, "that, namely, of self-sacrifice, prompts the triune God to satisfy his own justice, in the room and place of the sinner who has incurred the penalty of justice. In the work of vicarious atonement, God himself is both the offended and the propitiating party. This is taught in 2 Cor. v. 18, 'God hath reconciled us to *himself*;' Col. i. 20, 'To reconcile all things to *himself*.' God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, is Judge, Priest, and Sacrifice, all in one Being. The common objections to the doctrine of the propitiation of the Divine anger rest upon the unitarian idea of the Deity. According to this view, which denies personal distinctions in the essence, God, if propitiated, must be propitiated by *another* being than God. Christ is merely a creature. The influence of the atonement upon God is, therefore, a foreign influence from the sphere of the finite. But, according to the trinitarian idea of the Supreme Being, it is God who propitiates God. Both the origin and the influence of the atonement are personal, and not foreign, to the Deity. The transaction is wholly in the Divine Essence. The satisfaction of justice, or the propitiation of anger (whichever terms be employed, and both are employed in Scripture) is required by God, and made by God." It is a risen Saviour, living and reigning, who saves us from fear of Divine wrath and assures us of acceptance.

III. JOY THROUGH RECEIVING THE RECONCILIATION. (Ver. 11.) Now, when we appreciate God's wondrous love in providing a reconciliation, then we receive it by faith, and find ourselves constrained to rejoice in God who could so provide for us. Moreover, it is clear from the term "received" (ἐλάβομεν) that the "reconciliation" (καταλλαγή) is not something paid by the sinner, but something divinely provided which has to be accepted. It is an additional obligation imposed, not a price paid. God is so regal as to "reconcile himself," and then ask us to receive the benefit thereof. We ought to rejoice in such a God. Verily his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. The justified have every reason to be joyful in their King.—R. M. E.

Vers. 12—21.—*Representative responsibility.* In last section we saw the blessed state into which the justified believer comes—a state of peace, of gracious acceptance,

[1] See Shedd, *in loc.*

of glorious hope, of joy in God. The apostle in the present section expounds the relation in which mankind stands to the two great representatives, Adam and Christ. We cannot do better than consider these two representatives in the order named, and how they are related to the race.

I. THE FIRST ADAM AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RACE. Now, the apostle distinctly declares in this passage that death entered into our world through one man's sin. The one man in his sin must, therefore, have been acting for the race; and it is for us to get a clear view of his representative position. Now, the usual mistake made in this subject is in supposing that representatives must be voluntarily selected by those they represent. This is not always the case. A representative may occupy his position of *necessity*. This was the case with our first parent. The human race is not made up of a number of *independent units*, but of a series of *dependent generations*. Consequently, as first parent, Adam was in the very nature of the case representative of the race. "The unreasoning flippancy," says an able writer, "with which some object to their responsibility for the act of Adam, because they had no part in choosing him as their representative, shows singular want of thought and of discriminating observation of the settled order of God's providence. It is evident that when God himself directly institutes a social organization, he always appoints, either by special act or by an invariable natural order, the ruling and representative head. . . . The unity of the human race is his own immediate institution, and he appointed Adam its ancestor to be its representative and federal head. And in this case also he rendered an elective appointment by man impossible, by the constitution which brought man into being in successive generations. Not having from the beginning contemporaneous existence, consentaneous action was impossible. Their unity, therefore, was made to depend upon a common head and upon his representative action. . . . The constitution of nature and the course of providence render it a matter of social justice that one generation shall bind the succeeding, however remote, for good or evil. All legislation and all government proceeds upon this principle, and cannot avoid it. The evil entailed upon the race has come upon us by the selfsame principle, and its repudiation is impossible without the violation of the moral order upon which the stability of society depends. Our responsible relation to the first sin of Adam in no way depends upon our consent to his appointment as our covenant head, any more than our responsible relation to the national debt of Great Britain is affected by the fact that it was contracted without our personal consent, and before we were born."[1] It will be found also that Adam's parental authority carries with it the idea of *kingship*; he was in a regal as well as representative position; he had dominion not only over the creatures, but also over his own posterity. His acts were consequently of a regal and representative character. Carrying these necessary principles with us, we can see how *his sin in eating the forbidden fruit was a representative act.* In this the race was represented, by it the race was bound; he was acting in his representative capacity, and there is no good gained by repudiating it. But, further, we can understand in some measure how a sin like Adam's affected his constitution, so that he became with his wife tainted, and so *transmitted the sin* to succeeding generations. The death of infants is the positive proof that the race has been treated as an organic unity, and that the taint of sin has been transmitted by ordinary generation. The whole subject of "heredity," as now scientifically treated, bears upon this relation of Adam to his posterity. It is evident that the generations have been linked each to each. Representative responsibility has been in operation from the first. Instead of quarrelling with the arrangement, our duty is to recognize it, and to see how out of the same principle we may receive blessing as a glorious set-off to the curse which has been transmitted to us.

II. THE SECOND ADAM AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JUSTIFIED. We have seen how the first Adam was constituted the representative of the race, and by his sin involved the whole race in trespass and condemnation. Death passed unto all men, for that all in him have sinned. But now the apostle shows us the glorious set-off to this inheritance of guilt and death. God has given a new Representative to the race, even Jesus Christ his Son. By his obedience the representative principle is transmuted into an organ of grace instead of an organ of condemnation. But let us carefully note the nature of the relation set up between us and Christ. And here let us observe: 1.

[1] Cf. Wallace's 'Representative Responsibility,' pp. 40—42.

*While we are united to the first Adam by ordinary generation, we get united to the second Adam by regeneration.* The first union is involuntary; we cannot determine who our parents shall be. But union to Christ partakes of a voluntary character. When the Spirit is received and regenerates us, he makes us willing in the day of his power. Freedom of the will has its place in the relation into which we enter towards the second Adam. We may reject the union or close with it. Hence the whole race is not necessarily embraced in Christ's vicarious work, simply because the whole race *will* not be. *All* will not come to Jesus that they may have life (John v. 40). 2. *Jesus proposes to quench the fire, not only of original sin, but also of actual sin, in those who receive his grace.* This is the apostolic idea in this passage. The arrangement might have been to checkmate merely the original sin; that is, to put the race upon as good a platform as our first parent occupied before the Fall. Christ's obedience might thus have been the mere equivalent for Adam's disobedience. But the free gift of justification through Christ embraces our actual sins as well as our original sin. Grace is thus seen to *abound*. All sin in which we have been involved gets cancelled and put away through the obedience of our Representative. And: 3. *Jesus proposes not only to counteract the sin, but also to secure a reign of grace unto eternal life.* The abounding grace of the second Adam raises its recipients into an eternal life in the favour and society of God. Thus is it that the representative principle provides the most magnificent compensation for all that it entails through our first parent's fall. If we by faith are united to the second Adam, then we get the benefit of his obedience; his endurance of the penalty we deserved is accepted as ours; his perfect obedience to the requirements of the Divine Law is imputed to us; and his gracious Spirit comes to abide within us. The result is that the grace so abounds as to overmaster the sin and to raise us into that fellowship with God which is life eternal. The second Adam thus more than redeems us from our relation to the first Adam.

III. THE ADMINISTRATION OF GRACE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST MAKES AMPLE COMPENSATION FOR ALL APPARENT ANOMALIES IN THE PREVIOUS COVENANT. Now, one of the facts referred to by the apostle in this passage is, on the admission of almost all the commentators, the death of infants in consequence of their relation to Adam. It may, of course, be said that these infants were in the loins of Adam when he sinned, as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when he paid tithes to Melchizedek. Still, the fate of infants would seem an anomaly in the government of God if they are to receive no compensation through relation to the second Adam. But if it is scriptural to believe that *all* infants who die because of their relation to the first Adam inherit everlasting life because of their relation to the second Adam, then all harshness disappears and the anomaly is overborne. Now, this is, as we believe, the proper doctrine. All who die in infancy are, through the all-abounding grace of the second Adam, saved. We need have no fears for them, wherever they have passed away. Their suffering unto death is a cheap price to pay for exemption from the temptations of the present world; and each of them in the glory will accept the painful passage to it as, after all, a merciful arrangement, seeing that glory lay beyond it.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1—ch. viii. 39.—(7) *Moral results to true believers of the revelation to them of the righteousness of God.* The *righteousness of God* having been announced as revealed in the gospel (ch. i. 17), set forth as available for all mankind (ch. iii. 21—31), shown to be in accordance with the teaching of the Old Testament (ch. iv. 1—25), viewed with regard to the feelings and hopes of believers (ch. v. 1—11) and to the position of the human race before God (ch. v. 12—21), the necessary moral results of a true apprehension of the doctrine are treated in this section of the Epistle. And first is shown from various points of view—

Ver. 1—ch. vii. 6.—(*a*) *The obligation on believers of holiness of life.* The subject is led up to by meeting certain supposed erroneous conclusions from what has been said in the preceding chapter. It might be said that, if where sin abounded grace did much more abound—if in the obedience

of the one Christ all believers are justified—human sin must be a matter of indifference; it cannot nullify the free gift; nay, grace will be even the more enhanced, in that it abounds the more. The apostle rebuts such antinomian conclusions by showing that they imply a total misunderstanding of the doctrine which was supposed to justify them; for that our partaking in the righteousness of God in Christ means our actually partaking in it—our being influenced by it, loving it and following it, not merely our having it imputed to us while we remain aloof from it; that justifying faith in Christ means spiritual union with Christ, a dying with him to sin and a rising with him to a new life, in which sin shall no longer have dominion over us. He refers to our baptism as having this only meaning, and he enforces his argument by three illustrations: firstly, as aforesaid, that of dying and rising again, which is signified in baptism (vers. 1—14); secondly, that of service to a master (vers. 15—23); thirdly, that of the relation of a wife to a husband (ch. vii. 1—16). It will be seen, when we come to it, that the third of these illustrations is a carrying out of the same idea, though it is there *law*, and not *sin*, that we are said to be emancipated from.

Ver. 1.—**What shall we say then?** So St. Paul introduces a difficulty or objection arising out of the preceding argument (cf. ch. iii. 5). **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?** Referring to the whole preceding argument, and especially to the concluding verses (ch. v. 20, 21).

Ver. 2.—**God forbid!** (Μὴ γένοιτο: St. Paul's usual way of rejecting an idea indignantly). **We who** (οἵτινες, with its proper meaning of *being such as*) **died** (not, as in the Authorized Version, "are dead." The reference is to the time of baptism, as appears from what follows) **to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?** The idea of dying to sin in the sense of having done with it, is found also in Macrob., 'Somn. Scip.,' i. 13 (quoted by Meyer), "Mori etiam dicitur, cum anima adhuc in corpore constituta corporeas illecebras philosophia docente contemnit et cupiditatum dulces insidias reliquasque omnes exuit passiones."

Ver. 3.—**Or know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** Ἤ, if taken in the sense of "or," at the beginning of ver. 3, will be understood if we put what is meant thus: Do you not know that we have all died to sin? *Or* are you really ignorant of what your very baptism meant? But cf. ch. vii. 1, where the same expression occurs, and where ἤ appears only to imply a question. The expression βαπτίζεσθαι εἰς occurs also in 1 Cor. x. 2 and Gal. iii. 27; in the first of these texts with reference to the Israelites and Moses. It denotes the entering by baptism into close union with a person, coming to belong to him, so as to be in a sense identified with him. In Gal. iii. 27 being *baptized* into Christ is understood as implying *putting him on* (ἐνεδύσασθε). The phrases, βαπτίζειν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι, or ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι, or εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, Χριστοῦ, were understood to imply the same idea, though not so plainly expressing it. Thus St. Paul rejoiced that he had not himself baptized many at Corinth, lest it might have been said that he had baptized them into his own name (εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα), *i.e.* into such connection with himself as baptism implied with Christ alone. Doubtless in the instruction which preceded baptism this significance of the sacrament would be explained. And if "into Christ," then "into his death." "In Christum, inquam, totum, adeoque in mortem ejus baptizatur" (Bengel). The whole experience of Christ was understood to have its counterpart in those who were baptized into him; in them was understood a death to sin, corresponding to his actual death. This, too, would form part of the instruction of catechumens. St. Paul often presses it as what he conceives to be well understood; and in subsequent verses of this chapter he further explains what he means.

Ver. 4.—**Therefore we were buried** (not *are*, as in the Authorized Version) **with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.** The mention here of burial as well as death does not appear to be meant as a further carrying out of the idea of a fulfilment in us of the whole of Christ's experience, in the sense—As he died and was buried, so we die and are even buried too. Such a conception of burial being in our case a further process subsequent to our death in baptism, is indeed well expressed in our Collect for Easter Eve: but the form of expression, "buried into death," does not suit it here. The reference rather is to the form of baptism, viz. by immersion, which was understood to signify burial, and therefore death. So Chrysostom, on John iii., Καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν τινι τάφῳ, τῷ ὕδατι καταδύοντων ἡμῶν τὰς κεφαλὰς, ὁ παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος θάπτεται, καὶ καταδὺς κάτω κρύπτεται ὅλος καθάπαξ. The main intention of the verse is to bring out the idea of resurrection

following death in our case as in Christ's. The sense, therefore, is—As our burial (or total immersion) in the baptismal water was followed by entire emergence, so our death with Christ to sin, which that immersion symbolized, is to be followed by our resurrection with him to a new life. As to the *δόξα τοῦ πατρὸς*, through which Christ is here said to have been raised, see what was said under ch. iii. 23. "Δόξα est *gloria* divinæ vitæ, incorruptibilitatis, potentiæ, et virtutis, per quam et Christus resuscitatus est, et nos vitæ novæ restituimur, Deoque conformamur. Eph. i. 19, *seqq.*" (Bengel). In some passages our Lord is regarded as having been raised from the dead in virtue of the Divine life that was in himself, whereby it was impossible that he should be holden of death (see under ch. i. 4). And he said of his own *ψυχή*, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). But here, as most commonly elsewhere, his resurrection is attributed to the operation of the glory of the Father—the same Divine power that regenerates us in him (cf. 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. xiii. 4; Eph. i. 19, etc.; Col. ii. 12; also our Lord's own prayers to the Father previously to his suffering, as given by St. John). The two views are not inconsistent, and may serve to show Christ's oneness with the Father as touching his Godhead. The marked association here and elsewhere of union with Christ, so as to die and rise again with him, with the rite of baptism, supports the orthodox view of that sacrament being not only a *signum significans*, but a *signum efficax;* as not only representing, but being "a means whereby we receive" regeneration. The beginning of the new life of believers, with the power as well as the obligation to lead such a life, is ever regarded as dating from their baptism (cf. Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 12). It is true, however, that in all such passages in the New Testament the baptism of adults is referred to; that is, of persons who at the time of baptism were capable of actual repentance and faith, and hence of actual *moral* regeneration, and they are supposed to have understood the significance of the rite, and to have been sincere in seeking it. Hence what is said or implied cannot fairly be pressed as applicable in all respects to infant baptism. This, however, is not the place for discussing the propriety of infant baptism, or the sense in which all baptized persons are regarded by the Church as in their very baptism regenerate.

Ver. 5.—**For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.** So the Authorized Version. But the English word "planted" (though the idea expressed by it has the support of Origen, Chrysostom, and other ancient Fathers; also of the Vulgate, and, among moderns, Beza, Luther, and others; while some, including Erasmus, Calvin, Estius, Cornelius à Lapide, understand "engrafted") probably suggests what was not intended. *Σύμφυτος* is from *συμφύω* (not *συμφυτεύω*), and need only express being made to grow together in close association. In classic authors it commonly means *innate*. It seems here used, not to introduce a new figure, whether of planting or grafting, but only to express the close union with Christ, already intimated, into which we entered in baptism. The Revised Version has "have become united with *him*," which may perhaps sufficiently express what is meant, though hardly a satisfactory rendering of *σύμφυτοι*. Tyndale and Cranmer translate "graft in deeth lyke unto him;" and perhaps "graft into" may be as good a rendering as any other. Meyer, Tholuck, Alford, and others take the dative *τῷ ὁμοιώματι* as governed by *σύμφυτοι*, equivalent to *ὁμοίως ἀπεθάνομεν ὥσπερ αὐτὸς* (Tholuck). But it may be better to understand *Χριστῷ*: "Graft into Christ, in the likeness of his death," *τῷ ὁμοιώματι* being added because Christ's death and ours, in the senses intended, are not the same kind of death literally, ours only corresponding to, and in a certain sense like his. The main purpose of this verse, as of ver. 4, is to press *resurrection* with Christ as following *death* with him. But why here the *future* *ἐσόμεθα*? Did we not rise with Christ to a new life when we emerged from our baptismal burial? Future verbs are used also with a similar reference in ver. 8 and ver. 14. Now, there are three senses in which our resurrection with Christ may be understood. (1) As above (cf. Col. ii. 12, etc., where the expression is *συνηγέρθητε*). (2) Our realization of our position of power and obligation in subsequent life—actually in practice "dying from sin and rising again unto righteousness" (cf. below, vers. 12—14). (3) The resurrection of the dead hereafter. Some (including Tertullian, Chrysostom, Œcumenius) have taken sense (3) to be here intended; but, though the words themselves, *ἐσόμεθα* and *συζήσομεν* in ver. 8, suggest this sense, it can hardly be intended here, at any rate exclusively or prominently, since the drift of the whole passage is to insist on the necessity of an *ethical* resurrection now; and it is evident that the clause before us corresponds with *οὕτω καὶ ἡμεῖς*, etc., in the previous verse, and to ver. 11, *et seq.* The future *ἐσόμεθα* is understood by some as only expressing *consequence*—a necessary conclusion from a premiss, thus: If such a thing is the case, such other thing will follow. If so, sense

(1) might still be understood; so that the idea would be the same as in Col. ii. 12, etc., viz. that of our rising in baptism itself to a new life with Christ, in which sin need not, and ought not to, have dominion. But still the repeated use of the future tense (especially ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει in ver. 14), together with the whole drift of what follows, seems rather to imply sense (2); that is, our realization of our position in our actual lives subsequent to baptism. If it be objected that in this case we should expect "we ought to be" rather than "we shall be," it may be replied that it is what God will do for us, rather than what we shall do for ourselves, that the apostle has in view. If he has made us partakers in the atoning *death* of Christ, having forgiven us all trespasses, etc. (Col. ii. 13, *seq.*), he will also make us partakers, as our life goes on, in the power of his *resurrection* too, delivering us from sin's dominion. Further, if this be so, the thought may also include sense (3). For elsewhere the future resurrection seems to be regarded as only the consummation of a spiritual resurrection which is begun in the present life, Christians being already partakers in the eternal life of God, of which the issue is immortality; cf. Eph. i. 5, 6; Col. iii. 3, 4; Gal. ii. 20; also our Lord's own words, which are peculiarly significant in this regard, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is *passed from death unto life*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John v. 24, 25). Again, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me *shall never die*" (John xi. 25, 26).

Vers. 6, 7.—**Knowing this** (cf. ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε, ver. 3), **that our old man was** (not *is*, as in the Authorized Version) **crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed** (or *abolished*, or *done away*, καταργήθῃ), **that henceforth we should not serve** (δουλεύειν, expressing *bondage*, or *slavery*; and so throughout the chapter in the word δοῦλοι, translated "servants") **sin. For he that hath died is freed from sin.** The word "crucified" has, of course, reference to the mode of Christ's death into which we were baptized. It does not imply anything further (as some have supposed) as to the manner of our own spiritual dying, such as painfulness or lingering; it merely means that in his death our old man died (cf. Col. ii. 14, προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ). The term "old man" (παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος) occurs also Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9. It denotes man's unregenerate self, when under sin and condemnation; the καινὸς or νέος ἄνθρωπος being his regenerate self. It is, of course, a different conception from that of ὁ ἔξω and ὁ ἔσωθεν ἄνθρωπος of 2 Cor. iv. 16. In Ephesians and Colossians the old man is said to be *put away*, or *put off*, and the new one *put on*, as though they were two clothings, or investments, of his personality, determining its character. Here, by a bolder figure, they are viewed as an old self that had died and a new one that had come to life in its place (cf. 2 Cor. v. 17, Εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν). The idea of a new man being born into a new life in baptism was already familiar to the Jews in their baptism of proselytes (see Lightfoot, on John iii.); and our Lord, discoursing to Nicodemus of the new birth, supposes him to understand the figure; but he teaches him that the change thus expressed should be no mere change of profession and habits of life, but a radical inward change, which could only be wrought by the regenerating Spirit. Such a change St. Paul teaches to be signified by Christian baptism; not only deliverance from condemnation through participation in the benefits of the death of Christ, but also the birth or creation of a new self corresponding to his risen body, which will not be, like the old self, under the thraldom of sin. "The body of sin" may be taken as meaning much the same as "our old man;" sin being conceived as embodied in our former selves, and so possessing them and keeping them in bondage. It certainly does not mean simply our bodies as distinct from our souls, so as to imply the idea that the former must be macerated that the latter may live. The asceticism inculcated elsewhere in the New Testament is in no contradiction to the ideal of *mens sana in corpore sano*. Our former sin-possessed and sin-dominated personality being now crucified with Christ, dead, and done away with, we are no longer, in our new personality, in slavery to sin, and are both bound and able to renounce it; "for he that hath died is freed [δεδικαίωται, literally, 'is justified'] from sin." In Scotland, one who is executed is said to be *justified*, the idea apparently being that he has satisfied the claims of law. So here—δεδικαίωται. The word δουλεύειν, be it observed, in ver. 6 introduces by the way the second figure under which, as above said, the apostle regards his subject, though it is not taken up till ver. 16.

Ver. 8.—**Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him**; *i.e.* as explained with regard to the future ζησόμεθα under ver. 5. The explanation there given accounts for the phrase here, πιστεύομεν ὅτι, without its being necessary

to refer our living with Christ exclusively to the future resurrection. For the continuance of God's vivifying grace during life after baptism is a subject of *belief*.

Ver. 9.—**Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.** When it is implied here that death had once dominion over him, it is not, of course, meant that he was in his own *Divine* nature subject to death, or that "it was possible that he should be holden of it." All that is implied is that he had made himself subject to it by taking on him our nature, and voluntarily submitted to it, once for all, as representing us (cf. John x. 17; Acts ii. 24).

Ver. 10.—**For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.** "Died unto sin" certainly does not mean here, as some have taken it, died *by reason of sin*, or *to atone for sin*, but has the sense, elsewhere obvious in this chapter, of ἀποθνήσκειν, followed by a dative, which was explained under ver. 2. Christ was, indeed, never subject to sin, or himself infected with it, as we are; but he "bore the sins of many;" "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." He submitted for us to the condition and penalty of human sin; but, when he died, he threw off its burden, and was done with it for ever (cf. Heb. ix. 28, "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time *without sin* unto salvation"). The purpose of thus describing the permanent life to God of the risen Christ is, of course, to show that the new life of us who are accounted to have risen with Christ must in like manner be permanent and free from sin. "Quo docere vult hanc vitæ novitatem tota vita esse Christianis persequendam. Nam si Christi imaginem in se repræsentare debent, hanc perpetuo durare necesse est. Non quod uno momento emoriatur caro in nobis, sicuti nuper diximus: sed quia retrocedere in ea mortificanda non licebit. Si enim in cœnum nostrum revolvimur, Christum abnegamus; cujus nisi per vitæ novitatem consortes esse non possumus, sicut ipse vitam incorruptibilem agit" (Calvin). The next verse expresses this clearly.

Ver. 11.—**Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** In the verses which follow (12—14) the apostle exhorts his readers to do their own part in realizing this their union with the risen Christ, to give effect to the regenerating grace of God. For their baptism had been but the beginning of their new life; it depended on themselves whether sanctification should follow on regeneration, as it needs must do in order to salvation.

Ver. 12.—**Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof.** (The reading of the Textus Receptus, "obey *it in* the lusts thereof," has but weak support.) Though our "old man" is conceived of as crucified with Christ—though this is theoretically and potentially our position—yet our actual lives may be at variance with it; for we are still in our present "mortal body," with its lusts remaining; and sin is still a power, not yet destroyed, which *may*, if we let it, have domination over us still. Regeneration is not regarded as having changed our nature, or eradicated all our evil propensions, but as having introduced into us a higher power —"the power of his resurrection" (Phil. iii. 10)—in virtue of which we may resist the attempted domination of sin. But it still rests with us whether we will give our allegiance to sin or to Christ. Οὐ γὰρ τὴν φύσιν ἦλθεν ἀνελεῖν, ἀλλὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν διορθῶσαι (Chrysostom). The lusts, obedience to which is equivalent to letting sin reign, are said to be those of our "mortal body," because it is in our present bodily organization that the lusts tempting us to evil rise. But it is not in their soliciting us, but in the will assenting to them, that the sin lies. "Quia non consentimus desideriis pravis in gratia sumus" (Augustine, 'Prop.,' 35). "Cupiditates corporis sunt fomes, peccatum ignis" (Bengel). The epithet θνητῷ ("mortal") is fitly used as distinguishing our present perishable framework—the earthen vessels in which we have our treasure (2 Cor. iv. 7)—from our real inward personality, ὁ ἔσωθεν ἄνθρωπος (2 Cor. iv. 16), which is regarded as having risen with Christ, so as to live to God for ever. "Vos enim, viventes, abalienati estis a corpore vestro (cf. ch. viii. 10)" (Bengel).

Ver. 13.—**Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.** By our *members* seem to be meant, not merely the several parts of our bodily frame—eye, tongue, hand, foot, etc.—but generally all the parts or constituents of our present human nature, which sin may use as its instruments, but which ought to be devoted to God (cf. Col. iii. 5). Many commentators would translate ὅπλα "weapons" rather than "instruments," on the ground that St. Paul usually uses the word in this sense (ch. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 7; x. 4; Eph. vi. 11, 13); and also that ὀψώνια in ver. 23, taken in the sense of the pay of a soldier (as in Luke iii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 7), is supposed to imply that the apostle has had all along the idea of *warfare* in view. The second of these reasons really proves nothing. Whatever the meaning of ὀψώνια in ver. 23, it is

too far removed from the passage before us to be taken in any connection with it. Neither is the first reason at all cogent. Ὅπλα bears the sense of *instruments* as well as of *weapons*, and may more suitably bear it here. When St. Paul elsewhere speaks of armour, it is the armour of *light*, or of *righteousness*, which we are told to *take up*, and to *put on*, in order to fight against our spiritual enemies. Such a conception is inapplicable to our own *members*, which we have already, which we may use either for good or evil, and which require the protection of heavenly armour rather than being themselves armour; and we certainly could not be told to take them up or put them on. We may, in the next place, observe that the two clauses of this verse are differently expressed in two respects. (1) It is our *members* only that we are forbidden to yield to sin; but *ourselves*, with our members, we are bidden to yield to God. For few of the persons addressed, if even any, could be supposed, deliberately and of choice, to offer their whole being to the service of sin as such; they were only liable to succumb to sin, in this or that way, through soliciting lusts. But the regenerate Christian offers and presents his whole self to God, and desires to be his entirely. (2) In the first clause we find the present imperative, παριστάνετε; but in the second the aorist imperative, παραστήσατε. The distinction between the two tenses in the imperative is thus expressed in Matthiæ's 'Greek Grammar:' "that the aorist designates an action passing by, and considered abstractedly in its completion, but the present a continued and frequently repeated action." Our giving ourselves to God is something done once for all; our yielding our members as instruments of sin is a succession of acts of yielding.

**Ver. 14.—For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.** As to the force of the future here, οὐ κυριεύσει, see what was said under ver. 5. Here also no more seems, at first sight, to be meant than that God, if we respond to his grace, will not let sin have dominion over us; we shall, in fact, if we are willing, be enabled to resist it. "Invitos nos non coget [peccatum] ad serviendum tibi" (Bengel). And the reason given is suitable to this meaning: "For ye are not under law" (which, while it makes sin sinful and exacts its full penalty, imparts no power to overcome it), "but under grace" (which does communicate such power). Thus understanding the verse, we see the distinction between βασιλευέτω in ver. 12 and κυριεύσει here. In ver. 12 we are exhorted not to let sin *reign*; we are to own no allegiance to it as a *king* whose rule we must obey. But it still will try to usurp lordship over us—in vain, however, if we resist the usurpation: οὐ κυριεύσει ὑμῶν. The sense thus given to the verse is what its own language and the previous context suggest. But ver. 15, which follows, suggests a different meaning. "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?" Such a question could not arise on the statement of the preceding verse, if its meaning were understood to be that grace will enable us to avoid sin; it rather supposes the meaning that grace condones sin. Hence, in ver. 15 at least, a different aspect of the difference between being under law and being under grace seems evidently to come in; namely, this—that the principle of law is to exact complete obedience to its behests; but the principle of grace is to accept faith in lieu of complete obedience. If, then, ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει in ver. 14 is to be understood in agreement with this idea, it must mean, "Sin, though it still infects you, shall not lord it over you so as to bring you into condemnation." Calvin has a good note on the verse. He allows the first of the expositions of it given above to be "una quæ cæteris probabilius sustineri queat." But he thinks that ver. 15, following, requires the other, and he concludes thus: "Vult enim nos consolari apostolus, ne animis fatiscamus in studio bene agendi, propterea quod multas imperfectiones adhuc in nobis sentiamus. Utcunque enim peccati aculeis vexemur, non potest tamen nos subigere, quia Spiritu Dei superiores reddimur: deinde in gratia constituti, sumus liberati a rigida Legis exactione." It may be that the apostle, when he wrote ver. 14, meant what the previous context suggests, but passed on in ver. 15 to the other idea in view of the way in which his words might be understood. In what follows next (vers. 15—23) is introduced the second illustration (see former note), drawn from the human relations between masters and slaves. It comes in by way of meeting the supposed abuse of the statement of ver. 14; but it serves as a further proof of the general position that is being upheld. The word κυριεύσει in ver. 14 suggests this particular illustration. We being under grace, it had been said, sin will not be our master, whence the inference was supposed to be drawn that we may sin with impunity, and without thereby subjecting ourselves to the mastery of sin. Nay, it is replied, but it *will* be our master, if in practice we consent to be its servants.

Vers. 15, 16.—**What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?** (Does being under grace mean that we may allow ourselves in sin without being under sin's thraldom?) **God forbid. Know**

ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey (literally, *unto obedience*), his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? This is not a truism, as it would seem to be if it only meant, "whose servants ye become, his servants ye are." "Ye yield yourselves" (*παριστάνετε*, cf. ver. 13) denotes acts of yielding. "Ye are" (*ἔστε*) denotes condition. The meaning is that by our conduct we show which master we are under; and we cannot serve two (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xvi. 13; cf. John viii. 34, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" and 1 John iii. 7, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous"). The two incompatible services are here said to be of *sin* and of *obedience*, with their respective tendencies or results, *death* and *righteousness*. A more exact antithesis to the first clause would have been "of righteousness unto life;" life being the proper antithesis of death, and righteousness being afterwards said, in vers. 18 and 19, to be what we ought to be in bondage to. But though the sentence seems thus defective in form, its meaning is plain. *Ὑπακοῆς* means here specifically obedience to God, not obedience to any master as in ver. 16; and though in English "servants of obedience," as though *obedience* were a master, is an awkward phrase, yet we might properly say, "servants of duty," in opposition to "servants of sin;" and this is what is meant. It may be that the apostle purposely avoided here speaking of believers being *slaves* of righteousness in the sense in which they had been slaves of sin, because subjection to righteousness is not properly slavery, but willing obedience. He uses the expression, indeed, afterwards (ver. 18), but adds at once, *ἀνθρώπινον λέγω*, etc. (see note on this last expression). Death, "unto" which the service of sin is here said to be, cannot be mere natural death, to which all are subject. Meyer (with Chrysostom, Theophylact, and other ancients) takes it to mean *eternal* death, as the *final* result of bondage to sin; *δικαιοσύνη*, antithetically correlative, being regarded as applying to the time of final perfection of the faithful in the world to come—"the righteousness which is awarded to them in the *judgment*." Seeing, however, that the word *δικαιοσύνη* is used throughout the Epistle to denote what is attainable in this present life, and that *θάνατος* is often used to express a state of spiritual death, which men may be in at any time (see additional note on ver. 12; and cf. ch. vii. 9, 10, 13, 24; viii. 6, 13; also John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14), it is at least a question whether the final doom of the last judgment is here at all exclusively in the apostle's view.

Vers. 17, 18.—**But thanks be to God, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine whereunto ye were delivered.** (Not, as in the Authorized Version, *which was delivered you*). **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.** There is no contradiction between what is here said and the fear previously implied lest the persons addressed might still serve sin. He refers them back to the time of their baptism, when he conceives them both to have understood their obligation (cf. ver. 3), and also to have been heartily sincere. The fear was lest they might have relaxed since, perhaps through infection with antinomian teaching. By the "form of doctrine" or "of instruction" (*τύπον διδαχῆς*) is not at all likely to be meant (as some have supposed) any distinctive *type* of Christian teaching, such as the *Pauline* (so Meyer). Usually elsewhere, where St. Paul uses the word *τύπος*, it is of persons being examples or patterns to others (1 Cor. x. 6; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Titus ii. 7). Somewhat similarly, in ch. v. 14, Adam is *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*; and in 1 Cor. x. 6 the things which happened to the Israelites in the wilderness were *τύποι* to us. These are all the instances of the use of the word in St. Paul's Epistles. Here, therefore, it may be best to understand it (so as to retain the idea of *pattern*) as the general Christian code into which converts had been indoctrinated, regarded as a *norma agendi*. "Norma illa et regula, ad quam se conformat servus, tantum ei per doctrinam ostenditur; urgeri eum non opus est" (Bengel on *διδαχῆς*).

Ver. 19.—**I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh.** Here *ἀνθρώπινον λέγω* ("I speak humanly") may be taken as referring to the expression immediately preceding, viz. *ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ*. St. Paul may mean, "In saying you were made *slaves* to righteousness, I am using human language not properly applicable to your spiritual relations. For you are not really in bondage now; you have been emancipated from your former bondage to sin, and are now called upon to render a free willing allegiance to righteousness; being, in fact, sons, not slaves." This view of the true position of the Christian being one of freedom recurs so often and so forcibly with St. Paul that it is peculiarly likely to be the thought before him here; the very word *ἐδουλώθητε* would be likely to suggest it (cf. ch. viii. 15, *seq.*; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. iv. 4—7; v. 1, 13). If (he would say) you fully realized your position as *sons* of God, you would feel it impossible even to think of sinning willingly; but, in accommodation to your human weakness, I put the case

as if you had only been transferred from one bondage to another, so as to show that, even so, you are under an *obligation* not to sin. According to this view of the meaning of the passage, "the infirmity of your flesh" has reference to dulness of spiritual perception, σάρξ being opposed in a general sense to πνεῦμα. Had they been πνευματικοί, they would have discerned τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ without need of any such human view of the matter being put before them (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 14). Some, however, taking ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς to denote *moral* weakness, which renders the attainment of holiness difficult for man (cf. Mark xiv. 38), understand ἀνθρώπινον λέγω as meaning, "I require of you no more than is possible for your frail humanity; for I call on you only to render to righteousness the same allegiance you once rendered to sin." This interpretation gives a totally different meaning to the clause. It has the support of Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Calvin, Estius, Wetstein, and others; but it does not appear so natural or probable as the other, which is accepted by most modern commentators. **For as ye yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto sanctification** (rather than *holiness*, as in the Authorized Version; the word is ἁγιασμός, always so translated elsewhere). This is a setting forth of what must follow in practice from the view that has been taken of the change in the Christian's position resembling the transference of bond-servants from one master to another. They must devote their *members* (see above on ver. 13) to the service of the new master in the same way as they had done to that of the old one; the aims or results of the two services being also intimated. The old service was in giving themselves up to *uncleanness* (with reference to sins of sensuality), and generally to ἀνομίᾳ, *i.e. lawlessness*, or disregard of duty; and its result is expressed by a repetition of the latter word. For sin leads to nothing positive; lawless conduct only results in a habit or state of lawlessness; whereas the service of righteousness in itself leads to sanctification—to the abiding result of participation in the holiness of God. "Qui justitiæ serviunt, proficiunt; ἄνομοι, *iniqui*, sunt *iniqui*, nil amplius" (Bengel).

Vers. 20—23.—**For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness** (more literally, *to righteousness*; i.e. ye were not in any bondage to righteousness). **What fruit had ye then** (*i.e.* when you were formerly slaves of sin) **in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and made servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification; and the end life eternal. For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord.** The logical connection with the previous context of the above series of verses, beginning with ver. 20, as well as the sequence of thought running through them (intimated by the particles γὰρ, οὖν, and δὲ), is not at once obvious. It seems to be as follows: the γὰρ in ver. 20 introduces a reason for the exhortation of ver. 19, παραστήσατε, etc. But ver. 20 is not in itself the reason, being only an introduction to the statement of it in the verses that follow. The drift of the whole passage seems to be this: Yield ye your members to the sole service of righteousness; *for* (ver. 20) ye were once in the sole service of sin, owning no allegiance to righteousness at all; *and* (ver. 21) what fruit had ye from that service? None at all; *for* ye know that the only end of the things ye did then, and of which ye are now ashamed, is death. *But* (ver. 22) your new service *has* its fruit: it leads to your sanctification now, and in the end eternal life. Authorities, however, both ancient and modern, are divided as to the punctuation, and consequent construction, of ver. 21. In the Vulgate and the Authorized Version (as in the interpretation given above) the stop of interrogation is placed after "ashamed;" the answer, *none*, being understood, and "*for* the end," etc., being the reason why there is no fruit. The other way is to take the question as ending at "had ye then," and "those things whereof," etc., as the answer to it, and "for the end," etc., as the reason why they are ashamed. Thus: "What fruit had ye then (when you were free from righteousness)? The works (or pleasures) of which you are now ashamed were the only fruit; you are ashamed of them now; *for* their end is death." The latter interpretation is defended by Alford on the ground that it is more consistent "with the New Testament meaning of καρπός, which is 'actions,' the 'fruit of the man' considered as the tree, not 'wages' or 'reward,' the 'fruit of his actions.'" This is true. But, on the other hand, it may be argued that such use of the word καρπός by St. Paul is always in a good sense; he usually regards *sin* as having no fruits at all; to the *fruit* of the Spirit is opposed, not any fruit of a different character, but the *works* (ἔργα) of the flesh (Gal. v. 19, 22); and in Eph. v. 11 (again in opposition to the *fruit of the Spirit*) he speaks of the *unfruitful* works (ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάρποις) of darkness. Thus the idea of ver. 21, understood as in the Authorized Version, seems closely to correspond with that of the

passage last cited. "The things of which ye are now ashamed," in ver. 21, are "the works of darkness" of Eph. v. 11; and in both places they are declared to have no fruit. Sin is a barren tree, and only ends in death. Cf. what was said above with respect to εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν and εἰς ἁγιασμόν in ver. 19. It is true, however, that the expression in the next chapter, καρποφορῆσαι τῷ θανάτῳ (ch. vii. 5), in opposition to καρποφορήσωμεν τῷ Θεῷ, in some degree weakens the force of the above argument. We observe, lastly, on ver. 23, that to the "wages" of sin (ὀψώνια, used usually to denote a soldier's pay) is opposed "free gift" (χάρισμα); for sin earns death as its due reward; but eternal life is not earned by us, but granted us by the grace of God. As to the phrase, δουλωθέντες τῷ Θεῷ, in ver. 22, it can be used without the need of any such apology as seems to be implied in ver. 19 (according to the meaning of the verse that has been preferred) for speaking of our becoming *slaves* to righteousness. For we do belong to God as his δοῦλοι, and to Christ, having been "bought with a price" (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 23); and St. Paul at the beginning of his Epistles often calls himself δοῦλος Χριστοῦ (cf. also Luke xvii. 10). But it does not follow that our service should be the service of slaves; it may be a free, willing, enthusiastic obedience notwithstanding; we obey, not because we are under bondage to obey, but because love inspires us (cf. Gal. iv. 6, etc., "Because ye are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no longer a servant, but a son").

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—11.—*The meaning of Christ's resurrection.* The prominent position occupied by the resurrection of our Lord in the apostolic writings and preaching need occasion no surprise; an event in itself so wonderful, and in its consequences so momentous, could not but be constantly in the minds and upon the lips of those to whom it was the supreme revelation of God. It may be well to gather up in a few sentences the import and significance of this central fact of Christianity.

I. AS A FACT, THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HAS A GENERAL AND WORLD-WIDE INTEREST. The historian of humanity, the philosopher reflecting upon the most important factors in human life, is constrained to acknowledge the central and universal interest of our Lord's rising from the dead. 1. It was a fulfilment of predictions, and a realization of hopes sometimes dim and sometimes bright. 2. It was the starting-point of the Christian religion. The existence of the Church of Christ is only to be explained by remembering how firmly the first promulgators of the new faith held the belief that their Lord had risen from the dead. 3. It was, in the view of the Christian community, the pledge of the general resurrection of all men to another life; it gave definiteness and power to the belief in personal immortality.

II. AS A DOCTRINE, THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HAS A SPECIAL CHRISTIAN INTEREST. 1. It is the chief external evidence of the Messiahship and Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. It was in fulfilment of his own express declarations that, after enduring a death of violence, he rose victorious from the grave. His resurrection is in harmony with his claim to a nature and character altogether unique. 2. It is the seal of the efficacy of his mediatorial sufferings. However the humiliation and sacrifice of the Redeemer were related to the forgiveness and justification of men, it is certain that Christ's rising from the dead was the completion of his redemptive undertaking on man's behalf.

III. AS A POWER, THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HAS A PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL INTEREST. This is the aspect of this great fact which is insisted upon most strenuously in this passage, and its practical importance to every individual Christian is manifest. The true believer in Christ shares in his Lord's resurrection. 1. Our sins were crucified in Christ's death upon the cross, and in his resurrection we were delivered from their power. 2. Our past sinful life became dead to us as Christ died; and our newness of life began in his rising from the tomb. We have the sign of this, the apostle teaches us, in baptism, with its teaching regarding renewal and consecration. 3. By our faith in the resurrection of our Saviour, we are raised above trial, doubt, temptation, darkness, and fear. The cross tells us that it may consist with the wisdom and the goodness of God that for a season we should endure trouble, disappointment, and seeming failure. But the empty tomb assures us that for every good man and for

every good work there is a resurrection appointed. Death is for a season; God's people cannot be "holden of it." The corn of wheat dies, but it dies to live, and to bring forth much fruit. 4. In Christ's resurrection the Christian is begotten to a living hope of an immortal inheritance. His people are appointed to share his triumph and his glory.

Ver. 4.—"*Newness of life:*" *a New Year's sermon.* Things new and old make up the sum of human experiences. All that is new becomes old, and the old disappears to come before us again in new combinations, in new shapes. The mind of man seems to have a natural leaning in both directions; we like the old because it is old, and the new because it is new. This is one of the contradictions inseparable from human nature. There is some truth in the common saying that the young prefer novelty and the aged cling to "use and wont." It is easy to see how, to the youthful, change should be welcome, for their knowledge is yet very limited, and new experiences are the appointed means of furnishing and equipping the mind. It is less easy to explain the conservatism of age and its dread of innovation, for experience must have taught the old how imperfect is everything that concerns man's culture and condition; this trait of character may be largely owing to the increasing feebleness which indisposes to the unwonted exertion of the faculties, or to accommodation to new circumstances. True religion takes advantage of both these tendencies of human nature. It appeals to the natural attachment we feel to what is ancient and sanctioned by prolonged existence; and it appeals also to the yearning for progress and for fresh experiences, which we all either have felt in the past or feel to-day. But observe in what way revelation makes use of these natural tendencies, and remark the harmony there is between the moral necessities of man and the Divine communications of Scripture. Broadly speaking, whatever concerns God is commended by its antiquity and unchangeableness; whilst that which refers to man approaches us with the charm and the allurement of novelty. A moment's reflection will show us why this should be so with true religion. Man, in his brief life, with his feeble purposes and his petty achievements, looks away from himself for the eternal and the unchanging. This he knows is not in himself or in his race; and he seeks it in the unseen God. And herein he is right. He does not seek these attributes in vain. For, knowing God, he knows that in him there is absolute being, unaffected by the changes to which all creation is subject. Man can find his true stability and his true peace only when he rests in the care and love of "the Father of lights, who is without variableness and shadow of turning." But, on the other hand, man, when he knows himself, is aware that his past has been a past unsatisfactory to himself, and blamable by his Creator and Judge. His changes have often been from evil to evil; and he looks forward, rather than behind him, for relief. His only hope is in his future. The old he can regard only with pain, with regret, with distress. If there is improvement, it must be in what is new—in a new condition, new impulses, new principles of the soul, in new associations and new help. Accordingly, Christianity comes to man with gifts of heavenly newness in her hand. Christianity establishes with man a "new covenant," and gives to him a "new commandment;" makes of him a "new creation," transforms him into a "new man." It opens up to him a "new way" unto the Father by the Mediator of a "new testament," gives him a "new name," and teaches him a "new song," and inspires him with the hope of a "new heaven and a new earth." In short, it enables him to serve in "newness of spirit," and to walk in "newness of life." "Life" is, in the New Testament, used as equivalent to the history of the spiritual nature. The Lord Jesus professed to be "the Life," "the Life of men;" he came that "we might have life, and that more abundantly," and the acceptance of him as the Divine Saviour is designated the "passing from death unto life." This being understood, it will not be supposed that by "newness of life" the Apostle Paul refers to the life of the body, or to the outward circumstances in which physical life may be passed. And yet the context shows that he is not treating of the future and blessed life in the nearer presence of God. Accordingly, we understand by "newness of life" that which contrasts with the spiritual deadness which hung as a cloud of darkness over heathen humanity, and which contrasts also with the earlier and imperfect developments of spiritual vitality. It is a newness of life which is peculiar to the Christian dispensa-

tion, but is yet found wherever Christ is known, trusted, and loved. We greet the new year with gladness and with hope, because it seems to offer us the opportunity to begin life anew. We are thankful for the relief of leaving the past behind, and we cherish the hope that each new year will be one of greater spiritual progress and happiness than the years that are past. Christians wish to forget the things that are behind, and to reach forth to those things that are before. Some who have been undecided as to their course have resolved with the new year to make a fresh beginning in life, and henceforth to live by the faith of the Son of God, and to his service and glory. The subject ought, therefore, to be appropriate and welcome to such as are hopefully and prayerfully aspiring unto "newness of life."

I. The newness of the Christian life will appear from the consideration that it is A LIFE IN CHRIST. This very language must be at first unintelligible to a person unacquainted with the gospel. That life should be in a person seems monstrous and meaningless. Yet Christ himself has said, "Abide *in me*, and I in you;" and his Apostle Paul has taught us that "if any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation." Christ is the Basis upon which the Christian builds, the Foundation of the edifice of his new and higher life. Christ is the Vine-stem into which the Christian is grafted, and from which he draws all his vitality, his vigour, and his fruitfulness. Christ is the Head, in dependence upon whom the Christian is a living, active, and obedient member. The signs and evidences of this life are these: 1. The renewed man learns who Christ is, and what Christ has done and suffered for him. 2. The renewed man admits the claim Christ has upon his gratitude, his faith, his love; and trusts in him. 3. The renewed man consciously accepts life as the gift of God in Christ. 4. The renewed man, by maintaining fellowship with Christ, advances in the new and higher life.

II. The newness of the Christian life is manifest from THE AGENCY BY WHICH IT IS EFFECTED. 1. A *spiritual* agency. 2. A *Divine* agency. 3. A *freely acting and gracious* agency. 4. A *transforming* agency. 5. A *ceaseless and progressive* agency.

III. The newness of the Christian life is displayed in THE MOTIVES AND PRINCIPLES BY WHICH IT IS GOVERNED. 1. The love of Christ revealed and responded to is the motive power of this life. 2. The law of Christ becomes a law of friendship. 3. The approval of Christ is an animating and cheering power in the heart. 4. Thus self and the world, the common motives to action, fall into their proper place, or are banished from the Christian's soul.

IV. NEW ASSOCIATIONS are a feature of the Christian's new life.

V. The Christian life tends and points to A FURTHER AND HIGHER REGENERATION IN THE FUTURE.

APPLICATION. Newness of life depends comparatively little upon outward circumstances. There is nothing in the colour of a man's skin, the climate of a man's birthplace, the nature of a man's occupation, his condition whether of poverty or wealth, his education whether scanty or liberal, his age or his station,—there is nothing in all these things which can interfere with or hinder him from becoming a new man in Christ. Does it seem to any one that for him this is an impossibility, because of the unfavourable circumstances in which he finds himself? Disabuse yourself of this illusion, for illusion it is. It may not be within your power to become a learned man, or an eloquent man, a rich man, or a powerful man; but the circumstances which may prevent you from becoming learned or wealthy, mighty or persuasive, have no force to hinder you from becoming "a *new* man." The obstacles to this renewal are to be sought within, not without; they are to be found in the will, which is often resolved to resist the authority, to reject the truth, and to ignore the love of God. If you take a savage from his native woods, clothe him in civilized attire, place him in a lordly palace, surround him with books and with music, with paintings and with flowers, does he cease to be a savage? Not until the mind is changed. The man himself may remain the same, whilst all his surroundings are altered. These external changes do not make of him a new man, and his life has not in virtue of them become a new life. So is it with man in relation to the kingdom of Christ. Deprive a human being of the liberty which he has abused, remove him from his evil companionships, shut out from him the temptations to which he has been wont to yield, introduce him into

Christian society, constrain him to frequent the means of religious instruction; yet his life has not thereby become a new life. The old nature is still there. The Ethiopian has not changed his skin, nor the leopard his spots. The man's true life lies in the bent of his thoughts, the affections of his heart, the bias of his will; and whilst all these are toward evil, the old nature is supreme, and the new life is not yet. Love is the one only potentate at whose master-bidding old things will pass away. Before Love's wizard wand alone, the ancient shadows will depart from the gloomy cave of the unregenerated soul, and that cave will become a temple peopled with the forms of the holy, and echoing with the songs of heaven. Divine love can make the wilderness a paradise, can change each thorn into a flower, and all the thistles into fruits. When Love smites the rock, the spring of health and of refreshing will gush forth. He who hears Love's voice shall forget the weakness and the weariness of the pilgrimage; and his footstep, erst so heavy and so dull, shall bound elastic onwards.

Ver. 14.—*The enfranchisement by grace.* The Law, by exhibiting the heinousness of sin and its awful consequences, was the occasion of the introduction of the gospel and of the victories of God's grace. If, then, where sin abounds, grace much more abounds, some sophistical reasoner may propose to continue in sin. It is against this wretched argument that the apostle appeals in the language of the text. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace." The very fact which was adduced by some as an excuse for sin is shown to be the chief reason for freedom from sin.

I. SIN HAS HAD, AND HAS, MASTERY OVER MEN. Sinners are under the rule and bondage of a tyrannical and wicked lord. Turning away in a rebellious spirit from their rightful King and Ruler, they have submitted themselves to the usurper's sway. Sin takes possession of their affections, their judgment, and their will.

II. UNDER THE LAW, MEN WERE COMMONLY AND HABITUALLY UNDER THE MASTERY OF SIN. By the Law, the apostle means chiefly the Jewish Law; yet not this exclusively; for it appears that the unwritten law generally is intended in the argument of the Epistle. They were "under the Law" who lived under legal ordinances and sanctions, and who, in theory at all events, acknowledged its claim. Sin to them was transgression, and the motive for avoiding transgression was the fear of penalty to be inflicted by the Lawgiver and Judge. Now, it is urged that those under the Law were in very many cases the slaves of sin; for the Law entered that the offence might abound. History, sacred and profane, bears out these assertions. The standard of morality by which men judged themselves was low, and even to this they did not generally approach, much less attain. This was so with the Jews, and more conspicuously with the Gentiles.

III. IT IS THE EFFECT OF THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE TO SET MEN FREE FROM THE MASTERY OF SIN. 1. What is it to be "under grace"? It is voluntarily and consciously to receive the free favour of God bestowed through Jesus Christ upon all who believe. It is to participate in the new and distinctively Christian righteousness. It is in the exercise of faith to be brought into harmony with God's government and purposes. It is to come under the influence of a new, Divine, and powerful motive, furnished by the infinite love and clemency of God. 2. How does being "under grace" set and keep a man free from sin? The apostle explains the process by employing three figures. According to the first, by baptism, the initiative act of faith and consecration, the Christian is joined to his Saviour in his death upon the cross, and, thus being united to an almighty Saviour, must consequently rise in the likeness of his resurrection to a new and holy life. According to the second, the Christian, forsaking the service of sin, yields himself by faith to the service of Christ, and is therefore bound to fulfil the obligations which he has undertaken. The third figure represents his state under the Law as abolished by faith in Christ, just as a woman is released from her husband by his death; fidelity to Christ's service and law are as binding upon the Christian as is fidelity to her second husband on the part of the newly married woman. Duty and love combine to render the obligation to holiness stringent and effective.

IV. THE POWER OF GRACE EXCEEDS THE POWER OF THE LAW. In explaining how this is we may observe: 1. The principles appealed to are higher; love and gratitude

are higher than fear and interest. 2. The aid afforded is greater; it is the aid of the Holy Spirit of God. 3. The example set before the Christian is more stimulating and inspiring. 4. The prospects presented are more alluring and glorious.

Ver. 17.—*The mould of Christian doctrine.* The Christian, in remembering what he was, deepens his impression of Divine grace, to which he owes it that the change has been effected in which he now rejoices. St. Paul took a peculiar satisfaction in reviewing his own experience, and acknowledging his indebtedness to that Divine grace which had fashioned his character anew. And if the Christian will consider the state in which he would have been apart from the supernatural doctrine and influences of Christianity, he will see reason for gratitude in the provision made for the transformation and renewal of his character. In this verse the change is attributed, instrumentally, to the power of Christian doctrine, which is, as it were, a pattern by which he is reconstructed, or a mould into which the metal of his nature has been cast, in order to its taking a new and divinely ordered shape and form.

I. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE IS AS A MOULD PREPARED IN ORDER TO GIVE A NEW SHAPE AND FORM TO THE HUMAN CHARACTER. When iron is "cast," it is run, in a liquid state, into a shape or mould of earth or sand of the desired form; and thus the artificer produces a bolt or a cannon. Thus, in the intellectual and spiritual realm, ideas govern men; and the character and life are largely owing to the thoughts which are familiar and congenial. And Christian doctrine is not an end, but a means; the righteousness and love of God, revealed in Christ, having power to reconstruct the character and to renew the life. The doctrine is alive with the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

II. THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE IS CAST INTO THIS SPIRITUAL MOULD, THAT HE MAY TAKE ITS NEW SHAPE AND FORM. The old elements of human nature, old errors and old sins, are dissolved and melted down when brought into contact with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Old things pass away, in order that all things may become new. We may fancy that the doctrine is delivered unto us, to do what we like with it; but the reverse is the case. We are delivered unto it, in order that it may do its work upon us. So it is with the Christian education of the young, and with the evangelization of the heathen. The mould of Christian doctrine imparts to him who is brought into living contact with it a new *motive* to holiness, in the redeeming and sacrificial love of the Saviour; a new *rule* of holiness, in his law and life; and new *help* towards holiness, in the provision of the Spirit's help and grace. A moral transfiguration is effected, as the natural result of intelligent acceptance and voluntary allegiance. For if faith is the soul of obedience, obedience is the body of faith. There is no change so wonderful and so admirable as that which is wrought in human character by the moulding power of Christian doctrine.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The practical power of the Resurrection.* Here the apostle enlarges still more fully upon the truth that the Christian's faith leads not merely to the pardon of sin, but also to deliverance from its power. Because grace has abounded over sin, and our unrighteousness has commended the righteousness of God, it does not therefore follow that we are to continue in sin. If we have a real union with Christ, we have been baptized into his death. We are buried with him by baptism into death; "that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (ver. 4).

I. THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION. That the resurrection of Christ is surrounded with mystery, no one will deny. But the evidence by which the great central fact itself is established is so strong, so clear, so decisive, that even scepticism has sometimes to admit itself convinced. The effect of the most able and adverse criticism has only been to establish more and more certainly the fact of the Resurrection, and thus to confirm more strongly the Christian's faith. It is remarkable that two of the greatest rationalists of the present century, who doubted almost every fact of the New Testament history, admitted that the Resurrection was a fact which they could not

doubt. Ewald, who deals destructively with most of the gospel incidents, "regarding some as mythical, some as admitting of a rationalistic interpretation, and some as combining the elements of both," is unable to destroy or explain away the Resurrection. "Rejecting all attempts to explain it, he accepts the great fact of the Resurrection on the evidence of history, and declares that nothing can be more historical." The testimony of De Wette is even more remarkable. He was more sceptical than Ewald; so much so that he was called "The Universal Doubter." Nevertheless, such is the force of the evidence, that this great rationalistic critic, in his last work, published in 1848, said that the fact of the Resurrection, although a darkness which cannot be dissipated rests on the way and manner of it, cannot itself be called in question any more than the historical certainty of the assassination of Julius Cæsar. 1. *The fact of the Resurrection is attested by the four evangelists.* The four Gospels were written by men widely separated both in time and place. Their very variations are a proof of their substantial truth. They give varying accounts of the Resurrection, as would naturally be expected from men whom so great an event impressed in different ways, but they all agree in testifying that the event occurred. 2. *The narrative of the Resurrection was accepted by the early Christians who lived at the time when the event took place.* It is spoken of constantly in the Epistles to the various Churches as an event with which they were all familiar, and about which there was not the slightest doubt. When Peter is proposing the appointment of a successor to Judas, he speaks of the Resurrection as one of the great subjects of apostolic preaching. Indeed, it would appear that he regarded the preaching of the Resurrection as the great subject for which the apostle should be chosen. His words were, "Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." 3. *The conversion of St. Paul, and his subsequent advocacy of the doctrine of the Resurrection, are perhaps the strongest proofs of its truth.* Paul was a persecutor and a bigoted Pharisee. He suddenly became a member of the sect that was so hated and despised. The explanation that he himself gave of this change was that Jesus Christ had appeared unto him. It was not likely that Paul, a clear-headed man, accustomed to weigh evidence, would be deceived as to Christ's appearance. He could not be lightly led to take a step of such immense importance to his whole life. Something more than a mere dream or hallucination must be found to account for his whole subsequent career. He was not likely to undertake those missionary journeys through Asia Minor, through Macedonia, and through Greece, and to persevere in them, in the face of much opposition, ridicule, persecution, and many hardships and dangers, for the sake of a mere fancy. He was not a mere visionary or fanatic. His Epistles show him to have been a man of robust mind, great reasoning power, and soberness of judgment. And yet, in every instance in which a public speech of his is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; in his address at Antioch in Pisidia, in his address at Athens, in his address to the multitude when he was taken prisoner at Jerusalem; whether he is in the presence of the high priest, of Felix, or of Festus and Agrippa, he most distinctly proclaims the fact of the resurrection of Christ. 4. As the life of the Apostle Paul was changed, so *the lives of all the apostles were changed from the moment that the risen Christ appeared to them.* Before that they were timid and frightened. The boldest of them became so cowardly as to deny that he knew Christ at all. They had all forsaken him and fled when the time of crucifixion drew near. After the crucifixion they became disheartened and depressed. We can easily see what would have become of Christianity had there been no resurrection, as we study the conduct and words of the disciples when they knew that their Master was so soon to be taken from them, and when they thought he was still in the grave. But the Resurrection altered everything. The change that occurred can only be explained by the actual reappearance of Christ to them. The timid became brave again. They cannot but speak the things which they have seen and heard. They endure persecution and suffering and martyrdom now, for the grave is no longer dark, and the crown of life is beyond the struggle and the pain.

II. THE DOCTRINES WHICH IT TEACHES. 1. *That there shall be a general resurrection of the dead.* "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). 2. *That*

*those who believe on the Lord Jesus shall live with him for ever.* "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John xi. 25). And here the apostle says, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (ver. 8). Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He has satisfied the yearning of the human heart for a life beyond the present—a yearning so strong that one of the greatest thinkers of our own time, though the logical conclusion of his system is universal death, nevertheless tries to avoid or overcome this dreary prospect by the suggestion that out of this death another life may spring. Our poet-laureate has expressed that yearning thus. Speaking of love, he says—

"He seeks at last
Upon the last and sharpest height
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light!'"

Yes, it is when the grave is near, it is when our loved ones are suddenly taken from us by death, that we learn what a precious truth the resurrection of Jesus is to rest on.

III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH IT CONVEYS. "That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (ver. 4); "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (ver. 12). Elsewhere the apostle expresses the same truth. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (Col. iii. 1). This is the practical power of the fact and doctrine of the Resurrection. If we have in our hearts the hope of being with Christ, what a transforming influence that hope should exercise upon our lives! We should "yield ourselves unto God, *as those that are alive from the dead*, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (ver. 13). Thus the risen life of Christ enters into and becomes part of the present life of his people. Thus their life enters into and becomes part of his. "Our life is hid with Christ in God."—C. H. I.

Vers. 15—23.—*The two services and their rewards.* In the closing part of the fifth chapter, and throughout this chapter, the apostle is contrasting the operation of two great principles. The one is the principle of sin; the other is the principle of righteousness. He compares them to two kings reigning in the world, controlling men's lives, and influencing men in certain directions and to certain actions. Sin reigns unto death. That has been its operation all through human history. But a new power has entered to dispute its influence. That power is the free grace of God, exhibited in Christ, God's Son. That power operates in righteousness. It provides a righteousness *for* men by the blood of Christ. It produces a righteousness *in* men. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." And now in these immediate verses St. Paul is making an appeal to his readers. He has set before them the two great principles. He has contrasted them in their operation and their results. *Now he makes the matter personal.* He enforces his appeal by the question of the sixteenth verse, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" And then he says, "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (ver. 19).

I. EVERY LIFE IS A SERVICE OF SOME SORT. 1. *Some are servants of the love of money.* Of money and how to make it they are always thinking; for the sake of it they will go through many risks and toils and hardships. Their first question about everything is, "Will it pay?" and all their money-grasping does not pay them in the end. They may have much goods laid up for many years; they may have good securities for their investments; but they have made no provision for their immortal souls; they have laid up no treasure that will be of use to them beyond the grave. That is a poor service for a being who must soon go into the presence of the eternal

God. 2. *Some are servants of the love of dress.* Even in our Lord's time, he found it necessary to warn his hearers against thinking too much about their dress. Even Christian people, who profess to be the servants of Christ, are too frequently the servants of fashion. There is sometimes more attention given to the dress of our neighbours or of ourselves in the house of God than there is to the voice of our Creator and our Saviour, or than there is to the question whether we have the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, or the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. It is said that St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who rebuked princes, and fired all Europe with a new crusade, all the while living himself in utter poverty, used to ask himself every day the stern question, "Bernarde, ad quid venisti?"—"*Bernard, wherefore art thou here?*" So it would be well if we would ask ourselves more frequently what is the purpose of our lives. 3. *Others, again, are the servants of ambition.* To be higher than their fellow-men, to be fawned upon and flattered, to receive the homage of the poor and the favour of the rich, to be talked about in the gossip of society,—that is the object for which many persons live. Yet, when attained, it brings no lasting peace or contentment to the mind. The praise of men, moreover, is a very fickle and uncertain thing. The hero of to-day will be forgotten to-morrow. Earthly fame has ever been—

"Like a snow-flake on the river,
A moment seen, then lost for ever."

Such are some of the services to which men devote their thoughts, their time, their energies. How vain and profitless are they all! When the hour of death draws nigh, let any one who has spent his life in the service of any of these masters ask them to help him in the death-struggle, to give him hope for the future: will they be able to give him any assistance? They cannot even keep his poor mortal body from the dust; much less can they give life to the soul. They have already helped to produce death in the soul. They have dragged him downwards to the earth. And so it is that, when the soul must go from this world into the unseen, it is earthly still. There is no fitness for heaven in it at all. The pleasures and possessions of the world, innocent in themselves, become positively harmful to many. They become sinful to them, because they keep the soul away from God.

II. THE SERVICE OF SIN AND ITS RESULTS. Even what we call the more innocent service of the world results in death at last. The death of the body is accompanied by the death of the soul. Much more is this true of all kinds of positive sin. The apostle seeks to point out here the result of being the servant of sin. "His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether *of sin unto death*, or of obedience unto righteousness" (ver. 16); "The end of those things is death" (ver. 21); "The wages of sin is death" (ver. 23). Even in this life there is a clear connection between sin and death. The service of sin is a fatal service. Take, for instance, those who are the servants of the craving for intoxicating drink. A special committee of the British Medical Association brought in a report at the meeting of 1887 on the relation of alcohol to disease, which stated that, after careful and prolonged examination of the subject from a scientific point of view, they came to the conclusion that every man who indulged in alcohol beyond the most moderate amounts shortened his life by at least ten years. The President of the United States, General Harrison, has testified that of a class of sixteen young men who graduated with him, almost all had gone to early graves through intemperate habits. Even in this world the sin of intemperance leads to death. But it brings a more lasting and more terrible death than this. The besotted mind, the darkened intellect, is but a beginning of blackness of darkness in the future. "No drunkard shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." When drink becomes the master, how terrible are the results for time and for eternity! In like manner it is true of all other sinful services, that they lead to death. "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption;" "The wages of sin is death."

III. THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (ver. 18); "But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (ver. 22). This is the only service that leads to everlasting life. *It is the only service which is not slavery. It is the only service which men never regret entering into.* It is the only service which can be called an unmixed good, the only service that brings perfect

peace to heart and mind and conscience. It is an easy service, for it is a service of love. Instead of growing weaker by our efforts in the service of Christ, as we do by our efforts to serve sin, we grow stronger; for the true Christian is a better man, a stronger man spiritually, every day he lives. *It is the only service that has a hope beyond the grave.* It was because Christ saw us perishing in the service of sin, guilty, lost, and helpless, that he came to save us. He calls us now to believe on him, to follow him, and he promises to all who do so the gift of everlasting life. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"How long to streams of false delight
Will ye in crowds repair?
How long your strength and substance waste
On trifles light as air?"

Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the beautiful arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we would only realize these three truths, we should not let the world or its pleasures keep us from Christ, we should not let trifles trouble us, we should not hesitate long about making our choice. "*Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.*"—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—11.—*Buried and risen with Christ.* Attaching to almost all privileges and blessings there are dangerous possibilities of abuse. So with the blessed doctrine of justification by faith, which has been so largely dwelt on hitherto. So especially with that aspect of it just referred to (ch. v. 20). How readily the question might spring to the lip, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" But how readily, from every Christian heart, would spring the response, "God forbid! How shall we?" This answer amplified in the following verses: The relation of the believer, through the death and resurrection of Christ, to sin and holiness.

I. THE DEATH. 1. *The relation of the death of Christ to sin.* Two elements entering into the atoning work of Christ, each of which, in its bearings, must be distinguished from the other—the Divine, and the human. (1) As to *guilt.* The guilt of the race an accomplished fact; the stain ineffaceable; the white purity of the infinite Law blotted. What are the bearings of Christ's atonement, divinely and humanly, on this guilt of the past? (*a*) Divinely: condemnation for ever; (*b*) humanly: expiation for ever. (2) As to *sin.* An existent, a persistent fact; a possibility always; a strong power of evil. What are the bearings of Christ's atonement on this sin of the present? (*a*) Divinely: stamp of condemnation; the thing which has brought guilt that must be expiated by death, is by that very death a branded thing; (*b*) humanly: renunciation and conflict; the thing which is branded, in the atonement, on the part of God, is forsworn on the part of man. 2. *Our relation through the death of Christ to sin.* A natural identification of Christ with us, as federal Head of the race; and a spiritual—this latter of voluntary, sympathetic oneness. So a corresponding identification of ourselves with Christ: natural and spiritual. This latter, by faith; the spiritual analogue corresponding with the historical fact, or, in other words, our voluntary spiritual sympathy with Christ's own work. (1) As to *guilt.* (*a*) Acquiescence in the condemnation: every mouth stopped; (*b*) acquiesoence in the expiation: for me! (2) As to *sin.* (*a*) A thing condemned of God: so we regard it henceforth, as bearing a stigma of evil; (*b*) a thing forsworn by us: so we regard it henceforth; perpetual war. Therefore our faith in Christ not merely gives us pardon and peace with God, but commits us to a stern and uncompromising battle with all that is opposed to God. "Yo see your calling, brethren!" Your very baptism is your pledge to wage such warfare.

II. THE LIFE. 1. *The relation of the life of Christ to God.* Two elements entering into the resurrection-life of Christ: raised by God, raised as Man. (1) As to *favour with God.* (*a*) Divinely: the accepted sacrifice; "through the glory of the Father;" (*b*) humanly: from darkness into light; "Ought not Christ to have suffered these

things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26). (2) As to *devotion to God.* (*a*) Divinely: God could not suffer *his Holy One* to see corruption; "having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 33); (*b*) humanly: "he liveth unto God;" for us. 2. *Our relation through the life of Christ to God.* Identification as before—potential for all, actual through faith. (1) As to *favour with God.* (*a*) Acquiescence in the approval: gratitude; (*b*) acquiescence in the joy: for me! (2) As to *devotion to God.* (*a*) A life claimed by God: henceforth we bear these "marks;" (*b*) a life yielded to God: "the likeness of his resurrection." So our faith in Christ has regard, not only negatively to sin, but positively to God. We are his; freemen in Christ; risen ones!

"Reckon ye" this! The potential fact will but aggravate our condemnation and our woe, if it be not actualized through faith. Enter into spiritual sympathy with the work of the Redeemer; be dead to the past, be alive to all the glorious future of an immortality in God.—T. F. L.

Vers. 12—14.—*The two dominions.* A renewed application of the subject just discussed. The reign of sin; the reign of grace.

I. THE REIGN OF SIN. 1. *The self yielded to sin.* Man's higher self—reason, conscience, and will—should dominate over the "soul" and the "flesh," the mere passions and lusts; man's spirit should be king. But the true self has been discrowned, and the lower self—the lusts—has gained the mastery. And in this false mastery of the flesh, sin reigns. Oh, degradation! we are led in chains, and sin lords it over us! 2. *The members yielded to unrighteousness.* Man's lower nature should be the instrument of the higher, for the working of all that is just and good. In Paul's philosophy of human nature, the "body" is synonymous with all the active life; and is not the activity of our whole life to be used subordinately to the dictates of the enlightened will? But the activity of life is yielded to the usurping power of sin, instrumental to unrighteousness.

II. THE REIGN OF GRACE. 1. *The self yielded to God.* Man is not an irresponsible ruler of his own nature; his sovereignty is delegated by God. And only in absolute devotion to God does he realize a true self-conquest. God claims again possession of the spirit which has been torn from him by the power of sin. The claim is one of authority; but the authority is the authority of love. 2. *The members yielded to righteousness.* God requires the homage of the heart; he also requires the service of the life. Only through the heart can the life be rightly swayed. "Not under law."

A resurrection, and a resurrection-power. Yes, because he lives, we may live also! But the appropriation of this power is of man: "Present yourselves." Here is the marvellous gift of human freedom, which may be a freedom unto death; but there is the boundless power of love and life! Therefore choose life, that thou mayest live!—T. F. L.

Vers. 15—23.—*Servants to obey.* A slight but suggestive difference between the question of ver. 15 and that with which the chapter opens. "Shall we continue in sin," the apostle had asked, "that grace may abound?" And he had flung away such a thought by the presentation of the believer's new life as a life pledged to God through Christ. In vers. 12—14 also he had insisted on the consistent fulfilment of the pledge. But now he supposes another and more subtle question—Shall we, not "continue" in sin, but sin, once and again, as we may please, presuming on the easily procured pardon of a gracious God? Alas! how this question insinuates itself into the Christian consciousness! how readily we condone our carelessness by thoughts of the restoring mercy of God! But we are grievously wrong if we think to ourselves that sin and obedience may be played with. We have the dread power to choose our master; but he *is* a master, and our choice in either case commits us to a course, and to a consequence. The train may be turned on to this line or that, but the line must be followed, and the destinations are wide as the poles apart. Let us look at these three thoughts—A choice, a course, a consequence.

I. A CHOICE. The false doctrine of law in the necessarian scheme of morals—so many weights upon the scale. But man's will is not a dead scale, determined by weights; it is a living thing, and unless its peculiar life be taken into account all calculations must be wrong. True, if we know the causes, we can predict the result.

And certain teachers have said—These are the causes: man's own susceptible nature, and the divers influences which play upon it. Therefore, given the temperament and the influences, we can predict the result. Very plausible. True, if these are the only causes, the result may thus be known. But the cause of causes is the will itself. This is the great factor in the problem. And, after all, when the most scientific calculations have been made, this self-determining power in man may defy all your calculations to predict a right result. Let us not attempt to prove this freedom by elaborate arguments; we need but appeal to each one's consciousness. "I know that I am free; I have power of choice; when I have willed, I know that I might have willed otherwise." This must be each one's true confession. Just as surely as we know that we exist, by the same intuition, which is deeper and truer than all reasoning, do we know that we can yield ourselves to any one of all the manifold motives that are playing upon our will. Does not the history of the Fall illustrate this freedom? For what is the essential truth of that history, but that man had it in his power, either to obey God or to gratify himself, and that he chose self-gratification rather than obedience? But the results were not by any means so transient as the choice itself might seem to be. In the highest sense, freedom was gone. There still remained freedom of choice among the various objects of self-gratification, but there was no longer the power to serve God as before. A great gulf was fixed between man and God. And in this consists what is called the total depravity of man: totally separated from God, and without the power to return. And certain, moreover, to drift from bad to worse. But under the redeeming influences with which God visits the heart of man, and more especially in view of the great redeeming fact with which God has visited the world, this total depravity becomes in some sense neutralized, man's enfeebled will receives new power, and it is once more possible for him to place his choice on God. The freedom of true duty is once more within his reach; from the depths he may yet climb back to God. So, then, taking men as they now are, and especially taking them as we find them in contact with the redeeming truths of the gospel of Christ, we see that each has his alternative choice between godliness and ungodliness, truth and falseness, the right and good, and the wrong and bad, or, in the words of St. Paul, between obedience and sin. "Ye yield yourselves:" the supreme fact of every one's life is wrapped up in those words. From childhood upwards good and bad influences contend for the mastery. God and sin ask for our service, and we cannot but "yield ourselves" to the one or the other. We make our choice, whether consciously and with full deliberatenes of purpose, or well-nigh unconsciously and with careless neglect. We choose sin, and thereby set the seal on our own death; or we choose God, and thereby rise to newness of life. But in either case our own choice determines our course, and the course to which we commit ourselves works out its inevitable consequence.

II. A COURSE. Let us now consider the course to which our choice in either case commits us. 1. *In the one case we become servants, or slaves, of sin.* Our Lord's words (John viii. 32—36). Man may refuse to bow to sin; but when he does bow, sin holds him fast. Nay, he may yet rise from his thraldom and be free; but every yielding is the taking on of a new chain, and every continuance in sin is the rivetting of the chain. The slave of sin? Oh, it is no fiction! The man who yields to sin is led captive by a master stronger than himself. So with the inebriate, the man of passion, the miser. Yes; dragged in chains. And yet it is a "free" man, forsooth, who has thus sold himself to serve sin! 2. *In the other case we become servants, or slaves, of obedience.* The same law works, whatever the material of its working. Hence the degrading slavery of the servant of sin is but the dark side of the result of that same law which, in its brighter results, is the safeguard and glory of our righteousness. But is not the result slavery still? Ah! let us ask, what is slavery? Mere service—intent, earnest, unremitting service—is not. Service is slavery when it is forced. Contrast the service of a Crusader, and that of a captive among the Moors. It is slavery also when, even if not forced, it is degrading and low. Contrast slave-trader, and pure, virtuous man enthralled. So Epictetus. The service of sin, then, is slavery because it is degrading and base; whereas, to yield obedience to God, and thenceforth to serve him with unremitting ardour and with the enthusiasm of lofty joy, that is not slavery, that is freedom of the highest kind (so John viii. 36). Yes; this the secret of liberty: the "spirit of a son" (Gal. iv. 6, 7).

III. A CONSEQUENCE. But now let us consider the consequence to which such a course of conduct in either case must lead. 1. "*Sin unto death.*" Yes, towards this inevitable result the service of sin must tend. A fixity of corrupt character. Recovery of freedom possible now; not always. Death—the death of man's best nature,—this the doom which the service of sin ensures. The victims of Circe: so the slaves of sin. But no wizardry can undo that death! 2. "*Obedience unto righteousness.*" A fixity again. This the process of all true moral life. So was it to have been with the first man; so was it with the second ("yet learned he obedience"). So, doubtless, with the angels. And so with us: we are fighting towards the crown which Paul desired (Phil. iii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8), the crown of a consummate righteousness, or, in other words (Rev. ii. 10), "the crown of life." Such the two consequences of the two courses, to one or other of which each man, by his free choice, commits himself. But whereas death is the wages of sin, the eternal life is God's free gift.

And to all of us, in words of hope, the voice from heaven says, "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life!"—T. F. L.

Vers. 3, 4.—*The significance of baptism.* To suppose that the acceptance of the grace of God in Christ renders us careless about the further committal of sin is to misapprehend the nature of redemption. We cannot dissociate the external results of Christ's work from a consideration of its inward effects upon the mind and heart of the man who profits by it. For a practical refutation of the supposition, the apostle points to the acknowledged meaning of the ceremony wherein each believer indicates his close relationship to the Saviour.

I. BAPTISM THE SYMBOL OF AN ALTERED LIFE. What can more forcibly set forth an abandonment of former feelings and behaviour than being "dead and buried"? The allusion here to immersion is questioned by none, and a water grave speaks eloquently of a changed attitude to sin and the world. We are so constituted that this appeal to the senses powerfully impresses both the actual participator in the act and the spectators of the living picture.

II. A SYMBOL OF COMPLETE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST. The follower of Christ repeats in his inward experience the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. These were necessitated by the presence and enormity of sin, and to "put on Christ" as our Redeemer is to adopt his crucifixion and subsequent triumph as our expression of hatred against all that perverts the moral order of the world. To be immersed into the death of Christ is to be completely surrendered to the claims of the Son of God, and to share his hostility to evil, rejoicing in his conquest over death and the grave, and the adversary of mankind. By compliance with his commandment does the disciple signify his entire dedication to his Master's service.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS NEW LIFE. Emerging from the burial, the candidate rises with Christ as his Example and Companion. His is to be an active life, "a walk," not a dreamy repose of self-absorption into the bliss of Nirvana. The contrast to the old career was exemplified in the resurrection gladness and glory of the Lord. No more was sin to exert its baleful influence; the body of the risen Lord no longer could be tortured with hunger and thirst and suffering. The Saviour was limited no longer by material barriers; he was endowed with full authority from on high, and crowned with ever-increasing splendour. When the Apostle Paul saw his Lord, the brightness excelled the noonday sun. These triumphs are in their degree repeated in the spiritual life of the baptized believer. He casts off the works of darkness and puts on the armour of light. He keeps his body under, so that the spirit rules. The voice from heaven proclaims him God's beloved son. Instead of anguish there is peace and joy. He sits in heavenly places, and God causeth him always to triumph in Christ Jesus. Such is the ideal life of fellowship with Christ in his resurrection, shadowed forth by the ascent from the baptismal waters.—S. R. A.

Ver. 16.—*Not masters, but servants.* The knowledge of a truth is not synonymous with its practical recognition in our daily life. "Know ye not?" calls plain attention to the consequences of behaviour. It is the business of Scripture and preaching to emphasize the importance of our personal acts. We are not really masters in any condition. The curbed or uncurbed steed of our desires is working in some service, be it of sin or of God.

I. THE ALTERNATIVE. We yield to the motions either of "sin unto death" or of "obedience unto righteousness." No middle course is possible. Though the notorious transgressor may do a kind action, and the distinguished saint disappointingly err, yet the distinction is real. Characters are only of two sorts; they verge to good or evil. It is not for others, but ourselves, to estimate our position and tendency. Men are deluded by the imaginary difficulty of drawing a boundary-line because of the way in which apparently the good shades off into evil. In the one service or the other we are actually enlisted.

II. THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE. There is the option of the two careers; we are not compelled to either. Motives, longings, circumstances, do not amount to constraint. The apostle pictures men as voluntarily yielding themselves, presenting themselves to the chosen employer. This does not mean that men willingly elect sin as such. The moral bent, the image of God, is shown in their use of terms to hide the viciousness of actions; "a gay life" instead of debauchery; "embellishing a story" instead of a perversion of the truth. Milton describes sin as leaping from the head of the arch-fiend, a form that struck the rebel host at first with horror, "but familiar grown she pleased." That is the death of the soul when evil is deliberately selected: "Evil, be thou my good." And the freedom of choice does not imply the absence of obligations to serve God. To delay is to adhere to sin.

III. THE SERVICE OF SIN A DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD. The statement of the alternative, by its sharp antithesis of "sin" and "obedience," indicates the essential nature of sin. Disobedience is the wanting our own way in opposition to some command of a rightful authority. God's government being moral, to elect a course of life which violates his laws is to give one's self to the service of God's enemy. As compliance with some small order evinces the loyalty of the soldiers; so with us, like our first parents, it may be a so-called trifling matter which tests our disposition. To sin is to disobey a physical, moral, or religious commandment, and this transgression is not merely an individual concern; it affects the Ruler of the universe. Treason is the worst crime against the state, and no man can be allowed to become a centre of infection to the body politic. The disobedience may be in thought, affection, or will, apart from any outward act. Human laws can rarely take note of the inner man; but it is the perfection of Divine laws to regard the heart of the agent.

IV. THE HAPPY RESULT OF OBEDIENCE. Obedience to "the highest we know" is justified by its consequences, "righteousness" and "life." Men are often afraid lest, by keeping the commandments, they may be debarred from gain and enjoyment; yet is it obedience which augments true power and satisfaction. The laws of God were framed and written upon the heart of man to secure his well-being; to break them is to mar the working of the beautiful machine. If conscience warn you of danger, only folly will silence the monitory voice and darken the beacon-light. Note the work of Christ in removing hard thoughts of the Lawgiver, and exhibiting the beauty of a blamelessly obedient life. He manifested the goal of obedience to be peace, joy, triumph. Our obedience is not the life of despotism, where to reason is illegal; nor of slavery, where is work without a recompense; nor of penance, where merit is sought by righteous deeds as a title to heaven; but Christian obedience is rendered as the joyous intelligent outcome of salvation through Christ, bringing us righteousness and life. Persevering obedience begets a habit of virtue, and surrounds us with a holy environment, wherein it is easier to do right than wrong. Conscience as the approving faculty ministers constant delight. This, at least, is the ideal, to which we may increasingly conform. Compare the lines, spoken by Adam to Michael, in the 'Paradise Lost'—

> "Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
> And love, with fear, the only God," etc.;

and the angel's reply—

> "This having learnt, thou hast attained the sum
> Of wisdom: hope no higher," etc.

S. R. A.

Ver. 17.—*The gospel a mould of obedience.* Some memories are best forgotten, like a horrid dream. Not so the Christian's recollection of his conversion. As the Corin-

thians were reminded of their previous wretched career—"such were some of you"—so here the Romans. In reading the Authorized Version stress must be laid on the past tense, "were;" then it suggests the clearer translation of the Revised edition.

I. THE FORMER SLAVERY. Absolute freedom is impossible to man, who is surrounded by higher powers, and has a Divine law impressed on his nature. The headstrong youth is really in bondage to sin; and the recluse in his solitude, whilst free from some of the restrictions of civilization, yet deprives himself of some advantages, and thereby imposes on himself certain limits. The description of sin as bond-service is just when we think of the manner in which men are worn out by vice. The silken cords of pleasure become adamantine bonds. The man who delays to reform his life becomes a prisoner, unable to turn the key in the rusty look. Dislike of the epithet, "servants of sin," must not blind us to its accuracy, in spite of the euphemistic terms which would hide the flagrancy of our transgressions. Without supposing that statistics of the members of Churches accurately embrace all servants of righteousness, the condition of slavery is all too common, even in Christian England. Press home this fact, and remember that the great question is not whether we can fix the date and enumerate the details of our conversion, but whether we are conscious of a renewed heart and life.

II. THE NEW SERVICE. The text speaks of a changed state of obedience to God and adoption of righteousness—a state sanctioned by conscience, ratified by the judgment, pleasing to the Almighty, and every way beneficial to ourselves and others. Its cause is the new teaching concerning Jesus Christ. The tense is definite; these Christians had received the doctrine and embraced it gladly. Perhaps the good news is to-day too much encumbered with technical phraseology, or, having been frequently listened to from infancy, fails to excite in us the glad wonder which it evoked when fresh to the ear. To the Romans it brought tidings of the abrogation of the Sinaitic Law as a covenant of life; it told of the one perfect Offering whereby those that believe are sanctified; it spoke of the all-providing love of the Father for his erring children. The gospel comes as a law to be obeyed, but supplies adequate motives and spiritual power for its fulfilment. The code is discipleship to Christ, hearkening to his preaching and copying his life. This doctrine is represented in the text as "a mould" into which the life of the obedient is cast, imparting to them a righteous form—a likeness to their teacher—Christ. And in hearty obedience true freedom is realized. The father, toiling home laden with gifts for his children, does not look upon his load as a wearisome burden. The mother, with her fresh responsibilities and cares, delights in the maternal yoke. Love alters the bias, oils the wheels of duty. Christ has won the hearts of his people, and to serve him is an honour and a joy. He strikes off the shackles of sin, and we welcome the golden chains of righteous obedience. We do not deny that sin has its pleasures; but, in comparison with the sense of purity and elevation which the service of Christ furnishes, there is the difference between the hot, stifling atmosphere of the music-hall and the sweet bracing air of the mountain-top.

III. THE THANKSGIVING FOR THE DELIVERANCE. None could think that the rendering of the Authorized Version implied Paul's delight at the former unrighteousness; but the Revised rendering is less ambiguous to the hurried reader. The phrase, "thank God," used to be a stock insertion in ordinary letters. Here it is no unmeaning ascription, filling up the interstices of speech, but a devout acknowledgment of sincere gratitude to him who instituted the gracious plan of salvation, giving up his beloved Son, and by his Spirit opens the hearts of an audience to attend to the message of everlasting life. It is the outpouring of the heart for the safety and honourable obedience of fellow-Christians. A pastor may offer it for his flock, a teacher for her scholars. Give glory to God! thank him with lip and life, by seeking to understand and obey the statutes and principles of the Word of truth, and by leading others to know the joys of redemptive obedience.—S. R. A.

Ver. 23.—*Covet the best gift!* Contrast heightens effect, as artists by a dark background throw the foreground into brighter relief. So the apostle places two careers in close proximity. He will not allow that it makes little difference which path men tread, in which condition they are found, or what qualifications they seek.

1. A MOMENTOUS BLESSING. "Eternal life." All life is wonderful. Easy is it to

destroy the ephemeral life of a moth, but to restore it is beyond human skill. The disciples were assured of eternal life, yet they died; consequently the life they received was not to be measured in ordinary scales, nor to be probed by a material dissecting knife. Eternal life is a different kind of life from mere transitory existence; it passes unharmed through the crucible of animal death, for spiritual powers are untouched by earthly decay and corruption. Eternal life means the quickening of the moral nature, its resuscitation from the sleep of trespasses and sins. And as ordinary life in its fulness involves freedom from pain and sickness, and a vigorous activity, so spiritual life, when fully realized, implies peace of mind and the power to do right. They are feeble Christians who do not know the joyous energy of children "with quicksilver in their veins," delighting to exercise their limbs and thus to develop their growing faculties.

II. THIS BLESSING RECEIVED AS A GIFT. By a sinful course of action we merit death, as a soldier by his service earns his rations and his pay. We disobey the Law, and bring the sentence upon ourselves. But we have no power available to procure for ourselves acquittal and favour. Much as the youth joys to see his first-earned sovereign glittering in his palm, he could take no delight in the stripes which his disobedience brings upon him. Human weakness has been provided for in God's plan of salvation. He who breathed natural life into man comes again graciously to inspire his creatures with spiritual life. God knows the needs of his creatures, and the gift is pre-eminently suitable. The Romans loved the games of the amphitheatre; but when famine threatened the city, the curses were loud and deep against Nero because the Alexandrian ships expected with corn arrived instead with sand for the arena. And men like a beautiful present; let us not, therefore, hang back from accepting the royal bounty so adapted to our wants. Treat the gift with care, prize and use the treasure.

III. THE BEARER OF THE GIFT. It comes "through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is the Channel through which new life streams into us, the envelope containing the promise of life. Life in the abstract we cannot comprehend; it is ever connected with some person or organism. "In him was life;" "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Life has been scientifically declared to consist in the harmonizing of our external and internal conditions. The chief condition on our part is sinfulness, on God's part righteousness; and it is Christ who reconciles us unto God, putting away sin by the cross, and investing us with the righteousness of the Holy One. In his words, example, and offices we find all help and blessedness. As the navigator passing through the Straits of Magellan into the Pacific connected its tranquillity with the southern cross gleaming in the sky above, so can we rejoice in the peace which Christ brings. It is not a creed we are invited to accept, but a living Person, with whom we may hold converse, and be instructed in perplexity and cheered when despondent. We have this earthly life as the period and opportunity of "laying hold on eternal life."—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—11.—*Justification securing sanctification.* St. Paul has been speaking in the previous paragraph of "grace abounding," and a very natural insinuation might be made that continuance, permanent abiding, in sin would be the condition of the most abounding grace. If, therefore, our pardon and acceptance are secured through Christ's obedience unto death, what motive can the justified have in warring with sin? Why not sin up to our bent, that grace may abound? It is this immoral insinuation that the apostle combats, and combats successfully, in the present section. He does so by bringing out the full significance of Christ's death to the believer. Now, the peculiar beauty of our Lord's history lies in this, that, as Pascal long ago pointed out, it may have, and is intended to have, its reproduction in the experience of the soul. The salient facts of Christ's history—for example, his death, burial, and resurrection—get copied into the experience of the regenerated soul. The apostle had experienced this himself. At Damascus he had experienced (1) a burial of the past; (2) a resurrection into a new life; (3) a walking in newness of life.[1] This he believes to be the normal experience of the believer in Jesus. Let us see how these facts of Christ's history, death, burial, and resurrection, get duplicated in our experience.

I. OUR BAPTISM INTO CHRIST IMPLIES A BAPTISM INTO HIS DEATH. The apostle

[1] Cf. Rougemont's 'La Vie Humaine,' pp. 88—93.

speaks to the baptized Roman Christians in these terms: "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death" (Revised Version). What we have got first to determine here is the exact meaning of being baptized *in* or *into* the name of a Person. In a remarkable essay on 'Baptism and the Third Commandment,' a thoughtful writer says, "There is an evident connection between these two. We are baptized in the Name of the Lord our God. And *that* is the Name which we are commanded not to take in vain. . . . It is to tell that we are the Lord's, claimed by him for his service, called to be followers of him 'as dear children' (Eph. v. 1). This is the real meaning of a phrase, much used but little reflected on—*a Christian name*. Such are the names, *John*, *James*, *Thomas*, among men; *Jane*, *Mary*, *Elizabeth*, among women. They tell that the bearers belong to Christ. We have two names. The latter of these, our surname, distinguishes us as the children of our earthly father; the former avouches us as the children of a Father in heaven. And let us mark well what comes out of this solemn verity. If we have upon us the name of the God of gentleness while we ourselves are men of strife, or the name of the God of purity while our own lives are impure, or the name of the God of truth while we are given to lying, we are taking that name in vain."[1] Following out this clue, let us notice that baptism into Christ implies a baptism into his *death*. For Jesus "died unto sin once;" "he died for the ungodly;" "he died for us;" that is, he passed through the experience of crucifixion to save the lost. Now, the counterpart of this death for sin is found in us if we believe upon him. We realize that we have died in him unto or for sin. "If One died for all, then all died" (2 Cor. v. 14). Accordingly, we are to "reckon ourselves to be dead" in Jesus Christ "unto sin." Coleridge has rightly remarked, in his 'Literary Remains,' that "in the *imagination* of man exist the seeds of all moral and scientific improvement;" and it is by placing ourselves imaginatively on the cross with Christ, and realizing in his atoning sacrifice our death for sin, that we come to appreciate our individual justification before God. We are thus baptized into his death.

II. OUR BAPTISM INTO DEATH IMPLIES A BURIAL WITH JESUS. For our blessed Lord not only died upon the cross; he was also buried in the tomb. Friends begged the body, took it down tenderly from the accursed tree, wrapped it in spices, and laid it in Joseph's well-known sepulchre. Now, in burial one thought overpowers all others; it is the putting of the dead out of sight, out of all relation to the struggling world around. As long as a man's body remains in the tomb

> "He has no share in all that's done
> Beneath the circuit of the sun."

Such a separation took place through burial between the once-living Christ and the bustling world. The throngs might seethe around the temple court and settle down to selfishness again, but the Master-spirit who had been among them is now withdrawn, and sleeping for a season in his tomb. Now, the apostle implies in this passage that a similar sharp separation is experienced by the truly Christian soul from the world. In casting in his lot with Christ, he is buried out of sight, so to speak, and becomes a stranger in the world. His reception by baptism into the Christian community implies his withdrawal from the previous worldly relations in which he stood to other men. And here it is only right to guard against the superficial use made of the burial reference, as if it implied a *mode* in baptism. "This word (*συνετάφημεν*), 'we were entombed,' contrary to the opinion of many commentators," says Dr. Shedd, "has no reference to the rite of baptism, because the burial spoken of is not in water, but in a sepulchre. . . . Burial and baptism are totally diverse ideas, and have nothing in common. In order to baptism, the element of water must come into *contact* with the body baptized; but in a burial, the surrounding element of earth comes into no contact at all with the body buried. The corpse is carefully protected from the earth in which it is laid. Entombment, consequently, is not the emblem of baptism, but of death." Consequently, the idea of the apostle is that we are spiritually separated from the world by our reception into the Christian community by baptism, just as Jesus was physically

[1] Tait's 'Thoughts for the Thoughtful on the Blessed God, and on Christ and Christianity,' pp. 186—195.

separated through his burial in the tomb. Godet, in a note to his comment upon this passage, gives a beautiful illustration of the truth from what a Bechuana convert said to the missionary Casalis some years ago. The convert was a shepherd, and thus expressed himself: "Very soon I shall be dead, and they will bury me in my field. My sheep will come and pasture above me. But I shall no more attend to them, nor go out of my tomb to seize them and carry them back with me into the sepulchre. They will be strange to me and I to them. Behold the image of my life in the midst of the world, from the time that I have believed in Christ." The idea, therefore, is that by our baptism, *i.e.* by our union with the Christian Church, we are buried out of the world. The Church proves, so to speak, the cemetery where, in holy peace and blissful fellowship, God's people rest. And so, as we manfully throw in our lot with Christ, we pass into the grave-like peace of the Christian Church, and enjoy therein fellowship with Christ and his peaceful people. It is to this burial out of the world and into the kingdom of God we are called.

III. ALONG WITH THIS DEATH AND BURIAL WITH CHRIST THERE IS EXPERIENCED A CRUCIFIXION OF OUR OLD NATURE. Historically the crucifixion precedes the death, but experimentally we shall find that, as the apostle here puts it, it succeeds it (ver. 6). It is when we have realized our death in Jesus for sin, and our burial with Jesus out of the world, that the crucifixion and mortification of our old nature begin. A counterpart of the crucifixion is realized within us. The "body of sin," elsewhere called "the flesh" (σάρξ), must be destroyed, and we nail it to the cross, so to speak, with as much alacrity as the Roman soldiers crucified Christ. We "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;" we "mortify our members which are upon the earth" (Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5). We feel that "our old man" is incapable of amendment; that the only way in which to improve him is to improve him off the face of the earth and out of existence. This is, consequently, the steady effort of the regenerate soul to kill, by *patient* crucifixion, the old nature within. As the Saviour was several hours on the cross, as crucifixion, though in his case comparatively speedy, is yet a tardy ordeal, not a momentary execution; so the death of our old nature takes time for its accomplishment, and must be patiently passed through. We must be crucified with Christ, as well as feel that we have died in Christ for sin (Gal. ii. 20).

IV. OUR BURIAL WITH JESUS IS WITH A VIEW TO OUR RESURRECTION WITH HIM INTO NEWNESS OF LIFE. After death and burial there came to Jesus, as the Father's glorious gift, resurrection to a new life. Let us consider what resurrection as an experience brought to Jesus. From the cradle to the cross Christ had been the "Man of sorrows." The weary weight of all this sinful, sorrow-stricken world lay on him; the Father had laid on his strong and willing shoulders the iniquity of us all. It was not wonderful, then, that his life was one long burden, taking end only on the cross. But the first glimpse we get of the risen Saviour conveys the notion of sturdy, stalwart strength, for the Magdalene mistakes him for the gardener. And all that we can gather from subsequent interviews with his disciples goes to show that life has ceased to be the burden it was once, and is now free, joyous, triumphant. All sense of sin-bearing is gone like a dream of the night; he is out in the glad morning of the resurrection with everlasting joy upon his head. Now, such a joyful experience should be the possession of every regenerate soul. We should feel not only that guilt is cancelled through the death of Jesus for us, and that we are "accepted in the Beloved," but also that a new life is ours—a life of fellowship with God. For just as Jesus during "the great forty days" was more in the unseen with the Father than in the seen with the disciples, so in our new life we shall largely cultivate fellowship with the Father.

V. THE NEW LIFE WE LEAD WILL BE LIKE OUR LORD'S, ONE OF ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO GOD. Now, of the risen Saviour it may well be said that he lived unto God. All his faculties and powers were instruments of righteousness unto God. So it is in the Christian life. It is one of entire consecration. In this way it will be seen that justification leads necessarily to sanctification. The leading facts of our Lord's history get duplicated in our experience, and death, burial, resurrection, and consecration become ours.—R. M. E.

Vers. 12—23.—*The reign of grace.* We saw in last section how the leading facts of our Lord's life get copied into the experience of the regenerate; so that we have a death

and burial, and crucifixion, and resurrection, and new life along with Christ. Sanctification in this way naturally issues out of justification.[1] The apostle consequently proceeds to show that the *dominion* of sin is broken by the same means as the removal of our condemnation, viz. by outlook to Jesus. We find ourselves to be no longer under law as a condemning power, but under a reign of grace. But if we are under a reign of grace, and not under a condemning law, might we not be tempted to think lightly of sin; nay, more, to sin that grace may abound? To meet this objection, the apostle discusses the reign of sin, and contrasts it with the reign of grace. Sin may be our master, but as the slave of sin we shall get rewarded in shame and death; or righteousness, that is, the God of grace himself may be our Master, and, as the slave of righteousness or slave of God, we shall have our reward—a reward of grace, in the development of holiness, and in the gift of eternal life. We cannot do better, then, than contrast the reign of sin with the reign of grace.

I. THE REIGN OF SIN. (Vers. 12, 13, 21.) And in this connection let us notice: 1. *Sin is a very exacting tyrant.* In fact, when we become slaves of sin, we cease being our own masters. We lose the dignity of our nature; we lose self-command; we lose will-power and decision of character. Our bodies become the instruments of unrighteousness, and the lusts of the flesh are obeyed. The prodigal in the parable presents vividly the condition of one under the tyranny of sin (Luke xv. 11—25).[2] Then we notice: 2. *Sin is a very poor paymaster.* For even allowing that it has pleasures to bestow, these are found to be only for a season (Heb. xi. 25). After these come shame, remorse, and the horrible tempest which infuriated sin entails. Then comes death, the real wages, or rations (*ὀψώνια* from *ὄψον*, "cooked meat," see Shedd, *in loc.*). This means, of course, alienation from God, and, when it sets finally into the experience, proves a hopeless and helpless condition. 3. *The sooner all slaves of sin change their master the better.* The reign of sin only tends to torment. The soul that sells itself to such a tyrant is a fool. He is beside himself, like the prodigal, when he does so. He comes to himself when he renounces the tyranny and transfers his allegiance.

II. THE REIGN OF GRACE. (Vers. 16—23.) Now, in this passage the apostle uses no less than three terms to express the new and better reign. These are "grace," "obedience," "righteousness." And then, dropping personification altogether, he shows how we become subjects and slaves of *God.* From the slavery of sin it is possible to pass into the service and slavery of God. We may get free from sin, and then shall we be at liberty to serve God and be his slaves. We shall not make much mistake if we take up Paul's teaching under the idea of a reign of grace.[3] And here we have to notice: 1. *We enter of our own free-will into the slavery of the God of grace.* We are not forced into it; we are "made willing in the day of God's power" (Ps. cx. 3). The slavery to God is voluntary. It is a yielding of ourselves. In both slaveries we must remember that the will is not forced, but free. We are free in our slavery to sin; we are free when we turn from it to the slavery of a God of grace. No one forces our hand. 2. We enter our state of grace *through obeying from the heart "that form of teaching whereunto we were delivered"* (Revised Version). This refers clearly to the all-important doctrine of justification by faith, through the reception of which we get delivered from condemnation, and started on our course of sanctification. It is most important, therefore, that that doctrine should be faithfully and clearly stated to the soul which is enslaved through sin. It is the very charter of its spiritual freedom. 3. *We find that in serving a God of grace we secure holiness of character.* For this voluntary and gracious slavery implies the dedication of all our powers to God. We lay ourselves as "living sacrifices" on God's altar. We find ourselves in consequence visited by an increasing sense of consecration. We learn to live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. v. 14). This sense of consecration becomes habitual. We feel that we are not our own, but bought with a price, and therefore bound to glorify God with our bodies as well as spirits, which are God's

[1] See a fine sermon by Adolphe Monod, on "La Sanctification par le Salut Gratuit," in his Lyons 'Sermons,' quatrième édition, p. 107, etc.

[2] See Hofacker's 'Predigten,' No. 54, upon "Der Knechtschaft der Sünde und der Knechtschaft der Gerechtigkeit."

[3] See Booth's instructive volume, 'The Reign of Grace from its Rise to its Consummation,' *passim.*

(1 Cor. vi. 20). 4. *We find this service of grace happy as well as holy.* In other words, we find in God an excellent Paymaster. His service is delightful. Feeling that we are less than the least of all his mercies, feeling that we are at best but unprofitable servants, we accept joyfully whatever he sends; we feel that he daily loadeth us with his benefits, and then, regarding the great future, he gives us therein "eternal life." Doubtless we do not, strictly speaking, deserve such rewards; they are rewards of grace, not of debt; they are free "gifts" from a gracious Master. Yet they are none the less welcome. Let us, then, renounce the reign of sin, and accept the reign of grace. Its fruit, increasing with the consistent years, is unto holiness, and its end is everlasting life.[1] We are real freemen only when we have become the slaves of a gracious God.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII.

Vers. 1—6.—Here comes in the third illustration of the moral obligation of the baptized. It rests on the recognized principle that *death* cancels the claims of human law on a person (cf. ch. vi. 7); and this with especial reference to the law of marriage, as being peculiarly applicable to the subject to be illustrated, since the Church is elsewhere regarded as married to Christ. As has been observed above, it is from *the Law* that Christians are now said to be emancipated in the death of Christ; not from *sin*, as in the previous sections. Hence this section might at first sight seem to introduce a new line of thought. But it is really a continuation of the same, though differently viewed; for, in the sense intended by St. Paul, being under the Law is equivalent to being under sin. How this is has already more or less appeared; and it will be shown further in the latter part of this chapter. For elucidating the connection of thought between this and the preceding sections, it may be here briefly stated thus: A fundamental axiom with the apostle is that "where no law is, there is no transgression" (ch. iv. 15; cf. v. 13; vii. 9); *i.e.* without law of some kind (including in the idea both external law and the law of conscience) to reveal to man the difference between right and wrong, he is not held responsible; to be a sinner before God he must know what sin is. Human sin consists in a man doing wrong, knowing it to be wrong; or, at any rate, with an original power and opportunity of knowing it to be so. (This, be it observed, is the idea running through the whole of ch. i., in which all mankind are convicted of sin; the whole drift of the argument being that they had sinned against knowledge.) Law, then, in making sin known to man, subjects him to its guilt, and consequently to its condemnation. But this is all it does; it is all that, in itself, it can do. It can remove neither the guilt nor the dominion of sin. Its principle is simply to exact entire obedience to its requirements; and there it leaves the sinner. The above view applies to all law, and of course peculiarly to the Mosaic Law (which the writer has all along mainly in view) in proportion to the authority of its source and the strictness of its requirements. Thus it is that St. Paul regards being under the Law as the same thing as being under sin, and dying to the Law as the same thing as dying to sin. Grace, on the other hand, under which we pass in rising again with Christ, does both the things which law cannot do: it both cancels the guilt of sin (repentance and faith presumed), and also imparts power to overcome it.

Ver. 1.—**Are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to persons knowing law), how that the Law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth?** *i.e.* so long as *the man* liveth; not so long as *the Law* liveth in the sense of *viget*, or "remains in force," though Origen, Ambrose, Grotius, Erasmus, and others, for reasons that will appear, understood the latter sense. It is not the natural one.

[1] Dr. Alexander's 'Christian Thought and Work,' p. 213, on "Progressive Piety;" and Caspari's 'Von Jenseit des Grabes,' ii. s. 149, on the "Dienst der Gerechtigkeit," where he shows it is "ein heiliger," "ein herrlicher," and "ein seliger Dienst."

Vers. 2—4.—**For** (this is an instance of the application of the general principle, adduced as suiting the subject in hand) **the woman that hath an husband** (ὕπανδρος, implying subjection, meaning properly, *that is under an husband*) **is bound to her living husband; but if the husband die, she is loosed** (κατήργηται; cf. ver. 6 and Gal. v. 4. The word expresses the entire abolition of the claim of the husband's law over her) **from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the Law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.** The general drift of the above verses is plain enough; namely, that, as in all cases death frees a man from the claims of human law, and, in particular, as death frees the wife from the claims of marital law, so that she may marry again, so the death of Christ, into which we were baptized, frees us from the claims of the law which formerly bound us, so that we may be married spiritually to the risen Saviour, apart from the old dominion of law, and consequently of sin. But it is not so easy to explain the intended analogy in precise terms, there being an apparent discrepance between the illustration and the application with regard to the parties supposed to die. Even before the application there is a seeming discrepance of this kind between the general statement of ver. 1 and the instance given in ver. 2. For in ver. 1 it is (according to the view we have taken of it) the death of the person who had been under law that frees him from it, whereas in ver. 2 it is the death of the husband (representing law) that frees the wife from the law she had been under. Hence the interpretation of ver. 1 above referred to, according to which *law*, and not *a man*, is the understood nominative to *liveth*. But, even if this interpretation were considered tenable, we should not thus get rid of the subsequent apparent discrepance between the illustration and the application. For in the former it is the death of the husband that frees the wife; whereas in the latter it seems to be the death of ourselves, who answer to the wife, in the death of Christ, that frees us. For that it is ourselves that are regarded as having died to the Law with Christ appears not only from other passages (*e.g.* vers. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, in ch. vi.), but also, in the passage before us, from ἐθανατώθητε in ver. 4, and ἀποθανόντες in ver. 6. (The reading ἀποθανόντος of the Textus Receptus rests on no authority, being apparently only a conjecture of Beza's.) There are various ways of explaining. (1) That (notwithstanding the reasons against the supposition that have just been given) it is the *Law*, and not the *man*, that is conceived as having died in the death of Christ. Eph. ii. 15 and Col. ii. 14 may be referred to as supporting this conception. Thus the illustration and the application are made to hang together, the law of the husband being regarded as having died in the husband's death, as *the Law* generally to us in Christ's death; and we have already seen how ver. 1 may be forced into correspondence. This view of the Law itself being regarded as having died has the weighty support of Origen, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Ambrose, and other Greek Fathers. Chrysostom accounts for the apostle introducing a different conception in ver. 4 by suggesting that he avoided saying explicitly that the Law had died, for fear of wounding the Jews: Τὸ ἀκόλουθον ἦν εἰπεῖν, Ὥστε, ἀδελφοί, οὐ κυριεύει ὑμῶν ὁ νόμος· ἀπέθανε γάρ. Ἀλλ' οὐκ εἶπεν οὕτως, ἵνα μὴ πλήξῃ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους. This explanation hardly commends itself as satisfactory; and besides, in addition to what has been already said, it may be observed that throughout the whole passage there is no phrase to suggest in itself the idea of the *Law's* death, but only of *some* death which emancipates from law (ver. 1 being taken in its natural sense, and ἀποθάνοντες, in ver. 4, being accepted as the undoubtedly true reading). (2) That in the illustration the wife is really supposed to die when the husband dies. The death of either party to the marriage-bond cancels it; and when one dies, the other virtually dies to the law that both were under. Thus the statement of principle in ver. 1, the particular illustration in vers. 2, 3, and the application are made to hang together. Meyer takes this view decidedly, and cites Eph. v. 28, *seq.*, to show that the husband's death may be considered as implying the wife's death also. (3) That there *is* a discrepance between the illustration and the application, the husband being regarded as dying in the former, and ourselves, who represent the wife, in the latter; but that this is of no consequence; the idea, common to both, of *death* abrogating the claims of law being sufficient for the apostle's argument. Death, it may be said, however regarded in the application, is an ideal conception, and not an actual fact with respect to ourselves; and it is immaterial how it is regarded, as long as the idea comes out that through death, *i.e.* ours in the death of Christ, we are freed from the dominion of law. (So, in effect, De Wette, and also Alford.) (4) That the former husband is

not the law, but *the lust of sin* (τὰ παθήματα τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, ver. 5); the wife, the *soul;* the new husband, *Christ.* Augustine, who is the author of this view, puts it thus: "Cum ergo tria sint, *anima*, tanquam *mulier; passiones peccatorum* tanquam *vir;* et *lex* tanquam *lex viri;* non ibi peccatis mortuis, tanquam viro mortuo liberari animam dicit, sed ipsam animam mori peccato, et liberari a lege, ut sit alterius viri, *i.e.* Christi, cum mortua fuerit peccato, quod fit, cum adhuc manentibus in nobis desideriis et incitamentis quibusdam ad peccandum, non obedimus tamen, nec consentimus, mente servientes legi Dei" (Aug., 'Prop.,' 33). Beza, taking up the view of Augustine, puts it somewhat differently, and more clearly, thus: "There are two marriages. In the first, the *old man* is the *wife; predominating sinful desires*, the *husband; transgressions* of every kind, the *offspring.* In the second, the *new man* is the *wife; Christ*, the *Husband;* and the *fruits of the Spirit* (Gal. v. 22) are the *children.*" This explanation being still apparently open to the objection that, in the illustration, the wife continues the same, but not so that which corresponds to her in the application, Olshausen explains thus: "In man the old man is distinguished from the new without prejudice to the unity of his personality, which Paul subsequently (ver. 20) signifies by ἐγώ. This true personality, the proper self of man, is the wife, who in the natural state appears in marriage with the old man, and, in intercourse with him, generates sins, the end of which is death (ch. vi. 21, 22). But in the death of the mortal Christ this old man is dead with him; and, as the individual man is grafted by faith into Christ, his old man dies, by whose life he was holden under the Law." The commentator on the Epistle in the 'Speaker's Commentary' adopts this explanation, with the remark that "St. Paul's application of the figure is quite clear, if we follow his own guidance." The view rests mainly on, and certainly derives some support from, vers. 5 and 6, if regarded as carrying out the application of the figure. Others, however, in view of the difficulties of the whole passage, may prefer to content themselves with explanation (3), as conveying as precise an idea as may possibly have been even in the apostle's mind when he wrote. Commentators may sometimes go beyond their office in attributing to their author more exactness of thought than his words in themselves imply. It is to be observed that the concluding expression in ver. 4, "that we should bring forth fruit unto God," brings us back to the main purport of this whole section, which begins at ch. vi. 1, viz. the obligation of a holy life on Christians. In vers. 5, 6, which follow, the hindrance to our living such a life "when we were in the flesh," and our power of doing so now, are briefly intimated in preparation for what follows. It does not seem necessary to conclude—as is done by those who adopt interpretation (4) of what precedes—that the illustration of the marriage bond is meant to be kept up in these two verses.

Ver. 5.—**For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were through the Law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.** *In the flesh*, to which might be opposed *in the Spirit* (cf. ch. viii. 9), denotes our state when under the power of sin, before we had risen to a new life in Christ; it is virtually the same as what is meant by being under the Law, as is shown by the opposed expression in ver. 6, κατηργήθημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου. What is signified by "the passions of sins" being "*through* the Law" will be considered under vers. 7 and 8.

Ver. 6.—**But now** (meaning, *as things are*, not *at the present time*, as is shown by the aorist following) we have been (properly, *we were*) **delivered** (κατηργήθημεν, the same verb as in ver. 2; see note on that verse) **from the Law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.** In the word "serve" (δουλεύειν) we observe a resumption of the idea of ch. vi. 16, *seq.*, where we were regarded under the aspect of being still bond-servants, though to a new master. There the apostle intimated that he was but speaking humanly in describing our new allegiance to righteousness as bond-service, such as we had once been under. Here he intimates the true character of our new service by the addition of the words, ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος, καὶ οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος. These are characteristic and significant expressions. "Spirit" and "letter" are similarly contrasted (ch. ii. 29; 2 Cor. iii. 6). "Spiritum literæ opponit, quia antequam ad Dei voluntatem voluntas nostra per Spiritum sanctum formata sit, non habemus in Lege nisi externam literam; quæ frænum quidem externis nostris actionibus injicit, concupiscientiæ autem nostræ furorem minime cohibet. Novitatem vero Spiritui attribuit, quia in locum veteris hominis succedit; ut litera vetus dicitur quæ interit per Spiritus regenerationem" (Calvin). Otherwise, with regard to *newness* and *oldness*, "Vetustatis et novitatis vocabulo Paulus spectat duo testamenta" (Bengel). That the latter idea may have suggested the expressions seems not unlikely from 2 Cor. iii. 6—18 (cf. also Heb. viii. 6—13). For in both these passages the idea of the verse before us enters, and in both the old and new covenants are contrasted with regard to it. It may be enough here to say

that the contrast in its essence is between exacted conformity to an external code (which was the characteristic of the old covenant) and inspired allegiance to the Law of God written on the heart (which is the characteristic of the new).

Vers. 7—25.—(*b*) *The relation of law to sin, and how law prepares the soul for emancipation in Christ from the dominion of sin.* In the section of the argument which begins at ch. vii. 1 we have seen that the idea of being under *sin* has passed into that of being under *law*, in such apparent connection of thought as to identify the positions. The apostle, seeing that readers might be perplexed by such identification, now, in the first place, explains what he has meant by it. Is the Law, then, sin? No, replies the apostle; the Law itself (with especial reference to the Mosaic Law as the great and authentic expression of Divine law) is holy; and its connection with sin is only this—that, in virtue of its very holiness, it convinces of sin, and makes it sinful. And then, to the end of ch. vii., he goes on to show how this is by an analysis of the operation of law on human consciousness. He presents to us a vivid picture of a man supposed at first to be without law, and therefore unconscious of sin; but then, through law coming in, acquiring a sense of it, and yet unable to avoid it. The man assents in his conscience to the good, but is dragged down by the infection of his nature to the evil. He seems to have, as it were, two contrary laws within himself, distracting him. And so the external Law, appealing to the higher law within himself, good and holy though it be, is, in a sense, killing him; for it reveals sin to him, and makes it deadly, but does not deliver him from it, till the crisis comes in the desperate cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (ver. 24). But this crisis is the precursor of deliverance; it is the last throe preceding the new birth; the Law has now done its work, having fully convinced of sin, and excited the yearning for deliverance, and in "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" the deliverance comes. How it comes is set forth in ch. viii., where the state of peace and hope, consequent on deliverance through faith in Christ, is portrayed in glowing terms, so as thus to complete the subject which we announced as being that of the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, viz. "the moral results to believers of the revealed righteousness of God."

Two questions have been raised and discussed with regard to vers. 7—25. (1) Whether St. Paul, who writes throughout the passage in the first person singular, is describing his own personal experience, or only so writing in order to give vividness and reality to his picture of the experience of any human soul. (2) Whether he is describing the mental experience of an unregenerate or of a regenerate man.

As to (1), his purpose undoubtedly is not (like that of Augustine in his 'Confessions') to tell us about himself, but to depict generally the throes of the human soul when convinced of sin. But, in doing this, he as undoubtedly draws on his own past experience; recollections of the struggle he had himself gone through gleam evidently throughout the picture; he paints so vividly because he has felt so keenly. This makes the passage so peculiarly interesting, as being not only a striking analysis of human consciousness, but also an opening out to us of the great apostle's inner self; of the inward pangs and dissatisfaction with himself which had, we may well believe, distracted him through the many years when he had been a zealot for the Law and apparently satisfied with it, and when—perhaps partly to stifle disturbing thoughts—he had thrown himself into the work of persecution.

Then, further, the sudden change of tone observable in the eighth chapter, which is like calm and sunshine after storm, reveals to us the change that had come over him (to which he often elsewhere refers), when "the light from heaven" had shown him an escape from his mental chaos. He was then "a new creature: old things had passed away; behold, all things had become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

As to question (2), an answer has been already virtually given; viz. that the condition described is that of the unregenerate; in this sense—that it is of one still under the bondage of sin and law, before the revelation to the soul of the righteousness of God, and the consequent rising to a new life in Christ. This seems obvious from its

being the thought of law subjecting to sin that introduces the whole passage, and runs through it—the γὰρ which connects ver. 14 with what precedes denoting a continuance throughout of the same line of thought—and also from the marked change of tone in ch. viii., where the state of the regenerate is undoubtedly described.

Further, we find, in vers. 5 and 6 of ch. vii., the obvious theses of the two sections that follow, in the remainder of ch. vii. and in ch. viii. respectively. Their wording exactly corresponds to the subject-matter of these sections; and ver. 5 distinctly expresses the state of being under law, ver. 6 the state of deliverance from it. Further, particular expressions in the two sections seem to be in intended contrast with each other, so as to denote contrasted states. In ch. vii. 9, 11, 13, sin, through the Law, *kills;* in ch. viii. 2 we have "the law of the Spirit of *life*." In ch. vii. 23 the man is brought into *captivity;* in ch. viii. 2 he is made *free*. In ch. vii. 14, 18 there is invincible strife between the holy Law and the carnal mind; in ch. viii. 4 the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled. In ch. vii. 5 we were in the *flesh;* in ch. viii. 9 not in the *flesh*, but in the *Spirit*. And, further, could St. Paul possibly have spoken of the regenerate Christian as "sold under sin" (ver. 14)? His state is one of redemption from it. We do not mean that the state which begins to be described at ver. 14 is one devoid of grace. A condition of progress towards regeneration is described; and the final utter dissatisfaction with self, and the keen yearning after good, imply a roused and enlightened conscience: it is the state of one who is being prepared for deliverance, and is not far from the kingdom of God. All, in fact, we say is that it is not till ch. viii. that the picture of a soul emancipated by a living faith in Christ begins. We may observe, further, that the mere use of the present tense in ver. 14 and afterwards by no means necessitates our supposing the apostle to be speaking of his own state at the time of writing, and therefore of the state of a regenerate Christian. He uses the present to add vividness and reality to the picture; he throws himself back into, and realizes to himself again, his own former feebleness; and he thus also more clearly distinguishes between the state described and the imagined previous one before law had begun to operate.

The view which we thus confidently advocate is that of the Greek Fathers generally, the application of the passage to the regenerate Christian being apparently due to Augustine in his opposition to Pelagianism; *i.e.* according to his *later* view; for in his earlier days (Prop. 45 in 'Ep. ad Rom.;' 'Ad Simplic.,' i. 91; 'Conf.,' vii. 21) he had held with the Greek Fathers. Jerome also seems to have similarly changed his mind about it; and the later view of both these Fathers has been adopted by Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Corn. à Lapide, and by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Beza, and others among the Protestants. What weighed with Augustine was that in vers. 17, 20, 22, more propension to good is implied than his doctrinal theory allowed to the natural man. Under a similar impression, Calvin says, commenting on ver. 17, "Porro hic locus palam evincit non nisi de piis qui jam regeniti sunt Paulum disputare. Quamdiu enim manet homo sui similis, quantus quantus est, merito censetur vitiosus." If, however, St. Paul's intention, obvious from his own writing, does not fit in with Augustinian or Calvinistic theology, so much the worse for the latter. The verses in question do not, in fact, express more than the apostle elsewhere allows man to be capable of, and what observation of fact shows him to be capable of, though not having yet attained to Christian faith; viz. approval of, longing for, and even striving for, what is good. It is not more than the sincere and earnest, even in the Gentile world, have been already credited with in ch. ii. of this Epistle (vers. 7, 10, 14, 15, 26, 29). It does not follow that such moral earnestness is independent of Divine grace; but there is a true and effective operation of Divine grace, suitable to men's needs and capacities, before the fulness of Pentecostal grace.

And further, however "far gone from original righteousness" man in his natural state may be, still that utter depravity attributed to him by some theologians is neither consonant with observed fact nor declared in Holy Writ. The image of God in which he was made is represented as defaced, but not obliterated. Be it observed,

lastly, with regard to the whole question of the intention of this chapter, that its reference to the unregenerate precludes the wresting of some parts of it to support antinomianism. Calvin, though applying it, as said above, to the regenerate, thus alludes to and guards against any such abuse of ver. 17: "Non est deprecatio se excusantis, ac si culpa vacaret; quomodo multi nugatores justam defensionem habere se putant, qua tegant sua flagitia dum in carnem ea rejiciunt."

It was observed in the note at the head of ch. ii. that, though the thesis to be then proved was the sinfulness of all men without exception before God, this did not seem to be in that chapter rigorously proved with regard to those—and such it was allowed there were—who sincerely sought after righteousness, and refrained from judging others; and it was said that this apparent deficiency in the proof would be supplied in ch. vii. And so it is in this analysis of the inward consciousness of even the best in their natural state; recognizable by all as a true one in proportion to their own moral enlightenment and moral earnestness. This consideration is an additional reason for regarding ch. vii. as referring to the unregenerate; since otherwise a link in the argument on which the whole treatise rests would seem to be wanting.

We may remark also, before proceeding with our exposition, that, though we hold ch. vii. to refer to the unregenerate, and ch. viii. to the regenerate state, between which a sharp line is here drawn, yet it need not follow that either the sense of having passed at a definite time from one to the other as represented in this ideal picture, or the consciousness of entire blessedness as portrayed in ch. viii., will be realized by all, who may still be regenerate and have undergone a true conversion. Owing to the weakness of the human will, which has to work with grace, and to the infection of nature that remains in the regenerate, the triumph of the grace of the new birth is seldom, in fact, complete; and so even saints may often be still painfully conscious of the conflict described in ch. vii. They will, indeed, have the peace and assurance of ch. viii. in proportion as "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is potent and paramount in them; but still they may not attain all at once to the ideal of their regenerate condition.

Similarly, in St. John's Epistles the kingdoms of darkness and of light are set forth as totally distinct, and the regenerate are regarded as having passed entirely from the one into the other, so as to have the perfect love which casteth out fear; and it is of importance that the essential distinction between the two kingdoms should be kept in view. But still in actual life, as we cannot but feel, the majority of believing Christians have not so passed entirely; clouds from the old kingdom of darkness still partially overshadow most of those who, in the main, have passed into the light, and it may be difficult for us to determine to which kingdom some belong. Such would be the case even with those whom the apostle addressed—persons who had consciously, in adult life, risen to a new life in baptism; and still more will it be so with us, who were baptized in infancy, and may have grown up more or less, but few entirely, under the influence of the regenerating Spirit. Further, it is to be observed that, though the peace and confidence of ch. viii. be the growing result and reward of a true conversion, yet the practical tests of one are ever said by both St. Paul and St. John not to be feelings only, but the fruits of the Spirit in character and life.

Ver. 7.—**What shall we say then?** (St. Paul's usual phrase, with μὴ γένοιτο following, for meeting and rejecting a possible misunderstanding of his meaning; cf. ch. vi. 1.) **Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but through law.** Ἀλλὰ, translated "nay," being thus taken, as in the Authorized Version, adversatively to the supposition of the Law being sin, and so a continuation of what is expressed by μὴ γένοιτο. So far from the Law being sin, it exposes sin. Or it may be in the sense of "howbeit," as in the Revised Version, meaning—still, law has to do with sin so far as this, that it brings it out. **For I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet;** or rather, *thou shalt not lust*, so as to retain the correspondence of the verb with the preceding substantive. Observe, here as elsewhere, the significance of νόμος with and without the article. In the preceding section it was the Mosaic Law that was specially in view, and it is the idea of *it* being sin that is so indignantly repudiated at the beginning of this verse. So also

at the end, the Law of Moses is referred to as forbidding lust. Hence the article in both cases. But in the intervening phrase, *εἰ μὴ διὰ νόμου*, it is the principle of law generally that is regarding as making sin known. The adducing of *ἐπιθυμία* as being made known by the Law seems to have a significance beyond that of its being one particular instance of sin being so made known. It may imply that the very propension to evil, which is the root of sin, is thus only made known as sinful. The reference is, of course, to the tenth commandment. Without it men might not have been aware of the sinfulness of desires as well as of deeds, and thus, after all, been unacquainted with the essence of sin. Further, we may suppose it to be not without a purpose that the apostle varies his verbs expressive of knowing, *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔγνων*, and *ἐπιθυμίαν οὐκ ἤδειν*. "Ἔγνων majus est, ἤδειν minus. Hinc posterius, cum etiam minor gradus negatur, est in incremento" (Bengel). Ἔγνων may express personal acquaintance with the working and power of sin; ἤδειν, no more than knowing lust as being sin at all. If so, it does not in itself imply (whatever may seem to be the case in ver. 8, of which below) that the Law *excites* lust, in the sense that I should not have lusted as I do had not the Law forbidden me to lust.

Ver. 8.—**But sin, taking occasion, through the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence** (or, *of lust*): **for without** (or, *apart from*) **law sin is dead.** Here, as in ch. v. 12, *seq.*, sin is personified as a power, antagonistic to the Law of God, that has been introduced into the world of man, causing death. In ch. v. its first introduction was found in the scriptural account of Adam's transgression. It has ever since been in the world, as is evidenced by the continuance of the reign of death as it comes to all men now (vers. 13, 14). But it is only when men, through law, know it to be sin, that it is imputed (ver. 13), and so slays them spiritually. Apart from law, it is as it were dead with respect to its power over the soul to kill. It is regarded here as an enemy on the watch, seizing its occasion to kill which is offered it when law comes in. It may be observed here that, though it is not easy to define exactly in all cases what St. Paul means by *death*, it is evident that he means in this place more than the *physical* death which seemed, at first sight at least, to be exclusively referred to in ch. v. For *all* die in the latter sense of the word; but only those who sin with knowledge of law in the sense intended here (see also note on ch. v. 12). It is supposed by most commentators that the expression *κατειργάσατο* in this verse means, not only that "the commandment" brought out lust *as sin*, but further that it *provoked* it, according to the alleged tendency of human nature to long all the more for what is forbidden: *Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.* Whether or not we have this tendency to the extent sometimes supposed, the *context* certainly neither requires nor suggests the conception, either here or in vers. 5 and 7. It is true, however, that the *language* of vers. 5 and 8 does in itself suggest it. Against it is the reason which follows; "for without law sin is dead," which can hardly mean (as the strong word *νεκρά* would seem in such case to require) that lust itself is altogether dormant until prohibition excites it. Calvin interprets *κατειργάσατο* thus: "Detexit in me omnem concupiscentiam; quæ, dum lateret, quodammodo nulla esse videbatur;" and on *ἁμαρτία νεκρά* remarks, "Clarissime exprimit quem sensum habeant superiora. Perinde enim est ac si diceret, sepultam esse sine Lege peccati *notitiam*."

Vers. 9—11.—**For I was alive without** (or, *apart from*) **law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived** (or, *sprang into life*), **and I died. And the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion, through the commandment deceived me, and through it slew me.** If, in saying, "I was alive once," the writer is at all remembering his own experience, the reference may be to the time of the innocence of childhood, before he had any distinct consciousness of the behests of law. Or it may be that he is only imagining a possible state without any consciousness of law, so as to bring out more forcibly the operation of law. On the general drift of ver. 9, Calvin says tersely, "Mors peccati vita est hominis: rursum vita peccati mors hominis." In ver. 11 the conception of sin's action is the same as in ver. 8; but the verb now used is *ἐξηπάτησε*, with obvious reference to Eve's temptation, which is regarded as representing ours (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 3). The view of the origin of human sin presented to us in Genesis is that man at first *lived* at peace with God; but that *the commandment*, "Thou shalt not eat of it, lest thou die," was taken advantage of by the "serpent" (answering to personified *ἁμαρτία* in the passage before us), inspiring sinful *lust;* and that so the *commandment* (i.e. *law*), though in itself holy, became the occasion of *sin*, and of *death* as its consequence; and further, that all this came about through *delusion* (*ἐξηπάτησε*). The thing desired was not really good for man; but the *ἐπιθυμία* inspired by the tempter caused it to seem so. One great purpose of regenerating grace is to dispel this delusion; to bring us back to the true view of things

as they are, and so to peace with God. Thus, in part, does the apostle teach us to regard the inscrutable mystery of sin, and the remedy for it in Christ.

Vers. 12. 13.—**So that the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Has then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, through that which is good working death unto me; that sin might become exceeding sinful through the commandment.** The question of ver. 7, "Is the Law sin?" has now been answered so far as this—that, far from being so, the commandment was in itself "unto life" (cf. Lev. xviii. 5; ch. x. 5), only that sin took occasion by it, and so got power to slay. But still it would appear that law was ultimately the cause of death. Was, then, its purpose and effect, after all, deadly? for, though not *sin*, it seems to have been *death* to us. No, it is replied; away with the thought! Its effect was only to reveal sin in its true light; it was only an Ithuriel's spear ('Par. Lost,' bk. iv.), bringing out and exposing the deadly thing that before was latent. And (as is elsewhere set forth in pursuance of the line of thought) its effect in the end was really "unto life;" for its awakening of the sense of sin, and of a craving for redemption from it, was the necessary preparation for such redemption (cf. Gal. iii. 19, *seq.*).

Ver. 14.—**For we know** (we are all already aware of this; we recognize it as a principle; we can surely have no doubt of it; cf. ch. ii. 2; iii. 10) **that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.** The statement of ver. 12 is here in effect repeated as being one that cannot be gainsaid with respect to *the Law*, but with use now of the epithet πνευματικός; and this in opposition to *myself* being σαρκινός. The new word, πνευματικός, is obviously meant to express a further idea with respect to law, suitable to the line of thought now about to be pursued. Without lingering to mention varying suggestions of various commentators as to the sense in which the Law is here called *spiritual*, we may offer the following considerations in elucidation. Πνεῦμα and σάρξ are, as is well known, constantly contrasted in the New Testament. The former sometimes denotes the "Holy Spirit of God," and sometimes that highest part in ourselves which is in touch with the Divine Spirit. Σάρξ, though it may, in accordance with its original meaning, sometimes denote our mere bodily organization, is usually used to express our whole present human constitution, mental as well as bodily, considered as apart from the πνεῦμα. When St. Paul in one place distinguishes the constituent elements of human nature, he speaks of πνεῦμα, ψυχή, and σῶμα (1 Thess. v. 23). There ψυχή seems to denote the animal life or soul animating the σῶμα for the purposes of mere human life, but distinguished from the πνεῦμα, which associates him with the Divine life. Usually, however, πνεῦμα and σάρξ alone are spoken of; so that the term σάρξ seems to include the ψυχή, expressing our whole weak human nature now, apart from the πνεῦμα, which connects us with God (see Gal. v. 17, etc.). That in this and other passages σάρξ does not mean our mere bodily organization only, is further evident from sins not due to mere bodily lusts—such as want of affection, hatred, envy, pride—being called "works of the flesh" (cf. Gal. v. 19—22; 1 Cor. iii. 3). What, then, is meant by the adjective πνευματικός? Applied to man, it is, in 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3, opposed to σαρκικὸς (or σαρκινὸς), and in 1 Cor. ii. 14, to ψυχικὸς (cf. Jude 19); the latter word apparently meaning one in whom the ψυχή (as above understood), and not the πνεῦμα, dominates. Further, St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 44) speaks of a σῶμα ψυχικὸν and a σῶμα πνευματικὸν, meaning by the former a tenement fitted for and adequate to the mere *psychic* life, and by the latter a new organism adapted for the higher life of the *spirit*, such as we hope to have hereafter; and in the same passage he uses the neuters, τὸ ψυχικὸν and τὸ πνευματικὸν, with reference to "the first Adam," who was made, or became (ἐγένετο) εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, and "the last Adam," who was made εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. Thus πνεῦμα, generally, denotes the *Divine*, which man apprehends and aspires to, nay, in which he has himself a part in virtue of the original breathing into him of the breath of life (πνοὴν ζωῆς) directly from God (Gen. iii. 7), whereby he became a living soul (ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν) for the purposes of his mundane life (itself above that of the brutes), but retained also a share of the Divine πνεῦμα connecting him with God, and capable of being quickened so as to be the dominant principle of his being through contact with the πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. It would seem that the Law is here called πνευματικὸς, as belonging to the Divine sphere of things, and expressive of the Divine order. "The Law, both the moral law in the bosom of man, and the expression of that law in the Decalogue, is, as Augustine profoundly expresses it, a revelation of the higher order of things founded in the being of God. It is hence a πνευματικόν" (Tholuck). But man (ἐγὼ δὲ), though still able to admire, nay, to delight in and aspire to, this higher order, cannot yet conform himself to it because of the σάρξ, infected with sin, which at present enthrals him: Ἐγὼ δὲ σαρκινός, πεπραμένος ὑπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν. Thus is fitly introduced the analysis of human consciousness with

reference to law which follows. The word σαρκινὸς (which, rather than σαρκικὸς, is the best-supported reading) may be used to express merely our present constitution—our being *of flesh*—so as to account for our inability, rather than our being *fleshly*, or carnally minded, as σαρκικὸς would imply. In two other passages (1 Cor. iii. 1 and Heb. vii. 16) authority is also in favour of σαρκινὸς instead of σαρκικὸς as in the Textus Receptus. Tholuck, however, doubts whether there was, in common usage, a distinction between the meaning of the two forms. The word πεπραμένος is significant. It denotes, not our having been originally slaves (*vernæ*), but our having been sold into slavery (*capti*). Slavery to sin is not the rightful condition of our nature. We are as the Israelites in Egypt, or as the captives in Babylon who remembered Zion. Hence the possibility of deliverance, if we feel the burden of our slavery and long to be free, when the Deliverer comes.

Vers. 15—25.—**For that which I do** (rather, *work*, or *perform*, or *accomplish*, κατεργάζομαι) **I know not** (rather than *I allow not*, as in the English Version, this being the proper meaning of the verb γινώσκω. The idea may be that, when under the delusion of sin I do wrong, I do not know what I am accomplishing): **for not what I would, that I do** (rather, *practise*; the verb here is πράσσω); **but what I hate, that I do** (ποιῶ). **But if what I would not that I do, I consent unto the Law that it is good** (καλός). **Now then** (νυνὶ δὲ, not in temporal sense, but meaning, *as the case is*) **it is no more I that work** (κατεργάζομαι, as before) **it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me** (that is, in my flesh,) **dwelleth not good** (ἀγαθόν): **for to will is present with me; but to perform** (κατεργάζεσθαι) **that which is good** (τὸ καλὸν) **is not** (οὐ, rather than οὐχ εὑρίσκω as in the Textus Receptus, is the best-supported reading). **For the good** (ἀγαθόν) **that I would I do not** (οὐ ποιῶ): **but the evil which I would not, that I practise** (πράσσω). **But if what I** (ἐγὼ, emphatic) **would not, that I do** (ποιῶ), **it is no longer I** (ἐγὼ, again emphatic) **that work** (κατεργάζομαι) **it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man. But I see a different law in my members** (on what is meant by "members" (μέλεσι) see note under ch. vi. 13) **warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to** (or, according to some readings, *by*) **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?** (probably in the same sense as "the body of sin" in ch. vi. 6; see note thereon. Translate certainly as in the English Version: not *this body of death*, as if it meant *this mortal body*) **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.** In the note introducing this whole section (vers. 7—25) its general drift has been intimated. The following additional comments may further explain the part of it which begins at ver. 15. (1) The initial γὰρ introduces proof of the ἐγὼ being in the condition spoken of in the preceding clause, viz. "sold under sin." For (the meaning is) am I not a bond-slave, when, as I feel is the case with me, I am not my own master? But, observe, the state that goes on to be described is that of an unwilling bond-slave; not of one who likes his bondage, and has no desire to be free. The conscience is supposed already, through the operation of law, to protest against sin; to hate its thraldom; not willingly to acquiesce in it. (2) The distinction between the verbs ποιῶ, πράσσω, κατεργάζομαι, not observed in the English Version, but to which attention has been drawn in the above translation, has its meaning. Attention to the places where they occur will show their appropriateness in each case, denoting severally single acts, habitual practice, and general working, performance, or accomplishment. (3) The English Version is wrong in rendering, in ver. 15, "What I would, that I do not," so as to make the idea the same as that in ver. 19. There are really two different statements in the two verses—the first, of our doing what we wish not to do; the second, of our not doing what we wish to do; and after each the same conclusion is drawn in the same words, viz. that sin is the real worker (κατεργάζομαι being here the word appropriately used). (4) The conflicting principles, or energies, of human nature, between which the individual ἐγὼ, which wills and acts, is here regarded as being distracted, are the σάρξ in which sin dwells (which has been explained above; see note under ver. 14) on the one hand, and the νοῦς (ver. 23) of the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος (ver. 22) on the other. The ἐγὼ is identified with the ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, rather than regarded as an intermediate personality between the two. For it is spoken of throughout as willing what is good; and, though in ver. 14 it is said to be σαρκινός, and though, in ver. 18, good dwells not in it, yet the first of these expressions only means that it is in the flesh at present, and therefore in bondage; and the latter is at once qualified by the addition, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου; it does not identify the ἐγὼ with the σάρξ. It is, we may remark in passing, this ἐγὼ—ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος—that is regarded as rising to a new life

with Christ, so as to become a *new man*, delivered from bondage; this last expression, of course, involving a different idea from that of the *inward man*). It is to be observed, further, that throughout this section beginning at ver. 7, there is no distinction drawn (as elsewhere by St. Paul) between πνεῦμα and σάρξ; the idea of πνεῦμα, in fact, does not come in at all, except with regard to the Law, which is called πνευματικός. The reason is that the apostle is confining himself here to an examination of what man, even at his best, is in his mere human nature; of what thoughtful observers, though not theologians, may perceive him to be. It is a philosophical rather than a theological analysis. It is one that might commend itself to heathen philosophers, some of whom have, in fact, expressed themselves much to the same effect. Hence it is not till ch. viii., where man's regeneration by the Divine πνεῦμα is portrayed, that the spiritual principle in himself, through which he is capable of such regeneration, comes into view. And it will be seen that it is this very idea of πνεῦμα that pervades that whole chapter. This essential distinction between the two chapters is sufficient in itself to disprove the theory that the regenerate state is described in ch. vii. (5) The senses in which the word νόμος is used in this chapter require to be perceived and distinguished, its usual sense (see under ch. ii. 13) not being uniformly retained. There is, however, always some appended expression to indicate any new application of the word. We find it (*a*) in its usual sense, with the usual significance of the absence or the presence of the article, in vers. 7, 9, 12, 14, 16; and in ver. 22, still in the same sense, we have "the Law of God." We find also, (*b*) in ver. 23, "the law of my mind," whereby I delight in the "Law of God." Here "law" assumes a different sense from the other, but one in which the word is often used; as when we speak of the laws of nature, having in view, not so much a fiat external to nature which nature must obey, as the uniform rule according to which nature is found to work. The Latin word *norma* expresses the idea. Thus "the law of my mind" means the normal constitution of my higher and better self, whereby it cannot but assent to "the Law of God. Then (*c*) we have "the law of sin in my members;" *i.e.*, in a similar sense, an antagonistic rule or constitution dominant in my σάρξ. Lastly, (*d*) in ver. 21, the general law (in like sense) of my complex human nature, which necessitates this antagonism: "*the* law, *that* when I would do good" (in accordance with the law of the mind), "evil is present with me" (in virtue of the other law). Ancient and other commentators have been much puzzled as to the meaning of ver. 21, from taking τὸν νόμον at the beginning to denote the Mosaic Law, as νόμος usually does when preceded by the article. But not so when there is something after it to denote a different meaning; as there is here in the ὅτι at the end of the verse, meaning *that*, not (as some have understood it) *because*. (6) Difficulty has been found in the concluding clause of ver. 25, ἄρα οὖν, etc. It follows the expression of thanksgiving, "Thanks be to God," etc., which certainly introduced the thought of deliverance from the state that had been described; and hence it is supposed by some that this clause must be a continuance of that thought, and so to be taken as an introduction to ch. viii. rather than a summing up of the preceding argument. It is said also, in support of this view, that more entire association of the ἐγὼ with the Law of God than was before intimated is here expressed; αὐτὸς ἐγὼ being written instead of simply ἐγὼ, and δουλεύω being a stronger word than συνήδομαι (ver. 22). Thus the meaning would be, "*Though* in my flesh I still serve the law of sin (the φρόνημα σάρκος still remains in me, notwithstanding my regeneration), yet now *in my very real self* I not only *approve*, but *am in subjection to*, the Law of God." It is, however, at least a question whether these slight differences of expression come to much; and both the introductory ἄρα οὖν and the form of the clause suggest rather its being the summarized result of ch. vii. The additional emphasis added to ἐγὼ (which had, indeed, already been emphatic), and the substitution of δουλεύω for συνήδομαι, may serve only to bring out all the more strongly in the end what it had been the purpose of the whole passage to lead up to, viz. that man's real self, when conscience is fully aroused, yearns for and is ready for redemption. There is no difficulty in so understanding the clause (as we should surely understand it naturally but for the preceding thanksgiving), if we regard the thanksgiving as a parenthetical exclamation, anticipating for a moment the purport of ch. viii. Such an exclamation is characteristic of St. Paul, and it adds life to the passage.

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 6.—*The new spirit of Christian service.* What God creates he creates for a purpose. When he gives life, there is a special career before the living creature; thus

the fish is for the water, the bird for the air. When he imparts spiritual renewal, it is with a view to a new spiritual life. In re-creating human natures in the likeness of his own Son, God has it, so to speak, in his purpose that they should serve him, and that in "newness of the spirit."

I. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW LORD TO SERVE. They are freed from the dominion of sin, from their state of bondage to the tyrant; they are endowed with spiritual liberty. And they are devoted to the personal service of Christ, that they may do his will, advance his cause, promote his glory.

II. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW MOTIVE TO SERVICE. 1. The ground of their service is redemption, the distinctive fact and doctrine of the new economy. 2. The impulse to their service is grateful love, awakened by the experience of Christ's redeeming power and grace.

III. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW LAW OF SERVICE. This law is widely different from the "oldness of the letter." It extends to the spiritual realm, beginning in fact within, and working outwardly.

IV. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW EXAMPLE OF SERVICE. In the Lord Jesus they see the Servant of Jehovah, found in fashion as a man, assuming the form, the guise of a servant, ministering unto God and unto man, and in both relations fulfilling a perfect, flawless ministry.

V. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW POWER FOR SERVICE. This is the help of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of zeal and holiness, of patience and of devotion.

VI. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW MANNER OF SERVICE. They are not as the hireling who serves for wages, or as the bondman who serves from fear; but rather as the freedman who serves willingly and gratefully, as the child who serves from love. Christ introduced into the world a new style and tone of service; taught men the dignity and beauty of consecrated ministration. How precious and powerful this impulse and example have proved is known to every student of the history of Christ's Church.

VII. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW SCOPE FOR SERVICE. 1. *Mutual service* is an obligation in the Church springing from mutual love. The great are to serve the lowly, and the lowly the great. 2. *Universal service* is enjoined upon all who would do the will of the Divine Master. In both directions the service of those for whom Christ died is the service of Christ himself.

VIII. CHRISTIANS HAVE A NEW REWARD FOR SERVICE. Nothing adventitious or external attracts those who are in sympathy with him who is at once the Servant and the Lord of all. Of all privileges, that most alluring and dear to their hearts is the favour of their Master, the joy of their Lord.

Ver. 7.—*Knowledge of sin by the Law.* Although the apostle aimed in this Epistle to show that the Law by itself was unable and unfitted to secure men's salvation, it is evident, both that he honoured the Law as an expression of the Divine character and will, and that he considered it, from a Christian point of view, to fulfil a most important purpose. Especially in this verse does he set forth the Law as awakening conscience of sin, and so preparing the way for the introduction of the gospel, both in the order of the Divine dispensations and in the course of individual experience. His own spiritual history is represented as typical: "I had not known sin, but by the Law."

I. LAW IS THE REVELATION OF THE SUPERIOR WILL TO THE SUBJECT AND INFERIOR WILL. There is a sense in which the word "law" is commonly used in the exposition of physical science; it is in such connections equivalent to uniformity of antecedence and sequence. But this, though a proper employment of the term, is secondary and figurative; part of the connotation is intentionally abandoned. The fuller meaning of law is seen when the reference is to requirement of certain modes of action; and when the requirement is made by one who has a just right to make it, a just claim upon the submission and obedience of those to whom the command is addressed. The superiority in the Lawgiver does not lie simply in physical power, but in moral character and authority.

II. BEING UNDER SUCH LAW IMPLIES THE POSSESSION OF INTELLIGENT AND VOLUNTARY NATURE. The inferior animals are not, in the proper sense of the term, under law. Nor are babes, or idiots, or any whose moral nature is undeveloped.

Man, as an intelligent being, can apprehend law; as an active and voluntary being, can obey law. Kant has put the matter in a very striking and a very just light, in saying that, whilst the unintelligent creation acts according to law, an intelligent being has the prerogative of acting according to the representation of law; i.e. he can understand, consciously adopt, and willingly and without constraint obey the law. Freedom is the power to obey or to disobey.

III. IN PROPORTION TO THE DEFINITENESS OF THE LAW IS THE MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY ATTACHING TO THOSE WHO ARE SUBJECT TO IT. Confining attention to human beings possessed of thought, reason, and will, we cannot fail to detect degrees of acquaintance with the revelation which in various ways is vouchsafed to the race. There are those, as for example untutored savages, and the "waifs and strays" of a civilized community, whose knowledge of the Divine will is both very imperfect and very indistinct. Such in former ages was the case of the Gentiles as compared with the highly favoured Jews. Now, our Saviour himself, and, following his teaching, the inspired apostles, have plainly taught that responsibility varies with knowledge and opportunity.

IV. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE POSSESSION OF EXPRESS AND VERBAL LAW INVOLVES HEIGHTENED RESPONSIBILITY. When the knowledge of duty is clear, defection and rebellion are aggravated in guilt. The sin of transgression is increased as the light sinned against is brighter. Such was the case with the Jews, who were worthy of sorer condemnation than the Gentiles, where both were disobedient. Comparatively, they only knew sin who knew the Law by which sin is prohibited. True, there is a general conscience, against which even the unenlightened transgressors are offenders; but they are the worse culprits who, having the light, walk not in it.

V. THUS THE LAW, BY REVEALING A HIGHER STANDARD OF DUTY, AND BY MAKING SIN "EXCEEDING SINFUL," PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DIVINE GOSPEL OF SALVATION AND LIFE. The apostle avers that, but for the Law, he had not known sin, *i.e.* comparatively. If this had been all, he would have had little reason to thank the Law. But, in fact, the Law, proving the holiness and righteousness of God, and the powerlessness of man to obey, served to make the introduction of a new dispensation—that of grace—doubly welcome. Men were brought to feel their need of a Saviour, and, when that Saviour came, to receive him with alacrity and gratitude, and to use the means prescribed by which the penalties of the Law may be escaped, and the blessings of eternal salvation enjoyed.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

VERS. 1—17.—*The position of the Law under the New Testament.* The apostle is here continuing his discussion of the immoral suggestion to which he alluded in the previous chapter (ver. 15), "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace?"

I. THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO THE CHRISTIAN. 1. *The Christian's union with Christ involves his freedom from the Law.* (1) *From the Law as condemning him.* "Ye are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ" (ver. 4). The Christian, by faith in Jesus Christ, becomes a participator in his death. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;" "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (2) *From the Law as a motive-power.* "But now we are delivered from the Law, having died to that wherein we were held [Revised Version]; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (ver. 6). The Authorized Version is here misleading when it translates, "that being dead wherein we were held." The apostle does not speak of the Law as being dead, but of Christians as being dead to the Law. *The Law is not dead, but we are dead to it.* We have a higher and a better life. 2. *But this union with Christ and freedom from the Law do not imply that he is free to commit sin.* The principles of the Law remain, though the power of it is gone, so far as justification or condemnation of the Christian is concerned. The Law was powerless to give life. Through the sinfulness of our nature it brought forth fruit unto death (ver. 5). But our very freedom from the Law is in itself a reason for holy living. Christ implants in us a new

principle. We now "serve in newness of spirit." Professor Croskery ('Plymouth Brethrenism') deals with this subject very fully in a chapter on "The Law as a Rule of Life." "If Old Testament saints," he says, "could be under the Law and yet not under curse, because they were under the promise—that is, under the covenant of grace—why should not New Testament saints, saved by grace, be under Law likewise, as a rule of life, without being overtaken by the curse? What difference was there between David's sin and Peter's sin, in relation to the Law? If David was bound to keep the ten commandments, including the seventh, are not New Testament saints similarly bound? Does not James settle this point when he says, 'He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill' (Jas. ii. 11), and says this, too, to Christians? The passage [ch. vi. 14] means, 'Ye are not under the Law as a condition of salvation, but under a system of free grace.'" The Law still remains as the rule of life, the standard of obedience. St. Paul himself says in this same chapter, "With the mind I myself serve the Law of God" (ver. 25). And our Lord himself said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17).

II. THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO THE SINNER. 1. *The Law reveals to him the depths and power of his own sinfulness.* After the apostle has shown how, in the unregenerate nature, "the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death," he asks, "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?" (ver. 7). That is to say—Is the Law therefore in itself sinful? does it encourage sin? Far from it, he says. "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law." That is—I had not known the force or power of sin but by the law. "Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (ver. 13). Some would condemn the Bible because it describes sin, and pictures some of its best characters as falling into sins of gross description. But this, so far from being a defect of the Bible, is at once an evidence of its truthfulness, and an element in its purifying power upon humanity. The Bible does not describe sin to make us love it, but to turn us from it. So it is with the Law of God. It may awaken in our minds suggestions of sins that we would not otherwise have thought of (vers. 7, 8), but conscience at once recognizes that this is due, not to the Law itself, but to the sinfulness of our nature. 2. *The Law remains as the standard of right life.* "The Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (ver. 12); "The Law is spiritual" (ver. 14). Here is the answer to those who regard the Law as abrogated. The Law is still binding as the rule of life, the standard of morality. It therefore condemns the sinner. Thus still it becomes our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ.—C. H. I.

Vers. 18—25.—*The inward conflict of the Christian heart.* Two forces are for ever struggling for the soul of man. Goethe, the German poet, has immortalized that for us in his great drama of 'Faust,' where Mephistopheles, the prince of evil, tempts a human being too successfully into the paths of destruction. Milton has immortalized it for us in his great epic, 'Paradise Lost.' But these great poems are, after all, but echoes of the story of the Fall as told us in the Bible. These words of St. Paul are another echo of that story of the Fall. They might have been spoken by any of us. What folly to discuss the doctrine of human depravity as the result of the Fall, when every man carries the proof of it in his own breast! Thank God, there is a Paradise Regained as well as a Paradise Lost. There is a power of good as well as of evil working on the human heart. There is "a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness," and—something more than he who used those famous words meant by them—there is the personal power of a personal Saviour, coming down into this sinful world, and trying to lift men up again from their fallen and lost condition, by the power of his cross, by the power of his Divine love and mercy, by the power of his resurrection, by the power of his Spirit working upon their hearts.

I. A DESIRE AND A DELIGHT. St. Paul speaks of himself as having *a desire for what is good.* "When I would do good" (ver. 21), that is, "when I want to do good," "when I wish to do what is right." That in itself is a step on the upward path. But you might have a desire for what is right, and yet not be a Christian. Paul had something more than this desire for what was right; *he had a delight in it.* "I delight in

the Law of God after the inward man" (ver. 22). That in itself marks him out as a true Christian. He takes pleasure in the Divine Word, although it reveals to him the sinfulness of his own heart. He delights in the Law of God, because it shows to him his Father's will. He delights in the Law of God, because it shows to him the ideal of human character, the standard of good to which he desires to attain. Here, then, is the test, the evidence, of a true Christian. When we delight in the Law of God after the inward man, making it our constant study; when we humbly, but with earnest resolution, set ourselves to obey its precepts; this is evidence of the renewed nature and the regenerate spirit. Do we delight in the Law of God, or do we find God's commands a burden? Is the sabbath a delight, or is it wearisome? Are the services of God's house a pleasure which we would not miss if it were possible, a pleasure into which we throw all our capacities and energies; or are they a routine form which we go through because we think we must—a kind of cold, uninteresting task, which we are anxious to get over just as soon as possible? And how is it with the duties of the Christian life—with the duty of charity, the duty of forgiveness, the duty of liberality? If you do not delight in these things, then there is much reason to doubt if you are a Christian at all.

II. CONFLICT AND CAPTIVITY. Paul was making an analysis of his own mind. It was a complete analysis, and he has left behind a true record of it. "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" (ver. 23). We know what is right, but we often fail to do it. *Probo meliora, deteriora sequor.* But some one may say—This conflict with sin and captivity to it were not the experience of a truly regenerate man. Are we not told that "he that is born of God sinneth not"? The previous statements of the apostle are an answer to this. He tells us that he delights in the Law of God after the inward man—a statement which none but a true Christian could make. The fact is, the Apostle Paul was no perfectionist. He did not believe in sinless perfection. Like every true saint of God, the older he grew and the holier he became, the more he felt his own sinfulness. The more he knew of Christ, the less he thought of self. It was a humbling experience, this conflict with sin and subjection to its power. Yet we are not to suppose that when the apostle said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," he meant that in every instance when he wanted to do good he was absolutely prevented from accomplishing his purpose, and drawn away into positive sin by the corruption which still adhered to him. What he means is evidently this—that in all his endeavours to do the will of God, the power of sin so interfered with his efforts that he could not do anything as he wished to do it; that the power of evil seemed to pervade his whole life, and to taint all his actions, even the best of them. *Is not this the experience of every child of God?* Let any one who really loves and fears God, and desires to serve him, form a purpose, any one morning of his life, to repress all sinful influences, and to set such a guard upon feeling, and temper, and word, and action throughout the day as that there shall be no cause for regret or repentance in the evening; and I think it will be found that, if the work of self-examination be faithfully and honestly performed at night, the language of the apostle will accurately describe the experience of such a one: "I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

III. TRIAL AND TRIUMPH. It was a great trial to the apostle, this indwelling presence and power of sin. Under its power, clinging constantly to him, as the dead body which the ancients used sometimes to fasten to their prisoners, he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (ver. 24). This very agony of spirit was a further proof that he was a child of God. Had he been an unregenerate man, sin would have been a delight to him, instead of a wearisome and loathsome burden, from which he is anxious to be delivered. *Here again is a test whether you are a Christian or not.* What are your feelings in regard to sin? Is it a source of shame and grief to you when you yield to sin? Or do you see no harm in doing those things which God's Word forbids? Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, once said in that famous school, as is recorded in his life, "What I want to see in the school, and what I cannot find, is abhorrence of evil. I always think of the psalm, 'Neither doth he abhor that which is evil.'" The true Christian will abhor sin. It is in this sense that "he that is born of God sinneth not"—does not love sin. He will look upon it as

the abominable thing which God hates. Its presence in his own heart, manifesting itself in his best services and in his dealings with his fellow-men, will be a sore trial to him. It will lead him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" But no one need despair of deliverance, no matter how strong is the force of temptation from within or from without. Even as Paul asked the question, he answered it himself: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." *This story of the inward conflict teaches us many lessons.* It should teach us all watchfulness and prayerfulness. It should teach us all to cultivate the higher, the better, the heavenly side of our nature. It should teach us humility. It should teach us charity toward others, when we remember the faults and failings and frailties of our own nature. It should teach us to look for and to depend upon, more than ever we have done before, the Divine strength of the mighty Saviour, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—6.—*The two unions.* The apostle has spoken of freedom from the Law, and of the new reign of grace; but lest this freedom should be disputed, he here establishes it. The Mosaic Law, as such, touches only this present life; death does away with its claims. Christ, therefore, by his death, is freed from its demands; and we, by our spiritual fellowship with him, are likewise free. Free from the old union, to enter on the new. Such is the argument of these verses.

I. DEAD TO THE LAW. Law is not spoken of here in its Divine perfection, but in its partial, external character as revealed through Moses. A law of rigid retribution: "Do this, and live;" "Do that, and die." A law of mere restraints, not of renewal. 1. Of this law, death was the annulment, even as the penalties did not extend beyond the grave. It laid its sanctions on the whole of life; further than life it did not go. An example of this is found in the Jewish law of marriage, which, like all mere national laws of marriage, can only touch this present life. The law of the union, in such external legislation, is only until death. The death of either destroys the law. 2. Has not Christ, then, by his death, escaped the claims of all such legislation? Dying, he has died unto the dispensation of Moses; he is now no longer the Jew; the Law has no authority over him. He is now only the Divine Man; he has risen into all the spiritual freedom and power of the life of God. No narrow, prohibitive Law is the law of his risen life; but the perfect, quickening law of God. And are not we dead, in him, to all the limitations and restraints of the Law? Our very union with him, by faith, releases us now from all its claims. It is as though we were dead. The unhappy marriage-bond is broken.

II. ALIVE TO CHRIST. But if so, a new marriage-bond is formed. Dead to the Law, we live to Christ. The one has no more claim; the other has every claim. We are joined to him now, indissolubly one. 1. The plenitude of spiritual power is ours in him. No law of the letter restrains, but a law of the Spirit inspires. His Spirit! which he hath "poured forth" (Acts ii. 33), which he hath "poured out upon us richly" (Titus iii. 6). Is it not so? a law written on the heart—the law of liberty, the law of love. 2. And being thus filled with power, through faith in him, we bring forth fruit unto God. The old union, with the Law, wrought fruit, but it was fruit unto death. Its very holiness, as a mere exterior restraint in contact with our carnal nature, was an excitant to sin. Fruit unto death! yes; for, sowing to the flesh, we reaped corruption. But now, God's law works in us, as a quickening power. God's love is our very life; and the fruit is unto life, unto God!

Have we such union with Christ? an indefeasible union, utter and for evermore? For such is truly the new life of faith. "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20): we must be satisfied with nothing short of this.—T. F. L.

Vers. 7—13.—*Is the Law sin?* "The sinful passions, which were through the Law" (ver. 5). What! does the Law bring forth such fruit? Is the Law SIN? Nay, that cannot be; on the contrary, we all acknowledge it, without dispute, as "holy," and every separate commandment which it gives as "holy, and righteous, and good." Nevertheless, even the holy Law has peculiar relations to the development of sin; and they are these: the Law reveals sin; the Law becomes, to a sinful man, an excitant to further sin.

I. THE LAW AS REVEALING SIN. "For," says the apostle, "I had not known sin, except through the Law; I had not known coveting, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Here we have a general principle, and a special instance. Law, by saying, "Thou shalt not," brings home to our conscience the knowledge that certain tendencies, which we had followed unconsciously before, are wrong; the separate commandments of the Law stamp this character of wrongness on each separate tendency respectively. Thus we learn the great distinctions of right and wrong; the particular distinctions in particular cases. To us, then, as fallen creatures, there is a great revelation of wrong. When Law first speaks, we awake to find ourselves sinful, *i.e.* dead! Till then? Alive, without law; yes, even as the brute beasts are alive, not being conscious of any moral disharmony or disorder. They may covet and strive and fight, but to them this is not wrong. Law is silent, and therefore sin, in its recognized character, is not—it is dead. So with us. But Law comes; sin revives; *we* die!

II. THE LAW AS AN EXCITANT TO SIN. To innocent creatures law would be directive, and restraining; to corrupt creatures it is galling, and incentive to yet worse outbreaks. Illustrate, unruly horse. The very curbing makes it spring forth more furiously. So sin works in us, through the commandment, all manner of coveting. And surely nothing shows the exceeding sinfulness of sin more strikingly than this, that a Law which is acknowledged as holy and good should be the means of making it more rampant and riotous! Sin works death "through that which is good." And we, meanwhile? Slain! slain, that we may desire a better life. Law the necessary preparative for redemption.

But when are these successive experiences realized? When are we "alive without law"? In the days of irresponsible infancy, when we are sinful indeed, but unconsciously sinful, yielding to the wrong tendency even as we yield to the right, not knowing, not reflecting. More or less, though only partially, this is the case among the untaught heathen also; only partially, for there is law written on the heart. To some extent the case even amongst the enlightened, even amongst the regenerate; for it is only by degrees that the Law of Christ unfolds to us its sublime perfection. And when, and to what extent, are we dead, when sin revives? As childhood develops into fuller life, and the Law without awakes the law within. Also, as the heathen, the uninstructed, are taught the fuller truth. And, in accordance with above, as the Christ unfolds to us his perfection, and we do not at once respond. And so it is that

> "They who fain would serve thee best
> Are conscious most of wrong within."

But "he giveth more grace!"—T. F. L.

VERS. 14—25.—"*Sold under sin!*" Such is the deplorable result of the action of God's Law on man: sin is made to stand out blackly, in all its hideous evil; nay, it seems even stimulated to increased malignity of working. How so? Because of the intense opposition between the holy Law and an unholy nature: "For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." But man's nature is not without its witness for the Divine; the spiritual is captive, but not destroyed; it is capable of apprehending and desiring, though not of really purposing and performing the good: and therefore, not merely is there a conflict between the spiritual Law and man's carnal nature, as described above, but between the spiritual nature of man himself, when quickened by the spiritual Law, and that carnal nature to which it is enslaved. These verses depict this opposition, and we have therefore—the desire for the good; the subjection to the evil; the hopeless conflict.

I. THE DESIRE FOR THE GOOD. Repeatedly, through this whole passage, the apostle speaks of those who are touched by the quickening action of the Law as desiring, and half purposing, the good. Thus, "I consent unto the Law that it is good;" "To will is present with me;" "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man;" "With the mind I serve the Law of God." And is not this verified by our experience? Our very nature constrains us to approve, to admire, the good. We have the witness in ourselves. The spirit made after God's image recognizes God. The light of conscience struggles upwards to its kindred light. Nay, more than this. If we do not stubbornly resist, the fair image of goodness commands, not merely our approval, but our desires.

The will, bond-slave as it is, covets freedom. The subjected spirit craves to be once again in harmony with the spiritual Law. Is not this verified likewise by the history of mankind? In the ancient world, amid all the corruptions of heathendom, there were those who approved and desired the good. It shone before them in its fascinating beauty, and their eyes were fixed upon its fairness, and their souls were drawn in longing towards it. So is it still. Does not the Christ attract the gaze, the admiration even, of sinful men? And is there not stirred in many a sinful heart the longing to be at one with Christ? Yes; the spiritual Law attracts the approbation and desire of the spiritual in man. The Ego, the Self, the I, desires the good.

II. THE SUBJECTION TO THE EVIL. But is the desire accomplished? Alas! to desire the good is only to realize more intensely the utter subjection to evil. Man's spirit is enslaved to the flesh, and, through the flesh, to sin: "sold under sin." This thought also runs through the passage. And so abject is the enslavement, that the Ego is but the impotent instrument in the hands of sin. "It is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me," is the thrice-uttered plaint of the captive man. And thus the very motions of the will are made in blind submission: "that which I do I know not." Yea, even when the will would make some show of resistance, it is all in vain. For the rigid law which governs the whole nature, made to seem the more rigid in its defiance of that other holy Law of God, is—"to me who would do good, evil is present;" yes, present always, as an absolute, a mocking lord. Has not the world's history verified these things? Listen to its confessions: *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor; Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata* ("I see the better things, and approve them; I follow the worse;" "We strive ever after what is forbidden, and desire the things denied to us"): so spake the heathen, in the ancient world. And is not this our experience still? We are "in the flesh," and in our flesh "dwelleth no good thing." Such is our natural state.

III. THE HOPELESS CONFLICT. And, this being so, is not our condition one of wretchedness, of despair? Perpetual war between the law of the mind and the law of the members; between the spirit and the flesh. But hopeless war; sin, through the flesh, triumphant always, mockingly triumphant. Yes, we may look, we may writhe in our efforts to escape; but we are bound—bound hand and foot. And so our own very body, intended to be the obedient instrument of the governing spirit, has become, by the supremacy of sin, a brute lord, and is a "body of death." Death unto death; darkness ever darker: is not the conflict hopeless? may we not well cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

Yes, hopeless in itself; no victory in us. But, thanks be to God, there is a mightier One, even Jesus; and he is our Helper, "mighty to save"!—T. F. L.

Ver. 6.—"*Newness of spirit.*" The apostle never tires of contrasting the Sinaitic with the gospel dispensation, to the exaltation of the latter. He thinks of the former as a thraldom. "We were holden," that is, cribbed, confined by the Law.

I. AN ESSENTIAL TO DELIVERANCE FROM LAW. 1. *Death must have intervened.* Death is the great liberator, exhausting the penalty of the Law, and giving quittance from its captivity. The wife is released from spousal obligations by the death of her husband, and is free, therefore, to enter into a new covenant. 2. *The death of Christ affords the necessary liberation.* Prior to full obedience and reception of the utmost penalty of Mosaism, a fresh dispensation had been like adultery; but when the Law had been fulfilled to its extreme requirement, the death of the victim abrogated the authority of the Law. 3. *The death of Christ is spiritually enacted in his followers.* They repeat in essence his crucifixion of sin. His atonement is realized in their heart, and their baptism is the outward emblem of release by death and burial from a covenant of works. "He died unto sin once, but liveth unto God." Henceforth with Christians "the terrors of law and of death can have nothing to do."

II. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE NEW CONDITION. We are not set free to please ourselves, but belong to him "who died for us and rose again." We enter into a fresh service. 1. *The fact that it is new is a guarantee of improvement.* Not everything new is better than the old. Man frequently retrogrades by his changes of custom. But when the alteration is a direct consequence of Divine intervention, there must be an advance. We cannot conceive of God taking a backward step. 2. *The new service*

*has the dewy freshness of youth about it.* The resurrection-life is an awakening out of sleep, with the vigour of a glad new morning. The Christian sloughs off the old skin, to be attired in a vesture of beauty, and, like the winged butterfly emerging from the chrysalis state, he enters into an enlarged sphere of existence with corresponding capacities. 3. *Voluntary service is substituted for compulsion.* "Live and do" takes the place of "Do and live." The heart has been won to God, to obedience and holiness, and "love's labour is light." The renewed spirit delights to exert itself in loving activity. Gratitude is a sweeter and stronger motive than authority. 4. *Rules are exchanged for principles.* Not the definite limiting letter governs the service, but a code of action which leaves much to be ascertained and applied by the enlightened judgment. It is the obedience of the instructed manhood, not the strict and rigid enforcement of precepts on children in their pupilage. The Law lay as a burden on men's souls; the gospel is a "reasonable service," clarifying the vision and guiding men as "with the eye" of God. We serve not to gain heaven, but because Christ has opened to us the kingdom of heaven. As pilgrims relieved of a heavy load, we journey joyously to the city of the King. A bird must sing, and a Christian must serve.—S. R. A.

Vers. 7—11.—*Knowledge of sin through Law.* The strong language in which the apostle exulted in the believer's discharge from the Law might easily be misunderstood, and give offence to Jewish readers. It seemed to throw the onus of man's bondage and death entirely upon the Sinaitic Law. To obviate misconception, he therefore enters into a detailed examination of the relationship of sin and Law. He insists on *the function of Law as revealing sin*—the secondary, not the primary cause of sin.

I. THE LAW MANIFESTS THE EXISTENCE OF SIN. "I had not known sin, except through the Law." The tenth commandment is selected as a particular instance of law. The prohibition against coveting brings to light the perversity of human nature, which rebels against the idea of a thing forbidden, and longs to do the action reprobated. We know not the existence of the current till we put some barrier in the way; then the stream rages to overcome the obstacle. A precept provokes into activity the dormant selfishness; sin "revives." Apart from a law, we had sinned without realizing that it was sin.

II. THE LAW DISPLAYS THE STRENGTH OF SIN. We must distinguish between the agent and the occasion. The commandment furnishes an opportunity of which the sinful appetites readily avail themselves to suggest disobedience. And we gauge best the power of the tide when we try to swim against it. Sin hurries us onward against the bounds which law has set up, and in our vain struggles to check the sinful impulse we learn how mighty sin is within. We had thought it easy to control our inclinations till the conflict began.

III. THE LAW EXPOSES THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. "Sin beguiled me through the commandment" (Revised Version). The promises of sin are ever fair to the eye and ear: "Ye shall be as gods." But experience reveals the fact that sin works evil to us. It is a treacherous monster dealing with us as Joab did with Amasa; it kisses us and stabs our souls. The fruit, so sweet and pleasant, turns to gall and wormwood. Sin pretends to fasten wings to the soul, but is really loading it with fetters. The operation that was to purge our vision has destroyed it. All sin is not ugly on the surface. Like some diseases and parasitical growths, it appears with an illusory brightness to mock our hopes.

IV. THE LAW EXHIBITS THE FATAL EFFECTS OF SIN. "Slew me." "The commandment which was intended for life, I found to be unto death." Learn the abominableness of sin which pollutes the pure stream of holy injunction into a poisoning river, and turns the inspiriting fire of the Divine Word into a destructive conflagration. In the physical death which attends so many vicious courses, we see an analogue of the moral death with which sin visits humanity. As a ray of light makes visible the motes in the atmosphere, so the commandment of God discovers to us the sinful miasmatic motions of the flesh. We confess the loss of a sense of God's favour and of righteous peace in the soul. Push sin to its final consequences to judge of the enormity of a single act. By its fruits we know sin. It enslaves the soul and forces

it to do what it would not, so that men groan under the desperate oppression. Thus the Law fulfils its purpose in the manifestation of sin, and ultimately leads to the deliverance of the believer. Sin overreaches itself, and is hoist with its own petard. Feeling the working of death and dreading the issue, we cry to him who "was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." The Law being impotent to produce holiness, another dispensation was requisite, ushered in by Christ, who brings the "law of the Spirit of life" and peace.—S. R. A.

Vers. 22, 23.—*The inner warfare.* Even prior to their self-dedication to the service of God, men are conscious of the two opposing laws of which the text speaks. The conflict is intensified and its issue rendered certain by the saving knowledge of the truth, but it is not entirely abolished. All men can therefore echo in some degree the utterance of the apostle.

I. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF GOD MEANS A VICTORY WON OVER A PART OF SELF. There is a dualism in man; the lower appetites strive to subjugate the higher and nobler desires. However powerful the "law of the members," it cannot obliterate the remembrance of a superior Law. But the carnal inclinations may be so readily followed that there is hardly any fighting at all. Howbeit, when the "inward man" asserts his sway, and the fleshy impulse is denied, this implies that a battle has been waged. It is not natural to us nor easy to do right and to conquer evil. Sin struggles hard; the spirit may be willing to comply with the Divine dictate, but the flesh is weak unto good, and often refuses to follow the lead of the spirit. Recall the temptation and conflict of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. The law of the members, our corporeal frame, often pleads speciously for the indulgence of a longing legitimate enough at another time or place, and this fact augments the severity of the warfare.

II. CONSIDERATIONS ADAPTED TO STRENGTHEN THE COMBATANT AGAINST SURRENDER TO THE LOWER PRINCIPLE. 1. *The Law of God has authority on its side.* The law of the mind is the genuine law; the other is a usurped dominion, promulgating an unlawful edict. Obedience to properly constituted authorities is the path of safety and honour for communities and individuals. Recollect, therefore, that what you are urged to do by the law of the members is flat rebellion against your King. Its force has no sovereignty behind it. 2. *To succumb to the law of the members is to yield to sin and death.* Reflect on the consequence of a defeat of the higher self. It implies slavery and destruction. None but the conquerors can taste life here and receive its crown hereafter. 3. *Only the Law of God can excite true delight.* It is called "the law of the mind," because it is that which the clarified vision discerns as beautiful, and to which the purified judgment yields complete and lasting assent. To allow the body to govern the soul is to mar the plan of our being. For the sake of ease and pleasure to gratify a present inclination is to prefer the temporal to the eternal, and shadows to the substance. Subsequent reaction testifies to the short-lived gratification of sensual appetites. This is true of every case in which ignoble pursuits and aims have overridden the suggestions of a lofty self-sacrificing career. 4. *The God who has written his Law on the pages of Scripture, and graven it on the tablets of the mind, assures us of his unfailing support in the warfare.* He has given us his Son as the Captain of our salvation. "By death he death's dark king defeated," and by his triumph and exaltation exhibited the superiority of goodness to every other method of obtaining solid peace and honour. We may fight with confidence, for our emancipation from evil is sure. He turns our folly into wisdom and our weakness into strength through his indwelling Spirit, the ever-present Christ.—S. R. A.

Vers. 24, 25.—*A cry and its answer.* Strange language to issue from the lips of the great apostle of the Gentiles! from a chosen vessel unto honour, a man in labours abundant and most blessed, with joy often rising to transport. Nor was it forced from him by some momentary excitement or the pressure of some temporary trouble. Nor is there any reference to outward afflictions and persecutions. Had he cried out when under the agonizing scourge or in the dismal dungeon, we had not been so surprised. But it is while he is enforcing truth drawn from his own inward experience he so realizes the bitterness of the spiritual conflict, that his language cannot be restrained within the limits of calm reasoning, and he bursts forth with the exclamation, "O

wretched man," etc.! Some have been so shocked as to call this a miserable chapter, and have shifted the difficulty by passing it on one side. Others have adopted the notion that he is here describing, not his actual state, but the condition of an unregenerate man such as he was once. Yet the expression of the preceding verse, "I delight in the Law of God," and the change of tense from the past to the present after the thirteenth verse, indicate that we have here a vivid description of the struggle that continues, though with better success, even in the Christian who is justified, but not wholly sanctified, whilst he is imprisoned in this "body of death."

I. INQUIRE MORE CLOSELY INTO THE GROUND OF THIS EXCLAMATION. What is it of which such grievous complaint is made? He appeals for aid against a strong foe whose grasp is on his throat. The eyes of the warrior grow dim, his heart is faint, and, fearful of utter defeat, he cries, "Who will deliver me?" We may explain "the body of this death" as meaning this mortal body, the coffin of the soul, the seat and instrument of sin. But the apostle includes still more in the phrase. It denotes sin itself, this carnal mass, all the imperfections, the corrupt and evil passions of the soul. It is a body of death, because it tends to death; it infects us, and brings us down to death. The old man tries to strangle the new man, and, unlike the infant Hercules, the Christian is in danger of being overcome by the snakes that attack his feebleness. How afflicting to one who loves God and desires to do his will, to find himself thwarted at every turn, and that to succeed means a desperate conflict! Attainments in the Divine life are not reached without a struggle, and non-success is not simply imperfection; it is failure, defeat, sin gaining the mastery. *This evil is grievous because it is so near and so constant.* The man is chained to a dead body. Where we go our enemy accompanies us, ever ready to assault us, especially when we are at a disadvantage from fatigue or delusive security. Distant evils might be borne with some measure of equanimity; we might have a signal of their approach, and be prepared, and hope that, after a sharp bout, they would retire. But like a sick man tormented with a diseased frame, so the "law of sin in the members" manifests its force and uniform hostility in every place.

II. DERIVE CONSOLATION FROM THE EXCLAMATION ITSELF—from the fact of its utterance, its vehemency, etc. 1. *Such a cry indicates the stirrings of Divine life within the soul.* The man must be visited with God's grace who is thus conscious of his spiritual nature, and of a longing to shake off his unworthy bondage to evil. It may be the beginning of better things if the impression be yielded to. Do not quit the fight, lest you become like men who have been temporarily aroused and warned, and have made vows of reformation, and then returned to their old apathy and sleep in sin. And this attitude of watchfulness should never be abandoned during your whole career. 2. *The intensity of the cry discovers a thorough hatred of sin and a thirst after holiness.* It is a passionate outburst revealing the central depths. Such a disclosure is not fit for all scenes and times; the conflict of the soul is too solemn to be profaned by casual spectators. Yet what a mark of a renewed nature is here displayed! What loathing of corruption, as offensive to the spiritual sense! Sin may still clog the feet of the Christian and sometimes cause him to stumble, but he is never satisfied with such a condition, and calls aloud for aid. Would that this sense of the enormity of sin were more prevalent; that, like a speck of dust in the eye, there could be no ease till it be removed! Sin is a foreign body, a disturbing element, an intruder. 3. *There is comfort in the very conviction of helplessness.* The apostle sums up his experience as if to say, "My human purposes come to nought. Between my will and the performance there is a sad hiatus. I find no help in myself." A lesson which has to be learnt ere we really cry for a Deliverer, and value the Saviour's intervention. Peter, by his threefold denial, was taught his weakness, and then came the command, "Feed my lambs." We are not prepared for service in the kingdom until we confess our dependence on superhuman succour.

III. THE CRY ADMITS OF A SATISFACTORY ANSWER. A Liberator has been found, so that the apostle is not in despair; he adds, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." *Christ assumed our body of death, crucified it, and glorified it.* Thus he "condemned sin in the flesh." He bruised the serpent's head. Since our Leader has conquered, we shall share his triumph. *He quickens and sustains his followers by his Spirit.* Stronger is he who is for us than all against us. His grace is the antidote to

moral evil; by its power we may contend victoriously. The indwelling Christ is the prophecy of ultimate, complete victory. *Eventually we shall quit this tabernacle of clay*, and leave behind us all the avenues to temptation, and the stings and infirmities of which the body is the synonym. Clothed with a house from heaven, there shall be no obstacle to perfect obedience—a service without weariness and without interruption.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—6.—*The two marriages of the soul.* In the preceding chapter we saw how justification leads of necessity to sanctification. Once we realize that we have died in Jesus for sin, we are spiritually prompted to enter with a risen Saviour into newness of life. We realize our consecration to God. We give up the slavery to sin, and become slaves to God; and our fruit is found unto holiness, and our end everlasting life. The apostle, moreover, has affirmed that "we are not under Law, but under grace" (ch. vi. 14). This he proceeds more fully to explain. "Slavery" may be the idea under *sin*, but "marriage" becomes the idea about *Law*. Under the Law provision was always made for a second marriage. If death took one of the married persons away, the survivor was at liberty to contract a second marriage. It is this figure which the apostle employs in the present section. He represents the soul as first wedded to Law; then, through death with Christ for sin and unto Law and resurrection with Christ to newness of life, the soul is legally warranted in contracting a second marriage, and this time with Christ himself. The Law is the soul's first husband; and Christ becomes the second. We cannot do better, then, than consider, in the first place, the soul's first marriage to the Law; in the second place, how this unhappy marriage is dissolved; and in the third place, the soul's second marriage to Jesus Christ.

I. THE SOUL'S FIRST MARRIAGE TO THE LAW. It has been thought by some that this seventh chapter comes in strangely after the third; but if we will bear in mind that in the third chapter the apostle is showing the Law to be unequal to man's *justification*, while here he is showing it to be unequal to man's *sanctification*, all difficulty about his line of thought will disappear. The point insisted upon in the present chapter is that, although the Law is in itself holy, it cannot *make* men holy. Its sanctification does not pass over to the legal soul. Now, in an unhappy marriage the husband may be quite blameless; he may, poor man, be doing his very best; but the wife proves so incorrigibly bad that nothing but wretchedness results. This, then, is the Pauline idea. The Law is holy, just, and good; but the soul wedded to the law is sinful, so that there is nothing but irritation and unhappiness as the result. In fact, the sinful soul gets provoked by the demands of Law, and acts more recklessly than if no such demands were made. This will come out more clearly as we proceed with the chapter. It is sufficient here to insist that the soul which is wedded to legalism is sure to experience an unhappy union; the legal soul finds the union with Law exacting and exasperating, and the only hope for it is in getting the union dissolved.

II. HOW THIS UNHAPPY MARRIAGE IS DISSOLVED. Now, it is important here to notice that the apostle does not represent the Law as having died. This would have been the natural use of the marriage figure. If Law be the husband, and if the soul, wedded to the Law, is to contract another union, must not the husband first die? The apostle takes another line altogether. The Law does not die; but the soul may "die to the Law," and so die out of the legal union. If, then, having died out of the one relation, it is raised into a new life, then it is in a position to contract a second marriage. This, accordingly, is the ground taken up by Paul in this passage. The soul dies to the Law in the Person of Christ, and so the unhappy union gets dissolved. This is what is expressed in ver. 4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead" (Revised Version). That is to say, Christ died; we die by faith in him to the Law's claims. All are met. Law, accordingly, has no further right over us. We are no longer *its wife*. We have died in our spiritual experience out of our old relation; that state is past. It is most important that we should see that *legalism can exercise no sanctifying power*. Its only fruit is pride and death (ver. 5). There is no hope for the soul but surrendering its legalism, and betaking itself through death and resurrection to a better union and a happier life.

III. THE SOUL'S SECOND MARRIAGE TO JESUS CHRIST. The apostle's idea is that

the soul, having died in Jesus to the Law, and having thus dissolved the unhappy union, gets raised along with Christ and is united to him as the second and better husband. It is to a risen Saviour that the risen soul is united. Jesus is the Bridegroom, and the soul the bride (cf. John iii. 29). And regarding this second marriage of the soul, it is a happy one; for: 1. *The soul receives the Spirit of Christ, and so becomes one with him.* There can be in this case no ill-assorted union. Christ can make his bride one in spirit with himself, and so the sweetest unity of spirit prevails. 2. *As the risen Saviour, he secures the devotion of the soul in a way that abstract law never could.* The devotion of a true wife to her husband is something essentially different from and infinitely higher than obedience to a code of laws. It is here that sanctification is secured. The soul is led to feel that a Saviour, who has lived and died for its redemption, deserves the homage of the heart. In this way obedience passes into the enthusiastic devotion of the whole nature, and becomes a passion of the soul. This is the "newness of the spirit," as distinguished from the "oldness of the letter," to which the apostle declares the renewed soul comes. 3. *The fruit of this marriage with Christ is consecration to God.* The soul is joined to the risen Saviour that "we might bring forth fruit unto God." Now, just as in married life, when children come, they are consecrated unto God, so the fruits of our union with Christ consist in those "good works which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God." Good works are the united product of Christ and the believing soul. "Without me ye can do nothing," he tells us. And so we are to rejoice in them as the fruit of that spiritual union existing between the Saviour and the soul. It is for us to test ourselves by these facts, and see to it that we are united to Christ, as the bride is to her husband.[1]—R. M. E.

Vers. 7—13.—*The work of the Law in awakening the soul.* After the general statement about the two marriages of the soul, the apostle proceeds to exhibit the soul in its unregenerate state, and how it is awakened through Law to a sense of its guilt and danger. In the section now before us we have the soul presented in its state of security, and then passing into its state of alarm. The subsequent section, as we shall see, presents the soul in its regenerate condition contending successfully against its remaining corruption. Let us, then, look at—

I. THE SOUL'S SECURITY UNDER SIN. Two distinct ideas are suggested about this state—first, that sin without Law is "dead," by which the apostle means that it lies in a state of latency or dormancy, and is not roused into active struggle; secondly, the soul before the advent of Law is "alive," that is, apparently alive, fancying itself quite as good and well-to-do as its fellows. It lives by its instincts, and yet has no idea of the guilt of doing so. "The child or savage," to take an illustration from De Rougemont, "is selfish, addicted to appetite (*gourmand*), cruel, hateful, freely and naively; he does not imagine that he is doing wrong in following his natural instincts, and as he satisfies his passions without remorse, he is content, he *lives*."[2] It has been very properly said, "Unbelief in the Law is as common as unbelief in the gospel. If men believe the gospel, they soon feel the power of it. So of the Law; if they truly believe it, they will feel the power of its condemning voice. No man can be found who will deny that he has sinned. Let a man, then, only believe, in reality, that death eternal is, according to the Law of God, annexed to his sin as a punishment, and he will be afraid—his heart will sink within him. He will have no rest, he will have fearful forebodings of wrath; and if this be not the case, then plainly he does not believe the Law. . . . To hear the Law, and yet be as hopeful and merry-hearted and unconcerned as if the Law were an idle tale or a mere man of straw, that shows a most miserable state of blindness and want of feeling—a state which can be accounted for only by the fact that the Law is not credited, that its threatenings are not believed at all."[3] Now, this state of security under sin is one of danger as well as guilt. It is a

[1] On fruit-bearing through union with Christ, cf. Moule's 'Union with Christ,' p. 57; also Archer Butler's 'Sermons,' ii. p. 121.

[2] Cf. 'La Vie Humaine avec et Sans la Foi,' p. 108.

[3] Cf. Hewitson's 'Remains,' vol. ii. pp. 93, 94; see also Griffith's 'From Sin to Salvation,' pp. 43—58.

sleep on the edge of a precipice, a sleep over a mine, a mere dance of death. The sooner it ends the better. Let us, therefore, consider—

II. THE SOUL'S AWAKENING THROUGH THE LAW. The Law comes claiming consideration and belief, and the moment we receive it in good faith, the sense of security is at an end. Now, by the Law the apostle has in view the Decalogue, and he here directs special attention to the tenth commandment and its forbidding covetousness or "lust" (*ἐπιθυμία*). It is, in fact, the spiritual rider to the whole Law, carrying the receiver of the Law into the region of the heart, and inquiring how its desires and passions are regulated. A Pharisee, such as St. Paul had been, could complacently contemplate the other commandments and regard himself as having kept them from his youth up—that is, of course, so far as outward, overt act is concerned. But the moment the tenth commandment comes in to forbid "desire" of a selfish character, the self-complacency is levelled to the dust and genuine conviction begins. Here, then, we have the first step in the awakening of the soul, when the Law searches the heart with its lighted candle and exposes the selfish "desires" which lay behind all the overt acts. Not only so, but, secondly, *the Law becomes the occasion, not the cause, of intensified lust*—"all manner of coveting" (*πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν*). By contrariety, the soul becomes more disposed to the "desires" which have been forbidden. The holy command evokes unholy resistance. Sin is intensified through the very denunciation which the Law contains. And then, thirdly, *the soul realizes through the Law its death in sin.* For, as one already quoted has further observed, "the Law not only shows us our sin, but makes us feel that we are lost—as good as dead. A man is in a room during the dark; he sees nothing, but imagines that he is safe. At length the day breaks. Through the window of his apartment sunlight enters; and behold, he is, though he knew not till now, in the midst of wild beasts which, like himself, have been asleep. They awake, and put on a threatening aspect. There is a serpent, uncoiling its horrid length, and there a tiger, watching its opportunity for a fatal spring. The light has come, and the man now sees his danger—he is but a dead man. So, when the Law comes, there is seen guilt now in the past life, in every part of it. There is felt now sin in the present condition of the heart. Every moment there is a discovery of sin. Everything past and present cries, as it were, for vengeance. Death everywhere stares him in the face."

III. THE LAW THUS REVEALS THE REAL NATURE OF SIN. As a selfish disposition, it seems to the unawakened soul a simple "taking care of number one," as the world puts it. But the Law comes with its searching light, and lo, sin is found to be an enemy of our real interests. It antagonizes our welfare; it takes the Law and uses it as a weapon against us. In short, we discover that self-seeking in any form is mutiny against the real welfare of the soul. We discover that we are beguiled and deluded by sin; that all this self-centring is treason to the true interests within. Not only so, but the intensification of sin through the Law's advent leads us to rightly regard it as "exceeding sinful" (*καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἁμαρτωλὸς*). How dreadful and malignant sin must be when it takes a good and holy Law and works death in the soul thereby!

We have thus set before us what the Law can do. It can break up our refuge of lies in which we were trusting; it can awaken the soul to a sense of its sin and danger; but it cannot give us either "the remission of our sins or the Holy Spirit." The salvation must come from a higher source than Law. It comes from the Saviour, who has satisfied the demands of Law and offers us deliverance in himself. The Law serves its purpose, then, when as a schoolmaster it conducts us to Christ that we may be justified by faith.[1] May we be led by Law to him who can save us from all our sin!—R. M. E.

Vers. 14—25.—*The principle of progress through antagonism.* In last section we saw how the soul is awakened through the Law. This Law-work is a necessity of our times. And now we have to notice how the soul is kept awake by the antagonism going on within. For the gospel is not intended to promote at any time satisfaction with self. So far from this, it is a plan for subordinating self to its rightful Sovereign,

[1] Arnot's 'Roots and Fruits,' on "The Place of Law in the Salvation of Sinners;" also Rougemont and Hewitson, *ut supra.*

the Saviour. And so we are not only put out of conceit with ourselves in conviction and conversion, but kept out of self-conceit by the law of Christian progress. In this section, as in other portions of his Epistles, the apostle reveals this law as that of *antagonism*. The imparted Spirit proves himself a *militant* Spirit. The special tendencies in the wild heart of man are met and controlled by the Holy Spirit, and to this war within the Christian has to reconcile himself. In fact, he is not right until this campaign of the Spirit is begun. It will help us to the proper idea to look at the law of antagonism as it obtains in the larger sphere of Christianity. To special and undesirable tendencies on the part of men, Christianity will be found to have presented such opposition as proved in due season victorious. A few leading illustrations must suffice. Take, for example, the case of those rude invaders who broke the power of imperial Rome to pieces. We call them "Vandals." Now, they were wandering soldiers, who loved war, but hated work. They were attached to military chiefs, and so were a constant menace to the peace of Europe. The problem for the Christianity of that early age was how to curb this wandering and idle disposition and *settle* the nomads in Europe. And the needful antagonism was supplied in *feudalism*, by which the soldiers were transformed into serfs and united to their chiefs by the mutual ownership of land. And it can be shown that from this feudalism modern patriotism properly so called has sprung. In Greece, for example, in pagan times all that passed for patriotism was love of a *city*. No man apparently had the comprehensive love which can embrace a whole land. They were Spartans, or Athenians, but not patriots in the wider sense. But in the wake of feudalism true patriotism came, and vast nations were formed at last who were ready to die for their fatherlands. Thus Christianity antagonized the selfishness which was so rampant in pagan times. But under feudalism arose *serfdom*, which proved to be only a shade better than pagan *slavery*. How did Christianity antagonize these evils? Now, the necessity for serfs under feudalism and of slavery under paganism arose from the mischievous and mistaken idea that work is degrading. Christianity, accordingly, in the dark ages, which were not nearly so dark as some men make them,[1] set itself to consecrate manual labour by the example of the monks. Devoted men in religious houses made manual labour, agriculture, and work of all kinds a holy thing, and so prepared the way for the industrial movement of later times. Gradually it dawned on the European mind that it is *not* a noble thing to have nothing in the world to do; that it is *not* a degrading thing to have to work; and that work may and ought to be a consecrated and noble thing. Having thus antagonized the natural indolence of men, Christianity had next to combat his unwillingness to *think* for himself, and this was through the Reformation of the sixteenth century under Luther. The problem of the sixteenth century was to get men, instead of leaving to others to think out the plan of salvation for them, and as priests to undertake their salvation, to think the question out for themselves, and to have as their Advocate and Mediator the one great High Priest, Christ Jesus. Luther, in his stirring treatise on the freedom of a Christian man ('Von der Freiheit einer Christen-Menschen'), brought out in his admirable way that every believing Christian is himself a priest; and so he enfranchised human minds and gave dignity to the race.[2] Now, this law of antagonism, which we have seen on the larger scale in Christianity, will be found in individual experience. This is evidently the idea of the present section of the Epistle. And here let us notice—

I. THE LAW OF GOD PROVING DELIGHTFUL TO THE CONVERTED SOUL. (Vers. 14, 22.) The apostle shows that he had attained to the conviction that "the Law is spiritual;" and he could say with simple truth, "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man." This is a grand attainment. The renewed soul alone can say so. God's Law is seen to enter into the very secrets of the soul, to discern the desires and motives of the heart, and to furnish the perfect standard. It supplies the ideal. Like the copper-plate copy at the head of the schoolboy's writing-book, God's Law is a perfect ideal set to each struggling soul to stimulate attainment. The secret of progress in penmanship is in having the *perfect* copy set, not in having the standard lowered. And so God supplies us in his Law with a perfect and ideal standard of attainment, and it

[1] Cf. Maitland's 'Dark Ages,' *passim*.

[2] See on this interesting subject Hebberd's 'Secret of Christianity,' *passim*.

is a great thing gained when we have been led to delight in the spirituality and thoroughness and perfection of God's Law.

II. THE CONSTANT SENSE OF FALLING SHORT OF THE IDEAL. The renewed soul feels that it somehow cannot do what it would. It never hits the bull's-eye. The good that it had hoped to do is never reached; the evil it had hoped to avoid somehow gets accomplished. There is a sense of failure all through. To recur to the illustration from penmanship, the copy is found to be always very different indeed from the original. But the schoolboy does not, in consequence, insist on lowering the standard. He does not insist that the master will write him a head-line only a little better than he can write himself, and thus let him improve by easy stages. He wisely accepts the perfect pattern of what penmanship should be, and laments that he is coming towards it only by very tardy steps. In the same way, the wholesome sense of failure abides in the soul; the perfect Law antagonizes imperfect attainment, and the soul walks very softly before the Lord, and strives to please him.

III. THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE IS FOUND IN THE BODY OF DEATH. The delight in the perfect Law and the desire after it is accompanied by a painful sense of another law counter-working what is good. It is called "sin," that is, indwelling sin. It is called the "flesh," that carnal part of man which militates against what is spiritual. It is called "a law in our members warring against the law of our mind." It is called "the law of sin;" it is called "the body of this death," or "this body of death." Now, what a gain it is for us to rise against this old nature within, to take God's side against it, to take the field against this old self! We are never right till by repentance we take God's side against ourselves. The old nature has to be crucified, slain, overcome. Antagonism is thus begun. We find there is no use in blaming our progenitors, or circumstances, or environment. What we have got to do is to fight the old self in the interests of God and of that "better self" which he has given us.

IV. IN THIS HOLY WAR JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY DELIVERER. The apostle was ready to cry in his antagonism to indwelling sin, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The more progress made, the more intense the antipathy to the evil nature within! But the Deliverer is found in Jesus. He comes to dwell within us and be a "better self." He dwells within us by his Holy Spirit, and this Spirit is not only militant, but victorious. The mind is reinforced, and the flesh is combated, and the result is progress through antagonism. We follow Christ to victory over ourselves.[1]—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VIII.

**Vers. 1—39.**—(*c*) *The blessed condition and assured hope of such as are in Christ Jesus.* The summary of the contents of this chapter, which follows the Exposition, may be referred to in the first place by the student, so as to assist comprehension of the line of thought.

Ver. 1.—**There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.** (The additional words of this verse in the Textus Receptus have but slight support, having probably been supplied from ver. 4. They are out of place here.) "Nunc venit ad liberationem et libertatem. Non autem ponit adversativam δέ, *autem*, sed conclusivam ἄρα, ergo; quia jam in fine capitis vii. confinia hujus status attigit. Nunc etiam plane ex diverticulo eximio in viam redit quæ habetur cap. vii. 6" (Bengel).

Ver. 2.—**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free** (not *hath made me*; the aorist refers to the time when the Christian became possessed of the Spirit of life in Christ) **from the law of sin and death.** Here is a distinct contrast to the state described in vers. 14, 23 of ch. vii., and a realization of what was yearned for in ver. 24, "the law of sin and of death" being evidently "the law of sin in the members" previously spoken of. The ἐγώ, before in captivity to this law, is now freed from it. And how? Not by its becoming a different ἐγώ; not by a change of the constituent elements of human nature; but by the introduction of a new law—the law of the Spirit of life—which has emancipated the

[1] Cf. Beck's 'Christliche Reden,' i. s. 326; Hewitson's 'Remains,' ii. p. 250; A. W. Haro's 'Sermons,' vol. i. p. 209.

ἐγὼ from its old unwelcome thraldom. In virtue of this new law, introduced into my being, I am now free to give my entire allegiance to the law of God. Νόμος, be it observed, is here again used in a sense different from its usual one, and we thus have a still further νόμος, in addition to those defined in the note after ch. vii. 25. The designation of this new law is in marked opposition to that in which the ἐγὼ was before said to be held; we have *life* in opposition to *death*, and the *Spirit* in opposition to the *flesh*, as well as *freedom* in opposition to *captivity*. The *Spirit* is, in fact, the Divine Spirit taking possession of what is *spiritual* (now at length brought into view) in the *inward man*, making him partaker in the Divine *life*, and able to serve God *freely*. The expressions used bring out strikingly one essential distinction between Law and Gospel, viz. that the principle of the former is to control and discipline conduct by requirements and threats; but of the latter to introdnce into man's inner being a new principle of life, whence right conduct may spontaneously flow. Coercion is the principle of the one; inspiration of the other. An illustration may be found in the treatment of disease—on the one hand by attempted repression of specific ailments, and on the other by imparting a new vitality to the system, which may of itself dispel disease. It is shown next how this new state of freedom has been brought abont. First, by what God in Christ has done for us apart from ourselves; the subjective condition in ourselves being introduced at the end of ver. 4, τοῖς μὴ, etc.

Ver. 3.—**For what the Law could not do** (this is certainly what is meant by τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου), **in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.** The Law could not deliver from the domination of sin; it was weak for such a purpose (cf. Heb. vii. 18, 19); but this not through any defect in itself, but as having to work through our sinful flesh which refused obedience. And it was not the office of law to regenerate; it could only command and threaten. Hence the deliverance came, and could only come, from God himself (and this in accordance with the grand idea of the whole Epistle, expressed by the phrase, "the righteousness of God"); and so he sent *his own* Son (*i.e.* his Son essentially—in a sense in which none of us can be called sons, himself Divine. The whole drift of the passage, as well as ἑαυτοῦ, requires this conception); and he sent him into the very sphere of things that required redemption, that by actual participation in it he might personally redeem it; for he sent him in likeness of our "flesh of sin." It is not said *in flesh of sin*; for that might imply sin in Christ's individual humanity: but, on the other hand, "in likeness" (ἐν ὁμοιώματι) does not imply docetism, as though Christ's humanity were not real; for stress is evidently laid on the fact that it was in our actual human flesh that he "condemned" sin. The phrase appears to mean the same as what is expressed in Heb. ii. 17 and iv. 15: Ὤφειλε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι, and Πεπειρασμένον κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. The addition of περὶ ἁμαρτίας "adds to the how the wherefore" (Meyer). Both this and the preceding expression are most naturally and intelligibly connected with πέμψας; not, as some say, with κατέκρινε. Περὶ comes suitably after the former verb, as denoting the occasion and purpose of the sending (cf. προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου, Luke v. 14). In Heb. x. 8 (quoting from Ps. xl. 7 in the LXX.) we find θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν καὶ ὁλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας, where the expression signifies offerings for sin; and in Heb. x. 18 we have προσφορὰ περὶ ἁμαρτίας. The correspondence of phrase here suggests decidedly the idea of the purpose of *atonement* being intended to be expressed by it, though it does not follow that περὶ ἁμαρτίας is used here substantively as it seems to be in Heb. x. 8. But in what sense are we to understand *condemned* (κατέκρινε) sin? We observe first that the verb appears to be suggested by κατάκριμα in ver. 1, the connection being that formerly sin condemned us, but now sin itself has been condemned; that is (as Meyer expresses it), deposed from its rule in the flesh—"jure suo dejectum" (Calvin). (Perhaps similarly, John xvi. 11, ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέκριται.) One view of the force of κατέκρινε (found in Origen, and taken by Erasmus and others), that it denotes the *punishment* of sin endured by Christ vicariously on the cross, is not only not obvious, but inconsistent also with τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου preceding; for what the Law could not do, was not to punish sin, but to deliver from it. Nor is there, further, anything in the language used to confine the condemnation of sin, in whatever sense intended, to the atonement made for it on the cross itself. It was in the whole mission of the Saviour (expressed by πέμψας) that sin was "condemned;" and the idea may include his triumph over it in his human life no less than the penalty paid for it on the cross in behalf of man. "In the flesh" (connected with *condemned*, not with *sin*) does not mean Christ's own flesh, but human nature generally. He represented man, having become for our sake *the* Son of man; and we share his triumph over sin,

made in our very human flesh, when we are baptized into his death, and become thereupon partakers of his resurrection. This idea, ever present to St. Paul's mind, is expressed in the next verse, where our own appropriation of the condemnation of sin in Christ is declared.

Ver. 4.—**That the ordinance** (or, *righteous requirement*, rather than *righteousness*, as in the Authorized Version. The word is δικαίωμα, not δικαιοσύνη. It occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, Luke i. 6; ch. i. 32; ii. 26; Heb. ix. 1; and in a like sense often in the LXX.; also, though with a difference of meaning, ch. v. 16, 18) **of the Law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** This, then, is the purpose of Christ's victory over sin—that the requirement of the Law in us too may be fulfilled; which evidently means more than that his victory may be *imputed* to us, on the ground of our faith only, while we remain as we were. The expression, δικαίωμα πληρωθῇ, and also the condition appended at the end of the verse, imply that the "Spirit of life" must so dominate over the flesh in ourselves that the Law may forfeit its claims over us. The sinful propensions of the flesh remain in us still (as the verses that follow distinctly show); but the Spirit that is in us is strong enough to overcome them now (cf. Gal. v. 16—18). It does not follow from this that any Christians will actually avoid all sin, or that they can be accepted *on the ground of* their own performance: to say this would be to contradict other Scripture (cf. Jas. ii. 10; 1 John i. 8); and Paul confessed himself to be not already perfected (Phil. iii. 12). But perfection, through Christ who lives in them, is put before us as, at any rate, the aim of the regenerate (cf. Matt. v. 48); and by actual and progressive holiness they are to show that their union with Christ is real. His Spirit within them must, at any rate, give a new direction and tone to their characters and lives.

Vers. 5—8.—**For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.** These verses are added for explanation and enforcement of the condition demanded at the end of ver. 4; pressing the fact that "the infection of our nature"—"the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *phronema sarkos*" (Art. ix.)—with its antagonism to the Law of God, and its deadly tendency, remains even in the regenerate, and that hence we are still in danger of succumbing to it; but that if we do—unless the Spirit within us prove in practice the stronger power—the condition required for our individual redemption is not fulfilled. Οἱ ἐν σαρκὶ ὄντες, in ver. 7, evidently does not mean those who are still in the body, but the same essentially as οἱ κατὰ σάρκα ὄντες in ver. 5; ἐν denotes the element in which they live (see verse following). The δὲ which connects ver. 8 with the foregoing has its *ecbatic*, not its *adversative* sense. *So then*, in the Authorized Version, though not strictly equivalent, seems sufficiently to express the general idea.

Ver. 9.—**But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But** (not *now*, as in the Authorized Version) **if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** That is—Though I imply the possibility of even the baptized being still in the flesh, so as to be unable to please God, this is certainly not *your* condition; if, indeed (as is surely the case), your conversion was a reality, so that you have become really Christ's; for the Spirit of Christ (which is the Spirit of God) of necessity *dwells* (so as to be the ruling power) in all such as are really his (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 16). We observe here how "the Spirit of Christ" is identified with "the Spirit of God," so as to imply the essential Deity of Christ, and also to lend support to the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Ghost (cf. 1 Pet. i. 11). Observe, too, how persistently and continually the apostle presses his protest against antinomian abuse of the doctrine of grace, with which he began this section of his Epistle, at ch. vi. 1. He never loses sight of it; it pervades the whole. If St. Paul, especially in this Epistle, is, on the one hand, the great exponent of the doctrine of justification by faith only, he is, on the other, no less the persistent preacher of the necessity of works. Sanctification is continually pressed as the necessary result, as well as evidence, of justification. He only shuts out human works from the office of justifying.

Vers. 10, 11.—**But** (or, *and*) **if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ** (the previous Ἰησοῦν denotes the human person of our Lord; Χριστὸν his office, fitly used here in connection with the thought of his resurrection ensuring ours. Some readings give τὸν before, and Ἰησοῦν after, Χριστὸν) **from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.** These verses have been variously understood. It has been supposed by some that

ver. 10 continues the thought of ver. 9; "the body" (τὸ σῶμα) meaning the same as "the flesh" (σάρξ), and "dead" (νεκρὸν) meaning νενεκρωμένον, *i.e. mortified*, or lifeless with respect to the power of sin that was in it (cf. ch. vi. 6, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας). Thus the meaning of the first clause of ver. 10 would be, "If Christ be in you, the body of sin in you is dead; but you are alive in the Spirit." Decisive objections to this view are, (1) that the word σῶμα by itself is not elsewhere used as an equivalent to σάρξ, but as denoting our mere *bodily* organization. This statement is consistent with the metaphorical application of the word sometimes in a different verse, as in ch. vi. 6, above quoted, and in ch. vii. 24. Observe also τὰ θνητὰ σώματα ὑμῶν in ver. 11, which can hardly be taken but as expressing what is intended here; (2) that διὰ with the accusative (διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) cannot be forced out of its proper meaning of "because of," which, according to the view we are considering, would be unintelligible; (3) that ver. 11, which is obviously connected in thought with ver. 10, cannot well be brought into tune with it according to the view proposed. All is made clear, in view both of language and of context, by taking these two verses as introducing a new thought, which is carried out afterwards in ver. 18, viz. that of the drawback to the full enjoyment and development of our spiritual life owing to the mortal bodies which clothe us now; and the purpose is to bid us believe in the reality of our redemption, and persevere in correspondent life, notwithstanding such present drawback. Thus the idea is that, though in our present earthly state the mortal body is death-stricken in consequence of sin (δι' ἁμαρτίαν)—subject to the doom of Adam, that extended to all his race (cf. ch. v. 12, etc.)—yet, Christ being in us now, the same Divine Spirit that raised him from the dead will in us too at last overcome mortality. Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (ζωοποιηθήσονται, the same word as in ver. 11 here); and compare also all that follows in that chapter. This view of the meaning of the passage before us is strongly confirmed by our finding, in 2 Cor. iv. 7—v. 6, exactly the same idea carried out at length, with a correspondence also of the language used. The frail, mortal, ever-dying earthen vessels, in which we have now the treasure of our life in Christ, are there regarded as crippling the expansion of our spiritual life, and causing us to "groan, being burdened" (cf. in the chapter before us, ver. 23, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν); but the very consciousness of this higher life within him, yearning so for an adequate and deathless organism, assures the apostle that God has one in store for him, having already given him "the earnest of the Spirit." And this seems to be what is meant here by "shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." As to particular expressions in the verses before us, νεκρὸν, applied to "the body," may be taken to mean *infected with death, and doomed to it* (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 31; 2 Cor. i. 9; iv. 10—Διὰ δικαιοσύνην, in opposition to δι' ἁμαρτίαν, given as the reason for the Spirit being life, may be explained with reference to the essential conception of *righteousness* throughout the Epistle, as God's righteousness, revealed in Christ, and made over to man as the remedy of human sin. Before carrying out the thought peculiarly suggested by the last two verses (as is done at ver. 18), the apostle now draws a conclusion (expressed by ἄρα οὖν) from what has been so far said, so as to press the more the obligation of a spiritual *life* in Christians.

Vers. 12, 13.—**So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye must** (μέλλετε, expressing here a result that must follow. The Authorized Version has "shall," not distinguishing the force of the phrase from that of the simple future ζήσεσθε which follows), **die; but if by the Spirit ye do mortify** (rather, *do to death*, or *make to die*, so as to correspond to the *die* preceding) **the deeds of the body, ye shall live.** Here "the body" (τοῦ σώματος) must be taken in the same sense as in vers. 10, 11. True, the "deeds" spoken of are, in fact, those of *the flesh*; but the body is regarded as the organ of the lusts of the flesh, and it is fitly named here in connection with the thought of the preceding verses. The word translated "deeds" is πράξεις, denoting, not single acts, but rather *doings*—the general outcome in action of fleshly lusts using the body as their organ. Μέλλετε ἀποθήσκειν and ζήσεσθε, viewed in connection with ζωοποιήσει in ver. 11, seem to point ultimately to the result hereafter of the two courses of life denoted: but not, it would seem, exclusively; for our future state is constantly regarded by the apostle as the continuance and sequence of what is begun in us already—whether of life in Christ now unto life eternal, or of death in sin now unto death beyond the grave. The general idea may be stated thus: If ye live after the flesh, the power in you to which you give your allegiance and adhesion will involve you in its own doom, death; but if ye live after the Spirit, you identify yourselves with the Spirit of life that is in you, whereby you will be emancipated at last even from these your mortal bodies, whose *doings* you already slay.

Vers. 14—17.—**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

**For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, wherein we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.** In ver. 14 is introduced a further ground for the assertion in ver. 13, ζήσεσθε; viz. the felt *sonship* to God of those who have so received his Spirit as to be *led* (*i.e.* practically actuated) by it. We say "felt" because, though in this verse the sonship is alleged as a fact, yet, in the following verses (15, 16) the inward experience of true Christians is appealed to as evidence of such sonship. Then, in ver. 17, the thought is carried out, that *sonship* implies *inheritance*, and hence a share in the glorified eternal life of Christ. (This conclusion makes further evident what was meant to be implied above in the expression ζήσεσθε.) "When, after your conversion," the apostle would say, "ye received the Spirit, it did not inspire you with the fear of slaves, but with filial love and trust. And this you know also is the feeling that we give vent to in the congregation, when we cry out [κράζομεν, denoting emotional utterance], Abba, Father." This last expression is given by St. Mark as our Lord's own in the garden of Gethsemane (xiv. 36). We may conclude that the Aramaic word ἀββᾶ was the one used by him, and heard by St. Peter, who is said to have been St. Mark's informant in the composition of his Gospel; the equivalent Greek word, ὁ πατήρ, having been added originally by the evangelist in explanation (cf. Mark v. 41 and vii. 34 for similar instances of St. Mark giving Christ's own expressions, with their Greek equivalents). Afterwards it may be further supposed that the Greek-speaking Christians came to use the whole phrase, as it had been delivered to them, in their own devotions, as representing our Lord's own mode of addressing the Father, and so as expressing peculiarly their union with Christ, and their filial relation to God in him. It is probable also, from the way St. Paul here introduces the expression (κράζομεν, changing from the second to the first person plural), that it was in customary use, perhaps at some special parts of the service, in congregational worship. It occurs once more in a passage closely corresponding with the one before us, and which should be studied in connection with it (Gal. iv. 6). It is to be observed how, in ver. 17, the idea of our sonship now, and consequently of our being *joint-heirs* with Christ, leads up to a resumption of the now prevailing thought of our present condition in the mortal body being no bar to our final inheritance of life. It is our being as yet in these mortal bodies that is the cause of our present suffering; but he also was in the body, and he also so suffered; and our sharing in his sufferings really unites us the more to him, and the more ensures our final inheritance with him (cf. 2 Cor. i. 5, 7; Phil. iii. 10).

The apostle introduces next a deep and suggestive view, both in explanation of our now being subject to suffering, and in confirmation of our expectation of future glory notwithstanding. He points to nature generally, to God's whole creation, so far as it is under our view in this mundane sphere, as being at present "subject to vanity," and, as it were, groaning under some power of evil, which is at variance with our ideal of what it should be, and from which there is a general and instinctive yearning for deliverance. Our present sufferings—all those drawbacks to the full enjoyment of our spiritual life—are due to our being at present in the body, and so forming part of the present system of things. But that general yearning is in itself significant of a deliverance; and so the sympathetic witness of nature confirms the hope of our higher spiritual yearnings, and encourages us to endure and wait. Such is the general drift of the passage, continued to the end of ver. 25. Particular thoughts and expressions will be noticed in the course of it.

**Vers. 18, 19.—For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.** (So, as in the Revised Version, or *upon us*, as Tyndale and Cranmer, rather than *in us*, as in the Authorized Version. The expression is εἰς ἡμᾶς, and the idea is of Christ appearing in glory, and shedding his glory on us, cf. 1 John iii. 2.) **For the earnest expectation of the creature** (or, *creation*) **waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God.** "Revelatur gloria: et tum revolantur etiam filii Dei" (Bengel). God's sons will be revealed as being such, and glorified (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 5; also 1 John iii. 2). Ἡ κτίσις, in this verse and afterwards, has been variously understood. The word properly means *actus creationis*, and is so used in ch. i. 20; but usually in the New Testament denotes what has been created, as, in English, *creation*. Sometimes, where the context limits its application, it denotes *mankind*, as Mark xvi. 15 and Col. i. 23; or it may be used for an individual

creature (cf. ch. viii. 39; Heb. iv. 13). Where there is nothing to limit its meaning, it must be understood of the whole visible creation, at any rate in the world of man. Thus in Mark x. 6; xiii. 19; 2 Pet. iii. 4. And so here, except so far as the context limits it; for see especially πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις in ver. 22. It is, indeed, apparently so limited to the part of creation of which we have cognizance at present; for see οἴδαμεν in ver. 22, which denotes a known fact. But is there any further limitation, as many commentators contend? Putting aside as untenable, in view of the whole context (see especially ver. 23), the view of those who understand the new spiritual creation of the regenerate to be meant, we may remark as follows: (1) That ἡ κτίσις includes certainly *all mankind*, not excepting the regenerate. Καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ in ver. 23 means that "we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit" are included, not that we are a class apart. (2) *The whole animal creation* is included too. So general a term as πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις could not surely have been used if man only had been meant. And it is obviously true that the whole sentient creation, as well as man, has a share now in the general suffering. To the objection that the irrational creatures cannot be conceived as sharing in the "hope" and "earnest expectation" spoken of, it may be replied that, so far as it seems to be implied that they do, it may only be that the apostle, by a fine *prosopopeia*, conceives them as feeling even as the human mind feels concerning them. But, further, conscious hope and expectation does not seem, if the language of the passage be examined, to be distinctly attributed to them. All that is of necessity implied is that they share in the groaning from which we crave deliverance. (3) Inanimate nature too *may be* included in the idea, it also seeming to share in the present mystery of evil, and falling short of our ideal of a terrestrial paradise. Tholuck appositely quotes Philo as saying that all nature ἀσθένειαν ἐνδέχεται καὶ κάμνει. It may be that St. Paul had in his mind what is said in Genesis of the cursing of the ground for man's sake, and of the thorns and thistles; and also the pictures found in the prophets of a renovated earth, in which the desert should rejoice and blossom as the rose. Calvin comments on the whole passage thus: "Omissa expositionum varietate, hunc locum accipio, nullum esse elementum, nullamque mundi partem, quæ non, veluti præsentis miseriæ cognitione tacta, in spem resurrectionis intenta sit." Again, "Spem creaturis quæ sensu carent ideo tribuit, ut fideles oculos aperiant ad conspectum invisibilis vitæ, quamvis adhuc sub deformi habitu lateat."

Vers. 20, 21.—**For the creature** (or, *creation*, as before) **was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope. Because** (or, *that*; i.e. *in hope that*) **the creature** (or, *creation*) **also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.** The aorist ὑπετάγη ("was subjected") seems to imply that the present "vanity" and "bondage of corruption" were not inherent in the original creation, or of necessity to last for ever. Thus the assertions of Gen. i. 1 and 31, stand unshaken, viz. that in the beginning God created all things, and that all at first was "very good." The ideas, resorted to in order to account for existing evil, of matter (ὕλη) being essentially evil, and of a δημιουργός, other than the Supreme God, having made the world, are alike precluded. It might serve as an answer to the argument of Lucretius against a Divine origin of things—

"Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam
Naturam rerum, tanta stat prædita culpa."

Why the "creature" was thus "subjected" is not here explained. No solution of the old insoluble problem of πόθεν τὸ κακὸν is given. All that is, or could be, said is that it was διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, meaning God. It was his will that it should be so; this is all we know; except that we find the beginning of evil, so far as it affects man, attributed in Scripture to human sin. But he so subjected his creation *in hope*. This expression may refer to the *protoevangelium* of Gen. iii. 15, or to the never-dying hope in the human heart; to either or to both. The latter idea is expressed in the myth of Pandora's box. Further, the creature is said to have been so subjected "not willingly" (οὐχ ἑκοῦσα). No sentient beings acquiesce in suffering; they resent evil, and would fain flee from it. Man especially unwillingly submits to his present bondage. When in ver. 21 the hope is expressed of the creature (or creation) itself being eventually freed from the present bondage of corruption, it may be that the human part of creation only is in the writer's eye; but it may be also (there being still no expressed limitation of the word κτίσις) that he conceives a final emancipation of the whole creation from evil (cf. Eph. i. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 23—27; 2 Pet. iii. 13). But if so, it is not said that the peculiar glory of the sons of God will extend to all creation, but only that all will be freed into the freedom of their glory; which may mean that the day of the revelation of the sons of God in glory will bring with it a general emancipation of all creation from its present bondage.

Such a great final hope finds expression in the verse—

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."
('In Memoriam.')

The present condition of things is in ver. 20 denoted by *ματαιότης*, and in ver. 21 by *τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς*. The first of these words is the equivalent in the LXX. of the Hebrew הֶבֶל, which means properly "breath," or "vapour," and is used metaphorically for anything frail, fruitless, evanescent, vain. It is often applied to idols, and it is the word in Ecclesiastes where it is said that "all is vanity" (cf. also Ps. xxxix, 5, 6). It seems here to denote the frailty, incompleteness, transitoriness, to which all things are now subject. "*Ματαιότης* sonat frustratio, quod creatura interim non assequatur quod utcunque contendit efficere" (Erasmus). *Φθορᾶς* intimates corruption and decay.

Vers. 22, 23.—**For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, 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.** The present unwilling subjection of the whole visible creation to evil is here still more forcibly expressed, and spoken of as being what is known—a subject of experience to all who observe and think; and it is added that this state of things continues still—it is "until now." The yearned-for deliverance has not yet come; and therefore we should not be surprised if we too, the regenerate, while in the body, are not yet exempt from our share in the universal groaning. For we have but the *firstfruits* of the Spirit as yet, not its full triumph; cf. "the *earnest* of the Spirit" (2 Cor. i. 22), and "the *earnest* of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 14). Its being said that we still wait for our adoption as sons is not inconsistent with other statements (as in Eph. iv. 5—7, and above, ver. 14, etc.), to the effect that we are already adopted, and are already sons; for *υἱοθεσία* here denotes the final realization of our present sonship, when the sons of God shall be *revealed* (ver. 19). Similarly, our redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) is here regarded as future. In one sense we are redeemed already; in another we await our redemption, *i.e.* the full accomplishment thereof. It is the consummation called by our Lord *ἡ παλιγγενεσία* (Matt. xix. 28), and by St. Peter, *ἀποκατάστασις πάντων* (Acts iii. 21). Cf. 2 Pet. iii. 13, and Revelation generally. "Of our body" seems to be added with reference to what has been seen above as to our present "mortal bodies" being both the organs of the lust of the flesh and the hindrances to the proper development of our inward spiritual life.

Vers. 24, 25.—**For by** (or, *in*) **hope we were saved**; not *are saved*, as in the Authorized Version. The aorist *ἐσώθημεν*, like *ἐλάβετε* in ver. 15, points to the time of conversion. The dative *ἐλπίδι*, which has no preposition before it, seems here to have a *modal* rather than *medial* sense; for faith, not hope, is that *whereby* we are ever said to be saved. The meaning is that when the state of salvation was entered upon, hope was an essential element in its appropriation. A condition, not of attainment, but of hope, is therefore the normal condition of the regenerate now; and so, after shortly pointing out the very meaning of hope, the apostle enforces his previous conclusion, that they must be content at present to wait with patience. **But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.**

Now comes in a further thought, and a very interesting one.

Vers. 26, 27.—**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for what we should pray for as we ought we know not: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because** (or, *that*) **he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.** Here, then, is a further source of help and comfort to Christians under present trials. Of themselves they know not what relief to crave. St. Paul himself knew not what to pray for as he ought, when he asked for removal of his thorn in the flesh; if left to themselves, their long waiting and their manifold perplexities might damp their hope; but a Helper beyond themselves comes in to succour them, viz. the Holy Spirit himself, who intercedes (*ὑπερεντυγχάνει*) for them. But how? Not as the Son intercedes for them, apart from themselves, at the mercy-seat; but within themselves, by inspiring them with these unutterable (or, *unuttered*) groanings; and they are conscious that such deep and intense yearnings are from the Divine Spirit moving them, and teaching them to pray. They may not still be able to put their requests of God into definite form, or even express them in words; but they know that God knows the meaning of what his own Spirit has inspired. This is a deep and pregnant thought. Even apart from the peculiar faith and inspiration of the

gospel, the internal consciousness of the human soul, with its yearnings after something as yet unrealized, affords one of the most cogent evidences of a life to come to those who feel such yearnings. For ideals seem to postulate corresponding realities; instinctive longings seem to postulate fulfilment. Else were human nature a strange riddle indeed. But Christian faith vivifies the ideal, and intensifies the longing; and thus the prophecy of internal consciousness acquires a new force to the Christian believer; and this all the more from his being convinced that the quickening of spiritual life of which he is conscious is Divine. The psalmist of old, when he sang, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God," felt in these ardent though inarticulate pantings a presage of fulfilment of his "hope in God." So the devout Christian; and all the more in proportion to the intenseness and definiteness of his yearnings, and his conviction that they are from God.

Ver. 28.—**And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, to them that are called according to his purpose.** A still further reason for endurance. Not only do these inspired groanings strengthen our hope of deliverance; nay, also *we know* (whether from God's Word, or inspired conviction, or experience of their effects) that these very trials that seem to hinder us are so overruled as to further the consummation to them that love God (cf. above, ch. v. 3, etc.); and at the end of the verse there is added, as introducing a still further ground of assurance, *τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς*; the significance of which expression is shown in the following verses, which carry out the thought of it.

Vers. 29, 30.—**For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. And whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.** Thus is introduced the doctrine of predestination. This is indeed a principal passage on which theological theories with regard to it have been built. It, with the context, is the basis of the definition of predestination in Art. xvii. It is, therefore, of great importance to consider carefully what the apostle here really says, and appears most obviously to mean; it being the duty of the expositor to pay regard to this only, in view of the language used, the way it is introduced, and any cognate passages that may throw light upon it. We may observe, in the first place, that it is plain that more is spoken of here than *national* election, or predestination to a state of privilege, which is the subject especially treated in ch. ix. *Individual* predestination is in view; and this not to gospel privileges only, but also carrying with it the result of glory. But it still remains to be seen whether such predestination is regarded as (1) *absolute*, i.e. irrespective, with regard to its final result, of the *condition* of man's use of grace given; and, if so, whether (2) *arbitrary*, i.e. irrespective of the Divine *foreknowledge* of what men would be, and themselves deserve. The Calvinistic view is that God from all eternity, of the mere good pleasure of his will, selected certain persons out of mankind to be the heirs of glory; the Arminian is that he foresaw from all eternity who would, in the exercise of their own free-will, respond to his purpose, and, in virtue of such foreknowledge, predordained them to glory. It is hardly necessary to consider whether there is any countenance given to the view that predestination ensures salvation, however a man may live; the obligation of actual holiness in Christians being (as we have seen) so strongly insisted on all along. If, then, the Calvinistic theory should appear to be supported, it must be with the proviso that predestination of necessity carries with it the grace of *perseverance* in good works, or at any rate a true conversion before the end, as well as final glory. Let us, in the first place, observe the way in which St. Paul introduces the subject, so as better to understand his drift. He has been speaking of the trials and imperfections of the present life, and urging his readers not to be discouraged by them, on the ground that, if they continue to "live after the Spirit," these things will by no means hinder, but rather further, the final issue. To strengthen this position he introduces the thought of God's eternal purpose; in effect thus: Your being in the state of grace in which you now feel yourselves to be, is due to God's eternal purpose to call you to this state, and thus in the end to save you. It is impossible that the circumstances in which he places you now, or any power whatever, should thwart God's eternal purpose. But it is not of necessity implied by anything that is actually said that the persons addressed might not themselves resist the Divine purpose. In fact, their own perseverance appears to be presupposed already, and they have been urged to it all along, as though their use of grace depended on themselves. Hence the apostle in this passage does not really touch the theoretic questions that have been raised by theologians, his purpose being simply the practical one of encouraging his readers to persevere and hope. We may now examine the successive expressions in the passage, and see what they imply. In ver. 28 the

context shows πάντα to have especial reference to external circumstances of trial, and not at all to men's own sins. Calvin, commenting on it, quotes St. Augustine as saying, "Peccata quoque sua, ordinante Dei providentia, sanctis ideo non nocere ut potius eorum saluti inserviant;" but while he assents to this proposition, he denies, with truth, that any such meaning is intended here. It may be observed, in passing, that Augustine's proposition, though it sounds strange, may, in a certain sense, be accepted as true: "We must continually err in order to be humble; our frailty and sins are the tools that God uses" (General Gordon's 'Letters to his Sister,' p. 371). Further, τοῖς κλητοῖς cannot be understood as limiting τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν Θεὸν, as though among those that love God only some are "the called;" nor can κατὰ πρόθεσιν be understood as limiting κλητοὶ, as though even of the called not all are called with the purpose of saving them. Only a preconceived idea could surely have suggested such an interpretation of the verse. In ver. 29 (γινγνώσκειν bearing the sense of "to determine," as well as of "to know") προέγνω may possibly mean "predetermined" rather than "foreknew." Elsewhere in the New Testament, when used of men, it has the latter sense (Acts xxvi. 5; 2 Pet. iii. 17). When used of God, it may, as here, have either meaning (cf. ch. xi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 20); but in the text last referred to the first meaning seems more probable. So also of πρόγνωσις in Acts ii. 23 and 1 Pet. i. 2. The distinction would not be of much importance but for the fact that the sense of "foreknew" has been pressed in support of the Arminian view; viz. that Divine predestination was consequent on the Divine foreknowledge of what men would be. It would not, indeed, really prove this view, since it might only mean that God knew beforehand the objects of his intended mercy. Calvin, though translating *præcognovit*, strongly rebuts the Arminian inference, saying, "Insulsi colligunt illi, quos dixi, Deum non alios elegisse nisi quos sua gratia dignos fore prævidit." Again, "Sequitur notitiam hanc a bene placito pendere, quia Deus nihil extra seipsum præscivit quos voluit adoptando, sed tantum signavit quos eligere volebat." Προώρισε (which might, perhaps, be better rendered *preordained*, which is its proper meaning, so as to avoid the necessary idea of irresistible destiny which is commonly associated with the word *predestinate*) must be taken, not absolutely, but in connection with συμμόρφους. That the elect should in the first place be "conformed to the image of Christ" is all that is, here at least, denoted as preordained by God. The expression, συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος, etc., may be understood, from the preceding context, to refer, primarily at least, to participation in Christ's sufferings (cf. Heb. ii. 10). Coming to ver. 30, we find the following sequence: (1) eternal foreknowledge (or eternal purpose), (2) preordination to fellowship with Christ, (3) calling (to acceptance of the gospel), (4) justification, (5) glorification. Ἐδικαίωσε (4) means the participation in God's δικαιοσύνη, the passing into a "state of salvation" through faith in baptism. But what is meant by ἐδόξασε (5) has been a subject of discussion. Some, in view of the aorist, not future, tense of the verb, understand it of *sanctification* subsequent to *justification*, regarded as participation in the *glory* of the Divine holiness. Others, in view of the significance of the word itself, understand future glory, the aorist being accounted for by the apostle's taking in one view the whole process of salvation with its final result, which is contemplated as accomplished. Perhaps both ideas are included, present sanctification being regarded as the commencement and earnest of the full glory to be revealed in "the sons of God" hereafter. In any case, we are not bound by what is here said to conclude that final glory of necessity follows the previous stages. For the apostle may be only setting forth the process and result when grace is not resisted. But certainly he implies that, when the result is glory, all is to be traced, not to man's initiation or deservings, but to Divine grace, and the Divine purpose of mercy from eternity.

In the remainder of this chapter the apostle rises into a strain of glowing eloquence, into a very song of triumph, in view of the assured hope of faithful Christians. Faithfulness, be it once more observed, is presupposed throughout the passage, which is quite wrongly understood as encouraging confidence in any on the ground of their conviction that they are certainly, even in spite of themselves, predestinated to glory: it only encourages perseverance in spite of trial on the ground of our feeling that, if we do persevere, we cannot fail, because God is on our side, and it is his eternal purpose to save us.

Vers. 31—34.—**What shall we then say to these things?** (πρὸς ταῦτα, meaning "with respect to," not "against"). **If God be for us, who can be against us?** (τίς, οὐκ τί, in opposition to ὁ Θεὸς: *who*—what adverse power — can there possibly be, stronger than God?). **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all** (evidently

not for the elect only, but for all mankind; cf. on ch. v. 18), **how shall he not with him also freely give us** (*i.e.* grant us of his free grace) **all things!** (τὰ πάντα, corresponding to ὑπὲρ πάντων). **Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect!** (Not, of course, meaning that the elect, in virtue of God's choice of them, cannot, though sinful, be charged with sin; but that no possible adversary—again τίς—can be conceived as arraigning those whom God himself accepts as justified. Observe that the word here is ἐκλεκτῶν, not κλητῶν as in ver. 28. Cf. Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14; Πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσι κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί. Many may be *called* to a state of salvation, but not all of them *chosen* finally, as fulfilling the purpose of their calling.) It is **God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth! It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** A different punctuation of these two verses is preferred by some, and seems more natural and more forcible; thus: *Who shall charge God's elect? God who justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Christ who died?* etc. A similar answering a question by asking another is found below in ver. 35. The further thought is thus implied that, if neither God charges, nor Christ, the Judge, condemns, who can do either? The apostle next goes on to say that, there being none to charge and condemn us at last, so also there is none that can *remove* us from our state of acceptance now. For who or what can possibly prove stronger than Christ's love, which has called us to it? The enumeration that follows of things that might possibly be supposed to remove us shows again that it is not our own sins, but external circumstances of trial, that are being viewed all along as powerless to hinder our salvation.

Vers. 35—39.—**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ!** (*i.e. the love of Christ to us*, and in the same sense "the love of God" below; cf. τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς in ver. 37). **Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword! As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** (This quotation of Ps. xliv. 22 may be introduced as showing that such trials have ever been the lot of God's servants, and did not separate the saints of old from God.) **Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors** (ὑπερνικῶμεν—we not only conquer in spite of them; we conquer all the more because of them; cf. ch. v. 3, etc., and ch. viii. 28) **through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** In these two concluding verses the thought is distinctly extended from *circumstances* of trial to all *powers*, human or superhuman, that may be conceived as assaulting us through them, or in any way opposing us. But it is still adverse powers and influences, not our own failure in perseverance, that are in view. It is not necessary to define what is exactly meant by each of the expressions in these verses. Enough to say that what is meant is, that nothing whatever, in heaven or earth, or under the earth, can thwart God's good purpose for us, or separate us from his love.

The following paraphrastic summary of this important chapter, free from the encumbrance of notes, may help to a clearer perception of its drift and sequence of thought:—

Ver. 1.—There is then no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 2.—For a new law—the law of the Spirit of life—is introduced into their being, by virtue of which they are freed from their old state of bondage to the law of sin and death.

Ver. 3.—And this because of what God himself did for mankind in *his own* Son, Christ, who, in our very flesh, and in behalf of mankind, did what man himself was powerless to do—triumphed over sin and condemned it.

Ver. 4.—And in us too (united to him by faith, and having spiritually died and risen again with him) the requirement of the Law is fulfilled, so that it forfeits its claim to condemn us now; but only on this condition in ourselves, that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Vers. 5—8.—For there are two φρονήματα in us still, of the flesh as well as of the Spirit; the one tending to death and the other to life; and it is only those who give themselves to the latter that can share in the life to which it tends.

Ver. 9.—And you *can* give yourselves to this, if you are true Christians; if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, without which you are not his.

Ver. 10.—So our condition is this: We have within us the Spirit, which is life; but we have the body clinging to us still, which is death-stricken because of sin.

Ver. 11.—But if the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead be in us, he will quicken our mortal bodies too, delivering us at last, through the same vivifying Spirit, from all lingering power of death over us.

Ver. 12.—The conclusion is (as has been

insisted on all along), that we are bound, as Christians, in our present lives, to live, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Ver. 13.—If we do not, then (notwithstanding our redemption) we must needs die—yea, die the death beyond the grave (whatever it may be), which is the doom of sin; but if we do, then we shall live—yea, live at last (as the sequel shows to be implied) in the eternal life of Christ with God.

Vers. 14—17.—For the Spirit you received when you became Christians was one of sonship; our habitual earnest cry of "Abba, Father," expresses our feeling of it; the Spirit still witnesses with our spirit that we are God's children; and sonship implies heirship—heirship with Christ, through our union with whom we feel ourselves to be sons; and, if we have to share in his sufferings now, this only unites us the more to him, and fits us the more for our inheritance of eternal life with him.

Ver. 18.—For what of all these present sufferings, these present drawbacks to the full triumph of the πνεῦμα ζωῆς in you, these present evidences that the σῶμα νεκρὸν still clings to you? They are nothing to the destined glory; they are not worth consideration in comparison with it.

Vers. 19—22.—And, after all, these present drawbacks are but our inevitable share in the condition of imperfection under which all creation, as we see it now, is labouring. The whole world presents to us the picture of an ideal not realized, but ever yearned for. All we can say about it is that it has pleased God to subject it for a time to vanity and the bondage of corruption, but so as to leave hope alive.

Ver. 23.—And we too, while in this mortal body, must needs share in this universal groaning; but, having already the firstfruits of the Spirit—the earnest already of a diviner life—we especially yearn all the more for deliverance, and expect it hopefully.

Vers. 24, 25.—When we entered on our state of salvation as Christians, it was in hope; our essential condition became then one of hope, which is incompatible with present attainment of our hope; we must, therefore, needs endure and wait, bearing these present trials.

Vers. 26, 27.—And if our trials are great, and we know not ourselves what relief to pray for, we have the comfort of believing that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us within ourselves by inspiring all those unutterable yearnings, which he that searcheth the heart knows the meaning of, and will answer according to the mind of the Spirit who inspired them.

Ver. 28.—We know, too, that all things, even all these present trials, far from harming us, work together *for good* to them that love God, being called *according to* his purpose.

Vers. 29, 30.—Yes, called according to his purpose; here is a further ground of hopeful assurance. For his having called us to be Christians at all, and justified us through faith, shows that it was his eternal purpose in so calling us, to conform us to the image of his Son, that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren; and that so we, being thus made his brethren, might inherit with him. In short, his having preordained us to our present state of salvation carries with it his preordaining us also to its end and purpose, which is glory.

Vers. 31—34.—If God be thus for us, who can be against us? He who has already given up his own Son for us all will surely grant us all. And, if God has chosen us, who shall arraign us? God himself, who already justifies us? No. Christ, who died, rose again, ascended to the right hand of God, and now intercedes for us? No. And against them what other power can possibly prevail?

Vers. 35—37.—Certainly not these present trials and calamities, however severe; though "we are killed all day long, and are appointed as sheep for the slaughter." Through Christ, who so loved us as to share them, we are conquerors all the more by means of them.

Vers. 38, 39.—For I am persuaded that no powers or circumstances whatever, external to ourselves, will ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, or consequently bar our attainment of our final inheritance.

### *Additional Note on ver. 29, seq.*

The view given above of St. Paul's intention and meaning is by no means meant as ignoring the essential mystery of predestination, however regarded. Divine omnipotence combined with omniscience on the one hand, and human free-will on the other, seem indeed to human reason to be incompatible ideas; yet we are compelled to entertain both—the one on the ground, not only of scriptural teaching, but also of our conception of the Divine Being; the other on the ground, not only of our conception of Divine justice, but also of our own irresistible consciousness, and of scriptural teaching too. Such difficulty of reconciliation between two apparently necessary ideas is not peculiar to theology; philosophy has it too; and there are necessitarians among philosophers, as well as predestinarians among theologians, equally contradicting man's irresistible consciousness of having the power of choice. We can only regard

the conflicting conceptions as partial apprehensions of a great truth which as a whole is beyond us. The apparent contradiction between them may be due to the failure of finite beings to comprehend infinity. They have been compared to two parallel straight lines, which, according to geometrical definition, can never meet, and yet, according to the higher mathematical theory, meet in infinity; or we may take the illustration of an asymptote, which from a finite point of view can never possibly touch a curve, and yet, in analytical geometry, is found to cross it at an infinite distance. For the practical purposes of life both ideas may be entertained; and it is only human attempts to reconcile them in theory, or to escape the difficulty by denying free-will altogether, that have given rise to the endless controversies on the subject. It is important to observe how St. Paul, though he distinctly intimates both conceptions (as he must needs do as a preacher of God's truth in all its aspects), and though his allusions to predestination have been made a main support of Calvinistic views, never really propounds a theory. When he alludes to the subject, it is with a practical purpose; and when (as in this chapter) he speaks of God's predestination of believers to glory, his purpose is to encourage them to persevere in holiness on the ground of their assurance of God's eternal purpose concerning them, the essential human conditions being all along supposed to be fulfilled (see also note on Heb. vi. 16—20, in 'Pulpit Commentary').

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—"*No condemnation.*" In reading this chapter, it cannot but be felt that there was, in the mind of the apostle, a very vivid sense of the contrast between the character, the position, and the prospects of the true Christian, and those of unbelievers, whether Jews or Gentiles. This contrast is kept up, either verbally or implicitly, from the beginning to the close of what is felt to be one of the most encouraging and precious portions of the apostle's writings.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDITION AND CHARACTER. It is plain that, in the view of St. Paul, personal religion did not consist in external condition or relationships, in association with any family, or nation, or visible society. Christians are those who are "in Christ Jesus." 1. The language is instructive as to the Divine provision for man's spiritual welfare made in the incarnation, ministry, and sacrifice of the Son of God. To be accepted and approved by the great Ruler and Lord of all is a condition made dependent upon association with that Being in whom God at once revealed his character and purposes, and reconciled the world to himself. 2. A spiritual union is implied. To be "in Christ Jesus" is what he himself has enjoined: "Abide in me." And the New Testament represents Christ's people as "in him," "found in him," "standing in him," "walking in him;" and after this life as "sleeping in him," and "dead in him." 3. The purposes of union with Christ are involved in this description. (1) Christians are hidden in Christ for safety; as in the cleft of a rock which affords shelter from the storm, as in the city of refuge whither the fugitive flees, and in which he finds himself safe from the pursuer. (2) Christians are grafted in Christ for life; they are branches in the living Vine. (3) They are joined to him for guidance, as members of the mystical body. 4. The power and principle of union with Christ are assumed. On the human side the union is effected by *faith;* on the Divine side it is rendered possible by the impartation of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S EXEMPTION AND IMMUNITY. 1. What is the condemnation from which those who are in Christ are relieved? Doubtless, the penal consequences of sin, the Divine displeasure and judicial anger, the present punishment of remorse and fear, the future punishment of destruction and death. 2. Who removes it? The Lord and Judge, whose prerogative it is to pass sentence of condemnation, retains in his own hands the right to remit the punishment of those sentenced, and to set guilty but repentant criminals free to enjoy a spiritual liberty. 3. On what grounds, and in virtue of what provision, does the righteous Lord remove the condemnation? For his own mercy's sake, and in virtue of the redemption which was wrought by Jesus Christ our Saviour, so fully stated and explained in this Epistle. 4. With what results? The conscience of the sinner is relieved; the favour of the holy God is vouchsafed; the privileges and pleasures of the Christian life are opened up, and final acquittal is definitely and certainly assured.

APPLICATION. 1. Let the Christian rest in no inferior view of his position; for this assurance of liberty is one which every believer in the Lord Jesus is invited and is warranted to take to himself. 2. Let those who are under condemnation by reason of sin remember that there is one way of escape and acquittal, and only one; and let this be sought and found without delay.

Ver. 2.—"*The Spirit of life.*" What interest we always feel in life! Among things earthly, the main distinction, to our minds, is that between the living and the lifeless. Among the snows of Alpine heights, the blue gentian flower is welcome to the eye of the mountaineer. Amid the hot wastes of the sandy deserts, sweet is the oasis of green shrubs and shady palm trees which spring up around the solitary fountain. The child loves to watch the butterfly fluttering from bush to bush, the lizard peeping out and darting in among the heather and the ling of the common, the dragon-fly weaving its graceful dances over the sunny waters of the secluded pool. Who does not find a calm delight in marking the grayling leap from the silvery brook, the heron lift itself in slow flight from the reedy banks of the tidal river, the hawk circle in the blue sky, the antlered deer bound into the lake and fleet through the glades of the forest? Amidst the loneliness of the ocean, what a relief to the mariner to witness the gambol of the sea-monster, or even to hear the cry of the wild storm-bird! And, to the thoughtful mind, how far deeper the interest felt in the more complex, the more varied—the moral—life of men! Whether in the mountain or the plain, by the sea, in the well-tilled fields, or in the busy city where myriads throng and jostle, wherever human life meets the eye and ear, we feel ourselves in the presence of God's greatest works. Here is the spiritual realm; here the moral conflict; here the probation, the discipline, which regard eternity. For the interest of the life of man lies not in its picturesque or its pathetic aspect, but in the working of great principles, to issues dear to the very heart of God. The life of the body engrosses indeed much of men's energies and cares. Yet we all feel that it is the higher life—the soul-life—that is of supreme moment and deathless interest to man. There is a life of the spirit, which multitudes may disregard, but which to the Creator, and to all enlightened minds, seems the one great end for which worlds were made and man was fashioned. It is the office of religion to summon men's attention to this life, precious, beautiful, and immortal; to tell men that, unless they live this life, they live in vain; to assure them that the privileges and the probation of earth have a view to this higher conscious, spiritual existence and growth. And Christianity comes to men, telling them of a Divine Saviour, in whom "was life," and who came "that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly;" telling them of a spiritual agency provided by God to awaken them from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; telling them of the presence and the power among men of "the Spirit of life." It is the spiritual life, enkindled and sustained by this Divine Spirit, which is the aim and the reward of a Father's pity and a Saviour's love. Contrasting with that death from which it is a deliverance, it is a preparation for that eternity which is the infinite scope for its development. Consisting in the exercise and growth of the highest and noblest powers with which the Creator has endowed mankind, amidst the circumstances which Providence has arranged for their manifestation, it brings the dependent being to share the Divine nature, and fits it to inherit the heavenly kingdom.

I. THE APOSTLE SPEAKS OF THE LIVING SPIRIT—the Spirit in whom is life. God is spoken of in the Scriptures as "the living God." The Holy Spirit is a living Agent; not merely conscious, but energetic. He has knowledge: "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." He works the work of God in the material world: "By his Spirit God hath garnished the heavens;" "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created." He is the Author of our conscious being: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." He is the universal Presence of omniscient Deity: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" He is the power that raised the Redeemer, who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." He is the Divine Force of life to Christ's followers: "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." In so much of nature as is accessible to our observation, life springs

from life. So is it in the spiritual realm. The Holy Ghost is spoken of as the Source and Imparter of the new and holy life; because he himself possesses, in infinite fulness, that which we receive according to measure. We recognize the presence of the Spirit of God in all God's works and methods, in what are called nature and nature's laws. But not simply the lower life—the highest and the best also is his; his also is the life which is emphatically Divine. The Spirit of God is, accordingly, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of life. Far from being merely contemplative, the Spirit of God is emphatically energetic. His omnipresence and universal activity bear witness to the justice and the beauty of the designation applied to him—"the Spirit of life."

II. THE LIVING SPIRIT IS ALSO THE LIFE-IMPARTING SPIRIT. In the Nicene Creed, which has been in use in Christian Churches for fifteen hundred years, the Holy Ghost is termed "the Lord and Giver of life." Not only is life *in* him; it is *from* him. Wherever we observe the signs of spiritual life, we are justified in attributing them to the Divine influences. That life from the dead should result from the outpouring of the Spirit appears to have been constantly taught by the Hebrew prophets: "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: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses;" and again, "The Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." And when our Lord Jesus taught the great truths of his kingdom, he expressly referred to this same Divine agency the new life which was to be distinctive of his subjects. Using figurative language, drawn from the history of the bodily life, he said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Examples of spiritual death are too common all around. A person may have abundance of life and health and strength of body, he may even be alive intellectually; yet he may be as dead in the sight of God. If there be in him no interest in the Divine presence, no reverence for the Divine Law, no submission to the Divine Word, no devotion to the Divine service, no faith in the Divine promises, the man is *dead*—"dead in trespasses and sins;" there is "no life in him." A most striking picture of the condition of dead souls is given by the prophet who records the vision of the valley of dry bones: "There was no life in them." On the other hand, what is meant by spiritual *life*? A truly living Christian is alive to the presence and favour of God, is under the constraint of the love of Christ, delights in the Divine Word, and treasures up its precepts and its promises, is obedient to the commands of Jesus the Lord, and is devoted, gratefully and joyfully, to his service and glory. The things of earth, which are everything to the worldly, have comparatively little interest for such, except as they are connected with Christ's kingdom. They "have purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." That a great change has passed over those who were spiritually dead, but are now "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," cannot be questioned. No change in condition, from beggary to opulence, from a dunghill to a throne, can for a moment be compared with this change. This is indeed "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" the "new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." No explanation of this change is reasonable and sufficient which does not refer it to the Spirit of God. To those spiritually awakened, brought to newness of life, the words of the apostle may be addressed: "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." If we can say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," we shall certainly be found forward to acknowledge, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." It is by the grace and energy of the Holy Spirit that human souls are born anew, are born from above. That this scriptural teaching is most reasonable seems as plain as can be. If we believe in the existence of human spirits, we must acknowledge their influence over our nature and character. The uprightness and magnanimity of a father, the tenderness and unselfishness of a mother, the ennobling and inspiring influence of a true friend, have all "told" upon us, and helped to make us what we are that is good. Is it credible that

we owe so much to human spirits, and yet owe nothing to him who is "the Father of the spirits of all flesh"—in whom is all moral excellence, and whose benevolence is equal to his holiness? Do we behold his handywork in the vaulted heavens and the verdant earth; and shall we not recognize his mighty working in the spiritual realm, and admire his grace and love in all that is pure in human character, true in human speech, and beautiful in human life? If it is the Spirit of God that "renews the face of the earth," that turns the winter into spring, calling forth life and beauty, fragrance and song, where sterility and death have reigned; surely it is not enthusiasm to attribute to "the Spirit of life" the transformation of the human soul, the enkindling of the spiritual vitality and energy, that mark the new creation! The Spirit of life does not act independently of means. The human soul is affected by power, in accordance with its own laws. In order to live unto God, a soul must have some knowledge of God and of God's purposes, must be awakened to a sense of sin and need, must understand and accept the gospel of Divine grace, must receive in faith the promises of pardon, of help, of guidance, of salvation. Now, the Holy Spirit of God acts in connection with these means; for he is the Spirit of truth, as well as of power. He takes of the things of Christ, and reveals them unto us. This is why we are especially encouraged to seek the influences of the Holy Spirit when we are using the means which Divine wisdom has appointed for the conversion of sinners. The Spirit works with the Word, brings the gospel home with power to the heart of the hearer, at once gives energy to the truth itself and to the appeal of the heavenly message, and enlightenment and quickening grace to the nature of the hearer. The Word, alone, is lifeless; the soul, alone, is dead; but the Spirit imparts efficacy to the Word, and, so, vitality to the soul. Thus God accompanies the Word "with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power." There is a shaking among the dry bones; the Spirit is breathed into them, and they live, they stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. What encouragement this doctrine should give to all who are labouring for the salvation of souls! They may be very ignorant and very weak, for they are but human. But the work is to be effected, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. We do but comply with the directions of him who alike reveals the truth and imparts the Spirit. Yes, we may be assured that he will honour his own agency, that he will not forsake his own servants, that he will prosper his own work, and so glorify his own Name, and hasten his own kingdom.

III. IT IS THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE, NOT ONLY TO AWAKEN, BUT TO SUSTAIN LIFE. Life is not a thing which is perfected at once. The blossom of the spring is fair and fragrant; yet months must pass, and all seasonable influences must have play, before the luscious fruit shall be found, where the bloom of promise cheered the eye and roused the hope. The child, in his helplessness and speechlessness, must be nurtured and taught through long years before the infantile nature shall develop into that of the philosopher or the statesman. Life is a thing of progress, a thing of growth; has its own divinely appointed order and processes and laws. So is it with the spiritual life. It is no dishonour to the Divine Spirit that the work of renewal is not an instantaneous and perfect work, leaving nothing further to be done. The new birth is, as a birth, complete; but it is only the commencement of a new life. To be "born again" is to begin to live anew, with higher principles and purer motives and nobler aims. Here, upon earth, the path of the Christian is one of progress; he is introduced to the right way in order that he may follow it—that he may make progress therein, year by year, and day by day. It is not the will, the plan, of God that there should be either pause or (far less) retrogression. Two things are needful—first, growth, always; and secondly, revival, sometimes. It were to be wished that young Christians were more conscious of the requirement of growth in the Divine life. To be brought into a right relation with God is the first step in the spiritual life; but it remains to learn God's truth, to do God's will, to serve Christ's people, and to promote Christ's cause. It will take the whole of life to fulfil the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Character and usefulness,—these, to use ordinary language, are the great ends of life. They who fail here fail altogether. Coming to religious services, reading the Bible, prayer, fellowship,—these are means to an end; and that end is that men may be more like Christ. Aspire to this; be not satisfied unless you are making progress in this direction; let the fruit be seen, which is the effect and the

evidence of life. It is by the Spirit of life that this result is to be effected—by the Spirit of life working in the heart, and changing the character into the likeness of the Lord, and assisting to conquer sin, to resist Satan, to acquire a character congenial and akin to Christ's. This is the Holy Spirit's choicest, holiest work; to foster and promote the spiritual life, that it may be growingly vigorous and fruitful, to the praise and glory of the ever-living God. And it is the office of the same Spirit to *revive* the life that is feeble and sluggish. If, by negligence and sloth, the Christian has become cold to spiritual realities, and is not living in constant communion with the Unseen, there is but one power that can reanimate the slumbering soul, that can again enkindle the dying flame of devotion, that can save from selfishness and worldliness, that can make a man truly live unto God. *Re*-vival presumes that life is already in existence, but is, as it were, in abeyance or in a dormant state. In the use of divinely appointed means this condition may be escaped, this mischief may be remedied; but the power that alone can accomplish this good work is the power of the Holy Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that awakens first to the sense of deadness, so to speak, and then leads to the employment of those means by which the soul can be reanimated and refreshed. A little reflection will show that only the same Spirit can perfect life in immortality. The life which is awakened by this Divine agency is a life which knows no death. The change which passes upon the body at its dissolution does not affect the spiritual life; for this, begun in time, is perfected in eternity. "The Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." In the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we have the pledge and earnest of a blessed immortality. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;" "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the Earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory;" "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Vers. 15, 16.—*The Spirit received by Christians.* The Holy Spirit is the gift of God to his people in Christ—"the promise of the Father;" the Comforter whose advent was foretold by Christ, accompanying Divine truth, and characterizing the new dispensation of God's mercy and love. In this passage the Spirit is mentioned, not so much as the Gift of God, as in the aspects he assumes in the conscious experience of God's people.

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY. Man in a state of sin is under bondage to the Law, to sin, to fear, and slavishness. But by the emancipating power of the Spirit, the disciple and friend of the Divine Saviour is set at liberty, is freed from the dominion of sin, from the trammels of the world, from the inner bondage of fear and distrust. He possesses "the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. This is indeed a marvellous truth, a marvellous privilege. All mankind are the creatures of Divine power, and it is in this sense the poet affirmed, "We are all his offspring." The reflective man perceives that in a higher sense we are children of God, inasmuch as our reason and conscience are the reflection of the Divine nature. But it was reserved for Christianity, as the highest form of revelation, to introduce the conception of man's spiritual sonship in Jesus Christ. The establishment of this relation is a proof of God's condescending kindness. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" Here is no question of a merely external relationship; a change of heart, of character, of life, is here implied. Where this relation is realized, the cry, "Abba, Father!" ascends from the affectionate and filial heart.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SPIRIT OF WITNESS. The personality of the Spirit is compatible with the personality of the human recipient of his blessed influences. There is a unity, and yet a diversity. God's Spirit is in contact with the spirit of Christ's disciple, and witnesses with it, assures of Divine favour and fatherhood. The Word is revealed to the soul; the soul is enlightened to apprehend the Word; the truth is realized, the privilege appropriated; the response is rendered. The same Spirit gives power to the Word and receptiveness to the heart, and brings the two into exquisite sympathy and harmony. And this witness is effected, not by a vision or a voice, not by fancy or enthusiasm, but by Divine, conclusive evidence. The Spirit of truth and

holiness manifests his presence and his power, by calling into existence the fruits of the Spirit, whose quality and abundance leave no room for doubting the Divinity of the agency to which they owe their existence.

Ver. 17.—*The twofold fellowship.* A person may be the heir to a title and to a great estate, and yet, in some circumstances, he may in his minority and even afterwards be exposed to some privations. He may even be a homeless wanderer, thrown into uncongenial society and unfamiliar scenes and undesirable occupations. If such be the case, it may well happen that his experience may be profitable and serviceable. He may taste "adversity's sweet milk, philosophy." He may learn many a lesson of self-control and self-denial, of forbearance, patience, and considerateness. His character may mature, his best qualities may be called out. He may learn to sympathize with the afflicted, and to make allowances for the tempted. And when the time comes for him to enter upon his inheritance, he may fulfil the duties of his exalted position all the more wisely and faithfully for the discipline he has passed through, stern and harsh though that experience may have been. In like manner, the Christian, who is a joint-heir with Christ, has appointed for him a period of probation, of humiliation, of spiritual conflict and suffering. This is the decree of infinite wisdom and love. Our Father would, by subjecting us to earth's discipline, fit us for the heavenly inheritance, the eternal glory. The Christian's exile is the preparation for his home, his inheritance, his crown.

I. CHRISTIANS HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN SUFFERING. They may suffer *for* Christ. Doubtless, to Paul and to the early Christians, this was a familiar thought and a not infrequent experience. The apostles, the martyrs, and confessors, all in the primitive Church who by their steadfastness in the faith incurred men's displeasure and hostility, were partakers of the sufferings of Christ. And in our own time, and amongst ourselves, there are those whose witness to the Saviour is borne amidst petty persecution and half-concealed hostility from their unbelieving and scoffing companions. And, even amongst professing Christians, those who prefer fidelity to Christ and his gospel to compliance with current fashions and opinions must make up their minds to endure much for the Lord's sake. There are, however, other senses in which Christians may be justly said to share Christ's sufferings, to suffer *with* their Master. 1. There was anguish and distress peculiar to the Son of God. The burden of our sins he bore in his own Person; he "trod the wine-press alone;" he "bore our sins and carried our sorrows;" he "tasted death for every man." His sacrifice was his alone. But there was suffering which he endured because he lived in a sinful world, because he submitted to the buffetings of Satan and endured the contradiction of sinners. To Christ's people their necessary contact with a sinful world is painful, even as such contact was conspicuously painful to the holy Saviour himself, who in character and conduct was emphatically "separate from sinners." As he also sorrowed over this sinful race, could not look upon the multitudes without grief and commiseration, could not gaze upon the guilty Jerusalem without weeping over it; so true Christians are constrained to sigh and cry for the abominations that abound in the world, for they have learned to look upon humanity with the eyes of their Lord himself. 2. Yet again, we are called to share our Master's sufferings by reason of the temptations to which we are exposed. What Christ endured from the assaults of the tempter, the adversary, we can never know; yet the record of his temptation implies that it was the occasion to him of sore distress; "he suffered, being tempted." He only overcame through resistance and bitter strife. That this must be our experience is well known to every follower of the Lamb. "We wrestle not with," etc.

> "He knows what sore temptations mean,
> For he has felt the same."

In this matter all the Lord's servants must, in his own language, "deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow him." Their path is one not of compliance with the tempter, but of opposition to him. They die with their Lord unto sin; in this respect being crucified with him unto the world, knowing the fellowship of his sufferings, and being planted together in the likeness of his death. 3. There is a wider and more general sense in which we may be said to suffer with Christ. There are afflictions which are

common to men as men, but which have to Christians a signification different from that which they have to others. All men have to endure, more or less, weakness and suffering of body, depression of mind, bereavements, changes in outward circumstances, and other afflictions providentially appointed or permitted. But to Christians these come as messages and monitions from the heavenly Father, and they have to be accepted in the spirit which the Lord Jesus has displayed and exemplified. When suffering and sorrow are borne in the spirit of him who said, "Not my will, O my Father, but thine be done," then there is evidence of fellowship with the Lord.

II. CHRISTIANS SHALL HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN GLORY. It is a sign of God's great condescension and fatherly kindness that he, in his Word, deigns to cheer and encourage his poor, suffering, struggling children, in their encounter with life's ills, by the assurance that in due time the shadows shall flee away, and the bright morning shall break upon their sight. He does not even say merely, "Your sufferings shall come to an end; your toil and conflict shall be followed by repose." This is said; but, with it, something more. Victory, triumph, glory, festive joy,—such is the prospect held out to us. To be told that we shall be glorified with Christ seems too much; it is only credible because it is the assurance of him who cannot lie. With regard to the glory of our Saviour, we have material for judging. Something of his proper outward glory appeared when he was transfigured; more when he was raised from the dead, and when he ascended on high. Yet his real glory was, and surely ever must be, spiritual. Exalted to the throne of heaven, our Saviour's glory is to be discerned in the loyalty and affection with which he is regarded by human hearts, the joy with which his authority is practically acknowledged by the natures which have felt his love and holiness. Christ was, when here upon earth, in his humiliation, the same in character and in nature as now, but the hindrances to his recognition have been removed, and his glory is now apparent. Our Saviour himself intimated that his faithful people should participate in his approaching glory. They should sit on thrones of judgment. Having been with him in his tribulations, having drunk of his cup and received his baptism, they were appointed to reign with him and to see his glory. It was a lesson deeply impressed upon the minds of Christ's companions. "If we suffer with him," said one, "we shall also reign with him." They spoke of a crown which they believed to be reserved for them. They looked for an inheritance incorruptible and unfading. And the chief element in future blessedness and glory they deemed to be union and association with their Lord. To be ever with him, to see him as he is,—this was all their desire and hope. There seems something so utterly alien to our poor, feeble, sinful humanity in the "glory" which is revealed as the future lot and life of the Christian, that it is not easy for a sober mind to take in the thought. Yet it is plainly taught that Christians shall appear with their Lord in glory, that they are called to eternal glory. This may be explained by two remarks. First, the chief glory is moral and spiritual; to be delivered from sin, and to be changed into the same image with Christ,—that is glory. Secondly, whatever glory may attend the Lord's people in the future life is simply that which he sheds. To be near Jesus is to receive from him something of that holy radiance which is native and proper to him, and ever streams from him.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Let those who have been bereaved of Christian kindred and friends learn to submit with resignation to the will of God. Concerning those who sleep in Jesus, we may well believe that their sufferings are over and their glory has begun. 2. Let those to whom the Christian life is a scene of trial and conflict cultivate patience and fortitude. Think not of your experience as something strange happening to you. It is the path which our Lord and all his followers have trodden before you. 3. Let those whose conflict has been protracted, and who must soon lay down the weapons of the earthly warfare, cherish the hopes which are justified by God's Word, and look forward with lowly faith to the glory of the heavenly inheritance.

Ver. 18.—*Suffering quenched in glory.* It is not easy to weigh the future against the present. To children, and to the unreflecting, the present seems so real, and the future so shadowy, that the least advantage or relief to-day seems immensely preferable to something in itself more desirable, but which is deferred to a distant date. As knowledge and thought advance, the power of realizing the future increases. Hence

in worldly affairs the useful virtue of prudence emerges, and men deny themselves now in order to make provision for the coming years. The same principle is applicable in religion. Those who believe themselves destined to a future and immortal existence are capable of looking forward to the life to come, and of allowing that life to exercise upon their minds a mighty influence, so that their present attitude of spirit is largely governed and controlled by their expectations of the future. It is, indeed, far from being the highest of motives that influences men, if they do good to avoid future misery and secure future happiness. For religion consists in the love of truth and right for their own sake, as supremely desirable, in the love of God as supremely excellent. Yet, as the text shows, Christianity holds out the prospect of immortal happiness as fitted to cheer and encourage the pilgrims of the night amidst the difficulties and darkness of time.

I. THIS IS A CALCULATION WHICH IS NOT INTENDED TO DISPARAGE THE PRESENT SUFFERINGS OF CHRISTIANS. Paul does not mean to say the sufferings to be endured here are in themselves inconsiderable. For the fact is otherwise; every man, and much more every Christian, has much to bear. "They that will live godly must suffer persecution." In some cases, the amount of opposition and calumny and neglect involved in fidelity to the Saviour is far from trifling. But the apostle means to affirm that so vast is the recompense, so exceeding and eternal the weight of glory hereafter, that even the direst persecution, the fiercest conflict, the keenest self-denial, are all extinguished in the lustre, the blaze, of heavenly day.

II. THIS IS A CALCULATION BASED UPON THE REVELATIONS OF SCRIPTURE. Reason unaided could never have arrived at this result. For one of the members of the comparison is beyond the range of reason. We know by experience the sufferings of the present; but only Divine foresight can acquaint us with the glory of the future. It is granted that in the present condition of Christians is nothing which can justify an expectation so glowing. The star is in its station in the heavens, although hidden beneath a cloud; when the sky is cleared, the star shines out in its brilliancy. So, for the present, our life is "hid with Christ in God;" and "we know not what we shall be." Our capacities and circumstances do not allow of our comprehension of a state which only the glorified nature can take in. The coming glory is spiritual, consists in closer fellowship with the Saviour and in perfect harmony with God himself. "When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory." This is the prospect of the sons of God, the joint-heirs with Christ, the partakers of their Lord's character and spirit. It is the prospect of an endless blessedness; for its eternity is part of its Divine perfection. Nothing less than a glory which never wanes is worthy of the Giver, or satisfying to the recipient. The quality and the immortality of the glory of heaven, when taken together, manifestly outweigh all the privations, the conflicts, the temptations, in a word, the "much tribulation" through which we must enter into the kingdom of heaven.

III. THIS IS A CALCULATION WHICH GOVERNED THE APOSTLE'S PERSONAL LIFE. Observe that he says, "I reckon." It was his own deliberately reached conclusion. He had adopted this opinion long ago, and he retained it still. Otherwise he would not have continued to lead the life of a Christian and an apostle. His choice had brought him much outward suffering and adversity. From the first, he had been exposed to persecution from Jews and Gentiles; he had endured many hardships and dangers in his missionary life; he had suffered the loss of all things. His choice had occasioned him much spiritual conflict. The strife between the old nature and the new, the anxiety he felt as to his own fidelity, the buffetings of Satan he encountered,—all these were sufferings strictly consequent upon his union with Christ. Yet it is clear that Paul did not repent his choice. Even to the end he "counted all things as loss, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, . . . for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." He had present consolations, very precious and sustaining; for he was supported by the grace which ever proved sufficient for him, and, knowing whom he trusted, he was persuaded that he was able to keep that which was committed unto him against that day. And when the mercy and favour of the present were added to the glorious prospects of a heavenly inheritance, how could the sufferings of life be allowed to counterbalance privileges so precious and hopes so bright?

IV. THIS IS A CALCULATION WHICH HAS SUSTAINED THE FAITH AND COURAGE OF MULTITUDES OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST IN EVERY AGE. This has been the case, not only with those who have been called upon to witness to their Saviour by public labours and by public sufferings, with those who have contended upon the high places of the field; but also with myriads of lowly, faithful, patient hearts, that have endured in silence the reproach of Christ, that have borne in silence the cross of Christ. The well-founded hope of glory has animated and sustained such amidst petty persecutions, amidst galling misrepresentations, amidst spiritual conflicts, fightings without and fears within. The hymns of the Church are a witness to this; in every land and in every age these hymns have expressed the longings of the universal heart of Christendom for the repose, the fellowship, the delights, of the heavenly Jerusalem. And they have been wont to make these longings centre in that Divine Redeemer who is the Sun of the eternal city, and whose presence makes it light and glorious.

V. THIS IS A CALCULATION WHICH MAY BE COMMENDED TO ALL CHRISTIANS WHO ARE CAST DOWN AND DISTRESSED BY THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE WAY. Some are tried by adversity, and are tempted to say of the circumstances surrounding them, "All these things are against me." Others are smitten by bereavement; their dear and trusted friends are taken from their side by death. Others are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Others endure great spiritual conflicts, and sometimes know not how to bear up against the assaults of the adversary. Others are weary, in body and in mind, under the pressure of cares and responsibilities. To all such it is lawful to say, "'The end of all things is at hand.' The period of probation is nearly over. Hold on a little longer. 'Be faithful unto death.' There awaits you rest after your pilgrimage, and triumph after your warfare, songs after your tears, and glory after your depression. The revelation of which the text speaks is not far off. And, in the glory it shall manifest, all your weariness and woes shall be forgotten. You shall see Jesus, and in his presence no darkness is."

Vers. 24, 25.—"*Saved by hope.*" Hope is an emotion compounded of expectation and desire. We may expect what we dread, we may desire what we are sure is beyond our reach; in either case hope is impossible. Faith is in the unseen present; hope is of the unseen future. As a feeling, and consequently as a motive power, hope is taken up, heightened, and hallowed by religion. In the New Testament, great stress is laid upon, and great virtue is attributed to, hope; it ranks with faith and love.

I. THE OBJECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. 1. God himself; his favour and fellowship. "Hope thou in God" is the admonition given, to which the suitable response is, "My hope is in thee." Hope in God is distinguished from hope in man, in being always secure. 2. Especially God in Christ, who is spoken of as the "Lord Jesus Christ, our Hope." We are enjoined to "hope in Christ;" and his character and promises justify compliance with such injunction. 3. To particularize, the object of hope is stated to be Christ's future appearance; the Christian looks for "the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Has not our Lord expressly said, "I will come again"? Now, "he that hath this hope, purifieth himself." 4. The Christian's hope extends both to the future of this life and to immortal blessedness. This earthly existence is brightened by the prospects opened up to us of Divine aid and guidance, protection and comfort; and such hope is fitted to strengthen and to cheer. Whilst Christianity is especially distinct and emphatic in its revelation of the glories of the future state; telling of the "hope of eternal life," "the hope laid up in heaven," and imparting a "living hope of an inheritance."

II. THE GROUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. 1. *The promise of God.* Here is a sure and stable foundation which it would be folly and sin to distrust. "I hope," is the godly man's exclamation, "in thy Word." His is the "hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began." In giving us his revelation, the design of infinite love was that we, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." 2. *The teaching of the Holy Spirit.* He is the Inspirer of all good affections and desires; one purpose of his bestowal upon Christians being that they "might abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." 3. *Our experience of the Lord's faithfulness.* "Experience worketh hope." It is not a matter of conjecture

on the part of Christ's people whether or not the promises of God will be fulfilled; they have already been fulfilled in such measure as to justify our hope concerning the future. Ours is a hope which "maketh not ashamed," which will not disappoint those who cleave to it.

III. THE FRUITS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE. 1. *Calmness and confidence of disposition.* In this, hope is as "an anchor unto the soul;" for whilst fear disturbs, hope pacifies. 2. *Cheerfulness and joy.* They are bright and glad who have something to which they can look forward, even when the present is cheerless and discouraging. Such is the case with Christians, who "rejoice in hope." "Happy is he whose hope is in the Lord his God." 3. *Spirituality and purity of heart and life.* The purifying power of hope is especially described by St. John; it is by its influence that Christians are meetened for their inheritance. 4. *Patience and endurance.* In this respect hope is as a helmet to the soul. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The Thessalonians were commended by St. Paul for their "patience of hope." 5. *Salvation.* This is the ultimate aim, issue, and end. The hope of the Christian shall at last be realized, when he shall be delivered from the bondage of the body, the harassing of temptation, the wounds of sorrow, the pressure of sin.

Ver. 28.—*Overruling providence.* Perplexity and mystery are part of the experience to be shared by all reflecting men. The world, and especially human life, furnish enigmas which the understanding cannot solve, which can only be dealt with by the higher principle of faith. The groans of creation mingle with the groans of men, and the discerning mind detects also the groaning of the Spirit. But, above all, is a harmony which overcomes and silences earth's discords. The apostle heard this harmony, and summoned his disciples to recognize the operations of that providence which constrains all things to work together for good.

I. THE PRINCIPLE PROPOUNDED. 1. There is *purpose* in all things. Modern teleology lays less stress upon the traces of intention and design in individual instances, in organs and organisms, than upon the striking evidence of purpose manifest upon the largest scale, in the vast arrangements and adaptations, in the wonderful chemical and mathematical laws which pervade the whole universe. The more the universe, as accessible to our observation, is studied, the more will it appear a system. Signs of order, of adaptation, of prearrangement, are obvious to every careful student. There is nothing too great, nothing too small, to illustrate the presence of mind. Human life is not exempt from the tokens of Divine foresight and adaptation.

> "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

It is a mistake to suppose that the establishment of the reign of law, of physical causation, conflicts with the operation of purpose; that evolution and design are in any way opposed. 2. The purpose which may be detected in all things is a *good* purpose. A moral aim is discoverable throughout the universe, and emphatically in human life. All things work together, not indeed for the promotion of pleasure, but for moral good —the highest and worthiest of all aims. This conviction is the key to many difficulties by which observant and reflecting minds have been distressed. 3. This moral purpose is secured so far as spiritual beings voluntarily conform to God's will. As a matter of fact, the order of things does not actually secure the good of all beings; many will not receive the benefits which nature and life are intended to convey. But Christians who *love* God, and who respond to his *call* in Christ's gospel, do really reap advantages to which others are strangers. These are the obedient, who are attentive to the Divine summons and accomplish the Divine purpose. For these all circumstances are ordained and overruled, that they may minister to the true well-being of God's people.

II. THE WORKING OF THE PRINCIPLE ILLUSTRATED. 1. Men's *circumstances* may contribute to their true well-being. Thus poverty may be as spiritually serviceable to those who experience it as competence or wealth; obscurity as honour, etc. 2. Men's *own more personal experience* is also overruled by God's providence for their highest good. Thus even doubts of intellect, and sorrows of heart—two of the most painful forms of moral discipline—are both, as a matter of fact, caused to subserve purposes of supreme value in the development of character and in the acquisition of influence.

III. PRACTICAL LESSONS DRAWN FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE. 1. The Christian may learn to avoid murmuring, when he remembers that even untoward circumstances are intended to work out his highest good. Such a conviction casts a new light upon daily experiences; and what otherwise might be regarded as annoyances, calling forth resentment, are now looked upon as ministrations of Divine love and mercy. 2. The Christian may seek to profit by all God's providential dealings. It is the spirit in which these are received which determines whether or not they shall be means of blessing; and the proper spirit is one of submission and teachableness. 3. The Christian will cherish the expectation that the day will come when, looking back upon the path by which he has been led, and the discipline through which he has passed, he shall be able gratefully to acknowledge that God "hath done all things well."

Ver. 32.—*The Gift which implies all gifts.* One very desirable habit of Christian experience is the habit of connecting all spiritual privileges and all providential favours with the supreme Gift which God has conferred upon us in the bestowal of his own Son. It is this habit which the apostle encourages by the appeal of the text.

I. THE ONE GIFT GOD ONCE GAVE. 1. The Person given was his own Son—the Only Begotten, the Well-beloved. 2. The sacrifice on the part of the Giver involved in the Gift. The use of the word "spared" implies "withheld" not, which suggests that the Divine heart felt the sacrifice and surrender, yet that its pity devised it and consented to it as the greatest revelation of the nature of Deity. 3. The Gift was more than a gift; it was a delivering up, *i.e.* to earth, to the society of sinners, with the knowledge that he who was thus surrendered would meet with misunderstanding and misrepresentation, would be maligned and insulted, rejected and persecuted, cruelly abused, and unjustly slain. 4. The Gift was intended for all; not for a select few, but for Jews and Gentiles alike, for sinners of every grade, of every nation.

II. THE MANY GIFTS GOD IS ALWAYS GIVING. 1. Every possession and privilege is, in fact, the gift of God; all "come down from above." However we may forget that we are needy and dependent recipients, the truth is that we have nothing which we have not received. 2. Spiritual gifts are chiefly intended, such as are so fully enumerated and characterized in this chapter; spiritual life in all its stages, from deliverance from condemnation, on to eternal, inseparable fellowship with Christ. 3. Yet, without question, temporal gifts are included. Of these we sometimes say they come through natural law; and this is so. Yet we, in so speaking of them, only describe the process, whilst the origin is in God alone. 4. These gifts are bountifully and generously bestowed. God bestows munificently as a King, tenderly as a Father; and we receive without any possibility of rendering repayment or recompense.

III. THE INCLUSION OF THE MANY GIFTS IN THE ONE. 1. A *doctrinal* explanation of the inclusion here affirmed. The greater includes the less; and, as Christ is the unspeakable Gift, his bestowal involves all other evidences of Divine generosity. The power which can give one, can give all; the disposition which could plan the one, can bestow all; and the mediation and advocacy of Christ are such that they are to be regarded as the channels by which the bounty of the Eternal flows copiously into human hearts and lives. 2. A *practical* explanation. Dwell upon the wonderful, significant, and precious phrase here employed by the apostle, "with him!" "With him" God gives his people pardon for their sins, a perfect model of goodness, a higher conception of human virtue, a powerful motive of obedience, a holy bond of brotherhood, a bright hope of everlasting life. As a matter of practical experience, this is so in the history alike of individual Christians and of the world.

Ver. 37.—*Spiritual victory.* It is not every good cause which, as far as we can see upon earth, when opposed with human hostility, prospers and triumphs, at once, manifestly, and for ever. This only proves that Providence takes a wider view than is possible to us, and has purposes extending far beyond this world. But the one great cause of moral goodness, the cause of Christ, is always really victorious. The warfare is just, the weapons sound, the Captain skilful, and victory certain.

I. WHAT CONSTITUTES THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY. In the first age the conflict was to a large extent with open persecution. Jesus himself endured "the contradiction of

sinners," and warned his apostles to expect the same. In our time there is indeed persecution for Christ's sake to be endured, both open and secret; but perhaps the dangers now to be dreaded are those of prosperity rather than of adversity. Pure Christianity has to combat scepticism, materialism, the self-indulgent habits of the age. Pure Christianity has to be upon its guard against superstitious views and habits, and mere outward compliance with public opinion. Such influences openly or insidiously threaten the religious life, especially of the young and the unwary. Hence the necessity of watchfulness, of preparation, of the Divine panoply, of courage and endurance. For the promise is to "him that overcometh," and the true soldier is ever the true conqueror.

II. WHAT ENHANCES THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY. Christians are assured that they shall be "more than conquerors"—exceeding or triumphant conquerors. 1. The severity of the conflict. This is evidenced by the admitted power of the enemy and the variety of his attacks, by the number who in the past have been defeated by the foe of Christ, by the defection of many faint-hearted or disloyal combatants, and by the protraction of the conflict. 2. In contrast with all this has to be considered the thoroughness of the conquest. This is evidenced by the magnificence of the reward to the victors, by the vast number of those who shall share the honours of the victory, and by the glory and perpetuity of the triumph which shall follow.

III. WHAT SECURES THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY. At first there may appear to be some incongruity in the expression, "more than conquerors *through him that loved us.*" Yet upon reflection it will appear that he must indeed have loved us, to mingle in such a fray and to lead his soldiers and followers even unto his own death. And the teaching alike of Scripture and of individual experience assures us (1) that Jesus conquered the foe *for* us, when he really overcame the world and Satan, by whom he seemed, to superficial observers, himself to be vanquished; and (2) that Jesus conquers the foe *in* us, giving us the example, the motive, the spiritual power and principle which ensure to us immortal victory.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—11.—*The judgment-day, and how to prepare for it.* The apostle speaks much in the language of the Law. He himself was not only acquainted with the useful handicraft of tent-making or sail-making, but he was also trained in the profession of the Law—brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He had a considerable acquaintance, too, with the practice of the law-courts. From the brief references in the Acts of the Apostles to his personal history before his conversion, it would appear as if previous to that time he had been engaged as a public prosecutor of the Christians. After he became a Christian, he was frequently called upon, for Christ's sake, to appear at the bar of Jewish and Roman courts of justice. On his first missionary visit to Europe he was dragged before the magistrates at Philippi, and again before Gallio at Corinth. Then, again, he stood before the Jewish council at Jerusalem; before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa at Cæsarea; and, finally, before Nero himself at Rome. On the present occasion he is writing to residents at Rome. Rome at the time was the metropolis of the world, the centre of the world's legislation. To stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat was to stand before the highest earthly authority then in existence, and to be tried by the greatest code of laws which, with the exception of British law, the world has ever known. The laws of the XII. Tables, as they were called, which were the basis of all the Roman laws, were engraved upon twelve tables of brass, and set up in the comitium, or public meeting-place, so that every one might be able to read them. Every educated Roman youth learned by heart these XII. Tables. It was to a people thus familiar with the ideas and the practice of courts of justice that Paul, himself a well-trained lawyer, was writing. He keeps before their minds and his own the thought that there is a higher than all human authority; that there is a judgment-seat more terrible than that of Cæsar; and that the great concern of every human being is how he or she shall fare in that great day of reckoning—that day which bulks so largely in St. Paul's mind, which stands out so prominently before his mental vision, that he constantly speaks of it as "*that day.*" It is an important subject, how to prepare for meeting God in the judgment.

I. THE PREPARATION OF THE CHRISTIAN. *The apostle speaks of the Christian as being prepared for a judgment-day.* "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That day needs a preparation. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The thought of that judgment makes strong men tremble. Felix trembled as Paul the prisoner reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come. It is that dread of something after death that makes the murderer's sleep so restless, and that makes the dishonest man's gains like a weight of lead upon his mind. Conscience does, indeed, make cowards of us all. The Christian recognizes that there is a terror in the judgment, as Paul did when he spoke of "the terror of the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 11); but the judgment brings no terror to him. He knows that he too will be judged according to his deeds, that the fire will try every man's work of what sort it is, and, therefore, he will realize his responsibilities and privileges. But he knows that one thing is certain, and that is that he is safe from condemnation. *He carries his pardon in his hand.* The Christian's confidence comes from the very Judge himself who sits upon the throne. That Judge is Jesus Christ himself. But before he would sit to judge men, he came into the world to die for them as their Saviour. To every one who receives him and accepts his salvation he gives the white stone (Rev. ii. 17), the token of acceptance and pardon. He becomes their High Priest, their Advocate with the Father. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." *In Christ!* What a sense of security that brings with it! In Christ! Not till we stand before the great white throne, and our names are found written in the Lamb's book of life, shall we fully realize what that means. In Christ! That was Paul's great wish for himself. "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, and be found in him." In Christ! Yes. Jesus is the Ark, into which we may betake ourselves from the dangers of temptation and destruction. He is the City of Refuge, to which we may flee from death, the avenger of blood. He is the sure Foundation, on which we may build with perfect confidence all our hopes for eternity. He is the Rock, in the clefts of which we may hide ourselves, and feel that all that concerns us is safe. Your pledge of safety at the judgment-day is the character and promise of the Judge himself. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "*I know whom I have believed,* and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." *Let it not be said that this confidence leads to carelessness;* that because we are delivered from condemnation, therefore it does not matter how we live. The verses which follow the declaration that there is no condemnation are the answer to this suggestion. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: *that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*" (vers. 3, 4). No true Christian ever thought or acted as if, because he was delivered from condemnation, he was thenceforth free to commit sin. If we are Christ's, we have no longer a guilty fear of death and condemnation, but we have a filial fear that shrinks from offending and grieving our heavenly Father. We are constrained by the love of Christ in our hearts to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates. We are constrained by a feeling of gratitude. We have been bought with a price; therefore we will strive to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his. We have the hope of heaven in our hearts; and therefore we seek to walk worthy of our high calling, to purify ourselves, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. *So far from being a motive to carelessness, the Christian's safety in Christ is the grandest motive to holiness and usefulness of life.*

II. THE PREPARATION OF THE CHRISTLESS. At the judgment-day there will be just two classes—those whose names are found written in the Lamb's book of life, and those whose names are not there; the Christian and the Christless; those who are "in Christ," and those who are not. Many are relying upon their moral life, though it may be utterly worldly and godless, as their hope for eternity. But whatever human expectations may be, God's Word makes it very plain how it will fare on the judgment-day with all who are out of Christ. It is not the fault of God the Father. He so loved

the world that he gave his own Son for our salvation. It is not the fault of the Son. Christ says, "I am come that ye might have life." It is not the fault of the Spirit, who is constantly striving with us. If Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, surely it is clear that there is no salvation in any other. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). —C. H. I.

Vers. 12—30.—*The privileges and responsibilities of the children of God.* The apostle in these verses makes a high claim for believers—the claim of being children of God. In this eighth chapter he unfolds, as in a panoramic view, the whole plan of salvation. He begins with the idea that those who are in Christ Jesus are delivered from condemnation. But salvation is something more than that. It means sonship also. And step by step, verse by verse, the apostle advances, at each step unfolding some fresh view of the Christian's privileges, till at last, as he surveys the whole field of sin and sorrow, of joy and suffering, of trials and temptations, of time and eternity, he grows stronger in the confidence of his sonship, and exclaims, "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I. THE PRIVILEGES OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. 1. *God is their Father.* They can say that in a special and spiritual sense. In one sense all human beings are the offspring of God. We are all the creatures of his hand, and are dependent continually upon his bountiful care. But sin has come in and separated us from him. It has made us prone to disobey rather than to fulfil our Father's commands. Jesus came into this world that he might bring us back again into the relationship of God's spiritual children. He became a child of humanity that we might become children of God. He became "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." All who believe on him are born again. They are by creation God's children; now they are his by a spiritual birth. Now they receive "the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father" (ver. 15). Oh, the greatness of our heavenly Father's love! He has not cast us off. He has sent his own Son to bring us back, to restore his image in our hearts, and by-and-by to have us sit down with him in his everlasting kingdom. 2. *Jesus Christ is their elder Brother.* "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (ver. 17). The inheritance which Christ has we have, if by receiving him we become children of God. It is almost too great a privilege to conceive, but it is plainly revealed to us by God. If we are Christ's, *all things are ours;* for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Christ's own prayer was, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." And then there is a family likeness between the children of God by adoption and their elder Brother. If children of some humble rank were adopted into a noble or royal family, there would be a great dissimilarity between them and the children of that family. There would not be community of feeling. It seems a wonderful thing that we, poor, weak, sinful creatures, should be adopted into the family of God, and made the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. How can there be any likeness between us and him? But God has provided for this. Those are remarkable words, "For whom he did foreknow, *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,* that he might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (ver. 29). Thus God has provided that as we are to be the brethren of Christ, we shall be like him. "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." This likeness to Christ is a gradual growth. It is the development of the Christian character. It is not in the infant lying in the cradle that much likeness to its parent can be detected. But as the body matures, as the features become more marked, as the individuality of character begins to show itself, then we see the likeness, and we say, "He is his father's son," "She is her mother's daughter." Those beautiful statues of the Louvre or of Florence, which are the admiration of the world, did not spring by magic from the sculptor's hands. He had his ideal. He had his plan. With that ideal before him, he took the rough material, and on it he gradually worked out his plans

He first modelled his figure in clay, and then took the rough, shapeless mass of marble, in which no one could see any traces of the future statue's loveliness or symmetry of form. But the sculptor's love for his work, the skill of his hand, the patience and perseverance of his mind, the hammer and chisel which he wielded, slowly but surely accomplished his purpose, until at last the statue stood forth in all its beauty. So God has his ideal for the Christian—likeness to Christ, the image of his Son. He has his plan, the plan of redemption, of sanctification. With that ideal before him he takes our human nature, and, by the slow and sometimes painful discipline of Christian experience, he develops the Christian character, until at last the believer is found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. 3. *The Spirit of God is their Helper.* There are three ways mentioned by the apostle in which the Spirit helps us. (1) *He shows us the path of duty.* "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (ver. 14). The Spirit uses the Word of God, and applies it to our conscience and our heart. (2) *He gives us assurance of our sonship.* "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). How does he give us that assurance? By producing in us the fruit of the Spirit. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John ii. 3). If our delight is in the Law of the Lord, if we are striving, however imperfectly, to walk in his ways, to follow in the footsteps of Christ, then this is the Spirit's testimony to us that we are the children of God. (3) *The Spirit also makes intercession for us in prayer.* We are more accustomed to think of Jesus as interceding for us. But the Spirit's work of intercession is here described in very forcible words. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, for he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (vers. 26, 27). Christ intercedes for us in heaven; the Holy Spirit intercedes in us on earth. We know not what we should pray for aright. But the Holy Spirit reveals to us our need. He helps our infirmities. He creates within us high and holy aspirations; and even when we cannot rightly express our wants, he that searcheth the hearts knows what our desires are; for the Spirit expresses them better than we can. Let us avail ourselves more of this threefold help of the Spirit of God, that we may be guided in the path of duty, that we may receive a stronger and clearer assurance of our relationship as children of God, and that we may be assisted in the prayers we offer at the throne of heavenly grace. 4. *Heaven is their home.* "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (ver. 18). While enjoying the fellowship of our earthly homes, let us think of the better home on high, the only home that shall never be broken up.

II. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. They are summed up in the apostle's brief words, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (ver. 12). "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (ver. 13). We are to remember that we are debtors. We are to reflect how much we owe. We are to realize God's claims upon us. We are to think of the claims of that heavenly Father who has condescended to adopt us as his children, and who is constantly caring for us. We are to think of the claims of that loving Saviour who gave himself for us. We are to think of the claims of that Spirit who has quickened us from the dead, who has been enlightening our minds, and who is renewing us after the image of God.

"All that I am, e'en here on earth,
All that I hope to be
When Jesus comes, and glory dawns,
I owe it, Lord, to thee."

C. H. I.

Ver. 28.—*God's mingled providences.* "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." This was a remarkable statement for the Apostle Paul to make, especially when we consider how much he had suffered because of *his* love to God and his truth. He had been imprisoned, he had been stoned, he had been beaten with stripes; and yet, after all this, he is able to say that "all things work

together for good to them that love God." Some might be disposed to doubt such a statement with regard to the experience even of the Christian. Yet many others besides Paul have borne similar testimony. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. xxxvii. 25). And again, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy Word. . . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Ps. cxix. 67, 71).

I. THERE IS GOOD IN ALL THE PROVIDENCES OF GOD. Many persons think there is good only in those things that give pleasure or delight to body or mind. They will admit that there is good in health and prosperity. But they find it hard to see what good there can be in sickness, in adversity, in poverty, or in sorrow. The apostle takes a wider view of life's experiences. He holds that "*all things work together* for good." He could appreciate the joys of life, but he felt that there was a wise purpose and blessing in life's sorrows and trials also. Our human nature is in itself unholy, alienated from God, easily absorbed by the influences of this present world, and easily led away by temptation and sin. What a proof of the ungodliness of man's nature is afforded by the fact that many are as little affected by the most certain and most important religious truths, which they profess to believe in, as if they did not believe them at all! There are no truths more universally admitted than the existence and moral government of God, the certainty of death and of a future state of rewards and punishments. Yet how many do we see around us whose character and conduct afford almost no evidence that they believe in these truths at all! How, then, are men to be roused from their indifference? How are they to be led to think seriously of their own souls and that eternity that awaits them? Some might be disposed to answer—By what we ordinarily call exhibitions of God's love and goodness. But we are having exhibitions of God's love and goodness supplied to us every day in our daily food, in health and strength, and all the other blessings and comforts which we enjoy. Yet these, instead of making men think of eternity, seem to make them think more of this present world. God's goodness, instead of leading them to repentance, hardens their hearts. The discipline and awakening of suffering and trial are needed. These trials, breaking in upon the routine of our daily business and enjoyments, help to withdraw our desires from the things of this perishing world, and to fix them upon a more enduring substance. They remind us that this is not our rest; that we are entirely dependent upon a power that is above us for all our happiness and comforts; and that there is indeed a God that judgeth in the earth. There is nothing more calculated to show a man his own weakness and his dependence upon a higher Power, and to lead him to reflect seriously upon his future prospects, than to find himself, in the midst of important and perhaps pressing duties, suddenly laid aside, stretched upon a bed of sickness, racked, it may be, with pain, and unable to do anything for himself. In such circumstances we must feel that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." There are many Christians everywhere who, with feelings of deep humility and gratitude, are ready to acknowledge that they never had any serious thought of eternity, that they never knew the power of the love of Christ, and that they were never led to seek him as their Saviour, until the day of adversity made them consider; until they were stripped of their dearest possessions; until they were warned by the sudden death of some one who was dear to them; or until they themselves were laid upon a bed of sickness, and brought nigh unto the gates of death. "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living" (Job xxxiii. 29, 30). And through all the Christian life, how many times we have to thank God for the discipline of trial! Our trials have often proved to be our greatest blessings (see also on ch. v. 3—6).

II. WHO ARE THOSE THAT EXPERIENCE THIS GOOD IN ALL GOD'S PROVIDENCES? "All things work together for good *to them that love God*." It is not all men, therefore, who are entitled to such a happy way of looking at the events of life. There are many in whose case everything that God gives them seems to be turned into evil. Not merely the trials which harden their hearts, but also his blessings which they abuse and are ungrateful for, and the life he gives them, which they misspend. The more they have prospered, the more they have forgotten God. Those things that might be a blessing if rightly used, become their greatest curse. *Love to God is the quality*

*that makes all life happy and blessed.* Love to God sweetens every bitter cup, and lightens every heavy burden. For if we love him, we must know him, we must trust him. That is the threefold cord that binds the Christian unto God, and that keeps him safe in all the changes and circumstances of life. In order to love God, we must know him and trust him. This knowledge and this trust can only come by the study of God's Word. This love can only come from a heart that has experienced the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. The natural man is enmity against God. Cultivate the love of God if you would have light for the dark places of life, if you would have strength for its hours of weakness, and comfort for its hours of trial and sorrow. Then you will experience that "all things work together for good to them that love God."—C. H. I.

Vers. 31—39.—*The uncertainties and certainties of a new year: a new year's sermon.* St. Paul was no narrow dogmatist. He was a man of profound sympathy and charity even for those from whom he differed. Yet there are some strong assertions in his writings. Nowadays it is almost considered a virtue to be in doubt, and a rash presumption to be sure of anything. In the revolt from superstition, men have gone into an unbelief that almost amounts to a superstition in itself. There was no superstition about St. Paul. He was a man of thoughtful mind, of wise judgment. But he did not think it either presumption or dogmatism to be firmly persuaded and convinced of certain things. It is no dogmatism to assert that the sun is shining, when its warm bright rays are flashing down upon us and around us. It is no dogmatism to assert the existence of frost, when the earth grows hard beneath its grasp, and we feel its icy breath upon our faces and in our throats. With all the uncertainties and unrealities of life, there is such a thing as certainty and truth. To St. Paul the love of Christ was such a certainty. He had felt it, not as the frost, but as the warm sunshine in his heart. He had yielded himself to its influence, till it became to him what the steam is to the steam-engine, till he could say, "The love of Christ constraineth me;" or again, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There are few finer or more complete pictures of that love and its power than this eighth chapter of Romans presents to us. Here St. Paul shows us the Christian, under the influence of that love, gaining the victory over sin and temptation, glorying in tribulation, receiving the Spirit of adoption, standing fearlessly before the judgment-seat in the irresistible conviction that he is a child of God, shielded and strengthened by the love of Christ; and, as he gazes from point to point, from time to eternity, and sees the Christian secure and safe at every point, his conviction, his rapture, increase in intensity till they carry him away in that grand outburst, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here are the uncertainties and the certainties of life contrasted.

I. THE UNCERTAINTIES OF A NEW YEAR. 1. *The new year may be a time of prosperity.* If it is God's will to give us worldly prosperity and wealth, let us pray for grace and wisdom to use them aright. Prosperity has its dangers. It comes in as a separating barrier between the soul and God. Our Saviour, in one of his parables, speaks of the deceitfulness of riches, and tells us that, along with the cares of this world, it is like thorns that choke the good seed of Divine truth, so that it becomes unfruitful. Let not riches "separate us from the love of Christ." 2. *The new year may be a time of trial.* St. Paul felt convinced that no trials could separate him from that wondrous love. "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (vers. 35, 37). No trial, or the prospect of it, brings dismay or terror to the apostle's heart.

> "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I."

Conquerors! Yea, and more than conquerors of our trials! We do more than vanquish them. We turn them, or rather the love of Christ turns them for us, into our

friends. So Paul found it in his experience. So did many a child of God. Martin Luther was sent to prison in the Wartburg, apparently a heavy blow to himself and his friends, and the cause of the Reformation. But the love of Christ was stronger than the castle walls. They could not keep Christ out. Luther was more than conqueror. He not only endured his imprisonment, but while he was a prisoner he translated the Scriptures into that great German version of his, and wrote besides some of his great commentaries. The walls of Bedford Jail could not separate John Bunyan from the love of Christ, and during his imprisonment for conscience' sake he wrote that matchless allegory, 'The Pilgrim's Progress.' Samuel Rutherford, a prisoner in Aberdeen Castle, wrote his beautiful 'Letters,' of which Richard Baxter said that, after the Bible, such a book the world never saw. All of these were more than conquerors through him that loved them. Whatever trials we may meet with, there is the great certainty of the love of Christ. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (ver. 31). We may lose our earthly friends, but Jesus remains—the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. 3. *The new year may be to some of us a year of death.* Philip Henry, father of Matthew Henry the commentator, used frequently to pray this prayer, "Fit us to leave or to be left." Whatever uncertainty we may feel about the earthly lot that is in store for us, whether our days may be many or few, let us make sure that we are clinging to the cross of Jesus, and then we have a safety and a security which no trials can ever shake.

II. THE CERTAINTIES OF A NEW YEAR. While there is much that is uncertain about each new year, there is much also that we may with confidence expect. 1. *The new year will be a time of opportunities.* This is as certain as that the sun will shine, and the seasons come, and the ocean ebb and flow. Every day will bring to each of us its opportunities. *Opportunities save souls.* John Williams, a careless young man, was persuaded by a friend to go one sabbath evening to a place of worship, and there he heard a sermon on the words, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" That opportunity, availed of, saved his soul and led him to decide for Christ, and he became the famous missionary and martyr of Erromanga. Had he refused that invitation, rejected that opportunity, a similar opportunity might never have returned. *Opportunities test character.* Some one has said that "opportunities are importunities." Every opportunity appeals to us. It appeals to us to avail ourselves of it, to show what side we are on, to make our choice for time and eternity. Abraham had his opportunity when the call came to him to leave his father's house, and he used it well. It showed him to be a man of faith, a man who would do God's bidding at any cost. Joseph, Joshua, Daniel—each of these had his opportunity, and well he used it. Herod had his opportunity, and seemed to be impressed by the preaching of John the Baptist, for "he did many things, and heard him gladly;" but when the critical and testing opportunity came of making his choice, of choosing good rather than evil, he lost it. So it was with Felix and Agrippa. But let our life be dominated by the constraining influence of the love of Christ, and then the opportunities which the passing hours are sure to bring will only show more and more clearly that we are on the Lord's side. 2. *The new year will be a time of duties.* It is well to begin the year with a high sense of our obligations and responsibilities. Duties are a certainty which every day brings with it. There are the duties of daily prayer and daily thanksgiving to God; the duties of parents to their children, of employers to their servants, of all Christians to those who are around them. Here, again, let every duty be discharged in the spirit of love to Christ, and there will be no uncertainty about our faithfulness. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—5.—*What the Law could not do.* The perpetual conscience-cry that rings through all the struggles of ch. vii. is, "Condemnation!" But "to them that are in Christ Jesus"? "No condemnation now!" The heavens smile, the earth is glad. All things are made new. Such is the opening note of this eighth chapter; a sweet song of joy in place of the old cry of despair. And we have here following—God's work in Christ; Christ's work in us.

I. GOD'S WORK IN CHRIST. The great work referred to here is the practical con-

demnation of sin. And it is set forth, in regard to Christ and in regard to ourselves, negatively and positively. 1. *Negatively*, by contrast with the impotence of mere Law: "What the Law could not do." The Law of God, whether inwardly in conscience, or outwardly as through Moses, sufficiently condemns sin theoretically; but practically?—"weak through the flesh." All this has been emphatically demonstrated in the previous chapter: "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," etc. (vers. 22, 23). The flesh dominates, and there is no power to render effectual the better aspirations. 2. *Positively*, in the holy, loving life of Christ: "God, sending his own Son," etc. He came into the realms of sin, and wearing the nature which sin had weakened and destroyed, but resolutely resisting sin's power, defying sin's assaults. "The flesh in him was like a door constantly open to the temptations both of pleasure and pain; and yet he constantly refused sin any entrance into his will and action. By this persevering and absolute exclusion he declared it evil and unworthy of existing in humanity" (Godet). Yes; God in Christ "condemned sin in the flesh," by practically casting it out from *that* humanity. Casting it out? nay, it was not suffered to intrude. The history of the temptation, and of the last agony, is the emphatic illustration of these words.

II. CHRIST'S WORK IN US. In Christ, then, there is a practical and immediate condemnation of sin, by its utter exclusion from his life. But is there not in this a pledge of the like condemnation in those who are joined to him by faith? And is not this pledge fulfilled to those who are "in Christ Jesus"? "When we see the king's son enter the revolted province without opposition, and know that he has come because of the revolt, we are sure that the king is both able and determined to overthrow the rule of the usurper" (Beet). And in us who believe, and who therefore "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," the usurper is dethroned, and "the ordinance of the Law" is "fulfilled." 1. *Negatively*. Not "after the flesh," to "mind the things of the flesh." As above, our state by nature is one of bondage to "the flesh;" the lower impulses master us. And though the aspirations of the spirit may be quickened, yet we sigh vainly for freedom and strength. We do but realize the more bitterly our bondage to sin. How shall the bondage be destroyed? "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." He has broken the condemnation of the past by the offering of himself, once for all; he destroys our present captivity by the incoming of his Spirit, received by faith in that same sacrificial love. Thus the aspirations are realized by this blessed inspiration. 2. *Positively*. "After the Spirit," to "mind the things of the Spirit." Christ, who conquered for us, conquers in us. We are joined to him, and "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 17). Thus "we are transformed into the same image," and "walk even as he walked." Now, then, we more than realize our first estate; our manhood is redeemed; "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes us "free." Our service is the glad, spontaneous service of sonship; we are not commanded to an impossible obedience from without, but animated by the impulse of a boundless love within; and this love, with the free obedience which it begets, is nourished and strengthened evermore by our fellowship with God in Christ. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"—we "think on these things;" and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, guards our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7, 8).

The one supreme question for us is—Are we in Christ? If so, the determining element of our life is new, all things are new. But if not, we abide in death! And how shall Christ be received? By simplest faith. He offers himself freely, we are to receive him freely. Believe! yes, believe with the heart in all his boundless love, and live by it.—T. F. L.

Vers. 6—9a.—*The flesh and the Spirit.* Being free from sin in Christ Jesus, we are also free from its results—condemnation and death; or rather—for the result is one—the death, of which condemnation is but one aspect.

I. THE MIND OF THE FLESH. In a state of sin, as in a state of holiness, there is activity, though the activity be abnormal. The "flesh," equally with the "spirit," has its "mind," *i.e.* its purpose, its aspiration; an activity which tends to a goal. And what is the dread goal to which the activity of sin must lead? Death! Yes,

"the mind of the flesh is death;" this is as surely the result of such a perverse activity of our nature as though it were consciously designed and sought after. What is death, to such a one as man? The complete separation of the soul from God! And how is such death wrought by the "mind of the flesh"? By the reciprocal hostility between sin and God, which must work an utter mutual exclusion. 1. *Sin's hostility to God.* (Ver. 7.) The very essence of sin is rebellion against the Divine authority. The "flesh," viz. all the lower desires and passions of man's nature, broken loose from their proper governance, together with the more spiritual faculties which have been dragged down by the riotous animal impulses into a kindred perversion and anarchy—the flesh is "enmity against God." And, this being so, man's very sin, by its own action, shuts out God. Oh, what a suicide is here! For, with God, all good must ultimately be gone. The rebel rioters bar every avenue to shut out God; they darken the windows that the light of heaven may not shine; they exclude every breath of life and liberty. 2. *God's hostility to sin.* (Ver. 8.) But God is not a mere passive influence, whose exclusion from sinful man is determined solely by the express action of man's sin itself. God is a Spirit! Yes, no mere influence, but a living Person; a living Will! And God were no God, if he were not a holy God; and, being holy, ever hostile to all sin. It must be so. And therefore, when man erects his own rebellious will against his Maker, God's presence is not merely shut out from the soul by sin, but God in grief—yea, and in wrath, in holy wrath—withdraws himself. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." So, then, on these two grounds, "the mind of the flesh is death." Both by the repugnant action of sin to God, and by the repugnant action of God to sin, all the favour and love and life of God are banished from the heart.

II. THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT. But if the inevitable result, and in some sense the conscious choice, of sin is the loss of God, what is the result of the true and right activity of the renewed nature, when the "spirit" is inspired by the Spirit of God, and restored to its proper ascendancy over the "flesh"? "The mind of the spirit is life and peace:" this is the necessary result; this is the result which is consciously sought after and desired. What is this life? The perfect possession and enjoyment of God, and of all good in God. And how is it wrought by the "mind of the spirit"? As in the former case, by the reciprocal action between the renewed spirit and God; though here, not reciprocal enmity, but reciprocal love. 1. *The craving for God.* "The spirit thirsts for life in God, which is its element, and sacrifices everything to succeed in enjoying it perfectly" (Godet). This is the very essence of the new life, as of all true spiritual life, a desire for God (see the Psalms, *passim*). And, by the appropriating power of faith, the spirit possesses itself of that which it desires. It hungers, and is fed. 2. *The response of God.* As above, God is not a mere atmosphere to be breathed, but a living God to give or withhold himself. And just as he withdraws in holy wrath from sinful man, so he imparts himself in gracious love to the humble, believing soul (see John xiv.—xvii., *passim*). So then "the mind of the spirit is life"—life which consists in the full possession of God, and, with him, of peace, joy, strength, and perfect liberty. Yes, "this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

Which shall be our portion, our destiny? Life? or death? We answer, practically, by living according to the flesh or the spirit. But this latter is possible only in one way: does the Spirit of God dwell in us?—T. F. L.

Ver. 9*b*.—*The Spirit of Christ.* Let us resume a little. The "flesh" and the "spirit," as elements of man's complex nature. Latter controlling power, itself God-controlled. There was to be a supreme and established domination of spirit over flesh, according to God's design. But reverse took place; spirit sunk in flesh. But God's Spirit has not forsaken the spirit of man. Cannot reassert its own supremacy, but his help is nigh. For though he cannot enter into fellowship with sinful man, and if man persist in sin must ultimately withdraw altogether, yet now he seeks to save. And so the dualism of man's own nature, which is hopeless, gives way to this higher and better dualism, which is essentially full of hope. God's contact with man is in conscience; man's appropriation of God is in Christ. Hence a true faith in Christ is inevitably followed by the reigning influence of Christ's Spirit in the heart. The true, attractive doctrine of the Spirit: not a something antagonistic to everything that is

human, but a sweetly moulding and formative influence towards all that is truly, divinely human, all that is noble and pure and good. A Liberator from bondage—a bondage which all feel—and One who lifts us from the murky mists of self and sin into a tranquil, sunny air. The true sign of true conversion—as we have already seen. But a danger of the mystical fostering of some supposed interior life of ecstasy and transport, to the great detriment of a sober, useful godliness, and even perhaps to the disparagement of a careful, conscientious righteousness. Therefore the text needs to be interpreted in such a way as to check and prevent such perversion. And it may well be. Christ's Spirit was certainly the Informer and Moulder of his human life of humiliation, as it is the effluence now of his Divine-human life of glorification. And as he informed and moulded his human life, in the flesh, so he will inform and mould our human life likewise. Therefore, to know whether we have Christ's Spirit, we have but to inquire whether we reflect Christ's character. And so our Lord's words will have their application, "By their fruits ye shall know them." That character, then, the test. But the manifoldness of that perfect character makes delineation impossible, in detail. Let us content ourselves now with the contemplation of two generic qualities of character, as illustrated in him, which spring from the inspiring Spirit of God. For the rest, we all must make comparison continually. We may consider, then, his intense godliness, and intense humanness.

I. INTENSE GODLINESS. The quarrel of Christianity with the mere ethicists of the day. Depths of man's nature; its heights. The two relationships, towards God and towards man; and shall that higher one be disregarded? Let us look at the elements of Christ's godliness. 1. *Conscious contact with God.* The "angels ascending and descending;" "the Son of man *which is in heaven.*" The baptism; the Mount of Transfiguration. We want this contact with God. A present God, face to face, heart to heart, breath to breath. This the inspiring power of a godly, righteous, and sober life. And this everywhere, and always. Meetings and means are but to express, and in turn to foster. But the real presence should be a constant factor of our life; everywhere heaven about us. 2. *Complete obedience to God.* The temptation, and the agony. A spotless life the sequel of the former; a patiently submissive life the precursor of the latter. So, "Thy will be done" must be the motto of our life. Not in one narrow sense; for activity as well as passivity. "I do always those things that please him:" shall not we seek to say that? 3. *Enthusiastic devotion for God.* From "Wist ye not," etc.? (Luke ii. 49), to "I have a baptism to be baptized with," etc. (Luke xii. 50). So John iv. 34. And we must cherish a like devotion. For we have a special life-work to do for God: let the doing of it be our bread of life! Such the godliness.

II. INTENSE HUMANNESS. 1. *A tremulous, burning sympathy with all that was truly human.* Had he been amongst us now, he would have been the Inspiration of all educational, social, and philanthropic enterprise. We must catch this spirit. (1) Be truly human: sentiments, pleasures, pains, work. (2) Respect the human: be right, in action—doing justice; in words—speaking truth; in demeanour—showing courtesy. (3) Love and aid the human. 2. *A stern, unsparing hatred of all that was false in man.* The Pharisees: "Woe unto you!" So we. No false tenderness. Know how to hate, as well as how to love. And so hate unsparingly all falseness, hypocrisy, badness, in ourselves and in others—but most in ourselves. Some sins too leniently dealt with; and they damning sins! Oh, let the fiery, scorching indignation of Christian society burn them up! Such the humanness.

In the light of all this read again, "If any man hath not," etc. Begin beneath the shadow of the cross, advance by drinking daily into his Spirit, and so shall you end by being transformed into his perfect likeness. We all know that Christ died for us; let us be quite as sure that Christ lives in us.—T. F. L.

VERS. 10, 11.—*The redemption of the body.* He has said (ver. 6) that the "mind of the spirit is life." We have seen in what a large, rich sense these words are true. But it might be objected—and our special familiarity with one aspect of the meaning of "life" would lead to this—that after all, we die; that, in Solomon's language, "all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked." And at first sight this would seem to be a formidable objection. The brand of condemnation

is upon us to the last: we die! Of what validity, then, is the justification through Christ? and of what reality the renewal by the Spirit? The objection is answered in these verses, in which are set forth—the persistence of death, the triumph of life.

I. THE PERSISTENCE OF DEATH. It is, indeed, true that, in spite of our justification and renewal, death seems to have dominion over us in our physical relations: "the body is dead." This needs no proving; no human fact can be more patent. We die daily, and at last yield to the final triumph of the foe. How is this reconcilable with the new life? The body is dead "because of sin," viz. the sin of the first man, our federal head. This is the sad heritage which descends to the race on account of the transgression. 1. And one main secret of the persistence of death consists in this, that mankind, in all its natural relations, is one organism. If one member suffer, the other members suffer with it. More especially do ancestral actions, entailing physical consequences, affect the condition of succeeding generations. Therefore, as above (ver. 15 of ch. v.), "by the trespass of the one the many died." The complex unity of man's natural relations necessitated this permanent consequence to the race. 2. Yes, each one's mortality is linked on to the mortality of the race; man, by necessary natural entailment, is "born to die." But why, it may be asked, does not the individual, volitional agency by which the Christian believer is linked on to a new federation, and made partaker of the power of life, involve of equal necessity the reversal of the original cause? The answer in part is this: that, for reasons which we may or may not partially discern, in the present economy of things there is a permanence of natural causation even in spite of altered spiritual conditions. It is this principle which effectuates the ordained unity of the race, as above set forth; and the same principle involves that, not merely must each member of the race accept at birth his natural heritage, but even his own free spiritual choice and action may not, at least now, effect a change in the sequence of natural causation. This is true of such natural consequences as may have resulted from each one's individual transgressions; it is equally true of the inherited consequences of the first transgression; it is eminently true of the unique entailment of mortality. 3. And one special reason for this permanence of natural causation, in addition to the economic considerations requiring the organic unity of the race, is the necessity that man, under a process of redemptive recovery from sin, should be subjected to the chastening influence which only an experience of the evil of sin's effects can supply. Illustrate by continuance of penalty resulting from individual transgression; as, *e.g.*, drunkenness, dishonesty. So, generally, the continuance of all the ills that flesh is heir to, on account of human sin. In this twofold sense, then, "the body is dead because of sin:" the transgression involved it as a natural consequence; also, in view of redemption, as a remedial discipline.

II. THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE. "But"—oh, what a "but" is this!—"the spirit is life because of righteousness." Observe, not living, as the body is said to be dead, *i.e.* not merely possessed of an attribute; but life!—itself, through the inhabitation of the Spirit of God, a living power, which shall eventually penetrate with its vitality all man's psychical and even bodily nature (see Godet). All this is involved in the peculiar phraseology of the tenth verse, and is plainly set forth in the eleventh. 1. A new organic unity of the race, with its own laws of natural causation, is established in Christ. He is the second Adam, the "greater Man." And as by the "sin" of the former came death, so by the "righteousness"—the justification—which is through the latter comes life. 2. "With its own laws of natural causation:" yes; for, though we may not trace their working, they are at work, and shall eventuate in our triumph, through Christ, over even the mortality to which we now must submit. The case is complex; the two humanities are as yet commingled; the two trains of causation are jointly at work. But of the triumph of life, we have the pledge in that he was raised from the dead; himself submitted to the old law, and rose by the power of the new. "Christ the Firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 3. "Afterward:" yes, when the remedial discipline shall have done its work, and from a restored world, from a renewed mankind, the curse shall be utterly removed. For this we wait, for this we work; and we do not work and wait in vain. "The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies."

Such, then, is our assurance, such is our hope. But on what is it conditioned? "If Christ be in you;" "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in

you." Oh, let us hasten to him who is the Source of the new life, the Giver of the living Spirit!—T. F. L.

Vers. 12—17.—*The adoption in Christ.* Is our desire, is our vocation, life? Then we are bound in honour, bound by the necessity of the case, to live, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But are we even then sure of the destiny of life? We are walking in a way; whither does the way lead? The answer to this question lies in the prevailing characteristic of the life we live now—a life that is "led by the Spirit of God." These are sons! Survey the life: only "sons" could live a life like that. And the life, being of God, is to God; "If children, then heirs." We have, then, to consider —sonship, heirship.

I. THE SONSHIP. In ver. 15 he leads them back to the commencement of this new life. What was the change which then passed over them? They were in bondage once —such bondage as he has described in ch. vii. And this bondage might be said to be of God, for it was the transition to liberty. God showed them the infinite claims of his holy Law, and thereby revealed to them their guilt, their helplessness, their doom. Oh, what bondage was theirs then! The whole purport of that period of their spiritual discipline was "unto fear." Nay, not the whole purport; they were but wounded that they might be made whole. God had prepared some better things for them. "In me dwelleth no good thing:" yes, this they learned. But, in Christ, they "received the Spirit of adoption;" in him they saw their sin forgiven, and in the power of God's boundless love they mounted upward as on eagles' wings. Accepted in the Beloved! 1. *The adoption.* An alienation is here implied from the original sonship. Man's fall; each one's sin and wicked works. The potential adoption of all in Christ Jesus: hold fast to this great fact. But not this alone: each one's individuality respected, and hence the actual adoption only of those who voluntarily attach themselves to the new Headship of Christ Jesus. This the blessed concomitant of pardon; and love working by law (Roman custom), that in this also "he might be just." 2. *The witness.* Each one who unfeignedly believes in Christ Jesus *is* adopted into the family of God. But may not this blessed adoption be realized? Thank God, it may: "The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit." "All things are of God" (2 Cor. v. 18), and so the whole of the great work of salvation is his work, and when every holy confidence towards himself is inspired in the believer's mind, it is his inspiration. But he deals with men in harmony with the laws of their own minds, and guides and inspires them through the processes of their own thought. Hence the expression, "witnesseth with our spirit." Our consciousness of God's forgiveness, our conviction of his love, are produced instrumentally by our apprehension of his purposes and promises in Christ; but in and through the working of our own spirit his Spirit works. We are prompted by our perception of God's love in Christ to cry, "Abba, Father;" but it is also by him that we thus cry. He works the assurance in and through the working of our thought and feeling: "witnesseth with our spirit." And thus is explained the failure, where there is failure, to realize this assurance. God's inspiration is not wanting, but the instrumentality is at fault. Perceptions, tone, temperament—these constitute the hindrance. And remediable by proper means. Such, then, the sonship which is the secret of the new life: adoption, and the realization of that adoption—all of God. His children! His beloved ones! Therefore we love him; therefore we live to him.

II. THE HEIRSHIP. But if sonship be the inspiration of this new life, what must its destiny be? We are heirs—"heirs of God; joint-heirs with Christ." 1. *Heirs of God.* The idea of fatherhood is the bestowal of all benediction on the child. And "of him every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15). Therefore he himself, and all that he can give, shall constitute our heritage. Now, in this world, God is ours; this is the great possession: his presence, his power, his love. And thus the world itself is transmuted into an inheritance of joy, even sorrows yielding blessing. But we are not yet of age; our manhood then! And oh, the inheritance that shall be! God himself we shall see face to face, knowing even as we are known. And God's creation shall be made—how fair and beautiful to us, who shall say? "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (PS. xvi. 11). And *that* "path of life" shall be "shown" us by God. 2. *Joint-heirs with Christ.* Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of man—God has adopted us in him; God

has made us heirs in him! And his appropriation of the heritage is our pledge. His life in the world: the Father, the Father's gifts; yea, even the cross. His risen and ascended life: "the Firstfruits of them that slept;" "whither the Forerunner is for us entered" (1 Cor. xv. 20; Heb. vi. 20). See John xvii., where the co-heirship is so set forth.

But meanwhile, "if so be that we suffer with him"! The process of recovery to sonship, heirship. We drink of that cup, we bear that cross; but so we shall wear that crown.—T. F. L.

Vers. 18—25.—*The redemption of the creation.* "If so be that we suffer with him." Then we do suffer? Yes, even as he did. For ours is a redemptive history, and redemption is not without pain. But the future—oh, how the glory eclipses all the momentary trial! So was it with himself. "For the joy that was set before him," he "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2). And so shall it be with us. We may well join the apostle in his triumphant outburst of hope, "For I reckon," etc. Ours is the hope of an immortal glory; nay, the hope is the hope of the world: "the earnest expectation of the creation," etc. So, then, we have for our consideration—the present pains, the future glory.

I. THE PRESENT PAINS. 1. *Of the creation.* This expression must not be toned down. It refers to all the creation, outside of man himself, with which man has to do; our "world," which is connected by a mysterious solidarity with ourselves, sorrowing in our sorrow, rejoicing in our joy. Once? It was "very good;" all was harmony, beauty, peace. We may not tell what were the joys of the early creation, but it was the garden of the Lord, the paradise of man. The ravages of the storm, the desolations of the wilderness, were then unknown; the creatures preyed not one upon another then; love, liberty, and life were all in all. But man's fall drew a shadow—oh, how dark!—across the beauty; and for love, liberty, and life, there were then strife, bondage, death! "The creation was subjected to vanity;" yes, cursed was the world for man's sake. And now? Look around you: "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." The earthquake and storm, the arid desert and dreary seas, the inhospitable clime, the unfriendly skies, the blighted harvests—the shadow of the cross! And the ravages of the animal world: destruction, pain, death. And at last? "The fashion of this world passeth away!" 2. *Of ourselves.* The nature-part of us is likewise "subject to vanity:" we groan. Disease, death—of our own frame and organic life; of our relationships. Oh, how we are mocked: dust, dust, dust!

II. THE FUTURE GLORY. 1. *Of ourselves.* We are God's children by faith in Christ; his adopted ones. But though the adoption is real, it is not yet manifest to the universe. No, nor to ourselves in its fulness. As though a beggar-child were adopted by a king, but for a while must still appear in beggar-garments. Oh, it shall not be always so! The beggar-garments shall be cast away, and the royal robe assumed; our sonship shall be made manifest to all: we wait "for the redemption of our body." Yes, God's purposes shall be accomplished; in the resurrection of the Son they are pledged to fulfilment; the body of our humiliation shall be made like to the body of his glory, and "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 2. *Of the creation.* But if we wait, and wait in hope, so does our creation wait, groan, yearn for the revealing of the sons of God. The ἀποκαραδοκία! The decay and death not intrinsically pertaining to it; no, not if God's world. The vanity to which it was subjected, the mockery of aim, the frustration of purpose, this was all "in hope." And as by man came the curse, by man comes the blessing. Bondage, corruption, through the sin? Yes; and liberty, glory, through the great redemption! Whatever of evil was done, shall be undone; the blot shall be wiped away; the shadow shall pass that the eternal light may shine. And all our relationships with the world, and with one another, these shall be remade then; delivered, glorified! Oh, how the heart has bled—bled because of the frustrations and rendings of this world. Oh, how the heart shall bound—bound with the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ; a gospel, not in word only, but in power, delivering power—power that shall work its deliverance on man's whole nature, all man's relationships, man's whole world!

Shall ours, then, not be the patience—"we wait for it"? Yes: for he giveth grace.

But shall we not know something of the triumph too? Shall we not grasp the future, and almost live in it as though the present were not? Yes; for ourselves, for our dear ones, for our dear world, "I reckon," etc.—T. F. L.

Vers. 26, 27.—*Helping our infirmity.* In the previous verses the twofold "groaning" has been set forth—of nature as subjected to vanity, and of redeemed man as still sharing the heritage of vanity in himself and in his relation to the world around. "We hope for that we see not:" and this hope, though it be of the character of patient waiting, is yet also of the character of intense desire. But are our desires merely vague, unauthorized wishes for some fancied good, which God may not be purposed ever to grant? Nay; for what might be otherwise but the vague wishes of our burdened hearts are intensified and authorized by the spiritual life which is in us—are, indeed, the promptings, the groanings, of that very Spirit of God who is the Author and Sustainer of our spiritual life. And as such they are according to God's will, and, being according to his will, are the sure pledge of their own realization. The general truth here set forth is that, in all our times of weakness in this mortal life, when we are ready to faint, the Spirit sustains us; the special application of the truth is that, when "in praying we cannot express to God what the blessing is which would allay the distress of our heart" (Godet), the Spirit of God inspires us with holy aspirations, which are not indeed to be formulated in human words, seeing that they are touched with something of the infinite, but which react in comfort on the heart, as conveying in themselves an assurance that the almost infinite craving shall be infinitely satisfied.

I. OUR INFIRMITY. 1. In this life of trial, in which evil is so largely mingled with good, and in which, therefore, as regards our perfect redemption, we have to "hope for that which we see not," we are called to exercise both a passive and an active waiting. (1) Passively, we are to wait until the day dawn and the shadows flee away. (2) Actively, we are to do God's will in this present world, and by so doing to hasten the advent of that day. But how often we prove our "infirmity"! our strength is weakness. How sometimes the heart is well-nigh crushed beneath the load, and we are tempted to say impatiently, "Would that it were morning!" And how dispirited we are then for the work of the kingdom! 2. And this general infirmity manifests itself specially in our inability to pray aright for the good which we confusedly desire. Oh, who has not proved this? The evils and mysteries of life almost daze our spirits; we strive in vain with our vision to pierce the impenetrable darkness. "Who shall show us any good?" So, coming before God, we do not find our accustomed relief: "we know not how to pray as we ought."

II. OUR HELP. 1. Amid all our weakness, however manifesting itself, the Spirit helps us. He gives us the patience to wait, and the strength to bear the burden and to do the work. Yes, that which of all things else is hardest, "to labour and to wait," earnestly to pursue our appointed task in spite of the mystery and distress of life, that is made possible by the good Spirit's help. Nay, even more, an inspiration comes from him which makes us zealous for the extension of his kingdom, and we urge our way with strength renewed; for our way is his way, and it tends to the accomplishment of his perfect will. 2. But especially, as these verses teach us, the Spirit helpeth our infirmity when "we know not how to pray as we ought." Oppressed by the mystery of life, torn by its cruel-seeming evils, knowing that these things ought not so to be, that they will not so be in a perfect state, we yet can scarcely realize our own desires, and cannot pray for the things we need. Then comes the inspiration from on high, and our heart goes forth towards God in aspirations prompted, and therefore warranted, by God. And the very desire, so born, gives rest. We may not know its full meaning; we are but partly conscious of our true need as regards that future for which we sigh. And therefore we may certainly not articulate all our desire in syllables of human speech to God: the groanings "cannot be uttered." But they are heard; they are understood; they shall be answered. For the Spirit that is in us is the Spirit who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10); and he therefore "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Oh, what a pledge is here of our sure fruition of all good! We do not vainly and wrongly sigh for the perfectness of the new world; God himself sighs in us, with us, for this consummation. There is truly a groaning in nature itself for deliverance; there is a

groaning in ourselves for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" and there is a groaning, in and with ours, of God's Spirit likewise, for the doing away of all contradictions such as now are, and the ushering in of the day of God, the perfect day. Here, then, is the law of a spiritual instinct, which, like all true instinct, however vaguely it may be conscious of its exact purport, is yet the pledge of its own realization.

Let us, then, not be ashamed to hope, to intensely hope, for that we see not, for the hope is heaven-born. But because of the very divineness of the hope itself, and the consequent certainty of realization, let us with patience wait for it.—T. F. L.

Vers. 28—30.—*God's purpose in Christ.* The apostle has indicated the hope of the future glory, in comparison with which all suffering now is as nought. He has also shown how this hope is no vain imagining of a diseased mind, but the inspiration of God's Spirit. And now he goes on to show that, since this divinely inspired hope corresponds with the great purpose of God concerning us, all things which enter into God's plan for our governance, including apparently evil things which are suffered by him to befall us, must ultimately subserve his purpose and be for the fulfilling of our hope. All this, assuming that we "love God;" thus any carelessness or sin of ours is utterly excluded from the reckoning. It is, indeed, this inward principle of love which transmutes the evil into good, and prepares for the final glorifying. We have, then—the purpose; the process.

I. THE PURPOSE. God's purpose concerning man dates back to the eternal past, for to God's mind all things are ever present. But, objectively, it dates back to the wreck of the primal purpose in man's transgression and death. On the first purpose a second purpose was built; out of the wreck of the old race a new race should be formed. 1. *The Firstborn.* Since the first man had betrayed his trust, and become the progenitor of a fallen race, there should be a second Man, the Lord from heaven. He should be God's own Son, for the redemption-work was one which needed the powers of Divinity; he should be man's Son also, one in whom the nature of the race might be concentrated, who might therefore redeem men, as God, but through the medium of a true humanity. He should humble himself, be shorn of his splendour, suffer and die, being baptized with blood for the remission of our sins; he should also, "dying, draw the sting of death," and, rising as the Firstfruits of a justified race, pass into the heavens as our Forerunner. Being perfect in all things as Son of man, obedient to the Father, and having performed a perfect work, he should enter perfected into life, glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. 2. *The many brethren.* Such was God's purpose in his Son. But, glorifying his Son, he should also "bring many sons unto glory" (Heb. ii. 10); for the Son, "having been made perfect," should become "unto all them that obey him the Author of eternal salvation" (Heb. v. 9). For them he suffered, and therefore they also must suffer, "becoming conformed unto his death" (Phil. iii. 10); but, just as he passed through death unto life, so they also, dying with him, should with him "attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii. 11). "Conformed to the image of his Son:" yes, this was God's purpose in Christ for man, the inward conformation of consummate holiness, and the outward conformation of consummate happiness.

II. THE PROCESS. Those, then, who by their own free choice should become Christ's people—for all others are here left out of account—were foreknown and foreordained by God, "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus," as sharers together with him in the perfect adoption of sons of God. Now, such a purpose, formed by God, and formed in the eternal past—such a purpose concerning believers and faithful ones (for, as above, all possible misuse of freedom on the part of man, whether for rejecting God's grace, or for casting away a grace received, is here waived, and it is assumed that the purpose formed by God is embraced and adhered to by man)—such a purpose cannot fail of its result, but the process of God's working must issue in its complete accomplishment. 1. *Called.* The summons in accordance with the purpose. God calls his people, by the outward Word, by the inward Spirit; or, in other words, invites them, summons them, to enter into life. Can his Word be broken? Can his Spirit deceive? He means what he says, and, responding to his call, his people have a guarantee which is more sure than the pillars of the universe (Matt.

xxiv. 35). 2. *Justified.* The virtual instatement in accordance with the purpose. Calling them, he justifies them. There is a Name which destroys all guilt, and acquits for ever, and upon them this Name is named. They are "in Christ Jesus," and "there is therefore now no condemnation." From darkness into light; from death unto life. And the justification is the pledge and beginning of all blessings in Christ that shall tend to the consummation of the life. It carries with it the regeneration of our nature; it supplies the power that shall issue in our complete sanctification; and it points unfalteringly through all the tears and darknesses of the intermediate discipline to "the revealing of the sons of God." 3. *Glorified.* The actual instatement in accordance with the purpose. This "revealing of the sons of God" is so assured to us, that it is spoken of here as though already an accomplished fact. Yes, all things must be made consistent and harmonious at last; the discord must be done away; the blessedness of the saved spirit must be wedded to the blessedness of a saved world, and so "all things be made new." Such shall be the culmination of the process by which God's purpose shall be fulfilled.

The lesson insisted on is this: God will let nothing thwart him. Only love him, throw yourself into the current of his good purpose, and all things shall be made good to you. Opposition there may be, affliction there may be; but God in Christ shall triumph—triumph in you. The very hindrances shall become helps, the enemies unwitting friends. Yes, "we know that all things," etc.—T. F. L.

Vers. 31, 32.—*Supplying all our need.* The argument of vers. 28—30, and, indeed, of the entire chapter, is now summed up in a triumphant hymn—the victorious battle-cry with which the conqueror surveys the vacated field (Godet). Vers. 31 and 32 refer to God's call according to purpose; vers. 33 and 34 to the solemn justification of believers by God; and vers. 35—39 to their final glorifying as involved in the justification. Here the reference is to God's great purpose in Christ, and the apostle challenges an answer to his question, "If God is for us, who is against us?" Nay, God's purpose is irrefragable. And what a pledge has he given of his intent to carry out that purpose to the uttermost! "He spared not his own Son." Surely, therefore, in him all things are ours. Let us consider, then, what are the "all things" that we need, and what is our assurance that God will give them.

I. OUR NEED. Ours is a triple need—of guidance, grace, and glory. 1. *Guidance.* A venture has been made upon a new career. Is it a venture? and may we possibly find ourselves in endless mazes lost? Or are we not sure, rather, of the leading of an unseen hand? "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." (1) Belief. As an essential requisite of advancement in salvation, God will give knowledge of his truth. How immense is the potency of ideas! A false idea will sway a world to its destruction; a true idea will impel men with mighty progress in the way of life. So is it in the way of the Christian life: zeal may hasten men to all vigorous endeavour, but zeal without knowledge may make their endeavours futile, or even ruinous. A prejudice, an error, may dwarf, or even vitiate, our Christian character and work; a true belief, a real knowledge, will be our strength and conquest. But how liable we are to prejudice and error! How insufficient is our intellect for grasping truth! We may so easily follow false lights. No; "Thou shalt guide me." The God who calls will lead, and he will lead our thought, our knowledge, our belief, if we rightly seek his help. Use of all available means presupposed—self-training, experience, God's Word. A right spirit also—humble, teachable, true. Then not far astray. (2) Growth. The truth is as food, and our appropriation of it must be followed by true growth of Christian character. But the growth needs to be watched and tended; the application of the truth to our own hearts needs care. Illustrate food and bodily health; but how much more the spiritual! God gives wisdom to use knowledge, and above all he himself guides the upward growth. (3) Life. As with the character, the hidden man of the heart, so with the life, the outer man. Principles may be formed; but the application of principles in practice yet remains. And how multifarious the applications! how complex! how sometimes conflicting! We need to seek all help that right knowledge affords, a well-informed conscience. But also we need the intuitive perception, the pure intent, which itself is often the surest guide; the right spiritual instinct. In either way the life shall have guidance of the God that leads us. 2. *Grace.* If we need

direction, do we not also need active help? for we are not only fallible, but frail. (1) The grace of life shall be given. All the power of love which constitutes our spiritual life shall be supplied by him. His Spirit is within us; we are led by himself to himself. (2) The grace of conquest also. All power, as well negatively towards evil as positively towards good. Whatever oppositions there may be to our spiritual well-being, we shall conquer through his love. (*a*) Actively: as pressing our way through temptation; (*b*) passively: we learn to suffer and be strong. 3. *Glory.* While guidance and grace are given to conduct us to the glory, the glory itself is sure. (1) Perfect purity: all possibility of sin then done away; all fulness of good. (2) Perfect manhood: our outward and inward nature harmonized. (3) A perfect world: our habitation and our nature then at one.

II. OUR PLEDGE. But how know we that these things shall be given? The pledge is twofold: God's purpose—"God is for us;" God's gift—"He spared not his own Son." 1. *God initiates salvation.* Not begged of him by us; not procured by a third. "Of his own will." If *he* begins to work, he will finish. 2. *God gives the supreme Gift.* The very life: his Son; himself. Hence all subordinate gifts will be given. "Is not the life more than meat?" 3. *God loves with such a love.* Beyond our thought. But more than all which the analogy suggests: "his own Son."

"How then shall he not," etc.? Argue the matter to yourselves. He gave his Son for me! And then—

"All, all he hath for mine I claim;
I dare believe in Jesu's Name!"

T. F. L.

Vers. 33, 34.—*The triumphant challenge.* He has asked the general question, challenging an answer: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He now proceeds to two special questions, the first of which has reference to the justification of believers by God. In view of that he asks, "Who shall lay anything to their charge? who shall condemn?" And again, amplifying the fact of their justification, he tells of the death, the resurrection, the ascension, the intercession, of Christ Jesus, as the pledge and declaration of their acquittal. We may consider the possible sources of charge against God's people, and their triumphant vindication.

I. THE CHARGE. To them that are in Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation, and yet whispers of condemnation may again and again be heard. 1. *The transgressions of the past* may come to mind with such force as to destroy our joy in God. Past irreparable, and though first consciousness of free forgiveness of God may almost blot it from our memory for the time, yet there are times when it seems to live again, and so vividly that we can hardly detach the thought of overwhelming guilt as still upon us. 2. *The imperfections of the present.* How far from the perfectness of the ideal! And how the very growth of earnestness and increase of endeavour seem to make the ideal more distant still! So conscience, the Law, the adversary, and accusing men (see Beet, *in loc.*) may make us feel condemned.

II. THE VINDICATION. But the condemnation is not real; it exists only in the diseased imagination. Let it be brought face to face with the great facts of the gospel, and it must vanish quite away. What are these facts? 1. The great central fact is that we are God's chosen ones; and who shall dispute God's choice? Not that he ever can act without reason; but, whether we see the reason or not, we are elect, the elect of God, as being his people, and who shall gainsay it? 2. This great election is declared by his justification of the believer, which has gone abroad in the gospel to all the world: "He that believeth is not condemned." 3. And even the reasons of the election of believers are graciously made known, and graciously confirmed: Christ's death, resurrection, exaltation, and intercession. (1) The death of Christ, as the great Propitiation for the sins of the world, utterly does away all guilt to those who sincerely receive it by faith. As the Son of God, he thus sets forth the infinite love of a God who laid down his life for our sake; as Son of man, making reconciliation for the sins of the people, he appeals on our behalf even to the infinite justice for our acquittal. And though we may still be frail, and sin may cleave to us, yet, if we are sincere in our faith, that atonement avails for all things and for ever. (2) The resurrection of Christ, following after the expiation, is God's sure setting-forth of the value of the

expiation, and the effectiveness of the finished sacrifice. "Raised for [*i.e.* because of] our justification" (ch. iv. 25). (3) The exaltation, as the resurrection completed, is the completing of the guarantee that we are accepted in him. And he is our Forerunner. (4) The intercession, as the work of the exalted High Priest, is the continuous application of the atoning work, in itself for ever finished and for ever guaranteed. For returning prodigals, and for us with our frailties who have believed, he "ever liveth to make intercession," and is therefore "able to save unto the uttermost."

Oh, then, whether we look to God who has chosen and justified us, or to him whom God hath set forth as a Propitiation, and again declared to be his Son, well-pleasing and beloved, by the raising from the dead; whether we regard God in Christ as the Source of our salvation, as the Effecter of salvation, or as the Manifester of salvation; whether we think of the past, the present, or the future in Christ;—in any case we can take up the triumphant challenge given us by Paul, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus," etc.—T. F. L.

Vers. 35—39.—*The great persuasion.* This second special question which Paul asks has reference to that final glorifying of believers by God, that perfect conformation to the image of his Son, which is the import of his purpose concerning them, the goal of all his working. The "love of Christ," or the "love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," is represented as laying hold of them with a firm grasp, to rescue them from death, and to raise them to perfect newness of life; and the apostle asks, in view of all possible evils which might seem to threaten the accomplishment of such purpose, assuming, of course, their own continued loyalty of heart, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and, as he recapitulates all actual or imagined perils, the ready answer still breaks forth from his lips, "Nought, nought shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" We have, then, here for our consideration —love; love's hindrances; love's triumph.

I. LOVE. The great truth, great beyond all others, fundamental to all others; the truth to which all the revelations were designed to lead, and in which they culminate; the truth set forth so wondrously in the life and death of Christ, is this, that "God is love." This love was manifest in man's creation, and in the rich resources of man's world, furnished for man's sake with such liberal lavishment; it was manifest yet more in man's redemption, and in the rich resources of man's spiritual world, prepared and furnished for man with infinite tenderness. And how has it not been manifest to each of the called ones, laying hold of them, lifting them from the depths, setting them even now in heavenly places, and destining them, as joint-heirs with Christ, to all the blessedness of an immortal future!

II. LOVE'S HINDRANCES. But this love has its seeming hindrances; shall they obstruct the accomplishment of its designs? 1. *Death and life.* (1) Death was no fancied evil then; for, as he tells us, it was only too true that "for God's sake they were killed all the day long, accounted as sheep for the slaughter." And in another place he speaks of being, as it were, "appointed to death" (1 Cor. iv. 9). And again (1 Cor. xv. 31) he says, "I die daily." Not mere talk, for we know how in reality this was the seal of their witness-bearing. The Roman Christians, in after-times—in what terrors was not death arrayed to them? As under Nero. And so whenever the beast—the brute power of ungodliness—has made war with the saints (Rev. xiii. 7). And even now in the forefront of the conflict there is death for Christ's sake; and to all there is the dread dying that sooner or later must end this mortal strife. (2) But the life itself is filled with jeopardy. Perhaps really more trying test than any martyrdom: latter once for all, and glory round it; former protracted and commonplace. (*a*) Positively: dangers and difficulties of circumstance and event; moral difficulties, as world's reproach, and opposing one's self to stream of custom; and difficulties relating to one's own patient continuance in well-doing. (*b*) Negatively: the allurements of temptation; repetition of primal fall. Thus life perpetually tries us. 2. *Angels and principalities.* Eph. vi. opens our eyes to the tremendous forces arrayed against us. So Bunyan's allegory no fiction. There is a real, objective opposition of "spiritual wickedness" against us, and of what strength and subtlety who shall say? And through the medium of the strength and authority of the "powers" of this world; as Roman emperors. 3. *Height and depth.* Great exaltation, of this life or of the spiritual life, has its besetting tempta-

tions: so Paul himself (2 Cor. xii.) in danger of being "exalted above measure." Great depression or abasement has likewise its perils: rebellion, or despair. 4. *Things present and things to come.* Boding fears often worse than actual fightings. So we may "die a thousand deaths in fearing one." 5. *Any other creation.* The apostle has been hinting at a new creation, when the true Paradise shall be restored. But if the former Paradise was so perilous, and this creation now has so many perils, what may not the new creation bring? Shall that separate us from the love of Christ?

III. LOVE'S TRIUMPH. Shall these things separate us from God's love? Nay, God's love is too strong; and God's gifts, already given, are too great. And, indeed, those things all enter into the working of God's purpose, and therefore cannot break it. Nay, more: if they enter into the working of that purpose, they shall actually subserve it; and so we shall not only conquer, but more than conquer (ver. 28); for that which is against us shall become for us, evil shall be transformed to good, our enemies shall become unwitting friends. "More than conquerors!" Of our entry into life they swell the triumph (illustrate by triumph of Roman generals), and so an entrance is ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom.

Let this be our persuasion, our faith; so shall we be strong, and at last we shall realize the victory which is even now assured.—T. F. L.

Vers. 1—4.—"*No condemnation.*" This is a glorious beginning to a glorious chapter. As in some great musical work, we can tell its character from the opening bars. The apostle, having been treating some of the darkest human problems, delights to emerge into the brightness of the new condition achieved for our fallen humanity by Christ Jesus.

I. HOW CLOSE IS THE UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE! The preposition "in" denotes an altered state, men no longer reckoning themselves according to their genealogy from Adam, but as grafted into the stock of Christ. It is not hearing merely of the gospel, but being vitally united to its Author, deriving life from him, as the branches in the vine are nourished by its sap. Or, as the apostle puts it in ch. vii., we are "married to" Christ, made "members of his flesh, of his body and of his bones." The relationship is effected on God's side by his Spirit, on man's side by repentance and faith. No other religion claims such an intimate association to exist between its founder and its votaries. The union is mystical, but very real. Christ is our City of refuge from the avenger, our Ark of salvation, our Haven of peace. "Abide in me" is his cheering counsel to all his disciples.

II. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO CONDEMN THOSE WHO ARE THUS UNITED TO HIS SON. This would mean severing himself from the Son of his love. He did conceal his presence from the crucified One, but only for a season. "God hid his face, but held him by the hand." The Saviour said, "Father, into thy hands," etc. The resurrection was the seal of God's approbation of the Messiah's career. And Christ's people, by their faith in the Redeemer, virtually place his Person and work between themselves and the condemnatory Law. Though metaphors are inadequate, we may assert that justice cannot demand a double payment. If Christ our Representative was accepted and glorified, we may triumphantly await the judgment. The very "weakness of the flesh" which made the Law unable to condemn sin was compelled, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which tried to seduce him from holiness, and, failing, wounded him unto death. In the flesh was an offering made for sin, demonstrating the guilt of human nature, and yet redeeming it from the deserved penalty. As the "hue and cry," or the preparation of the scaffold for the execution of some sentenced wretch, does not alarm the innocent, so the threatenings of the law of sin and death do not concern or terrify those who have received the law of the Spirit of life. We are not saved by understanding accurately the *rationale* of the plan of Divine mercy; but to be able, like the apostle, to see the truth grounded on an adequate foundation, is to feel our feet on the granite rock which no wave of wrath's sea can shake.

III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE SECURED BY UNION WITH CHRIST RENDERS CONDEMNATION IMPOSSIBLE. The apostle speaks strongly of the requirements of the moral law being "fulfilled" in Christians. They walk no longer "after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Thus the Law sees its end accomplished, its goal reached. The affections are placed on things above, the thoughts are cleansed, the will is submissive to the

dictates of God. The most rigid code could not produce holiness. But to love Christ, to learn of him, to walk in him, is to cut up sin at the roots. Christ is not only a Pattern of obedience, but a Power to his associates, enabling them to become like him, "fulfilling all righteousness." The husk of the Law being stript off, the kernel is acknowledged to be "just and good." If the Law ventured to prefer a complaint against the infirmities and failings of Christians, all objection is banished by the assurance of the Master that his scholars shall grow in grace and knowledge till they are not only saints in name, but in character and deed. They shall be presented faultless before the throne of judgment.—S. R. A.

Ver. 6.—*The spiritual and the carnal man.* Religion may be judged of from within or without—from the character it forms or the actions to which it gives rise. Only the latter can properly come under the survey of our fellows, whilst we may discern the inward effects. Besides ourselves, only God can determine our inner condition. The Searcher of hearts can unlock the private door of the heart. It is well for us, without self-flattery or self-depreciation, to anticipate the disclosures of the last day. No wise man wishes to deceive himself.

I. TWO DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE DISPOSITIONS. We may be spiritually or carnally minded. The "mind" of the Revised Version suggests too much the rational part of our nature; "mindedness" would perhaps be preferable. We are to think of what the Spirit has a mind to, and what the flesh. The "minding" is what a man thinks of, aims at, cares for. *The spiritually minded man is one in whom the Spirit is supreme.* The Holy Spirit has breathed upon the soul, giving a new impulse from God, so that the spirit of man asserts its rightful position, bringing the lower passions under control. Though not without a struggle, the flesh has to yield. *He discerns the excellence of spiritual objects.* He recognizes in the Scriptures a message from the Most High. He thinks of God with veneration and affection; he respects the blessings of salvation and of the life to come. *He delights in spiritual exercises,* deeming them not a round of duties, but of enjoyments. He flies to them as a refuge from cares and anxieties. Whilst he meditates, the dove of peace broods over the turbulent waters, and there is a great calm. The fleshly man is deaf to the charms of spiritual melody, and blind to the glory of the spiritual sunrise. *He turns all the events of life to spiritual purposes.* Plants may have the same air and moisture and soil, yet they embody the results according to their separate individuality; as animals from similar food produce hair or wool, or bodies of diverse structure and capability. So two men may witness the same scene or read, the same paragraph; yet how different the emotions! The one loathes wickedness, the other gloats over the garbage. To mind the things of the Spirit is to draw instruction from every event, to turn the mercies of God into praise, and his judgments into matter for humiliation. Temptations make such a man more watchful, afflictions contribute to his advancement, as the flower climbs even by a thorn. We do not deny that worldly minded men occasionally turn their thoughts to the spiritual realm; but this is accidental, and does not accord with their ordinary behaviour, so as to flow spontaneously from the inner life. What makes men doubt the contrariety is that dispositions and actions shade into one another, constituting at times a sort of neutral borderland, where it is difficult to say which is flesh and which Spirit. Yet darkness is not light, nor poverty riches, nor is vice an infinitesimal degree of virtue; there is a radical distinction.

II. THE CERTAIN MISERY OF THE ONE STATE. "The minding of the flesh is death." *It overturns all proper order.* The lower appetites are ruling; the pyramid is inverted, and a fall is certain. Where the rabble revolt and reign, anarchy leads to dissolution of all prosperity. *It fights against Divine Law.* "The carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God;" it may prudently regard the Law so as to secure greater indulgence, but it does not voluntarily submit or embrace the Law gladly. All the laws of God are for the good of his creatures; they are for, not against, the spiritual life. Men cannot come into conflict with the laws of their being without harm and loss. *Death is the visible effect in all departments.* Vice ruins the physical constitution; unjust acts disintegrate civil society; the pursuance of evil blunts the perception of moral good, and deadens the conscience; and even Christians, through sin, may become callous to the spiritual—"having a name to live, and being dead." These are the beginnings, quite

sufficient to show the terrible possibility of becoming altogether fleshly, choosing evil deliberately as good. As men long immured in prison may lose all desire for liberty, deeming the light of day painful and fellowship irksome, so does it kill all the rational longings and stifle the highest faculties of the soul to be continually in bondage to the bodily appetites.

III. THE NECESSARY BLESSEDNESS OF THE OTHER STATE. To be in Christ is to be a new creation, where the thrill of young life fills the being with joyous hope of yet better things to come. There are new desires, new resolves made, new occupations entered upon. The boy that refuses to tell a lie may suffer, yet is glad within; and the victor over temptation knows what it is for the angels to minister to him. There is a happy consciousness that we are on the right path, that there is harmony between us and our Maker. The reality of life is manifested by its fruits, against which there is no law, no sentence of death. This life is accompanied by the tranquil satisfaction of peace, the panacea for daily irritations. Not the deceitful calm of opiate slumber, nor the stagnation of a festering pool; but a flowing stream, gliding by smiling orchards and productive industries. He has "life and peace" whose "conversation is in heaven," for such is not swayed by the customs of the hour, nor ruffled by the accidents of the day. Take from the Christian what you please, you cannot rob him of this holy serenity. Not death can strip him of his comfort; he has "a house not made with hands," his honour stands not in the breath of man, his treasure is not dug out of the bowels of the earth. He receives "a kingdom which cannot be moved." He lives when all the world is dead, is happy when all the fountains of earthly pleasure are dried up. —S. R. A.

Ver. 10.—*An indwelling Saviour.* Awe-struck must Israel have been when the cloud of the Lord rested upon the tabernacle, the sign of the interest of Jehovah in his people and of his intention to dwell amongst them. And when the dedication of the temple of Solomon was completed, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, the nearness and condescension of their God caused the Israelites to bow with their faces to the ground, and to praise the Lord, saying, "For he is good: his mercy endureth for ever." It was much when the angelic messengers appeared to patriarchs and prophets, brightening their homes for a space. But how vast the honour conferred upon the humblest Christian when the Son of God fulfils his promise by not only visiting him, but taking up his abode in his heart! The visit of a sovereign invests the meanest domicile with interest. Look with wonder, therefore, on the man with whom the Deity is a constant Guest.

I. THE INTIMACY OF THE UNION. Jesus employed the figure of a vine to set it forth. *He used the same way of speaking as with reference to the union between his Father and himself.* "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Paul, alluding to his conversion, said, "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me." The heart of man is pictured in Scripture as a house at which the Saviour knocks for admission. Thus is the question answered, that God will "dwell with man upon the earth." *Christ is said to abide in us when his words are retained* in the memory and acted upon in the life, becoming a source of inspiration for high and holy thoughts and deeds. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you," etc. *Christ bestows upon his people the gift of his Spirit,* to be his Representative, the living, present Comforter. "Hereby know we that he abideth in us, by his Spirit which he hath given us." To aspire to such a relationship we had never dared of ourselves; the conception is manifestly Divine.

II. SOME EFFECTS OF THE INDWELLING OF CHRIST. 1. *It is not intended to nullify all the natural results upon the body of the fall of man.* "The body is dead because of sin." The reception of Christ by faith, and the consequent obedience to his teachings, does indeed tend to produce such temperateness, industry, and contentment as are most fitted to preserve the corporeal frame in pure and wholesome condition and to prolong its existence. Nevertheless, the gospel does not avert the operation of physical laws, and longevity is not the Christian's chief aim. The youthful may pass away because of inheriting a weak constitution, and their early decease is not to be regarded as mysterious, and as a scourge from God's hand to the sorrowing relatives. Every death does speak to us of the evil of sin in the race. The forcible wrenching asunder of soul

and body can never be beautiful to contemplate. God writes in dreadful character his opinion of sin. 2. *It leads to the mortification of wrong desires.* As the Messiah drove out from his Father's house the thieves and law-breakers who polluted the sanctuary, so he cannot enter the temple of the soul without vindicating it against profanation by unholy passions. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." There is a spiritual death of the body in the sense that the Shechinah of the Divine presence involves a restraint upon corrupt longings, a controlling of rebellion against the laws of God, against unruly will and envious, impure affections. Inclinations contrary to righteousness are not henceforth to have their way, but to be as if dead. 3. *It vivifies the spirit of man.* As the sap invigorates the branches, so the power of Christ works in us mightily. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." Man's good purposes and feelings are strengthened, the seed of life fructifies, the dethroned spirit restored to supremacy is aided in the government of the kingdom by the auxiliary forces of the King of kings. No unrighteous confederacy is permanent; its union is external, not internal; it carries within itself the germs of its own decay. Righteousness alone unites a people in strength, forbidding discord and promoting progress and prosperity. The presence of Jesus conforms us to his image, as friends grow like one another. Having Christ, we have the principle of life, of holiness, of perfection; work it must, until it attains the designed development. The acorn prophesies the oak, and the stainless spirits of heaven are predicted in the saints of this earthly sphere. 4. *It promises a quickening of the mortal body.* In view of the comparison instituted in ver. 11, it is impossible to restrict the interpretation to a merely spiritual resurrection. The triumph of our Deliverer is not consummated till these frail tenements of clay are freed from corruption and glorified. In what the exact relationship or identity consists, we may not know. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain. But God giveth it a body as it pleased him." Look not on the graveyards as charnel-houses of the dead, but as nurseries where seeds of immortal plants are deposited, to bloom with undying vigour in the heavenly garden.

CONCLUSION. It is our connection with Christ which alleviates affliction. Through him does God educe good out of evil, triumphing over opposing forces, and making sin to contribute to righteousness, and death to be the gate of life. But if there be no loving communion between us and Christ, if we stand aloof from him, we cut ourselves off from salvation and glory. It is not sufficient to hear of the Saviour; we must entrust ourselves to him; we must entreat him to "come in and tarry with us." —S. R. A.

Ver. 14.—*The guidance of the Spirit.* Moses displayed a beautiful absence of jealousy when he cried, "Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" His wish is realized under the Christian dispensation, where "the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." This gift is the fulfilment of Christ's promise that his disciples should not be left "orphans," and our investiture with his Spirit is a testimony to the efficacy of the work of Christ. The Spirit operates silently but powerfully on the heart; though unseen, his presence is most real. Science acquaints us with subtle forces that work on matter. Place a bar of steel in the magnetic meridian with the north end downward, and, if struck with a wooden mallet, the bar will be magnetized. No outward difference is perceptible, yet the particles have assumed a uniform direction, have acquired new properties. So does the Spirit impart a new tendency, a new nature, and the whole man is changed. The Spirit works not like the influences of our environment from without inwardly, but from within outwardly.

I. THE LEADING FOR WHICH THAT OF THE SPIRIT IS SUBSTITUTED. It is called "self," or "the flesh," where the inimical power of the great adversary is the chief factor. The aim of the life may not be clear to the man possessed. He may seem to have no definable object of pursuit; led on now by one impulse, now by another, its force and persistency varying in all degrees. Some rely on their own native wisdom for the steerage of their course, others are governed by the maxims and customs of the society in which they move. The "spirit of the age" is a prevalent controlling force. In proportion as any one goal is kept in view, and "reached forth to" perseveringly, is the man esteemed strong and successful. And the Christian is strong according to

the heartiness and fidelity with which he surrenders himself to the guidance of the Spirit. He acknowledges that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

II. THE ROAD TRAVELLED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT. It is a heavenward journey; the affections are "set on things above." It begins with taking up the cross to follow Christ, and implies self-denial in order to please God. It is a pilgrimage. This world is not our rest, or our final home. It involves a warfare, for many foes beset our path, and there is no turning aside to By-path Meadows for the man under the influence of the Spirit. How the natural life is glorified and transfigured by this conception of the unseen hand impelling us! No man is ever harmed by the Spirit's leading, and if he falls into a snare it is because he has mistaken the Divine indications of his route.

III. ASCERTAINING THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT. We are not led blindfold and irresistibly; the reason is illumined, the emotions are quickened. All that strengthens the spiritual life contributes to the clearness with which we recognize the Spirit's prompting, and to the readiness with which we yield to his gentlest touch. Prayer keeps open the communication with the spiritual realm. Ask for guidance before, not after, commencing an enterprise; nor expect the Holy Spirit to come in as a *deus ex machinâ* to rectify your errors. Compare your judgment and conduct with the precepts and principles of Scripture, and with the example of good men, especially of Jesus Christ. We are taught in his school. Like an artist intently studying some work of genius and imbibing its spirit, so meditate on Christ till you catch his enthusiasm for goodness and consecration to the will of God. Make the most of the seasons when you are blessedly conscious that you are "in the Spirit," be it on "the Lord's day" or any other. It is sin that darkens our spiritual perceptions, as some accident to the body may blunt the finer sensations, may dull the hearing and dim the sight.

IV. THE FAMILY LIKENESS WHICH THIS GUIDANCE IMPARTS. The Spirit of God enables us to realize our sonship. Hatred and disobedience and fear are exchanged for glad communion and willing service. We become increasingly like our Father, like our elder Brother Christ, and like the rest of the redeemed children. It is not identical sameness, but similarity, which results. Members of the same home may differ much in exact lineaments, yet the stranger can discern a family likeness. By his Spirit is the Saviour preparing his brethren for their heavenly home, to enter with intelligent zest into its enjoyments, the society of the angels and of the blest, into holier worship and higher service than we can render here.—S. R. A.

Ver. 19.—*The Christian apocalypse.* The kingdom of God is a kingdom of progress; "forward" is its watchword. That outgoing of the character of God which constitutes his works and laws cannot be other than an advance. For God to retrograde is impossible. In Judaism at its brightest period, the eyes of the noblest men directed their vision to better days to come. The saints "died in faith," not having received the promises, but embracing them afar off. And to-day the Christian, much as he loves to read of the illustrious sacrifice of himself on earth of the Son of God, regarding the events of that earthly sojourn as the foundation of his hope and religion, yet sighs not for a return of past wonders, but believes in a more glorious unveiling of the plan of God. Times of apparent defeat and humiliation are but valleys to be traversed in ascending to the topmost mountain-peak.

I. THE GOAL OF EXPECTATION. "The revealing of the sons of God." The sons are at present in obscurity. The statue is partially hidden, its proportions are visible, but we shall hereafter discern its lustrous beauty and perfection, complete, unstained. Princes, heirs to the throne, may be for a season in poor habiliments and amid mean surroundings; but they are to be brought forth like Joash, to be crowned as kings and priests unto God. God has given us "the firstfruits of the Spirit." As when a friend despatches his carriage and servants and son to conduct us with all honour to his house, so God has sent his Spirit into the hearts of his children—the earnest of the joys of heaven. Sweet voices whisper a coming state of larger possibilities and nobler felicity. The dawn heralds a cloudless day. We "wait for the redemption of the body," the removal of every trace of sin, the deliverance from every yoke, the complete abolition of death. Here a mean presence may conceal a beautiful personality; there the body shall be the out-flashing glory of the perfected spirit, as at the Trans-

figuration the soul of Christ in its intensity tinged with splendour the very skirts of his garments.

II. THE WHOLE CREATION IS INTERESTED IN THIS UNVEILING. With uplifted and outstretched head does the "creature" wait to decry the long-desired event. Genesis tells us of the ground cursed for man's sake. Man was formed to rule over the world, but, unable to control himself, his dominion has been broken in upon by disorder. And the beasts have suffered through the degradation of man. If the master deteriorate, so will his household. The howling of the dog, the moaning of the lion, the writhing of the worm, the fluttering of the imprisoned bird, all confirm the assertion of "subjection to vanity unwillingly." The poor brutes at the mercy of rough men may well pant for the redemption of the sons of God. Had man continued upright and grown in true wisdom, doubtless the very character of nature had changed for the better. Then had the glowing language of Isaiah been descriptive of common occurrences: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, . . . and a little child shall lead them." All things in God's universe are linked together. Man was formed out of the dust of the ground, and we must despise nothing.

III. IT IS ALREADY OBSERVABLE THAT THE PREVALENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ALLEVIATES THE HARDEST LOT. Many are the philanthropic agencies which owe their origin to the diffusion of the Spirit of Christ. First deemed quixotic, sentimental, then plausible and possible, and further becoming actual, the contrary has at last come to be thought disgraceful and unnatural. More consideration is shown to the lower animals. Earth yields up her stores to investigation, rejoices in the augmenting power of man to use her forces and bring her marvels to light. That sympathy with nature which modern poetry exhibits was almost unknown to the ancients. We are learning the language of Creation, interpreting her smiles and tears. At the death of Christ, the association with nature's pangs was made visible by the rending of the rocks and the darkening of the sun.

IV. If this tendency to amelioration is even now patent, WHAT SHALL BE THE EFFECT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S PURPOSES! Then shall "earth be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Moses in his song called the "heavens to hear, and the earth to give ear." Our Saviour showed his command of the elements. Winds and waves, trees, sickness, and evil spirits obeyed his word. In the desert the wild beasts hurt him not. In anticipation of the day when men shall be like the Saviour, the psalmist called upon earth to "make a joyful noise before the Lord. Let the floods clap their hands, for he cometh to judge the earth." Isaiah predicted that in Israel's millennium "the mountains and hills shall break forth into singing." And in the Book of Revelation we hear the chorus of redeemed creation: "Every creature which is in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, heard I saying, Blessing . . . be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." The cross of Christ is the great rectifier, reconciling all things unto God. If we cannot fathom the deep secrets of God, it is good, however, for us to meditate on the hints of a widespread redemption. There is something in the prospect which dwarfs our selfish earthly plans, and ennobles all that is linked on to God and his kingdom. It makes the pains and strifes and aches of the world bearable, because "our redemption draweth nigh." Are we doing aught as the sons of God to quicken the approach of the apocalypse? May our awaking be not to shame and everlasting contempt, but to the glorious emancipation of redeemed humanity!—S. B. A.

Vers. 24, 25.—*Hopeful patience.* The Christian, like the rest of the creation, waits for full redemption, but consciously and aspiringly. He is an heir who has not yet entered into the possession of his inheritance. He is saved from the guilt of sin, and is being released from its power. His sun is veiled under morning clouds, and he shall soon rejoice in cloudless splendour. A state of hope is the condition in which and the instrument by which he works out his complete salvation.

I. HOPE IS EXERCISED ON THE UNSEEN. What we see is here before us; what we hope for is still in the future—the invisible womb of time. Faith and hope are inseparable companions; where the former is, the latter is nigh. Hope is faith in the attitude of looking towards better things to come. It vividly pictures the approaching

glory, and is "the present enjoyment of future good." Christian hope is not a mirage that mocks the heart, but is surely grounded on the work of Christ, who has revealed the character of God and his far-reaching purpose of love. Many a man depending on high expectations has found them baseless; the legacy is absent, the coveted post is given to another. When the sceptic talks of a bird in the hand being preferable to two in the bush, we reply that by the very nature of the case Christian anticipation is precluded from being satisfied with the temporal. "We look for new heavens and a new earth."

II. HOPE DRIVES OUT DESPAIR, THE FOE OF PATIENCE. Where despondency grows, there activity ceases. What means that sudden splash, that piercing cry, except that life has been quenched because the light of hope had vanished first? The gospel, by its promise of a free pardon for the penitent sinner, rolls away the burden from the back, enables the criminal to take heart of grace, and to exchange the dungeon of dreary fate for the glad sunlight of a new lease of endeavour after righteousness. There is a danger of succumbing to the weariness of the long Christian journey, but hope grasps the future and draws us thereto. Hopeful, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' had much ado to keep his brother's head above the water; but he comforted him saying, "Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us."

"Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray."

We are not as shipwrecked mariners, uncertain if any vessel shall pass near enough to succour us; we know that, if we wait patiently, "he that cometh will come, and will not tarry."

III. HOPE FITS THE SOUL FOR ITS FUTURE ARENA OF GLORY. For every state certain qualifications are requisite, if we would play a proper part therein. Dr. Johnson would like due notice of Burke's visits, that he might prepare himself for the lofty conversation certain to ensue. The young lady prepares herself for the engagements of society, and to acquit herself gracefully on her presentation at court. It is the hope of after-practice that inspires the labour of the student barristers and doctors. The necessary waiting is a beneficial discipline testing perseverance and fidelity. The disciple of Christ can abstain from worldly indulgences because of more cherished longings. He will not barter away his birthright even though faint with hunger. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." Hope is the great engine of progress and reformation. Israel under Ezra could ratify a covenant of amendment, because "there was hope for Israel concerning this thing."—S. R. A.

Ver. 26.—*Inarticulate prayer.* One reason for the lasting power of the Bible is its wide-ranging view of life. It runs through the whole gamut of feeling, touches every state. In this passage the apostle has brought heaven and earth together—has shown that creation is a unity waiting for a glorious consummation. He gives us truth fit to be "the master-light of all our Christian seeing, the guardian light of all our doing."

I. OUR HUMAN WEAKNESS. "Infirmity" suggests not so much the feebleness of the babe from a want of development, as the prostration of illness through the inroad of disease. Sin wastes the constitution, and we perceive our weakness when we proceed to act. This is the first stage of enlightenment, to be made conscious of helplessness. *Ours is a condition of sighing.* Like the rest of creation, Christians "groan within" themselves. They are subject to vanity, corruption, and sorrow. Afflictions deceive, comforts disappoint. At Marah the waters are bitter, and at Nineveh the gourd of one day withers the next. With what pain is thought exercised! Sin weighs us down; a cloud of passion obscures the Saviour's love; we toil, and "catch nothing." Deliverance is our cry. We stretch the head and crane the neck to hail the day of redemption. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." *A notable instance of weakness is furnished by our prayers.* We are ignorant of the fit requests to make, and the proper manner in which to present them. There is a danger of our asking unwisely, too impetuously, for a hurtful gratification. The most needful object, what "we ought" to supplicate, we are not earnest enough about; we scarce know what it

is. We look through eyes of flesh, and our vision is limited. We dislike a burden and all suffering. Like Paul, we have "thrice besought the Lord" to remove what is designed for beneficial discipline. Like sufferers under the surgeon's knife, we long for present ease rather than the removal of the real cause of disorder. Amid the whirl of life "bound to its wheel," we are liable to "mistake its end;" would fain arrest the machinery ere the clay is sufficiently impressed to make a "vessel meet for the Master's use."

II. THE DIVINE PROVISION. Help is afforded us by the Spirit of God. *The very sense of dissatisfaction is a sign of the indwelling Spirit.* The world wonders at the lamentation so frequent in religious biography. But to be quite content argues deadness of soul. To deem one's self perfectly wise is a sure token of self-deceit. The Spirit breaks up the deeps of an undisturbed monotony. The Emperor Augustus desired to see the wonderful couch on which a man slept serenely in spite of his heavy indebtedness. *The groaning of the Christian is an advance upon that of the natural creation.* It is not merely bewailing and murmuring; it is for spiritual reasons. He is made aware of his Divine sonship, and has to reconcile his confidence in the Father with his present irksome bondage. Creation longs for development; the Christian feels his sinfulness and sighs for salvation. His groaning proves a longing for infinitude; that he was made for God, and nothing less can satisfy. Like the hart chased by pursuers, till big tears are rolling from the eyes and the moisture is black upon its sides, so the Christian "thirsts for the living God." For him, to cease to aspire is to die, as the cessation of activity in extreme cold means a fatal rest. The unwilling bondage is an "incipient liberty." *This groaning is an intercession of the Spirit, an utterance too big for words, a powerful plea with God.* We have the advocacy of Christ without us, and the intercession of the Holy Spirit within. "I will send you another Advocate." Such an advocacy assures us of good. The Spirit is "the Firstfruits," and the golden harvest shall surely follow to the garner. These yearnings are the earnest of the fulfilment of our largest hopes, a pledge that the Father does not mean us always to remain down-trodden and stained and imperfect in knowledge. *How great the encouragement to pray!* Even though we are uncertain what exactly we want, our vague aspirations are not useless. We are lifted higher by them. Prayer is God's law, though how it acts on God we cannot tell. We know that in the human sphere a father exerts his power of loving aid when his child cries in trouble. And God reads the mind of his own Spirit, urging us to pour out our hearts before his throne of grace. We may pray, then, even though we realize our inability to express our needs. We can interpret the dumb animal's pleading look, or the babe's expression of suffering; we project our spirit to them, and by sympathy understand their wants. And our broken utterances, or the stereotyped phrases of the Liturgy, are multiplied by the Spirit into a mighty intercession on our behalf. Though we fear lest we ask amiss, God will understand aright, nor grant an injurious boon. The direction of the Spirit's longing stimulated within us is ever in accordance with the judgment of the All-wise.
—S. R. A.

VER. 32.—*A consolatory argument.* This is one of the most wonderful chapters in all Scripture, for the height to which it soars and the breadth of its conceptions. It is rich in doctrine, in promise, and in consolation. Having climbed, as it were, the mount of God, the apostle reaches the summit, stands bathed in the very light of God.

I. A GLORIOUS AND SOLEMN TRUTH COMMEMORATED. "God spared not his own Son." God has known what it is to be bereaved by the departure and death of his best-beloved. No need now to dwell upon those sufferings of Christ at the crucifixion—the baptism of horror, darkness, and blood in which the Sun of Righteousness set for two days. The God who in his tender mercy steps in and spares offenders taken in arms against him, then seemed deaf to the cries of his only begotten Son. He must drink the bitter cup to its dregs. Hagar in the wilderness turned away that she might not see her child die. She prayed, and Ishmael lived. Yet God beheld his Son prostrate in the garden, and yet yielded him up for us all. What can give such views of the enormity of sin as the sacrifice of Christ! When hard iron laws tempt us to disbelieve the compassion of our Maker, we are reassured by the spectacle of the suffering Christ. There is no lack of wisdom, power, or love, however stern the necessity which compels

our anguish. "A man spareth his own son that serveth him" all needless toil, but the grandest service may entail the severest labour. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation."

II. THE ARGUMENT WHICH THIS TRUTH IS USED TO ENFORCE. If God bestows such a gift, what will he withhold? 1. *When we were enemies he surrendered his Son on our behalf; how much will he not do for us now we are friends?* The mediation of Christ hath restored us to a covenant position. 2. *Jesus Christ is the sum of all good gifts,* inestimable, unspeakable. Nothing more precious in the eyes of God than his dear Son! It is absurd to suppose that he will refuse us a lesser gift. All good is embodied in Christ; other blessings are fruits of his tree of life. He is the Sun; other brightness is but beams from that Sun. 3. *The gift of Christ was for the express purpose of opening a door through which all other good things might pass to us.* He is the great Charter of Christian privilege, the Preacher of peace, the Ambassador of reconciliation, the Channel of Divine grace. "All things are yours." 4. *As we did nothing to deserve the gift of Christ, so the lesser blessings* to enrich our lives *are bestowed* not according to our deserts, but *according to God's free bounty.* He gives abundantly "without money and without price." 5. *The one condition is to receive Christ.* These gifts are to be had "with Christ," or not at all. What is to be said for him who can treat lightly this stupendous boon? If God spared not his own Son, what must the impenitent expect who refuse to obey the will of God, and harden themselves in unbelief? Turn to him in prayer, and employ the persuasive petition, "for Christ's sake."—S. R. A.

Ver. 35.—*Victorious love.* This chapter is like a stream that gathers strength and volume as it flows. Beginning with the Christian's state as one of freedom from condemnation, it ends by placing him on the summit of victory, radiant with the love of God. It is a chapter full of Christ. Christ in humiliation and triumph; Christ as the Sacrifice in whom sin was condemned, and, as the risen Redeemer, the Firstborn of many brethren; Christ as the present Strength of his people by his indwelling Spirit, and, as seated upon the throne, the perfect Son of God, to whose lineage all the sons are to be conformed. The earnest rhetoric of the apostle leads him to summon all adversaries to the bar, and challenge them to prove their ability to upset his reasonings and destroy the hopes of the followers of Christ. Who or what shall sever the tie that binds them to their Lord?

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHALLENGE. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The passage requires us to understand the expression as referring rather to Christ's love for us than to our response to his love. See the parallelism with ver. 37, "through him that loved us." And ver. 39 speaks of "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This interpretation loses no shade of meaning, since Christ's affection involves our love in return, as its natural outcome. The expression is, in truth, a desoription of our religion. To be severed from Christ's love means utter loss. 1. *Christianity is founded upon the love of Christ.* This looked down pityingly upon our dark and helpless world. It shone through all the symbols of the Law, pointing the worshippers to the coming Saviour. It nerved him to endure his anguish in the garden and on the cross. It has provided for man a day of grace, and the endowment of the Spirit to renew and sanctify. 2. *The new life is dependent on the continued manifestation of this love.* Remove the sunlight, and the plant sickens and dies. Let the supply of the air above be stopped, and the diver cannot breathe. Without the love of Christ operating on the heart, the sweetest ordinances lose their savour, communion by reading and prayer is eclipsed, no rainbow brightens the tears of penitence. The love of Christ shed abroad is the root of obedience. From it we draw our most influential motives to holiness and service. The lustre of our deeds is marred unless encircled by this golden band. 3. *The love of Christ is the love of God herein revealed.* Christ is the Horn of plenty by which the Father would pour into the lap of his children all good things. To be sundered from this love must signify, therefore, our estrangement from all that lifts us heavenward. Could this happen, Christianity were stilled into a frozen sea, the ripples and waves remaining in form, but not in motion and might—a waste of desert ice. The query is not merely oratorical. Endeavours

to intercept the love of Christ are reiterated and prolonged. The words that follow are not empty terms, not visions of the night, but stern foes, combatants to be encountered by day.

II. THE CONFIDENT REPLY. The apostle answers his own query. Look at the particular things enumerated, and then appreciate the apostolic assurance. 1. *The trials of life* cannot defeat the purposes of Christ's love. "Tribulation, anguish, famine, nakedness," though they may becloud our path and awaken a bitter cry, yet, instead of being regarded as indications of abandonment, are rather signs of the providential discipline which perfects sanctification. The good Shepherd is moved to greater compassion at the sight of the wounds of his flock. 2. *The hostility of an unbelieving world* cannot dissolve this union. "Persecution, peril, and the sword" do but liken the servant to the Master. Piety has thriven most in days of ridicule and torment. Christian heroism cheerfully underwent the loss of goods, stripes, and imprisonment; it converted jails into holy fanes resounding with praise and prayer. "In that he suffered being tempted," he has proved himself "able to succour those that are tempted." 3. *The apostle advances in his enumeration.* Neither "death," however grim its aspect, nor "life," with its snares and bewitchments, its competitions, its trifles, can succeed in detaching the pilgrim from the protecting love of his Guide. Nor can the ranged battalions of evil win the victory. Christ triumphed over them, and conquers still. 4. So *finally the apostle sums up* in the emphatic comprehensive assertion that neither the forces of time, "things present and to come," nor the forces of space, "height and depth," bewildering the imagination or depressing the soul, no, "nor any other created thing," above or below, personal or impersonal, animate or inanimate, known or unknown, shall defeat the loving purpose of Christ in the salvation of his people. "Many waters cannot drown his love, nor the floods quench it."

III. THIS CONFIDENCE JUSTIFIABLE. 1. *The dignity of Christ's Person and the perfection of his character forbid fear.* His love falters not, is not fickle; it waxes, but never wanes. He does not undertake what he cannot accomplish, nor begin what is beyond his power to finish. The foes to our salvation were foreseen and measured from the first. To doubt it is to dishonour him. 2. *The whole trend of the redemptive scheme is against any supposition of abandonment by Christ.* How infinite the price already paid! how steadily and surely the great design of salvation has marched through the ages, developing ever deeper wisdom and unfailing resources! We might wonder that man had not been left to himself in his rebellion and a new race created; but man's elevation having been promised and begun, every indication points to the ultimate fulfilment of our purest and brightest hopes. 3. *Innumerable biographies confirm the apostle's declaration.* May our life add another testimony! Look at the forces opposed to our steadfastness, and then, like Peter, we lose heart and begin to sink. Fix the gaze upon Christ, and our cheerful courage, our triumphant conviction of his unshakable love, will of itself lend such vigour to our loyalty that every apprehension of disaster shall vanish.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—11.—"*Paradise regained.*" The last chapter, after bringing out the insufficiency of Law to sanctify, ends by declaring the sufficiency of Christ. Through him, as our Deliverer from the body of death, we are enabled to enter upon an experience which has been rightly denominated "Paradise regained."[1] In the first section, which we are now to consider, we have the victory set before us which the Holy Spirit secures over sin and over death.

I. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST ESTABLISHES THE SOUL IN HOLINESS. (Vers. 1—4.) After what has been stated in ch. vii., it is seen that "there is not now *any* condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The soul has *died to Law* in the death of Jesus Christ, and, now risen, is married to another, even the risen Christ. And this better Husband has put the soul under another and better law of life, what is called in this passage "the law of the Spirit of life," and we are enabled by Paul's statements to see how it operates. And here it is well to premise that *law* and *Spirit* are not antitheses. The Spirit has, in fact, his law of operation, and it is this we have here set before us. 1. *The Spirit emancipates the soul from the law of sin.* Law, that is, the Law of Moses, could never do this. It was weak through the flesh, and had not the

[1] Cf. De Rougemont's 'La Vie Humaine avec et sans Foi,' p. 164.

necessary power. On the other hand, the Spirit takes Christ's life, applies it, and produces the emancipation through it. The grace of God is seen in "sending his own Son," that is, "the Son of himself;" and he made his advent "in the likeness of sinful flesh," that is, he came not as an apparition, but in a real body, yet it differed from other human bodies in that it was not "sinful flesh." And his purpose in assuming sinless flesh was that he might be "an Offering for sin" (Revised Version), and thereby might "condemn sin in the flesh." His whole life in the flesh was, indeed, a condemnation of sin; but the condemnation reached its climax when on the cross Jesus expiated human guilt. As a powerful writer has well stated the truth of the passage, "believers are made 'partakers of the Divine nature.' The nature of the Father through the Son is made known unto them—and as the rays of light which pass through a coloured medium take the hues of the medium through which they come, so the Spirit of God, coming to us through Christ incarnate, is baptized in the humanities of his Person, and hence becomes the Dispenser of the Divine mercy, as that mercy was revealed in the flesh. So that 'what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [had no sympathetic power to touch the emotional nature], God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the Law [which requires love, but cannot produce it] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'"[1] 2. *The Spirit enables the soul to fulfil the righteousness of the Law by walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* "The righteousness of the Law," in ver. 4, is given in the Revised Version as "the ordinance of the Law" (*δικαίωμα*, not *δικαιοσυνη*). But the idea is clear. The perfect life is the ideal of the Spirit. He accordingly comes to *inspire* as well as to *condemn*. He prompts us to "walk after the Spirit," in the spiritual path our Saviour trod, and so we find ourselves, through the appreciation of the life of Jesus, becoming progressively holy in character, approximating steadily towards the perfect righteousness which dwelt in him. It is this inspiration to holy living which defeats the law of sin. This is the real victory. Salvation is not so much from the uncomfortableness of hell, as from the greater misfortune of sin. As one has very properly said, "If my religion is to make me comfortable in spite of ill temper, and slipshod ways of business, and words that are not exactly true,—then I say deliberately, better the very fires of hell than that comfort, if they could only burn into me and through and through me a great abhorrence of all that is evil."

II. THROUGH DESTROYING SIN, THE SPIRIT DESTROYS DEATH. (Vers. 5—11.) For as long as we "mind the things of the flesh," that is, are occupied with them to the exclusion or subordination of spiritual things, we are, as "carnally minded," in a state of spiritual death. This "mind of the flesh is death" (so Revised Version). And when we analyze this death of the soul, we find it consists in at least these three things: (1) *Enmity to God* (ver. 7); (2) *rebellion against his Law*; and (3) *separation from him* as those that are not pleasing in his sight (ver. 8). The result of such a state is *misery*. "Paradise lost" is the true expression for the carnal state. It is into this state of misery, then, that God's Spirit inserts himself, and proposes: 1. *To destroy this spiritual death by destroying sin.* The moment we become "spiritually minded," we have passed the boundary between "Paradise lost" and "Paradise regained." We find that both "life and peace" result from spiritual-mindedness. "Here," says De Rougemont, "we are in full life and in full peace; there is in some way upon the mountain of God the terrestrial paradise of faith and of hope; there is the sweet sun of Eden, there are its sweet shades, there are its limpid waters which murmur, there is its tree of life whose fruits are the envy of the angels, if they have not similar ones in abundance. No one before Jesus Christ had known the way and passed the portal of this garden of delight. The Son of God descended to the lowest parts of the earth, and taught the existence of it to his disciples. They were suddenly transported there on the Day of Pentecost by the impetuous breath of the Spirit of God." 2. *The Spirit also proposes to destroy the mortality of the body by resurrection.* Alas! at conversion we do not become immortal. The change of heart has doubtless its good effect on the body, but it does not replace a bad constitution by a good one, nor rehabilitate the body. The body remains dead because of sin, even when the spirit has become life

[1] Cf. Walker's 'Philosophy of the Divine Operation,' pp. 84, 85; see also Julius Müller's Zeugniss von Christo,' ss. 142—170.

because of righteousness. But the justified and sanctified spirit within man is not going to be perpetually chained to a dying body. The Spirit of God, who has effected the vital change within, is the Spirit who raised up Jesus from the dead. That resurrection of our Lord is the pledge of our bodily resurrection. God is not going to leave his work half-done. Having raised our dead hearts out of the grave of trespass and of sin, he is not going to leave us in a state of physical mortality. The Head having been raised, the members shall be also "resurrected." The cemeteries shall not be left as trophies of the king of terrors. They shall be despoiled of their prey by the quickening power of the Divine Spirit. God means to save his people out and out, body as well as soul. Thus our gospel is that of the Resurrection. The tree of life in the midst of Paradise regained shall prove victorious over our mortality, and we shall have conferred upon us in body as well as soul an immortality like our Master's.

"No longer must the mourners weep,
Nor call departed Christians dead
For death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave becomes a bed.
Now once more
Eden's door
Open stands to mortal eyes;
For Christ hath risen, and man shall rise!
Now at last,
All things past,
Hope and joy and peace begin;
For Christ hath won, and man shall win!
It is not exile, rest on high;
It is not sadness, peace from strife;
To fall asleep is not to die;
To dwell with Christ is better life.
Where our banner leads us
We may safely go;
Where our Chief precedes us,
We may face the foe.
His right arm is o'er us,
He will guide us through;
Christ hath gone before us;
Christians! follow you!"

(John Mason Neale.)

R. M. E.

Vers. 12—17.—*The Spirit of adoption.* In the previous section we have found "Paradise restored," through the Spirit destroying sin and thereby death within us, first in the soul and then in the body. But this experience of spiritual-mindedness is realized on the line of God's adopting love. The emancipating Spirit is the Spirit of adoption. Let us notice the stages as here presented by the apostle.

I. OUR OBLIGATION IS NOW TO THE SPIRIT, AND NOT TO THE FLESH. (Vers. 12, 13.) The Spirit of Christ has freed us from every condemnation; he has secured a measure of sanctification, and death is defeated in soul and will be in body. Such a work carries clearly obligation with it. We are his debtors. We realize accordingly: 1. *That we are not bound to live after the flesh.* To do so would only be to court death. It would be to return to our vomit, like the filthy dog; it would be to wallow once more in the mire, like the once-washed swine. 2. *We are bound to mortify the deeds of the body, and so live.* Mortification of fleshly desires and lusts is the great duty the Christian owes to the Spirit who condescends to dwell within him. It is a painful process, but passes into a painless one. When we earnestly set about it, it abundantly rewards us. And we find that mortification of the deeds of the body is the very secret of life. It is thus evident that the struggle of the latter part of the seventh chapter is also found in the eighth. Christian progress, as we have seen, is through antagonizing our sinful desires and tendencies, and so largely discharging our obligation to the pure Spirit who condescends to dwell within us (cf. Shedd's 'Commentary,' *in loc.*).

II. SONSHIP IS REALIZED IN THIS SUBMISSION TO THE SPIRIT. (Ver. 14.) God's

adopting love is realized within. He can give the family spirit as well as the legal standing as sons. Sonship among men, and especially adoption, may be destitute of the becoming spirit. The children may despise their parents or their foster-parents, and treat them inconsiderately. But in God-given sonship there is as its essence submission to God's Spirit. The adopted soul abandons himself to the Divine inspiration; the right filial attitude is reached; and life becomes the outcome of *inspiration*. They only are sons of God who are led by his Spirit.

III. ALL GOD'S TRUE CHILDREN PROVE PRAYERFUL. (Ver. 15.) The spirit of bondage which leads souls to fear like stricken slaves before God gets cast out by the Spirit of adoption, and there is within us the divinely prompted cry, "Abba, Father." Just as true children love to have fellowship with their earthly parents, so God's children love to hold fellowship with their heavenly Parent. Prayerfulness is one of the best tests of our relation to God. It is the instinct of an adopted child. In this way the spiritual relationship is realized. Just as fellowship is the essence of family relationship, so is it with the family of God.

IV. THE PRAYERFUL CHILDREN RECEIVE THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS TO THEIR SONSHIP. (Ver. 16.) The witness of the Spirit is something distinct from the testimony of our own consciousness, as the verse implies. The latter concurs with the former. What is it, then? If we consider Jesus in his baptismal prayer, we shall find that he received not only the gift of the opened heaven, that is, all needful *revelation*, and the gift of the descending dove, that is, the perfect *inspiration*, but also the *audible assurance of his Sonship*, when the voice came from heaven to say, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father assures the Son of his ineffable relation. Now, this passage shows that there is something corresponding to this assurance granted to God's sons. They are enabled to hear the Father's voice, and are reassured thereby. It is not, of course, an audible voice, as when they said, "It thundered;" yet a voice which speaks home to the spirit within. It comes through God's Word. Up to a certain point the Bible is a splendid literary treasure; but the Spirit comes, and the Bible becomes a *child's book*, with a Father's voice ringing lovingly through it all. These spiritual tones are found to coincide with experience, and we have the witness within. It is thus that we are enabled to examine ourselves through God's Word. We begin to read it as children should to whom a father is faithfully speaking, and we are reassured and comforted thereby.[1]

V. THE PRAYERFUL CHILDREN THROUGH LISTENING TO THE FATHER'S VOICE COME TO REALIZE THAT THEY ARE HEIRS OF GOD, AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST. (Ver. 17.) Heirship succeeds the sense of sonship. Now, in earthly inheritances the sad condition now is the parent's death; but it was not so under the ancient law. Then, as in the parable of the prodigal son, the inheritance could be divided in the father's lifetime, and either enjoyed with the father or away from him.[2] Thus the father says to the elder son, "All that I have *is* thine;" and the promise to God's children is clear, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 21—23). When we realize, therefore, that God is to us "all in all," then have we entered into our inheritance with him. And what adds to its preciousness is the fact that it is a *joint-inheritance* with Christ. It is through him that it has become ours. What he gets we get. He has raised his brothers and sisters through adoption to the platform of his own inheritance.

VI. FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING IS THE SIGN AND PLEDGE OF FELLOWSHIP IN THE COMING GLORY. (Ver. 17.) Now, we must remember that fellowship through suffering is the closest fellowship of all. It is when hearts are together in the fires that they are welded or rather melted into one. Now, life gets sooner or later for the true son of God like Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, with one like unto the Son of God in the fire along with him. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. xi. 6, 7). It is to this fellowship in his sufferings that we are providentially called, that so we may become in due season conformable unto his death (Phil. iii. 11). We should reconcile ourselves to our inheritance of suffering, seeing

[1] Cf. Tholuck's 'Worke,' band ii. s. 22, etc.

[2] Cf. Maine's 'Ancient Law,' ch. vi., "On the Early History of Testamentary Succession."

that it is through it we, as a rule, reach our inheritance of wisdom.[1] And as a suffering *with* Christ is the sign and pledge of being glorified together with him, we should hail it as the birthright mark, and rejoice in hope of the glory.—R. M. E.

Vers. 18—30.—*Salvation in spite of suffering.* "Paradise regained" in this life is not a sorrowless and painless condition. The sons of God are chastened. They know what suffering is. And there is here the great religious evidence. When the world sees men and women composed and even cheerful amid untold tribulation, then it sees a reality in religion. Job, for instance, was an evidence for the reality of religion that even Satan himself could not gainsay or deny. How is it that the Christian spirit can assert its supremacy amid suffering of the most intense character? It is because it is enabled to keep its eye on the hidden good, and bless God for it. And so in this section we have the spirit of the apostle asserting itself upon this important subject.

I. THERE IS THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PRESENT SUFFERINGS AND THE PERFECTED SANCTIFICATION. (Ver. 18.) God's end in his dispensations is to create a glory *in* us of an eternal character—the glory of sanctification when it comes in fulness. We may see the price we pay in the stanzas of the poetess.

"Through long days did *Anguish*,
And sad nights did *Pain*,
Forge my shield, *Endurance*,
Bright and free from stain!

"*Doubt*, in misty caverns,
'Mid dark horrors sought,
Till my peerless jewel,
*Faith*, to me she brought.

"*Sorrow* that I wearied
Should remain so long,
Wreathed my starry glory
The bright crown of *Song*.

"*Strife* that racked my spirit
Without hope or rest,
Left the blooming flower,
*Patience*, in my breast."
(Miss Procter's 'Legends and Lyrics.')

Now, when we look at what is paid and what is bought, we must admit that the bargain is a good one, for the glory of sanctification is weighty and eternal. "The light affliction," says the apostle elsewhere, "which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

II. IN SUFFERING WE ARE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE WHOLE CREATION. (Vers. 19—22.) When we look into the Book of Job we see that the man of God is a special sufferer. But God points out in the sequel of the book that the perplexity in Job's experience is matched by the perplexity which pervades all nature. So is it with suffering. We may see it all through nature. Suffering *human* nature is only in line with suffering nature. And here we have to remark that: 1. *The study of nature shows long progress through suffering towards higher forms.* This is the lesson of evolution so far as it is a truth. The "struggle for existence" is painful progress towards more perfect forms. It may seem to our philosophic laureate a mystery that nature should be "so careful of the type," and "so careless of the single life;" nay, he goes on to see that she lets "a thousand types" go, and seems to care for nothing.[2] But if we take the great procession as a whole, we may see that it embodies *progress through pain to more perfect form.* The groaning creation thus sheds light on sanctification through suffering and pain. 2. *Out of the present is to be born a new state of things in which nature shall share in the restoration of the sons of God.* The very word "nature," which signifies "something about to be born," is a prophecy similar to what the apostle here gives. If Nature, without any moral fault, has been subjected to vanity; if

[1] Sir Henry Taylor's 'Notes from Life,' p. 104.
[2] Cf. Tennyson's 'In Memoriam,' liv., lv.

it has, without consent on her part, been made the painful illustration of moral and spiritual truth; then we may expect a just Governor, like God to give Nature compensation, and allow her to share in the glorious liberty of his children.[1] It is surely significant that that manly Christian, Frank Buckland, when he was dying, said, "I am going a long journey where I think I shall see a great many curious animals. This journey I must go alone."[2] As animals were saved in the ark with Noah, and in Nineveh with the penitent Ninevites, is it not reasonable to suppose that they shall have some share in the regeneration of all things?

III. MAN AS THE SOUL OF THE WORLD INTERPRETS THE TRAVAIL OF THE CREATION. (Vers. 23—27.) And here we cannot do better than take up the points as St. Paul gives them. 1. *Man's aspiration about the body.* (Ver. 23.) For the body is to be redeemed, not discarded. It is this "hope" which saves us in our present distresses (ver. 24).[3] If we had not this hope, we should inevitably despair. And along with hope comes patience, so that "the patience of hope" becomes the attitude of all faithful souls.[4] Then: 2. *The Holy Spirit endorses our groaning after the better bodies.* (Ver. 26.) Prayer is not all articulate. A groan, a sigh, a tear, may have all the elements of prayer addressed to the heart of the Most High. Now, some saints have had such suffering communicated to them as compelled them to groan with desire after a better, because promised condition. These groans, that are too deep to be articulate, are Spirit-prompted. He pressed from tried spirits these unutterable longings. 3. *God, the Heart-searcher, responds to these unutterable groans.* (Ver. 27.) We have here the whole philosophy of prayer. It is the *inspired* expression, articulately or otherwise, of what is agreeable to the Divine will, and the Heart-searcher recognizes in the prompted prayer the return to him of his own will, and so can answer it.[5]

IV. THIS IS THE BEST POSSIBLE WORLD FOR ONE WHO LOVES GOD. (Ver. 28.) There is a certain *idealism* which inspires us all. According to our inward state is our outward world. "'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus." Consequently, if we have learned to love God, we take all things as animated by a Divine purpose of good to us. Suffering may come, but it comes to sanctify. Faith thus becomes *optimistic.* It lifts up its head, knowing that its redemption draweth nigh. It refuses to be pessimistic. In spite of all drawbacks, the glory of sanctification is on its way. And so those who have been called by a loving God to the exercise of love, find as they look about them that all things are co-operating for God's holy end of making his children holier and fitter for his fellowship. We could not be better situated than we are for sanctification. A poet on the subject "It is well" has thus written—

"So they said, who saw the wonders
Of Messiah's power and love;
So they sing, who see his glory
In the Father's house above:
Ever reading in each record
Of the strangely varied past,
'All was well which God appointed,
All has wrought for good at last.'

. . . . .

"And thus, while years are fleeting,
Though our joys are with them gone,
In thy changeless love rejoicing
We shall journey calmly on;
Till at last, all sorrow over,
Each our tale of grace shall tell,
In the heavenly chorus joining:
'Lord, thou hast done all things well!'"
(Cf. Randolph's 'Changed Cross, and other Poems.')

[1] Cf. Bishop Ellicott's 'Destiny of the Creature;' also 'Animal Futurity,' by Joseph Hamilton.
[2] Cf. 'Life of Frank Buckland,' by Bompas, p. 423.
[3] Cf. Mozley's 'University Sermons,' p. 46.
[4] Cf. Dora Greenwell's remarkable little volume on 'The Patience of Hope,' *passim.*
[5] Cf. the writer's volume, 'Does God answer Prayer?' *passim.*

V. CONFORMITY TO CHRIST'S GLORIOUS IMAGE IS WHAT GOD HAS IN VIEW FOR THOSE HE CALLS. (Vers. 29, 30.) The gospel is God's plan for securing a multitude of children who shall all become Christ-like. He sent his only Child, "the only begotten Son," into the world to secure many brethren, and be the Firstborn among them. No narrow jealousies here! In the holiest sense it is true regarding God's family that "the more" there are in it, "the merrier" will all be. Now, God's purpose, foreknowledge, and predestination are robbed of every repulsive feature, when we bear in mind that individuals are not predestinated to salvation without regard to their moral state. They are predestinated to become Christ-like. Men may reject the call of God to Christ-likeness, but his purpose is not nullified by such wickedness. His purpose was pure in calling them, even though they reject the call. And so it is in the light of this holy purpose to make men Christ-like that we are to regard the predestination, and the call, and the justification, and the glorification. The glory when reached, the glory of Christ-likeness, sheds its heavenly halo over all. May we all reach that paradise of experience, likeness to our blessed Lord!—R. M. E.

Vers. 31—39.—*Faith rising into assurance.* We have appreciated the paradise of pardon, of acceptance, of sanctification, into which, in spite of this life's sufferings, believers in Jesus come. And now we are to study that hymn of courageous assurance, into which the apostle rises at the close of the chapter. Nowhere does St. Paul rise into nobler eloquence than here.

I. THE BELIEVER'S SOLILOQUY. (Vers. 31, 32.) In this soliloquy the apostle reviews the whole previous argument. Ch. i.—v. is God *for* us—justification by faith; ch. vi.—viii. is God *in* us—sanctification through the Spirit of Christ. What can be said to these things? If God be for us, then we ask naturally and logically: 1. *Who can be against us?* With God as our Ally, we may safely face the world in arms. Assurance is thus traced to its Divine Source. It is not boastfulness, but humble dependence upon the almighty strength of God. The *One* is more than a match for all his and our foes. 2. *In sparing not his own Son, he has given us the greatest pledge of his good will.* In delivering up his Son to the death for us all, God was giving to man his very greatest Gift. It implies that the lesser gifts of the Spirit and of providence shall not be wanting.

"He who his Son, most dear and loved,
Gave up for us to die,
Shall he not all things freely give
That goodness can supply?"

It was a similar argument through which Abraham passed. He journeyed to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. He found there that God had provided a substitute in the ram caught in the thicket, and that, therefore, Isaac could go free. He accordingly called the place "Jehovah-jireh"—the Lord will look after everything, and I shall not want any really good thing from his hands (Gen. xxii.). Christ crucified is thus the foundation of the believer's assurance.

II. THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE. (Vers. 33—36.) And here we have a challenge: 1. *To all who may dispute his right to salvation.* (Vers. 33, 34.) For: (1) Justification is from *God.* And he has taken every possible charge into account. (2) The *ground* of the justification is the death of Jesus Christ. (3) The *guarantee* of it is the resurrection, reign, and intercession of Jesus. With a risen Saviour on the throne, making intercession for us, who will dare to dispute, and who will succeed in preventing, our pardon and acceptance? It is thus that the apostle works the great facts of our Saviour's history into the experience of the believer. 2. *We have a challenge to all adverse circumstances.* (Vers. 35—37.) The believer can defy his environment, as it is now called, as well as his enemies. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword,—one and all shall be found to be powerless in separating him from the love of Christ. Jesus, with his loving and almighty arm, can hold his people safe in every trial and difficulty. What have these adverse circumstances been but opportunities for the exercise of preserving power? They are golden opportunities which Christ embraces for exhibiting his power to save. And so here we have the true Christian evidence, that Jesus can preserve his people in spite of all apparently adverse things.

III. THE BELIEVER'S SUPREME PERSUASION. (Vers. 38, 39.) In these verses the apostle exhausts the category and declares his persuasion that not one of the things or persons embraced shall be able to separate the believer from the Divine love. Let us glance at them in order. 1. *Death* shall be no separating power. So far from this, the believer is enabled to rejoice in the fact that to die shall be gain; absent from the body, present with the Lord. The king of terrors will only usher the emancipated spirit into the near presence of his Lord. 2. *Life* shall prove no separating power. Even when it is flowing full and free, with all its garish and distracting shows, it will not be allowed to separate us from the love of Christ. Of the two dangers to our union with Christ, life is greater than death, but not so great as to defeat the loving power of Jesus. 3. *Angels, principalities, powers,* shall prove no separating power. This must refer to the evil angels, to Satan and his hosts; for the good angels are our helpers (Heb. i. 14). A risen Saviour is more than sufficient to meet and overthrow them all. 4. *Things present,* appealing to sense, shall also be unable to separate us from Christ's love. They are subtle and powerful foes, yet Christ can vanquish them. He can conquer the inclination to be over-occupied with such things. 5. *Things to come,* appealing to fear, shall be unable to separate us from Christ. No possible combination of circumstances can perplex him. He is more than a match for all. 6. *Height, depth, or any other creature,* shall likewise be unable to separate us from the Lord's love. Neither space nor time, things physical or things metaphysical, shall be able to endanger our union with Christ.[1]—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1—ch. xi. 36.—2. *The present position and prospects of the Jewish nation considered.*

Vers. 1—5.—(1) *Deep regret expressed for the present exclusion of the Jewish nation from inheritance of the promises.* This section is not necessary for the main argument of the Epistle, which would have been complete without it for an exposition of God's righteousness, ch. xii. following naturally the conclusion of ch. viii., and these intervening chapters having no immediate connection with the preceding or succeeding context. But it was a subject too deeply fixed in St. Paul's mind to be left unnoticed. And besides, what he had said at the beginning of his treatise, and afterwards implied, seemed to call for some explanation in the face of existing facts. For he had said (ch. i. 16), that the gospel "was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; *to the Jew first,* and also to the Gentile;" and throughout he has regarded it as the fulfilment of the peculiar promises made to the Jews themselves, who were to have precedence, though not monopoly, in the inheritance of its blessings. How, then, was this view consistent with the fact that the Jews in general, even more than any others, were now *excluded* from this inheritance? The apostle has already, even in the course of his argument, paused to meet certain supposed difficulties of this kind in the short section, ch. iii. 1—8; but now he takes up the whole subject formally, and considers it in all its bearings.

First, in ch. ix., he expresses his deep sorrow for the fact; but shows it to be not inconsistent either with God's faithfulness to his promise, or with his justice, or with the Word of prophecy.

Ver. 1.—**I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost.** For similar solemn asseverations by St. Paul of the truth of what was known to himself alone, cf. ch. i. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Phil. i. 8; 1 Tim. ii. 7. The peculiar solemnity of this may be due to the peculiar depth of his feelings on the subject. It is not *necessary* to suppose him to be moved by a fear of his patriotic enthusiasm being doubted, now that he had turned Christian, and argued so strongly against Jewish monopoly of privilege. But it may have been so. For the force of ἐν Χριστῷ, cf. 2 Cor. ii. 17; ch. xii. 19; Eph. iv. 17; 1 Thess. iv. 1. It is not an adjuration, but denotes the element in which he moves and speaks. Similarly, ἐν Πνεύματι

[1] Cf. Saurin's 'Sermons,' tome iii. p. 1

ἀγίῳ following (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3), which, of course, could not be on oath.

Vers. 2, 3.—**That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.** He does not say what for, leaving it to appear in what follows. The broken sentence is significant of emotion. **For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.** None of the ways that have been suggested for evading the obvious meaning of this assertion are tenable. One such way is to take the imperfect ηὐχόμην as expressing what he once wished, viz. before his conversion; so that the meaning would be, "My interest in my own people is such that, in my zeal for them, I once myself desired to be entirely apart from Christ; I myself said, Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦν (1 Cor. xii. 3), and persecuted his followers." Neither the natural force of the imperfect here (as to which cf. Acts xxv. 22; Gal. iv. 20), nor that of ἀνάθεμα εἶναι, nor the context, allow this subterfuge. Another way is to understand ἀνάθεμα εἶναι as implying only devotion to temporal destruction, i.e. to a violent death. In Lev. xxvii. every animal devoted to the Lord (in the LXX. ἀνάθεμα) is surely to be put to death; and this has been conceived as all that is implied here. So Jerome, 'Quæst. 9, ad Algas.,' and Hilary, 'Ad Ps. 8.' But how then about ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ? The words ἀνάθεμα and ἀνάθημα, from ἀνατίθημι, both denote primarily what is offered or set apart; the latter being applied to things devoted to God's honour and service (cf. Luke xxi. 5), the latter always in the New Testament used to denote rejection or devotion to evil. It occurs in Acts xxiii. 14; 1 Cor. xii. 3; xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, 9. It certainly means here separation from the communion of Christ, in the same sense as κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Gal. v. 4). Even if the expression ἀνάθεμα εἶναι be understood as meaning in itself excommunication only (as ἀνάθεμα ἔστω in ecclesiastical usage), the addition of ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ evidently implies more than mere separation from outward Church communion. The apostle can hardly mean otherwise than that he would forfeit his own communion with Christ on behalf of (ὑπὲρ) his countrymen, if so they as a nation could be brought to accept the gospel. This certainly was a strong thing to say, and it may seem to us to imply an impossibility, if we compare it, for instance, with ch. viii. 38, "I am persuaded," etc. But we need not understand a passing expression of feeling, however real, as a deliberate utterance. The imperfect ηὐχόμην implies only that the fact had passed through his mind in the intensity of his desire for the salvation of his brethren. It corresponds with the saying of Moses under the like strong emotion, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 32). Bengel remarks well, "Ex summa fide (cap. 8) nunc summum ostendit amorem, ex amore divino accensum. Res non poterat fieri, quam optarat: sed votum erat pium et solidum, quamlibet cum tacita conditione, *si fieri posset*." Also, "De mensura amoris in Mose et Paulo non facile est existimare. Eum enim modulus ratiocinationum nostrarum non capit; sicut heroum bellicorum animos non capit parvulus."

St. Paul proceeds, in the spirit of a patriotic Jew, which he ever retained, to enumerate the peculiar privileges of the chosen people, their possession of which rendered their present failure to realize their purpose so peculiarly disappointing and distressing.

Vers. 4, 5.—**Who** (οἵτινες, with its usual sense of *quippe qui*) **are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.** Here "the adoption" (υἱοθεσία) means the selection of Israel to be God's peculiar people (cf. Exod. iv. 22, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn;" Deut. xiv. 1, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God;" Hos. xi. 1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt;" also Exod. xix. 5. Cf. also τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ in ver. 8 below). It is, of course, a different idea from that of the spiritual υἱοθεσία of believers (at present as in ch. viii. 15, or to come as in ch. viii. 23), though it might be typical of it. "The glory" (ἡ δόξα) seems best explained by reference to 2 Cor. iii. 7—18, where the visible glory, said to have rested on the mercy-seat and to have illuminated for a time the face of Moses, is regarded as expressing the glory, in a higher sense, of the old dispensation, which, however, was destined to fade away in the greater glory of the revelation of God in Christ. The word may be thus taken to denote, not simply the *Shechinah*, or the glory on Mount Sinai, but rather what was signified by these manifestations. It was probably a recognized term in use with reference to the giving of the Law. "The covenants" (αἱ διαθῆκαι), and "the promises" (αἱ ἐπαγγελίαι), both in the plural, include those made with and given to Abraham and the other patriarchs, as well as the Mosaic ones. The former word is wrongly taken by some as denoting the *tables* of the

covenant. Ἡ λατρεία is obviously the divinely appointed ceremonial worship, the typical significance of which is explained at length in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the same word is used. "The fathers" (οἱ πατέρες) are the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the original recipients of the promises, descent from whom was made such account of by the Jews, as being the foundation of their privileges (cf. Matt. iii. 9; Luke iii. 8; xiii. 28; John viii. 39; and, for the use of πατέρες in this sense, cf. Acts iii. 22; xiii. 32; ch. xv. 8; Heb. i. 1). The last and crowning distinction of the Jewish race is mentioned last, viz. the fleshly descent therefrom of Christ, even of him who in his higher nature is "over all, God blessed for ever." This is certainly the most obvious meaning of the conclusion of ver. 5, as far as the language is concerned, and the one understood by all ancient commentators. Some moderns, however, as is well known, have raised objections to this interpretation of the clause, based solely on the supposed improbability that St. Paul would have so designated Christ. Some would, therefore, get over this imagined difficulty by putting a full stop after κατὰ σάρκα, and taking what follows as a doxology to God the Father, thus: "God, who is over all, be blessed for ever." The apostle is supposed, according to this interpretation, to have been moved to this parenthetical utterance by his contemplation of the Divine favours to Israel, which he had been recounting. Some have suggested the full stop being put after πάντων, so as to refer ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων to Christ, and take only what follows as a doxology, or, as some would have it, as a statement. But, in either case, the idea of so unlikely a breaking up of the sentence may be dismissed as untenable. Others, without thus breaking up the sentence, take the whole of it, beginning with ὁ ὤν, to be, not a doxology, but a statement, thus attempting to meet the objection to its being a doxology (to be noticed presently), arising from the collocation of the words. But a mere assertion that God *is* blessed for ever would seem peculiarly uncalled for and purposeless here. Meyer, being a critic of deserved repute, and an upholder of the modern interpretation of the clause, taking the whole of it together as a doxology to the Father, it may suffice to state his arguments. (1) That St. Paul, though regarding the Son of God as the image of God, of the essence of God, the agent in creation and preservation, the judge of all, the object of prayer, and the possessor of Divine glory and fulness of grace (ch. i. 4; x. 12; Phil. ii. 6; Col. i. 15, etc.; ii. 9; Eph. i. 20, etc.; 1 Cor. viii. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 4; viii. 9), never expressly calls him Θεός, but always clearly distinguishes him as the Κύριος from Θεός; and that the passages in which Θεὸς has been supposed by some to apply to him (as in 2 Thess. i. 12, Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; and Eph. v. 5; Titus i. 4) are wrongly so understood; ὅς, not Θεός, being also undoubtedly the original reading in 1 Tim. iii. 16. (Of St. Paul's usual distinction between Θεὸς and Κύριος, when he is referring to the economy of redemption, other instances are found in 1 Cor. viii. 6; xii. 4, 5, 6; Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. That he does usually so distinguish is undoubted.) (2) That, according to the old ecclesiastical interpretation, "Christ would be called here, not only God, but even *God over all*, and consequently would be designated as Θεὸς παντοκράτωρ, which is absolutely incompatible with the entire view of the New Testament as to the dependence of the Son on the Father." (3) That "in the properly apostolical writings (2 Pet. iii. 18 does not belong to them, nor does Heb. xiii. 21) we never meet with a doxology to Christ in the form which is usual in doxologies to God." Meyer adds in a note, "2 Tim. iv. 18 certainly refers to Christ; but this is just one of the traces of post-apostolic composition." Now, to these arguments it may be replied as follows: To (1) that, though it may be true that St. Paul in no other passage expressly calls Christ Θεός, yet his doctrine with respect to his Divine nature is in accordance with the expression; for surely the term Θεὸς is applicable to him who is spoken of, as *e.g.* in Phil. ii. 6 and Col. i. 15, etc.; that his usual distinction between the supreme God and Christ as Mediator by no means precludes his declaring in express terms Christ's essential Deity in a passage where such a declaration is suitable and called for; that even St. John, who is acknowledged by all to have peculiarly set forth the Divine essence of Christ, only once uses the expression, Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος, or any exactly equivalent to it. To argument (2) it may be replied that the language used does *not* identify Christ with the Father as ὁ παντοκράτωρ Θεός, especially if we suppose a comma after πάντων, so that the meaning would be, "Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever." That Christ is "over all" is what is distinctly declared elsewhere by St. Paul, and Θεὸς, etc., may be appended predicatively to denote his Divine essence. As to argument (3), it is necessary to exclude not only 2 Peter and Hebrews, but also 2 Timothy from the list of apostolical writings in order to give it any force. But even so it would be irrelevant; for the sentence before us is not a doxology, but an assertion: it is, according to the ancient interpretation, not "Blessed *be* Christ as God for ever;" but "Christ, who

is God blessed for ever." The positive reasons for retaining the ancient interpretations may be stated as follows: (1) Not one of the Greek or other Fathers, or any interpreter before Erasmus, is known to have understood it otherwise. (2) It gives the most obvious sense of the words themselves. It may well be contended that no other would have been thought of, but for the supposed discrepance with the apostle's usual way of speaking of Christ. (3) Whereas a doxology to God the Father does not seem called for here, or to have any very obvious bearing on the writer's train of thought, some assertion of the Divine greatness of Christ seems wanted to complete the representation of the final and crowning privilege of the race of Israel. Ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων would indeed suffice for this purpose, if it could be dissevered from what follows. But, as has been said above, it is not allowable so to break up the sentence. Cf. also ch. i. 4, where the statement that Christ had been born of the seed of David, *according to the flesh*, is followed by an assertion also of his Divine Sonship. (4) If the sentence had been intended as a doxology, εὐλογητὸς ought properly to have preceded Θεὸς (cf. Luke i. 68, Εὐλογητὸς Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; Eph. i. 3, Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς καὶ Πατήρ, etc.; 1 Pet. i. 3, where the same expression occurs); whereas in every other passage where εὐλογητὸς follows the subject of the sentence, it is an assertion, and not a doxology (cf. ch. i. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 31). (5) The whole objection to the ancient interpretation rests solely on the views of modern critics as to what they think St. Paul was *likely* to mean—not on what his language most obviously intimates that he *did* mean—a very unsafe principle of interpretation. Our safe conclusion seems to be that modern criticism has not made out a sufficient case for departing from the unanimous ancient interpretation of this passage.

Vers. 6—13.—(2) (*a*) After this avowal of his deep sorrow, and his reasons for feeling it, the apostle now proceeds to deal with the subject. First (as has been said above) he shows (vers. 6—13) that the present exclusion of the great majority of the Jews from Christian privileges does not imply any *unfaithfulness* on God's part to his ancient promises; and thus it follows that the fact of their exclusion is no proof of the gospel not being the true fulfilment of those promises.

Vers. 6, 7.—**But it is not as though the Word of God hath taken none effect** (or, *hath come to naught*, ἐκπέπτωκεν). **For 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.** The promises to the patriarchs never, from the first, implied the inheritance of them by *all* the physical descendants of those patriarchs; even in Israel there is a recognized distinction between being of the race of Israel and being the true Israel of God; in the original promise to Abraham the descendants of Ishmael (though equally with those of Isaac, his physical seed) were excluded. And so even the race of Israel is but a part of the whole seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was made. Hence it follows that the present exclusion of the majority of even the race of Israel from the inheritance of the promises is not inconsistent with the original purport of those promises. The quotation from Gen. xxi. 12, "In Isaac," etc., is properly (as in the original Hebrew) "In Isaac shall a seed be named to thee;" *i.e.* "In Isaac it shall come to pass that posterity of thine shall have the name and position of *the seed of Abraham*, and be recognized as the inheritors of the promise" (Meyer).

Vers. 8, 9.—**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 seed. For the word of promise is this, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son** (Gen. xviii. 10). In other words, it is not in virtue of mere carnal descent, but of the promise, that any are so counted; mere carnal descent establishes no claim. It is to be observed that in the first recorded promises to Abraham (Gen. xiii. 15; xv. 5; xvii. 7) there was no restriction; and so through Ishmael, who is also called Abraham's seed (Gen. xxi. 13), as well as through Isaac, the fulfilment might have been. But the subsequent promise (Gen. xvii. 19, 21; xviii. 10, 14) limited it to Isaac; which limiting promise is, therefore, in ver. 9, referred to. With τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ in ver. 8 compare ἡ υἱοθεσία (ver. 4), and also Isa. lxiii. 16. The apostle may have been led to use the expression here in view of the spiritual sonship to God of Christians (cf. ch. viii. 15, etc.) which was typified and prepared for by the υἱοθεσία of the chosen seed. A still further limitation of "the children of the promise" is next referred to; and one still more telling for the apostle's argument. It might be said that Ishmael was not, even carnally, the true seed, as being born, not of the wife, but of the bondwoman; or perhaps that he had forfeited any claim he might have had by his proved unworthiness (Gen. xxi. 9, etc.). But Esau and Jacob were twin children, not only of the same

patriarch (ἐξ ἑνὸς), but also of the same wedded wife; and yet one was chosen and the other rejected, and this even before birth; so that, as the selection was not due to carnal descent, so neither could it be due to proved desert. Thus by this second consideration is disposed of the Jew's assertion of an indefeasible claim to inheritance of the promises on the ground of his boasted works, as by the other is disposed of his claim on the ground of his race. St. Paul's argument to the Jews of his own day would be—You cannot set up a claim to be all of you the necessary inheritors of the promises for all time on the ground either of your carnal descent or of your works, since the selection of Israel himself did not depend on either of these grounds; nor can you say that my position (viz. that Christian believers, to the exclusion of most of you, are now the true inheritors of the promises) implies unfaithfulness in God to his ancient promises; for it is in accordance with the principle on which, according to your own Scriptures, he fulfilled of old his promises to the patriarchs. St. Paul, however, is not to be understood here as writing with a direct polemical intention, but rather as discussing a problem which had at one time perplexed himself, and which seemed to him to call for solution.

Ver. 10.—**But not only this; but Rebecca also, when she had conceived by one, even by Isaac our father.** The sentence thus begun is not formally completed, being taken up—after the parenthetical ver. 11—by "It was said unto her" in ver. 12.

Vers. 11—13.—**For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election** (*i.e.* the principle of his electing to privileges of his own good will and purpose, and not on the ground of any fancied human claims) **might stand** (μένῃ, *i.e.* should remain in force, ever applicable), **not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger** (Gen. xxv. 23). **As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated** (Mal. i. 2, 3). It is here to be carefully observed that, though Jacob and Esau were individuals, yet it is not as such, but as the progenitors and representatives of races, that they are here spoken of. So it was, too, in both the passages quoted from the Old Testament. In Gen. xxv. 23 the words are, "Two *nations* are in thy womb, and two *manner of people* shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one *people* shall be stronger than the other *people*; and the elder shall serve the younger." In Mal. i. 2 the prophet's entire drift is to set forth the Divine favour shown, from the first and still, to the race of Israel as compared with the race of Edom. Hence, as well as from the purport of the chapter as announced at its beginning, it is evident that the subject of *individual* predestination does not really come in, as it did in ch. viii., but only that of nations or races of men to a position of privilege as inheritors of promises. It will be seen, also, as we go on, that the introduction in illustration of the case of the individual Pharaoh does not really affect the drift of the chapter as above explained. The strong expression, "Esau I hated" (applicable, as shown above, not to the individual Esau, but to the race of Edom) is capable of being explained as meaning, "I excluded him from the love I showed to Israel." The evidence of such alleged hatred the prophet expresses thus: "and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness;" whereas Israel, it is implied, had been protected from such desolation. As to the necessary force of the word in the Hebrew (שָׂנֵאתִי), we may compare Gen. xxix. 30, 31, where in ver. 30 it is said that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, and in ver. 31, as meaning the same thing, that Leah was hated; and Deut. xxi. 15, "If a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated." In both these passages the same verb is used as in Malachi, and need not, in either case, mean more than disregarding one in comparison with another who is loved. For the use, in the New Testament, of the Greek word μισεῖν in a sense for the expression of which our English "to hate," in its usual acceptation, is evidently too strong, cf. Luke xiv. 26 (to be compared with Matt. x. 37) and John xii. 25; so also, though not so distinctly, Matt. vi. 24 and Luke xvi. 13. It is, moreover, not improbable that the Prophet Malachi, in his patriotic ardour, had in his mind the idea of wrath against the race of Edom on the part of the LORD, as "the people," as he afterwards says, "against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever." But even so, the glowing language of prophets need not be taken as dogmatic assertion; and certainly not as binding us to believe that any race of men is, in the literal sense of the expression, hated of God. Such a view is in evident contradiction to the general teaching of Scripture, and notably so to that of St. Paul, who has so emphatically declared that God "made of one blood all nations of men," and is One to all.

Vers. 14—24.—(*b*) In the next section *injustice* on the part of God, in thus electing the objects of his mercy according to the good pleasure of his will, is repudiated. As in ch. vi. 1 and vii. 7, a false inference from what has been said is introduced by

τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν, and indignantly rejected by μὴ γένοιτο, followed by reasons against the inference.

Vers. 14—16.—**What shall we say then? Unrighteousness with God?** ("Is there" supplied in the Authorized Version somewhat weakens the force of the expression.) **God forbid! For to Moses he saith, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.** The argument (thus introduced by γὰρ) requires two understood premisses—that God cannot possibly be unrighteous, and that what he himself said to Moses must be true. These premisses assumed, the apostle reasons thus: "What I have said of God's way of dealing with men does not imply unrighteousness in him; for it agrees with what he said of himself to Moses." The quotation is from Exod. xxxiii. 19. Moses had besought the LORD to show him his glory, as a token that he and the people had found grace in his sight (vers. 16, 18). The LORD, in answer to his prayer, makes "all his goodness pass before him," in token that such grace had been found; but declares, in the words quoted, that all such grace accorded was not due to any claim on the part of man, but to his own good pleasure.

In the verses that follow (17, 18) it is further shown, by the same kind of argument, that, as God declares himself to accept whom he will, so he also declares himself to reject whom he will; and hence, as his power is absolute, so is his justice unimpeachable, in himself determining the objects of his reprobation no less than the objects of his mercy. This appears from what he is recorded (Exod. ix. 16) to have said through Moses to Pharaoh.

Vers. 17, 18.—**For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose** (rather, *for this very purpose*) **did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the earth. So then he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.** The passage quoted in ver. 17, taken (as it is intended to be) in conjunction with the whole history as given in Exodus—and especially with the passages in which God himself is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go—shows that not only the deliverance of Israel, but also the obduration of Pharaoh, was due to the determination of God that it should be so, in accordance with his own righteous purpose, which cannot be called in question by man. The particular declaration of Exod. ix. 16 appears to be selected for quotation because of its relevancy to the case in hand, which it is intended to illustrate; viz. the present rejection of the majority of the Jews from gospel privileges. How this is will appear below. Now, this whole passage has been used in support of Calvinistic views of the original absolute reprobation of individuals irrespectively of their deserts. Calvin himself draws this conclusion from it, very decidedly, thus: "Neque enim prævideri ruinam impiorum a Domino Paulus tradit, sed ejus consilio et voluntate ordinari; quemadmodum et Solomon docet (Prov. xvi. 4) non modo præcognitum fuisse impiorum interitum, sed impios ipsos fuisse destinato creatos, ut perirent" ('In Epist. Pauli ad Rom.,' on ch. ix. 18). It is, therefore, important to consider carefully both the original meaning of the verse, quoted from Exodus, and the apostle's application of it. First, with reference to Pharaoh himself, what is meant by "I raised thee up (ἐξήγειρα)"? Not "created thee;" nor (as in the Vulgate, and as Augustine, Calvin, and some others interpret) *excitavi te*, i.e. "stirred thee up" to resist my will, that I might exhibit my power in confounding thee. Whether or not St. Paul's ἐξήγειρα would bear this sense, it is quite inadmissible in the LXX. (from which, in this expression, he varies), and also in the Hebrew, of which the proper rendering is, "I made thee to stand." The LXX. has ἕνεκεν τούτου διετηρήθης, meaning that Pharaoh had been kept alive instead of being at once cut off, that God's power might be displayed in him. (The idea thus expressed, it may be observed, accords closely with that of ver. 22 below, where the case of Pharaoh is still in view; "endured with much long-suffering," etc. Thus, though the rendering διετηρήθης may be incorrect, and varied by St. Paul, yet he still seems to recognize the idea which it expresses.) St. Paul's rendering, which is closer to the Hebrew than the LXX., seems to mean, "raised thee to thy present position of power and greatness" (or possibly, as Meyer explains, "caused thee to emerge," *i.e.* in history: "Thy whole historical appearance has been brought about by me, in order that," etc.). Thus the expression cannot mean, either that God had brought Pharaoh originally into existence for the sole purpose of destroying him, or that he had from the first irresistibly incited him to obduracy in order to condemn him, and so destroy him. The Lord says in effect to him, "Thou art now great and powerful; but it is I that

made thee so, or still keep thee so: and this, not that thou mayest accomplish thine own will, but subserve mine, and that my power to work out my own purposes of mercy or of judgment may be the more notably displayed." For how is God's purpose in so raising Pharaoh up defined? "That I might show in thee my power, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the earth;" *i.e.*, as is evident from the history, by the deliverance of Israel in spite of Pharaoh's opposition through the judgments sent on him and his people to that end. There is plainly nothing in the original history to imply Pharaoh's individual reprobation with regard to his own eternal salvation, but only his discomfiture in his opposition to the Divine purpose of mercy to Israel. But still, with a view to such execution of his purposes, God himself is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart; and it is to this that the apostle draws special attention in conclusion, as denoting that which it is his design to show. It is thus certainly declared that this hardening was from God. But even so, it is nowhere said that God had made Pharaoh's heart hard from the first, so that he had been all along incapable of acting otherwise than he did. The inference rather is that, after wilful resistance to appeals, final obduracy was sent on him as a judgment. And it is further to be observed that in some verses in Exodus (viii. 15, 19, 32; ix. 34) Pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart, with the addition, in Exod. ix. 34, of "he sinned yet more;" while in others (Exod. vii. 14, 22; ix. 7, 35) it is only said generally that "his heart was hardened." The two forms of expression seem to denote two aspects of final obduracy in man—according to one as being self-induced, according to the other as judicial. Thus also in 1 Kings xxii. the LORD himself is said to have sent the lying spirit into the heart of Ahab's prophets, in order that he might rush to his ruin, though it was obviously due to his own sins that he was thus finally doomed. A striking instance of the two aspects of human obduracy is found in Isa. vi. 9, etc., and the reference to the passage by our Lord in Matt. xiii. 15. In Isaiah it is, "Make the heart of this people fat," etc.; but in our Lord's reference, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes *have they* closed;" as if the closing had been their own doing (cf. Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10). The following lines express a like conception of judicial blindness—

"For when we in our viciousness grow hard
(O misery on't!), the wise gods seal our eyes,
In our own filth drop our clear judgments, make us
Adore our errors, laugh at us while we strut
To our confusion."

We may compare also the Latin saying, *Quem Deus vult, perdere prius dementat*, which by no means implies that the divinely dementated persons have not deserved destruction. Such, then, seems the view to be taken of what is said about Pharaoh himself. But the important thing to be kept in view for a proper understanding of the drift of the passage is that, though Pharaoh was himself an individual, his case is adduced in no connection with the question of individual predestination, but in illustration of the principle on which nations, or races of men, are elected to or rejected from the enjoyment of Divine favour. This is the real subject of the whole chapter; and hence to build on this part of it a doctrine of individual election or reprobation is to bring into it what is not there. The drift of the passage before us is this: Moses and the Israelites of old illustrate the position of the faithful remnant of the Jews together with all Christian believers now. Pharaoh illustrates the position of the obdurate majority of the Jewish nation now. As he, in setting himself against the Divine purpose, and relying on his own strength, was unable to thwart God's design of mercy to his chosen, and was himself hardened and rejected, so the Jews as a nation now. And as then, so now, both the election and the rejection are to be referred entirely to the will of God, having mercy on whom he will and hardening whom he will, his justice in doing both being nevertheless unimpeachable.

Ver. 19.—**Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who resisteth his will?** Having shown that *injustice* cannot be imputed to God in hardening as well as having mercy on whom he will, the apostle now meets the supposed difficulty of understanding why men should be held *guilty* before God for but being as he wills them to be. It is immediately suggested by Pharaoh's case, which led to the conclusion, ὃν θέλει σκληρύνει; but the apostle foresees that an objection might be raised on this ground to his finding fault with the Jews for rejecting Christ, and them he especially has in view in what follows. It may be observed here that there is undoubtedly a difficulty to the human mind in reconciling theoretically Divine omnipotence with human free-will and responsibility. (On the general question, see notes on ch. viii.) St. Paul here, after his manner, does not attempt to solve the general problem, confining himself for the

present to the Divine side of it. His answer, in vers. 20, 21, is simply to the effect that God has the absolute right as well as power to deal with his own creation as he pleases, and that man is in no position to "contend with the Almighty" (see Job xl. 2). He brings in from the prophets the illustration of the potter's power and right over the clay, which he fashions and deals with as he chooses. It will be seen, however, as we go on, that this illustration by no means involves, as by some it has been supposed to do, the idea of rejection and condemnation irrespectively of desert.

Vers. 20, 21.—**Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?** (Isa. xxix. 16; xlv. 9). **Hath not the potter power** (rather, *authority*) **over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?** (Jer. xviii. 1—10). The figure of the clay, first introduced from Isaiah, is carried out at length in the passage from Jeremiah which is referred to. It is important, for understanding St. Paul's drift, to examine this passage. The prophet, in order that he might understand God's way of dealing with nations, is directed to go down to the potter's house, and watch the potter at his work. The potter is at work with a lump of clay, with the view of making a vessel of it; but it is "marred in the hand of the potter;" it does not come out into the form intended; so he rejects it, and makes anew another vessel after his mind, "as seemed good to the potter to make it." The prophet's application of the illustration is that, "as the clay is in the potter's hands, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel, saith the LORD;" meaning that if the house of Israel failed to answer to the LORD's purpose, he could reject it at his pleasure, as the potter did the marred vessel; and in vers. 7—10 the view is extended to God's power over, and way of dealing with, all nations of mankind; and then, in ver. 11, the men of Judah are warned to return from their evil ways, lest the LORD should so do unto them. Thus it is by no means implied by the illustration that Israel, or any other nation, has been formed with the primary and irresistible purpose of rejecting it as a "vessel unto dishonour," or that, when rejected, it has not had opportunity of being otherwise; but only that God has absolute power and right over it, to reject it if proved unworthy. It cannot then resist his will (*βούλημα, i.e.* determination or resolve; not here *θέλημα*. The primary Divine *θέλημα* is "that all men should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and this men do resist. For distinction between *θέλειν* and *βούλεσθαι*, cf. Matt. i. 19); but yet he may "find fault" with justice. It is here again evident that it is not individuals, but nations, that are in view all along. The apostle goes on next to consider whether, in God's actual dealings with the "vessels unto dishonour," there may not be, not only great forbearance, but also a merciful purpose.

Vers. 22—24.—**What if** (literally, *but if*, involving an anacoluthon) **God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels** (not, as in the Authorized Version, *the vessels*) **of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy which he afore prepared unto glory; whom he also called, even us, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.** "And" at the beginning of ver. 23 is omitted in the uncial B, and there is considerable authority of versions and Fathers for rejecting it. Without it the sentence runs better, and its drift becomes more apparent. The purpose expressed in ver. 23 thus comes out distinctly as the grand ultimate Divine purpose, to which the display of wrath and power spoken of in the previous verse is but subsidiary; and this drift becomes the more apparent, if we supply in English, as we may do, "while" before "willing" in ver. 22. Thus the drift would be, "What if God, while willing to exhibit his wrath and manifest his power, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath that had become fitted for destruction, in order that he might manifest the riches of his glory," etc. The idea expressed by "endured," etc., seems suggested by Pharaoh's case (see on ver. 17 with regard to the word *διετηρήθης* in the LXX., which the apostle appears here to retain the idea of, though he varied from it); but it is the Jewish nation of his own day that he has now in view. They were rejected from inheritance of the promises, and under Divine wrath; as he says in another place, "The wrath had come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16). But they were still borne with; they were not finally cut off; and what if their present rejection were but subservient to the great purpose of mercy to the true Israel? The thought, hinted here, is carried out in ch. xi., where even the idea is further entertained of Israel itself as a nation, after judgment endured, coming into God's true fold at last, according to the design of God, through ways inscrutable by us, to "have mercy upon all." The forms of expression used in the passage before us are to be noted in support of the view we have taken of St. Paul's general meaning. "The vessels of wrath" are said to be "fitted to destruction" (*κατηρτισμένα*

εἰς ἀπώλειαν); of the "vessels of mercy" it is said that God "afore prepared" them unto glory. Predestination to salvation is certainly a doctrine of St. Paul, but he nowhere intimates predestination to reprobation. Further, "Non dicit quæ προκατήρτισε, sed κατηρτισμένα: præscinditur a causa efficiente: tantum dicitur quales inveniat Deus quibus iram infert" (Bengel). Lastly, it may be observed that, though ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν carries with it the idea of individual salvation, yet this only comes in as the outcome and ultimate purpose of the calling of nations or races of men. The drift of the preceding argument remains still what it has been stated to be.

Vers. 25—29.—(c) *The inheritance of the promises by the Gentiles, with a remnant only of the Jews, shown to be in accordance with prophecy.* This is really a new section of the argument, though the writer, in a way usual with him, does not mark it as such, ver. 25 being in logical connection with the preceding one, suggested by the concluding expression, "Not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." So far nothing has been adduced to support the idea of *Gentiles*, to whom no original promises had been made, superseding the Jewish nation in the inheritance, though it had been shown generally that God may have mercy on whom he will; and in the earlier part of the argument (vers. 6—13) all that appeared plainly from the Old Testament was *selection* out of the total seed of Abraham—not the calling of a new one apart from his stock. Hence this section is necessary for completing the whole argument.

Vers. 25, 26.—**As he saith also in Osee, I will call my people that which was not my people, and beloved her who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.** The quotation in ver. 26 is from Hos. i. 10, and is correctly cited; that in ver. 25 is from Hos. ii. 23, and varies from both the Hebrew and the LXX., but not so as to affect the meaning. Both refer to the same subject. The prophet had been directed to "take unto him a wife of whoredoms." He had so taken "Gomer the daughter of Diblaim," who had borne him a daughter, to whom was given the symbolical name Lo-ruhamah ("Not beloved;" or, as it is interpreted in 1 Pet. ii. 10, "Hath not obtained mercy." "*Love* and *mercy* are both contained in the full meaning of the intensive form of the Hebrew word," Pusey on 'Hosea'); and afterwards a son, who received the name Lo-ammi ("Not my people"). Both are symbols of the ten tribes of Israel as distinct from Judah; the two names denoting (as Pusey explains) successive stages of God's repudiation of the people, and the last implying entire rejection. But in Hos. i. 10, after the naming of Lo-ammi, it is said, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are Lo-ammi, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the children of the living God." The subject is pursued through Hos. ii., at the end of which (ver. 23) comes the other passage quoted: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy on Lo-ruhamah; and I will say to Lo-ammi, Ammi ['My people'], and they shall say, My God." It might seem that these quotations are not apposite, since they referred originally, not to the Gentiles, but to the ten tribes of Israel. It is to be observed, however, that the words were spoken after these tribes had been declared to be cut off from being God's people at all, so that a principle of Divine dealing is expressed which is applicable to the Gentile world. "This, which was true of Israel in its dispersion, was much more true of the Gentiles. These, too, the descendants of righteous Noah, God had cast off for the time, that they should be no more his people, when he chose Israel out of them, to make known to them his Being, and his will, and his laws, and (although in shadow and mystery) Christ who was to come. He had threatened to Israel that he should be *unpitied*, and no more his people; in reversing his sentence, he embraces in the arms of his mercy all who were not his people, and says to them all, that they should be *my people* and *beloved*" (Pusey on 'Hosea,' ii. 23). In 1 Pet. ii. 10 the same text from Hosea is quoted as applying to those who were addressed in the Epistle, and then with more obvious applicability; for it appears to have been written, mainly at least, to Israelites of the *dispersion* (see ch. i. 1). Still, Gentile converts may be concluded to have been included (cf. ch. i. 14; iv. 3). It is to be observed that in ver. 25 the feminine ἠγαπημένην has reference to the *daughter* of the prophet, Lo-ruhamah; and that in ver. 26 "in the place where" must be understood, both in the original prophecy and the application, as meaning any region where those who were to be called *my people* might be. "And so St. Peter says that this Scripture was fulfilled in them, while still *scattered*

*abroad through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.* The place, then, where they should be called *the sons of the living God* is wheresoever they should believe in Christ" (Pusey).

"'Tis Zion, wheresoe'er they dwell,
Who, with his own true Israel,
Shall own him strong to save."
('Christian Year: Fifth Sunday in Lent.')

The texts from Isaiah which follow are intended to show that, according to prophetic utterance, while those who were not God's people, in large numbers, would be called his people, a *remnant* only of the Jews would be so.

Vers. 27, 28.—**Esaias also crieth** (κράζει, denoting loud and earnest utterance; cf. John i. 15; vii. 28, 37; xii. 44; Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 21) **concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, the remnant** (not, as in the Authorized Version, "*a* remnant." The idea seems to be, as it is in the original, that *it is the remnant only that*) **shall be saved: for he will finish a word** (not *the work*, as in the Authorized Version) **and cut it short: because a short** (rather, *cut-short*) **word** (again, not *work*) **will the Lord make** (*i.e.* accomplish) **upon the earth.** The Greek of ver. 28, according to the Textus Receptus, is difficult, so as to have compelled our translators to render the participles συντελῶν καὶ συντέμνων by futures, "will finish," etc. But we have the high and early authority of the uncials ℵ, A, B, for omitting part of the sentence, so as to make it read more intelligibly, thus: *The Lord will make* (i.e. accomplish) *a word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short.* The longer form, however, agrees, though not quite exactly, with the LXX., which differs itself greatly from the Hebrew, though not so as to affect the main drift of the passage as a whole. The passage is from Isa. x. 22, which had primary reference to the remnant of the house of Israel that should "return unto the mighty God" (Isa. x. 21) after the then predicted devastation of the nation by the Assyrian king. The series of prophecies with which this is connected begins at Isa. vii., which gives an account of Isaiah's memorable visit to Ahaz King of Judah, on the occasion of the combination of Pekah King of Israel, and Rezin King of Syria, against Jerusalem, in the course of which visit he predicts the birth of Immanuel. He took with him his son, who bore the symbolical name of Shear-jashub ("A remnant shall return"). Subsequently another son was born to the prophet, to whom was given the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("Swift of spoil, hasty of prey," as Ewald renders; or, "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth," as in margin of the Revised Version); the latter name having been previously written on a great roll (Isa. viii. 1). The primary drift of the prophecies in Isa. vii. and the following chapters is that the confederacy of Pekah and Rezin against Jerusalem shall fail, that their own lands would ere long be devastated by the Assyrian king, who would sweep irresistibly over Judah too; but that God's people may still trust in the LORD's protection, who would preserve and bring back a remnant, though a remnant only. The three names, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Shear-jashub, and Immanuel ("God with us"), are throughout significant of the leading ideas of the whole series of predictions; the first expressing the certainty of coming judgment, the second the return of the remnant, and the third God's own presence with his people. Now, without pausing to consider what primary historical fulfilment of the prophecy about Immanuel there might be in the way of type, we cannot but perceive, in the language and tone of much in this series of prophecies, a distinct Messianic reference. We cannot, for instance, otherwise understand Isa. ix. 6, 7; and in Isa. xi. there succeeds an ideal picture of peace and blessing under the "rod out of the stem of Jesse," which is undoubtedly Messianic. Hence the relevance of the passage, not only as showing God's way of dealing with his people in times of old, but also as an intimation of how it should be when the Messiah should come.

Ver. 29.—**And as Esaias hath said before** (*i.e.* in an earlier chapter), **Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah.** This quotation is from Isa. i. 9, and, though it seems to have no obvious reference to the Messianic age, it expresses the same idea as the other, of a remnant only being saved; and it is quoted suitably, occurring as it does at the beginning of the Book of Isaiah, and being a sort of key-note of the prevailing purport of his prophecies. The force of all the above quotations is much enhanced, if we remember that they are not mere isolated texts, but suggestive specimens of many prophetic utterances to the same effect. All familiar with the prophetic writings are aware that main ideas constantly recurring are: First, judgments to come upon the chosen people, painted often in many consecutive verses without relief; but secondly, after such denunciations, a dawn of hope and comfort appearing, and culminating in unutterable blessing under the Messiah's kingdom; and thirdly, this dawn of hope being for a remnant only of the race, compared in one place to a gleaning of the grapes when the

vintage is done (Isa. xxiv. 13); and fourthly, the association with this remnant, not only of the "outcasts of Israel" gathered from all lands, but also of a multitude of Gentiles, who should be gathered into the Messiah's kingdom (cf. Zeph. iii. 12, etc.; Zech. xiii. 9; Amos ix. 9; Joel ii. 32; Isa. vi. 13; lvi. 6; lx.).

Ver. 30—ch. x. 21.—(3) *The cause is in the fault of the Jews themselves.* Hitherto the apostle has viewed his subject from the side of the Divine will and purpose (see note on ver. 19). He now views it from the side of human responsibility. The rejection of the Jews is now attributed, not to God's purpose to reject them, but to their own fault, in that they would not accept God's terms. "Hic expresse ponit causam reprobationis, quia scilicet nolint credere Evangelio. Ideo supra dixi, similitudinem de luto non ita accipiendam esse quasi non sit in ipsa voluntate hominis causa reprobationis" (Melancthon).

Vers. 30, 31.—**What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, following after a law of righteousness, attained not to** (or, *arrived not at*, so as to distinguish ἔφθασε εἰς, used here, from καταλαβε, previously used of the Gentiles. It expresses the idea of failing to reach what is being pursued) **a law of righteousness.** The Gentiles are here said to have attained *righteousness* (i.e. the righteousness of God, appropriated by faith, as previously explained); but Israel to have pursued, without reaching it, *a law* (not, as in the Authorized Version, *the Law*) of righteousness; because in the Law of Moses they sought a *justifying* law, which in itself it could not be. The idea is resumed in ch. x. 3. The concluding δικαιοσύνης in ver. 31, which may have been introduced into the text to make the meaning plain, is ill supported; but the sense requires it to be understood. So far we have a statement of the facts of the case. The reason follows.

Vers. 32, 33.—**Wherefore? Because they sought it not of faith, but as of works of law.** The genuineness of the concluding word νόμου here is doubtful. Its omission does not affect the sense. If retained, it must, according to the rule observed in this Exposition, be translated *law*, not *the Law*. **For they stumbled at the stone of stumbling; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and rock of offence: and he that** (πᾶς before ὁ πιστεύων, expressed in the Authorized Version by "whosoever," has no good support, having probably been supplied from ch. x. 11) **believeth on him shall not be ashamed.** Here, as throughout the Epistle, the apostle's position is supported by an Old Testament reference. In this instance it is to two passages of Isaiah intermingled (xxviii. 16 and viii. 14). The way in which they are fused is illustrative of St. Paul's way, elsewhere apparent, of referring to Scripture. As a rule, he quotes the LXX., but often varies from it, and sometimes so as to be closer to the Hebrew. Sometimes he seems to be quoting from memory, as one who is familiar with the general drift of prophecy on the subject in hand, and satisfied if the form of his quotation expresses such general drift. In the case before us, he follows the Hebrew in Isa. viii. 14, and the LXX. in xxviii. 16, where for the Hebrew expression rendered "shall not make haste," the LXX. has οὐ μὴ καταισχυνθῇ, apparently with the same essential meaning; for "make haste" seems to signify "haste away in terror and confusion." The two texts combined express the idea of a stone being laid by the Lord in Zion, which should be the support of the faithful, but a stumbling-block to others. It is not necessary to inquire whether the texts themselves have in the original any obvious Messianic reference. Enough that they denote God's plan of dealing with his people. But to understand the full idea in the apostle's mind, when he speaks of "*the* stone of stumbling," we must take into account also Ps. cxviii. 22, and our Lord's language, as recorded in Matt. xxi. 42, 44 and Luke xx. 17, 18. In the Psalms we find the figure of "the stone" used thus: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner;" and in the Gospels our Lord refers to this text as denoting himself, and subjoins, with reference to Isaiah, the idea of the same stone being one on which some should fall and be broken, with the additional conception of its crushing those on whom itself should fall. The same view essentially is expressed in Simeon's words (Luke ii. 34), that "this Child" should be for the fall as well as for the rising again of many in Israel; and it is repeated definitely in 1 Pet. ii. 7 (cf. also Acts iv. 11; 1 Cor. i. 23).

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 6.—*The true Israel.* Since one great aim of the apostle in this Epistle is to combat the view of religion which regards the external as of main interest and importance, he finds it necessary to disabuse of their prejudice and error those Israelites who not only prided themselves upon their descent from Abraham, but who relied upon that descent for their acceptance with God. He points out that it is one thing to be "of Israel," *i.e.* sprung from the patriarchs in the way of natural lineage, and quite another thing to be "Israel," *i.e.* to possess the ideal character of the true Israelite. Even some of Abraham's posterity were not included in the covenant, but only the offspring of Isaac. This was in itself a limitation; and if God appointed a limitation of an external and racial kind, how far more obviously did it consist with Divine wisdom and justice to confine spiritual blessings to those spiritually prepared and qualified to enjoy them!

I. LIGHT IS HERE CAST UPON THE CHARACTER AND PURPOSES OF GOD. 1. God is faithful to his promises, but not to men's misunderstanding of these promises. 2. God is just, and not partial, in his treatment of the subjects of his kingdom upon earth. 3. God does not look upon men's outward relations and position, but upon the character and heart.

II. LIGHT IS CAST UPON THE MORAL CONDITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEN. 1. Men are blamable and foolish if they rely upon adventitious advantages; as *e.g.* upon parentage, ancestry, associations, acquired knowledge, religious privileges. 2. Men are wise if they remember, and act upon their remembrance, that it is God's prerogative and method to search the heart. 3. Men should use diligently the opportunities they enjoy, knowing that it is not their advantages, but the use they make of them, that is all-important. 4. Men should look forward to the individual account to be rendered at the last to the supreme Judge of all.

Vers. 25, 26.—*A great reversal.* Whether the original reference of the prophet here quoted was to the "ten tribes" or to the Gentile world is, for our purposes, immaterial, since it is unquestionable that the Apostle Paul employs the quotation to illustrate and, in a sense, to prove his contention—that it is the purpose of him, who is Eternal Wisdom and Unchanging Righteousness, to transfer privilege and blessing from those who considered themselves to possess an ancestral claim to them, unto those who had usually been regarded as aliens and reprobate—even the "sinners of the Gentiles." If this phase of Divine action has to some extent lost its interest for us, the principle which it illustrates is ever important.

I. THE HIGHLY FAVOURED AND PRIVILEGED MAY ABUSE THEIR ADVANTAGES, AND MAY LOSE THEM. Consider the case of the Hebrews. 1. Their special prerogatives in the possession of religious knowledge and means of spiritual improvement. 2. Their rebellion and apostasy in yielding in the earlier periods of their history to temptations to idolatry. 3. Their frequent chastisement, especially in the Captivity in the East, and in their subsequent national humiliations. 4. The repetition of their insensibility and disobedience in the rejection of Jesus, the true Messiah. 5. The final catastrophe which overtook the nation, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the dispersion of the people throughout the earth.

II. THE LESS FAVOURED MAY BE, IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE, EXALTED TO PRIVILEGE, AND, BY A RIGHT USE OF IT, MAY BECOME PARTAKERS OF PRICELESS SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. Consider the case of the Gentiles. 1. The publication of the gospel to them by St. Paul upon its rejection by his own fellow-countrymen. 2. The acceptance by many of the glad tidings intended for the enlightenment and salvation of men. 3. The position taken by Gentile converts in the diffusion of Christianity. 4. The consequent conversion of the Roman empire to the faith of Jesus of Nazareth. 5. And the course of the history of Christendom, which may all be traced to the operation of this wonderful principle.

APPLICATION. 1. They act foolishly who rely upon their privileges. 2. They are wise who, grateful for privileges, are concerned so to use them that they may not lose them, so to use them that they may become the vehicles of the highest spiritual blessing to themselves and to those associated with them, over whom their influence

may extend. 3. They who are cast down because their circumstances seem unfavourable should not forget that the people who were "not God's people" became "his people," "beloved," "children of the living God."

Vers. 32, 33.—*The rock of offence.* In one point of view it would seem all but incredible that the highest display of Divine wisdom and goodness should be regarded, by those for whose benefit it was provided, with indifference and even hostility. But in order to understand how this should be, it is necessary to bear in mind the distorting influence of sin upon the minds of men. True religion comes into conflict with men's errors, prejudices, and guilty conscience; and is a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence.

I. CHRISTIANITY HAS NO RESPECT FOR NATIONAL PREJUDICES AND PRIDE. Jew and Gentile, civilized and barbarian, stand before God, and his Law and gospel, upon the same footing. All alike are treated as guilty, as needing to repent in order to salvation.

II. CHRISTIANITY HAS NO RESPECT FOR PERSONAL RANK OR FAMILY REPUTATION. In the first age it was especially observed that not many great, or mighty, or noble were chosen. Such as were chosen were accepted upon the same terms as the lowly and the obscure.

III. CHRISTIANITY DOES NOT MAKE SPIRITUAL BLESSING DEPEND UPON EXTERNAL PRIVILEGE. Such advantages were enjoyed in abundance by the Jews; but the preachers of Christianity made no account of them. When Israelites counted themselves unworthy of everlasting life, the heralds of salvation turned to the Gentiles. No wonder that such a reversal of customary methods angered those who prided themselves upon their position of advantage.

IV. CHRISTIANITY DISPARAGES MERE EXTERNAL CONFORMITY AND OBEDIENCE. Most religions are content with words, gestures, gifts, etc. The new faith repudiated all such observances as in themselves valueless, laying stress upon the thoughts and intents of the heart. This was a paradox which was not unnaturally encountered with resentment.

V. CHRISTIANITY PRESCRIBES HUMILIATION AND REPENTANCE AS THE INDISPENSABLE CONDITIONS OF PARDON. And this in every case—a provision which is galling to the self-righteous and self-confident, who have little conscience of sin, and little pining for forgiveness. "The natural man" stumbles at this condition, which may, he thinks, be applicable to others, but has no appropriateness to him.

VI. CHRISTIANITY INCULCATES SPIRITUALITY OF CHARACTER AS ALONE SUFFICIENT AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. Christ's own commands and counsels appeal to the heart—the inmost nature of man. A new nature, renewed dispositions, heavenly desires,—nothing less avails in his sight. "It is a hard saying," is the objection; "who can hear it?"

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The sympathy of a Christian patriot.* If our Christianity is genuine, it will not destroy our natural affections, but will purify and ennoble them. Domestic affection is all the stronger and the brighter under the influence of Christianity. The Christian patriot is the truest patriot. So it was with St. Paul. Because he had embraced, so to speak, a new religion, he does not turn in bitterness against his former co-religionists. Because he has become wiser than they, he does not look down upon them with scorn and contempt.

I. HIS SORROW FOR THE LOST. He says that he has "great heaviness and continual sorrow" for Israel, his kinsmen according to the flesh. This sorrow is intensified by many considerations. 1. *He thinks of their great privileges.* "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (vers. 4, 5). It was indeed a saddening reflection to think that a people so highly honoured by God should depart from him. They had the Law for their guidance; the fathers for their example; Christ Jesus, God's own Son, for their Messiah and Deliverer; and the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the promises

for their encouragement and inspiration. Yet they crucified their King, and hardened their hearts against God's messages of mercy. Great privileges make our guilt the greater if we reject Christ. 2. *He thinks of the world's obligation to them.* The Jewish people have been the benefactors of the whole world. They have been the channel through which blessings have come to other nations. How sad that they themselves should forfeit the Divine blessing by their impenitence and unbelief! So also it would be sad if our British nation, which by its missionary enterprise has brought so many blessings to other nations, should itself depart from the truth as it is in Jesus, and fall into the depths of materialism and infidelity. 3. *He thinks of his own relation to them.* "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Those who are connected with us by ties of blood or common nationality should be the objects of our special solicitude and sympathy. Many Christian people are full of sympathy for the heathen in India, or China, or Africa, who never think—except, perhaps, with indifference or contempt—of the poor and ignorant and oppressed among their own countrymen at home. The strikes among working men in England, the discontent among the crofters of Scotland, disaffection and outrage in Ireland,—does not much of the responsibility for these things lie at the door of the Christian people of these nations? Thoughtlessness and indifference with regard to those around us bring their own retribution.

II. HIS SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT. St. Paul did not confine himself to mere sentiments or words. "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (ver. 3). He had already given proof, in a very practical way, of his desire for the salvation of Israel. Wherever he went, "he preached Christ in the synagogues" (Acts ix. 20) as he had opportunity, thereby subjecting himself more than once to bitter persecution and attack. The true Christian patriot will sacrifice himself for the good of his country and fellow-countrymen. He will sacrifice his prejudices of class and creed, he will sacrifice even the favour and friendship of those of his own rank, if by so doing he may better reach the poor and degraded and ignorant. Have we ever known what it is to have heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for our fellow-countrymen, and to bear reproach and opposition in our efforts to do them good?—C. H. I.

Vers. 6—13 with 24—32.—*Israel's rejection no violation of the Divine promise.* The natural question suggests itself to the mind, on thinking of the rejection of the Jewish people—What, then, becomes of the promises of God? Has the Word of God, then, become of no effect? The apostle answers this question in the negative (ver. 6), and proceeds to give his reasons.

I. THE PROMISE WAS A SPIRITUAL PROMISE. 1. *It was a promise of spiritual blessing.* "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." 2. *It was a promise made on spiritual conditions.* It was not a promise made to Abraham's children according to the flesh, for then Ishmael and his children would have been partakers of it. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (vers. 7, 8). Isaac was Abraham's son, not in the ordinary course of nature, but by reason of the special promise of God, and Abraham's faith in it. Many think they have a claim on God's promises who forget that every promise has a condition attached to it, and who fail to fulfil that condition.

II. ABRAHAM'S TRUE CHILDREN ARE THOSE WHO EXHIBIT ABRAHAM'S FAITH. "For they are not all Israel, who are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" (vers. 6, 7); "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith" (ver. 30). The same thought is brought out in ch. iv. 9—17. Abraham's righteousness was the righteousness of faith. He had this faith when he was yet uncircumcised, "that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised" (ch. iv. 11). Hence the Gentiles who exhibit Abraham's faith are heirs of the same promise and partakers of the same righteousness. There is no violation of the Divine promise in rejecting those who are Abraham's seed according to the flesh, but who do not exhibit Abraham's faith, and in including those who are Abraham's true spiritual children, because they exhibit Abraham's faith, though they are not his seed according to the flesh. God looketh on the heart. "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh

righteousness, is accepted of him." External forms and outward privileges will not save us unless we have the change of heart which is required of all who would enter into the kingdom of God. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

III. GENTILES AS WELL AS JEWS WERE INCLUDED IN THE PROMISE. The apostle not only argues by inference, but also from God's specific statements. "As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (ver. 25). The Jews were too much inclined to limit the Divine promises to themselves only, though there were many clear indications in the Divine Word that, while they were God's chosen people, other nations also were to be partakers of the blessing conveyed through them. We may so pride ourselves upon our privileges, while we neglect our duties, that at last even the privileges themselves shall be taken away.—C. H. I.

Vers. 13—24.—*God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.* Here is one of the most difficult problems touched on in the whole of this Epistle, and one of the most difficult problems in the whole range of human thought. It cannot be said that the apostle fully explains it. He does indeed suggest arguments which are sufficient to meet some of its difficulties. But how to reconcile human responsibility with Divine sovereignty remains a problem as difficult as that of reconciling the existence of evil with the power and righteousness and benevolence of a merciful God. Our wisdom is to bow with reverence in presence of these great mysteries, and to say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY. 1. *God's sovereignty is exercised in righteousness.* The objection is commonly made that to choose some and reject others would be an unrighteous act on the part of the Almighty. But God's choice of any one is not on the ground of deserving at all, but on the ground of his own mercy. It is not of works, but of grace. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (vers. 15, 16). God's choice of the Jews was free, and therefore he was free to reject them and to choose others. But if the Jews were rejected, they were rejected because of their own unbelief. 2. *God's sovereignty is exercised in mercy.* While the apostle takes a high view of the sovereignty of God, and asks, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" (ver. 21), yet at the same time he shows that God uses that sovereignty, not with arbitrary power, but with mercy. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known"—that is, God who must vindicate his own character, who will by no means clear the guilty, who must punish sin, what if he nevertheless—"endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" In other words, "You who would question the justice of God's dealings with Israel forget how much endurance and patience and forbearance he exhibited towards them." If we consider God's dealings with ourselves must we not all admit that he has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities?

II. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY. Another very common objection to the doctrines of Divine sovereignty and election is that, if these be true, man is not responsible. "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" (ver. 19). But here comes in the great truth of the freedom of the will. Human responsibility is there, whether we admit it or not. We are free agents, to choose between the good and the evil. Our conscience tells us this when it accuses us of guilt. The very condemnation of conscience is in itself a testimony to the freedom of the will and human responsibility. There would be no accusing voice within if we did not feel that we were free agents. Daniel Webster, the great American statesman, was once dining with a few friends in New York. In the course of the evening he was asked by the gentleman who sat next to him, "Mr. Webster, what is the greatest thought that has ever occupied your mind?" Pausing for a moment, he replied, "The most solemn thought that ever occupied my mind is the thought of man's responsibility to God."—C. H. I.

Ver. 33.—*Jesus as the Stumbling-stone.* "Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling-stone and Rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." It seems

a strange thing that Jesus, the Saviour of men, should at all be set before us in this way. But the truth is, the great object is to cause us to consider what our own attitude is toward Christ. Have I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, or am I hesitating to commit myself to him? Am I clinging to him as my Rock of safety, or am I being repelled from him as from a rock of offence? It was no new idea, this which St. Paul brings forward here, of Christ being a Stumbling-stone. It was spoken of by Isaiah, when he said, "And he shall be for a Sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a Rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (Isa. viii. 14). Jesus himself alluded to the same idea when he said to the chief priests and Pharisees, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner?" And then he added, to show the evil results of rejecting him, "And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi. 42, 44). The Stone of stumbling, the Rock of offence, and the Stone against which men fall to their own destruction,—all these convey the same truth. It is a truth which conveys a solemn warning—the danger of rejecting Christ. How is it, then, that men stumble at Christ?

I. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN CHRIST'S LIFE AND WORK AT WHICH MEN STUMBLE. I do not mean to say that there is anything in the life and work of Jesus Christ at which men ought to stumble, but such is the depravity of the human heart, such is the power of the great enemy of souls, that men find difficulties even in the way of salvation. They raise mental objections to the very way in which the Creator of the world wants to give them a share in his heavenly inheritance, and have their doubts as to whether there might not be some other way, some other Teacher, some other Saviour, just as good as the eternal Son of God, who, in his matchless love, gave himself to die for the redemption of their souls. 1. Christ is a Stumbling-stone to many *because of the way in which he came into the world.* So it was when he was on earth. Men asked the question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And when he was come into his own country, they said, "Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's Son? . . . And they were offended in him" (Matt. xii. 54—57), or stumbled at this difficulty of his lowly parentage. And yet there should be no difficulty, no stumbling-block in this; for Jesus came in the very way and in the very place it had been predicted several hundred years before that he would come. Micah had predicted the place of his birth when he spoke of Bethlehem, and Isaiah the manner of his birth when he spoke of the miraculous event of a virgin who should conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel. That which is a stumbling-block to many ought to be a strength and confirmation of faith in the Son of God. 2. Others, again, find a difficulty *in the surroundings of his daily life.* It was with the poor and lowly that he chiefly mingled; he ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and his intimate followers and disciples were chosen mainly from the humbler walks of life. Here, however, is the very proof that Christ was indeed Divine. God is no respecter of persons. Had Christ been a mere man, with an ambition to found an earthly kingdom, he would have sought the society of the great; he would not have put away from him all the attempts to make him a King. But his kingdom was not of this world. The very persons whom he chose to be its first ambassadors and founders were in themselves a proof that their religion was Divine. Without earthly rank or riches, without learning or worldly influence, they went forth from an obscure province of the Roman empire, and, only by the power of the words they spoke, founded a religion which to-day is placing a girdle round the world, and before whose mighty power the temples of heathenism and the mosques of the Mohammedan are destined yet to fall. God hath indeed chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. This fact also about Jesus Christ, his lowly surroundings and his humble followers, instead of being a stumbling-block, should be a strength to faith. 3. There are many who find *a great difficulty in the death of Christ.* St. Paul said that in his day Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And it is the cross of Christ that is the stumbling-block to many at the present day. They are willing to regard Christ as the greatest of all teachers, as a beautiful and holy example, but they can see no meaning in the atonement. They stumble at the cross. They call the preaching of salvation by the sufferings of Christ "a doctrine of blood." Be

it so. And if you take the doctrine of blood out of the Bible, how much of it have you left? Was it not the shedding of blood that was the feature of Abel's sacrifice, which, because it foreshadowed the need of an atonement for sin, was preferred to that of Cain, in which there was no recognition of guilt or unworthiness? The lamb which God himself provided for a burnt offering in lieu of Abraham's intended sacrifice; the lamb slain, and the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites in Egypt; the sacrificial offerings of the Mosaic Law;—were not all these but types, pointing to the great Sacrifice, and teaching the children of Israel their need for his atonement? But those who accept Christ as a great Teacher, and reject the doctrine of his atonement, are hardly consistent. It seems incredible how any one can accept the gospel narrative of Christ's own teaching, without believing that he taught that his death was a sacrifice. Just immediately after he entered on his ministry, he permitted John the Baptist to say of him, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." He himself said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Such words plainly convey that not only would there be the power of a good example in the life of Christ, but that there would be *a healing, saving power in his death* when he was lifted up upon the cross. He speaks of laying down his life for the sheep; and when he instituted the Lord's Supper, he clearly indicated that his sufferings on the cross were to be the leading thought in that commemoration, and that those sufferings were endured on behalf of his people. "This is my body, broken for you;" "This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins." If men stumble at the cross, they stumble at the very threshold of the gospel. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." If men find a difficulty in the cross, they find a difficulty in the most convincing evidence given to men of God's love for the world and of the desire of Jesus Christ for their salvation. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." *Instead of stumbling at it, let me cling to it, let me live under its power.* "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

II. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN THEMSELVES WHICH CAUSE MEN TO STUMBLE AT CHRIST. 1. *Christ is a Stumbling-block to human pride.* If we are to be saved by Jesus Christ, then we must confess ourselves to be guilty sinners, we must lay aside all trust in any merit of our own, all hope of heaven because of our own good works. This is a stumbling-block to many. Penances are no stumbling-block. Men will freely inflict on themselves fastings and bodily sufferings, to purchase for themselves, as they think, the pardon of their sins and the hope of heaven; but simply to accept the salvation provided by Jesus Christ—*when they are asked to do this, they hesitate, they raise difficulties, they entertain doubts.* God's way of salvation is too simple for many. If he would bid us do "some great thing" we would gladly do it. Here, again, is it not plain that such a cause of stumbling is unreasonable? If I will not take God's way of getting to heaven, how can I expect to get there by any other? And if there could be any other way, what necessity was there for God to give up his own Son to death for us all? 2. *Christ is a Stumbling-block to human sins.* Many would like to get to heaven, but they do not like to give up their sins. Many are inclined to ask, "May one be pardoned, and retain the offence?" How unreasonable to choose a few hours of sin and to destroy both body and soul, rather than to follow that Saviour whose service is perfect peace, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore! 3. *Christ is a Stumbling-block to human selfishness.* Many who are not the slaves of grosser sins are nevertheless the slaves of worldliness and self. They fear that Christ's service would be too much of a restraint upon them. They know that they cannot serve God and mammon. Their conscience tells them that if they would be conformed to this world and imitate the customs and fashions of those around them, they must violate the precepts and incur the displeasure of Christ. And so they make their choice, like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. They are not prepared for the service of him who said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." But how great is the loss of those who for any of these reasons reject Christ!—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—5.—*The honour of Israel.* These verses open up to us the great problem discussed in the three following chapters, "the rejection of the elect people" (Godet). God had chosen his people; he now repudiates them. And as the apostle in the previous chapter has been transported into an ecstasy of exultation in contemplating the final victory of God's true people, he is now brought back to sorrow and pain of heart by a thought of the contrasted lot of Israel. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" he had asked. But they have not known this love! He could well-nigh wish himself deprived of these high blessings that his people might possess them. For they are his beloved brethren, and the new spiritual endowments on his part do but intensify the claims of natural affinity. But in themselves, who are they, this people? In vers. 4 and 5 he sets forth their lofty claims; and we have in this shining catalogue—their ancestry; their dignities; and their boon to the world.

I. THEIR ANCESTRY. "Whose are the fathers;" "Who are Israelites." Nations pride themselves most on the heroes of their history, and they delight to trace their descent from men of renown. How is it with this nation? They are sprung from the patriarchs, of more than heroic fame. Abraham, God's friend, the man of whom in his communings with God amidst the corruptions of the world it might be said, "His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;" Isaac, the quiet, meditative man, whose deeds made no blaze of excitement among men, but with whom was "the secret of the Lord;" and Jacob, whose day rose so murky and dark, but whose sunset was of the most glorious—so mean, yet afterwards so strong; a supplanter and deceiver among men, who yet became a prince of God, one around whom the heavens opened, and whom God touched:—these were the fathers of the race! They, then, themselves were Israelites, princely ones with God.

II. THEIR DIGNITIES. 1. *The adoption.* According to God's message to Pharaoh (Exod. iv. 22), "Israel is my son, even my firstborn." God is dealing with nationalities as with individual men, and in calling the nations to himself he summons Israel as the firstfruits from among the peoples. 2. *The glory.* To Jacob in his dream the glory of the opened heavens had appeared; the Israelites in their journeyings were led by a cloud that from its dark depths shot radiance; the same glory, as of God, shone in the Shechinah of the holiest place. Theirs was this symbol of an ever-present Deity. 3. *The covenants.* How many times had God said to the patriarchs, "Surely blessing I will bless thee"! And these covenants were perpetuated in the abiding covenant with the chosen people. 4. *The giving of the Law.* Having adopted them as his firstborn son, and shown them his glory, and made with them a covenant, he had trained them, in fatherly wisdom, by the Law, which was designed to be their schoolmaster in all high and holy things. 5. *The service.* And trained in righteousness, they were trained likewise in godliness—priests of the most high God. 6. *The promises.* They were emphatically a people of hope; their whole history pointed towards better things to come.

III. THEIR BOON TO THE WORLD. "Of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." "The patriarchs, from whom the people sprang, are as it were its root; the Messiah, who sprang from the people, is as it were its flower" (Godet). But let us notice two antitheses. 1. "*Of whom is Christ.*" This people was called and trained that it might give birth, humanly, to the world's Deliverer. A high calling! But though from them, he is not to be their exclusive possession: "*Over all.*" From them springs the world's Christ. Oh that they had known their high destiny! why it was that they were a nation of priests! 2. "*As concerning the flesh.*" Humanly his origin was from them. Not a Jew, but a true, perfect Man, fashioned from Jewish human nature. All tender human sympathies of soul, as well as faculties of human body, were his to link him to his brethren among men. But in him, the Man, was an inhabitation, an incarnation of the Divine: "*God blessed for ever.*" Oh, wondrous truth! Here was the truest Shechinah, tabernacling in the world and for the world! the "Word made flesh"! Here the truest fulfilment of Israel's dream—the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on man. Such the world's heritage: God is ours!

But this inheritance the ancient Israelites have given to the world. May he not well grieve that they have despised their own boon? And may he not well set him-

self to grapple with the problem—How can such an elect people be rejected of God? —T. F. L.

Vers. 6—13.—*The freedom of God's election.* They had been so highly privileged, and were yet cast out. Oh, what a fall was there! But had God's promise come to naught? Nay, verily. For, as the history of their ancestry showed, the purposed working out of God's plans for the salvation of the world—for which alone Israel had been chosen—was not committed rigidly to all Israel, but only to such of them as God should choose. And, in this matter of choosing, God was perfectly free. This freedom is illustrated by the apostle from the election of former times.

I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD. A Creator's love must embrace his whole creation; a Father's must go forth towards all his children. God is the Father of mankind, even though all have fallen away from him; any purpose of salvation must, therefore, comprehend all men in its wide scope, and only the wilfulness of man can prevent the perfect accomplishment of the purpose. God has purposed the redemption of the world in Christ Jesus (Eph. iii. 11), but by reason of man's debasement through sin the accomplishment of the purpose must needs be gradual. One great central work shall be wrought—God's work through Christ; but up towards this the avenue of preparatory work must lead, and away from this the avenue of fulfilment must conduct. An education of the world; a great power of salvation; a world-wide application of the power.

II. AN ELECT PEOPLE. The election dealt with in these chapters, which has no reference whatever to the election of individuals for eternal salvation, was the election of a people who should conduct the world towards Christ by way of preparation, and afterwards conduct Christ's power to the world by way of application. In the matter of preparation, an exclusion of this people from others was needful first, because of the abounding corruptions of the world. Sometimes this is the only safety: "Come out, and be separate!" But a scattering was needful afterwards. So the captivities, overruled by God; so the dispersion in later times. In the subsequent evangelization there must be concentration first, that the new power of life might be fully realized; a scattering afterwards, that the new power might touch the uttermost ends of the earth (*vide* Acts viii. 4).

III. THE FREEDOM OF THE ELECTION. But surely, in such a work of grace, God's hands cannot be tied? surely he may choose whom he will for the great purpose of the world's salvation? Even so. We can conceive nothing other; and the history of the past abundantly illustrates the freedom with which God has worked. First, God chose Abraham; the Jews would not complain of his freedom of election here. Again, of Abraham's sons he chose the later-born, showing that the matter of priority of natural claims could not weigh with him. And of Isaac's twin-sons, before their birth, he chose again the later-born, Jacob, showing that nothing done by the elected one constituted a claim on his electing grace. Neither the Ishmaelites nor the Edomites were rejected of God from personal salvation, but as regarded taking a special part in the work of the world's salvation they were reprobate. So, then, God had acted freely in the choice of Abraham, and in the narrowing down of the election among Abraham's seed. Was it to be wondered at that, in the fulness of the times, he should act freely still, and elect only a remnant of the people to the work of evangelizing the world? This work so soon to be entrusted also to Gentile workers themselves.

The same principle still holds good: God elects us, according to his sovereign will, for work in his kingdom. Let us learn, as the first lesson, absolute submission; nay, the unquestioning fealty of love.—T. F. L.

Vers. 14—18.—*Moses and Pharaoh.* But was not this free election of God an unrighteous thing? Nay, verily. For, if they would think of it, the very antithesis of character which stood out so boldly at the threshold of their natural history, and in its results had made them what they were, was a conspicuous example, even according to God's own showing, of this electing liberty. Moses, the man after God's own heart, was chosen by God freely for the salvation of Israel from Egypt, and the consequent salvation of the world; and Pharaoh, the great antagonist of Moses, was chosen as freely by God for the working out of his purposes.

I. MOSES. Next to the Christ, perhaps none has played so conspicuous a part in the history of the world's salvation as Moses. Prepared from his birth for the great work of his life: trace his history with this in view. Called forth at last to step into the arena; and, when the antagonism was past, set forth by God as the great legislator for his race. And here, for his inauguration into the great work, the vision of God's goodness (Exod. xxxiii. 19). But, while God would thus equip him and make him strong, had he a claim upon God's call and fashioning and favour? No; it was all of God's free choice. Another might have been chosen—another called, equipped, and blessed. God had his reasons, doubtless, but these are in the background here. The question is one of freedom. Can God select whom he will for his saving purposes, or is he tied by any supposed claims on the part of individuals or of peoples? There is only one answer—that God is perfectly free in this matter: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," etc. Surely, if God showed this freedom in the case of Moses, he might show it equally in the case of the "remnant," and of the Gentiles.

II. PHARAOH. God's great purposes were to be wrought out the more effectually by antithesis; even as all his purposes are wrought out by the antithesis of good and evil. Moses was the great deliverer; Pharaoh was the great resister. And as Moses set forth judgment and mercy from God, Pharaoh set himself against God, and hardened his heart yet more and more. And at last his own conspicuous overthrow must publish abroad to all nations and all time that with a mighty hand God had set his people free. And could Pharaoh rightly complain that God made him play this conspicuous part, against his own will, in the salvation-purposes of God for the world? No, in truth. As an individual, he had perfect liberty of choice, and God undoubtedly willed his salvation; his sinful resistance of God was not ordained by God. But God, foreseeing the sin, determined to make even the wrath of man to praise him; and though Pharaoh's co-operation with Moses would have achieved the object well, yet his resistance of Moses, as God's messenger, was so overruled as to redound to the effectuation of God's will. God certainly had the liberty to make his self-hardening tributary to the fulfilling of his own designs. And if he had the right to reprobate Pharaoh from a voluntary co-operation, and yet control his resistance to the same end, might he not equally reprobate unbelieving Israel from a voluntary co-operation now, and—for this truth now comes into the foreground in their case—make even their reprobation to subserve his designs?

Let us remember that God will use us, whether we will or not, for the work of his kingdom. But let us seek to be used as willing instruments, and, as we have no claim to be used in this way or that, seeing that God's purposes are sovereign, let us pray, "What wilt thou have me to do?"—T. F. L.

VERS. 19—29.—*The rebuke of presumption.* The objectors might say—If God overrules all the conduct of men by such sovereign power, why does he reprobate any? Is not the very idea of the reprobation inconsistent with itself? He sets himself against some that he may glorify his Name; but if this tends to the working of his will, and they cannot resist, why does he set himself against them? The apostle, in reply, will indeed vindicate to them the reasons which enter into the working of the all-righteous God; but, first, he will question their competency to object to the working of such a One as God. They ask in a spirit of self-complacent Pharisaism; he will ask them how they dare presume to sit in judgment on their Maker. He shows, then, the unreasonableness and the unscripturalness of such presumptuous questioning of the ways of God.

I. AN UNREASONABLE PRESUMPTION. If it be regarded on the ground of mere right, has not God a right to do what he will with his own? It is certain that his will is wise, righteous, and merciful; but the question now is one of prerogative. And God, the Absolute One of the universe, is surely not to come to the tribunal of creaturely judgment? It is even as though the clay were to judge the action of the man that fashions it, and say, "Why didst thou make me thus?" The potter has a right over the clay; he may do as he will. He may make the vessels, some for meaner use, some for nobler; and the clay cannot question his deeds. So cannot man question God. He deals with mankind for historical purposes as the potter with the clay. God takes clay, begins to fashion it for purposes of honour, casts it aside, takes other clay and

puts it to the use for which the former portion was first intended: are we in a position to say, "Why?" God knows best! The race of mankind is dealt with by God according to his own wisdom, and there are vessels of mercy unto glory, and vessels of wrath unto destruction. Egypt was a vessel of wrath, while Israel was taken for fashioning into a vessel of mercy; by-and-by Israel, as a nation, becomes a vessel of wrath, and a new people, of Jews and Gentiles, is the vessel unto honour. God knows what he is doing best. But all shall subserve his glory. Just as Pharaoh's stubbornness was made by God the occasion for a greater display of delivering power, so the stubbornness of the Jews, and their wickedness even unto the crucifixion of their Lord, were made subservient to the world's salvation. And while the wrath towards some was for mercy towards others, yet towards the children of wrath long-suffering was shown, not merely that the purpose of mercy towards others might be more conspicuously and effectually fulfilled, but that they, had they repented, might have mercy shown them. The very wrath is in love.

II. AN UNSCRIPTURAL PRESUMPTION. The presumption was not only unreasonable in itself, but according to their own Scriptures it was altogether unwarranted. Hosea (ii. 23; i. 10) had spoken words of prophecy concerning the ten scattered tribes, which involved the same principle as that on which God was acting now—the right to reprobate for idolatry, and the right to restore. And, as they had lapsed into idolatry, and as they were furthermore so intermingled with the Gentiles that a definite separation might be impossible, theirs was not only a new election, as of Gentiles themselves, but actually involved the election of Gentiles also. Isaiah, too (x. 22, 23), speaking of Israel, sets forth the other principle, or another aspect of the same, on which God was dealing with the world now—his right, while reprobating Israel from the great work of the world's salvation, to spare a remnant, with whom the Gentiles should be joined, and who with the Gentiles should form the new Church for the extension of the kingdom of God. So, then, their Scriptures pointed to this very selfsame, twofold principle for the formation of the new society. And all their history, as recorded in the Scriptures, had been one repeated manifestation of the same. Yes, God had the right, and he had already used it from the beginning, to take or set aside, as he would, nations or individuals, in the great economy of the redemption of the world. The apostle goes on to show (ver. 30—ch. x. 21) that there were reasons for God's dealings in all cases, and what, in the main, these reasons were; also (ch. xi.) that the very reprobation of Israel now, in accordance with such reasons, should ultimately redound to the good of the world.

Let us remember this for ourselves as a nation. We may think, "God hath not so dealt with any people." But—he does not pledge himself rigidly to deal so with us to the end. Our earnest question must be—not captiously, or he would not answer, but devoutly, and he will answer—Why are we now exalted? and how may we secure a continuance of his blessing which maketh rich? And so for ourselves, as individuals, we can ask no more important question than—How may I become "a chosen vessel," "a vessel unto honour, meet for the Master's use" (Acts ix. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 21)?—T. F. L.

Vers. 30—33.—*The reasonableness of God's working.* The question hitherto has been—How can God set aside an elect people? And the answer—God chooses whom he will for the carrying on of his saving work. But now a reason is adduced. For though God does what he will, yet we may be sure he never wills what is not right. And here the great reason of the rejection of Israel, and the choice of the Gentiles, for the carrying out of God's purposes, is this—that the former have altogether failed to apprehend the nature of salvation, when all has been done by God to teach them its true character; whereas the latter, left, it might seem, to themselves, have eagerly received the proffered gift when once it was presented. Needs it any arguing to show that they are better fitted to work for God than the others?

I. GENTILES. 1. The previous history of the Gentiles, from the religious point of view, is set forth in this—that they "followed not after righteousness." That is, they sought not justification with God. For a subjective righteousness they did seek after, as is witnessed by the earnest inquiries of the great ethical leaders, *e.g.* Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; and of their poets and historians, who also sought to set forth the principles

of right. But as to an objective righteousness, a being right with God, this was not in all their thoughts. They regarded God as not much troubling himself with human conduct, and sin itself as rather a defect, an ignorance, than something for which man is gravely culpable. So, in this sense, it was emphatically true that they "followed not after righteousness." 2. But of the same Gentiles it is said, of their acceptance of Christ's gospel, that they "attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." The dormant conscience awoke; the weakness of their ethical systems was revealed; the exceeding guilt of sin, as well as the exceeding love of God, was set forth in the cross of Christ; and being stricken to the heart, and crying, "What must I do to be saved?" they were ready, nay, eager, to respond to the blessed command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And, accepting the great salvation, they stood as justified in the presence of him who forgiveth for the sake of Christ. They "attained to righteousness."

II. JEWS. 1. The history of the Jews is stated, by way of contrast to that of the Gentiles, as consisting in this—that they "followed after a Law of righteousness." The wording is most accurate. They followed a Law, which was designed by God to teach them their sin, and lead them to look to his free grace, through Christ, for pardon; but it was not this "end of the Law" which they in reality followed, but rather the Law itself. They made an end of the means, and thus entirely subverted its design; for instead of learning by the Law their sin, they sought, by a supposed fulfilment of its precepts, to make themselves just before God. So, instead of learning to be poor in spirit, they learned an arrogant self-complacency; instead of coming to God's grace for pardon, they thanked God they were not as other men, and stood before him self-justified. 2. What was the result? They "did not arrive at that Law;" not at its true purport, its ultimate design. And so the real law of justification, the being saved by grace through faith, was hidden from their eyes. To them the Rock of Ages was "a Stone of stumbling, a Rock of offence."

Oh, let us learn, from the history of the past, that there is shame for us, and shame only, if we seek to make ourselves just before God. But, accepting freely the grace which is freely given, we shall prove, "He that believeth on him shall not be put to shame."—T. F. L.

Ver. 4.—*The right use of privileges.* The apostle turned from his rapt meditation on the present and future glory of the Christian dispensation, to think of the race of Israel excluding themselves from participation in its benefits, and he felt his soul charged with heaviness on their behalf. They hated him as overturning venerable customs, and as lowering their dignity by admitting the Gentiles to the blessings of the covenant on such easy terms. But in reply he vehemently asserted his still subsisting love for his "kinsmen," and for those whom in the past God had so signally honoured. None can look without emotion on the face and form of a Jew, who consider his history and destiny.

I. THE SUPREME DISTINCTIONS OF LIFE ARE THOSE WHICH CONCERN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. All the items particularized are connected with the Divine manifestations granted to Israel. The apostle cares little for the story of military prowess, or even of skill in literature; but all that appertained to the knowledge and worship of God, this was worth dwelling upon. It becomes a speedy test of judgment when we know the things on which a man prides himself. Does he point with chief delight to his acquisition of lands or goods, or to his rank in society, or to his fame in science or art circles? or does he account his position in the family of the Most High, and the revelation vouchsafed of Divine mercy and grace, as his possession of greatest worth? Which in our hearts do we deem the most highly favoured nation—Greece, or Rome, or Israel? The true wealth and place of a modern empire should be reckoned, not according to its material resources and fighting strength, but rather by its widespread distribution of moral and religious truth. This means real refinement and enduring prosperity. Many opportunities occur to all of us to exhibit our genuine opinion in the lives we lead, the money and time devoted to the highest pursuits, the notions cherished in the family, the books read, and the amusements indulged in. Missionary enthusiasm rests on a sure basis when the value is perceived of an acquaintance with the things of God. Such a knowledge is the best legacy that can be bequeathed to children.

II. THE HIGHEST RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES WILL NOT PROFIT UNLESS USED ARIGHT. In spite of their advantages, the Jews were found wanting, and, like unfruitful branches, were broken off. Before the exile they fell into idolatry, and sought to nullify their glory by equalling the abominations of the heathen. Could a stronger proof be furnished of the seductiveness of sinful practices and the blindness of man? And the coming of Christ was a further testing season. Their "zeal of God" was shown to be unintelligent, depending upon external rather than spiritual views of religious grandeur and service. It behoves us not only to enjoy but to improve our privileges. Attendance at the sanctuary, the public prayers and reading, unless they exert a living influence upon us, increase our condemnation, as the presence and works of Christ multiplied woes upon the cities of the sea. The tendency is strong that would lull our souls into comfortable dreams of security, from which there could only be a terrible awakening. The religious pride of the Jews hardened into fossilism—an unreceptive soil for new truth. Instead of guiding their steps by the Law, they looked at it till they were dazzled by its glare, and could not recognize the coming of the "Light of the world."

III. THE ADVANTAGES ENJOYED BY NATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT CONFERRED FOR THEIR OWN EXCLUSIVE BENEFIT. The Israelites were stewards of the mysteries for the world around and the times to follow. Very important functions they discharged, keeping the lamp of truth alight, preventing the world from lapsing into barbaric atheism. Especially in relation to Christianity do we discern these advantages as preparatory. The "sacrifices" had respect to the offering of Christ, and in part explain its meaning. The "Law" acted as a pedagogue to bring us to the school of Christ. The temple "service" illustrates the obedience of the Christian priests, and the promises fulfilled confirm our faith. Israel was a nursery where choicest plants were reared with which to stock the wilderness till it should blossom as the rose. And the same principle holds good of every advantage the goodness of our God bestows. The Christian Church is to be as a city set on a hill; its members are lights in the world, pilgrim-soldiers, ambassadors for Christ. It is ours to guard the gift entrusted, to transmit to others the revelation received, the spiritual heirlooms of liberty and intelligence, lest we fail to deliver up a proper account of our stewardship.—S. R. A.

Ver. 21.—*The sovereign right of God.* Some aspects of the Deity may be less pleasing to contemplate than others. The pride of man rejoices not at first in the thought of the majesty which overawes his littleness and compels him to submission. Yet as a hard flint forcibly struck emits a bright spark, and as a rough husk often covers a sweet kernel, so these stern views of the Almighty may, if reverently faced and meditated upon, yield salutary, ennobling, and even comforting reflections.

I. THE POTTER CLAIMS ABSOLUTE RIGHT TO DEAL WITH THE CLAY AS HE THINKS FIT. His arbitrary power does not signify the absence of proper reasons for his selection. As in the calling of Israel to peculiar service and responsibility and honour, so everywhere can an election be discerned. We do not start in the race of life with exactly similar equipment, though we live in tabernacles of clay. If the physical and spiritual powers are the same in essence, like the particles of "the same lump," yet the faculties of some have been well trained from the beginning, and their natures have developed under favourable conditions. Here is *a lesson of resignation.* He is happiest who accepts the will of God as revealed in his lot, assured that God's decision has ample justification. Even the Stoic philosophy could declare that if man knew the plans of the Superintendent of the universe, and saw them in their completeness, he would at once acquiesce in the determinations of the Arbiter of his destiny. This is the truth which mingles with the error of Mohammedan fatalism. We have to do all that lies within our power, and leave the result with him who is wise and merciful. For the Potter is our Father in heaven. How much of the vexation and worry of life is due to a conceit of our capacity, and perhaps to a jealousy of the position and attainments of our neighbours! Be content to fill a lowly place. And the time is at hand when "the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar."

II. THE POTTER HAS NO DESIRE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS WORKMANSHIP. He cares not to waste his clay, nor to employ it in a manner to secure its speedy extinction. It is a pain to God to see his gifts abused, his image degraded, his work

marred. He is said in ver. 22 to "endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath." *A lesson of hopefulness* is here. The Most High will not break his vessels in pieces as long as they are fit for any use, for any post, though humble and insignificant. "Potter and clay endure," howe'er the wheel of life may turn and fashion the material into altered shapes. If the light of God shines in a vacuum, no brightness is observable. An empty heaven were a dreary home for a God of love, a silent temple for him who glories in the praises of his people and his works.

III. THE POTTER PREFERS TO CONSTRUCT THE CHOICEST VESSELS. The noblest ware pays him best, and he lovingly exerts his skill on specimens of highest art. Deny not to God the delight which every artist feels in the finest productions of his genius! The most polished mirrors best reflect his glory. *A lesson of aspiration* therefore. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." God has made his clay instinct with will and energy; he takes pleasure in the improvement of the vessels, that they may be brought into his sanctuary. It will mightily assist our struggles to be sure that the Captain longs "to bring many sons unto glory."—S. R. A.

Ver. 33.—*Either an offence or a refuge.* An offence is caused by some obstacle upon the road, something that trips up the feet or bars our progress, or some stone pillar that overthrows the unwary charioteer in his course. The apostle combines two passages from Isaiah to prove that the rejection of Christ by the Jews was long ago foretold; nothing, therefore, to be wondered at, much less a reason for abandoning Christianity. To John the Baptist, encompassed with doubts born of the shadows of a prison, the stirring assurance was sent, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me."

I. THE WORK OF CHRIST A DIVINE APPOINTMENT. "Behold, I lay in Zion," etc. There were hints and predictions of the gospel in nature, providence, and Jewish symbolism. And now that the purpose of grace has been clearly manifested, we can everywhere trace intimations corroborative of the significance of the Saviour's mission, though we might not without this key in our hands have discovered the opening of the locks. Much in the mystery of redemption transcends expectation. Who could have invented a narrative of such Divine condescension? And many things connected with the intercession of Christ recall the language of Leviticus, "I have given it you to make atonement for your souls." Christ is God's Gift to our fallen world. He came according to the flesh an Israelite; he came to Zion, and in the midst of his own people made his soul an offering for sin.

II. THIS WORK A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO SOME. The people in Zion could not understand how a Galilæan Prophet could become a Corner-stone of a nobler edifice than they had ever beheld. They had respect to the outward meanness of the Messiah, and could not comprehend his spiritual glory. They were unprepared for a system that secured righteousness, not by human merit and obedience to statutory and ceremonial regulations, but by faith in the Righteous One. A Messiah crucified was the reversal of every hope. And when the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentiles, multitudes could see in it naught to evoke their admiration or claim their intellectual homage. It humbles pride, makes severe demands upon our power of credence. The facts are extraordinary, and the doctrines based thereon run counter to many a deep-rooted, warmly cherished prejudice. And thus the preaching of Christ becomes "a savour of death."

III. A SURE FOUNDATION TO BELIEVERS. Three translations of the original word are found in the Authorized Version—"shall not make haste," "shall not be confounded," "shall not be ashamed." These terms all lay stress on the durableness of Christian hope. When the hail "sweeps away the refuges of lies," he that trusteth in the Lord shall find he has not believed in vain; his Ark survives the flood, his Tower withstands the assault of the foe. The consciousness of peace and satisfaction which the disciple of Christ enjoys must ultimately be accepted as the strongest weapon in the controversy, the plainest indication of the reconcilement of the natural and the supernatural. A foundation which bears unmoved the strain of a heavy superstructure cannot be treated as worthless. According to our position, then, as in the camp of Israel or of Egypt, will the Divine cloud minister light or darkness, succour or bewilderment.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—5.—*Christian patriotism.* We saw in last chapter how a "Paradise" may really be experimentally "regained," and how Christian experience culminates in a triumphant assurance. But the apostle could not contemplate this as a mere personal matter. He could not rejoice in personal salvation and be indifferent to the salvation of his brethren. The case of his countrymen accordingly comes forward for review, and in the review of it the apostle is seen as the Christian patriot. Though the "apostle of the Gentiles," he has lost no interest in his *Jewish* countrymen. The subject raised in this section is, consequently, the important one of Christian patriotism. Now, there are some who imagine that we have in these terms a real contradiction. Their notion is that the true Christian is so occupied with a future world as to have little interest in a present one. Is not heaven the fatherland of the believer? is he not taught to regard himself as a citizen of the better country? is he not to live as if already within its pearly gates? and will he not in consequence lose real interest in the world that now is, and pass through it as a mere "pilgrim and stranger"? While this is perfectly true, it is also true that the Christian may and ought to be the very best of patriots, and Christian patriotism the very best form of patriotism. St. Paul's case is one in point. He was the very finest specimen of a Christian which our era has produced. He laid the emphasis on the future world as few have ever done. He lived as if within the gates of the eternal city. And yet, in his relations to his fellow-countrymen, he was the truest and wisest of patriots. Up to a certain period Saul of Tarsus had been a trusted national leader. It was to him the chief priests committed their policy of persecution; and right zealously had he carried it out. Under the notion that the Christians were the enemies of their country and religion, the Jews, and Saul as their chosen instrument, thought that they did God service when they imprisoned and murdered them. Had it been asked who was the greatest patriot among all the Jews, the reply would have been unanimous—Saul of Tarsus. His patriotism was thoroughly unscrupulous; it stuck at nothing. But when the risen Saviour meets and conquers him on the road to Damascus, the arch-persecutor becomes a meek and lowly Christian. And now he seeks out *Jews* instead of *Christians*, not to persecute them, however, but if possible to persuade them to become Christians too. The result is he is persecuted, and has to flee; yet the process is repeated in the missionary tours which characterize his life. To the Jews first, and then, when they reject his message, he turns to the Gentiles. He might, indeed, have given up the Jews with good reason. "Surely," says Colani, "if the Christian was held to break the chains which bound him naturally to a nation, never, to a certainty, had any man been so completely delivered therefrom as the apostle."[1] He might have said, moreover, that he was set apart for the mission to the Gentiles. Yet, in spite of all their persecutions, he will give them the first place in his affections and in his evangelistic work. Indeed, he seems to gravitate instinctively and at all hazards to Jerusalem, prepared to sacrifice life and, as it would seem, everlasting happiness, if it would save them. And indeed, when we look into Paul's life we see at once a cosmopolitanism and a patriotism—a cosmopolitanism which embraced all Gentile nations, and a patriotism which would have made any sacrifice for his own beloved Jews. In contrast with this, pagan patriotism will be found to be *politic* rather than *patriotic*. Cities, not broad fatherlands, were the tiny footholds for which the citizens were ready to make sacrifices. They had not under paganism any broad or liberal views such as Christianity produced. Christianity transformed selfish *citizenship* into disinterested *patriotism*.

I. THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT WILL EMPHASIZE THE GOOD QUALITIES OF HIS COUNTRYMEN. (Vers. 4, 5.) Paul is particular in bringing out the good qualities of the Jews. Though they had persecuted him, his only revenge was in doing them service by preaching to them Christ as their true Messiah. And when he found them unwilling to receive his message, "great heaviness and continual sorrow" seem to have settled in his heart. This consuming interest, moreover, was kept alive by the consideration of the *good* qualities of his countrymen. To them, as he rejoiced to think, pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." He looked into Jewish

[1] Cf. Colani's sermon on "Le Patriotisme," in his second volume, p. 314; also Dean Goulburn's sermon on "The Grounds of True Patriotism," 'Sermons,' p. 227.

history and noted with satisfaction how his nation had been acknowledged and honoured in connection with God's revelation of himself. The Jewish genius was in the sphere of religion. He studied also the great capacities of his countrymen, and it was his downright conviction that if they were once won to Christ, their advent to the Christian cause would be as "life from the dead." His fellow-countrymen seemed to him the most magnificent of latent possibilities, embodiments of great and noble qualities which simply were waiting to be consecrated to Christ. And it is here that enlightened Christian patriotism must begin. Let us take the good points, not the bad, in our fellow-countrymen. Let us consider what splendid possibilities they are, and then let us try, by God's blessing, to have these qualities consecrated to our Lord and Master.

II. THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT WILL NOT EXCUSE HIMSELF FROM SERVING HIS COUNTRYMEN UNDER THE PRETENCE OF SOME SPECIAL MISSION. There are some people who are so occupied with special work as to have no time, as they certainly show little taste, for what is patriotic. They imagine they have got a dispensation from all patriotic service. But if any one ever had such a dispensation, it was assuredly the Apostle Paul. As soon as he was converted, he was told he was to be the apostle of the Gentiles. Immediately he blooms into a man of cosmopolitan aims and desires. The whole world becomes his parish, and all men his charge. Might he not, in such circumstances, plead for a division of labour, and leave the Jews to the care of Peter and of the eleven? Especially when he had tasted the bitterness of their persecution against him, might he not have well excused himself on the plea of his special mission? He might—but, blessed be God, he did not. Though the apostle of the Gentiles, he was so patriotic as to have the Jews and their interests always on his heart. It pained him evermore to think that these splendid possibilities were being wasted in a vain endeavour to stem the tide of Christianity that he knew was on the flood, and would reach, in spite of all opposition, its fulness. And so we see this Christian patriot laying siege of set purpose to the Jewish synagogues on his way; preaching the gospel to the Jews until they would hear no longer; praying for them, writing Epistles about them, and perhaps one to them; in short, doing anything that a patient, pertinacious, persevering, converted Jew could do for his kinsmen according to the flesh. In view of Paul's special mission, then, no man has any right to excuse himself, as some indeed do, from patriotic service.

III. THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT WILL RECOGNIZE THE SALVATION OF HIS COUNTRYMEN AS THE MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT THEY CAN RECEIVE. It is certainly remarkable that St. Paul, in all his work among the Jews and references in his writings to them, keeps steadily before his mind and theirs that their conversion to Christ would be the greatest boon they could possibly receive. He gets involved in no controversy about patriotic politics, but devotes himself to the promulgation of what he believes to be the best religion for the Jews and for any man. He tried, accordingly, to bring them into sympathy with Christ. He preached the Messiahship of Jesus on the ground of the Jewish Scriptures. He showed that there was promised first a suffering and then a glorified Messiah; and that Jesus, now risen and reigning, embodied all their hopes. He understood their prejudices, for he had himself shared them; he met them manfully, and tried to carry conviction to their hearts. The result may have been and often was disappointing. The patriot was misunderstood, was despised, was rejected, was forced to flee from city to city, was mobbed, stoned, imprisoned, and at last martyred, all because bright as a star above him all the time shone the single purpose of getting his countrymen converted to Christ. Now, the same duty lies before all of us. The most patriotic effort any one can put forth is to get all one's fellow-countrymen brought into fellowship with Christ. Other policies may be questioned and questionable, but the one about which there can be no question is the patriotic one of getting all we can influence in our country converted to the faith in Christ. Let us be his "living epistles," and we shall be "known and read of all men."

IV. THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT WILL BE READY FOR ANY SACRIFICE TO SECURE HIS KINSMEN'S SALVATION. We have seen how Paul exposed himself for his Jewish countrymen. He was prepared for risks. His poor body might be battered, stoned, killed, but Paul was quite ready for such eventualities. Nay, the passage before us shows that he was ready for a still greater sacrifice. If it had been possible for him to secure their salvation by becoming "anathema," that is, separated from Christ, he was

patriotic enough for this. In other words, Paul was ready to forego his own heaven if by doing so he could bring his brethren to it. How many Christians have risen to such a patriotism? Self-sacrifice for their country may have been faced—but self-sacrifice only for a time. Glory beyond the shadows makes compensation for the pain and the parting here. But self-sacrifice for eternity—this is no less than Paul's idea. Let us be patriotic as Paul was, and our country shall be every way the better for our being reckoned among her sons.—R. M. E.

Vers. 6—18.—*The children of the promise.* We have seen St. Paul as a Christian patriot ready to sacrifice his everlasting fellowship with Christ if it could ensure the salvation of his fellow-countrymen. But, alas! the fact of the rejection of Jesus and his gospel by many of the Jews must be accepted. And when the apostle turns to history, he finds that there has been no wholesale salvation of either the descendants of Abraham or of Israel, but a certain proportion only became children of promise. How can these facts be dealt with under the Divine government? It is to this the apostle devotes himself in the present passage.

I. GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON ANY MAN IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE QUALITIES OF HIS NATURAL DISPOSITION. When we take up the cases here given, we see that God did not elect to privilege either all the children of the patriarchs, or even those we would incline to elect ourselves. St. Paul mentions the children of Abraham; and, as the history shows, he had *eight* (Gen. xxv. 2), yet only *one* becomes the "child of promise." Isaac also had two sons, but the younger, not the elder, becomes in his turn the "child of promise." Moreover, when we consider Ishmael and Esau, who are apparently both before Paul's mind, we are inclined to regard them as more manly and noble men than their brothers Isaac and Jacob. They may have become "sons of the desert," yet there is something in both the rejected men which commands our admiration. Of course, we see in them purely natural endowments. They live lives of sense and sight rather than of faith. They live solely under the power of things seen, and are what we now call worldly men. Their natures are as interesting and as noble as pure worldliness of spirit will allow. Now let us suppose for a moment that God's electing love had laid hold on these well-made "noblemen of nature," with all their physical force and muscular power, and had passed by their feebler brothers, the meditative Isaac and the cowardly Jacob; would not violent outcry have surely resulted against a God who professed to be a Father, and yet could favour the strong and pass by the weak? It is plain that an electing love which moved along such lines as these would have been denounced by all serious and thoughtful men. But, as a recent preacher has said, "the Father in heaven is a considerate Father. He does not cast out his crippled and deformed children to perish. He holds to a stricter and sterner responsibility the sons that are nobly endowed by birth and nature. He is not the gentleman's God, nor the Redeemer and Saviour of persons of fine culture and beautiful instincts. He is, and from the beginning has been, the Saviour of the lost. And by many a story as strange as this of Jacob and Esau he has shown to the honourable and generous and high-minded that there is a possible way of ruin for them; and to those who know in their own sorrowful consciousness, and by the scornful words or looks of others, that they are not of noble or generous strain, that there is a way by which such as they may find salvation and the eternal favour of God."[1]

II. THE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE HAVE BEEN LED TO PRIZE IT AND TO TRUST THE FAITHFUL PROMISER. Both Isaac and Jacob were children of the promise in this sense, that their mothers would never have borne them had not God sustained their hope of children by the promise of a seed. But Esau was included in this promise as well as Jacob. There was, however, another and a better promise—a promise about all the families of the earth being blessed through a particular seed. In other words, the promise of a Messiah was held before them as their highest hope. Now, Ishmael and Esau despised this arrangement; they did not feel indebted to posterity, as many a worldly mind thinks still. But Isaac and Jacob got interested in the promised blessing, and were led to trust him who uttered it. Their very weakness and cowardice led them to lean upon One mighty to save, and they were pardoned, accepted, and in due

[1] Leonard Woolsey Bacon's 'Simplicity that is in Christ,' Sermon xxv. on "Jacob and Esau."

season sanctified. God's electing love thus moves along lines where there is the likelihood that the poor, crippled, crushed souls will learn to trust God who is mighty to save. It is harder for a rich man, for example, to trust God than it is for a poor man; hence God has "chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom" (Jas. ii. 5). It is harder to get able-bodied men, who never know what a day's sickness is, to trust God than it is to get the sick and the sorrowing; and hence we find that Jobs and Asaphs, who have been plagued all the day, and who are in deep waters almost constantly, are made by Divine grace to show to the unbelieving world that they can serve God for naught, that even though he slays them, yet will they trust in him (Job i. 9; xiii. 15; Ps. lxxiii.). And so, as the writer already quoted says, "Be of good comfort, all whose need of salvation is deepest and most inward. You shall be saved, not only in spite of these shameful faults and infirmities which you abhor in yourself and which God abhors; you shall not only be saved, blessed, loved, in spite of them;—you shall be saved *from* them—and that is a greater thing. Faith in God is the vital air of all true human nobleness. In this air the stunted germs of human virtue unfold and blossom. Without faith, their fairest, strongest growths tend to shrivel and decay. For lack of faith in God, the noble gifts of Esau are of no avail. He shuts himself out, a willing stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope, without God in the world. He moves, a wandering star, in a track without a centre, on towards blackness of darkness. By faith, the low nature of that 'worm Jacob' is by-and-by redeemed from the power of evil, and, transformed in character and in name, Jacob the supplanter is changed to Israel the prince that hath power with God" (Bacon, *ut supra*).

III. GOD'S ELECTING LOVE AND REPROBATING HATE CANNOT BE CHARGED WITH ANY INJUSTICE. Now, in analyzing God's love for the children of promise, the apostle distinctly traces their election to God's good pleasure. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion. And if mercy be "*undeserved favour*," that is to say, if no one deserves it or is entitled to it, then he may justly give it to whomsoever he pleaseth. On the other hand, those who are passed by and hardened, having no claim to better treatment, receive simply the due reward of their deeds. And here it may be well to guard against a false view of the statement about God's hatred of Esau. It is not to be inferred that God hated Esau before he was born and had any opportunity of doing evil. When we consult the passage here quoted by Paul, we find it refers to the judgment of Edom in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. It is in Mal. i. 2: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." To quote an acute writer upon this very subject, "Esau is left in his inferiority before his birth, but he is not hated, in the sense of the prophet, until nine hundred and ninety-six years later, when King Nebuchadnezzar put his mountains to desolation. Without being blessed like his brother, Esau received his home 'in the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.' His indifference had cost him his right of primogeniture, and he could no more receive it back (Gen. xxv. 32; xxvii. 33—37; Heb. xii. 16, 17); yet the Law prescribed respect for him, 'Thou shalt not have the Idumæan in abomination, for he is thy brother;' and God endured ten centuries of hardness of heart before he said, 'I have hated Esau.'"[1] That is to say, God's reprobation of Esau is not to be confounded with his election of Jacob. The mistake made by many in thinking of these subjects is in taking reprobation as the opposite of election—as if God decreed men's reprobation in the exercise of the same pure sovereignty in which he decrees the election of others. But so far from this being the case, election and reprobation rest upon two distinct portions of the Divine nature. The opposite of *election* is not reprobation, but *non-election*; and no human being has any evidence that he is not elected. The opposite of *reprobation* is *approbation*, and we are all reprobated by God so long as we do not accept of Christ, and have him in us, our Hope of glory. Election rests on the good pleasure of God; reprobation on his holiness, which leads him to antagonize and loathe what is unholy. I cannot do better than quote the elder Robert Hall, in his admirable little treatise, 'Help to Zion's Travellers.' He says, "*Reprobation* in Scripture always stands opposed to, and is the natural negative of,

[1] Cf. Monsell's 'La Prédestination,' p. 26; see also on this whole passage Boyschlag's 'Die Paulinische Theodicee,' Römer ix.—xi.

*approbation*, whether it respects the *state* of a person, the *frame* of his mind, or the *nature* of his actions. Hence, vile professors are compared to the alloy or dross frequently mixed with metal, which on trial is found to be base or deficient in quality; therefore reprobate silver shall men call them, because God has rejected them (Jer. vi. 30). So in the text, 'Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' the apostle's obvious meaning is that such are *destitute of real worth*. For however splendid a profession be, yet, without Christ, all will be found mere *refuse* at last: therefore he puts them upon close examination, lest they should be deceived by appearances, *thinking themselves something, while in fact they are nothing*. Hence in the next verse he adds, 'But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates' (2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6); and in ver. 7 he says, 'Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear *approved*, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as *reprobates*.' Thus he considers *reprobation* and *approbation* as natural opposites. Again, men of *corrupt* minds are said to be *reprobates* concerning the faith, *i.e.* destitute of a true understanding of the truth (2 Tim. iii. 8). And the abominable and disobedient are unto every good work *reprobate* (Titus i. 16). Agreeably, therefore, to this view of reprobation, those vile affections to which the Gentiles were given up are called a *reprobate mind* (Rom. i. 26, 28, 29). Meaning that their *dispositions* and *conduct* were odious, and could not possibly be *approved* of, either by God or good men. From the above considerations, it evidently appears that election and reprobation are not inseparably connected, nor even so much as related as *kindred* ideas, and that reprobation does not intend an absolute appointment to eternal misery, for such may still find mercy as Paul did; but that it is the awful opposite to Divine approbation, whether it respect persons, principles, or proceedings." Hence we are not to think that either Esau or Pharaoh was unfairly dealt with. Their histories show that they had their fair chance of accepting God's plan and submitting to him. But preferring their own course, and to fight rather than submit, they became the object of God's righteous reprobation and leisurely wrath. God is slow to anger; but when it comes about, it is seen to be well deserved. At close quarters, the injustice charged against God is seen altogether to disappear.—R. M. E.

Vers. 13—33.—*Vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy.* We have already seen that God's hatred of Esau was after a millennium of patience. This fact of God's long-suffering with Esau's seed carries the light we need into the difficult section now before us. It is a specious objection that the Divine will is resistless, and so, as each one finds he cannot resist God successfully, what reason has the Most High to find fault with his helpless creatures? But a little fair thinking on the whole subject of God's sovereignty will show that he has every right to complain. Assume that we are all clay in the hands of the potter: what then? Is the potter responsible for the composition of the clay? If one lump is most common clay, out of which no glorious vessel could be fashioned, surely the potter can be held responsible only for the use to which he puts the base lump supplied him, and not for the common character of the clay? It is the unfair use of the figure which has led to exegetical difficulty. Let us, then, take up the two kinds of vessels here referred to, and see what truths are actually communicated by them.

I. THE VESSELS OF WRATH FITTED UNTO DESTRUCTION. And here I cannot do better than translate from a writer already quoted. In his little-known work, 'La Prédestination,' Monsell says, "The all-important point for the interpretation of these verses is to decide when the act of forming the vessels took place; does this operation represent the predestination, or the moral government of God in actual time? A word of ver. 23 decides this question, without giving ground for the least hesitation; this word is the key of the whole passage, and, strange to say, it is omitted by Luther and by the French translations anterior to that of Lausanne. It is the word 'afore'—'which he has prepared *afore* for his glory.' The predestination of the vessel, then, is not its fabrication; it precedes it. Thus, then, when God is compared to a potter who fashions the clay, the question is about his actual treatment of sinners. They are before him one identical mass, vile and shapeless; to make the one portion vessels unto dishonour, to make them promote his glory without bettering their condition, is to treat them according to their nature; to make the other portion vessels unto honour

is to treat them according to his grace which has been given them in Christ before the foundation of the world. As to the vessels of wrath, God is not the Author of their nature, but only of their form; he has fashioned them, but he has not 'prepared' them; their form is already a merited punishment; he shows therein his wrath. Could one believe that God was irritated against those who would be such as he had wished them to be? Would he need 'a grand long-suffering' to endure his own work in the state which he had himself determined? Has he raised with one hand what he has overturned with the other? Such a doctrine ends by doing violence to that reason in the name of which it has outraged our moral sentiments." It is clear, then, that the potter's relation to the vessels of wrath is that of the fashioner of material made ready to his hand. He is not to be blamed if the coarse clay will only make a dishonoured vessel. The preparation of the clay, the contraction of its coarse character, has been anterior to the potter's disposal of it. All he can do is to determine the destination which suits the nature of the provided clay. In the very same way, God is not to be held responsible for the coarse characters sinners contract in the process of their development. They have exercised their freedom in reaching the condition when, like clay, they lie before the great Potter's wheel. All that God can be held responsible for is the form as vessels of dishonour they are to take; and if he shows his deserved wrath in disposing of them as dishonoured vessels, he is acting well within his rights. It is in the disposal of incorrigible sinners, in suffering long with them, and in at last dooming them to destruction, that he displays the severe side of his character—that side without which he could not ensure our respect. As for this wrath of God, it has been very happily denominated by some of the Germans "the love-pain (*Liebesschmerz*) of God."[1] And there can be no doubt that with his long-suffering there enters a large element of pain. These wrecked lives are not disposed of by God without due sensibility. He grieves over them as in human form he grieved over doomed Jerusalem.

II. THE VESSELS OF MERCY PREPARED AFORE UNTO GLORY. It is much pleasanter, however, to turn to the vessels of mercy—the vessels which God fashions into "vessels unto honour, fitted and prepared for the Master's use." He can and does take men like Isaac and Jacob, whose natural qualities are not of the highest and noblest, and out of their unlikely characters he can by his grace make what is pure and holy. Of Jews and Gentiles he has called a proportion, and they have become Christ-like, and so glorious. And here we have to notice: 1. That *in this way God has made known the riches of his glory*. For if these elect ones had not become the subjects of God's grace, much of God's rich glory would have remained unknown. The fall of man and his deterioration have furnished God with splendid opportunities for the revelation of his glorious love and transforming power. The whole universe has profited by the manifestation of the riches of God's glory in the vessels of mercy. 2. *In the formation of the vessels of mercy God was not working without a plan*. Just as a skilful potter, in the formation of some specially fine piece of porcelain, spends anxious thought upon its form and ornamentation, so God afore prepared the vessels of mercy unto glory. The predestination of grace is simply the due foresight and prearrangement of God. There is nothing fortuitous; nothing of chance-work about God's acts of grace. "There is," says Monsell, "in our chapter only one predestination, that of grace; and not only that, but the words of the apostle are weighed and chosen to prevent all misapprehension: the one are *ready* or *fit* for perdition, the other are *prepared* for glory; the first, it is not God who has made them ready—on the contrary, he endures them 'with a grand long-suffering;' the latter, it is God who has prepared them—still more, he has prepared them afore. Were it not for the care with which the idea of reprobation is here put aside, I should never have supposed that such a dogma had presented itself to the spirit of a sacred writer. Paul makes on purpose an antithetic parallelism, as he had done (ch. vi. 23) between wages and gift, and this parallelism finds itself in all the members of the sentence. God shows his anger towards the wicked, and the riches of his glory towards the saved; but the latter, the mercy, is altogether gratuitous. If he wishes to make his power known (ver. 22), it is not his power to create evil, but to punish it; and how to punish evil if not by evil, how to show his anger towards the clay unless by making the vessels unto dishonour?"[2] 3. *It is faith which makes the vessels glorious*. After quoting several prophecies

[1] Cf. Weber's 'Vom Zorne Gottes,' s. 32. [2] 'La Prédestination,' pp. 28, 29.

about the elect remnant, the apostle proceeds to point out that faith in the one case, and the lack of it in the other, made all the difference. The Jews for the most part stumbled at the idea of a crucified Messiah. They would not trust him, but busied themselves about building up their own righteousness. Self-righteousness became their ruin. But the Gentiles, on the other hand, not seeking self-righteousness, went forward and believed in Jesus, and the faith transfigured them. They found that "whosoever believeth on Jesus shall not be ashamed." And faith in the risen Lord, ever present with them according to his promise, made them noble men and women, ready to witness for Christ even unto the death. It is thus that God in his sovereign mercy makes men and women "vessels unto honour," fitting them by the gift of faith for service here on earth, and preparing them for still more glorious service in the life to come. As Ray Palmer sweetly sang, so may we—

"My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine:
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day
Be wholly thine!

. . . . .

"When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll;
Blest Saviour, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!"

R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER X.

In this chapter the view of the whole subject introduced at ch. ix. 30 is continued and carried out, according to which the present rejection of the Jews as a nation is traced to no absolute and irreversible Divine decree, but to their own refusal to accept God's plan of mercy to all mankind; testimonies being, as usual, adduced from the Old Testament in support of the argument. But, before proceeding, the apostle renews expression of his regret (cf. ch. ix. 1, *seq.*) at the present position of his countrymen, and his earnest desire that it should be otherwise.

Ver. 1.—**Brethren, my heart's desire** (*εὐδοκία*, expressing *good will*) **and prayer to God for them** (*for Israel*, as in the Textus Receptus, has no good support) **is, that they may be saved** (literally, *is unto salvation*). 'Non omnes Paulus, si absolute reprobati essent" (Bengel).

Vers. 2, 3.—**For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God.** For *ζῆλον Θεοῦ*, meaning zeal *for* God, cf. John ii. 17; Acts xxii. 3; Gal. i. 14. The word *ζῆλος* was commonly used for the religious ardour of the Jews at that time (cf. Acts xxi. 20, *Πάντες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου ὑπάρχουσι*), and there was a faction among them called distinctively *Ζηλωταί*, to which Simon Zelotes (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13) is supposed to have belonged originally. St. Paul's mention of the religious zeal of the Jews of his day is apposite in this place. In ch. ix. 1—5, where he was about to speak of their rejection from the inheritance of the promises, he appropriately dwelt on their ancient privileges; here, where he has in view their own failure to respond to God's purpose for them, he as appropriately refers to their undoubted zeal, which he regrets should be misdirected. **But not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of** (*ἀγνοοῦντες*, in explanation of *οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν* preceding) **God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own** (*righteousness*, repeated here, is ill supported), **they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.** For the meaning of God's righteousness, opposed to man's own righteousness, see on ch. iii. 19, 20; also on ch. i. 17, and Introduction.

Ver. 4.—**For Christ is the end of Law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.** The word "end" (*τέλος*) might in itself mean (1) *termination*, (2) *fulfilment*, (3) *aim*

or *purpose*, which is the evident meaning of the word in 1 Tim. i. 5 and 1 Pet. i. 9. This last seems best to suit the line of thought in this place. The Jews evinced *ignorance*, i.e. of the real meaning and purpose of Law, in resting on it for justification. This is St. Paul's constant position in speaking of the office of Law—that it could not and was never meant to justify, but rather to convince of sin; to establish the need of, and excite a craving for, redemption; and so prepare men to appreciate and accept the righteousness of God in Christ which was its τέλος (see especially ch. vii.; and cf. Gal. iii. 24, Ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν). Νόμος being here anarthrous, we translate it according to the rule observed in this Commentary. The apostle has, indeed, in view the Mosaic Law; but it is the principle of law, as such, that he is speaking of. He next proceeds, as elsewhere throughout the Epistle, to quote from the Old Testament in illustration of the contrast between the two principles of justification, and this with the intention of showing that even in the Pentateuch that of justification by faith was intimated, and thus that it was all along the real τέλος of the Law. "Nam si prophetas suæ sententiæ testes citasset, hærebat tamen hic scrupulus, cum Lex aliam justitiæ formam præscriberet. Hunc ergo optime discutit, quum ex ipsa Legis doctrina stabilit fidei justitiam" (Calvin).

Ver. 5.—**For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by** (literally, *in*) **them** (Lev. xviii. 5). This quotation is intended to express, in the words of Moses himself, the principle of Law, viz. the requirement of entire observance of it, such as the apostle elsewhere contends is impossible (cf. Gal. iii. 10—12). It may be objected that Moses himself, in the original passage, does not seem to be setting forth any such impossible requirement. He says, in the name of the Lord, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them;" implying, it would seem, that a man might so keep them as to live in them; else were the injunction delusive. In the quotation also of the same text in Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21 and Neh. ix. 29, only such a requirement as might have been fulfilled appears to be understood. But St. Paul (as appears from the context, and from Gal. iii. 12, where the text is similarly cited) refers to it as expressing the strict principle of law, as above defined. If, then, the text, in its original connection, seems to fall short of the sense put upon it, we may understand the apostle to quote it as a well-known one, sufficiently suggestive, if taken, as he intends it to be, in connection with others, such as Deut. xxvii. 26, cited with it in Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them." It is his way to refer to familiar texts, or such as most readily occur to him, as suggestive of Old Testament ideas which he expects his readers to be acquainted with. Calvin's remarks on this whole passage deserve attention: "Lex bifariam accipitur. Nunc enim significat universam doctrinam a Mose proditam, nunc partem illam quæ ministerii ejus propria erat; quæ scilicet præceptis, præmis, et pœnis continetur. . . . Quod ergo hic de justitia Legis dicitur referre convenit non ad totam Mosis functionem, sed ad partem istam quæ peculiariter quodammodo ei commissa fuit." His drift is, that the passage before us intimates the strict principle of law, which it was the peculiar function of Moses to promulgate, whereas the passage which follows from Deuteronomy is significant of its *universa doctrina*. This distinction may help us to understand St. Paul's drift, in referring, as he proceeds to do, to Deut. xxx. 11—14. The determination of this drift is attended with some difficulty. First, we observe that, whereas the original passage certainly refers to the Law given to the Israelites through Moses—to the same "statutes and judgments" that were the subject of the previous quotation—St. Paul applies it to describe justification through faith in Christ; and, secondly, that, in order to apply it, he alters some parts of it, and interposes comments of his own. One view is that he is only making a free use of the words of the passage to clothe his own thoughts. So Bengel: "Ad hunc locum quasi parodia suavissime alludit, sine expressa allegatione." But his obvious intention, here as elsewhere, to support his positions from the old Scriptures surely precludes this view. Nor can he be supposed to cite the passage as simply prophetical of the gospel which was to supersede the Law, since it evidently was not so. The proper view seems to be that he adduces it as illustrating, in the first place, what Calvin calls the *universa doctrina* of the Law itself, with regard to its actual application as a *norma vivendi* to the needs of man. Here, he would say, the very Mosaic dispensation is presented to us, not as exacting any impossible obedience to the strict behests of law, but only such as the "circumcised in heart" could render, and be accepted still; it is presented to us, not as a rigid external code, enjoining and threatening, but as a word very nigh unto us, even in our heart, that we may do it; it is, in fact, an anticipation and foreshadowing of gospel salvation. In confirmation of

this view of the apostle's meaning, it is to be observed that the passage occurs, not in the earlier books of Moses, but in Deuteronomy, which appears as an appendix to them, containing for the most part long discourses in the style of the prophets, wherein the Law is, as it were, spiritualized, and its *universa doctrina* opened out. In it we feel ourselves as rising out of the region of strict legal exaction into a higher and more spiritual one. Observe also that the passage before us is based on the idea of a people circumcised in heart, and loving the Lord with all the heart and all the soul (vers. 6, 20); on an ideal view of a state of favour and acceptance never realized in Jewish history, but such as we find often in the prophetic writings (cf. Jer. xxxi. 31—34, the famous passage referred to more than once in the New Testament as having its eventual fulfilment in Christ). Thus the passage before us is legitimately referred to by St. Paul, as an intimation in the Pentateuch itself of the "righteousness which is of faith."

Vers. 6—10.—**But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart** (in the original, *It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say*), **Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down).** The parenthesis is St. Paul's own; the original has, after "heaven," *and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?* **Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).** Again the parenthesis is St. Paul's; and he has substituted "into the deep" (εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον) for "beyond the sea." The original is, *Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?* **But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart** (the original adds, *that thou mayest do it;* and the LXX., after "heart," has, *and in thy hands*): **that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that** (or, *because*) **if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.** The apostle's purpose in varying from the original is obvious from his interposed comments, and from the application that follows. It seems to be as though he had said, "See how, with a slight alteration, the passage in Deuteronomy becomes an exact description of our Christian doctrine." The most marked alteration is the substitution of "into the deep" for "beyond the sea." The "sea" in the original, to which the term "abyss" is applicable (cf. Job xxviii. 14; Ps. cvii. 26), may have suggested the word; but St. Paul here evidently means by it the regions of the dead, imagined as subterranean, equivalent to the Hebrew *Sheol*, and the Greek Ἅδης. For use of the word in this sense, cf. Ps. lxxi. 20 (which may have been present to his mind), Ἐκ τῶν ἀβύσσων τῆς γῆς πάλιν ἀνήγαγές με; cf. also Luke viii. 31 and Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8; xx. 1, 3; in which passages ἡ ἄβυσσος seems to denote the penal abode, corresponding to the Greek idea of Tartarus; but the word itself does not contain this idea, which is by no means intimated here. It may be taken to denote *Hades*, into which Christ "descended." Some commentators suppose the previous expression, "ascend into heaven to bring Christ down," to mean bringing him back to earth from heaven, whither he has ascended now. But the mere fact of its coming first, as well as the general sense of the passage, shows it to refer rather to the Incarnation, and what follows to the Resurrection. These were the two grand stages in the great work of redemption; both were required that "the righteousness which is of faith" might effectually be brought "nigh unto us." The impossible task of effecting either was not required of man; God has done both for us, and we have but to "believe in our hearts," that "the word" of his grace may be nigh us, in our mouth and in our heart, that we may do it. Thus all that was intimated or foreshadowed by that old passage in Deuteronomy is in its fullest sense to us fulfilled. (It may be observed, in passing, that the application to the Incarnation of καταγάγειν, etc., is, if correct, one of the instances of St. Paul's recognition of the Divine pre-existence of our Lord.) In ver. 9 the applicability of the words, "in thy mouth, and in thine heart," to the gospel dispensation is shown; the two expressions, properly understood, denoting all that is required of us. Confession of the Lord Jesus with the mouth must be taken to express generally, not only fearless avowal of the Christian faith, but also consistent life, according to the full meaning of our Lord's words in Matt. x. 32; Mark viii. 38; Luke x. 26; xii. 8, etc. Confession of the Lord Jesus with the mouth, too, would have a peculiar significance then, when Christians were often so sorely tempted to deny him under persecution (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3). We may observe also how "the mouth" is elsewhere regarded as the index of the heart; as the main bodily organ whereby character is evinced and expressed (cf. Matt. xii. 34, 37; xv. 11, etc.). Further, the belief spoken of is *belief in the heart*—a living operative faith, not intellectual conviction only. Nor is belief that God raised the Lord Jesus

from the dead to be taken as meaning belief of this one article of the Creed alone; it carries with it belief in the gospel generally, the doctrine of the Resurrection being here, as elsewhere, regarded as the central doctrine on which all the rest depends (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 17; 1 Pet. i. 21). "Hæc summa Evangelii est. Nam, cum credimus Christum excitatum esse e mortuis, credimus eum pro peccatis satisfecisse, et in cœlis regnare, ut nos ad imaginem suam perficiat" (Bucer). In ver. 10, where the offices of the heart and of the mouth are denoted in general terms, the distinction between "unto righteousness" with respect to the one, and "unto salvation" with respect to the other, is significant. By faith alone we are justified; but by confession in actual life, which is the fruit of faith, our salvation is secured.

Vers. 11—21.—What follows to the end of the chapter is abruptly expressed, in such wise as to render difficult a clear exposition of the intended argument. It seems (as in other parts of the Epistle) as if St. Paul had dictated rapidly, and without pausing to consider whether readers would easily follow the thoughts of which his own mind was full. First, having done with his illustrations from the Pentateuch (which may be regarded as parenthetical), he resumes the line of thought expressed at the end of ver. 4, by πιστεύοντι τῷ πιστεύοντι. For, though ver. 11 is logically connected (in a way usual with St. Paul) with the preceding one—the quotation from Isaiah being adduced in proof of πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην in ver. 10—yet what follows is really a continuation of the thought of ver. 4, viz. that the "righteousness of God," spoken of in ver. 3, is *of faith*, and also *for all*. In evidence of this he returns to the text from Isa. xxviii. 16, already cited in ch. ix. 33, and himself supplies πᾶς at the beginning of it, so as to bring out its universal application. It may be that, quoting from memory, he had forgotten that this word was not in the original, or he may have purposely added it in order to express more clearly what the original—in which there is no limitation of ὁ πιστεύων—really implied. The latter supposition is probable, inasmuch as (according to the best-supported readings) he had previously (ch. ix. 33) quoted the text without this addition, and now follows out the idea of πᾶς by giving a reason for it, and then, in ver. 13, adds a text from Joel in which πᾶς does occur, so as to intimate that the "calling on the Name of the Lord," spoken of by Joel, implies the "believing" spoken of by Isaiah, and hence that the two texts must be equally universal in their application.

Vers. 11, 12.—**For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed** (see above, on ch. ix. 33). **For there is no difference** (rather, *distinction*) **between the Jew and the Greek: for the same is Lord of all, being rich unto all that call upon him.** Here, in ver. 12, the apostle comments on the text from Isaiah, so as to show the universality of its application (see previous note). It is (he would say) in itself applicable to Jew and Gentile alike, and it must needs be so, since the one God is the same to all that call upon him, even as the Prophet Joel also testified. The thought thus expressed was one deeply fixed in St. Paul's mind. He elsewhere speaks of the very unity of God as implying of necessity that he is the same alike to Jews and Gentiles (see above, on ch. iii. 29).

Ver. 13.—**For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved** (Joel ii. 32). The text from Joel is in a passage which is distinctly Messianic; the same that is quoted by St. Peter (Acts ii. 16) as fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Hence, and from the fact of πᾶς ὃς ἂν being emphatic in the original, it is well quoted by the apostle as supplementing the previous one from Isaiah, and as conclusive for his argument.

Vers. 14, 15.—**How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?** This question may be taken, in the first place, as serving to connect the two passages from Joel and from Isaiah (see previous note). But it is further the beginning of a sorites, suggested by a new thought, which is carried out to the end of the chapter. The course of this new thought through the rest of the chapter may be expounded as follows: It might be pleaded, in behalf of the unbelieving Jews, that they had never really heard, through preachers duly sent to them, the gospel message; and hence that they were not to be blamed for rejecting it. With this idea before him, the apostle first (vers. 14, 15) allows generally, in the form of a series of questions, that, as before *calling on the Lord* there must be *faith*, so before *faith* there must be *hearing*, before *hearing* there must be *preaching*, and for *preaching* there must be authorizing *mission*; and he quotes, in illustration, a passage from Isaiah, which describes beautifully the preaching of good tidings of peace by commissioned messengers to all the world. But he is careful to add

(vers. 16, 17) that, according to the same prophet, such universal *preaching*, and consequent *hearing*, does not involve universal *hearkening;* thus showing, in view of the main purpose of his argument, that the fact of the Jews not *hearkening* now is no evidence that they had not *heard*. Then he goes on to ask whether any could plead the excuse of not having *heard*, so as to justify want of the *faith* that cometh of *hearing*. Nay, he replies (ver. 18), the sound of the good tidings has gone forth to all the earth, even like the language of nature spoken of in Ps. xix. Then (ver. 19), pressing his argument home to the Jews, who have been all along in view, he asks, "But I say, Did not *Israel* know?" The word ἔγνω, being different from ἤκουσαν previously used, must express some different meaning. But what St. Paul exactly meant by it is not quite clear. The quotations from the Old Testament that follow in proof of knowledge (vers. 19, 20) seem to support the view that what Israel knew, or ought to have known, was the Divine design of the promulgation of the "good tidings" to all the world, which has just been spoken of. Such promulgation should have been to them no stumbling-block; for it had been told to them from Moses downwards, and they had full opportunity of *knowing* it. Lastly (ver. 21), the apostle intimates that the present state of things, in which Gentiles accept the gospel while Israel in the main rejects it, far from being an objection to it, is but a further fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies, which represent God as making himself known to those who had not known him, while pleading with Israel in vain. This exposition of the supposed course of thought being borne in mind, the passage (with the further aid of some interposed comments) may become intelligible. It continues: **And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that [preach the gospel (or, *good tidings*) of peace, and] bring glad tidings of good things!** (Isa. lii. 7). The genuineness of the words within brackets is at least doubtful. Even with them the text is not quoted in full, though sufficiently to remind of its purport.

Vers. 16—18.—**But not all obeyed** (or, *hearkened to*) **the gospel** (or, *good tidings*). This means, apparently, that in the prophet's representation of the proclamation of the good tidings all were said to hear, but not all to hearken. **For Esaias saith, Lord, who believed our report?** (The Greek word here is ἀκοῇ, the same as in ver. 17, there rendered "hearing," and corresponding to the verb ἀκούειν in vers. 14, 18.) **So then faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God** (ῥήματος Θεοῦ, God's own Word, committed to, and spoken by, preachers duly sent). **But I say, Did they not hear?** The previous aorist, ὑπήκουσαν, in ver. 16 having been understood as referring to the prophetic representations rather than to present known facts, the aorist ἤκουσαν here must, for consistency, be similarly understood, though with a view also to the actual universality of the gospel message. The unexpressed nominative to ἤκουσαν appears from the context to be men in general, not the Jews in particular. Israel is not specified till ver. 19. **Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world** (Ps. xix. 4). The "sound" and the "words" in the psalm are those of the heavens and the firmament. But in the second part of the psalm, beginning at ver. 7, the psalmist passes from God's revelation of himself in nature to his revelation of himself in his Word. Still the psalm itself cannot well be understood as intimating the universal proclamation of the gospel. Nor is it necessary to suppose that St. Paul so understood it. Enough for him that the words he quotes express admirably what he desires to say.

Ver. 19.—**But I say, Did not Israel know?** (see explanation given above). **First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no nation; by a foolish nation I will anger you.** It may be observed that in the Greek we have the same word, ἔθνει, in both classes of the sentence, though, in order to bring out the supposed meaning in the first clause, it is there, in the Authorized Version, rendered "people," and in the second, "nation." The passage occurs in the song attributed to Moses in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 21), and expresses the idea of God, in consequence of the defaults of Israel, favouring those who were so far, as it were, no nation at all, so as to provoke Israel to jealousy. It is therefore aptly cited as an intimation in the Pentateuch itself of the calling of the Gentiles in place of unbelieving Israel. The idea involved in "provoke you to jealousy"—in the sense of moving to emulation, so that Israel itself as a nation might, through the calling of the Gentiles, in the end be saved—is pursued, as will be seen, in the chapter that follows.

Ver. 20.—**But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me** (Isa. lxv. 1). The peculiar *boldness* of Isaiah's utterance consists in this—that, at a time when Israel was recognized as God's one chosen people, he is said to make himself known even to those who sought him not at all.

Ver. 21.—**But to Israel he saith, All day long I stretched out my hands unto a dis-**

**obedient and gainsaying people (Isa. lxv. 2).** Tholuck remarks, "If from this passage we once more look back upon the tenth and ninth chapters, it is manifest how little Paul ever designed to revert to a *decretum absolutum*, but meant to cast all blame upon *the want of will* in men, resisting the gracious *will* of God.

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—*Solicitude and supplication for the salvation of sinners.* Paul was himself a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. His first ministry was to Israelites, and, when upon his missionary tours, he made it his first business to address the frequenters of the synagogues. By his training and by his associations, and also by his evangelistic intercourse with his countrymen, he understood the Jewish mind, and how to deal with it. From the Jews he met with obstacles, opposition, and persecution; and he could not be blind to their faults and errors. This, however, did not prompt him to anger or to neglect; he loved his nation, and felt the claim of kindred and nationality. He laboured, spoke, wrote, and prayed for his Jewish kin; he sought above all things their salvation. Looking away from the special reference, let us consider the words of the apostle as supplying an example of the benevolent spirit of Christianity.

I. WE MUST BE AWARE THAT THERE IS A WIDESPREAD NEED OF SALVATION. Many of our neighbours need saving from debasing vice and unjustifiable, inexcusable crime; many have fallen into dangerous errors, from which they need to be delivered; many need to be awakened from the densest ignorance and carelessness with regard to spiritual realities. Some are sensible of their need; multitudes are utterly indifferent to it. Go to a hospital, and you will see many and varied forms of disease, accident, privation, affecting men's bodily state—all want healing. So is it with sinful society: salvation, and nothing less than salvation, is the world's great want.

II. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS SALVATION FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT. As Christians, we are assured that our Redeemer is a mighty, all-sufficient Saviour; we believe that he came that the world should be saved through him; we have been authoritatively told that he is "the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" that God is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe." Further, we have ourselves experienced the grace and power of Jesus to pardon, purify, and bless; and what he has done for us he can do for others. The offers and promises of his gospel are free and valid. He saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

III. CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE ANXIOUS AND PRAYERFUL ON BEHALF OF SINNERS THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED. In this the apostle is an example to all who have themselves tasted and seen that the Lord is good. 1. It should be our heart's "good pleasure" (for such is the literal rendering). A benevolent mind, in sympathy with the Saviour, who pitied, wept over, expostulated with sinners, will find pleasure in witnessing the power of the gospel to rescue and to save the lost. 2. Supplication should be offered with a view to the same end. We know that such prayer is acceptable; for Christ has said, "It is not the pleasure of my Father that one of these should perish." Supplication should not be selfish; it should be intercessory and benevolent.

IV. CHRISTIANS SHOULD USE THE APPOINTED MEANS FOR THE SALVATION OF THEIR FELLOW-MEN. Sympathy and prayer, unaccompanied by effort, would be a mockery. Certainly, Paul was not the man to grieve over his erring countrymen, and at the same time to neglect endeavours for their recovery. Some of us may preach the gospel, others may "send" the preachers, others may invite their neighbours to hear the gospel; sympathy and prayer will lead to some form of practical effort.

APPLICATION. 1. Whilst others are concerned for your salvation, are you seeking this salvation for yourself? 2. Are you manifesting practically solicitude for the spiritual good of your neighbours and fellow-men?

Vers. 2—4.—*False righteousness and true.* Paul's desire for the salvation of his countrymen and kinsmen arose from his clear perception of their spiritual destitution and need. They might hide their condition from themselves, but it was clear enough to him. The measure of true light which they enjoyed made it the sadder that many of them refused to accept and to walk in the full light of the Sun of Righteousness.

And the apostle's sympathy was excited on their behalf all the more because he understood their case so well.

I. ZEALOUS RELIGIOUSNESS MAY BE MISDIRECTED BY IGNORANCE. The apostle does not charge the Jews with neglecting, far less with despising, religion. In their own way they were very religious, and many of them were found willing to put forth great efforts and endure many sacrifices for their religion. They had "a zeal for God." They hated idolatry; they revered their Scriptures, their temple, their priesthood, their sacrifices and festivals; they prided themselves upon their ceremonial purity and their scrupulous observances. Yet, with all this, they were not commended by the apostle. Their zeal was without knowledge. We meet with similar characters in our own time. Some persons consider that if there is religiousness with sincerity, that is sufficient. It is a great mistake. We need light as well as warmth, knowledge as well as zeal. If truth has been revealed, our first duty is to learn and receive it.

II. THERE IS A FALSE AND UNCHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Jews are censured for seeking to establish "their own righteousness." The Law, indeed, was good in itself. For those who perfectly obeyed it, it was a means of salvation. But the Law is condemnation to those who trust in it and yet do not conform to it. And, as a matter of fact, the Law was "weak through the flesh," was insufficient for the salvation of sinful men. It is no foundation for a sinner's hopes. Further, the Hebrews were too much accustomed to regard their religious acts as services rendered, for which Divine recompense and payment are due. This is a notion still prevalent, but it is radically unscriptural and unreasonable. We cannot be justified by the works of the Law, and we can earn nothing as a right from God.

III. THE TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THAT WHICH IS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS. Observe: 1. The relation between Christ and the Law. The word "end" may be taken literally. The Law, as a dispensation, came to an end when Christ appeared. The Law was to the Israelites a conductor to lead them to Jesus. But the word "end" may mean more than this; it may mean the purpose and design of the Law. The Law was given in order to reveal both the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. It thus prepared the way for the coming of him whose obedience fulfilled the Law, and whose redemption secured pardon and liberty for those whom the Law was powerless to save. 2. Observe the way in which the higher righteousness is secured through Christ. This is described by three several expressions in this passage—knowledge, subjection, belief. The ignorant are without the means of obtaining justification; the unsubmissive rebel against the means; the unbelieving reject the means. It is the will of God that faith should be accounted for righteousness. This is a principle as old as Abraham; yet its most mighty working is apparent in the case of those who believe in Jesus. The doctrine of justification by faith is here plainly revealed, and its superiority to all rival doctrines plainly exhibited.

Vers. 5—10.—*Gracious terms of salvation.* The blessings of the gospel were designed for, and were offered to, Jews and Gentiles alike, with the most perfect impartiality. The descendants of Abraham, the disciples of Moses, did indeed enjoy an advantage; but, instead of profiting by it, they turned it against themselves. The apostle here teaches that if any of his kinsmen and countrymen come short of Christian privilege, the fault is their own, and cannot be laid to the Divine Author. St. Paul so presents the gospel as to exhibit—

I. ITS CONTRAST TO THE LAW. The former dispensation promised life to those who obeyed the Law. By life is meant more than continuance of existence and national and territorial advantages; the expression conveys the promise of Divine favour and acceptance. Perfect obedience would secure life; but such obedience no Hebrew, and indeed no mortal man, has rendered. The old covenant did indeed assure to the upright and pious Jew the blessings of salvation, and enjoined obedience upon all its sons. But it was only human pride and self-righteousness which could deem the life of even the holiest such as to merit the favour and fellowship of God. Christianity, on the other hand, provides all spiritual blessings as a free gift—the gift of grace.

II. ITS SIMPLICITY AND ACCESSIBILITY. To exhibit this, the apostle borrows language from the Book of Deuteronomy. What the Lord, by Moses, said of the commandment published to Israel, that Paul says of the gospel. The Divine righteousness speaks;

and what is its message to men? 1. It is a message which gently reproaches those who complain of the difficulty of understanding and realizing the will of God. How especially does this apply to Christianity! We have not to soar to heaven, or to plunge into the abyss; for Christ, the Son of God, has condescended to come down from the celestial heights that he might dwell among us; he has risen from the dead, conquering sin and death for us, and leading us in the way to God. Thus the Lord has deigned to make the truth of God intelligible, and the grace of God real and near. 2. But the Divine righteousness, speaking, assures us of the nearness of the Word of life to the hearers of the gospel, personally and individually. How could the word which quickeneth be nearer, more accessible? It is "in the mouth, and in the heart," of every Christian. Pause to think how true this is. Your English Bible is in your hands; the gospel is preached at your own doors; the creeds, the prayers, the thanksgivings, are framed and uttered in your own familiar speech; the name of Jesus is a household word; the simplest can understand the message of the gospel, the terms of life eternal; the child, the unlearned, the feeble, the aged, appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus; Christianity gains many a convert from among the poor, the vicious, the very heathen. All this is a testimony to the Divine adaptation of the gospel to human nature; it meets our deepest wants and supplies them, it creates its own witness by its own success.

III. THE TERMS IT PROPOUNDS. They are two. 1. *Faith*—as this whole Epistle tells, and tells again and yet again. The righteousness is of faith; "with the heart man believeth." A provision which attests the infinite wisdom of him who made it. The condition is one which can be fulfilled by men of every rank and age and culture; yet it is one profoundly affecting the moral and spiritual nature. It is profitable to man and honouring to God. 2. *Confession*—a condition, doubtless, very different in the apostles' days from our own, but, as the Lord teaches us, ever indispensable. Men have not the right to say in what way confession shall be made. But it must not be withheld.

IV. THE BLESSINGS IT SECURES. These also are two. 1. *Righteousness*—the new, Divine, Christian righteousness, that which is the gift of God; a righteousness which is by grace, but which is real, genuine, and eternal. 2. *Salvation*—by which we are to understand the final and complete enjoyment of what the gospel brings and promises. The end of your faith is the salvation of your souls. It is not only deliverance from sin and danger; it is the participation in the Divine nature, and in the eternal life.

APPLICATION. Let the hearer of the gospel think, not merely of the mysteries which belong to religion, but of the simplicity of what is most essential for him to believe. You have not to climb a lofty tree in order to pluck the fruit; the bough hangs low, and you have but to reach out your hand. You have not to climb the mountain crag, and cross the dangerous bog, in order to come at the water of life; the stream flows by your side, and you have but to stoop and drink.

VERS. 11—13.—*Lordship and riches.* This passage exhibits the identity of the old covenant and the new. Paul quotes from the prophecies of Isaiah and Joel, in such a manner as to show, not only that he acknowledged the inspired authority of those writers, but also that he regarded words of promise uttered in the former dispensation as valid in the later. The language quoted harmonizes with the widest conceptions of the Divine benevolence, and must have been adduced with especial satisfaction by one so broad in his sympathies as was the large-hearted apostle of the Gentiles.

I. THE LORDSHIP AND WEALTH OF CHRIST. In speaking of the blessings of salvation, it was very natural that Paul should be led to refer to the glory of the Saviour, in order that it might be understood how vast was his power alike to deliver and to protect his people, and to confer upon them priceless favours. 1. As *Lord of all*, Christ is Possessor of all power in heaven and in earth. He is of right Ruler of all; and the application of this language, referring to Jehovah, to the Son of man, is proof that he was regarded by St. Paul as Son of God. To Christians, however, it is delightful to reflect upon Christ's authority, exercised over them, benignantly on his part, and gratefully and practically acknowledged and submitted to by themselves. A rebel and a loyal subject think very differently of their sovereign. To us Jesus is the King, because he is the Prophet and the Priest, who has come to us with the voice of God,

and has bought us with his precious blood. He is enthroned in our hearts; he gives laws to our life. 2. Jesus is *rich unto all.* We are assured of "the unspeakable riches of Christ," and are counselled to buy of him "gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich." If "all things are ours," it is because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. He who redeems and rules, supplies the wants of his ransomed ones. He is not, like some of the wealthy of this world, rich for himself; he is rich *for us*, rich boundlessly and inexhaustibly, rich benevolently and for ever.

II. THE CONDITIONS UPON WHICH THE LORDSHIP AND THE WEALTH OF CHRIST MAY BE ENJOYED. These are stated in two modes. 1. *Believing on him* is essential to participating in the blessings Christ offers to men. The apostle has previously been insisting upon faith as the means of obtaining the true and Divine righteousness, as God's way for man to come to himself and to enjoy his favour. They who have faith shall not be put to shame, shall surely and eternally be saved. 2. *Calling upon him* would seem to be a natural result of faith. They who believe in the heart will give their faith utterance by the lips. By this Hebrew expression we may understand both open confession and earnest prayer. By calling upon the Lord's Name, no vain and superstitious invocations or repetitions are to be understood, but the sincere entreaty of the soul for deliverance, guidance, or help.

III. FOR WHOSE BENEFIT CHRIST'S LORDSHIP AND WEALTH ARE DESIGNED. 1. The limitations of nationality are abolished. The religions of heathenism are local; the deities of heathenism are national and tutelary. Under the older dispensation, Jehovah was revealed as the one God, the God of all the earth; yet the Hebrews too often regarded the Lord as their God, and theirs only. The distinction between Jew and Gentile was, to the Hebrew mind, deep and ineffaceable. To St. Paul largely belongs the honour of giving currency to the true doctrine of Christianity, that religion is one and universal; that God is the Father of mankind; that Christ is Saviour and Lord of all men; that the middle wall of partition is broken down; that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile. 2. The offers of Christianity are made to all, and its terms and conditions are adapted to all. He is "rich unto all," and his riches are for "whomsoever believeth," for "whomsoever calleth upon his Name." What language could be used more fitted to encourage every hearer of the gospel to submit to the Lordship and to seek the true riches of Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

Ver. 12.—*Spiritual enrichment.* The experience of the apostle was sufficiently large to enable him with confidence to make this sweeping assertion. And the experience of the Church of Christ, through the many centuries which have elapsed since St. Paul thus wrote, enables Christians to make the same assertion with undiminished confidence. In fact, the actual proofs at our disposal and command are overwhelming, both in number and in appropriateness; for, whilst the bestowal of Divine and spiritual wealth has been incessantly proceeding, the resources are unexhausted and inexhaustible.

I. THE RICHES OF THE LORD. In Christ is wealth adapted to the enrichment of dependent, needy men. He has in himself: 1. Riches of *revelation.* 2. Riches of *redemption.* 3. Riches of *replenishment*, owing to the nature and perpetuity of the spiritual dispensation of grace. 4. Riches of *resurrection*, inasmuch as the true riches endure unto life eternal.

II. THE LIBERALITY WITH WHICH THESE SPIRITUAL RICHES ARE DISPENSED. 1. It is because Christ is Lord *over* all, that he is rich *unto* all. 2. The riches of redeeming love are conferred upon men of every nationality. In the apostolic age, the great distinction which Christianity transcended was that between Jew and Gentile; but, in subsequent times, it has been proved by experience that there is no nation, no class, and no condition incapable of this Divine enrichment.

III. THE CONDITION UPON WHICH SPIRITUAL RICHES HAVE BEEN, AND STILL MAY BE, APPROPRIATED. As throughout this chapter, the apostle here insists upon that spiritual condition of receptivity and application by which all that is good may enter the nature of man. Calling upon him is an act (1) of repentance, (2) of faith, (3) of prayer, and (4) of aspiration. As we exercise this means of communion, all things are ours.

Vers. 14, 15.—*Preaching.* Paul was himself brought to the Saviour by that Saviour's immediate interposition. Doubtless he had heard much of Jesus; yet he had never

truly known him during his career of unbelief and persecution. It was when Jesus met him by the way that his hostility was overcome, that his heart was melted, that his nature was changed. But this was exceptional treatment. The Lord who, by a supernatural appearance and voice, called Saul to the knowledge of himself, commissioned him to preach the gospel to his fellow-men, and made him one of the first, and perhaps the most successful, of the innumerable band of preachers of the cross. We have here—

I. A DIVINE PROVISION. All good is from God. No apostle more constantly insists upon this great truth than does Paul; and in no treatise is it more prominently set before the mind of the reader than in this Epistle to the Romans. 1. We are told what the ultimate blessing is which Christianity proffers. It is salvation. Righteousness has reference rather to what is positively given; salvation, rather to the state from which men are rescued by the Redeemer. A worthy end!—worthy even of the interposition of Heaven, of the benevolence of God the Father, of the sacrifice of Christ, of the grace of the Spirit. A deliverance of the spiritual nature from condemnation and from all evil, and the provision for the saved of new associations, a new lot, a new hope—a salvation which is final and eternal. 2. We have brought before us the extent to which salvation may be enjoyed, the persons for whose benefit it is proposed. All mankind are qualified to be recipients of this boon upon compliance with the terms prescribed. There is no difference in the view of God. The comprehensive term "whosoever" is conclusive upon this point. Jews are not excluded; Gentiles are welcomed; the provision is for humanity. 3. The text sets before us the conditions upon which this blessing may be enjoyed. It is required (1) that men should call upon the Name of the Lord, *i.e.* Christ Jesus; and (2) that they should do this in intelligent and cordial faith: for "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" The expression, "call upon the Name of the Lord," is full of meaning and beauty. It reminds us whence the blessing of salvation proceeds; and as the voice, the call, the cry, come from a heart conscious of need and longing for deliverance, it speaks of the spiritual state which prepares for receiving salvation. Thus Christians are spoken of as "all who in every place call upon the Lord." They who act thus glorify God and his promises of faithfulness. They seek what he has promised to bestow, and they seek with earnestness and confidence. "He is near to all that call upon him in truth." In order to intelligent calling upon the Lord, the apostle reasons, there must be faith. "He that cometh unto him must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that seek after him." Faith is the first requirement of the gospel; faith in the glad tidings proclaimed; faith in that Divine Saviour to whom those tidings relate, and who, indeed, is himself the Gospel. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." An arrangement this in harmony with the wisdom of God, and with the moral nature of man. Dead in unbelief and unspirituality, the sinner rises in faith into newness of life, for he lays hold of the grace of God revealed in the Saviour Christ. Consider how unspeakably rich is the provision here made, and how unspeakably gracious the conditions here proposed. Hearers of the gospel, how can you remain without such a blessing as this when it is put within your reach, and when you are invited to take it, and when the terms upon which you may enjoy it are such that you cannot cavil at them? How can you think of such a Saviour and such a gospel, and remain faithless and unmoved? How can you do other than, from your sin and danger and helplessness, call upon One who is "mighty to save"—to "save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him"? This is the day of visitation. "To-day," says Christ, "if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts."

II. A HUMAN AGENCY. The apostle brings before us two classes of agents—those who, by the publication of the gospel, are the means of leading their fellow-men to faith; and those who send forth such preachers upon such a mission. 1. God employs *preachers* in bringing men to salvation. They have glad tidings of peace, of good things, to communicate. As the first bands of returning exiles, bringing good news of a larger company following in their train, were welcome to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who hailed their approach by the mountains of Judæa; so the preachers of Christianity may well have been welcomed by the spiritually captive tribes and nations whom they visited on their errands of grace and evangelization. This method of promulgating truth, though not peculiar to our religion, is very distinctive of it. Christ chose twelve apostles;

he sent out other seventy also. Before he left the world he directed and sanctioned personal agency in the ministry of the gospel. Paul instructed Timothy to commit the things he had received to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also; thus arranging for a succession, not of a priesthood, but of a teaching ministry. Christ calls out, sanctifies, and blesses the ministry of man to man. Would that there were a more general disposition to listen to his voice and to respond to his summons, "Whom shall I send?" in the ancient language, "Here am I; send me." The *success* which attended the ministry of the apostles and first evangelists was such as to confirm faith in the Divine appointment. God was pleased by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed. And every succeeding age has witnessed, in greater or less measure, to the efficacy of this wise provision. In our own day literature is so vigorous, and education so general, that the *press* has become a mighty auxiliary and ally to the ministry. Every preacher who has confidence in the Divine origin of his message, and in his own sincerity, will welcome the aids to general intelligence which are afforded by the able and varied literature of these enlightened days. Amongst a Christian community, preaching becomes naturally something more than the publication of the great fundamental facts of the gospel. But whilst there is abundant room for instruction, by which the Word of God may be expounded, and the application of religion be shown to all spheres and relationships of life, there is still a pressing need for evangelization. The young have to learn afresh "the first principles of the oracles of God;" the inattentive and careless have to be aroused by the Word which is as "a fire, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces;" the regions around have to be enlightened by the gospel, which is the true light; the world has yet to be gladdened by the good news of salvation and eternal life. 2. God employs his Church to *send* forth preachers of the gospel. All are not called upon to preach, but, in a sense, all are called upon to send. True, the one great Sender is the Divine Head of the Church; and they who are not commissioned by him are without authority, whatever human sanction, credentials, and approval they may enjoy. "The Lord gave the Word, and great was the company of those that published it." We have an instructive instance of the way in which the Lord inspires his people to send forth his servants upon a benevolent mission, in the narrative of the proceedings of the Church at Antioch, when that Church became the second great centre of missionary enterprise. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?"—a query little regarded by very many of the congregations named after Christ. It is thought enough to leave the matter to individual impulse, wise or unwise, or to consider it the vocation of the pastorate to call out living agencies. Yet, look at the vast demands of our own day. Clergy of all variety of gift; pastors for congregations; evangelists for our rural districts; city missionaries for our great towns; popular itinerant preachers; colonial missionaries; labourers, by voice and pen and press, among the heathen; defenders and promulgators of Christian truth in all the departments of literature;—we need all these, of the best and most varied quality, and in increased numbers. In order that Christian society may send out into the world those who shall diffuse the faith of Christ, it is first of all necessary that that society should be in such a condition that from among its members such agencies shall naturally emerge. Mechanical means are of little avail in this matter. Where there is little life there will be little movement. If love to Christ be chilled by worldliness, no place will be found for love of souls. Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak; when the feeling of the Christian community is strong, its voice will not be silent. The use of any and every means will depend for efficacy upon the sound and living condition of the society in which such means may be employed. It should be habitual with Christian congregations to call out and encourage the exercise of gifts divinely imparted. There are many other gifts beside that of religious instruction and persuasion, and gifts equally precious to God and useful to man. But there are reasons why *speech for Christ* needs special culture. Natural timidity has to be overcome, and formidable difficulties have to be encountered. It is here that wise counsel and affectionate encouragement come in with especial appropriateness. Almost every youthful speaker has been tempted to renounce this means of usefulness; and often it has happened that a word, providentially spoken, has cheered the diffident and discouraged. It must not be forgotten that, if there are to be learners, there must be teachers. If the Christian Church is to send out preachers and instructors, it must do something more and better than fling them

unfurnished on the world. Those who are to influence men must in the first place be influenced by men. That community is rich which contains a large amount of teaching, quickening power. One of our chief dangers is lest we should overestimate the power of money. There is much which cannot be purchased by material wealth. It is in the abundance of the highest type of Christian character that spiritual wealth consists. Where there are found the lofty, noble-minded, the holy and the learned, the spiritual and benevolent, among the leading spirits of a Church, there the young and ardent and devoted will gather by a subtle magnetism, and thence they will derive in turn, by God's grace, the power of Divine attraction. Hence the importance of seeking a high standard of biblical knowledge and Christian intelligence among all classes in our congregations. And hence, too, the importance of seeking out, and wisely employing, all the ability and culture which are devoted to Christ and sanctified to his glory. Can they be said to be truly sent who are thrust forth and then forgotten? Or, rather, does not that Church truly send which follows its agents, whether near or far, with kindly interest, with watchful sympathy, with fervent prayer? Sympathy is invaluable to those who labour, as all Christian servants must do, amid many difficulties and much opposition. Prayer of intercession is due from every member of the universal Church, and is especially required on behalf of Christian labourers. "Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of God may have free course, and be glorified." In order that the Churches may more adequately fulfil their office as illuminators of a dark world, it is necessary that there should be a sincerer pity for the multitudes who are in darkness, and a firmer faith in the light which is from heaven. A Church which hesitates as to whether or not it possesses the truth, and has a gospel for mankind; a Church which can look with unconcern upon the prevalence of sin and misery in the world, is not likely to send forth heralds of Christ and tidings of salvation. Faith in the Redeemer, pity for those whom he died to redeem, forgetfulness and denial of self,—these are the conditions of true evangelization. It is for us, then, to look up for a renewed baptism of the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of life and of power. How otherwise can we rise to fulfil responsibilities so sacred, to discharge duties so momentous? Hearers of the gospel, seek the Spirit of faith and prayer, that you may be not hearers of the Word only, but doers also! Preachers of the gospel, seek the Spirit of wisdom and fervour, that your words may be with demonstration of the Spirit and of power! Churches of Christ, seek the Spirit of your Master, that you may, feeling your own debt to the Divine, immortal Saviour, act in the spirit of his lesson, "Freely ye have received, freely give"!

Vers. 16—21.—*Israel's unbelief.* The more highly the apostle prized the gospel, the more sincerely and compassionately did he lament the folly and the guilt of those who deliberately or carelessly rejected it. Especially was his heart stirred to sorrow, when he observed how generally the glad tidings of life in Christ were rejected by his "kinsmen according to the flesh." Both upon the personal ground of relationship and association, and upon the general ground that Israel's greater privileges involved greater responsibilities, Paul grieved over the want of faith in Christ manifested by so many of his countrymen.

I. THE FACT OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF. 1. *It had been predicted.* In that remarkable anticipation of the sufferings and the glory of the Messiah which has won for Isaiah the designation "the evangelical prophet," there occurs an intimation that the Messiah should himself be despised and rejected of men, and that the news of his salvation should be disregarded by many for whose benefit it was intended. 2. *Fact agreed with prophecy.* Many sons of Abraham manifested Abraham's faith. Of the early professors and preachers of Christianity, a large proportion were Hebrews. Yet, although individuals welcomed the gospel, the nation as a whole, who by their leaders and representatives had crucified and slain the Lord Jesus, certainly turned away from the message of salvation, which, after his ascension, his apostles urgently and faithfully proclaimed. They did not all hearken to the report and obey its summons.

II. THE INEXCUSABLE GUILT OF ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF. This is made apparent by several considerations. It appears: 1. *From the terms of salvation.* "Belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." No terms could be more righteous, more reasonable, more in accordance with the character of God or the necessities of

men. Compliance with them involves no mental or social eminence, and is equally possible to those of all nations among men. 2. *From the general diffusion of the tidings.* Like the very light of the sun, like the voiceless witness of the heavens, the good news of salvation soon penetrated into the remotest and darkest places. Even the distant "sons of the dispersion" could not complain that they had been neglected. For the disciples of Christ, so far from keeping the good news to themselves, made it a point of conscience and religion to communicate to their neighbours the tidings of the advent and the mediation of the Son of God; whilst many, devoting themselves to the work of evangelization, deemed no journey too long to undertake and no perils too formidable to endure in the fulfilment of this sacred commission. 3. Even *from the fact that many of the less-favoured Gentiles came to believe.* It had been foretold by Moses and by the prophet Isaiah that the privileges which the Jews would despise and refuse should be offered to and accepted by the Gentiles. This came to pass. And it cut the apostle to the heart to remark that his kinsmen were rejecting blessings which the heathen to whom he preached were eagerly welcoming and receiving. 4. *From the forbearance and gracious invitations of a heavenly Father.* Again the apostle has recourse to the language of prophecy. How affecting is the representation here given of the patience, long-suffering, and kindness of God! He "willeth not that any should perish." Although the people oppose themselves, he does not soon weary of his invitations. He spreads forth his arms, as willing to welcome those who will return from their wanderings and be reconciled to him. So he stands, as it were, all the day long. Still, though he has long proffered grace in vain, the hands which might have been raised to smite are extended to rescue and to bless.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—4.—*Israel's strength and weakness.* The apostle returns again to the tender solicitude for the spiritual welfare of Israel which he had already expressed in the beginning of the ninth chapter. He was no blind bigot. He could recognize the good qualities even of those from whom he differed. He knew how far Israel had departed from the truth of God, and yet he is quick to perceive that, even amid their errors and sins, there is much that is commendable in their character. What an example for every Christian, and especially in these days, when ecclesiastical divisions are so numerous and so sharply defined, to recognize what is good even in those from whom we differ most widely!

I. ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE. 1. *Israel's zeal was an element of strength.* "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God" (ver. 2). The apostle does them the justice of recognizing their zeal for God. Here he could speak with sympathy, the sympathy of personal experience. He knew how, before his conversion to Christianity, he himself had been influenced by the same sincere, though mistaken, desire for God's glory. "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" (Acts xxii. 3). Here is the same sympathetic recognition of Jewish zeal. This quality, when rightly applied, was their strength. It well fitted them to be the bearers of God's message, and the channel of his blessings, to the world. A people without zeal will never accomplish anything permanent or great. 2. *Zeal without knowledge was their weakness.* They had a zeal of God, "but not according to knowledge." Zeal is not necessarily an unmixed blessing. Yet there are many who commend earnestness, utterly irrespective of the motives from which it proceeds, the methods it adopts, or the ends it has in view. On this principle the doctrines held or the character exhibited are of small importance, provided only there is earnestness and zeal. Mohammedanism and the Inquisition would therefore be both laudable, because they exhibited zeal. Zeal without knowledge may become the opened floodgate for a torrent of evil. Zeal in religion may lead to any excesses if it is not restrained and tempered by the wisdom which God's Word imparts.

II. WORKS WITHOUT FAITH. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto

the righteousness of God" (ver. 3). Thus it is plain that sincerity and morality will not save the human soul or procure acceptance with God. The essential condition of salvation is faith. Faith will lead us to accept God's plan of salvation, and to be guided by his Word in our efforts to obtain it. St. Paul's description of the Jews here might be appropriately applied to our Roman Catholic and ritualistic brethren. They too have a zeal for God. Their zeal and earnestness cannot be questioned. But their zeal is often not according to knowledge. They too are "going about to establish their own righteousness." They substitute works for faith, and by legal observances, by rites and ceremonies, by fastings and penances, they seek to work out a righteousness for themselves. Christ and his Word are too much set aside, and Church and priest and the commandments of men are set up in their place. Let us admit their strength, let us imitate their zeal, while affectionately "speaking the truth in love" we point out and avoid their weakness.—C. H. I.

Vers. 5—13.—*The simplicity of the gospel.* The apostle here contrasts the simplicity of God's plan of salvation with the efforts which men have made to work out a righteousness for themselves. Salvation is gained—

I. NOT BY OUR OWN GOOD WORKS. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man who doeth those things shall live by them" (ver. 5). If this were the condition of salvation, how hopeless would our condition be! None of us could say that we had made ourselves free from sin, or that our works were perfect and faultless, or that we had fully and faithfully kept all the commandments of God.

> "Not what these hands have done
> Could save this guilty soul;
> Not what this toiling flesh hath borne
> Could make my spirit whole."

II. NOR BY MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep?" (vers. 6, 7). The desire which is here expressed still survives. Not content with the Word of God and the invisible, but real, spiritual presence of Jesus with his Church, and the power of the Holy Spirit, many zealous Christians think it is necessary to have a more visible manifestation of the supernatural. Hence we have the doctrine of the real presence; alleged appearances of the blessed Virgin at Lourdes and at Knock; and, on the other hand, an undue stress laid upon the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

III. BUT BY THE PERSONAL RECEPTION AND CONFESSION OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. *The Holy Scriptures are the means used to bring this salvation near to us.* "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (ver. 8). In contrast with ceremonial or legal observances, in contrast with all miraculous appearances, the apostle here magnifies the reading and preaching of the gospel as the Divine method for the salvation of souls. "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation." 2. *Faith, which is the condition of salvation, is an act of the human mind.* Not by bodily labours or sufferings, not by appearances to our bodily senses, but by the Spirit of God and the Word of God working upon our spirits, and producing faith in us, do we receive salvation. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (ver. 10). It is to the spiritual and not to the bodily nature that the appeal of religion is to be made. It is the spiritual and not the bodily nature that we must cultivate if we would see the kingdom of God. 3. *Yet this faith will have an outward manifestation.* "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (ver. 10). If our faith in Christ is real, it will show itself. We shall not be ashamed to make public acknowledgment of him. 4. *Thus salvation is brought within the reach of every one.* "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved" (vers. 12, 13). This plan of salvation brings the gospel to the Gentile as well as to the Jew. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (ver. 12). Wherever there is a heart seeking after

God, that soul need not wait to work out a righteousness for itself. "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." What a contrast the simplicity of the gospel is to all human systems of religion and all man-made methods of salvation! The more we keep to the Word of God, and the less we mingle with it human tradition and ecclesiastical shibboleths, the more shall we be blessed in bringing souls to Christ. —C. H. I.

Vers. 14, 15.—*Four questions for every Christian.* When the great heart of the Apostle Paul burned within him as he wrote his Epistles to the Churches, he threw aside, as it were, the calm and stately prose of the quiet thinker and careful writer. He became an orator. He saw before him—even in his prison cell—immortal souls, whom he wanted to awaken and arouse. He asked questions, as if he expected an answer to them all. Such questions are frequent in this Epistle to the Romans, and on looking carefully over them we see that they are not only full of eager earnestness, but also of profitable instruction. In the four questions before us the apostle seeks to press home upon Christians the absolute necessity of mission work. In the previous chapter he is sorrowing for the unbelief of the Jews, and he begins this chapter by saying that his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Then, as he goes on, he is led to think of the salvation, not only of the Jews, but also of the whole world. He says, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." And then, as he thinks of the heathen world lying in darkness, he asks these four questions.

I. "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" In the ordinary dealings of daily life a certain amount of faith in another person is necessary before we can make any request of him. Unless we believe that he hears us, unless we believe that he is both able and willing to give us what we want, we are not likely to ask anything of him. So in spiritual matters, faith in God—the belief that he is, that he hears us, and that he is able and willing to help us—is necessary to successful prayer. It is necessary to salvation. But the heathen cannot call upon this gracious God of ours. As a matter of fact, they do not. No doubt, even amid heathen darkness, there are some earnest seekers after God. Certainly, if they call upon him, they shall be saved. But the vast majority of the heathen are without the knowledge of the true God. They are bowing down to pieces of silver and gold, of wood and stone, which cannot hear, or help, or save. Their very worship is a degradation in itself. Their religious rites are for the most part horrid cruelties, or foul and unspeakable lusts. And as for Buddhism, to quote only one authority, Sir Richard Temple, lately Governor of Bombay, tells us that however excellent and attractive the poetic accounts of it may be, as in the well-known poem, 'The Light of Asia,' the actual Buddhism of India is as degrading as can well be imagined. What they need to know is that there is a God who will hear them when they call upon him. They need to know that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, that the abominations of their land may be put away. They need to know of the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world, that they may turn from their useless ceremonies and cruel penances. They need to know of a Saviour who gives to all who call on him salvation, holiness, everlasting life. But "*how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*"

II. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Even Christians need to have the importance of *hearing about God* more impressed upon them. Some professing Christians seem to imagine that the heart instinctively turns to God, and that in some mysterious way the heathen who have never heard of God will come to him. This mistake is fallen into because in Christian lands we have been so accustomed to hear about God from our childhood that we can hardly imagine it possible not to know about him. But the simple refutation of this idea is the actual state of heathen nations. St. Paul, in this very Epistle (ch. i. 21, 25, 28), assures us that though the heathen had at one time a knowledge of God from his works of nature, yet they glorified him not as God, but changed the truth of God into a lie, and therefore lost the knowledge of God. This is confirmed by the testimony of travellers in heathen lands. Missionaries often find it very difficult to convey to heathen minds an idea of what God is, so degraded have been their notions. It is a long time before

a heathen can grasp the ideas of God's holiness and truth and purity, so accustomed is he to think of gods whose qualities are the very opposite of these. Even in our Christian land, unhappily, there are places in our large cities so neglected and degraded that children have grown up without hearing about God. And in such cases it has been found very difficult to convey at first an idea of God's being—his greatness, his holiness, his mercy, and his love. "*How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*" Hence, when the heathen learn of the love of God and the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, they often ask the question, "Why did you not send and tell us sooner?" No wonder that with sorrowful hearts they ask the question, as they think of loved ones who have passed away without hearing the glad tidings. How sad is the condition of millions of the heathen without the knowledge of the crucified Saviour!

III. "How SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?" Yes, the preaching of the gospel is still the agency that is to regenerate the world. It was the preaching of the gospel that was the means of converting thousands upon the Day of Pentecost. It was the preaching of the gospel which overthrew the idols of ancient Rome. It was the preaching of the gospel which brought about the Protestant Reformation. "The Word," said Martin Luther over and over again, "it was the Word that did it all." It was the preaching of the gospel that overthrew the idols of Madagascar, and that has already brought civilization and peace and contentment into many of the islands of the sea. It is good to circulate the Word of God in every language. But it is necessary also to have the living preachers. "Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It needs the living preacher to be a living witness to the truth and power of the gospel—the full heart overflowing with love to Christ and love to souls; the ripe experience; the fulness of the Spirit. The Ethiopian treasurer had the Word of God in his hand as he returned in his chariot from Jerusalem. But he was not savingly converted until Philip began at the Scriptures which he was reading, and "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts viii. 36). But the number of missionaries is still very small in comparison with the millions of heathen who have not yet heard the gospel message. "How shall they hear without a preacher?"

IV. "How SHALL THEY PREACH, EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?" This is the intensely practical question. If we realize the darkness and misery of heathen lands, if we are really thankful for the unspeakable blessings which the gospel has brought to us, what are we doing to send the message of salvation to those who sit in darkness? 1. *We can help to send out missionaries by our prayers.* "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." 2. *We can help to send out missionaries by our gifts.* We need to understand, not merely the duty of giving, but the privilege of giving. Surely it is a glorious privilege to be a labourer together with God. Upon the Christian Church is laid the responsibility of preaching the gospel to all nations. And there is this blessed encouragement: 3. *If the last of these parts of mission work*, of which the apostle speaks, *is fulfilled, the rest are all sure to follow.* If missionaries are sent, then there will be the preaching, the hearing, and, in God's own good time, the believing and the salvation of souls. His Word shall not return unto him void. Thus by our sending we may be the means of saving.—C. H. I.

Ver. 15.—*The beauty of the gospel.* The words, "How beautiful are the feet!" are plainly a figurative expression. This expression signifies the delight with which the messenger of peace is hailed, or, in other words, how welcome is the message which he brings. In Isaiah (lii. 7) it reads, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" as if the reference was to the inhabitants of some beleaguered city looking out for the messengers of peace, and as they behold them appearing, fleet of foot, upon the mountain-top, they exclaim, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" Such a description the apostle here applies to the messengers of the gospel.

I. THE GOSPEL IS BEAUTIFUL IN THE TRUTHS IT TEACHES. The truths of the gospel are here called "glad tidings of good things." This, in fact, is the very meaning of the word "gospel"—glad tidings or good news. 1. *Think what the gospel teaches us about*

*the one true God.* What a contrast to the helpless idols of heathenism! How beautiful to think that God is a Spirit who is everywhere present, who knows all our circumstances, and to whom we can always draw near in the assurance that he hears us, and is able and willing to help us! What a contrast to the unknown god of even the best forms of heathenism, to the unconscious and unsympathetic Brahm, the god of Hinduism! I heard a missionary to the Red Indians, speaking in Dr. Storrs' church in Brooklyn, mention how the chief of an old Indian tribe, seven thousand in number, had come seven times in fifteen months a distance of a hundred and fifty miles to a mission station, to ask that a missionary might be sent to tell them of "the white man's God." How beautiful to them that sit in darkness is the glad tidings of the true God, the loving and merciful Father in heaven! 2. *Think what the gospel teaches us about the human soul.* The gospel does not permit us to regard man as one of the beasts that perish, as he is under so many of the heathen religions. Some of these have no idea of the existence of a soul at all; but in the best of them the soul is either annihilated at death, or transferred to some other creature, or absorbed into the universal being as a drop into the ocean. The gospel, on the other hand, teaches that man was made in the image of God; that he has an immortal destiny; and that, when he had destroyed his own present happiness and future prospects by his own sin, so great value did God place upon him, so great love did his heavenly Father cherish for him, that he sent his own beloved Son to live and die for man's salvation. The gospel which proclaims the greatness, the majesty, the holiness, the glory of God, proclaims also the dignity and the immortality of man.

II. THE GOSPEL IS BEAUTIFUL IN THE INFLUENCE IT EXERCISES. This we might expect from the beauty and grandeur of the truths it teaches. There is nothing very elevating about the worship of an idol of wood or stone. There is nothing very inspiring in the thought that life must end at the grave, or that I shall be absorbed into the universe. It may be very poetic to sing, as Shelley did of his departed friend Keats—

> "He is made one with Nature. There is heard
> His voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird.
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, in herb and stone;
> Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own."

But such a thought would bring little comfort to the bereaved parent or sorrowing widow; and how very slight would be its influence upon character and life, compared with the thought that I am a responsible being, that I must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that my life as an immortal being hereafter will be determined largely by my life as an individual now! As a matter of fact, the gospel of Jesus Christ has exercised an elevating, purifying, beautifying influence wherever its power has been felt. *Take, for instance, the treatment of woman.* Mohammedanism and heathenism have both kept woman in humiliation and degradation. By keeping her in seclusion, they have at once injured her own moral and spiritual being, and deprived the community of the healthful influence which good women can exercise. Christianity has raised woman to respect and honour; it has promoted her own personal happiness; and it has enabled her to exercise a mighty power for good in the family, and in society at large. *Mohammedanism and heathenism are the props of slavery.* It was Christian missions that first aroused the Christian conscience on this subject. Sir William Hunter, one of the most distinguished scholars and statesmen of our day, speaking at the great Missionary Conference in London, June, 1888, said, "I recognize in missionary work a great expiation for the wrong which the white man has done to the dark man in the past; and I recognize also a pledge of national right-doing in future. During the past century missionaries have marched in the van of all our noblest national movements. When the time came for the great wrong of slavery to be redressed, it was the missionary voice which first stirred up the nation against the slave trade. That voice is now awakening the national conscience against the terrible evil which is being done by our liquor traffic among the darker and less civilized races." How long shall the Christian public of mighty England stand meekly by, while slavery's chain is still clanking, and

slavery's lash still falls? How beautiful is that gospel which has lifted woman out of her degradation; which has emancipated already so many millions of slaves; which has abolished cannibalism in so many islands of the sea; which has put an end to the suttee and other cruel ceremonies in India; and which is drawing the nations of the earth together in a universal brotherhood of good will and peace!

III. IT IS A BEAUTIFUL THING TO BE A BEARER OF THIS MESSAGE. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!" What share are we taking in this glorious work? "Consecrated capital," says Dr. A. T. Pierson, "is not only potent; it is well-nigh omnipotent. To have and to use money well is to multiply personal power a thousandfold, nay, to multiply one's self a thousandfold. The giver is potentially wherever his gift is. Sarah Hosmer's frugal savings educated six young men to preach the gospel in Oriental lands, and where they were, she had her representatives and preached through them. A man recently died in New York whose noble benefactions had spread so far, that in not less than two hundred and fifty different places he was represented by a mission Sunday school, a church, an asylum, a hospital, a college or seminary, or some other form of beneficence: his money made him virtually omnipresent as a benefactor." Oh that individual Christians would awake to their opportunities! Oh! that they would realize the moral grandeur and glory of being a bearer of the gospel message, and a helper in the gospel cause!—C. H. I.

Vers. 16—21.—*The lesson of neglected opportunities.* I. IT IS GOD'S PART TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITIES. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (ver. 17). The apostle recognizes that men cannot be condemned for unbelief, if they have not had the opportunity of hearing the gospel. No person will be condemned in the day of judgment who has not had the opportunity of salvation. And lest any one, applying this rule to the case of Israel, should suggest that they had not such an opportunity, he asks the question, "But I say, Have they not heard?" Can the plea of ignorance be put in on their behalf? Nay. "Their sound" (that is, the voice of God's messengers, referred to in ver. 15) "went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." *God has done his part for the enlightenment and salvation of men.* He has revealed himself in his works of nature. He has revealed himself in his Word. He has revealed himself in his Son. Jesus is the Emmanuel, "God with us."

II. IT IS MAN'S PART TO AVAIL HIMSELF OF THEM. The mere possession of gospel privileges is no guarantee of salvation. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (ver. 16). Israel had the Law, with its types and ceremonies, pointing to Christ; their prophets, who spoke of him. Yet, with all their privileges, they rejected Christ. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." It will not profit us that we have been brought up in a Christian home, in a Christian Church, or that we have had the Bible in our hands, unless we ourselves "obey the gospel," accept its invitations, respect its precepts, and submit ourselves to Jesus as our Saviour and our King. Yet there are many who are resting entirely upon their privileges, without exercising that living personal faith in Jesus Christ for which these privileges afford the opportunity and the help.

III. OPPORTUNITIES NEGLECTED WILL BE TAKEN AWAY. Israel had been from the beginning forewarned of this. So long ago as the time of Moses it had been said to them, "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you" (ver. 19). Then Isaiah repeated a similar warning, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me" (ver. 20). The same lesson in the history of Israel is repeated by Christ more than once in his parables. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the lord of the vineyard is represented as letting out his vineyard "unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (Matt. xxi. 41). The same lesson is taught in the parable of the wedding-feast, where the invitation, rejected by the regularly invited guests, is sent out to the highways and hedges. We have the same truth in the parable of the talents. "Unto every one that hath shall be given . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. xxv. 29). *The history of the Jews is a solemn warning against the neglect of opportunities.* It is a solemn warning to all those who, though brought up in Christian homes and in a

Christian land, make light of the blessings of the gospel, resist its invitations, and set at naught its counsels.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—11.—*The freeness of salvation.* The apostle's heart yearns for his people. For he recognizes their sincerity in much of their grievous mistaking of the ways of God. They had zeal for God, though the zeal was unreasonable and irreligious. Unreasonable; for how *can* man make himself just before God, guilty and sinful as he is? and why should the Jew think that, if this were possible, only one small portion of the race should be suffered to work out its righteousness? Irreligious; for instead of the humility as regards one's self, and the charity as regards others, which are two essentials of the life in God, there was a proud self-assertiveness, and a narrow bigotry. They must learn that God's favour is by grace (vers. 5—11), and for all (vers. 12—21). We have here—the freeness of salvation.

I. THE ERROR OF THE JEWS. 1. *Ignorance.* "Of God's righteousness." That is, of the fact that the justification of a sinner can only come of God's free grace. Surely their Law might have taught them this: negatively, for it should have made them realize their own utter imperfectness and impotence; positively, for had they not read (Gen. xv. 6) that Abraham was counted righteous through faith in God? and (Hab. ii. 4) that all just ones shall live by faith? 2. *Self-sufficiency.* "Seeking to establish their own." That is (see Godet), as a monument, raised, not to God's glory, but to show forth their own achievements. Here was the pride of man, which must be brought down before any way can be made towards God (Matt. v. 3). 3. *Disobedience.* "Did not subject themselves." For the very faith whereby we receive God's free forgiveness is an act of submission, an abnegating of our false pride, a yielding to a way which is higher and better than our own (see ch. i. 5; vi. 17). 4. *Frustration of the very purport of their own Law.* "For Christ is the End of the Law." All was designed to lead to him; the holy commands were to make them know their guilt and weakness, and crave for pardon and grace; the sacrifices and ceremonies were at once to stamp the fact of sin more deeply into their consciousness, and to give them a glimmering hope of propitiation and purifying. To Christ all these things directly and indirectly tended; but the veil was on their eyes, that they "should not look steadfastly on the end of that which was passing away" (2 Cor. iii. 13).

II. THE TRUTH OF GOD. 1. "*The righteousness which is of the Law*" was, that it should be done by man's efforts, conjoined with the grace of God. For, according to God's intent, grace was with the giving of the Law: pardon, for realized imperfection; help, for realized frailty; the coming of Christ, as the end of all its precepts and ceremonial. But if man would ignore this element of grace, there was nothing for him but a perfect fulfilling of an impossible righteousness! Doing it, he should live by it. They tried; the world has tried: the end thereof is death! 2. "*The righteousness which is of faith*" hath taught us better things. (1) Not the severe effort of the soul, by ecstatic contemplation, to attain to communion with Heaven: the Buddhist, the Christian mystic. For Heaven has come down to earth; we have but to confess the Sonship of Jesus, and live a life in him who has hallowed all life. (Consider the Incarnation, and the gift of the Spirit, as illustrating "the Word is nigh thee.") So, "the trivial round," etc. (2) Not the painful anguish of the soul, as by a crucifixion, to make atonement for its guilt: the devotee, the ascetic. For the atonement is made, and, to testify its completeness, he has risen from the dead. We have but to believe this in our heart, and then, "there is now no condemnation."

Yes, the faith which works by love: accepting with all our heart the free forgiveness which is through Christ's death, and acknowledging him with our whole life as our true Lord and King. So no shame, but perfect liberty and perfect love.—T. F. L.

Vers. 12—21.—*The universality of the gospel.* The favour of God is free. But the apostle has already indicated another antagonism to the ignorant zeal of his people: the favour of God, being free, is free for all (vers. 4, 11). As Godet says, "Paul has justified the matter of his preaching, salvation by grace; he now justifies its extension." He here sets forth the universality of the gospel as evident from its very freeness, as anticipated by the Law, as consistent with the exclusion of Israel from its blessedness.

I. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL IS EVIDENT FROM ITS VERY FREENESS. If the Law had been able of itself to justify, it might have seemed as though the Gentiles were without hope. But when it is perceived that the Law only leads to Christ, and that in Christ a free forgiveness is granted to sinful man, at once the conclusion is forced upon us—then to every sinful man. And the conclusion is just; even as Joel had foreseen, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." There needs but that faith which is involved in true repentance, a willingness to be saved by grace alone, and the salvation is ours. Let, then, the true cry for help go up from any human heart, and it is answered. But it follows that if, according to God's grace, salvation is such that it is, in itself, possible to every man, he must design that it shall be brought within the reach of every man. Hence the succession of questions which Paul asks, arguing that God's design to save sinful man, when calling upon him in truth, implies a design that it should be possible for man to believe in him as God the Saviour, which again implies the hearing him proclaimed, which again implies a preacher of the glad tidings, which again implies the sending of the preachers. Yes, if such is the salvation for sinful man, God must have instituted a universal apostolate for the nations. This indeed was so (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts i. 8). But Paul argues it, that he may justify his own mission, partly; and partly also, we may suppose, to remind them that they, the Jews, should have been the nation of apostles, that this was indeed the very intent of their election, had they not made the counsel of God of none effect. O glorious calling! O grievous forfeiture of high blessing!

II. THIS UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL WAS ANTICIPATED BY THE LAW. What had Moses said to them? "I will provoke you to jealousy," etc. They had provoked God by following after other gods; God would provoke his people by seeking other peoples (see Deut. xxxii. 21). Isaiah stated boldly what in the earlier words was more obscurely hinted at, "I was found of them," etc. (see Isa. lxvi.). Here also a repetition of ch. ix. 30—33. These, however, are but samples; there was enough in their Law, had not the veil been on their eyes, to show that they were but trustees for the world, and that one of their peculiar glories was that the Gentiles should come in the fulness of time to do homage to their God (see Isa. lx.). Israel "did know," or at least might have known.

III. THIS UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL WAS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE EXCLUSION OF ISRAEL FROM ITS BLESSEDNESS. The terms were, for them as for all, "Whosoever shall call," etc. And, it being impossible to call on One whom they had not heard, the hearing was certainly not withheld from them. It was true even of gospel preaching, as of the voices of the heavens (Ps. xix.), that the sound had gone into all the earth. For everywhere the gospel had been preached "to the Jew first." Yes, God had not cut them off from the blessing, but they had cut themselves off. It was true, as Isaiah had said, "All the day long," etc. So the parables of Jesus (Matt. xxi., xxii.). They might have been the chosen people for the glorious work of the world's salvation; but the election was broken by their unbelief.

So, then, though God might surely choose or lay aside instruments as he would, in the carrying on of his work, he did not act without reason. It was because the Jews, being exalted to heaven, cast themselves down to hell, that they might not be the heralds of his grace. They would not receive it; therefore they could not show it forth.—T. F. L.

Ver. 1.—*Anxiety for the salvation of our fellows.* It is the lot of reformers to be twitted as renegades, and to be exposed to the taunt of indifference to the welfare of their old companions. So the apostle was charged with noxiously subverting ancient customs, and he found it necessary to justify himself even to Jewish Christians against the reproach of wanton molestation of the hopes of Israel. It is difficult for prejudice in its blind conservatism to see that the change proposed is intended for the furtherance, not the injury, of what is held most dear—the emancipation of the spirit by the transformation of the body. The apostle lays bare his heart to attest his intense yearning for the spiritual good of his traducers.

I. WHY DID THE APOSTLE LONG SO ARDENTLY FOR THEIR SALVATION? He could not forget that the Saviour died to draw all men unto himself. A sinner unsaved lessens the reward of the "travail of his soul" and detracts from the possible glory of the

atonement. But further, *these men were his fellow-countrymen.* Surely the condition of our "kinsmen according to the flesh" must be uppermost in our thoughts, and each man's efforts naturally commence at his own house, his own neighbourhood, his own nation. Then, *they were the descendants of men signally honoured in the past.* Their lineage was so distinguished, that Paul could not calmly witness the exclusion from the kingdom of God of these sons of patriarchs and prophets. They were in a special sense the "brethren" for whom Christ died. What more affecting to-day than to witness religious apathy in the families of the godly, to see the place of the fathers unoccupied by the children in the house of faith? And the apostle *had visions of the splendid results that would ensue* if the veil were removed from their hearts, and they should recognize in the Nazarene their wished-for Messiah. What should the receiving of them into the Church be but "life from the dead"? The same reason impels us to seek the conversion of many around, whose talents and earnestness might be of such signal service in our ranks. As Saul the persecutor became Paul the missionary, so we may look upon a bigoted opponent as a potential future enthusiast in the cause of Christ.

II. How did the apostle's concern express itself? We answer—*In his preaching.* He ever visited first the Jews and the synagogue in his tours. It was God's design that the gospel should be first preached to his ancient people, that by rejecting or receiving the message they might either fill up the measure of their iniquity and crucify the Saviour afresh, or free themselves from the guilt of their nation and welcome the breaking down of the partition wall between Jew and Gentile. And *the writings of the apostle* evince his unabated regard and anxiety for the Jews. He declared that he could wish himself "anathema" from Christ, if that self-sacrifice could procure their redemption. We are reminded of the supreme act of self-abnegation by Moses on the mount, when rejecting Jehovah's offer to create from him a new people in the stead of that corrupt and obstinate generation. The apostle's language breathes the spirit of the cross of Christ—it is an emanation to the disciple from the Master's self-immolation for the good of men. *The prayers of the apostle* showed the genuineness of his affectionate solicitude. Prayer is a thermometer that gauges the warmth of our desire to save men from misery and ruin. Does not the teacher bring the members of the class before God in earnest petitions, and the parent his children? We care little for those who are never mentioned in our supplications. Let us remember them where it most avails.

III. What contributed to make this deep concern so noteworthy? It was *prayer for men who hated and maltreated him.* With rancorous unceasing enmity did the Jews pursue the apostle. They were the chief cause of his imprisonments and tortures, they did their utmost to mar his success and embitter his labours, and at last secured his death. Thinking of their attempts to overthrow the faith of Christian converts, the apostle could use strong language for their discomfiture; but on his knees, in the solemn presence of the God and Father of all, larger and more generous thoughts possessed his soul, and he forgot all his personal annoyances in the o'ermastering impulse to seek their salvation. If wronged by any, take the matter to the throne of grace, and you shall begin to pity and then pray for him that did the wrong. It was *prayer for those who had proved obstinate, and whose salvation seemed little likely.* No acquaintance with the decrees of God, nor the fact of God's forethought and foreordination, could hinder the apostle's entreaties. What a lesson for us not to despair, not to faint! Our mistrust too often paralyzes our intercessions, our human reasonings "limit the Holy One of Israel." *This was a benefit conferred which they had no power to refuse.* Prayer is a kind office which we may render to men who would accept nothing else at our hands. This they cannot hinder.—S. R. A.

Ver. 4.—*The end of the Law.* The desire for righteousness has embodied itself in diverse and some of them grotesque forms. Gather together the Pharisee with his phylacteries and ablutions; the Chinaman burning his bits of paper for ancestral worship; the Hindoo bathing in the sacred river, or prostrating himself under the idol-car; the Roman Catholic telling his beads and performing his penance; and the moral youth, who never omits his daily portion of Scripture, or his morning and evening prayers, and would scorn to tell an untruth; and one would scarce imagine that the

same motive actuates all these. Yet they all bear witness to man's anxiety to b righteous in the sight of the Supreme Being, and those are abnormally constituted who are never conscious of this yearning. It was not this strong desire for righteousness which the apostle tried to alter in the Jews, but the antiquated imperfect method to which they still clung after the one sure way of justification through faith in Christ had been proclaimed.

I. CHRIST THE TERMINATION OF THE LEGAL ECONOMY. The rending of the veil at the Crucifixion indicated the passing away of the old dispensation, with all its gorgeous rites and external splendour. There arose another order of priesthood, from which the exclusiveness of the former caste was absent. Jesus the High Priest came not of the tribe of Levi. It is no longer necessary to become a Jew in order to reap the privileges of access to God. Christ has released men from the yoke of the Law, with its fasts and feasts, its observance of days and seasons. He has changed our state from pupilage to manhood; from slavery to a "reasonable service." Wherever a Christian is found, there is a spiritual priest and a living temple; wherever Christians meet, there is a holy convocation. The tabernacle disappeared when the temple was erected, and the earthly temple is no longer needed when the glorious building rises, reared without hands. The Jews who would not receive this teaching had to be convinced, by the capture of Jerusalem and the burning of their "beautiful house," that "the old order changed, giving place to new." The forerunner of Christ was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

II. CHRIST THE DESIGN AND SCOPE OF THE LEVITICAL DISPENSATION. We cannot understand the Law unless we regard it as pointing unmistakably to the coming Messiah, preparing his way; a preliminary education of mankind and of one nation in particular; like a stock on which a new rose is to be grafted. The sacrifices, the moral and ceremonial precepts, were predictive, were prophecy acted in symbol and type. The chrysalis displays tokens of the winged perfect insect. "The Law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ." So that when men inquire, "To what purpose was all this cost of legislation and ritual?" the reply is that it paved the way for something better; it was the "shadow of good things to come."

III. CHRIST THE REALIZATION OF THE MOSAIC IDEAL. The holiness which the Law ever kept in view, endeavouring to raise men to its standard of righteousness, has been exemplified in Jesus Christ. Wherein the Law was weak, Christ was strong. His condemnation of sin was thorough and effective, and the perfection of his sacrifice renders any subsequent atonement needless. To enter into the spirit of his offering is to "purge the conscience from dead works" and to give rest and peace to the troubled —the region in which the Law was inoperative. The message of Divine love sounding from the cross has a constraining influence over the affections and life of the Christian, which the Law aimed at and failed to achieve. New Testament saints have frequently attained to an enlightenment of mind and conformity to the Divine will which was sighed after in vain by patriarch, psalmist, and prophet. Christ brings his followers into communion with God, and by faith in him are they sanctified. Love is proved a stronger principle than terror, knowledge than ignorance, example than precept. In abrogating, Christ fulfils the Law.

CONCLUSION. See, then, what faith does. *It looks at Christ instead of a Law of ordinances.* It is no longer tied by enactments and fearful of non-compliance, for it beholds the face of Jesus, "the Lamb as it had been slain." We may trust Christ as our Redeemer and Guide, without understanding or acknowledging all these points of superiority over the former covenant; as a woman knows she will be benefited by a certain medicine, though she could not name its ingredients, nor state the method of its working; or as a man may journey on the railway who comprehends little of the application of steam to locomotives, etc. And faith *is content to submit to God's righteousness,* instead of seeking to establish its own. It relies not upon personal desert, but upon the provisions of mercy furnished in Christ. It is humble, and tries not to patch together a human garment to hide deformities and deficiencies. Accepting the gracious offer of God, faith discovers new elements of strength and joy in the very position assumed.—S. R. A.

**Vers. 8—10.**—*The word of faith.* Men are quick to excuse their non-acceptance of

Christianity. In order to obviate the pretence of the gospel being a system complicated to examine and conform to, the apostle quotes from Deuteronomy (using the passage in a justifiable, though altered signification) to exhibit the simplicity and brevity of the gospel requirements. Nothing impracticable is demanded of would-be converts. The "word of faith" is close at hand and intelligible, ready to be uttered and trusted.

I. THE TWO ESSENTIALS TO ENJOYMENT OF THE BENEFITS OF THE GOSPEL. Belief and confession. 1. *Belief naturally precedes confession*, if the latter is not hypocrisy. Speech on religious questions that is not the utterance of a deep-seated conviction is like Ahimaaz running without tidings to deliver. An untimely avowal should be deprecated; the confession should stream forth from the fountain of belief; otherwise the want of correspondence between the outward declaration and the inward assurance will work deadly mischief. Let not the child's Catechism be heavily laden. To sensitive minds the gap will seem to widen with growing intelligence, and they will deem the alienation from the early standard greater than it is, leading perhaps to a position of ultimate antagonism. 2. *The essentials are few in number.* Unlike the minute details of the Mosaic ritual, the law of Christ is short and easily comprehended. This apostolic declaration judges our own preaching and creed, showing that we are in danger of making the gate narrower and the road longer to the kingdom than Christ ordained them. The tendency of hoary Christianity is to multiply the requisite articles of doctrine and observance, making the initiation burdensome, the novitiate cumbrous. 3. On the other hand, *less than the apostle insists on cannot prove a bond of Christian fellowship.* Occasional communion there may be between those who differ respecting the fact of Christ's resurrection, each recognizing the other's sincerity and desire to press forward to the light; but experience attests the impossibility of enduring religious co-operation on a slighter basis than that laid down in the text. Fundamental divergence of opinion curbs free utterance, checks the fervour of prayer, makes all parties uncomfortable in their association.

II. THE PRODUCT OF FAITH. "Righteousness." Distinguish between the assent of the understanding and the trust of the heart. "Believing with" or "in the heart" not only accepts the resurrection of Christ as an historical fact, but sees in this a spiritual truth, that Christ is the Mediator, the Redeemer, able and willing to work an ethical resurrection in all who commit themselves to his care and tuition. Such a faith rejoices in the great verity; the will gladly submits to Jesus Christ as God's approved Agent of reconciliation. And thus faith imparts righteousness, connecting the sinner with the Saviour, the weak with the Strong One, the ignorant with the All-wise.

III. THE RESULT OF CONFESSION. "Salvation." As human nature is constituted, the expression of a sentiment in word or deed lends it distinctness and potency. What the orator does for the multitude, when he translates into glowing language their vague aspirations and inarticulate feelings, clothing, fixing, clarifying, and intensifying them, is what an open avowal of his religious faith often effects for the individual. It discloses what was wrapped up in the inner being, and the embodiment gives place and form to the idea. Sentiment unexpressed is liable to fade away like vapour uncondensed. Confession is a real act; it makes the man commit himself definitely to a certain course of behaviour, and assists him to realize his ideal. Most are deficient in moral courage, and all that strengthens determination makes for salvation. It is easier for an avowed than for a secret disciple of Christ to refuse to yield to the solicitations of the worldly, to join them in unprofitable amusements and practices. Then, too, confession redounds to the glory of God, who honours them that honour him. In heaven it will be no signal tribute to own him, for all there sing his praise. On earth is a sphere of distinction possible by standing up for the true, the right, the good. And so Christ promises to confess those who have confessed him. A manly declaration may confirm the faith of wavering brethren, and thus save ourselves and others. Timidity which seals the lips is a sower retaining the seed in his bag, and allowing the waiting soil to go unblessed with golden crops.—S. R. A.

Ver. 12.—*The nature and beneficence of God.* Many surface-distinctions between the Jew and Greek may be drawn by men, but none are recognized by God in such wise as to incapacitate some members of the race for seeking salvation at his hands.

The text furnishes the basis for such a statement of universal salvability, in its clear enunciation of the nature of God. By implication it negatives many theories when it asserts that "the same Lord is Lord of all," and the following clause contains measureless comfort for every anxious praying heart. He is "rich unto all that call upon him."

I. SOME ERRORS CORRECTED. 1. *Polytheism.* We might infer the truth of monotheism from the unity of structure visible in the world—its inhabitants, animals, and plants; from the analogy observable in different kingdoms of nature; and from the existence of the same laws operating to the remotest star. And the Mosaic Law distinctly enforced the truth, "The Lord our God is one Lord." Nor is the doctrine of the Trinity in unity contradictory. There is the historical fact that wherever Christianity has prevailed, idolatry has been doomed. The preaching of the fishermen effected what the most potent arguments of Greek philosophy and the keenest shafts of ridicule failed to accomplish. 2. *Atheism.* This is the other extreme; instead of many gods, no God. To attribute to blind force and fortuitous collocation of atoms the order and beauty of design evident in nature and history, is to posit an inefficient cause for the effects noted. So clearly is this seen, that the favourite attitude of many is to avoid definite assertions, and content themselves with saying, "We cannot be sure; we cannot attain to sufficient knowledge of the Unknowable to prompt our worship." This is practical atheism, imitated by multitudes who do not deny the authority of the Scriptures, or reject religion on speculative grounds, yet live "without God in the world." Remember that the non-recognition of the Deity does not absolve from religious responsibility. If there be a "Lord of all," he has claims upon your service which will not vanish because of your pleasant dreams and guilty unconcern. 3. *Pantheism.* He is Lord "of," *i.e.* "over" all—a living, personal God, above as well as in nature. He is not to be identified with the universe, nor with his operations. He is different from his acts, as we are not our limbs, our deeds, but are conscious of a living will behind these manifestations. The instinct of prayer would be checked at once by the thought of "calling upon" an abstraction of humanity or unintelligent matter. 4. *Socinianism*, or the denial of the Deity of Christ. Few stronger passages could be adduced than those in the context to assure us of the apostle's conviction of the dignity of the Saviour. In the ninth verse we are taught to "confess Jesus as Lord," and following the emphatic language of the text comes the thirteenth verse, where the propbecy of Joel and the title Jehovah are applied to Christ, the express subject of this chapter. All doubt as to the reference is removed by the question, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" since the object of our faith is ever represented as Christ, the manifested God. The only refuge is to deny the competency and inspiration of the apostle, and then we do not get rid of the other Scripture texts which speak of him as the Creator "by whom all things were made," and the Judge "to whom all authority is committed." No declaration of the relationship of the Son to the Father, more available for explanation of the mystery, can we have than "he is the Image of the invisible God." 5. *Sectarianism*, or Judaism as a system of rites, the embodiment of the narrow bigoted spirit which will admit only certain classes within its pale. Most scornful epithets did the Jews employ with respect to the unprivileged state of the rest of mankind; they were "the drops of the bucket, the offscouring of all things." But if the whole world may claim the same Lord, one family dares not arrogate to itself all the Divine love and blessing. What is the miserable superiority of the giant to the dwarf in the view of him who gazes from the mountain-top? The regard of God is to quality, not quantity; he wants the pure gold of repentance and obedience, no matter with what ingredients or amid what surroundings it may be found. Jesus Christ taught us to abolish caste by the petition, "Our Father." In the present condition of religious knowledge and feeling, sects may be convenient, almost necessary, but we need not unchristianize those without our borders, nor confine our view of salvation to those who utter the same party shibboleth.

II. A TRUTH OF COMFORTABLE IMPORT—THE BENEFICENCE OF GOD. 1. *His wealth permits him to do good to all.* The slowly passing centuries have not enabled men to find out the extent of the Divine riches. The catalogue is exhaustless that is being compiled of the adaptations, combinations, resources, with which the Creator has furnished man's home. Then, whilst the microscope reveals innumerable infinitesimal wonders, the telescope discovers countless worlds. And the apostle delighted in the

use of the word "riches" to describe the mercies of God in redemption. He felt he had to publish a purpose of God rich in wisdom, love, and power, dwarfing all human systems of reform. The Lord of Christianity is so supremely glorious, that it was a relief to turn away from human poverty in thought and means, to contemplate "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ." 2. *He is rich in all that his creatures need.* Circumlocution offices abound on earth. The king cannot heal the leper, nor the doctor give legal information to the suitor, nor the lawyer be expected to head the subscription list. But none can seek Christ in vain for spiritual wants. He is rich in mercy to the penitent sinner, and to the believer forgetful of his early vows he is rich in the assurance of forgiveness and succour. The disappointed may find him an unfailing Hope, the bereaved a "God of all consolation;" to the tempted he is the "Way of escape," and to the heated with the struggle of life, "the Shadow of a great rock." 3. *A benevolent Lord.* "Rich unto all." Many a wealthy man is not "rich unto" anybody else—not even unto himself, poor niggardly soul. God sits not as a miser gloating over his goods, or as a king ensconced in the palace, where no cry of the poor or of the anguished can reach him. He delights to give; the glory of God is revealed in blessing his creatures. Love created, sustains, enriches, the universe. We need not fear coming too often or asking too largely. We shall not weary his generosity, or appeal too late to his exchequer because a more fortunate applicant anticipated our request. Invited to his banquet, he will not thank you for partaking scantily of the rich fare, lest you should trespass on his bounty. 4. *The one restriction.* Only one condition is to be fulfilled—that we "call upon him." This is but reasonable. We receive daily benefits unasked, but in the concerns of the soul we are treated as intelligent beings, as children whose voice the Father loves to hear. The prayer of mingled contrition and trust purifies and exalts the suppliants, honours and gratifies the Donor of good. The character of the petition manifests the spiritual state of the petitioner. Set the desires not so much upon the promises of physical relief as of spiritual blessing, not so much the removal of the trial as strength to bear it, not so much the extraction of the thorn as grace to submit patiently and to see wise purposes subserved by the infliction. What simpler counsel could be given to the heavy-laden sinner than this, "call upon him"? Like Peter amid the waves, cry out, "Lord, save me!" and Divine help shall respond, and you "shall be saved." And when the hour of death draws nigh, though we may not be surrounded by taunting foes, and no cruel blows may hasten our departure, yet, like the dying martyr, we may pass "calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—11.—*Confession of a risen Saviour.* In the previous chapter we saw a Christian patriot lamenting that so many of his fellow-countrymen, through rejecting God's mercy manifested in Christ Jesus, were becoming mere vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. At the same time, he sees in Divine sovereignty, its incidence and its justice, the real clue to the philosophy of history and the progress of the world. In the present chapter he discusses the rejection of Israel and its reasons, and the nature of that acceptance and salvation which the Gentiles received after the Jews had despised them. In the verses now claiming attention we have the apostle leading his readers up to faith in and confession of a risen Saviour.

I. THE MISDIRECTED ZEAL OF THE APOSTLE'S COUNTRYMEN. (Vers. 1—3.) The apostle's desire and "supplication" (so Revised Version) for the Jews was that they might be saved. But, alas! their misdirected zeal was preventing their salvation. For instead of submitting to the righteousness which is of God, instead of making their way to Christ, who is the End to whom the Law when properly understood leads, they were going about with the one object of establishing their own righteousness. This zeal Paul knew himself experimentally. For years he also had aimed at Law-keeping, and in his self-ignorance he thought that "touching the righteousness which is in the Law" he was "blameless" (Phil. iii. 6). But the Law-keeping may be in the letter and not in the spirit. The spirit of the Law is *love;* yet Paul and the Pharisees tithed mint and anise and cummin, while they lived lives of *hate,* and hesitated not to persecute Christ-like people even to the death. To keep self-righteousness before the soul as the end of life is simply misdirected zeal. It keeps us away from Christ and all the bliss which his fellowship implies. And so a day came when Paul saw that

his roundabout way, going about to establish his own righteousness, was a delusion, a snare, a loss, and not a gain, for it kept him long years from Christ. Let us be clear that we are not under a similar delusion. Let us give up self-righteousness and take God's better way.

II. A RISEN SAVIOUR IS THE END OF THE LAW AND OBJECT OF FAITH. (Ver. 4.) Now, the moment we are led to take a spiritual view of God's Law, to see that it demands perfect motive as well as decent outward morality, we see that we cannot keep it in its length and breadth; and therefore, instead of living by Law-keeping, we are condemned by the Law as its transgressors. Self-righteousness is seen to be self-deception. Condemnation is seen to be our natural state. Then is it that Christ and his perfect righteousness dawn upon our condemned and polluted souls. We see that he has done for us what we cannot do for ourselves, and so the Law serves its purpose when it lays us down at the feet of Christ, to be justified by faith. Instead of trusting our own righteousness, we see in our risen Saviour the true Object of faith and Source of righteousness. We pass out of shame into confidence in his finished work.[1]

III. THIS RISEN SAVIOUR IS EASILY FOUND. (Vers. 6—9.) The idea of the human heart is that by some prodigious effort salvation must be secured. Abana and Pharpar are further off, as well as likelier rivers, than this brawling Jordan hard by, and so Naaman cries out, "May I not wash in them, and be clean?" Only ask us to do some great thing in order to salvation, and our self-righteousness will be secured, and we shall be satisfied (cf. 2 Kings v. 12, 13). A far-off salvation suits man's taste the best. Set it in heaven, and he will rack his brains for some ingenious device by which he will fly away and be at rest. Set it beyond the sea, and boats will be built and the voyage undertaken with alacrity (cf. Deut. xxx. 11—13). Make salvation to consist in a bringing of Christ down from above, and men like Titans will try to scale Olympus. Make salvation to consist in a descent to the lower world to bring Christ up from the dead, and many will try a journey like Orpheus after the lost Eurydice, to bring the Saviour from the shadows. But we have got to see that the risen Saviour is not so far away or so hard to find as this. As Charles Kingsley once wrote to a lady, "My object has been and is, and I trust in God ever will be, to make people see that they need not, as St. Paul says, go up into heaven, or go down to the deep, to find Christ; because he, the Word whom we preach, is very near them, in their hearts and on their lips, if they would but believe it; and ready, not to set them afloat on new and untried oceans of schemes and projects, but ready to inspire them to do their duty humbly and simply where he has put them—and, believe me, the only way to regenerate the world is to do the duty which lies nearest us, and not to hunt after grand, far-fetched ones for ourselves."[2] In the Word of the gospel the risen Saviour comes near to every one of us. We do not require any prodigious effort to reach him. We have simply to open the eye of faith, and there he is.

IV. THE RISEN SAVIOUR MUST BE CONFESSED WHEN FOUND. (Vers. 10, 11.) Faith in a risen Saviour who is waiting to be found of us must prove its genuineness by the confession of his Name. It is when we take the Lord's side deliberately that we have tested the reality of our faith. There is a cowardly tendency to believe, but not confess; to get the benefits of salvation without running a single risk for our Saviour. But such a selfish, easy-going faith is mere delusion. Whoever really believes in Jesus will not be ashamed to confess him. And consequently we are encouraged first to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and then to confess him as our risen Saviour before men. There is undoubtedly a disposition to separate salvation from confession of Christ. It is thought to be wise and prudent to accept of the benefits Christ can offer, and at the same time to be silent about them. "Secret discipleship" is thought to be a masterpiece of wisdom. Everything is thus gained, and nothing risked or lost. But is everything gained? Is nothing risked or lost? Is the secret disciple ever likely to become a man of nobility and courage? Does he secure even self-respect? Must he not feel very much as a debtor who is always trying to shirk his obligations and ignore the debt? Or take the matter in the concrete. Was Nicodemus noble as he visited Jesus by night, and kept his discipleship a secret from

[1] See Kingsley's striking sermon on "Shame," in his 'Sermons for the Times,' 2nd edit., p. 231, etc.

[2] Cf. Charles Kingsley's 'Life,' i. p. 431.

the Sanhedrin? Was Joseph of Arimathæa noble as he gave his heart to the despised Saviour, but continued afraid to confess him? Neither man became noble until the Crucifixion brought decision, and they vied with each other what respect they could show to the remains of their great Master. Or would Saul of Tarsus have ever become the noble apostle of the Gentiles if he had sneaked into Damascus after his conversion, and resolved to risk nothing for his new-found Saviour? The manly character which Saul cultivated by confessing Christ was an infinite gain. It thus appears that confession of Christ is the wise test of the reality of our faith in him. May we all stand the test, and not be ashamed of him!—R. M. E.

Vers. 12—21.—*The natural history of faith.* From an account of the plan of salvation as faith in and confession of a risen Saviour, the apostle, in the verses now before us, proceeds to consider the natural history of the faith which Jew and Gentile are led to place in the one Lord. For it is most important to know how faith is induced. And here we notice—

I. THE RISEN LORD IS WITHIN EVERY ONE'S CALL. (Vers. 12, 13.) There is no difference in his accessibility to both Jew and Gentile. "He is rich unto all that call upon him." With the sovereigns of this world court-favourites are the rule, and I suppose there is no exception. Only certain individuals get near the king, and are favoured with an audience. But this risen Lord over all can be rich unto every one that cares to call upon him. Let Jew or Greek only cry to him, and the needful help will come. This suggests the following comforting thoughts. 1. *The throne on which our Lord now sits is a throne of grace.* He is to sit, indeed, one day on a throne of judgment; meanwhile let us rejoice that he sits on a "throne of grace." It is to help the needy and the lost that he now sits enthroned. We are now under a "reign of grace." We hear a good deal in the present day of a "reign of law:" what consolation it is to think that, so far as Christ is concerned, we are all under a "reign of grace"! 2. *He can hear directly every one that calls upon him.* Of course, such a fact implies that our risen Saviour is indeed Divine. By virtue of his Divinity, he can hear everybody, whether Jew or Gentile, who cares to call upon him, and can deal directly with them. The many-voiced cry of lost and tempted souls reaches his ear and is all interpreted. It is easy to state the case of Christ hearing prayer, but it is overwhelming to imagine what such an arrangement demands from the blessed Being upon the throne. Yet it is sober fact—the whole cry of the race, the bitter cry of lost and tried souls, enters the sympathizing mind of our Divine Saviour and King. 3. *He is rich to all the petitioners.* Just as when on earth he allowed no one to go empty away, so from his throne of grace on high there is no real petitioner dismissed without relief. He encourages Jew and Gentile alike to call upon him, and then treats us in a way that becomes a King. He does far more "exceeding abundantly for us above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." If we ask him to save us, he does so with an everlasting salvation. If we ask him to pardon us, he does so with overflowing love. If we ask him to sanctify us, he enables us to die daily unto sin and to live unto righteousness. If we ask him to make us useful, he opens doors of usefulness for us of the most surprising character. In short, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

II. BUT AN OMNIPRESENT SAVIOUR NEEDS THE BEAUTIFUL FEET OF HIS HERALDS TO BE UPON ALL THE MOUNTAINS IF MEN ARE TO KNOW HIS NEARNESS. (Vers. 14, 15.) We have seen that the risen Saviour is within every one's call. But he is not palpable to sense. He is unseen. His presence is spiritual. Only by heralds going forth to proclaim the glad tidings of his presence are men led to call upon him. And the heralds address the ears of men. By this particular avenue of hearing does the message come. If men never hear of Jesus, they cannot be expected to realize his presence or to trust him. And so a propaganda is necessary, and the missionary enterprise is just such a propaganda to bring before Jew and Gentile the splendid fact that a risen Saviour is within each man's call. The natural history of faith is, then, this: "'Faith'—the faith which, overcoming the world, justifies and purifies and saves—'cometh by hearing,' cometh in the way of communication from man to man, as

distinguished from any natural reflective enlightenment; while that 'hearing cometh by the Word of God,' ariseth out of an express revelation uttered from heaven, in contrast to every system, device, or imagination of unassisted human reason."[1] This being so, we can understand how the apostle quotes the rapturous words of the prophet about the beautiful feet of the heralds of glad tidings. The institution of the preaching of the gospel is the most beautiful now existing among men.

III. THE GLAD TIDINGS HAVE NOT HAD A UNIVERSAL RECEPTION. (Vers. 16—18.) In some cases the heralds have had small success. As Esaias cries, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" so has many a minister lamented his scant success. For, amid the multitude of competing things and persons palpable to sense, an unseen Saviour gets ignored by many. The problem was not, in the missionary age of Paul, as to many not hearing of a Saviour at all—rather was it that so many heard of him, yet gave no heed. For the apostle in this passage quotes what in the nineteenth psalm is applied to nature, as if the gospel message, at least in his day, had been as widely proclaimed as the limits of the world allowed. And when we consider the population of the world in Paul's time, and how it was practically within the grasp of the Roman empire, and that information filtered down to the distant colonies more surely perhaps than, though not so speedily as, news does nowadays; and when we add to this the magnificent missionary spirit which animated Paul and his associates, he had reason to take up the universal terms and apply them to the propagation of the gospel. So that the gospel was more widely proclaimed in the first century in proportion to the population of the globe than it is as yet in the nineteenth. The contrast which now obtains between the revelation of God in nature and the revelation of God in the gospel in their respective relations to mankind—the one being universal, the other partial in its application—has been largely, if not entirely, due to the lack of enterprise and missionary spirit on the part of the Church. And yet too much may be made of this contrast, and men may fail to see that the proclamation of a revealed religion is the one way in which God is likely to receive attention from his creatures. The following quotation from Archer Butler upon the point will be welcome. "If God were to interfere at all, they [the deists] maintain, it would be by some *universal* agency, simple, general, and obvious, as the laws of his visible creation. They smile at the notion of God's greatest exhibition of his will to man being acted upon the reduced theatre of a petty province, and made dependent on the chances of human testimony. 'In the moral as in the physical world,' exclaims the leader of the sentimental school of deism, 'it is ever on a great scale, and by simple means, that Deity operates.' But what if we retort that it is *those very laws of nature* 'on a great scale'—those very 'simple means'—that have caused God to be forgotten? Not justly, we admit; for they *ought* eminently to have convinced men of his presence and power: but what of that? We are not now speaking of argumentative propriety, but of actual fact; not of man as he ought to be, but of man as he is. And it *is* an undeniable fact that it is the permanence and uniformity of the natural laws of the creation that have beguiled men into speculative, and, still more, into practical atheism; that it is the very perfection of the laws which has hidden the Legislator. The hand that God has constructed so wondrously can write, 'There is no God;' let it be smit with sudden paralysis, and the notion of an intervening Avenger will arise; nay, let us at any time behold some strange unique in any of the departments of experience, and it startles our habitual slumber. That is to say, as long as the work is *perfect*, we recognize no worker; but the moment it becomes deficient (the very thing which ought logically to produce the doubt), we begin to conceive and admit his reality. The more apparently capricious the works of nature, the more they resemble man's; and the more they remind us of direct agency analogous to the human. Now, if this be so, could it be expected that, to produce an acknowledgment of his being and attributes, the Deity would continue to employ the same medium of regular and ordinary laws, the same vast and uniform processes in the physical and moral world, which in all ages have tended (such the miserable subjection of man to an unreasoning imagination) to render his agency suspected by some, and practically forgotten by the many? To make himself felt he must *disturb* his laws; in other words, he must perform or permit 'miracles.' But then he must likewise exhibit them *sparingly*, as, if they continued to appear on

[1] Cf. Archer Butler's 'Sermons,' vol. i. p. 393.

assignable principles of stated recurrence, and in definite cycles, nay, if they appeared *frequently*, though unfixedly,—they would enter, or seem to enter, into the procession of the laws of nature, and thus lose their proper use and character. What follows? It follows that miracles cannot be presented to every successive age, far less to each individual person; they must, then, be presented only to some *particular age or ages*, and to some particular personal witnesses. But we have seen that they ought to be publicly and continually *known*; therefore (there being but one way of transmitting past events to present times) revealed religion and the knowledge of God, which we have seen is only thus to be practically and influentially attained, must be dependent upon human *testimony*. There is no step of this deduction which might not be made by a man who had never heard of any actual revelation having been given to man; it is purposely built upon the simplest principles of our common nature. . . . This seems to me to amount to something not unlike *demonstration*, that a traditional revelation, built on testimony transmitted from man to man—that is, of a Bible and sermon religion—far from being improbable (as the impugners of an 'historical creed' so eloquently insist), is actually the form of religion imperatively demanded by the *very structure of human nature*."[1]

IV. THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL BY THE GENTILES HAS BEEN PROVIDENTIALLY ORDERED AS A STIMULUS TO THE JEWS. (Vers. 19—21.) The faith which has come by hearing the gospel to the Gentile nations was intended to rouse to holy jealousy the unbelieving Jews. The one section of mankind has been and is being played off against the other in the all-wise providence of God. And nothing is more certain than that the Jews shall yet surrender to the claims of our risen Saviour, and enter the Christian Church as obedient followers of the once crucified but now exalted Messiah. Let us, then, have confidence in our Lord, not only regarding our personal salvation, but also regarding the ingathering of the nations.—B. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XI.

Vers. 1—36.—(4) *The Jews are not finally rejected, but, through the calling of the Gentiles, will be brought into the Church at last.* St. Paul, painfully recognizing the fact of the present exclusion of Israel as a nation from the inheritance of the promises made to their fathers, and having in ch. ix. and x. accounted for and justified such exclusion, proceeds now to the question—But is Israel as a nation finally rejected after all? He answers—No; impossible! God's ancient covenant with his people stands; the remnant of believers even now is a sign of his continued favour to his ancient people, as was, in the time of Elijah, the remnant that had not bowed the knee to Baal; nor does the fact of its being a remnant only imply now, any more than then, that the nation as such is cast off; and further, the calling of the Gentiles, far from being intended to exclude God's ancient people, will be the means eventually of bringing it wholly in. Such is the apostle's prophetic vision of the future, in view of which he bursts at the end of the chapter into glowing admiration of the inscrutable ways of God. In the course of it also (vers. 17—25) he introduces a warning to Gentile believers not to pride themselves against the Jews because of present preference to them, or to regard their own position of privilege as indefeasible. It must still be borne in mind that it is the position before God of Israel *as a nation* that is all along in view.

Vers. 1—6.—**I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew** (or, *predetermined*. See the same word, ch. viii. 29). **Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of** (rather, *in*; i.e. in the passage concerning) **Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God** (ὁ χρηματισμός, denoting a Divine communication to man; in this case by the "still small voice." Only here in the New Testa-

[1] 'Sermons,' vol. i. pp. 395—397.

ment; but cf. Matt. ii. 12, χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ; also Luke ii. 26; Acts x. 22; Heb. viii. 5; xi. 7) **unto him? I have left to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.** The usual interpretation of this whole passage, and notably that of the ancients, has been to take the proof of God not having cast off his people as beginning in ver. 1, with "for I also," etc., and all the rest to be in sequence. Chrysostom's explanation of the argument is to the following effect: God has not rejected his ancient people; for I myself am eminently of it; and I have been selected as a chief proclaimer and expounder of the gospel to the world; this would not have been the case if the nation had been cast off. But it may be said to me, "You are only one of the ancient people; you are not the people." Nay, but I do not stand alone; there are thousands of Israelite believers as well as myself; and these are God's true people, the people whom he foreknew. And of them there may be more than we are aware of: it is as it was in the days of Elias; he had supposed himself to be left alone; but he was told that there were seven thousand with him who were God's true people still. And so now, there is a faithful remnant, the number of which is known to God alone, which is his people still, according to the election of grace. The same Father further understands the citation of the whole of the passage from 1 Kings xix. 14, though not required for the apostle's proof, to be intended as significant. It would have sufficed, he says, to cite only what was said about a remnant being left; but the whole complaint of Elias is cited, so as to show by the way that the present rejection of Christ and persecution of the Church by the majority of the Jews had also its counterpart in ancient times; and thus the apostle, he says, λανθανόντως τὴν κατηγορίαν αὐτῶν (*i.e.* of the unbelieving Jews) ἄγει. It is to be observed that the above interpretation of the passage, which in its main points has been most generally adopted, goes on two suppositions; viz. that "for I also," in ver. 1, is the first part of the proof that Israel is not cast off; and that "which he foreknew," in ver. 2, is intended as a limitation of the meaning of "his people." According to another view, decidedly upheld by Meyer, "for I also" is not part of the proof, but connected with μὴ γένοιτο: "I must needs say, God forbid! being myself a Hebrew of the Hebrews." Then, according to this view, comes the positive statement that God *has not* cast off his people in the same general sense as before, after which the proof begins; the addition of ὃν προέγνω not being a limitation of τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, but intended to enforce the idea of the impossibility of the final rejection of the race of Israel (cf. ver. 29; also Ps. xciv. 14 and 1 Sam. xii. 22). The fact that, throughout the chapter, it is Israel as a nation that is in view, and that the coming of the whole nation into the kingdom of Christ is contemplated in the end, adds decided probability to this view of the significance of ὃν προέγνω, though καὶ γὰρ ἐγώ, etc., in ver. 1, may still be regarded as possibly part of the proof. St. Paul's designation of himself as "of the seed of Abraham" seems meant to express that he was an Israelite of pure descent, not a proselyte or descended from proselytes. In Phil. iii. 5, as well as here, he specifies his tribe as that of Benjamin, the tribe that with Judah had clung to the house of David, and had shared the privileges of Judah. The quotation from 1 Kings xix. is given freely from the LXX., varying a little, but not so as to affect the meaning. One variation is in the feminine, instead of masculine, article before Βάαλ, which has been explained by supposing εἰκόνι understood (so in the Authorized Version, "the *image of* Baal"), or by there having been a female Baal, or by the god having been supposed androgynous, or by the feminine being used of idols in contempt. St. Paul may possibly have found this reading in his copy of the LXX. The variation is of no importance with regard to the drift of the passage. "According to the election of grace," at the end of ver. 5, does not seem to be directly suggested by the passage cited, but added by St. Paul so as to make plain his position — maintained throughout the Epistle, and about to be pressed in this chapter on the consideration of Gentile Christians—that the calling of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, is "of grace," and not claimable as of right by any on the ground of the merit of their own works. And in order to enforce this position, he adds, **And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace**; *i.e.* the word "grace" loses its essential meaning. [**But if of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**] The preponderance of ancient authorities is against the retention of the clause within brackets, which does not seem required. It is the same as in ch. iv. 4.

Ver. 7.—**What then?** (What is the present state of things?) **That which Israel seeketh for** (*i.e.* δικαιοσύνην; *cf.* ch. ix. 30, 31) **he hath not obtained; but the election** (*i.e.* the elect of the Gentiles, with a remnant only of the Jews—ἡ ἐκλογὴ being abstr. pro concret., like ἡ περιτομή, ἡ ἀκροβυστία, elsewhere) **hath obtained it, and the rest were hardened** (ἐπωρώθησαν). The verb denotes callousness rather than blindness, usually

in the New Testament referring to the *heart* (cf. especially John xii. 40, Τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς, καὶ πεπώρωκεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν). And such hardening is no new and strange thing, or to be taken as implying failure of God's promises to his people; for it is but what Scripture tells us of.

Vers. 8—10.—**According as it is written, God gave them a spirit of slumber** (rather, *stupor*. The word is κατανύξις, cited from Isa. xxix. 10 in the LXX. Cf. Ps. lx. 3, where the LXX. has οἶνον κατανύξεως. It is from the verb κατανύσσειν, which means properly "to prick" (see Acts ii. 37, κατενύγησαν τῇ καρδίᾳ). The noun seems to have got its sense as above from the idea of a pricking shock, causing stupefaction), **eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.** The references in ver. 8 are a combination of Deut. xxix. 3 and Isa. xxix. 10, quoted freely from the LXX.; that in ver. 9 is to Ps. lxix. 23, 24, also quoted freely. (For similar combination and free quotation of texts, so as to bring out Old Testament ideas, cf. ch. iii. 10—19; ix. 32, 33.) It is not necessary that the passages here referred to should be regarded as directly prophetic of the time of Christ. It is enough for the purpose of the argument that God's people should be shown to be liable to the state of stupefaction described, without ceasing to be his people. And so the thought, which has been in view all along, is now taken up, of the present hardening of Israel as a nation not being intended to be permanent.

Vers. 11, 12.—**I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall?** *i.e. in such wise as to fall*, rightly given in the Vulgate as *sic ut caderent*. There is no need here to press the *telic* use of ἵνα in ἵνα πέσωσι, so as to require the translation, "that they might fall." It is rather the use of *contemplated result*.[1] **God forbid. But by their fall** (rather, *trip*, or *false step*). The word is παράπτωμα, suitably used here in view of the figure of stumbling. The idea is that they had stumbled over the "stumbling-block" above spoken of, but not so as to lie hopelessly prostrate. Calvin translates well, "Num impegerunt ut corruerent?" and "eorum lapsu." Alford adopts "lapse" for παράπτωμα. But the word, as used in English, is not equivalent. If we retain the rendering "fall," we must understand a partial or temporary fall, not prostration from which there is no recovery. **Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.** (The word παραζηλῶσαι, with the idea conveyed by it, is from Deut. xxxii. 21, which see.) **Now if the fall** (παράπτωμα, as above) **of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?** The words ἥττημα and πλήρωμα, rendered in the Authorized Version "diminishing" and "fulness," have been variously understood. They are in contrast with each other, and must evidently be understood with reference to the same idea. Now, πλήρωμα, as used afterwards in ver. 25 (ἄχρις οὗ τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰσέλθῃ), seems plainly to mean the *full complement* of the Gentiles; and so here must surely be meant the *full complement* of the Jews, pointing to the same idea as πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ in ver. 26. If so, ἥττημα must mean the defect from such full complement—not, indeed (as some have explained), the small number (*i.e.* of believers) now opposed to the full number in the future, but abstractedly, *defect*, or *fewness*, as opposed to *fulness*. This interpretation agrees with the meaning of ἥττημα in the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament, viz. 1 Cor. vi. 7, where it seems to signify "defect," though used in that passage with a moral reference. The reason why the present ἥττημα of the Jews is the riches of the Gentiles is that the refusal of the Jews to accept the gospel had been the occasion of its being offered to the Gentiles (cf. Acts xiii. 46; xxviii. 28; also Matt. xv. 24; xxii. 9). It is not, of course, meant that the gospel was not originally intended for all the world, but only that the present and immediate promulgation of it to the Gentiles had been due to the Jews' refusal. Otherwise, we may conceive, it would have been after the fulness of the Jews had come in that it would have been extended through them to the Gentiles (cf. ch. xv. 8, 9). Cf. Isa. lx., where, as in other prophetic passages, the vision presented is that of the scattered sons of Israel being first brought into the glorified holy city, and the Gentiles gathering round them through the ever-open gates.

Vers. 13, 14.—**But** (δὲ is better supported than γάρ) **I speak to you the Gentiles. Inasmuch** (or, *so far*) **then** (οὖν, which is not in the Textus Receptus, being read, and so connecting this clause with what follows) **as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy** (in the Authorized Version, *emulation*, but it

[1] The various uses of ἵνα are well explained in one of a series of articles on the translation of the Revised Version by Professor Evans of Durham, published in the *Expositor* (see No. xviii., for July, 1882).

is the same word as in ver. 11) **my flesh** (*i.e. my kindred*), **and may save some of them.** To the Gentiles, whom he now directly addresses, he thus intimates that, though he is especially their apostle, yet beyond them he has his own countrymen still in view, whose conversion, through theirs, he has ever close to his heart. *I glorify* (δοξάζω) *my ministry*—i.e. my apostleship to the Gentiles—may mean that I add glory to it, if I may, through it, attain that further purpose.

Ver. 15.—**For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?** The vivid force of this concluding expression is weakened by attempts to define what is exactly meant by it; as, for instance (as some interpret), that the general resurrection will come when the fulness of the Jews as well as the Gentiles has come in. It is best to leave the grandeur of the conception to be felt rather than explained.

Ver. 16.—**And if the firstfruit be holy, so also is the lump; and if the root be holy, so also are the branches.** By the *firstfruit* and the *root* is signified the original stock of Israel, the patriarchs; by the *lump* and the *branches*, the subsequent nation through all time. The word ἀπαρχή, being here connected with φύραμα, may be understood as referring to Numb. xv. 19—22. The people are there enjoined to take of the first dough (φύραμα) kneaded after harvest a cake for a heave offering, called ἀπαρχὴ φυράματος (LXX.). This consecrated ἀπαρχή sanctified the whole φύραμα.

Vers. 17, 18.—**But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree** (*i.e.* of the stock of a wild olive tree; cf. ch. v. 34) **wast graffed in among them, and wast made partaker with them of the root and the fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches. But if thou boastest, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.** In thus addressing the Gentile in the second person singular, the apostle brings his warning home to any individual Gentile Christian who might be inclined to boast; though regarding him still as representing Gentile believers generally. They are compared to slips of the wild olive tree (ἡ ἀγριέλαιος, *oleaster*), which was unproductive (cf. "Infelix superat foliis oleaster amaris"), acquiring richness and fertility by being graffed into the cultivated tree (ἡ καλλιέλαιος, *olea*). Whether or not such a reversal of the usual system of grafting would have the imagined effect does not matter, as long as the illustration serves St. Paul's purpose well, and helps us to grasp his conception. The common process is

> ". . . to marry
> A gentle scion to the wildest stock,
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind,
> By bud of nobler race."

In the illustration before us a scion of wildest stock is supposed to be made to conceive through the stock of nobler race to which it is united. The selecting the olive tree for illustration is happy, inasmuch as it was not only a characteristic produce of Palestine, but also regarded as symbolical of a plant of grace; cf. Ps. lii. 8, "I am a green olive tree in the house of God;" also Jer. xi. 16; Hos. xiv. 6. See also the parable of Jotham (Judg. ix. 8, 9), where the trees apply first to the olive tree to be their king; and observe also there the word "fatness," used here also by St. Paul: Μὴ ἀπολείψασα τὴν πιότητα μου ἐν ᾗ δοξάσουσι τὸν Θεὸν ἀνδρες πορεύσομαι κινεῖσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ξύλων; (LXX.). The "branches" against which the ingrafted scion is warned not to boast are not exclusively either the broken-off or the remaining ones, but, as the sequel shows, the natural branches of the tree generally. The Gentile Christian is not to contemn the race of Israel because so large a portion of it is at present apart from the Church and under judgment; for it is, after all, from the stock of Israel, into which he has been engrafted, that he derives all his own fertility. As to the Christian Church being ever regarded as derived from that of Israel, the fulfilment and outcome of the ancient covenant, see note on ch. i. 2; and cf. John iv. 22, "For salvation is of the Jews."

Ver. 19.—**Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in.** Though I might not boast against the original branches that remain, and among whom I have been graffed, yet I may against those which, for their unworthiness, have been broken off to make room for me: though not boasting against the faithful Jews, I surely may against the unfaithful and rejected ones.

Vers. 20, 21.—**Well**—the fact of the case is as you say; but why?—**because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee.** (So, rather than as in the Authorized Version, according to the best-supported readings.) Thou art on thy trial, as they were, and alike liable to be broken off for the like cause; their present rejection should inspire in thee, not boastfulness, but fear. The question has been raised whether St. Paul (using, as he does, the terms σὺ and τινες τῶν κλάδων) has now the election and final salvation of individuals in view, or still only the calling to

a state of salvation of races or communities of men—of the Jewish race on the one hand, and Gentile Churches on the other. The whole purport of this section of the Epistle (ch. IX., X., XI.) seems to demand the latter view. (As to σὺ, see on ver. 17.) Besides, if by the broken-off branches were meant simply individual unbelievers, how could we explain their being "graffed in again" (vers. 23, 24), seeing that the contemplated restoration is regarded in vers. 25, 26 as something that is to take place in the possibly distant future, after "the fulness of the Gentiles" has come in? Thus this passage is really irrelevant to any doctrines about individual election and salvation that may have been built upon it. It is, however, important as confirming the general view of Divine election not being irrespective of the conditions of human faith and perseverance.

Vers. 22, 23.—**Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity** (to be a warning to thee); **but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they, if they abide not still in their unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.** The reference here to God's *power* to graff them in again may be suggested by the apparent impossibility, from a human point of view, of the Jews as a nation, having rejected Christ in person, and being so inveterately set against the gospel as they were, ever coming into the Church. But "with God all things are possible" (cf. Matt. xix. 26; Mark x. 27; Luke xviii. 27). Nay—so the thought goes on—it would seem in itself more likely, and according to the nature of things, that the Jews should be brought into the Church, which is really their own, and the true fulfilment of their own oracles, than that Gentiles, who had had no similar preparation, should have been so.

Ver. 24.—**For if thou wast cut out of that which was by nature a wild olive tree** (ἀγριελαίου), **and wast graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree** (καλλιελαίου): **how much rather shall these, which be branches by nature, be graffed into their own olive tree?** In what follows next the eventual coming of the Jewish nation into the Church is not only anticipated as possible or probable, but foretold prophetically. St. Paul announces it as a "mystery," which his readers may be ignorant of, but which he wishes them to know. By the word μυστήριον, as used by St. Paul, is meant something hidden from man in the Divine counsels till made known by revelation (see 1 Cor. ii. 7, 10; xv. 51; and, in this Epistle, ch. xvi. 25, 26—a passage which expresses clearly the apostle's meaning in his use of the word). In the LXX. it denotes any Divine secret, which may or may not be made known to man (cf. Dan. ii. 18, 19, etc.; Job xi. 6; Wisd. ii. 22; Ecclus. xxii. 22; xxvii. 16). So also in the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 11; Mark iv. 11; Luke viii. 10) it is said to be given to the disciples to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven, but to others in parables. In classical Greek μυστήρια were Divine secrets (as in the Eleusinian Mysteries) which were revealed to the initiated alone. St. Paul uses the word with the same essential meaning; only he speaks of *mysteries* which had already been revealed to himself and others by the Spirit, and has ever in view the Divine purposes, previously unknown, for the salvation of mankind. Thus in Eph. i. 9, *seq.*; and iii. 3, *seq.*, he speaks of the Divine purpose to "gather in one all things in Christ," and that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs," etc., as a *mystery*, "not made known in other ages unto the sons of men," but now revealed to the "holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." (The other passages in which St. Paul uses the word are 1 Cor. iv. 1; xiii. 2; Eph. v. 32; vi. 19; Col. i. 26, 27; ii. 2; iv. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 9, 16; 2 Thess. ii. 7.) Here he announces the Divine purpose to save "all Israel" at last through the calling of the Gentiles as a *mystery* which has been revealed to himself and others, and which he desires the Gentile Christians to be aware of, lest they should be "wise in their own conceits," *i.e.* presume on their present position of privilege through ignorance of what is in store for Israel.

Vers. 25—27.—**For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that hardness** (πώρωσις; see ver. 8) **in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.** Πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ here must mean the whole nation; not, as Calvin explains, "complebitur salus *totius Israel Dei* [*i.e.* of the spiritual Israel, as in Gal. vi. 16] quam ex utrisque [*i.e.* with Jews and Gentiles] colligi oportet;" for "Israel" must surely be understood in the same sense as in the preceding verse, where it denotes the Jewish nation as opposed to the Gentiles. Σωθήσεται, means coming into the Church (cf. Acts ii. 47, Ὁ δὲ κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ' ἡμέραν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ). **As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.** Referring, as throughout the Epistle, to the Old Testament for confirmation, St. Paul here, as in former instances, combines pas-

sages, and quotes freely, perhaps from memory. The main citation is from Isa. lix. 20, 21, with an addition from Isa. xvii. 9, the LXX. being followed. The citations are relevant, being specimens of many others that might have been adduced, predicting the final pardon and restitution of the house of Israel itself, notwithstanding judgments, through the Redeemer who was to come.

What follows, to ver. 33, is in the way of summary and further comment.

Vers. 28, 29.—**As touching the gospel indeed** (with regard to acceptance of the gospel now) **they are enemies for your sakes** (for their having become God's enemies by rejecting and opposing it has been the occasion of your having been now called in): **but as touching the election** (God's original choice of Israel to be his people. Ἐκλογὴ here cannot well have a concrete sense, as in ver. 7), **they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts** (*χαρίσματα*, meaning "free gifts," or "*gifts* of grace;" the word used to denote the special gifts of the Holy Ghost showered after Pentecost in the apostolic Church; but expressing generally, as here, whatever God, of his own good will, grants freely) **and the calling of God are without repentance** (i.e. unrepented of by him and irrevocable; cf. Numb. xxiii. 19, 20; also 1 Sam. xv. 29). This denial of anthropopathy in God is asserted as a general truth, to be applied to his calling of "the fathers," i.e. the patriarchs, and their seed after them, to be his people. It is true that, as is shown in ch. iv., there is a spiritual seed of Abraham, not necessarily of the house of Israel, to whom the promises in their ultimate scope were to be fulfilled; but the apostle regards it as impossible that the promises made primarily to the chosen people themselves should be revoked or fail of eventual fulfilment to them.

Vers. 30, 31.—**For as ye in times past believed not God** (so, except that the aorist ἠπειθήσατε is translated "have not believed," in the Authorized Version; but with an alternative in the margin of "obeyed" for "believed." The substantive ἀπείθεια, which follows twice, should be translated "disobedience" rather than "unbelief," if ἠπειθήσατε is translated "disobeyed." Properly and usually ἀπείθεια conveys a different idea from ἀπιστία, denoting "disobedience" or "contumacy," and not merely want of faith. But it appears to be sometimes used in the sense of ἀπιστία. For instance, in John iii. 36, ὁ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ is opposed to τῷ πιστεύοντι εἰς τὸν υἱόν. Most modern commentators, with reason, understand "disobedience" here. The difference does not affect the drift of the argument), **but now have obtained mercy through their unbelief** (or, *disobedience*): **even so have these also now not believed** (or, *obeyed*), **that through your mercy** (i.e. the mercy shown to you) **they also may obtain mercy.** The position of ἵνα after τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει has led commentators, ancient and modern, to connect τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλέει with the preceding ἠπειθήσαν, and to try to hit upon a meaning in this connection. But the sense of the passage, as well as the parallelism of the preceding clause, favours the connection of the Authorized Version, as given above. (For a similar position of ἵνα, cf. 2 Cor. xii. 7.)

Ver. 32.—**For God hath concluded them all in** (literally, *shut them all up into*) **unbelief** (or, *disobedience*), **that he might have mercy upon them all.** Chrysostom and other Greek Fathers understood συνέκλεισε to mean only *declared them to be* unbelieving (or, *disobedient*), or *convicted* them of being so. Thus Chrysostom, τουτέστιν, ἤλεγξεν, ἔδειξεν ἀπειθοῦντας. So, it may be said, must the verb be understood where St. Paul elsewhere uses it with a similar reference in Gal. iii. 22, ἡ γραφὴ being there the nominative to the verb. But ὁ Θεὸς being the nominative here, the more obvious meaning seems to be that the shutting up was God's doing. Some, understanding it so, would soften the expression by explaining that God allowed them to become so shut up. Τὸ συνέκλεισε νοητέον ὅτι τοὺς βουληθέντας ἀπειθεῖν εἴασεν ἀπειθεῖν (Diodorus). But we need not shrink from the plain meaning of the expression, viz. that it was God's own act. He is not thus represented as plunging men into inevitable infidelity, having given them no choice. As in the case of the *hardening* spoken of above, his dealings are *judicial*; the state into which they are now by him shut up has not been undeserved. And, further, his ultimate purpose is here distinctly declared to be one of mercy. The way in which the apostle regards such present judicial dealing as conducive to final mercy appears to be such as this. It is the doctrine of the whole Epistle that salvation is to be attained by man's renouncing his own imagined righteousness, and submitting himself to the righteousness of God. It conduces to this end that his ἀπείθεια should have its course and consequences; so that, conscience being at length awakened, he may long for deliverance from his hopeless state, and appreciate the offered salvation (see ch. vii.). So the Gentile world was long shut up in its self-induced, but also judicial, ἀπείθεια (ch. i. 18, *seq.*); that, "the wrath of God" being at length revealed to it from heaven, the "righteousness of God" might also be revealed to it and laid hold of. In like manner God deals now with the Jews, who

still persist in going about to establish their own righteousness instead of submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. He shuts them up for the present in their ἀπειθεία, to the end that at length, after their long judgment, and stirred up by the fulness of the Gentiles coming in, they may feel their need, and accept salvation. Τοὺς πάντας in the concluding clause seems to mean generally all mankind, Jews as well as Gentiles; and ἵνα τοὺς πάντας ἐλεήσῃ (as σωθήσεται was understood above with respect to "all Israel," as suggested by the context and the general drift of the chapter) God's embracing all races of mankind at last in the arms of his mercy by calling them into the Church. Thus the latter expression is not in itself adducible in support of the doctrine of universalism. Certainly the prospect of a universal triumph of the gospel before the end rises here before the apostle in prophetic vision; and it may be that it carries with it to his mind further glories of eternal salvation for all, casting their rays backward over all past ages, so as to inspire an unbounded hope. Such a hope, which seems elsewhere intimated (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24—29; Eph. i. 9, 10, 20—23; Col. i. 15—21), would justify the glowing rhapsody of admiration and thanksgiving that follows more fully than if we supposed the apostle to contemplate still the eternal perdition of the multitudes who in all the ages have not on earth found mercy.

Vers. 33—35.—**O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge** (or, *of the riches and wisdom and knowledge*) **of God!** By γνώσεως is signified God's omniscience; by σοφίας, his wisdom in ordering events; by πλούτου, if it be taken as a co-ordinate substantive, the abundance of his goodness (cf. ch. ii. 4, πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος; Eph. i. 7, τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ. Co-ordination of the three substantives is suggested by the καὶ before σοφίας; but St. Paul's prevailing usage may rather commend the dependence of σοφίας and γνώσεως or πλούτου, as in the Authorized Version). **How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding** (rather, *tracing*) **out!** (cf. Ps. xxvi. 6; Job ix. 10; xi. 7). **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?** (Isa. xl. 13, quoted accurately from the LXX.). **Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?** (cf. Job xli. 11, where the Hebrew has (Revised Version), "Who hath first given unto me, that I should repay him?" The LXX. (Job xli. 2) gives an entirely different sense of the passage; and it would thus appear, as may be seen also in other cases, that St. Paul, though usually quoting more or less freely from the LXX., was familiar also with the Hebrew text, and exercised judgment in his citations.

Ver. 36.—**For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things.** The view advanced by some, that we have here an intimation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, cannot fairly be maintained. But it is strikingly significant of the apostle's view of the essential Deity of Christ, that in 1 Cor. viii. 6 and Col. i. 16, 17, similar language is applied to him. In the first of these texts it is said of the Father, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα, and of the "Lord Jesus Christ," δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα; and in the second, of "the Son of the Father's love," ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα, and τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται, and also τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν. **To him be the glory for ever. Amen.**

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 15.—"*Life from the dead.*" The new wine of Christianity burst the old, worn skin of Judaism. Israelites were indeed the first preachers of the faith, and its first adherents were largely recruited from the synagogues. Still, as years passed on, it became apparent that, as a whole, the favoured nation was unprepared for a religion so spiritual, so universal, as Christianity. The rejection of the gospel by the Jews was the occasion of the progress of the gospel in the larger, the Gentile world. And the apostle, himself a Hebrew, yet the apostle of the Gentiles, recognizing this fact as included in the plans of Providence, yet looked beyond the present into the future, and saw, in the predicted ingathering of the sons of Abraham, the destined revival of true religion throughout the world. When an event so remarkable, so unlikely, yet so clearly foretold, shall occur, its effect shall be prodigious; it shall be nothing less than "life from the dead." These words contain a principle truly and emphatically Christian. Let them be regarded in this light.

I. THE FOUNDATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IS LAID IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF OUR SAVIOUR. From the throne of his glory Christ describes himself as the Being who "was dead, and is alive again." He must needs suffer, and taste death for every man; but it was not possible that he should be holden of it. His rising was more than a sign

of his authority and of his acceptance with the Father. He rose as the Mediator and the Representative and the Forerunner of his people.

II. THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IS SECURED BY THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Church professes, in the ancient Creed, to "believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life." Without the influences of the Divine Spirit, the moral results secured by Christianity could not have been realized. Like the sunshine and the showers of spring, the Holy Spirit, by his descent and by his shining, fertilizes the barren soil of humanity. Like the breath which came from the four winds, and breathed upon the slain so that they lived, is the influence which awakens the dead bones of the valley, and makes of them an exceeding great army. All spiritual life is evoked and sustained by the living Spirit of God.

III. THE PRINCIPLE REVEALS ITSELF IN THE NEWNESS OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE WHICH IS THE DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. The transforming power of the new faith was at once revealed, and has ever continued to be revealed, in the heart and life of the individuals who have received Christ. The former state, the state of heathenism and irreligiousness, the state of sensuality, or worldliness, or unbelief, may well be designated, and by the inspired writers was designated, "death." And the contrast between that and the state of fellowship with God and of obedience to Christ could not be more strikingly described than in the language of the text, "Life from the dead." It is nothing less than this that Christianity is intended to effect—a change moral, radical, extensive, and enduring.

IV. THE PRINCIPLE IS MANIFESTED ON A LARGER, A SOCIAL SCALE. It is thus that it is represented in the text as operating; it effects a transformation in human society. To many cities and communities in the primitive times, the religion of the Lord Jesus proved an impulse of regeneration. And by it ancient society seems to have been saved from threatening corruption and dissolution. When death was to all appearance imminent, the gospel entered into the heart of humanity as a new vital principle, renewing that which was old, healing that which was sick, and reviving that which was dead. It is still the one, the only, hope for a race "dead in trespasses and sins."

V. THE PRINCIPLE WILL BE EXEMPLIFIED IN THE ETERNAL LIFE OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE. Both the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and that transformation of spiritual character which is called "the first resurrection," are the pledge and earnest of the immortal life of the Lord's people. It is distinctive of our religion that it holds out a definite and assured prospect of a life beyond the present—a life holy, imperishable, and Divine. The prospect of bright and blessed immortality has strengthened the arms of every true Christian labourer, and has cheered the heart of every Christian sufferer. It has been the joy of the living and the hope of the dying.

APPLICATION. 1. The words are a summons to the spiritually dead. There is life in Christ even for such. 2. They are an encouragement to Christian toil. Those who in their service of benevolence are oppressed by the deadness which encounters them, should recur to first principles, and consider the purposes of infinite grace and power, and the promises of spiritual revival. 3. They are a consolation and inspiration to Christians when drawing near to the death of the body.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

VERS. 1—10.—*Israel not utterly rejected.* Here the apostle, reflecting on the disobedience of the great majority of the Jewish people, and their consequent rejection, returns to the thought already expressed (ch. ix. 27), that "a remnant shall be saved." He himself is a living proof, he says, that God hath not utterly cast away his people. "For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (ver. 1). But those who have been rejected have suffered the just and natural punishment of their own unbelief. Two practical lessons are here taught.

I. A WARNING TO THE UNCHARITABLE. Even in the most corrupt Churches there may be true believers. This lesson is practically illustrated by Elijah's mistaken or exaggerated view of the state of Israel in his time. "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand

men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (vers. 3, 4). How little Elijah knew of the true state of affairs! There is always a great danger, even amongst those who are most zealous for the truth, of depreciating or under-estimating the good that is in others. Want of charity to others may sometimes be found even in good men. Their very zeal leads them to depreciate others. If others do not come up to our standard of Christian doctrine, or Christian character, or Christian work, we are apt to imagine that they are not Christians at all. No doubt these other seven thousand servants of God were to blame for not having declared themselves more openly on the Lord's side. Had they taken their proper place, and done their duty, they would have encouraged Elijah's heart and sustained his hands; they would have made him feel that he was not alone in his efforts for the true and right; and they might even have prevented his flight. But there was no excuse for Elijah's wholesale condemnation of every one in Israel except himself. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." Especially in these latter days, when there are so many divisions amongst Christians, we need to cultivate that charity "which thinketh no evil," which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

II. A WARNING TO THE CARELESS. One of the great dangers of our time is indifference. Many who regularly attend our churches do so as a mere matter of custom or respectability. They hear the Word of God, but it has no power on their hearts, no influence upon their lives. The fate of rejected Israel is a solemn warning to the careless and indifferent (vers. 7—10). If we do not use our privileges, they will one day be taken from us. The neglect of talents or opportunities is as much a sin as the abuse of them. Men very soon become gospel-hardened. Hence the "more convenient season" to which they look forward never comes. They cease to think seriously about their souls; they cease to have any desire for salvation. The spirit of slumber comes upon them—that fatal sleep of spiritual indifference. Their eyes are darkened, and they do not see how fast they are hurrying to their own destruction. Oh, how it becomes us to urge upon men the present acceptance of the present offer of salvation, the present performance of the duties that lie at their door!—C. H. I.

Vers. 11—32.—*The Jewish people: their past history and their future prospects.* The Jew is the greatest modern miracle. He is an absolutely unique figure in the history of the world. In every nation you find him, an exile and a fugitive, a stranger and a foreigner. Whence came he? how came he hither? He claims our respect, our attention, our pity, our Christian sympathy. These verses are a strong enforcement of the lessons of Israel's history and a stirring appeal on Israel's behalf.

I. THEIR PAST HISTORY. 1. *They were the chosen people of God.* This is an absolutely unique distinction so far as races of men are concerned. All who are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, of whatever nation they may be, are in that sense the chosen people of God. But no single nation can ever claim to be the chosen people of God, except the Jews. 2. *They were chosen to be a blessing to the world.* The promise to Abraham was, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Wherever they went they carried with them the knowledge of the one true God; they have been a testimony to the nations of God's faithfulness and justice; and at the same time they executed God's judgments upon the nations for the preserving and purifying of the world. The Jews have been *the historians of the world.* A Jewish hand wrote the history of the creation. Jewish hands wrote the history of Israel's connection with Egypt and Assyria and other great nations, which modern discoveries of ancient monuments and relics are confirming more strongly every day. When the Greek historian Herodotus, who has been called "the father of history," was only beginning to write, Nehemiah, the last of the Old Testament historians, was already beginning to write. The Jews have been *the teachers of the world.* Unto them were committed the oracles of God. They prepared the way, too, for the coming of the Saviour. 3. *Even in their humiliation and dispersion they have brought blessing to the world.* "The fall of them" has been "the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles" (ver. 12). "Through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles" (ver. 11). "God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." He is still the God of Israel. The Jews may be despised, they may be hated by men, they may be neglected even

by Christians who owe so much to them; but they are still the chosen people of God, bringing blessings even in their fall to those that despise them.

II. THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS. 1. *There is hope for Israel in the promises of God.* As surely as God predicted the dispersion of the Jews, and that came to pass, so surely has he predicted a restoration of the Jews, and this also will come to pass. Many eminent Christians believe that there will be a literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine. It is remarkable that the late Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, in his book 'The Land of Gilead,' advocates, not for Christian reasons at all, but as a mercantile man, the colonization of Palestine by Jews, on the ground that they are the natural cultivators of the land, and that the country has never prospered except under Jewish proprietorship. But we are more specially concerned with the promises of their spiritual restoration. The Old Testament prophecies are full of these. "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. xlix. 14—16). Again, we are told that it is but for a moment that God's face is hidden from his people; and that in Israel's restoration "all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (Isa. xlix. 26). And here in the New Testament, even after Israel's rejection of the Messiah, St. Paul emphatically reasserts the certainty of Israel's restoration. Though they, the natural branches, were broken off for a time, "God is able to graff them in again" (ver. 23). "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (ver. 25). But when that time comes "all Israel shall be saved" (ver. 26). God will yet be as the dew unto Israel. 2. *In the present position of the Jews there are many things that point to a bright future for God's ancient people.* Though scattered among the nations, they still preserve their identity and individuality. They have not been absorbed or assimilated by the larger and stronger races among whom they are placed. This in itself would seem to point to a great future in store for them. Not only so, but it points to a great blessing in store for the nations by means of them. "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (ver. 15). When M'Cheyne returned from Palestine, he preached a sermon from the words, "To the Jew first," advocating Christian missions to the Jews on the ground that judgment will begin with the Jews, on the ground of God's special love for the Jews, on the ground of peculiar access to the Jews, and on the ground that *the Jews, if converted, will give life to the whole world.* This last is a point which deserves more attention than it receives. From their peculiar position, scattered throughout the nations, and being of an industrious and commercial disposition, the Jews are specially fitted to do missionary work. Reach the Jews as a people, bring them under the influence of the gospel, and through them you reach the whole world. Many writers who have given careful attention to this subject are of opinion that the success of missions to the heathen will be comparatively small until the Holy Spirit will enable the Jews to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, until he employs them as his instrument in the proclamation of the gospel among the nations. The Prophet Zechariah seems to favour that view when he says, "In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. viii. 23).

III. PRACTICAL LESSONS ENFORCED BY THIS SUBJECT. 1. *The necessity of personal faith.* While we consider God's dealings with Israel for their unbelief and disobedience, let us consider our own relationship to God. "Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (vers. 20, 21). Christian profession and Christian privileges will not save us, unless we have a personal and living union with Jesus Christ the Saviour. 2. *The duty of sympathetic efforts on behalf of Israel.* "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, *that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy*" (vers. 30, 31). God will fulfil his promises of the conversion of Israel just as he fulfils all his promises—by the use of means; by the missionary efforts of the Christian Church.—C. H. I.

Vers. 33—36.—*The unsearchable things of God.* These words may be taken as a fitting conclusion to the doctrinal or argumentative part of the Epistle. As we see how the apostle shows first of all, in the condition of both the heathen and the Jewish world, that all have sinned, and that all needed a Divine Saviour; and how he then unfolds the great doctrine of justification by faith and its results; as we see also the great privileges for time and eternity which are bestowed upon the children of God; may we not also exclaim, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

I. HIS UNSEARCHABLE WISDOM. "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God!" says the apostle (ver. 33); and again he asks, "Who hath been his counsellor?" (ver. 34). Beyond all human wisdom is the wisdom of God—a wisdom self-sufficient; derived from no other source; a wisdom of which, indeed, all human wisdom is but the faint reflection, the outcome and the overflow. Take the very wisest of men—men like Socrates, Plato, Seneca, or Bacon: how foolish were some of their thoughts, their proposals, or their actions! Take the very wisest man whom you know, and he will be glad sometimes to take counsel of some one else. Indeed, in this the wise man shows his wisdom. It is fools who despise reproof, and who will not take advice. But God needs no advice. He makes no mistakes. *This thought of the unsearchable wisdom of God teaches us a lesson of faith and trust.* God's dealings are often mysterious to us, but there is an infinite wisdom behind them all. He doeth all things well. *It teaches us also a lesson of obedience.* God's way is always wisest, safest, best, happiest. It might be said to us as Moses said to the children of Israel, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep therefore and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

II. HIS UNSEARCHABLE KNOWLEDGE. We have made much progress in scientific knowledge in this nineteenth century, and yet how very limited, after all, is human knowledge! How many things in chemistry, in geology, in astronomy, are still unrevealed! Even of a single science no man can say that he knows all about it, though he may have given a lifetime to the study of it. And then few men are masters of more than one branch of knowledge. Life is too short to do more than touch the surface of things. But the knowledge of God is unsearchable. "Oh the depth of the riches of the knowledge of God! . . . Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" (vers. 33, 34). Nothing is hidden from him. Every part and path of the universe is known to him. Every nation is known to him—its national history, its national sins. Every family is known to him. The joys and sorrows of every home, he knows them all. The secret thoughts, the secret motives, the secret plans of every life, he knows them all. *This thought carries with it great comfort.* "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." He knows all our difficulties and all our wants. And as we look forward to the future, to the judgment-seat, is there not a comfort in feeling that God's judgment upon us will be a perfectly fair one, because it will be based upon a complete and accurate and perfect knowledge of our lives? Our motives may be misunderstood by men; but God knows all about them. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." *It carries with it also solemn warning.* If God knows all about me, how careful I should be to live as in his sight! How careful I should be to live as in the presence of the judgment-seat! "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known."

III. HIS UNSEARCHABLE MERCY. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Here God's unsearchable wisdom and knowledge are represented as co-operating in his plan of universal mercy. Here again what depths there are that we cannot fathom! How very unmerciful men are at the best! How harsh the judgments even of professing Christians! and how limited and narrow are sometimes their views as to the possibility of the salvation of others! But the mercy of God is wider than all our creeds, and broader than the judgments of individual Christians. What a depth, what a breadth of mercy is revealed in those words of Christ, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life"! *Whosoever!* In that word there is hope for the guiltiest of sinners who will repent of his sin, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. *So, while we speak of the unsearchable things of God, we do not take the agnostic position.* We do not say that God is unknown and unknowable. We do not know the depth of his wisdom and knowledge and mercy; but we do know that he possesses and manifests all these sublime qualities in his dealings with men. There are mysteries in God's providences, but there is one great truth which will bring peace to every soul that acts upon it; which will bring every soul that acts upon it into the eternal presence and fellowship of God: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There are thoughts that are unsearchable about God, and yet they are thoughts that we can feel within our spirits as the very power of God unto salvation, even as we can feel the warm sunshine on our faces though we cannot walk along the bright pathway by which it comes. Jesus Christ is God's "unspeakable Gift;" yet many can say of him, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The love of God is called "the love of God, that passeth knowledge;" and yet many have experienced its power in their hearts. The peace of God is a peace "that passeth all understanding;" yet many have known how, in a time of disquietude or trial, that peace, like a sentinel, has kept our hearts and minds in quiet confidence and calm security. "Now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—10.—*Grace and unbelief.* The apostle has shown (ch. ix. 1—29) that God has the right, in his governance of human affairs, to take an instrument or lay it aside as he will; and (ch. ix. 30—x. 21) that, in using this right, he acts, not arbitrarily, but according to reasons which approve themselves to his infinite wisdom. He will now show that even the unbelief of the elect people, and their consequent rejection by God, shall be made to contribute to the consummation of his purposes in the salvation of the Gentiles and the final salvation of the Jews themselves. But are the Jews even now wholly rejected? No, in truth, but only partially. As a people they are, though this only for the present, but not indiscriminately and totally. For the apostle himself is an Israelite; there is also a remnant of Christian Jews, as in the ancient days a remnant were true to God; and as for the majority, they are blinded in their unbelief, and hence self-excluded from the election of grace.

I. THE ELECTION OF GRACE. 1. There had been times of national reprobation in the past, but in the darkest day there had been gleams of light. For example, the times of Ahab: Elijah's despair, and the seven thousand. So at intervals, more or less, throughout their history, from Moses onwards. And yet in the worst times some were true to God. 2. So it was even now. Truly the Jewish people had forfeited the privilege of its election, viz. its mission to the Gentiles as heralding the gospel of Christ. But while the people was "cast off," as it might seem, in its collective capacity, it was not reprobated in its totality as consisting of individuals. Still there was the remnant. And in these latter days of Christian history have not individual Israelites played a distinguished part? *e.g.* Neander. 3. Yea, even the apostle of the Gentiles himself was an Israelite, of the purest blood; and the very fact that he, an Israelite, was "a chosen vessel" was sufficient to show that God had not "cast off" his people. And in him the Jewish people might almost be said to be fulfilling its office of heralding to the Gentiles the gospel of Christ. He did their work, and right well.

II. THE REPROBATION OF UNBELIEF. While the election, then, was very true, and never withheld from Israelites as such—how could God deal so with them?—yet there was a very terrible reprobation of Israelites alongside the election. 1. Had it not been so in the past? The wilderness-history; the monarchy; the captivities. Yes, truly, reprobation was no new thing. 2. And now: priests, people. Yes, alas! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." But this gives us the secret of the reprobation; it was their unbelief. It had been so from the beginning: "An evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). And this unbelief had blinded them, and hardened them; it had been as a stupor. And the very things in which they boasted themselves, their spiritual privileges, these had been to them a snare. "Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Let us remember that we may frustrate by our unbelief God's best purposes concerning us. And also that we do not merely lose the blessing which our privileges are designed to give, but they themselves are perverted to our blindness and spiritual ruin. Our "table" is "made a snare, and a trap."—T. F. L.

Vers. 11—16.—*How much more!* Blindness and hardness have come upon Israel, so that they have rejected their Christ, and consequently God has rejected them. They have stumbled, and have missed the way of life. But have they stumbled that they might permanently fall? Can God not work to some other, some better end than this? Shall not even their evil be overruled for good? Such is the question propounded by the apostle here; and in the following verses, glancing with prophetic insight into the promise of the future, he sees and declares the answer. Israel may still be the elect people; its very reprobation works for the world's salvation; how much more shall its re-election!

I. Israel may still be the elect people. God chose them from the first, doubtless for some special fitness of spiritual temperament, to be his chief workers in the world. In Abraham he called them forth; in Isaac, in Jacob, he blessed them. The fathers of the race had worked for him, responding to his election: they were thus holy unto the Lord. But they were only the firstfruits; they were the root. The whole portion of the human race represented by them were to be similarly set apart for God's purposes; the branches springing from that root were to blossom and bear fruit likewise. And so, even in the future, this now unbelieving people might fulfil their primal mission, turning unto the Lord.

II. Israel's reprobation works for the world's salvation. So close is the connection in which Israel stands to the world's salvation, that even now, reprobate people as they are, salvation springs from them, and from the very facts which occasioned their own stumbling. The cross—oh, how has that symbol of shame become the object towards which all the nations turn! "To the Jews a stumbling-block:" nevertheless, Christ crucified draws all men unto him! Their very fall, then, is the riches of the world; their loss the riches of the Gentiles. Out of them, even in their ruin, must the world's deliverance come; for "salvation is of the Jews."

III. What sort of salvation, then, shall be for the world when all Israel shall be saved? This is the final outlook of the apostle's prophecy. And for this he does so glory in his apostleship. For the very salvation of the Gentiles now, without the Jews, must in time provoke the Jews to jealousy; they must one day look on with hungry, wistful eyes as they see the multitudes that have come from the east and west, and north and south, sitting down at the table of God. And when they turn unto their own Christ, and receive the new life of his gospel, oh, what an electric thrill shall pass through the whole world! It shall be, even to the converted Gentile nations, as life from the dead. "The light which converted Jews bring to the Church, and the power of life which they have sometimes awakened in it, are the pledge of that spiritual renovation which will be produced in Gentile Christendom by their entrance *en masse*." Think, for example, again, of the labours of such men as Neander (see Godet, *in loc.*).

The future is full of glorious hope. But meanwhile how much loss is occasioned by their continued unbelief! Let us beware that the purposes of God through us are not in like manner frustrated; that, being designed to some high mission for the world's good, we do not make void the election of God.—T. F. L.

Vers. 17—24.—*The solemn warning.* It may be difficult, in such a passage as this, to keep the matters of individual salvation and election to privileges and responsibilities in the kingdom of God distinct. They do naturally bear an intimate relation the one to the other. But we shall be on safer ground in following the tenor of the entire argument here also, and seeing both the Jews of whom he speaks and the Gentiles to whom he speaks as related to God's great world-purposes of salvation. For though it is true that the Jews who believed not forfeited their individual part in the kingdom of God, as well as the honour of extending that kingdom in the world; and that the Gentiles who believed became first partakers of a personal salvation, and then agents in disseminating God's truth in Christ; yet it is the objective kingdom

of Christ, and its extension, to which the apostle looks, and to which he would have them look. They, his readers, were now, in place, as it were, of the unbelieving Israelites, entrusted with the living power; it was for them, in conjunction with the believing Jews, to make known salvation to the world. We have here—their position in the kingdom of God, their danger, and the ultimate aspect of the kingdom.

I. First, the position of these Gentiles in the kingdom of God. "Grafted in among them." They had been "without God in the world;" but now, what a glory was theirs! made "partakers of the Divine nature"! And, being saved, charged as the heralds of God to carry this salvation to the ends of the earth! Truly, they had become "partaker of the fatness of the olive tree." And so they seemed to be in the place of the broken-off branches; they were "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." Out of the very ruin of the Israelites had come their salvation; in the very room of the rejected Israelites they stood. Here was a transfer of blessing.

II. But this very position was fraught with danger. "Glory not;" "Thou standest by thy faith." The danger of false pride was not an imaginary one; Gentiles probably did glory over the Jews. Nay, do they not glory still over these "unbelievers"? Do they not sometimes persecute them even to death? But how false was the pride! They were only grafted branches, borne by the ancient root of Israel. And yet they deported themselves with such consequence, and affected to despise their neighbour branches, as well as those that had been broken off. Another danger was involved in this: false, uncharitable pride was perilously near to a damnable unbelief; it was indeed that unbelief begun. Why had these branches been broken from the ancient tree? "Because of their unbelief." Was not the same excision impending over unbelief still? Instead, then, of pride, let them cherish a holy fear, and walk humbly with their God. For most surely, if God spared not the natural branches, neither would he spare them.

III. Once again, if faith was the condition of a part in the kingdom of God, and unbelief alone incurred exclusion from its benefits and work, then these very Jews, unbelieving as they now were, might, in the time to come, by faith become again partakers: "God is able to graft them in again." God is severe indeed, and all wilfully wicked ones incur his wrath; he cuts off his very chosen ones if they cherish an evil heart of unbelief. But God is good, and none shall ever seek his face in vain. And seeking him, and finding him, they shall surely be restored to their forfeited place. Think of the history of the Gentiles—their long abandonment because of unbelief. But God receives them freely as instruments for his work. "Much more shall the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree."

Let us learn how terribly we may fall, and therefore be not high-minded. But let us also learn how gracious and forgiving is the God of love, and how he will heal our backslidings, and will not remember our sins.—T. F. L.

VERS. 25—32.—*The Divine philosophy of history.* The apostle has cautioned them not to be high-minded because of any seeming preference shown to them; he now guards against their gross speculations as to the nature of Israel's rejection by setting forth emphatically its true character and intent. And in so doing he takes also a bird's-eye view of the religious history and destinies of the world, especially as regards the mutual relations of Jews and Gentiles. We have here the religious dualism and universalism of the natural history of mankind.

I. THE DUALISM. As Godet very strikingly says, "The entire course of the religious history of the world is determined by the antagonism created among mankind by the calling of Abraham, between a people specially destined by God to receive his revelations, and the other nations given over to themselves. From that moment (Gen. xii.) there begin to be described those two immense curves which traverse the ages of antiquity in opposite directions, and which, crossing one another at the advent of Christianity, are prolonged from that period in inverse directions, and shall terminate by uniting and losing themselves in one another at the goal of history." 1. The early period of the history of the world, after the call of Abraham, consisted of the contrast between believing Israel and the unbelieving nations. The Gentiles, as the beginning of the Epistle reminded us, were given over to their ignorance and sin. Why? Because

they "were disobedient to God." Theirs was a negative discipline to fit them for the reception of the truth. They were "shut up unto disobedience," that they might be prepared to receive unmerited mercy at the hands of God. And the discipline did its work. For them there came a "fulness of the times." They became sick of their own endeavours after wisdom and righteousness, and when Christ was preached unto them they received him. How had it been with the Jews? They were chosen by God to receive his truth, and the preparations for his salvation, in trust for the world. Theirs was a positive discipline. But the same sinful nature was in them as in the Gentiles, and it operated against the truth. They became hardened. Their very privileges became a snare to them. And at last, the "fulness of the times" having arrived for them also, when their own Christ came unto them, they received him not! 2. The later period of the world's history, after Christ, consisted of a contrast, which itself was in contrast with the former one. The Jews were given over, are given over still, to their hardness of unbelief. They are the stoutest opponents of the gospel. They are "enemies." God was compelled to cast them off, that the gospel which they refused might be set free for the acceptance of the world. And the Gentiles are reaping the benefits of their rejection still. Not as dogs, eating the crumbs from the children's table, but themselves admitted to the forsaken festal board.

II. THE UNIVERSALISM. The dualism shall not always last; God is preparing the way for the religious fusion of all the peoples of the world; they shall become one in Christ. 1. The gospel which the Jews despised, and the salvation of their own Saviour, is leavening the Gentile world; the nations, one by one, are passing out of heathendom into Christendom. Apart from the question of the conversion to true spiritual religion of individuals, the world is being won for Christ. 2. But what of Israel? "The fulness of the Gentiles" shall "come in; *and so* all Israel shall be saved." Oh, the strange irony of history! By the agency of the Israelites the world should have been won; now by the example and agency of Gentiles the Israelites shall be won. Yes; the hardening was but "in part," some being believers from the first; but likewise only temporary—"until." For they are still the people fitted by their gifts for God's great work, and therefore his call is not revoked. And the very working of their disobedience, as in the case of the heathen nations once, is but to fit them to receive his grace. And according to their own prophecies the Deliverer shall come, and "from Jacob" ungodliness shall be turned away. So then God will "have mercy upon all."

Let us learn his ways of judgment. He will give us up to our sins, if we persist in cherishing them, till we repent. But let us learn also his marvellous love: repenting, he will receive us freely!—T. F. L.

Vers. 33—36.—*A hymn of praise.* The apostle has reached the height of his great argument, and now he will take one eagle glance at the whole way by which he has led his readers—nay, at all the ways of God. We may not coldly dissect such glowing words as these, but pause with reverence to listen to his adoring wonder, his challenge, and his ascription of praise.

I. He has shown forth the belief and unbelief of man, and the marvellous way in which God, foreknowing all, has yet woven the web of history so that the wrath of man shall praise him. But man is lost in awe and wonder in presence of such knowledge and wisdom as are here—

> "A vast, unfathomable sea,
> Where all our thoughts are drowned."

The judgments by which God manifests his knowledge, and the ways by which his wisdom marches on to the accomplishment of his designs, are beyond our searching and tracing out. We may know the fact, but not always the cause; we may discern somewhat of the tendency and drift of his dispensations, but not all their force. And when the end breaks upon us at last, in the time of the accomplishment of all things, we shall see that what we formerly discerned was but a part of his ways, and our intensified astonishment must still exclaim, "O the depth of the riches!"

II. Man, then, has not had, cannot have, fellowship with God in the working out of such a high history. Man may indeed have worked, but God has overworked. And even man's wickedness has been caught up into the general procession of God's designs.

But man has neither known his Maker's mind, nor certainly has he counselled him with wisdom. And yet did the arrogant Israelite think to have merited aught from God? as though he had given him, forsooth, by his vain services, that it must be recompensed him again? This was indeed to arrogate to himself that knowledge of God's mind, and counsellorship of his ways, which were impossible, and to affect which was preposterous, and darkly like blasphemy. But the apostle has already cast these presumptions down, even to the dust.

III. It only needs now that he reassert, once for all, the utter freedom of the actions of God, which he has argued, and at the same time the almightiness and goodness of his ways, as also previously set forth. "Of him." He is the primal Fount of creation and of history. All things proceed forth from him, therefore surely he may put down one and set up another. "Through him." The very sins of men are open to his prevision, and their folly and blindness, and the results therefore do not take him by surprise; but rather they are allowed for in the great plan of his world-kingdom, and therefore through him they may be said to work their way. "To him." The very sins which he allows, and their consequences, adverse as they may seem to be to his plans, he can so control that they shall work for ultimate good. To him? Yes, to the perfecting of his wise plans. And these plans of his wisdom? They are all in love. Therefore to him we will ascribe the glory evermore. Amen.

Oh how utterly we may trust him, if we will! For only our persistent sin *can* shut us out from the might of his marvellous love.

> "Here, then, I doubt no more,
> But in his pleasure rest,
> Whose wisdom, love, and truth, and power
> Engage to make me blest."

T. F. L.

Ver. 13.—*Magnifying one's office.* The Epistles are prevented from being a dry compendium of doctrine by the personal notices scattered through them, and by the apostle's open-hearted references to his plans and feelings. The human element is strong and interesting. What a light is thrown on the apostle's self-denying labours by the declaration, "I magnify my office"! He gloried in his ministry, in his deaconship.

I. THEY WORK BEST WHO ARE PROUD OF THEIR OFFICE. Such freely devote the necessary time, thought, and energy to the efficient discharge of their duties. It becomes a "labour of love;" the heart quickens the circulation of the blood for all the activity requisite to faithful stewardship. Men can grow to like what at first was irksome, as we often see in prosecuting any study in science or art, till the subject and pursuit fascinate. We get clearer and more extensive views of the achievements possible. The apostle saw that the reception of the Gentiles might provoke the Jews to godly jealousy and fruitful emulation, and that the entry of the Jews into the Christian Church would prove a stimulus and revival to all. *It is the office, not the holder, which is to be magnified.* Where men have strutted like peacocks, airing their vanity; where Bumbledom has been harsh and overbearing, and man, "drest in a little brief authority, has played fantastic tricks," the chief regard has been paid to self instead of to the service rendered. To glorify our ministry is to remain humble, and tender in heart, lest the ministry should be discredited and its use diminished.

II. ALL WORK IS HONOURABLE TO WHICH GOD HAS APPOINTED US. To receive a commission from an illustrious sovereign lends dignity to a task, and it is this thought of a Divine mission which has upheld many a hero at his post of toil and peril. In the great house of God vessels of every capacity and form and texture are needed, and whilst we may covet the best gifts and the noblest service, no department is despicable. Said Lincoln the president, when taunted with his former menial occupation, "Didn't I do it well?" *How may we know that we are in the right place? By the character of our work.* Does it tend to happiness and usefulness, lessening misery and vice, supplying real wants, and elevating not degrading mankind, not ministering to base passions and low appetites? *By success therein.* Paul could point to the "signs of an apostleship." Though some honest labourers may have to wait for the crowning harvest, they can yet discern tokens of its advent, which forbid despon-

dency. *By the strength of the inward impulse.* There must be a "call," a necessity within ratified by compulsion without. *By the way they have been led.* Has not the cloudy pillar guided our steps, the road being blocked in other directions? Our post is to be abandoned only when a higher position manifestly offers itself.

III. WORK DIRECTED TO THE SALVATION OF MEN CANNOT BE TOO HIGHLY ESTEEMED. As apostle of the Gentiles, Paul was charged with a splendid embassage. What hearts were cheered, what minds illumined, what consciences freed from gloom, what holiness and philanthropy effected, by the preaching of Christ crucified and exalted for the redemption of men! We do not disparage aught that ministers to men's temporal comfort, that enlarges their knowledge of this present world and their mastery over its varied contents, that embellishes their homes and quickens their sensibility to pure sources of delight; yet to turn a soul from the error of his ways, to save from spiritual death, to instil into the breast enthusiastic loyalty to the cause of God, this connecting as it does the transitory with the eternal, preparing the spirit for a nobler exercise of capacity in a boundless congenial sphere hereafter, making earth the pathway to heaven, this must be allowed to be the highest, most awe-stirring mission that can engage our attention and engross our powers. Let those set apart to this work entirely or partially, prize their functions! Pastors, deacons, teachers, visitors, members of committees, etc., down to the very doorkeepers of God's house, may exult in all that appertains to this vocation, may be conscious that therein they are co-operating with God and the angels. If great thoughts and little souls do not harmonize, neither does it become us to ally grand endeavours with mean conceptions. Behold this title glittering with heavenly radiance, "the work of the Lord." This enterprise occupies the heart of the ascended Saviour, as it filled his life here below.—S. R. A.

Ver. 16.—*The dedication of a part the consecration of the whole.* The reference is to Numb. xv., where the ordinance is given that before the Israelites ate of the food of Canaan a portion of the dough should be taken as a cake offering to the priests. This was a recognition of God's sovereignty, of his care and goodness, and by this acknowledgment the entire food was hallowed.

I. THE APPLICATION TO THE APOSTOLIC ARGUMENT CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL. The Jews as a nation seemed cast away, stripped of former privilege and dignity. Yet, since the patriarchs and prophets and priests had been declared holy unto the Lord, and had served him according to his appointment, the remainder of the people must be accounted sacred, and thus the apostle was led to expect the future salvation of Israel when it should turn to the Lord. The inner life of the tree should be restored and invigorated, and then the branches should again acquire beauty and fruitfulness. They were still "beloved for the fathers' sakes."

II. THE SAME METAPHOR APPLIES TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE. His holiness wraps them round. Not only were individual institutions and officers symbolical and prophetical of the Messiah, but *the nation as a whole typified the Son of promise.* "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This explains many references of Old Testament passages to Christ by the evangelists and apostles. The nation was the "servant" of God, by which title, therefore, Jesus Christ is constantly designated. *Israel as a whole was claimed as God's peculiar possession.* By right of redemption, and the death of the firstborn in Egypt, the tribe of Levi was allotted to Jehovah in recognition of his lien upon Israel, and the number of the firstborn over and above the number of that tribe was balanced by a money payment. Yet Israel was "a holy nation unto the Lord," and the service of the priesthood represented, not superseded, the service of the nation. So is Jesus Christ termed "the Firstborn from the dead," and the Christian Church is "the general assembly of the Firstborn." *Christ sanctified himself for his people,* that his merits might attach to them. We talk much to-day of the solidarity of the race, and this helps us to realize how the leaven leaveneth the lump. Great men are seen to be universal property; the use of their gifts blesseth all mankind. As one takes a common tool and by deft handling convinces us of what it is capable; as one cultivates his estate as a nursery and pattern for all gardens; as another enlarges the domain of science whereby the navigator, the manufacturer, the thinker, and the consumer all reap a benefit; so did our Saviour teach us how much may be made of human life, how grand

and pure and beneficent it may become, and by his sacrifice opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Well may we rejoice in his work! Our High Priest before the throne sanctifies all who come to God through him. At the jubilee festivities the Queen of Hawaii claimed precedence as a sovereign, and, her credentials being authenticated, her claim was granted; so may we, as the brethren of Christ, lift up our heads, being made "kings and priests unto God." It is our connection with him that ennobles our condition.

III. SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS TO CONDUCT AND PROPERTY. *To consecrate the heart to God covers all the life*, sanctifies all the issues which flow from it. Here is the difference between religion and morality; here is the reason why some of the characters of Scripture are called "saints," in spite of infirmities and lapses. The setting apart *of Sunday as the Lord's day hallows all the week.* We are then what we are not able to be at other times, free from secular engagements and absorbed in devotion. And like a garden well watered in the early morn, the busy life retains its vigour and freshness through the heated hours which follow. *The dedication of youth is a consecration of the after-life.* Youth is like the morning of the day, and should be watered betimes with the dews of prayer. Prayer should be the foundation-stone of each enterprise. "When first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave to do the like; give God thy first thoughts then, so shalt thou walk with him all day, and in him sleep." *The devotion of a tithe or gift blesses all the increase.* The beauty of recurring seasons may fail to arouse because of the very regularity of their succession. Nature's constant stream of blessings may lull the soul into forgetfulness of the Giver. Hence the rites prescribed to Israel. "The altar unlocks the reaping gate." The first grains feed the altar, the first sickle cuts an offering for God. The common household routine of baking is transfigured by the appropriation of a part of the dough to religious uses. And this, not as a burden, a hateful tax, but a task of love. Not instead of hearty devotion, but as an outward emblem of gratitude. The followers of Christ are to bless the world. They are "begotten through the Word of truth to be a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures." They are as salt to preserve, as light to illumine. All brought into contact with them should be the better because they were called with a holy calling.

CONCLUSION. The topic reminds us of our certain resurrection to heavenly activity and glory. Christ was the Firstfruits of them that sleep. Sad to us the interval when we see our friends no more; death's icy hand has grasped them, and the worms do their work. Yet as Christ rose, so shall the seed spring up, we know not how. Death's seeming triumph is a defeat. They shall be changed and glorified; the crumbling dust shall shine brighter than the noonday sun.—S. R. A.

VERS. 20, 21.—*Spiritual pride rebuked.* The pride of man is a bladder easily inflated, and the apostle performed a salutary service when he showed how readily it might be pricked. The throwing open to the Gentile world, with additional advantages, of the religious privileges formerly confined to the Jews, begot in many converts an undue elation. Christianity inspires men with such expansive hopes that there is a danger of overweening vanity and presumption leading to a neglect of the conditions under which alone these hopes can be realized. The mercy of God may be illegitimately strained; the consciousness of spiritual freedom has often degenerated into licence of behaviour, and the "goodness" of God has made men unmindful of his "severity." Hence the useful caution of the text. Distinguish, however, between "fear" and "dread." Reverential, humble fear is quite compatible with gladness of soul and with unwavering trust in the promise of a free and full salvation. Let us adduce considerations that justify the caution of these verses.

I. WE HAVE AN IMPARTIAL GOD TO DEAL WITH. An arbitrary capricious monarch may select favourites, and dispense his gifts without regard to the moral worth of the recipients. Gentiles receiving an account of the river of Divine love abandoning its previous channel and inundating with a flood of blessing the surrounding parched lands, might be lapped into a false security, as if this blessing once granted could not again be withheld, no matter what the use made of the fertilizing influences vouchsafed. This would be to overlook the fact that it was for reasons the Jews were stripped of their exclusive advantages, and that the same reasons of abuse and ingratitude might cause the story to be repeated in the case of Christians, boastful of their position of

knowledge and close access to God, and omitting to cultivate the appropriate graces and duties.

II. THE LAW AND AIM OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Here we ascend to that essential attribute of God which is the guide and end of his dealings with his creatures. Well-being cannot be separated from well-doing. In no other way can the Almighty make his people happy than by inducing them to practise what is "lovely and of good report." Christ died to save men from their sins. His offering frees men from the overwhelming burden of their past enormities, wipes off the score against them, but requires the pursuit of holiness as the consequence and token of their forgiveness. The bearing of good fruit is the sure criterion of the improved condition of the tree. The rose which blooms not tells not of proper grafting. Faith in Christ admits to his kingdom, and continued faith showing itself by works of obedience keeps us united to the source of prosperity and progress. Heaven needs a prepared people to enter into its bliss and service. Greatly do men err, therefore, who plume themselves on their conversion and go not on unto sanctification of life.

III. HISTORY TEACHES US HUMILITY. History is God in action. The facts of history are naught apart from the revelation of a Divine order they bring to the illumined mind. The fate of Israel is a tablet whose letters of fire should brand themselves on the memory as a declaration of the forbearing goodness of God to the faithful, and his ultimate severity to the disobedient. God changes not; what he has done he may do again. If "the natural branches" were not spared, why should he spare the objects of his after-clemency when they too turn aside to rebel counsels? The story of the antediluvians swept away by a torrent of righteous indignation; of the inhabitants of Sodom smitten in their pride and idleness; of the Canaanites "spued out" of the land for their wickedness; of Babylon and Nineveh, where civilization was a hot-bed of vice, its riot and fumes extinguished by the desert sands; of Judas, who by transgression fell from his apostleship; of the temple at Jerusalem profaned by its guardians and then given over to the flames; of the candlesticks removed when the Churches of Asia "lost their first love;"—all these are so many voices echoing the warning of the text, "Be not high-minded, but fear." God spares long, but at last the thunderbolt falls. Sin marches to its destined grave.

IV. THE DECEITFULNESS OF OUR HEARTS CALLS FOR CONSTANT VIGILANCE. Human nature remains true to itself, brings forth the same fruit in all ages. Even in the renewed nature of the Christian, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." The serpent of evil is scotched, not killed. Our environment exposes us to unceasing attacks. At any moment of relaxed tension, the foe may assault and carry the fortress. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Saviour emphasized the caution, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!" Children are often reckless because they perceive not the danger; wise men neglect no precautions. Our safest course is to be intent on "the things that accompany salvation," to fill the hands with beneficent activities, to engage the thoughts on noblest themes. Press toward the goal, and no enchanted meadow shall beguile our steps. Like earnest competitors, read the rules carefully and sedulously conform to them. Prayerful meditation on the Scriptures, humble confidence in God, and the opening of the heart to the sway of the blessed Spirit, will correct any wrong attitude, and enable us to persevere to the end. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us," etc.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—10.—*The election of grace.* We saw in last chapter how the Jews, absorbed in the task of working out their own self-righteousness, had not as a nation submitted themselves to the righteousness which is of God. The Gentiles were accordingly appealed to, and their reception of the gospel is being used to provoke the Jews to jealousy, and lead them ultimately to a better mind. In the chapter now before us the apostle pursues the argument, and exhibits more in detail the Divine plan in Israel's rejection. The section now to be considered emphasizes the fact that, notwithstanding the general Jewish rejection of the gospel, there is an election of grace. And—

I. PAUL IS HIMSELF AN EXCEPTION TO THE GENERAL REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL ON THE PART OF THE JEWS. (Ver. 1.) To the question which in the Revised Version is put, "Did God cast off his people?" the apostle virtually answers, "By no means; I am myself a proof to the contrary." Paul had, like his compatriots, gone about to

establish his own righteousness; for years he had been taking that "roundabout way;" but he had been led by his interview with his risen Lord to see in the crucified Nazarene the Messiah of promise, and he had accepted salvation from his holy hands. No arrangement of God prevented any Jew from entering the charmed circle of Christ's fellowship and identifying himself with the Christian Church. The once-despised Messiah was waiting to receive all that cared to call upon him for his help. It was, of course, a salvation all of grace. Self-righteousness was sacrificed in the process; but it was in consequence the more thoroughly Divine. Consequently, it was the Jews who kept themselves out of the promise and the blessing, and no preventive ordinance of God.

II. THE SAVED EXCEPTIONS ARE ALWAYS MORE NUMEROUS THAN WE IN OUR DOWNCAST CONDITION IMAGINE. (Vers. 2—5.) The apostle goes back for comfort to the case of Elijah. In his days religion was in a desperate condition. One by one had Jezebel cut off God's prophets, so that Elijah, as he looked over the doomed land, fancied he was the only witness left. The whole nation, in his judgment, had conformed to the idolatry of the court, and his were the only knees which had not bowed to Baal. It was this view of things which Elijah laid before the Lord. But to his surprise he is informed that God has still seven thousand worshippers who have not bowed to Baal nor kissed the idol. Matters were better than Elijah imagined. There was a larger remnant, according to the election of grace, than he could have anticipated. The same lesson is to be learned at a later period in Hebrew history, in connection with the restoration of the exiles to Canaan. In the restored remnant God had a larger proportion of faithful witnesses than to the outward eye was apparent; and they became a seed of blessing in the promised land. It is so, let us believe, always. We cannot *see* all the good which has been accomplished through the gospel. We must let God "write up the people," and make out his own statistics. Our reckoning, like Elijah's, will usually be astray. God has "hidden ones," unknown to most, and his cause is not the hopeless one which pessimists suggest.

III. THE REMNANT SAVED OWES ALL TO DIVINE GRACE. (Ver. 6.) For the gospel is a way of salvation by free, unmerited favour, as opposed to all self-righteousness. It may be humiliating to be able to contribute nothing to our own salvation, but to have to accept it full and free from a risen Lord; yet salvation through humiliation is better, surely, than being lost. "*Grace*," says Dr. R. W. Hamilton, "is free favour; it can be related to no *right*, and contained in no *law*. It is extra-judicial: whenever bestowed, it depends upon the mere will of him who exercises it, or, upon what is the same thing, his voluntary pledge and agreement. If this latter be withdrawn, there may be a forfeiture of integrity and fidelity, but it is only so far unjust to those deprived of it, that a claim arose out of it; but no injustice accrues to them, considered in their *original circumstances*. A simple test of grace is presented by the following inquiries: *Ought* it to be exercised? Can it be *righteously withheld*? If we affirm the one, if we deny the other, it may be obligation, debt, reason, it cannot be *grace*, for this principle never owes itself to its object; and in not showing it, the person still is just. If there is any necessity for it, save that of demerit and its misery, it 'is no more grace.'"[1] By keeping the meaning of the term steadily in view, then, it will be seen that no injustice is done any who decline salvation by free grace and insist on some form of self-righteousness. For the latter is pure favouritism, and the former can alone be adopted by a God who is no respecter of persons.

IV. THE REJECTED JEWS WERE JUDICIALLY BLINDED. (Vers. 7—10.) Now, when we consider what the Jews generally were seeking after, we can see justice in their rejection. Their idea was essentially ambitious; they wanted a military and worldly Messiah to put them at the head of the nations of the earth. This vaulting ambition overleaped itself and fell on the other side. They obtained *not* what they were seeking for. But the election, the humble-minded who were ready to be saved by grace, got their salvation and their place in Messiah's spiritual kingdom. A spiritual Messiah satisfied their longings, while the proud, self-righteous worldlings were sent empty away. Now, what the apostle here notices is that their worldly spirit led to spiritual blindness. They were so engrossed with the table of self-righteousness and ambition that they could not see the offers and education of God's grace. This blindness comes

[1] See the whole discourse on ver. 6 in 'Sermons,' vol. i. pp. 280—312.

in the very order of nature, and is judicial. Engrossed with purely worldly ideas, they get unable to see the gracious opportunities or to appreciate them. And so they experience a fate which they richly deserve. May God preserve us all from judicial blindness!—R. M. E.

Vers. 11—32.—*Israel's future.* In the section now before us we find the apostle passing from the judicial blindness which had come upon his countrymen to its providential purpose. For God can make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he can restrain (Ps. lxxvi. 10). Hence the blind course pursued by the Jews is made the opportunity for the Gentiles. Paul, when the Jews would not receive the gospel, turned to the Gentiles, and had his success as apostle to the heathen. But the Gentiles, in their turn, are to contemplate the restoration of the Jews to God's favour, and to work for it. Israel is to be yet gathered into God, and when this desirable consummation comes, it will be as life unto the rest of the world. The future of Israel is what the apostle consequently in this paragraph discusses.[1] And—

I. THE FALL OF ISRAEL OPENED UP A WAY FOR THE SALVATION OF THE GENTILES. (Vers. 11, 12.) There is a strange unity in the human organism, so that when one part suffers another part is saved. How often, by applying a blister to an external part, the inflammation of an internal part is relieved! We have the same law of vicarious suffering obtaining in the human race. It is an organic whole on a vastly larger scale. And so we find one race suffering for the benefit of the others. Take the case of France, for example, and do we not see in it a nation which has been suffering from governmental experiments since before the Revolution, and becoming thereby a beacon and a blessing to the other nations of the earth? In the very same way, the Jewish nation, through rejecting Jesus, led to the evangelization of the Gentiles; and, as the "tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast," the children of Israel have been among the most precious proofs of the Divinity of our Scriptures. Their fall has thus been the riches of the world; the diminishing of them has been the riches of the Gentiles. The sad fate which made exiles and aliens of Israel has led to the acceptance and sonship of the Gentiles. Moreover, the apostle argues that the fulness of the Jews, when this comes round, will be the condition of still more abundant blessing to the Gentile nations. A suffering nation leads to the blessing of other nations; when the suffering shall cease, still more abundant blessing shall be the result.

II. THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES HOLDS BEFORE THEM THE HOPE OF STILL MORE ABUNDANT BLESSING WHEN THE JEWS ARE GATHERED IN. (Vers. 13—15.) As a skilful apostle, he wants to play the one against the other. He would stir up the Jews to jealousy by showing them how much the gospel has benefited the Gentiles; in this way he would try to save some of them. On the other hand, he would hold before the Gentiles the hope of far greater blessing when the Jews would be gathered in, and so set the Gentiles upon the enterprise of saving the Jews. Israel will thus be a stimulus to missionary enterprise. A great revival of spiritual life is to be expected through the ingathering of the Jews. So great will it be as to be properly compared to a resurrection, "life from the dead;" consequently the Gentiles, as a matter of spiritual profit, should seek the salvation of Israel. In this way Paul promotes the amity of the nations. He shows that in mutual good will is to be found their very highest good.

III. FROM THE HOLINESS OF THE JEWISH FIRSTFRUITS, AND OF THE JEWISH ROOT, THE APOSTLE FURTHER ARGUES TO THE HOLINESS OF THE LUMP AND THE BRANCHES. (Ver. 16.) Now, the apostle here speaks of the benefit and blessing which the Jewish stock had already been to the world. Some take the reference in the firstfruits and root to be to the fathers referred to in ver. 28; the idea being that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were "holy," that is, set apart, and so are their descendants to be. Others take it as referring to the elect Jews, such as Paul and the eleven, who, being saved, rendered hopeful the salvation of their fellows. But we think the firstfruits and root can only apply *fully* to him who was the real Firstfruits and "the Root out of the dry ground." The apostle's argument in this case would be this: If Jesus, the seed of Abraham and real root of the true Israelitish race, has been such a pre-eminent blessing to the race, how much may we expect when the Jewish lump and the Jewish branches

[1] Cf. Luthardt's 'Die Lehre von den letzten Dingen,' ss. 106—128.

get consecrated to God as he has been! In this way the apostle follows up his suggested hope, enlarges it, and makes it the fountain of enterprise, with a view to the conversion of the Jewish race. We should not forget that the most influential and life-giving individual who ever lived in this world was a Jew; and, while we can never expect any of his countrymen to come up to his standard of blessing, we may and ought to expect that the conversion of Christ's race to God must be of pre-eminent service to all the other nations of the earth. And as a matter of fact, Jews like Neander, who have got converted and consecrated, have become mighty blessings to their fellow-men. And so we hope great things from the first fruits and the root.

IV. THE APOSTLE WARNS THE GENTILES THAT THEIR ENGRAFTING INTO THE OLIVE TREE OF CHRISTIANITY CARRIES WITH IT SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES. (Vers. 17—24.) The Jews who have rejected Christ are branches broken off the real Root. In their place the Gentiles have been engrafted, so that the "eternal sap" proceeding from Christ the Root, and which should otherwise have sustained these Jews, passes over to the Gentiles. But now a fact about the olive tree is utilized by the apostle. Van Lennep tells us, in his work on the Holy Land, that "the olive tree grows to so great an age that the old wild root sometimes conquers the better graft, so that the fruit deteriorates, and the tree must needs be grafted anew" (p. 125). It is this fact which the apostle makes the ground of his warning. If the Gentiles, forgetting that it was solely through God's grace they had been grafted in, got infected with Jewish pride and self-righteousness, so that their fruit-bearing deteriorated, there would be nothing for it but through a new engrafting of the better Jewish stock to restore the olive tree to fruitfulness. God's severity to the broken-off Jewish branches should make the Gentiles very humble and very earnest, lest it come round upon themselves. They should continue in the enjoyment of God's goodness by exercising humble faith and ardent effort. If they will not discharge their responsibilities, they may expect likewise to be broken off. Unfaithful nations have been cut off—the candlesticks and Churches have been removed.

V. ISRAEL'S PARTIAL BLINDNESS IS PERMITTED UNTIL THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES IS COME IN. (Ver. 25.) To prevent the Gentiles being wise in their own conceits, the apostle explains the mystery that Israel's blindness has been permitted that the fulness of the Gentiles should be gathered in. The Gentiles have now their chance supplied. Their ingathering into Christ's kingdom is God's great present purpose. Missions to the heathen, the continuance of Paul's work, are to be prosecuted in the hope of abundant ingathering. The privileges of the gospel are thus laid at the door of the heathen. In this way the great pioneer missionary, St. Paul, would foster the twofold missionary enterprise; he would have the most earnest effort put forth that the heathen nations should be gathered in; he would also have the saved Gentiles to seek still greater blessing through the ingathering of the Jew.

VI. ISRAEL AS A NATION IS TO BE SAVED AS THE CROWNING ACT OF GOD'S MERCY. (Vers. 26—32.) When it is said, "All Israel shall be saved," it cannot mean that every individual Jew is to come right at last. Paul's doctrine is not

> "That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete;"

but evidently that Israel in its national capacity shall yet be gathered home to God.[1] As touching the election, the Jewish nation or race is beloved for the fathers' sakes. And God's gifts and callings are without repentance. Consequently, we ought to entertain the hope that the Jewish nation shall yet be restored to God's favour and be saved. And this is to be done through the mercy extended to the Jews by the saved Gentiles. In other words, the Jewish problem is to be solved by a mission to them from the Gentiles.[2] In this way God has overruled the unbelief of Jews to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Gentiles is next to be utilized for the ingathering of the Jews. When the fulness of the Gentiles is followed by the conversion of the Jewish people, we may expect that unprecedented spiritual life and power and energy shall then be experienced over universal Christendom. May the consummation so desirable be hastened!—R. M. E.

[1] Cf. Luthardt, *ut supra*. [2] Cf. Godet's 'Études Bibliques,' tome ii. p. 165.

Vers. 33—36.—*God, his own last End in everything.* The apostle has been throwing a very clear providential light upon God's dealings with his ancient people. He has shown how their unbelief and fall were permitted in order to the gathering in of the Gentiles; and that the Gentiles thus brought in are to gird themselves for the ingathering of the Jews. But he does not profess to have sounded the depths of the Divine wisdom and knowledge by these suggestions. Before that mighty ocean he stands in unfeigned humility. He may have picked up one or two pebbles on the strand, but he has not explored the caves of ocean that lie before him. Yet amid the unsearchable character of God's judgments, he can see one supreme end in everything, and this is God himself; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things."

I. WHILE GOD IS KNOWABLE, HE SURPASSES ALL OUR CONCEPTIONS IN HIS WISDOM AND HIS WAYS. (Ver. 33.) While believing in the radical error which underlies the agnostic philosophy, we must at the same time admit that God's wisdom and knowledge, his judgments and his ways, are past our comprehension. Just as a child may know, that is, be acquainted with, his parent, while at the same time he is utterly unable to follow him into the regions of pure mathematics, comprehend the differential or integral calculus, or the new department of quaternions; so a Christian may know God as he reveals himself in Christ, and yet stand in awe before his unsearchable judgments. It is God's glory to conceal a thing. If we saw through the whole administration of God, if there were no mystery or perplexity in his dealings, we should be living by *reason* and not by *faith*. It is more consonant with our finiteness in its relation to the infinite God that we should be asked to *trust* God, even when we see no reason for his action, when clouds and darkness may be round about his throne. What we have to consider, therefore, is the proper attitude of the Christian before the profundities of God. It surely should be one of humility, of reverence, and of thankful praise.[1] Now, the partiality of Paul's revelation may be profitably contrasted with the fulness of revelation as claimed by Christ. For he claimed to have *all* that the Father doeth shown to him (John v. 20). Nothing was or is concealed from Jesus. God's ways were not unsearchable to him.[2]

II. MEN SHOULD NOT IN CONSEQUENCE DICTATE TO GOD, OR TRY TO BE BEFOREHAND WITH HIM. (Vers. 34, 35.) Now, when the matter is put broadly in this way, it seems shocking presumption for men to set themselves up as superior persons, capable of dictating to the Eternal. Yet is this not the meaning of a large amount of the pessimistic literature of our time? If the pessimists had only been consulted, they could have planned a much better world than God has given us! His management has been, in their view, a mistake; and the only redeeming feature in the business is that he has somehow created the pessimists with judgments and powers superior to his own! It is time, surely, that these lamentations over a system of things so very imperfectly understood as yet should cease, and that creatures so finite should humble themselves before the Infinite, and acknowledge his superiority in all things.

III. AT THE SAME TIME, THE APOSTLE CONCLUDES THAT GOD IS HIS OWN LAST END IN EVERYTHING. (Ver. 36.) It seems a hard thing to take in, yet the more it is pondered the truer it appears. "The supreme Sun of the spiritual universe, the ultimate Reason of everything in the world and work of grace, is the *glory of God*. Whole systems of truth move in subordinate relation to this; this is subordinate to nothing."[3] "There was nothing," wrote Robert Haldane to M. Chenevière of Geneva, "brought under the consideration of the students which appeared to contribute so effectually to overthrow their false system of religion founded on philosophy and vain deceit, as the sublime view of the majesty of God, which is presented in these concluding verses of the first part of the Epistle, 'Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.' Here God is described as his own last End in everything that he does. Judging

[1] Cf. Caspari's sermon on "The Christian before the Depths of Deity," in his 'Von Jenseit des Grabes,' band ii. s. 94; also Barrow's sermon on "The Unsearchableness of God's Judgments," vol. i. p. 498. Saurin has also a fine sermon on "Profondeurs Divines," in his tome i. p. 176; and South has also a suggestive one on this passage, folio edition, vol. ii. p. 260.

[2] Cf. Gess's 'Christi Selbstzeugniss,' ss. 29, 30.

[3] Cf. Moule's 'Union with Christ,' p. 10.

of God as such a one as themselves, they were at first startled at the idea that he must love himself supremely, infinitely more than the whole universe, and consequently must prefer his own glory to everything besides. But when they were reminded that God in reality is infinitely more amiable and more valuable than the whole creation, and that consequently, if he views things as they really are, he must regard himself as infinitely worthy of being most valued and loved, they saw that this truth was incontrovertible. Their attention was at the same time turned to numerous passages of Scripture, which assert that the manifestation of the glory of God is the great end of creation; that he has himself chiefly in view in all his works and dispensations; and that it is a purpose in which he requires that all his intelligent creatures should acquiesce, and seek to promote as their first and paramount duty. Passages to this effect, both in the Old and New Testaments, far exceed in number what any one who has not examined the subject is at all aware of."[1] Now, if our idea of God is high enough, we shall conclude that he stands in such perfect relations to his creatures that in seeking his own glory he is at the same time seeking their highest good. Of course, we have the power of resisting this claim of God, and setting ourselves in opposition to his glory; yet this will not defeat his purpose, but be overruled for his praise. It is not selfishness in the most high God to seek his own glory; he is so perfect in his love as to be incapable of selfishness. His glory conflicts with the real good of none of his creatures.

IV. WE OUGHT IN CONSEQUENCE, LIKE THE APOSTLE, TO RAISE OUR DOXOLOGY. It is when from the heart we sing our doxology to this perfect Being that we are rising up into our spiritual birthright and joy. How different Paul's doxology from the agnostic deliverances before the unknown God! It is possible to adore and praise a God whose judgments are unsearchable, because the guiding principle of his perfect nature is love. May we all be led to praise him!—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1—ch. xiv. 23.—III. HORTATORY. (See summary of contents, p. xvii.) It is St. Paul's way to supplement his doctrinal treatises with detailed practical directions as to the conduct that should of necessity ensue on belief in the doctrines propounded. So also in Eph. iv. 1, etc., where, as here, he connects his exhortations with what has gone before by the initiatory *παρακαλῶ οὖν*. Beyond his exposition of the truth for its own sake, he has always a further practical aim. Saving faith is ever with him a living faith, to be shown by its fruits. Nor, according to him, will these fruits follow, unless the believer himself does his part in cultivating them: else were these earnest and particular exhortations needless. If, on the one hand, he is the great assertor of our salvation being through faith and all of grace, he is no less distinct for the necessity of works following, and of the power of man's free-will to use or resist grace; cf. 1 Cor. xv. 10, where, speaking of himself, he does not mean to say that grace had made him what he was in spite of himself, but that grace had not been in vain, because he himself had worked with grace. All was of grace, but he himself had laboured, assisted by grace working with him. It will be observed how comprehensive is the survey of Christian duty that here follows, reaching to all the relations of life, as well as to internal disposition.

Ver. 1—ch. xiii. 14.—E. *Various practical duties enforced.*

Ver. 1.—I beseech you therefore, brethren (he does not command, as did Moses in the Law; he beseeches; he is but a fellow-servant, with his brethren, of Christ; he does not "lord it over God's heritage" (cf. 1 Pet. v. 3), but trusts that they will of their own accord respond to "the mercies of God" in Christ, which he has set before them), by the mercies of God ("Qui misericordia Dei recte movetur in omnem Dei *voluntatem* ingreditur. At anima iræ obnoxia vix quid-

[1] 'Letter from Robert Haldane, Esq., to M. J. J. Chenevière, Pastor and Professor of Divinity at Geneva,' pp. 38, 39.

dam juvatur adhortationibus," Bengel), that **ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** The verb παραστῆσαι is the usual one for the *presenting* of sacrificial animals at the altar (Xen., 'Anab.,' vi. 1. 22; Lucian, 'De Sacrif.,' 13. The LXX in Lev. xvi. 7, 10, has στήσει. Cf. Luke ii. 22; Col. i. 22, 28, and *supra*, vi. 13). Our *bodies* are here specified, with probable reference to the bodies of victims which were offered in the old ritual. But our offering differs from them in being "a *living* sacrifice," replete with life and energy to do God's will (cf. Ps. xl. 6, 7, 8, and Heb. x. 5, 6, 7), yea, and even inspired with a new life—a life from the dead (ch. vi. 13). Further, the thought is suggested of the abuse of the body to uncleanness prevalent in heathen society (cf. ch. i. 24). The bodies of Christians are "members of Christ," "temples of the Holy Ghost," consecrated to God, and to be devoted to his service (cf. 1 Cor. vi. 15, etc.); and not in heart only, but in actual life, of which the body is the agent, we are to offer ourselves, after the example of Christ. *Your reasonable service* (τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν) must be taken in apposition to "present your bodies," rather than to "sacrifice," it being the act of offering, and not the thing offered, that constitutes the λατρεία. This word is especially used for the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament (cf. Exod. xii. 25, 26; xiii. 5; ch. ix. 4; Heb. viii. 5; ix. 1, 6, 9; x. 2; xiii. 10), the counterpart of which in Christians is, according to St. Paul, not ceremonial service, but rather that of a devoted life (cf. Acts xxvii. 23; ch. i. 9; Phil. iii. 3; 2 Tim. i. 3; Heb. xii. 28). The epithet λογικὴν has been variously understood. It probably means *rational*, denoting a moral and spiritual serving of God, in implied opposition to mechanical acts of outward worship. "Respectu intellectus et voluntatis" (Bengel). It may be taken to express the same idea as οἱ Πνεύματι Θεῷ λατρεύοντες (Phil. iii. 3), and πνευματικὴν θυσίαν (1 Pet. ii. 7; cf. John iv. 24). Though the offering of the body is being spoken of, yet "bodily self-sacrifice is an *ethical* act" (Meyer). Cf. 1 Cor. vi. 20. The word itself occurs in the New Testament only here and in 1 Pet. ii. 2, where its meaning, though obscure, may be similar.

Ver. 2.—**And be not conformed to** (rather, *fashioned after*; the verb is συσχηματίζεσθαι) **this world; but be ye transformed** (the verb here is μεταμορφοῦσθαι) **by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove** (or, *discern*) **what is the will of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** (So, rather than as in the Authorized Version; the epithets *acceptable* and *perfect* not being properly applicable to *the will of God*; and the translation given above being close to the original.) It is a matter of no importance for exegesis that ancient authorities leave it uncertain whether the verbs at the beginning of this verse should be read as imperatives (συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε) or as infinitives (συσχηματίζεσθαι and μεταμορφοῦσθαι). In the latter case they depend, with παραστῆσαι in ver. 1, on παρακαλῶ. The meaning remains unaffected. As to the words themselves, Meyer's assertion that they stand in contrast only through the *prepositions*, without any difference of sense in the stem-words, is surely wrong. St. Paul is not in the habit of varying his expressions without a meaning; and he might have written μετασχηματίζεσθε (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14; Phil. iii. 21) instead of μεταμορφοῦσθε or συμμορφοῦσθε (cf. Phil. iii. 10) instead of συσχηματίζεσθε. And there is an essential difference between the senses in which σχῆμα and μορφή may be used. The former denotes outward *fashion*, which may be fleeting, and belonging to accident and circumstance; the latter is used to express essential *form*, in virtue of which a thing is what it is; cf. Phil. iii. 21, and also (though Meyer denies any distinction here) Phil. ii. 6, 7. The apostle warns his readers not to follow in their ways of life the *fashions* of this present world, which are both false and fleeting (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 31, Παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου), but to undergo such a change of essential *form* as to preclude their doing so. If they become συμμόρφοι with Christ (cf. ch. viii. 29), the world's fashions will not affect them. The phrase, "this world" or "age" (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ), may be understood with reference to the rabbinical division of time into αἰὼν οὗτος, and αἰὼν μέλλων, or ἐρχόμενος; the latter denoting the age of the Messiah. The New Testament writers seem to regard themselves as still in the former, though to them it is irradiated by beams from the latter, which had already dawned in Christ, though not to be fully realized till the παρουσία (see note on Heb. i. 2). The transformation here spoken of consists in the *renewal of the mind* (τοῦ νοὸς), which denotes the understanding, or thinking power, regarded as to its moral activity. And Christian *renewal* imparts not only the will and power to do God's will, but also intelligence to discern it. Hence follows εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς, etc. (cf. Eph. iv. 17, 23; 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 8; and also *supra* ch. i. 28, where the Gentiles were said to have been given up, in judgment, εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, when ἀδόκιμον may possibly mean *undiscerning*. See note on that passage). It is to be observed, lastly, that the present tenses of the verbs συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε, unlike the previous aorist παραστῆσαι, intimate pro-

gressive habits. The perfect Christian character is not formed all at once on conversion (cf. Phil. iii. 12, *seq.*; see also previous note on ch. vi. 13, with reference to παριστάνετε and παραστήσατε).

So far the exhortation has been general. The apostle now passes to particular directions; and first (vers. 3—9) as to *the use of gifts*.

Ver. 3.—**For I say, through the grace given unto me** (the grace of apostleship to the Gentiles (cf. ch. i. 5; xv. 15). He is about to warn against either neglecting or exceeding the special graces given to each person; and he may, perhaps, mean to imply here that he himself, in giving these admonitions, is exercising, without exceeding, his own special grace) **to every man that is among you** (this is emphatic. The pretensions to superiority of some at Corinth who possessed more showy gifts than others had shown how the admonition might need to be pressed on all; and in a community like that of the Romans there might well be a special tendency to assumption on the part of some), **not to think** of himself **more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly** (rather, as in the Revised Version, *so to think as to think soberly*, or, more literally, *to be minded so as to be sober-minded*), **according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.** Why *of faith?* One might have expected the expression to be, "of grace," as in ver. 6, "according to the grace that is given to us;" or as in Eph. iv. 7, "according to the measure [μέτρον, as here] of the *gift* of Christ." It seems to be because by faith we become *receptive* of the grace given to each of us. Hence the faith assigned by God to each is regarded as "the regulative standard; the subjective condition" (Meyer) of the several gifts or graces. Cf. also Matt. xvii. 20 and 1 Cor. xiii. 2, where miraculous powers are spoken of as dependent on the amount of faith. Tholuck explains thus: "Faith in an unseen Christ brings man into connection with a world unseen, in which he moves without distinctly apprehending it; and in proportion as he learns to look with faith to that world, the more is the measure of his spiritual powers elevated."

Vers. 4, 5.—**For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office; so we, the many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.** The illustration of the body with its members to set forth the mutual dependence on each other of the several members of the Church with their several gifts and functions, and the importance of all for the well-being of the whole, is further carried out in 1 Cor. xii. 12, *seq.* In Eph. i. 22 and iv. 15, 16, Christ is regarded, somewhat differently, as the exalted Head over the Church which is his body. Here and in 1 Cor. xii., the head is not thus distinguished from the rest of the body (see 1 Cor. xii. 21); the whole is "one body in Christ," who is the living Person who unites and animates it.

Vers. 6—8.—**Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, in our ministry; or he that teacheth, in his teaching; or he that exhorteth, in his exhortation; he that giveth, in simplicity; he that ruleth, with** (literally, *in*) **diligence; he that showeth mercy, with** (literally, *in*) **cheerfulness.** The elliptical form of the original has been retained in the above translation, without the words interposed for elucidation in the Authorized Version. There are two ways in which the construction of the passage might possibly be understood. (1) Taking ἔχοντες δὲ in ver. 6 as dependent on ἐσμεν in ver. 5, and κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, not as hortatory, but as parallel to κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν, and understanding in a like sense the clauses that follow. Thus the general meaning would be—we are all one body, etc., but having our several gifts, to be used in accordance with the purpose for which they are severally given. (2) As in the Authorized Version, which is decidedly preferable, hortation being evidently intended from the beginning of ver. 6. The drift is that the various members of the body having various gifts, each is to be content to exercise his own gift in the line of usefulness it fits him for, and to do so well. The references are not to distinct orders of ministry in the Church, but rather to gifts and consequent capacities of all Christians. The gift of *prophecy*, which is mentioned first, being of especial value and importance (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 1, *seq.*), was the gift of inspired utterance, not of necessity in the way of prediction, but also, and especially, for "edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3), for "convincing," and for "making manifest the secrets of the heart" (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). He that has this special gift is to use it "according to the proportion of his faith;" for the meaning of which expression see on μέτρον πίστεως above (ver. 3). According to the prophet's power of faith to be *receptive* of this special gift, and to *apprehend* it if granted to him, would be the intensity and truth of its manifestation. It would seem that prophets might be in danger of mistaking their own ideas for a true Divine revelation (cf. Jer. xxiii. 28); and also that

they might speak hastily and with a view to self-display (see 1 Cor. xiv. 29—33), and that there was a further gift of *διάκρισις πνευμάτων* required for distinguishing between true and imagined inspiration (see 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiv. 29). Further, the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (1 Cor. xiv. 32); they were not carried away, as the heathen *μάντις* was supposed to be, by an irresistible Divine impulse; they retained their reason and consciousness, and were responsible for rightly estimating and faithfully rendering any revelation (*ἀποκάλυψις*, 1 Cor. v. 30) granted to them. Delusion, inconsiderate utterance, extravagance, as well as repression of any real inspiration may be meant to be forbidden in the phrase. (The view of *τῆς πίστεως* being meant objectively of the general Christian doctrine, from which the prophecy was not to deviate—whence the common use of the expression, *analogia fidei*—is precluded by the whole drift of the passage. It is not found in the Greek Fathers, having been apparently suggested first by Thomas Aquinas.) The gift of *ministry* (*διακονία*) must be understood in a general sense, and not as having exclusive reference to the order of *deacons* (Acts vi. 1—6; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8; ch. xvi. 1), who were so called specifically because their office was one of *διακονία*. The words *διακονεῖν*, *διακονία*, *διάκονος*, though sometimes denoting any kind of ministry, even of the highest kind, were used and understood in a more specific sense with reference to subordinate ministrations, especially in temporal matters (cf. Acts vi. 2, "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and *serve* tables (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*)"). If any had a gift for any such kind of administrative work under others, they were to devote themselves to it, and be content if they could do it well. *Teaching* (*διδασκαλία*) may denote a gift for mere instruction in facts or doctrines, catechetical or otherwise, different from that of the inspired eloquence of *prophecy*. *Exhortation* (as *παράκλησις*, which bears also the sense of *consolation*, seems here to be rightly rendered) may be understood with reference to admonitory addresses, in the congregation or in private, less inspired and rousing than prophetic utterances. In Acts xiii. 15 the word *παράκλησις* denotes the *exhortation* which any person in the synagogue might be called upon by the rulers to address to the people after the reading (*ἀνάγνωσιν*) of the Law and the prophets; cf. 1 Tim. iv. 13, where Timothy is told to give attendance to *reading* (*ἀνάγνωσιν*), to *exhortation* (*παράκλησιν*), and to *teaching* (*διδασκαλίαν*). *He that giveth* (*ὁ μεταδιδούς*) points to the gift of liberality, to the endowment with which both means supplied by Providence and a spirit of generosity might contribute. The almsgivers of the Church had their special gift and function; and they must exercise them in *simplicity* (*ἐν ἁπλότητι*), which may perhaps mean singleness of heart, without partiality, or ostentation, or secondary aims. But in 2 Cor. viii. 2; ix. 11, 13, the word seems to have the sense of *liberality*, and this may be the meaning here. "Uti Deus dat, Jac. i. 5" (Bengel). In the 'Shepherd of Hermas' (written, it is supposed, not later than the first half of the second century) *ἁπλῶς* is explained thus: *Πᾶσιν ὑστερουμένοις δίδου ἁπλῶς, μὴ διστάζων τίνι δῷς ἢ τίνι μὴ δῷς· πᾶσι δίδου* ('Hermæ Pastor,' mandatum ii.). Possibly this gives the true original conception, from which that of general liberality would follow. [The idea that the almoners of the Church, rather than the almsgivers, are intended, viz. the deacons (Acts vi. 3, *seq.*), is inconsistent with the general purport of the passage, as explained above. Besides, *μεταδιδόναι* means elsewhere to give up what is one's own, not to distribute the funds of others. 'Ο *διαδιδούς* might rather have been expected in the latter case (cf. Acts. iv. 35).] *He that ruleth* (*ὁ προϊστάμενος*) means, according to our view all along, any one in a leading position, with authority over others; and not, as some have thought, exclusively the *presbyters*. Such are not to presume on their position of superiority so as to relax in zealous attention to its duties. *He that showeth mercy* (*ὁ ἐλεῶν*) is one who is moved by the Spirit to devote himself especially to works of mercy, such as visiting the sick and succouring the distressed. Such a one is to allow no austerity or gloominess of demeanour to mar the sweetness of his charity. On the general subject of these gifts for various administrations (cf. 1 Cor. xii., *seq.*; xiv.; Eph. iv. 11, *seq.*) it is to be observed that in the apostolic period, though presbyters and deacons, under the general superintendence of the apostles, seem to have been appointed in all organized Churches for ordinary ministrations (Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xv. 2, *seq.*; xvi. 4; xx. 17; xxi. 18; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1, 8; v. 17; Titus i. 5), yet there were other spiritual agencies in activity, recognized as divinely empowered. The "prophets and teachers" at Antioch (Acts xiii. 1) who, moved by the Holy Ghost, separated and ordained Barnabas and Saul for apostolic ministry, do not appear to have been what we should now call the regular clergy of the place, but persons, whether in any definite office or not, divinely inspired with the gifts of *προφητεία* and *διδασκαλία*. In like manner, the appointment of Timothy to the office he was commissioned to fill, though he was formally ordained by the laying on of hands of St

Paul himself (2 Tim. i. 6) and of the presbyters (1 Tim. iv. 14), appears to have been accompanied—perhaps sanctioned—by *prophecy* (1 Tim. iv. 14). Persons thus divinely inspired, or supposed to be so, appear, as time went on, to have visited the various Churches, claiming authority—some, it would seem, even the authority of *apostles*; the term "apostle" not being then confined exclusively to the original twelve; else Barnabas could not have been called one, as he is (Acts xiv. 14), or indeed even Paul himself. But such claims to inspiration were not always genuine; and against false prophets we find various warnings (cf. 2 Cor. xi. 3, *seq.*; Gal. i. 6, *seq.*; iii. 1; 1 John iv. 1, *seq.*; 2 John 10; Rev. ii. 2). Still, these extraordinary agencies and ministrations, in addition to the ordinary ministry of the presbyters and deacons, were recognized as part of the Divine order for the edification of the Church as long as the special *charismata* of the apostolic age continued. Afterwards, as is well known, the episcopate, in the later sense of the word as denoting an order above the general presbytery, succeeded the apostolate, though how soon this system of Church government became universal is still a subject of controversy. It appears, however, from 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' (Διδαχὴ τῶν Δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων), recently brought to light by Archbishop Bryennius (the date of which appears to have been towards the end of the first century or the beginning of the second), that the earlier and less regular system continued, in some regions at least (it does not follow that it was so everywhere), after the original apostles had passed away. For in this early and interesting document, while directions are given for the ordination (or election; the word is χειροτονήσατε, the same as in Acts xiv. 23) of bishops and deacons in the several Churches, there is no allusion to an episcopate of a higher order above them, but marked mention of *teachers*, *apostles*, and *prophets* (especially the last two, *apostles* being also spoken of as *prophets*), who appear to have been itinerant, visiting the various Churches from time to time, and claiming authority as "speaking in the Spirit." To these *prophets* great deference is to be paid; they are to be maintained during their sojourn; they are to be allowed to celebrate the Eucharist in such words as they will (cf. 1 Cor. xiv. 16); while speaking in the Spirit they are not to be tried or proved (οὐδὲ διακρινεῖτε; cf. διακρίσεις πνευμάτων, 1 Cor. xiv. 10; and οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν, ch. xiv. 29), lest risk be run of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Still, among these itinerants there might often be false prophets (ψευδοπροφῆται; cf. Matt. vii. 15; xxiv. 11, 24; Mark xiii. 22; 1 John iv. 1), and the Churches are to exercise judgment in testing them. If they taught anything contrary to the received doctrine; if they remained for the sake of maintenance without working for more than two days; if they asked in the Spirit for worldly goods for themselves; if their manner of life was not what it should be;—they were false prophets, and to be rejected. Similarly, in the 'Shepherd of Hermas' (apparently a document of the first half of the second century, and in some parts corresponding closely with the *Teaching*, from which such parts may have been derived) like directions are given for distinguishing between true and false prophets, between those who had τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Θεῖον and those whose πνεῦμα was ἐπίγειον (mandatum xi.). And even in the 'Apostolical Constitutions' (a compilation supposed to date from the middle of the third to the middle of the fourth century) there is a passage corresponding to what is said in the *Teaching* about distinguishing between true and false *prophets or teachers* who might visit Churches (ch. vii. 28). The *Teaching* seems to denote a state of things, after the apostolic period, in which the special *charismata* of that period were believed to be still in activity, though with growing doubts as to their genuineness in all cases. As has been said above, it does not follow that this order of things continued everywhere at the time of the compilation of the *Teaching*; but that it was so, at any rate in some parts, seems evident; and hence some light is thrown on the system of things alluded to in the apostolical Epistles. It is quite consistent with the evidence of the *Teaching* to suppose that in Churches which had been organized by St. Paul or other true apostles, the more settled order of government which soon afterwards became universal, and the transition to which seems to be plainly marked in the pastoral Epistles, already prevailed.

Vers. 9—21.—*Various admonitions, applicable to all; headed by inculcation of the all-pervading principle of love.*

Ver. 9.—**Let love be unfeigned** (so is rendered elsewhere ἀνυπόκριτος in the Authorized Version, cf. 2 Cor. vi. 6; 1 Tim. i. 5; 2 Tim. i. 5; 1 Pet. i. 22). **Abhor** (literally, *abhorring*) **that which is evil; cleave** (literally, *cleaving*) **to that which is good.** The participles ἀποστυγοῦντες, etc., here and afterwards, may be understood as mildly imperative. Or perhaps the apostle connected them in thought with ἡ ἀγάπη, ἀνυπόκριτος, as if he had said, *Love ye unfeignedly.*

Ver. 10.—**In brotherly love** (φιλαδελφία) **be kindly affectioned** (φιλόστοργοι) **one to another** (φιλαδελφία, expressing the love of

Christians for each other, is a special form or manifestation of general ἀγάπη. In it there should be ever the warmth of family affection, στοργή); **in honour preferring one another**; literally, according to the proper sense of προηγούμενοι, *taking the lead of each other in honour*—i.e. in showing honour, rather than equivalent to ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν in Phil. ii. 3.

Ver. 11.—**In business** (rather, *diligence*) **not slothful; in spirit fervent** (we are to do with our might whatever our hand finds to do; yea, with fervent zeal); **serving the Lord.** For τῷ Κυρίῳ (*the Lord*), some manuscripts have τῷ καιρῷ (*the time*, or *the opportunity*), which reading is preferred by some commentators on the ground that it is less likely to have been instituted for the familiar τῷ Κυρίῳ than *vice versâ*. But τῷ Κυρίῳ is best supported, and has an obvious meaning, viz. that in the zealous performance of all our duties we are to feel that we are serving the Lord.

Vers. 12—14.—**In hope rejoicing; in tribulation enduring; in prayer continuing instant; communicating to the necessities of the saints** (*i.e.* Christians); **given to** (literally, *pursuing*) **hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.** In ver. 14 the form of the admonition passes from participles to direct imperatives, a positive command of Christ being adduced. In ver. 15 the gentler admonitory form of in the infinitive is taken up, passing to participles, as before in ver. 16.

Vers. 15—17.—**Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another** (denoting mutual good feeling and unanimity of sentiment; not, of course, agreement in opinion on all subjects). **Mind not high things, but condescend to** (literally, *being led away with*) **men of low estate.** It is a question whether τοῖς ταπεινοῖς should not be understood as neuter, so as to correspond with τὰ ὑψηλά; the meaning thus being that, instead of being ambitious, we should let ourselves be drawn willingly to the lowlier spheres of usefulness to which we may be called. The main objection to this view is that the adjective ταπεινὸς is not elsewhere applied to things, but to persons. **Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide** (in the sense of *take forethought for*) **things honest** (or *fair*, or *honourable*) **in the sight of all men.** This is a citation from Prov. iii. 4, where the LXX. has, Προνοοῦ καλὰ ἐνώπιον Κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων. We are not only to do what we know to be right in the sight of God, but also to have regard to the view that will be taken of our conduct by other men; we must not give any just cause for our good being evil spoken of (cf. ver. 16 and 1 Pet. ii. 12).

Vers. 18—21.—**If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath.** The thought in ver. 19 seems to follow from what precedes. It may sometimes be impossible to be at peace with all; but at any rate, do not increase bitterness by avenging yourselves. *Give place unto wrath* (τῇ ὀργῇ), has been taken by some to mean that we are to give scope to the wrath of *our enemy*, instead of being exasperated to resist it (cf. Matt. v. 39, etc.). But there has been no particular reference to a *wrathful* adversary. Another view is that *our own* wrath is intended, to which we are to allow time to expend itself before following its impulse; δότε τόπον being taken as equivalent to *data spatium* in Latin (cf. Lactantius, 'De Ira,' 18, "Ego vero laudarem, si, cum fuisset iratus, *dedisset iræ suæ spatium*, ut, residente per intervallum temporis animi tumore, haberet modum castigatio." Also Livy, viii. 32, "Legati circumstantes sellam orabant, ut rem in posterum diem differret, et *iræ suæ spatium*, et consilio tempus *daret*." There seems, however, to be no known instance elsewhere of this use of the Greek phrase. Chrysostom, Augustine, Theodoret, and most commentators, understand the meaning to be that we are to *give place* to the *wrath of God*, not presuming to forestall it. *The wrath*, used absolutely, might be an understood expression for the Divine wrath against sin (cf. ch. v. 9; 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 16); and this interpretation suits the usual sense of δότε τόπον. It is not thus implied that the falling of Divine vengeance on our enemy should be our desire and purpose, but only this—that, if punishment is due, we must leave it to the righteous God to inflict it; it is not for *us* to do so. And this interpretation suits what immediately follows. **For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord** (Deut. xxxii. 35, quoted freely from the Hebrew, but with the words ἐκδίκησις and ἀνταποδώσω as found in the LXX. The fact that the same form of quotation occurs also in Heb. x. 30 seems to show that it was one in current use). **But** (so rather than *therefore*, as in the Authorized Version) **if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.** This whole verse is from Prov. xxv. 21, 22, where is added, "and the Lord shall reward thee." What is meant by the "coals of fire," both in the original and in St. Paul's citation, has been much discussed. Undoubtedly, the expression in itself, in view of its usual significance in the Old Testament, suggests only the idea of Divine vengeance (see Ps. xviii. 12; cxx. 4; cxl. 10; and especially 2 Esdr.

xvi. 58. Cf. also Ps. xi. 6; Hab. iii. 5); and this especially as it occurs here almost immediately after "Vengeance is mine." Hence Chrysostom and other Fathers, as well as some moderns, have taken it to mean that by heaping benefits on our enemy we shall aggravate his guilt, and expose him to severer punishment from God. But it is surely incredible that the apostle should have meant to suggest such a motive for beneficence; and the whole tone of the context is against it, including that of ver. 21, which follows. Jerome saw this, writing, "Carbones igitur congregabis super caput ejus, non in maledictum et condemnationem, ut *plerique existimant*, sed in correctionem et pœnitudinem." But if the "coals of fire" mean the Divine judgment on our enemy, there is nothing to suggest a corrective purpose. The view, held by some, that the softening effect of fire on metals is intended, is hardly tenable. Heaping coals of fire on a person's head would be an unnatural way of denoting the softening of his heart. More likely is the view which retains the idea of coals of fire carrying with it, as elsewhere, that of punishment and the infliction of pain, but regards the pain as that of shame and compunction, which may induce penitence. This appears to be the most generally received view. It is, however, a question whether any such effect is definitely in the writer's view. He may mean simply this: Men in general desire vengeance on their enemies, expressed proverbially by heaping coals of fire on the head. Hast thou an enemy? Do him good. This is the only vengeance, the only coals of fire, allowed to a Christian. Then follows naturally, **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

## HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—*Christian sacrifice and worship.* In commencing the practical part of this Epistle, St. Paul adopts a tone of gentle and affectionate persuasion. He might have addressed his readers as disciples, and have used towards them the language of authority and command. But, on the contrary, he calls them his "brethren," and he "beseeches," entreats them, as employing the appeals of love to enforce the precepts of duty. At the same time, his language implies that compliance with his admonitions is not a matter optional and indifferent. He beseeches them because they are brethren, and because he has a right to expect that they will not only listen with respect, but obey with alacrity. Before entering upon the specific duties of the Christian life, and depicting in detail the Christian character, the apostle exhibits in this verse the general and comprehensive principle of practical Christianity. As religious men, these Roman Christians must, as a matter of course, offer a sacrifice and a service of worship. And they are here told that the presentation to God of themselves is the one great act in which all specific acts of obedience are summed up and involved. Let them enter into the temple of God, and bring with them a living sacrifice; let them join in offering to Heaven a reasonable, a spiritual worship; for with such the Father will be well pleased.

I. Consider THE MOTIVE WHICH THE APOSTLE URGES in order to induce to consecration. "By the mercies of God." To every sensitive and appreciative mind this is a cogent motive. The mercies of God have been, and are, so many, so varied, so suited to our case, so unfailing, that we cannot meditate upon them without acknowledging the claim they constitute upon us. The word used here is peculiar; the apostle speaks of the pity, the compassions, of the Lord. Language this which brings out our condition as one of dependence, helplessness, and even misery, and which brings out also the condescension and loving-kindness of our heavenly Father. There is, no doubt, an especial reference to the spiritual favours which have been so fully and powerfully described in the earlier portion of the Epistle. The mercies of God are nowhere so apparent as in redemption; and human sin requires a great salvation. In exhibiting the marvellous interposition of Divine grace on behalf of sinful humanity, in explaining the reconciling work of Christ, in depicting the immunities, privileges, and hopes of those who receive the gospel, the apostle has laid a good foundation for the appeal of the text. Mercies may well excite gratitude, for they are undeserved, sovereign, and free; and gratitude in the mind of the Christian, who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is a motive of no mean order. And gratitude to such a God, and for such gifts, can only be a motive to virtue and holiness.

II. Consider WHAT THE APOSTLE ENJOINS US TO PRESENT TO GOD. "Your bodies."

The vigorous understanding of St. Paul preserved him from that sentimental form of religion which many, professing to be his followers, have adopted and advocated. It will not do to treat men, to regard ourselves, as possessing only a spiritual nature. We have body as well as soul. The most ethereal and ecstatic spiritual experiences do not prove a man to be a true Christian. God requires that body, soul, and spirit should be consecrated to him. For the bodily nature is intended to express and manifest the character, the spiritual life, the true man. If the spirit be renewed and purified, the effect of this Divine work within will be apparent in the outer life. Thus it is that the new creation, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, extends to the whole nature and life. The body, therefore, shares in the death unto sin, and in the new life unto righteousness and holiness. The body is consecrated to him who has redeemed the body as well as the soul; and its members are employed as weapons or instruments, not of sin, but of righteousness. It cannot be supposed that the apostle intends us to understand that bodily service alone is sufficient. Nothing would have been more alien from his whole teaching, or from the spirit of the New Testament, than such a doctrine. Christ has taught us that worship, in order to being acceptable, must be in spirit and in truth; and St. Paul himself has assured us that bodily exercise profiteth nothing, that circumcision availeth nothing, but a new creation. In presenting our bodies unto God, we offer the praises of our lips and the service of our hands. The body is the instrument of toil. The Christian's daily activity is consecrated to his redeeming God; and this is so, whatever be the employment to which Providence has called him. The body is also the agent of spiritual ministry. Accordingly, the Christian's special efforts to do good, his teaching and preaching, his ministering to the wants of his fellow-men and relieving them from their sufferings, his evangelistic journeys in order to seek the lost and to proclaim the gospel,—all are instances of his consecration of the body as well as of the soul to his redeeming Lord.

III. Remark that SUCH PRESENTATION ON THE PART OF THE CHRISTIAN IS REGARDED AS SACRIFICE. From a study of the religions of mankind, we learn that the sacrifices, alike of the heathen and of the Jews, may be regarded as (1) offering, and (2) propitiation. Now, as far as expiation, propitiation, is concerned, we, as Christians, know that there has been one, and only one, real and acceptable sacrifice of this kind—the sacrifice of himself offered to the Father by our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the substance of which all that went before was merely the shadow, and which can neither be repeated nor imitated. But as far as the tribute of thanksgiving, adoration, and obedience is concerned, we are taught that this is to be offered to God continually (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). It is in this respect that all Christians are priests unto God; *all*, irrespective of the position they hold in the Church, or the special services they render in the congregations of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish sacrifice, which this perpetual offering most closely resembles, is the burnt offering, which the Hebrew worshipper brought to Jehovah as the expression of his personal devotion and consecration to Heaven, as the public declaration that he owed everything to the Lord, and that he withheld from him nothing which he possessed. In like manner Christians present their bodies—their whole nature and life—to him who gave himself for them. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your bodies, which are his." Of this sacrifice, in which all Christians unite, the apostle reminds us that it possesses three qualities. 1. *It is living.* The sacrifices which the Jews offered were either living creatures, or substances which by their nature ministered to life; and in offering such gifts the worshipper was presenting a symbol of his own life. But ordinary sacrifices were slain; the life was consumed in the offering. The Christian's life is not forfeited in being presented to God. Yet in the presentation there is both death and life. It has been said, "There is in every sacrifice a death, and in this sacrifice a death unto sin, out of which there arises a new life of righteousness unto God. Thus the living sacrifice is that in which, though the natural life is not lost, a new life of holiness is gained." What a privilege is ours, who are expected to bring unto God, not the bodies of brute animals, not the blood of bulls and goats, but our own bodies—our very selves, our living nature—and gratefully and willingly to lay this sacrifice upon the altar of God! 2. *It is holy.* The animals which were presented under the Mosaic economy were, according to the prescribed regulations, to be free from blemish. This was doubtless an ordinance intended to impress upon the mind of the worshipper

a sense of the holiness of the Being who was approached. All who officiated were to be ceremonially clean. The substance, of which these symbols were the shadow, was holiness, spiritual purity, freedom from iniquity. There is nothing upon which greater stress is laid than the requirement that every offering to God shall be such as a Being of perfect purity can accept. A sprinkled body is not sufficient; a pure heart is the demand of him who is himself the all-holy Lord. 3. And such an offering is *well pleasing to God*. This, indeed, may be inferred from a consideration of God's moral character as a truth-loving and holy Governor, who cannot endure dissimulation and hypocrisy. The enlightened among the ancient Hebrews saw clearly enough that ceremonial purity and ritual correctness were not enough to secure Divine acceptance and favour. And none who enters into the teaching of our Saviour, and sympathizes with the spirit of his religion, can fail to discern the necessity of a living and holy sacrifice in order to please the Searcher of hearts, and satisfy the requirements of Christ.

IV. The offering of the Christian is further represented as A REASONABLE SERVICE OR WORSHIP. The Revisers have, in the margin, "spiritual." It is a service rendered by the intelligent, reasonable, spiritual part of our nature. Though the body is presented, he presentation of the body is the expression of inner, spiritual worship. For the word means "worship"—"an outward act of religious worship." Worship is a universal expression of the religious nature of man. The heathen practised their ritual of ceremony, sacrifice, prayer, adoration; and the Jewish religion imposed an elaborate system of public worship. The superiority of Christian worship is marked. Obedience is the highest and most acceptable form of worship which can be offered to God. This "reasonable worship" is distinguished from worship that is merely mechanical and formal. It is similarly distinguished from all substitutionary worship. It is personal, not representative; not by a priest who worships for the congregation, and professes to offer sacrifice as their representative, but by each individual Christian who has his own tribute to offer, his own service to render.

APPLICATION. The language of the text appeals to those who neglect or withhold this sacrifice, this service, and reproaches them as unreasonable, ungrateful, indefensible, disobedient, self-destructive. It urges them to yield what God asks, through Christ, who makes obedience and praise acceptable offerings to God.

Ver. 2.—*Spiritual transformation.* The Apostle Paul was great both in theoretical and in practical thought. Truth and duty were equally his themes. He could introduce new ideas into men's minds, and that with a force which made the ideas part of the minds into which they were introduced. And, at the same time, he could show the bearing of the grandest ideas upon the commonest actions and the homeliest life. This is a combination of qualities not always found even in the greatest of men. It was found in Paul; and accordingly we go to him for the loftiest representations of Christian truth, for the most elaborate expositions of Christian doctrine, and also for the counsel we need in circumstances of difficulty, and the instructions we need in the development of social and individual life. It was a grand conception, that with which the apostle begins the practical part of this treatise. What devout heart does not, upon having this conception brought before it, burn with an ardent desire to realize it—to present the body, the self, the all, a living and holy sacrifice unto God? But then comes the question—How is it to be done? And, indeed, what is it, precisely and actually, which is to be done? The apostle proceeds to show us. And in translating the noble idea of the first verse into the language of practical life, he proceeds wisely and carefully, first giving us the general rule and law, and then drawing out from it the special applications in detailed duties of Christian morality. In studying this chapter we must ever and anon revert to the great principles contained in the first and second verses. The principle is barren without the precepts; the precepts are lifeless, flavourless, and impossible without the principle. The verse contains—

I. A DISSUASION; *i.e.* from conformity to the world. Human character and life are treated as something to be formed and fashioned by the personal will. We are dealt with as beings responsible for the form and fashion we impart to character and life. The apostle does not take it for granted that those living in a Christian community must, as a matter of course and necessity, attain to the Divine ideal. There is a temp-

tation, a danger, against which it *is* prudent to be warned. It was, no doubt, easier to understand this dissuasion in the earliest days of Christianity than it is now. "This world!" "this age!"—what a fulness, an awful fulness of meaning this expression must have had for a Christian of the first century! Not the material world, of course, but the world of human society, of pagan idolatry, and sensuality, and cruelty, and scepticism, and despair, was the world present to the apostle's mind. Satan is termed in the New Testament "the prince of this world;" the unbelieving, unchristian population are designated "the children of this world." "The disputer of this world," "the wisdom of this world," apply to what is unspiritual and godless. The distinction between the heathen world and the Church of Christ must then have been sharp indeed. And no reader could be at a loss to understand Paul's advice to the Roman Christians not to be fashioned according to this world. For in Rome, perhaps above all other places, this world was the acknowledged mistress and sovereign of human society. And, as a matter of fact, the Christian community in this and in other cities of the empire did live a life in utter, manifest, obtrusive contrast to that lived by the multitude of ambitious, pleasure-loving, superstitious, cynical citizens, by whom they were surrounded. To make this a practical matter, let us ask—How does this dissuasion apply to us? What is the world of which *we* are to beware? Is there such a world in our England to-day? We meet with narrow and prejudiced opinion on these questions. Some people think it worldly to have anything to do with politics—especially on one side; others, to mix with general society; others, to take an interest in painting, architecture, music, and even literature. To such objections it is enough to answer that, in becoming a Christian, one does not cease to be a man, but rather learns to bring to bear upon human interests and occupations the principles of the highest life and calling. We must beware of narrow and merely technical definitions of "the world." In truth, to be "fashioned according to the world" is to conform to sinful and prevalent practices. What is worldliness? It is injustice, untruthfulness, impurity, avarice, slander. Some of these vices and sins are to be found amongst those who are very scrupulous in preserving what they call the line between the Church and the world. But bear in mind that a life devoted to selfish aggrandizement or pleasure, a life lacking in love and sympathy, is a worldly life. The same idea is dwelt upon with urgency by the other apostles. John admonishes, "Love not the world;" and Peter requires Christians "not to be fashioned according to their former lusts in their ignorance."

II. A DIRECTION; *i.e.* to spiritual renewal. That the followers of Christ might present themselves "a living sacrifice" to God, they were taught that they must become something very different from what they had been in their unbelieving, unregenerate days. The admonition of the apostle is very full and strong. 1. It is to *a change*. "Repent!" was the first Divine message to men—alike from the forerunner and from the Messiah. Christians they could not be, whether Jews or Gentiles, until changed. Religion cannot flatter, though priests may. 2. It is to *renewal*. How characteristic of the religion of the Lord Jesus is this counsel! We have a new covenant, and we need a new nature; we need to become a new creation, that we may live in newness of life, and so prepare to dwell in the new heavens and to join in the new song. Christianity is a gospel of renewal. The fact implies the abandonment and death and crucifixion of the old—the old nature, "the old man," as Paul calls it. Christ takes the individual, the society, in hand, and moulds all afresh from the beginning; implants new principles, new laws, new aims, new hopes. He makes one new man, one new humanity. What a gospel it is! It invites men to turn their back upon their old and sinful ways, to abjure their old and sinful self; to enter upon a new course—to become a new creation. Here, surely, is hope and promise for the downcast. Amendment may be impossible, but not renewal and regeneration; for the Spirit of God is the mightiest of all powers to transform. 3. It is to *a mental, a spiritual renewal*. We are invited to a renovation, which shall be not merely outward and bodily, but shall commence with the very centre and spring and root of our being. There is wisdom in this provision. It originates in the Author and Framer of our being, who know what was in man. Let the heart be renewed, and, the fountain being cleansed, sweet water shall flow from it; and, the tree being made good, fruit ripe and wholesome shall be borne. Our Lord asks for the heart, and the heart only will he accept. "Be renewed," says the apostle elsewhere, "in the spirit of your mind."

The Holy Spirit imparts new affections, new principles, new desires; encourages to new associations, and inspires with new aims and hopes.

III. AN INDUCEMENT; viz. by following the apostolic instructions the Christian will prove what God's will is. It seems a somewhat singular motive to present. Yet, to a believer in God, it must be a very powerful motive. The great question which interests men's minds to-day is just this—Are there in the universe signs of the presence, and energy, the moral character, and conscious purpose of Deity? Is there, in a word, such a thing as God's will? and, if so, what is it? According to the apostle, the consecrated and obedient Christian is in the way to settle this question in his own experience. It seems almost presumptuous to propose the testing of God's will. The boy proves the calculation he has made with figures; the armourer proves the temper of the gun or sword; the steel-maker, the strength of the spring; the machinist, the resisting power of his boiler. The vessel is sent upon a trial trip; the electrician tries his principle practically in the working of a railway. So in the moral realm. The apostle bids us "prove all things." Still, to speak of proving God's will does seem marvellous, and scarcely reverent. But it must be borne in mind that Paul speaks of that will, not so much as the action of the Divine mind, as the Divine law of the human life, of that will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, it is one thing to look at the Divine will as something to be admired and reverenced, and another thing to regard it as something to be *done*. And by doing it, we, as Christians, prove it; we discover for ourselves what it is, what are its qualities. It is *good*. The old Greek idea of what, in moral life, is to be sought, was summed up in this word—the good, the truly good, the highest good. This is equivalent to the nature, expressed in the will, of the Supreme. It is *acceptable*, or well-pleasing. That is to say, the performance of the Divine will by man is well-pleasing to him who has revealed the law of human life, and who is gratified when his own idea is taken up, and wrought out into practice with vigour and sympathy. It is *perfect*, admitting of no amendment, no censure, no improvement. To attain to it is to reach a moral height above which nothing towers. The connection between the will of God and the consecration and sacrifice commended in the previous verse is obvious. As the apostle elsewhere says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Walking as children of the light, we "prove what is acceptable unto the Lord." It is only thus that we show ourselves to "understand what the will of the Lord is." To understand it as a mere matter of theory is valueless and vain.

APPLICATION. 1. The *motive* to this new life is to be found in the love and sacrifice of the Redeemer. 2. The *power* for this new life is to be found in the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit of God. Let this motive have force and sway in your nature; let this power be sought, to control, transform, and renew your life.

VERS. 3—5.—*Membership in Christ.* The great principles laid down at the outset of this chapter have to be followed out into practice. Paul shows how consecration and renewal are to manifest themselves in actual life, and how the will of God is to be practically proved. In so doing—perhaps because he is writing to a Church, and not to an individual—he first treats of the obligations of *social* Christianity, and shows how members of a brotherhood ought to act in their association with one another, in their Church-life. Yet he does not lose sight of the fact that a congregation, a community, is composed of individuals; accordingly, the message he delivers he delivers expressly to "every man that is among you." His first caution is against self-exaltation and self-praise; his first counsel is to unity and mutual consideration. This is very natural; for the early Christians were but few in number, and, being so decidedly distinguished from the world around, they were thrown very much into one another's society, and their Christian life had both the advantages and dangers attaching to its social character.

I. PRIDE IS CONDEMNED AND SOBRIETY OF JUDGMENT ENJOINED. 1. This was *a necessary caution and admonition.* It is a besetting temptation of human nature to think too highly of ourselves. Men are prone to exaggerate their own abilities and merits, and to extenuate their own faults; and, at the same time, alas! to depreciate the gifts and deserts of their neighbours, and to magnify their failings. It is the infirmity of selfishness, of self-importance, of self-glorification. In old times, the

Christian moralists reckoned pride among the seven deadly sins. There was an additional reason for this apostolic caution in the case of the early Christians. There were imparted to many of them very remarkable and striking gifts, in some instances of a miraculous character. Within the boundary of these societies, these gifts were held in high esteem, and were often unduly prized and even coveted. The possessors of supernatural powers, gifts of tongues or of healing, may have been persons of no more than average Christian character, and may have been specially in danger of being puffed up by spiritual pride. Let it be remembered that there is scarcely any possession or endowment which may not furnish occasion for sinful pride. 2. There is *a special propriety in modesty, in sobriety of judgment concerning ourselves.* What we have we received from the Giver of every good gift, and every perfect boon. Our "measure of faith" he bestowed. Who, then, made us to differ? In fact, what are we, the best of us, but poor helpless sinners, saved by sovereign grace? The more we reflect, the more we shall see how unreasonable, indefensible, and absurd it is to indulge sentiments of self-importance and self-esteem. Humiliation and contrition are far more appropriate to all. 3. This is *an admonition easy to misconstrue.* Insincere professions of humility are repugnant to the Searcher of hearts; yet there is reason to believe that they are frequent. There is a "pride that apes humility." And there are those who need to be put upon their guard against undue depreciation of themselves and their abilities; such persons do little good, because they have a rooted conviction that they have no power for service. It is desirable, neither to neglect the one talent, nor to boast of the five. 4. We have an example of the virtue of sobriety in Paul's own case. Even here, instead of commanding or dictating, he words his counsel modestly: "I say, through the grace given to me." Not that he doubted his apostolic authority, but that he disclaimed any personal merit or claim. For he could sincerely speak of himself as "the least of the apostles;" "not worthy to be called an apostle;" "less than the least of all saints." He, therefore, may justly be said to have enforced his precepts by his own personal, living example.

II. MEMBERSHIP IN CHRIST IS SHOWN TO BE THE ROOT OF HUMILITY AND MUTUAL CONSIDERATION. How can we enough admire in the apostle his habit of laying the foundation of every duty and virtue in Christ? In order to think modestly of ourselves, and kindly and respectfully of our Christian brethren, we should bear in mind our common dependence upon the same Saviour, and our mutual relation one to another. The principle here stated was one very familiar to Paul's mind; for it is propounded in several of his Epistles, and enforced with great beauty, and at some length, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. 1. Christians are in common members of the Lord Christ. He is the Head; the Divine Personality, revealing himself through the body. He himself had taught this great and precious doctrine. "Abide in me," said Christ, "and I in you." He dwells in and inspires his body, the Church, by his own gracious and mighty Spirit. It is his presence that gives life and guidance, energy and blessing, to the body. Now, if this be so, surely it is obvious that to exalt ourselves and to despise others is inconsistent with such a relation. Can we regard with neglect, or with scorn, those whom the Lord terms members of his own mystical body? 2. There is diversity among the members of the spiritual body. As in the human frame, so in the Church, every member has its own office. In subsequent verses Paul explains what some of these offices are. It is an instructive thought, impressing lessons of modesty and mutual esteem, that Christ has a use for every one of us. Instead of fretting that you have not your neighbour's gift, rather rejoice that he has it. Instead of thinking so much of your own work as to fill up the whole horizon of your vision with what is yours, turn an interested and kindly eye upon the ministry of your neighbour. Almost all men are prone to be one-sided. Receive inspired counsel: "Look every man also upon the things of others." There is room in the Church for the Christian scholar, the Christian philosopher, the Christian preacher, the Christian man of business, the Christian man of science, the Christian workman; for those who give themselves to healing, to education, to domestic life, to civil government, to social amelioration; in fact, there is room for all whom Christ has called and qualified for his own service. The great Maker has fashioned no two alike; let each be content to be himself—to be just what the Lord of the body intended him to be. 3. There is unity and harmony among the members of Christ's body. The inspired view is this:

We cannot be all Christ's without coming into relation with one another, very close and vital. Common dependence upon the Head creates mutual affections, and calls for mutual services. How destructive is this teaching of that pride, from which the apostle dissuades! The health of each member, and his efficiency for service, depends upon the condition of the other members of the spiritual organism and structure. It is not uniformity which is to be cultivated and expected; it is organic unity, which implies unity in diversity. Subordination to the one Head, the indwelling of the one Spirit, will produce this happy result. Thus are secured the growth of the body and the glory of Christ.

Vers. 6—8.—*Grace and gifts.* It is presumed that every member not only refrains from disparaging or envying the offices of fellow-members, but fulfils his own office. And it is also presumed that, as there is no member in the human body without a function, so, in Christian society, the Creator and Lord has assigned to every individual a place to fill, a work to do, and service to render as well as to receive. In this comprehensive passage several great principles are explicitly or implicitly presented.

I. GOD'S GRACE ACCOUNTS FOR HUMAN GIFTS. We speak of our fellow-creatures' "gifts," and say of some that they are "gifted," that they "have talents;" but what is involved in this language does not always come before our minds. Yet, if from the Father of lights cometh down every good gift and every perfect boon, surely the gifts of intellect and heart, the gifts of sympathy and ministration, are as truly and really from above, as are those we term the gifts of Providence. The risen and glorified Redeemer bestows gifts upon men. The Holy Spirit is given, and that Spirit's presence imparts moral power and adaptation and influence. Freely, and not of constraint, or because of our desert, is the Spirit given. It is ours to receive with gratitude, and to use with fidelity; but our receiving and employing are only possible through Divine grace and liberality.

II. GOD'S INFINITE RESOURCES SUPPLY MAN'S MANIFOLD NEED. We may well admire the goodness of our Father in heaven, in the bestowal of his gifts; his bounty, manifest in the universal diffusion of those gifts; and his wisdom, conspicuous in their endless variety. God has created man with many wants, and has so constituted human society that "no man liveth unto himself;" that we are mutually dependent one upon another for all our knowledge, happiness, and means of usefulness. Every congregation of Christians may be regarded as a collection of spiritual, as well as of more obvious and physical, necessities. The young need to be taught and trained; the misled need to be recovered; the feeble need to be confirmed; the sorrowful need to be comforted; the presumptuous need to be repressed; the petulant and quarrelsome need to be corrected; the inexperienced need to be advised. These, and other cases, can only be met by a provision inexhaustible in quantity and exquisitely adapted in character. In this and parallel passages the apostle takes pleasure in dwelling upon the vastness and variety of the resources which the Lord of all places at the disposal of his people. It is indeed a delightful thought: "All things are yours," etc.

III. THE WORK OF CHRISTIANS IN THIS WORLD IS THE FULFILLING A TRUST FROM GOD. We live, not certainly to seek our own pleasure, not certainly to respond to every passing social impulse, not even merely to develop our own nature and cultivate our own powers. We are summoned to take a higher view of life and its opportunities. As St. Peter expresses it, "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." It is good for the young and unformed to come under the control of a superior human mind and will, and so to shape life as to secure approval and commendation from a master, a leader. How much better for us all to live as those whose fidelity the Master in heaven is testing, and who are held responsible to him! When we read of God's gifts, we are not to infer that we possess them absolutely, in such a sense that it is in our option either to use or neglect them, that we are at liberty to treat them otherwise than as a sacred trust. On the contrary, "every one of us must give an account of himself to God." The talents the Lord has entrusted to his servants are for them so to employ that, when he comes in judgment, they may give in their account with joy and not with grief.

IV. EVERY CHRISTIAN IS CALLED TO USE HIS GIFTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS

FELLOWS. It is observable that every several admonition in this passage has reference to benefits to be conferred upon others. The Christian is called to look, not upon his own things, but also upon the things of others. This is the lesson which Christianity has from the beginning been inculcating; and modern society is for it under a debt, which is not always frankly and fully acknowledged. Some modern systems of morality and schemes of human life, as positivism, make the whole of religion consist in living for others (altruism). But it is vain to rear a superstructure without first laying the foundation. To induce and sustain an unselfish life, it is needful to begin with the counsels of God; to feel the one, sacred motive of the cross of Christ, to seek the guidance and aid of the Spirit of God. At the same time, unselfishness and self-denying benevolence are one great evidence of a renewed nature, and of the action of Christian principle.

V. CHRISTIAN MINISTRATION IS CONFINED TO NO CLASS, BUT DEVOLVES UPON THE WHOLE CHURCH. The apostle is not writing to the officers of the society at Rome, but to all in the city, who are "beloved of God, and called to be saints." The duties here enumerated are diffused amongst the community, amongst whom the gifts necessary for their discharge are graciously and wisely distributed. There is a mischievous tendency in human nature towards doing good by deputy. It is, indeed, right that a man should not meddle with work which is not his; but some, who profess to act upon this principle, not only neglect other people's business, but neglect their own. You may not be gifted with much power of teaching, but you may be able to show mercy. You may have little to give, but you may, if you will exercise your gift, prove able to console and sympathize. In any case, let us not fall into the error of supposing that, because we cannot do everything, therefore we can do nothing. One of the disadvantages attending a professional ministry is this—that many suppose that it is the exclusive business of the clergy to attend to the consolation of the saints and to labour for the evangelization of the world. The fact is that, wherever the gift has been bestowed and the opportunity for its exercise provided, there the responsibility lies, and there the service is required.

APPLICATION. 1. Let us ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" 2. Let us cultivate the spirit of mutual respect and consideration as fellow-members of Christ. 3. Let us co-operate for the great ends which the Divine Head of the Church has set before us, viz. the increase and the harmony of the body of Christ.

Vers. 6—8.—*Gifts (second homily).* In enumerating the various gifts imparted by the Lord to his Church, the various services its members are called to render to one another, the apostle writes for all time. In the primitive congregations there were persons endowed with special and supernatural gifts; but these, with one exception, the apostle does not include in this instructive catalogue; he rather chooses to put upon record his own judgment as to the graces and qualifications necessary, through all ages, for the edification of the Church and the evangelization of mankind. We observe—

I. GIFTS INTELLECTUAL AND INSTRUCTIVE. The truth is the great gift and deposit entrusted by the Head of the Church. The truth is first apprehended and appropriated; and then, as a natural result, is communicated and propagated. And this has been and is done in various methods. 1. By *prophecy*. This is, in the strictest sense of the term, a supernatural gift; the word designates the power of uttering forth the mind and will of God, and implies a special illumination from above. There are traces, in the Book of the Acts, of the existence and ministry of such a class, who authoritatively announced the will of Heaven, and sometimes foretold events to come. We may justly regard the apostles as themselves prophetically endowed; so that we, and the whole Church, are benefited through the impartation of this gift. 2. By *teaching*. Christianity is a teaching religion, and commits to every generation the sacred duties of instructing the succeeding race, and assigns to the enlightened the office of evangelizing those who are in spiritual darkness and ignorance. When the Son of God became incarnate, he condescended to live the life of a Teacher; and when he committed to his apostles the final trust, he bade them go forth and teach all nations. In the early Church the office of the teacher was magnified; and it was an evil time for Christianity when the teacher became a priest. It is true that not every Christian has the qualifications of the teacher.

Yet there is a vast amount of teaching power in many Christian congregations, which needs to be called out, sanctified, and employed in the holy cause of religion. 3. By *exhortation*, or consolation. Teaching appeals to the understanding; exhortation to the heart, the conscience, the will. We are reminded that human nature is reached in various ways. Teaching alone is apt to become dull and mechanical; exhortation, unless based upon sound, sober instruction, is vapid and unpractical. It is in the combination of the two that a spiritual ministry reaches its perfection.

II. GIFTS PRACTICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE. 1. By *ministry* seems to be meant all practical service. The deacons or ministers of the early Churches were no doubt entrusted with the charge of the poor, and the administration of the secular affairs of the Christian community; yet their service seems to have been varied and general, and was limited only by their own powers and the several opportunities of their lives. The apostle here specifies several forms of ministry, as samples of the rest, and as of peculiar interest and value. 2. These gifts may take the practical form of *government*. Rule is a Divine idea, just as is teaching; and without rule, in some form and to some extent, no society of imperfect human beings can be held together. There is order and rule in the Church, which fails to answer its Founder's ends, and fails to produce a right impression upon the world, unless decency and order and harmony are maintained. There must be rule in the State, which is an organism in which the head must needs direct and control the members. And there should be order and law in the household, which should be the Church in miniature. 3. Some possess the gift, and are entrusted with the privilege of *giving*, of liberality. It is obvious that there is propriety in regarding this as a proper consequence of receiving from Heaven. "Freely ye have received; freely give." Gifts may be either for the relief of the poor and needy, or for the promotion of evangelization. In any case, we are here taught that giving should be with simplicity, without ostentation, and with a single eye to the glory of God. 4. Closely allied to this gift is that of *showing mercy*. Whether in ministrations to the aged, the sick, and the dying, in the release or ransom of captives, in the instruction of the young, or in the recovery of the degraded and the lost, there has ever been, and there still is, abundant room in sinful human society for the showing of mercy. We are admonished that this gift—that of compassion and kindness—should be exercised with cheerfulness. There should be a sense of the dignity and privilege of being called to so Christ-like, so God-like, a vocation. Not grudgingly, not even from a constraining sense of duty, merely; but with the spirit of the Divine Physician, the Divine Liberator, should the followers of Jesus engage in these sacred and beautiful ministrations.

VERS. 9, 10.—"*Love unfeigned.*" Church-life is very important; but human life is wider and more important still. In the first age, and when Christian communities were few and small and persecuted, the life the followers of Jesus led was very much a life in common, and very distinct from that of the world around. We cannot wonder that so many of the apostolic counsels and injunctions referred to the conduct of Church-members towards one another, and towards one another as connected with actually existing societies. Still, many admonitions were given to Christians as men and women moving more or less in general society. They were bidden to "honour all men," to "walk in wisdom towards those without." So, in this practical chapter, when Paul has instructed the Roman Christians in their mutual duties as members of a society, and has shown how each ministry is to be discharged, how each office is to be filled, and how each gift is to be employed, he proceeds to more general counsels. He describes the spirit which is to be displayed in the common intercourse of life, both amongst themselves and in their association with the unchristian world. First and foremost among his exhortations is this to brotherly love and kindness. For all precepts beside are merely the unfolding of that Divine law of charity which is designated "the bond of perfectness."

I. Consider THE DIVINE PRINCIPLE AND MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE AND LOVE. We are sometimes told that mutual good will is evolved in settled society, being found advantageous to all, and preferable to suspicion, distrust, and malevolence. But the fact is that this is very much a matter of individual character, and that in very primitive societies there are found Christians who are superior to the malice and

hatred which prevail around them; whilst in the most civilized communities there are multitudes who prefer their own pleasure and interest to all beside. Christianity reveals to us the true principle of universal brotherhood, basing it upon the Fatherhood of God and the redemption of Christ. The apostle of love, St. John, tells us that "God is love," and makes this the Christian's motive to the love of his brother. And Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." And here the precepts of the apostle must be taken along with what goes before in this Epistle, and it must be remembered that the entreaty is urged "by the mercies of God." All earthly duties have a heavenly origin. Religion is designed to govern our whole spirit and life. The man who believes in the infinite love, in the fatherly heart, of God, who believes that God sent his Son to save us from hatred and all other sins, has a root for his renewed dispositions and his changed habits of regarding and treating his fellow-creatures; it becomes natural to him to live a life of love.

II. LOVE INVOLVES ALL VIRTUE, AND IS THE COMPENDIUM OF THE MORAL LAW. We have the unquestioned authority of our Lord for this view of love; for Jesus approved of the summing-up of all duty, of the whole Decalogue, in both tables, in the two precepts, "Love God," and "Love thy neighbour." Where there is true love, vice and crime are banished. And every virtue and grace may be regarded in practice as the fruit of this plant. Even justice, the first of the virtues, is not above this alliance; for how can we wrong those whom we love? It is thus we must account for the exhortation, with which ver. 9 closes, coming in this place. Evil is hatred, and is therefore abhorred; good is love, and is therefore sought and held fast with a firm grasp. Some, indeed, interpret this clause, "Cleave to the Good One, *i.e.* Christ," bringing the motive of a personal attachment to the Saviour to bear upon the redeemed nature. Let us not neglect the Divine method, or spurn the aid which infinite wisdom and grace have preferred. Is it in any respect hard for us to obey God, and follow in the steps of Christ? Then let us call to mind the love of God revealed in his dear Son, and allow that love to prompt us to obedience, gratitude, and consecration. And let us, adopting Christ's new commandment, live in the spirit of love and kindness. This, by the help of the Holy Spirit, will render difficult duties easy, and will enable us to fulfil, in the right spirit and in the right way, the will of God concerning us, in all our relations with our fellow-creatures.

III. CHRISTIAN LOVE SHOULD BE UNFEIGNED. As variously rendered, "without dissimulation," "without hypocrisy." There were hypocrites, not only among the Jewish Pharisees, whom Christ denounced for their pretences and insincerity, but also among the Christian communities. Thus Ananias and Sapphira professed love and generosity, but there was no reality corresponding to the profession. It is hard to understand how, in those times, there could have been any inducement to hypocrisy. However, the language of the apostle here seems to imply that there was a danger of some professing disciples of Christ avowing a love which they did not really feel. There is certainly such danger now. Public sentiment requires that charity should be professed among Christians. Yet there obtains very much which is inconsistent with such profession. There are those who call one another "dear brethren," who nevertheless slander and injure one another when opportunity occurs. It is the curse of the so-called religious world; and it would be well for a while to have in this matter a little less profession and a little more practice. The pretence of brotherly love without the reality is self-delusion, and it is most pernicious in its influence over the unbelieving world.

IV. CHRISTIAN LOVE SHOULD BE CHARACTERIZED BY SYMPATHY AND TENDERNESS. The language used by the apostle here is very remarkable: "Be tenderly affectioned one to another." There is a quality in Christian love which is peculiar to our religion, which was but little known previously to our Saviour's coming, and which may be sought almost in vain in the heathen world to-day. We are not to show kindness merely from a sense of duty; but to do so in the spirit of him who brake not the bruised reed, who was often moved with compassion, who, even on the cross, was meek and gentle, considerate and forgiving. Paul had much of the same spirit. A keen logical mind, a rhetorical style, a commanding will, were in him united with the tenderness of the nurse, the mother. His was the love of forbearance and patience, of

sympathy and pity. Now, there are many classes whom it is especially desirable that we, as Christians, should deal with in this spirit and temper. For instance, the young, the destitute, the afflicted, the wayward. All of these need to be approached in the spirit commended in this passage; not in a hard, cold, mechanical manner, such as seems habitual with some people, who in some respects might be called good; but in a Christ-like attitude, and with Christ-like tones, such as are proper to disciples of him who is touched with a feeling of human infirmities.

V. CHRISTIAN LOVE SHOULD DISPLAY ITSELF IN MUTUAL RESPECT AND HONOUR. Brotherly affection is opposed to self-seeking, pride, and arrogance, as pole to pole. It fosters humility as regards self, and it prompts to put honour upon others. In both these respects the Christian spirit is opposed to the spirit of the world, which impels men to push themselves forward, to urge their own claims, and, on the other hand, to depreciate their neighbours and to thrust them into obscurity. It is a precept of Christianity, "Be courteous." And true courtesy has its deep, Divine root in brotherly love, springing from the soil of fellowship with God in Christ.

APPLICATION. 1. Let any one who may be living in hatred and malice towards any fellow-creature learn to suspect the reality of his Christianity; for such dispositions are not the fruit of the Spirit. 2. Let those whose demeanour towards their neighbours is hard and unsympathetic, consider whether this is the temper of mind which their Lord exemplified in himself and approves in his followers. 3. Let all Christians cultivate that spirit of love which will fit for the immortal fellowship of heaven, the abode of harmony and charity.

Ver. 11.—*The spirit of Christian service.* Religion is a personal, individual matter. Its seat is in the heart. Christianity is both an intelligible truth and a living power. It enters into and takes possession of a man's spiritual nature; and controls and governs his life, and affects his social relations. Christ dwells in the heart by faith, and rules in the heart by the energy of the Divine Spirit. It is in this light that the apostle in this verse regards the religion which he authoritatively teaches and enforces. Let us look at the matter thus, and consider what Christianity proposes to do in the character and life of every person who truly receives it.

I. We have here described THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is *service*, rendered to Christ. Several very important views of our existence and vocation are afforded by this language. 1. Life should be *neither aimless nor selfish.* A desultory way of spending time, with no definite purpose, no unity, is most unsuitable to the professed Christian. To seek simply the satisfaction of one's own wants, the gratification of one's own appetites and tastes, is flagrant violation of the Divine law. How can such a life be termed a service? The bondman has one occupation, doing his master's will; and one aim, securing his master's approval. So with the Christian; the life which is not service cannot be his. 2. Life should be, consciously and deliberately, *a service rendered to the Lord Jesus.* This is what our Divine Master expects. "Ye call me," says he, "Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." This is what his inspired servants acknowledge to be right. "We serve the Lord Christ." This is, in fact, the proper designation of all true Christians—servants of the Lord. The will of God, revealed in Christ Jesus, is our proper law. The glory of God, in the advancement of the kingdom of righteousness, is our proper aim. The disciples of Christ are our congenial fellow-servants. The wages of our service, what are they? "The gift of God is eternal life." 3. Our service rendered to Christ should be *an acknowledgment of his incomparable service rendered to us.* Jesus was the Servant as well as the Son of God. He was the Servant of God *for us.* Such was his own declaration: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And the apostle says of him, "He took upon him the form of a servant." This amazing condescension, perfected in his sacrificial death, demands a grateful recognition and return from us; and is, indeed, divinely adapted to awaken within us the purpose and resolve to devote all our powers to him who withheld not his labours and his life from us. Hence we draw the motive and the power to obey and serve. To express our gratitude and love and consecration to him, no devotion can be too unqualified, no effort too strenuous, no sacrifice too great.

II. We have here described THE PRACTICAL DILIGENCE WHICH SHOULD DISTINGUISH

THE CHRISTIAN'S SERVICE. "Not slothful [or, 'remiss'] in diligence." "Business" is a misleading term, as it seems to refer to the occupation by which a man gains his livelihood. It is a quality or habit which is thus designated. 1. With regard to the *scope* for diligence, there is no limitation; except that, as a matter of course, the employment in which we are to be diligent is to be one which conscience and the God of conscience approve. The Christian should be diligent in the discharge of the common duties of life. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whether the sphere of your activity be in the family and household, in the Church, or in what is called secular life, the same rule applies. Let young people especially take advice in this matter, and, remembering the flight of time, and their responsibility to Heaven, be alert and active. 2. How *needful* is this admonition! All men have some, and there are those who have many, temptations to indolence. Natural disposition or the example of idle companions may induce some to remit their efforts. Others may become weary in well-doing, or may be discouraged because all their glowing expectations are not fulfilled; or because they are left, they fancy, to work without sympathy and alone. The work of the Lord may seem so vast, and your powers may seem so limited, that you may be tempted to say, "My exertions are worthless, and can issue in no result; I may as well fold my hands, and wait for some supernatural interposition." But the right spirit is this—Work as if all depended upon you; pray as if all depended upon God. 3. We have in Jesus Christ the *motive* and the *example* of diligence. Who can do too much, who can do enough, for him who has done and suffered all for us? His meat and drink were to do the will of him who sent him. Strenuous were his exertions in his earthly ministry; limitless his devotion. "It is enough for the servant that he be as his Master." Learn, therefore, of him.

III. We have here described THE FERVENT SPIRIT IN WHICH THE CHRISTIAN'S SERVICE SHOULD BE DISCHARGED. The same expression, here used with regard to the servants of the Lord Jesus generally, is used regarding that remarkable man named Apollos (Acts xviii. 25). It may be objected to this admonition that fervour is very much a matter of temperament; and that it would not be reasonable to expect that persons of a calm and equable character should display the same warmth as persons naturally excitable and emotional. In this there is some truth; yet there may be true fervour without demonstration and noise. A glow of love in the heart may animate the conduct and inspire the efforts even of the tranquil and quiet. It may further be objected that fervent people seldom wear well. We all know persons who have been full of feeling, eager to find fault with methodical and steady hard-workers, loud in their professions of zeal, and abundant in schemes for its display. And we have all known such persons as quick to cool down as to warm up. We have watched their ways, and have found them volatile and fickle; their fine schemes come to nothing; they themselves perhaps make shipwreck; or, at the best, they weary of one plan only to be hot for a season in promoting another. And perhaps experience has led us to undervalue ardour, to place no reliance upon the professions of the fervent, and to regard with no confidence the glowing projects of the sanguine. But let us bear in mind that it is not the fervour that is at fault, but the uncertainty of the flame, and the haste with which it burns out and dies down. The metaphor of the text may give us a hint as to the real truth of the matter. The word used applies to water which is heated to the boiling point. Now, if water be placed in an open vessel, and if heat be applied to it, it soon evaporates in the air—in homely language, it boils away; and the heat applied, the fuel consumed, have served no useful purpose. But let the water be poured into the boiler of a steam-engine, and then let the furnace be heated. What now will be the result? The fervour becomes *power*, the expansion of the steam occasions motion; the machinery begins to act, and some useful result is secured. So in the spiritual realm. Let us have warmth of devotion, love to Christ the Saviour, zeal in the service of God. But let them be under the control of Christian wisdom. Let them be applied to purposes of practical piety and benevolence. Let them, instead of evaporating in words, whether of insincere profession or of insincere devotion, be used according to the counsels of inspiration, the dictates of sober experience, and the holy promptings of the Spirit of God. What counsel shall be given to those professed followers of the Saviour who are deficient in spiritual fervour? In every Christian society there are, it is to be feared, some who, in the judgment even of charity, must

be accounted lukewarm. How displeasing to the great Head of the Church are such characters need scarcely be said; his word to them is, "I would thou wert cold or hot!" When you are careless as to your spiritual state, indifferent to God's Word and to the exercises of prayer and praise, negligent and irregular in attendance upon the public means of grace, slow to reform yourself and quick to censure your neighbours, illiberal in your gifts and slothful in your services to Christ and his cause, it cannot but be presumed that you are wanting in fervour of spirit. There is but one remedy. You must draw near to that Saviour from whom you have wandered. You must repent, renew your first love, and do your first works. Seeking forgiveness for culpable lukewarmness, you must revive the flame of piety by kindling it anew at the sacred altar of Divine love. Contemplate the grace and compassion of the Redeemer as evinced in the anguish of Gethsemane and the woe of Calvary. Call to mind the fervour he displayed when, in the anticipation of his sacrifice, he exclaimed, "Father, glorify thy Name!" "Thy will be done!" Thus shall your languid zeal be revived, thus shall your flagging devotion be reanimated. And your service shall no longer be cold and mechanical, but it shall be rendered gratefully and joyfully; it shall be the tribute of a loyal subject, and the offering of a loving child.

APPLICATION. 1. Let all hearers of the gospel clearly understand what are the claims of Christ upon them. A profession of faith in itself is of little value. What the Lord Jesus asks is the devotion of the heart, and the service of all the powers. 2. Let members of Christian Churches ask themselves how far the tone of their piety and the conduct of their life agree with the language of the text. And let them be on their guard against the insidious approach of lukewarmness. 3. Let communicants approach the Lord's table with the desire of so meeting with Christ that the fervour of their love may be renewed, and that they may be led to consecrate all their energies anew unto the hallowed service of their Saviour and their Lord.

Ver. 12.—*Patience, hope, and prayer.* In the preceding verse the active, energetic side of religion is presented with vivacity and completeness. And this is perhaps the most important of all the trustful results of true Christianity. It was an end worthy of the Divine interposition to introduce amongst men the purpose and the power to serve the Lord with fervour and with diligence. Yet this is not all which our religion does for us. Our life is not altogether in our own hands; we cannot control and govern all that concerns us. We have all to learn the lesson that Divine providence has appointed for us; not only to work, but to submit; that we have not only to serve, but to suffer. True religion must give us, not only a law and impulse for fulfilling life's duties, but also a power by which we shall endure life's calamities and weakness. However our natural character may make active exertion congenial, however our lot may be, on the whole, one of cheerful and devoted service; there comes a time to all—a time, it may be, of sickness, or of infirmity, of calamity, or of old age—when another aspect of religion must be realized; when we must turn to Christ for grace, that we may be found "in hope joyful, in trial patient, in prayer unwearied."

I. TO CHRISTIANS TRIBULATION IS DIVINE DISCIPLINE. The text implies, not only that the human lot is characterized by affliction, but that affliction is the occasion of the calling forth of Christian virtues. There would scarcely be such an emotion as hope unless the present were a condition from which (in some respects) it is desirable to be released, or, at all events, a condition susceptible of great improvement. Unless we had something to bear, there would be no scope for the virtue of patience. If all things were as we could wish them, if we had nothing to contend with, if nothing occurred to make us feel our own helplessness—in such case prayer would scarcely be felt to be urgently, or at all events constantly, necessary. Life is a very different thing to those who are enlightened by revelation, as this verse conclusively shows us. How truly Christian are these precepts, and how truly Christians those who fulfil them, appears, if we think of the heathen, and realize how they failed alike in patience, in hope, and in prayer. Philosophers inculcated patience in adversity, but they imparted no principle or power which enabled people generally to cherish this disposition. The hope which the unenlightened pagans cherished respected this life alone, and even the wisest and best knew nothing of a hope of immortality so vivid and powerful as to awaken joy. Their prayers were either purely matter of custom and form, or, being

addressed to deities morally imperfect and capricious, were faithless, fitful, and uninfluential even upon their own nature. It is the glory of Christianity to have changed all this. Among the lowliest of the Saviour's followers we find fortitude in the endurance of affliction, arising from the conviction that it is the chastening of a Divine Father. Hope—especially as reaching beyond this brief existence, and as a mighty sustaining power—is a virtue distinctively Christian. Whilst prayer, instead of being an occasional, doubting, and unprofitable exercise, is the atmosphere the Christian breathes, the power which sustains him in all trouble, and which inspires within him a hope founded upon the faithfulness and the promises of his redeeming God.

II. AS RESPECTS THE PRESENT, THE CHRISTIAN IS SUPPORTED BY PATIENCE. Patience suffers without murmuring the ills which Providence permits. Patience waits for the relief which, in due time, Providence will send. Suffering and waiting complete this unusual virtue. It is not easy for any one to be patient; it is easier to work with diligence and strenuousness than to endure trial without complaint—than to wait until a power not our own shall bring the trial to a close. Christian patience is not a stoical aquiescence in the inevitable, upon the principle "What can't be cured must be endured." 1. It is *the result of a belief in a wise and merciful Providence.* We do not bow to fate; we submit to a Father in heaven. Often we cannot understand why he should permit all that befalls us. But faith assures us that the counsels of God towards us are counsels of love. We cannot shut out from the universe the unseen hand that guides and governs all for our highest and eternal good. We believed in our own earthly father's heart, though sense could never have told us of it; and similarly our souls are patient, because we are assured that a heavenly Parent cares for us, and strengthens and heals as well as smites. 2. It is *the fruit of fellowship with Jesus.* There was no quality for which our Saviour was more to be admired than for his patience. He was patient with the misunderstandings of his own disciples; he was patient with his enemies and murderers; he was patient under insult and agony. In all this he left us an example; and an apostle prays that God may direct our hearts into the patience of Christ. Many, through faith in the meek and patient Saviour, have been enabled by Divine grace to overcome a naturally impatient and imperious, hasty and violent temper. 3. It is *a virtue in which we are instructed and practically disciplined by the Spirit of God.* "Tribulation worketh patience." The lesson is not learned all at once. Let not those dispositions to which it is not naturally easy be discouraged. "Let patience have its perfect work." Patience is tried, not that it may give way, but that it may be established. It is the handiwork of the living Spirit; and the day shall come when the Maker shall pronounce this and all his works to be very good.

III. AS RESPECTS THE FUTURE, THE CHRISTIAN IS INSPIRED BY HOPE. Now, hope is an easier and more natural exercise of the human spirit than is patience. A person may rebel and fret under present discipline, and yet may hope for better times.

". . . . the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away."

The Christian's hope is, however, far superior to any other. Whilst he has higher pleasures and stronger supports now, he has brighter prospects for the great hereafter. There are several elements of superiority in this hope. 1. It is *well-founded*, resting as it does upon the faithful promises of God. God is designated "the God of hope." Hence the Christian's hope is not vague, but definite; it is not hesitating, but sure. 2. It is *hope of grace for all the needs that are to come.* This means hope of deliverance from all dangers, support under all difficulties, consolation under all troubles, guidance in all perplexities. 3. It is *hope which reaches beyond this present life;* such hope as none has been able to inspire but he who "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." Hope of rest, of victory, of a kingdom; a hope as "an anchor unto the soul, sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil." 4. It is *hope which brings joy.* Making the future real, bringing the future near, hope chases away the gloom and darkness, and creates a spiritual joy, pure, serene, and unspeakable. Thus, in the night, songs of joy and gladness ascend to heaven. "Patience worketh experience, and experience hope."

IV. BY PRAYER, PATIENCE IS PERFECTED AND HOPE INSPIRED. It is evident that

the admonition to prayer is introduced here with a special purpose in view. It is intended to point out to us that the demeanour here commended can only be maintained through cultivating a prayerful spirit. It is not easy, whilst pursuing this pilgrimage, to be patient amidst its difficulties, to be joyful when the present is dark, and the ray of hope alone illuminates the night. Still, though not easy, it is possible. That is to say, it becomes possible by prayer. Grace can be obtained, if sought in God's appointed way; but it must be sought, not occasionally or fitfully, but steadfastly, perseveringly, constantly, habitually. This is reasonable enough. There is nothing in our condition that should put a close to our prayers, and nothing in our hearts. We do not become independent of the aid which such fellowship with Heaven alone can bring. There is every inducement, in the declarations and promises of God's Word, to "pray without ceasing," "always to pray and not to faint." God's fatherly heart does not cease to pity; Christ does not cease to intercede for his people. As long as our Lord is on the throne of power, and we are in poverty and need and helplessness, we may well continue our prayers. Private, domestic, and public; silent and uttered; stated and ejaculatory;—the prayers of God's people are acceptable, and are heard.

APPLICATION. 1. The tribulations of life are common to all mankind. Why should any hearer of the gospel endure those tribulations without the grace that can sustain and comfort, the hopes that can animate and inspire? 2. If Christians are weighed down and distressed by the trials of life, is it not because they fail to give heed to the admonitions of God's Word, because they neglect to use the means of grace and help which are placed within their reach? Tribulation will come. We can be sustained under it only by patience and by hope; and these virtues are the fruits of prayer.

Vers. 13, 14.—*Treatment of friends and foes.* Christianity is a practical religion. The New Testament is not simply a repertory of general principles; it draws out those Divine principles into the detailed duties and difficulties of daily life. For example, whilst love is the new commandment of Jesus to his disciples, and whilst love is described as the sum of the Divine Law, as the greatest of the virtues, as the bond of perfectness, we are shown *how* to manifest love in the occupations and relationships of daily existence. In this passage we learn how the Spirit of Christ will govern our conduct both to friends and to foes.

I. CHRISTIAN TREATMENT OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS. In the first age of the gospel there were formed, in the cities of the empire, societies professing to trust Christ as the Divine Saviour, and to obey Christ as the Divine Lord. In many respects the proceedings and habits of the members of these societies differed from those of the people around, and this with a profound and wide difference. This is exemplified in these admonitions. 1. *Charity* should be exhibited to those in need. In every community there were the very poor, the aged, the infirm and disabled, the oppressed and persecuted, the widows and orphans. "The poor ye have always with you." Among the heathen it was too common to treat these classes with contempt and neglect. Christianity introduced a better mode of dealing with the necessitous. Teaching the brotherhood of men in Christ, it encouraged the sentiment of community, and led each practically to share with his neighbour the good of this world. 2. *Hospitality* is another form of the same virtue. By this is not meant sumptuous banquets, often given for ostentation and for purposes of policy. But in early times Christians would often come as strangers to a town, it might be in pursuit of work, it might be to escape from persecution, it might be as the bearers of messages of greeting and sympathy. Accordingly, we find some Christians commended for receiving such into their houses and entertaining them, and we find admonitions to others to adopt such a practice—the encouragement being added, "Forget not to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." 3. *The motive and model of such conduct are to be found in the Lord Jesus himself.* His very coming to this world was occasioned by his compassion upon our necessities: how much more his sacrifice and redemption! Look at his example; and you find him and his disciples keeping a bag, and from their slender store relieving the poor; you find him providing bread for hungering multitudes; you find him healing the sick and helpless; you find him inviting young men to visit and to converse with him. After his ascension, Christ's followers, under the influence of the Spirit poured

out from on high, imitated their Lord's example. Officers were appointed in the societies for the ministration of alms; gifts were voluntarily made for the support of the poor; collections were made for indigent fellow-Christians; men were raised up whose ministry as hosts was deemed worthy of apostolic approval. All this was the working of Christ in the community; and in proportion as Christ lives in your hearts will you follow these examples. 4. *Wisdom and discretion are needed in the fulfilment of these honourable duties.* Circumstances differ as the state of society changes. Impostors abound. Indolence must not be countenanced. Each Christian must be guided in the exercise of charity and hospitality by his means and by his opportunities.

II. CHRISTIAN TREATMENT OF FOES. Those who curse, revile, calumniate, injure them, Christians are bound, as followers of Christ, to bless, to pray for, and to benefit. 1. Christ himself *has commanded such conduct.* There can be no doubt that the sermon on the mount was well known to Paul, and that he was quoting from it here. 2. Christ himself *has exemplified it.* In his life he never injured those who hated him, but rendered, contrariwise, blessing. When he came to die, he furnished the most amazing and Divine instance the world has ever known of returning good for evil. He prayed for and forgave his murderers; further than this he could not have gone. And "he has left us an example that we should follow in his steps."

Ver. 15.—*Christian sympathy.* Joy and sorrow are great facts of human life. If there is such an element as purpose in the universe, it is clear that men were made to experience gladness and grief, and that both experiences are intended to act as discipline by which human character may be tested and trained. Both emotions are experienced in childhood, and manifest themselves most strikingly in early life, when what the mature think trivial causes are wont to awaken feeling. In manhood, feeling is less easily enkindled, and it less easily dies away. To the selfish, causes of rejoicing must diminish, both in frequency and in force, with advancing years; whilst, probably to most, occasions of sorrow are multiplied, for bereavements, the causes of bitterest sorrow, naturally befall the most frequently those who have trodden the path of life the longest. The religion of the Lord Jesus does not seek either to subdue or to blame these natural emotions; it aims at controlling them, at enlarging their scope, at purifying them, at making them all minister to our spiritual good. To quote from the Old Testament, "There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh." To quote from the New Testament, "Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise." And, to bring out the special lesson of the text, Christianity teaches us that both joy and sorrow are to be shared, and yet extended; to be heightened, sanctified, and blessed, by true Christian sympathy.

I. THE NATURE OF SYMPATHY. This habit of mind is simply sharing the feelings of others, entering into the experiences of their hearts, making them our own. We do this by virtue of a natural principle. Sinful selfishness often overcomes this principle, checks it, and prevents it from displaying itself. Yet sympathy may sometimes be observed where there is no reverence or faith toward our Saviour; and, alas! is sometimes absent where there is a loud profession of such faith. When we participate in a brother's feelings, a Divine law appoints that such participation shall be for his good; we relieve him of some of the burden of his grief and anxiety, or we heighten his happiness. This quality of sympathy is, perhaps, more natural to some minds than to others; yet it may be either cultivated or repressed. It may be manifested in various ways—by the expression of the countenance, by the language of congratulation or condolence, by the tones of the voice, by the offer of companionship, by the extension of such assistance as the case may render possible. If there be two stringed instruments in a room, and a note of one be struck, it is said that the corresponding string of the neighbouring instrument responds to the sister tone. When the horn is wound among the rocks of the winding river, the cliffs give back the music in repeated and orderly response.

"Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever;
Blow, bugles, blow! set the wild echo flying;
And answer, echo! answer, dying, dying, dying!"

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

II. THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. Our religion lays the deep basis of all virtues in the character of God and in the redemption of Christ. The New Testament always, in admonitions as to conduct, either states or assumes this principle. Whatever is right is commended to us as the will of God. Christ died to redeem us from iniquity, and to sanctify us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works; and the Holy Spirit is the power of life whose fruit is holiness. 1. In Christ's mediation we have an instance—the highest and most wonderful of all instances—of true sympathy. Why did our Lord visit this world? Why did he take the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death? It was because he was impelled by Divine compassion, which is one part of sympathy. He wept with those who weep because of sin and misery and helplessness. He "bore our sins and carried our sorrows:" was not that practical sympathy? He "tasted death for every man," and "gave himself for us;" what more could he have done? Yet the other side of sympathy was present in his nature. He rejoiced in the joy of our deliverance, in the prospect of our participation in the blessings of life eternal. For the joy that was set before him—which was joy over us—he endured the cross! 2. In Christ's ministry we have beautiful examples of sympathy. He pitied the widow of Nain; he wept at the grave of Lazarus; he shed tears over the doomed Jerusalem; he commiserated the distressed daughters of the city. On the other hand, he rejoiced with those who rejoiced; he came eating and drinking; he was present at a marriage-feast, and contributed to its festivity. And when any poor wandering sinner was by his compassion recovered to the fold, the language of his heart was this: "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." 3. The religion of Christ provides for mutual sympathy among those who in common acknowledge him. In restoring peace between man and God, Jesus has virtually restored peace between man and man. As the Head, he brings all the members into a unity—living, organic, mutually helpful, and mutually sympathetic. Hence one great peculiarity of his Church, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

III. THE RANGE OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. We may sympathize with another's anxieties, fears, faith, fortitude, or hopes. But the apostle here refers to the two widest and commonest forms of emotion—joy and sorrow. 1. We are admonished to *participate in one another's rejoicing*. Thank God, there are very many occasions on which this is possible; the cup of gladness is handed round, and few are those who have not tasted. When our neighbour experiences some piece of good fortune, when after sickness he is restored to health, when he is spared in the midst of danger, when he is happy in his family life, prosperous in his business, honoured among his associates, let us rejoice with him. The mind that cannot so rejoice must indeed be grudging and envious. Of all vices, envy and jealousy are the pettiest and vulgarest, the remotest from a liberal, generous, Christian nature. No excuse or extenuation can be imagined for these faults, as for some others. And how shall we rejoice over the spiritual happiness of our fellow-men! When an undecided friend has yielded heart and life to the Saviour, when a disobedient one has been brought to contrition and repentance, when a brother has been enabled to exercise some Christian virtue by which good has been done to others, on such occasions it is meet and right, divinely natural and beautiful, to rejoice in our brother's joy. Paul would say, "I joy and rejoice with you all," and John had "no greater joy than to see his children walk in the truth." 2. We are admonished to *participate in one another's grief*—to "weep with those who weep." This is said to be easier than the former exercise of sympathy; for the other seems to imply our inferiority; this, our superiority. We are said to sympathize more easily with the greater sorrows, and with the lesser joys, of our neighbours. If envy refuses to rejoice with the happy, inhumanity refuses to sorrow with the afflicted. What a depth of malice does that heart reveal which can rejoice in the misfortunes and griefs of others! Yet, though this extreme of malignity is uncommon, it is not an uncommon thing even for Christians to be unmoved by others' woes. Naturally, sympathy will be more intense towards those in closest association with ourselves; those of widest sympathies can with difficulty weep for the woes of the distant and unknown. With our own family and congregation, with our own circle of friends, sympathy will, in time of trial, be ready, tender, and warm. With the widow and the fatherless, the aged and the infirm, the unfortunate and the deserted, the oppressed and

the persecuted, with the sons and daughters of affliction, let us sympathize with Christian forwardness and sincerity. And let it not be forgotten that sympathy will, in many cases, evince itself in practical forms. There are some, who are in elevated positions, towards whom we can show, when they are in grief, no other sympathy than such as expresses itself in demeanour and in words. But there are others, in poverty and in need, with whom it would be a mockery to express sympathy and yet to withhold from them relief and help.

IV. THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY. Not only is such a disposition, as is commended here, in harmony with the Divine will, and in itself beautiful and admirable, but it is contributive to the welfare and happiness of all concerned. 1. Sympathy is *the occasion of happiness to those who exercise it.* Those who are sympathetic need not be told this; those who are not, and are incredulous, may make the trial. To lose sight, as far as may be, of personal pleasure and trouble; to interest ourselves in the emotions of our neighbours;—this is the sure way to happiness. 2. Sympathy is *the occasion of relief and of profit to those to whom it is extended.* The burdened spirit parts with half its load when a kindly friend extends a ready and tender sympathy. The tear is dried, the heart is cheered, when the sufferer feels that he is not left to suffer all alone. And joy, when the rejoicing spreads, is purified from selfishness, and is heightened tenfold. A torch burns brightly; but let ten torches be applied to it, and you have eleven flames instead of one. Thus gladness spreads from heart to heart. And in the Church of Christ, what is more beautiful than to behold the gleam of gladness on a hundred faces, to hear the song of gladness from a hundred harmonious lips! One soul afire with love to Jesus calls upon other souls to share the devotion and the praise; sympathy spreads, and general joy prevails. 3. Thus *the Church of Christ is edified.* The purposes of Divine grace in appointing Christian fellowship are fulfilled when each bears his brother's burdens and joins his brother's song. There is no surer sign of the Saviour's spiritual presence, of his gracious work, than the prevalence of such sympathy. 4. *What a testimony is thus offered to the world!* Men complain of the world that it is heartless; that every one is engrossed in his own pursuits, his own interests, his own pleasures, his own troubles. It should be otherwise in the Church. And when it is otherwise, a proof is given of a Divine presence, a superhuman power. An energy of attraction is recognized; and men are drawn to the society of those who feel the winning and consolatory power of the emphatically Christian spirit of love and mutual sympathy.

Vers. 17, 18.—*Honourableness and peaceableness.* Men do and must live in society. And all civilized communities have their own codes of conduct, which must be observed by those who wish to enjoy the benefits of social life and the protection of political government. Civil society enjoins the observance of justice and the maintenance of peace. But public opinion often requires simply a compliance with the letter of the law, and is very tolerant as to infractions of its spirit. The code of society or the laws of honour require that a man shall deal honourably with his equals, but in some instances allow him to act, within the limits of the law, dishonestly towards his inferiors; thus he must pay his gambling debts, but he may cheat his tradesmen if he can. The same rules prohibit murder, but in some places admit of duelling, and generally sanction resentment and revenge. Christianity requires that honourable and peaceable conduct should be distinctive of our life in our relations to all men.

I. HONOURABLENESS. The word means more than honesty. It was not a very lofty morality which dictated the saying, "An honest man's the noblest work of God." Bare honesty is a small part of religion; it may keep a man out of jail, but it cannot fit a man for the Church of Christ. The apostle enjoins honourable, fair, praiseworthy, noble conduct. Deceitful, shifty, tortuous ways of acting should be far from the Christian's soul. Sincerity, straightforwardness, truthfulness, fairness, should dwell in his soul and speak from his lips. In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation he should shine. That the Christian should provide or take thought for such a course of action is in harmony with our reasonable and reflective nature. Deliberate preference, diligent pursuit, steadfast adherence to things honourable, are thus enjoined. Impulse is good when directed to what is right; but principle is better, for it is more trustworthy. When the apostle commends such conduct towards all men, he provides

for the social influence of Christians being felt by all around. Not merely within the pale of Christian society, not merely amongst personal friends and associates, but in the sight of all men, uprightness and honour should express the power of religion. The advantages accruing to the world in consequence of such a practice as is here commended are manifest. The credit of religion will be promoted, and the favour of men conciliated towards doctrines so fruitful of good works. Christianity and morality will appear as twin sisters, bringing congenial blessings to an ignorant and misguided world.

II. PEACEABLENESS. The New Testament makes it evident that the introduction of peace to a distracted and discordant humanity was one of the great ends of Christianity. Christ is the "Prince of peace;" his coming was the advent of peace; his kingdom is the reign of peace. From enjoyment of peace with God, and of peace of conscience within, the Christian passes to a wider sphere; cultivates peace as a mark of the Divine presence within the Church, and seeks its diffusion throughout human society generally. Amongst Christians there should prevail mutual forbearance, sympathy, and co-operation. But in saying this we do not exhaust the reference of this passage. "All men" are contemplated by the inspired writer. Men of all stations —superiors, equals, and inferiors; men of all characters—the litigious and quarrelsome as well as the meek and yielding—are all to be treated in the distinctively Christian temper. Sometimes opinions and interests conflict, sometimes natural temperaments differ; still the peace is to be maintained. Yet the apostle, who was both a reasonable man, and a man who had large experience of life, mentions a condition. It may not always be possible to live peaceably. But the impossibility must not be upon our part; we must not make such excuses as, "I could not keep my temper;" "I could not treat such and such a person with my usual self-possession." But there will sometimes arise an impossibility on the part of others. The enemies of religion may resolve upon breaking the peace; persecutors may rage and imagine a vain thing; as we see from passages in the life of our Lord and his apostles, and in abundance at later periods of history. Violent and unreasonable professors of Christianity may resent the exposure of their errors, or the rebuke of their sins and follies. There is a higher duty even than that of peaceableness; peace must not be sought at any price; we must not, for its sake, sacrifice conscience and displease God.

Happy is the society in which this picture is realized! Let not our spirit and habits prevent or delay the delightful realization.

Ver. 21.—*The way to victory.* Although the world is full of strife, and although the Scriptures constantly represent the good man as engaged in conflict, still we cannot regard warfare, either physical or moral, as the true occupation and the final satisfaction of man. The state of humanity is, however, such that only through the battling of opposed principles can true peace be gained and the ideal condition be reached. We are accordingly accustomed to think of resistance as the necessary incident and of victory as the hard-won end of the moral life. And, for us, the good man is the man who spends his strength, and passes his time, in antagonism to error and to evil.

I. THERE IS A GREAT CONFLICT AND WARFARE UPON EARTH CARRIED ON BETWEEN EVIL AND GOOD. Truth contends with error, reason with superstition, conscience with passion, virtue with vice, law with crime, order with turbulence, religion with infidelity. There are wars and fightings in which it may be said that light contends with darkness. But for the most part the campaign is not so simple, so intelligible; the combatants are not on the one side all good, nor on the other all evil; opposing principles are distributed irregularly through the armies.

II. NONE CAN BE NEUTRAL IN THIS STRUGGLE. Whether or not we consciously and deliberately engage in the moral war, it is ever raging. Not only so; we are constrained to take a side. He who professedly withdraws from the moral conflict does in reality side with the enemy of God. For to deem the war one of no interest, one which has no moral claim upon us, is to fail to respond to the trumpet-call of duty, and to decline the noblest of all careers—that of the soldier of the cross. "He that is not with me," says our Lord, "is against me."

III. THE FORCES OF EVIL ARE POWERFUL AND OFTEN VICTORIOUS. Christians do ill to despise the power of their spiritual foe; for such an estimate may lead them to

over-confidence, and to the neglect of necessary means of defence. They may then be taken unawares, and being surprised may succumb to their foe; or in any case the foe may in all likelihood gain an advantage over them. An example is given by St. Paul in this passage. There is a natural tendency to revenge. A Christian who has been wronged is urged by the surging of resentful passion within to turn upon his injurer, to retaliate, to inflict evil for evil. But, if he do so, in such case he will in fact be overcome by evil. Many are the cases in which the unspiritual principle or impulse gains the mystery in the heart and in the actions of the individual. Who is there who cannot from his own experience bear witness to this? And what state of society, what age of the world, can be pointed out which has been exempt from such spectacles as the temporary defeat of truth, justice, and goodness? Apart from Christianity, it does not seem that things have a natural tendency to improve. He who studies the history of any unchristian community will observe forms of sin continually varying, sometimes more and sometimes less repulsive, but he will not find truth and righteousness progressively powerful and finally triumphant. Now and again the snow-white standard sinks in the tumult of the strife.

IV. CHRIST, AS THE CAPTAIN OF THE RIGHTEOUS HOST, TOOK PART IN THE CONFLICT, AND CONQUERED EVIL WITH GOOD. It is true that the Lord Jesus was the Prince of peace, yet his whole life was one long struggle with sin and error. He knew well that there was but one way to a peace which should be acceptable to God and serviceable to man; and that that way was the way of spiritual conflict. It was in this sense that he came to send, not peace, but a sword, upon earth. Now, the supreme illustration of the method enjoined in the text, where we are bidden to overcome evil with good, is that furnished in the ministry of our Lord and Leader. He has proved himself the Conqueror, and if the world's sin is finally to be vanquished, it will be through Christ. And what were the tactics of the Divine Commander? He did not turn against his foes the weapons with which they attacked him. He did not render injury for injury, slander for slander, hatred for hatred. He relied upon the power of the highest and purest morality. Such strategy, if the word may be used in a good and not an evil sense, was not likely to be immediately successful; but under the government of God it cannot ultimately fail. By the compassion of his heart, by the ungrudging sympathy he ever showed to sufferers, by the patience with which he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, by his forgiving spirit, by his voluntary sacrifice,—by these means Christ procured his victory. Our Saviour's ministry was a conflict with the powers of darkness and of iniquity. In this conflict he was never really worsted. And that he was at last victorious was made manifest when he arose from the dead and ascended to the Father.

V. CHRISTIANS ARE SUMMONED TO FOLLOW THEIR MASTER IN THIS HOLY WAR. Have not their own hearts been the battle-field upon which the Saviour has fought and conquered? Has not their evil been overcome by his good? Such being the case, if they now yield to the adversary and espouse his cause, how inconsistent and indefensible will be such a course! And it must needs be that their own nature and character must be the field upon which the struggle is to be maintained even to the end. Nor is this all. We have as Christians a battle to wage with the ungodly world around. In every condition of life, in every relation, in every calling and service, there occur opportunities for us to withstand the forces of evil. And this we are called upon to do in the Saviour's Name, and by the might of the Saviour's cross. It is by honour and integrity, by purity and truth, by courage and patience, by meekness and love, that this holy war is to be waged. "Fight the good fight of faith."

VI. VICTORY MAY BE DEFERRED, BUT IT IS ASSURED AND CERTAIN TO THE ARMY OF THE LORD. It is not denied that the conflict will certainly be arduous, will probably be long. Why, we cannot tell; yet we can see that the protracted moral strife is a means of testing the faith and zeal of those combatants who have vowed to follow the banner of the Son of God. But the attributes and the promises of God himself, the glorious work of Christ, the precious and faithful declarations of Scripture, all assure us that the issue of the strife is in no way doubtful. Victory is pledged to the followers of the Lamb. We may unfalteringly rely upon the express assurance of the great Captain of our salvation: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me upon my throne."

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*The living sacrifice.* In the oldest records that can be found of the various nations of the earth, sacrifice is always found to have formed part of their religious services. Thus we find an idea universally existing that something was needed to obtain pardon for guilt, and to express gratitude to the supreme being or beings whom they regarded as the givers and benefactors of their life. But it is only when we come to the religion of Israel that we find the idea of sacrifice having any influence upon the life. The other nations offered sacrifices, but there was no turning away from evil. Nay, in the case of many heathen countries, their acts of religious worship became, and have become, associated with immoral and degrading practices. The religion of Israel, however, taught the necessity of personal holiness. True, their religion was largely composed of rites and ceremonies, but it was a religion of practical morality also. Very plainly the Jewish psalmist recognizes that it is the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart that is most acceptable to God, and that without this it is vain to offer the blood of bulls and goats. But the high precepts of their religion were sadly neglected by the Jews in later years. In the time of Jesus Christ on earth, the religion of most of them was a religion of ritual and routine. He told the Pharisees that though they outwardly appeared righteous unto men, within they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity. But Jesus came to teach men true religion. The worship that he demands is a worship in spirit and in truth. The sacrifice that he requires is a sacrifice of our life. He wants the activities and energies of body, soul, and spirit to be consecrated to his service. This is what the apostle means when he speaks of presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice.

I. IT IS TO BE A SACRIFICE OF OUR FEELINGS. The whole heart must be given up to God, so that whatever is right may be strengthened, and that whatever is wrong may be taken away. Many Christians render to Christ an imperfect sacrifice in this respect. They keep back part of their life from him. They allow themselves to be dominated by feelings which are inconsistent with his spirit and precepts. They will excuse themselves for some besetting sin by saying, "That is my nature; I can't help it." The evil nature is still with us, it is true; but it is our duty to strive against it, to overcome it. Moses appears to have been at first a man of hasty and violent temper. Yet the Divine discipline, and no doubt also his own obedience to the Divine will, produced such a change in his character that it is afterwards recorded of him, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth." It is a natural thing to be angry when things are said or done to provoke us; but is it Christian? So with the other feelings of envy, of pride, of revenge, of hatred—instead of yielding to them or excusing them, the true Christian will be ashamed of them and sorry for them, and will do his best to overcome their influence in his heart.

II. IT IS TO BE A SACRIFICE OF OUR AFFECTIONS. The love of God should ever be the chief affection of our heart. Not that we are to love our friends less, but we are to love God more. Hence, when our natural affections become hindrances in the Christian life, they must be restrained and subdued. The strongest temptations to the Christian are not always those that come from the baser part of his nature, but sometimes those that come from the purer and better emotions of the soul. The love of a friend—it might seem strange that there should be anything wrong in that. Yet even this affection, right and natural in itself, becomes wrong when it interferes with love to God. The love of home—how can there be anything wrong in that? Yet there is wrong in it when it interferes with the call of duty. "He that loveth father or mother more than me," says Christ, "is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." When the din of war begins to resound throughout a land, the man who has dedicated himself to the military service of his country does not hesitate to obey the trumpet-call. His farm or his business may require his presence, and may suffer seriously by his absence. It is a sore trial to tear himself away from his wife, from his family, and from his friends, whose faces he may never see again in this world. But however pressing the claims of his daily work may be, however strong his domestic ties, all these considerations must now give

way to the demand of patriotism and of duty. And shall not the Christian soldier sacrifice all earthly affections rather than be unfaithful to Christ? Shall he not hear the voice of Jesus above all earthly voices? Of such complete self-denial Christ himself has given us the best example. "He pleased not himself." Not merely in his death, but in his life, he gave himself a living sacrifice. When we think of how much we owe to Christ, any sacrifice that we can make will seem but a poor and feeble effort to show our gratitude and our love. Yet we are encouraged to present even our poor sacrifice by the assurance that it will be "acceptable unto God."—C. H. I.

Ver. 2.—*The two likenesses.* The exhortation contained in this verse regards the human mind as impressionable, pliable, susceptible. It is especially addressed to Christians. There are two forms which seek to impress themselves upon the Christian, and the image of which every Christian bears in greater or less degree. The one is likeness to the world; the other is likeness to God.

I. LIKENESS TO THE WORLD. Against this the apostle warns the Christian: "Be not conformed to this world." 1. *The exhortation is much needed.* The ambition of many Christians is to be as like the world as possible. They talk of the extreme of Puritanism, and speak of being too strict. The danger now is from the extreme of worldliness. If I am to choose, let me have the extreme of being too scrupulous rather than too careless, ultra-conscientious rather than having a conscience that sees no harm in anything. Let me be like Abraham, who would not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet from the King of Sodom, rather than like worldly minded Lot, who pitched his tent toward Sodom, and by-and-by came and dwelt in Sodom, though he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the filthy conversation and unlawful deeds of the people among whom he had chosen to dwell. Let me be like Elisha rather than Gehazi, like Daniel rather than Belshazzar. 2. *Conformity to the world is injurious to the Church.* When the Jewish people came in contact with the heathen nations, they began to imitate them, to conform to their customs. The result was disastrous to the spiritual life, and ultimately to the temporal prosperity of Israel. So it was with the Churches of Asia. Their worldliness proved their ruin. Sardis had a name to live, but it was dead. Laodicea was lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. We may try as Christians to please the world by conforming to it, but in proportion as we do so we are unfaithful to our Master, and we are displeasing him. "The friendship of this world is enmity against God." 3. *The conformity of Christians to the world is injurious to the world.* Some Christians imagine that they will have more influence on the world by becoming more like it. It is a great mistake. If we want to teach children to write, we don't set them imperfect copies. The world was never made better by low ideals. The deities of paganism did not elevate humanity. It is not the half-and-half Christian, the worldly minded Christian, whose influence will tell for good upon those around him. If we are to make the world better, it can only be by keeping before us as Christians a high ideal of what the Christian life ought to be, and by striving faithfully, and with the help of Divine grace, to live up to it. Christians are living epistles, known and read of all men. What kind of copy are we setting to the world? 4. *We are not to imitate the world in its estimate of religion.* The world's idea of religion is that it is a thing of gloom, an irksome restraint, a weary bondage, something that it would be desirable to have when death is approaching, but which it would be well to live without as long as possible. Too often Christians give encouragement to this idea. Their religion has too little relation to their daily life, or a relation of routine form rather than of living and pleasant association. 5. *We are not to imitate the world in its estimate of the soul.* In the popular estimation, and in everyday life, the soul is thrust into the background. The chief concern is how to provide comfort and luxury for the body. No expense is grudged for these objects. Bodily health is scrupulously guarded, and rightly so. Education is carefully attended to. How anxious parents are, and rightly so, to secure a good education for their children! But how little trouble is taken to instruct them or have them instructed in eternal things! How little care, generally, is devoted to the concerns of the immortal soul! In this respect professing Christians are too liable to be conformed to the world. They become too much absorbed in the world's business to think as much as they ought of their own spiritual life and of the souls of others. Christian parents are often

very careless in regard to the spiritual instruction of their children. Let us not bear the world's likeness. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate;" "Be not conformed to this world."

II. LIKENESS TO GOD. "But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." 1. *This is the way to drive out likeness to the world.* Likeness to God will exclude likeness to the world. The more desire we have for God, the less we shall have for the world; the more we think of the soul, the less we shall be anxious about the body; the more we think of eternity, the less we shall think of this present world; the more we think of the judgment of God, the less we shall think of the judgment of men. 2. *The first step is the renewing of your mind.* An external influence is here implied. We cannot renew our own minds. "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is rightly called the saving change. To experience this change is the starting-point of the Christian life. It is to pass from death to life. Old things pass away; all things become new. There is a new way of looking at things. Things which we once took pleasure in have no attraction for us now; duties which we once thought irksome now become our delight. This is the result of the Holy Spirit working in us, producing in us likeness to God, transforming us into his image, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. 3. *This transformation will soon affect your whole life.* (1) *It will affect your business.* You will no longer regard your business dealings from the merely worldly, but from the Christian standpoint. Your question will not be merely—Will it pay? but—Is it right? (2) *It will affect your companionships.* The question will be, not—Are they pleasant? but—Are they pleasing to God? are they helpful to my spiritual life? (3) *It will affect your amusements.* The question will be, not—May I? but—Ought I? Not—Is there any harm in this? but—Is there any good in it? Is it the way in which I would enjoy myself if I knew that I was to die to-morrow? When Achilles Daunt, late Dean of Cork, was a student at Trinity College, Dublin, he was passionately fond of the drama, and used to go often to the theatre. One evening, after coming home and taking up his Bible for his usual evening reading—feeling that the scenes he had just witnessed made it a little irksome to do so—his eye lit on our Lord's words, "He that is not with me is against me." The passage seemed to seize him with an iron grip. He then and there battled out the matter with his own heart, and did not rise from his knees till he had resolved to dedicate himself to the Lord, to take his stand boldly as his servant, and never again to enter a theatre. 4. *This transformation is to be developed by living near to God.* Prayer, and the study of God's Word, are the means of obtaining this likeness to God. It is noteworthy that the same Greek word which is here translated "transformed" is the word which is used to describe the transfiguration of Christ: "And he was transfigured before them." And when did Christ's transfiguration come to him? When he was on the mountain-top in prayer. "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering" (Luke ix. 29). Prayer is the true transformation, the true transfiguration, of the soul. Thus here on earth we shall reflect in some measure the image of God until we reach that land where "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—C. H. I.

VERS. 3—8.—*Diversity and unity in the Church of Christ.* The subject of union among the various branches of the Church of Christ is one to which much attention has of late years been turned. The efforts of the Evangelical Alliance have been largely directed to secure a more brotherly relationship and more hearty co-operation between the different denominations of Christians. Some Christians desire an organic union of all sections of the Church, but the passage before us indicates that there may be outward diversity along with inward and real unity.

I. DIVERSITY AND UNITY IN THE BODY. "We have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office" (ver. 4). *There we have diversity.* What diversity there is between the organs of hearing and seeing, tasting and touching, speaking and smelling! What a complex organism is that of heart and brain, and veins and arteries, and nerves and sinews! *Yet there too we have unity.* There is one body. One life throbs in all the parts.

II. DIVERSITY AND UNITY IN THE CHURCH. "So we, being many, are one body

in Christ, and every one members one of another" (ver. 5). *There we have diversity.* There is room for diversity in the Church of Christ—for varied forms of worship, for varied views of doctrine, for varied methods of Church government. A dull uniformity is undesirable. "Acts of Uniformity" only made more diversity, and produced discord instead of unity. When the Church of England had no room for John Wesley, she only prepared the way for a larger secession from the ranks of her membership. So, too, in individual congregations, there is room for varied gifts and activities. *There, also, we have unity.* "One body, and every one members one of another." There is the unity of the Spirit, the unity that arises from the common bond of faith in Christ and love to him, of obedience to the same Divine law, and of the inspiring hope of the same heaven.

III. TWO PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. *A lesson of humility.* "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly" (ver. 3). The recognition of the fact that there are varied gifts in the Church of Christ will prevent any one from being unduly proud of any gifts he may possess, or any work he may have done. All the members of the body have need of one another. There is a place for the humble and unlearned workers in the Church of Christ, just as much as for the wealthy and the cultured and the learned. 2. *A lesson of concentration.* Division of labour and concentration of individuals upon particular branches is one of the great principles of modern manufacturing and commerce. St. Paul applies the same principle to Christian work. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." There are three special spheres of Christian work. (1) *Teaching.* Under this head may be comprised what the apostle speaks of as "prophecy," "teaching," "exhortation." This is the work of ministers of the gospel, of professors in colleges, of teachers in daily schools and in Sunday schools. There could be no more important work than that of instructing others, moulding immortal souls, inspiring old and young with the power of great principles. When Socrates was asked why he did not commit to writing his philosophic opinions and teachings, his answer was, "I write upon human souls. That writing will last eternally." How important that all who engage in any department of teaching should realize the abiding consequences of their work, and should devote their best energies to it! (2) *Ruling.* There must of necessity be authority and discipline in the Christian Church. Impenitent offenders against Christian morality need to be excluded. Differences of opinion or quarrels between brethren need to be wisely considered, and breaches healed. How necessary that those who are placed in positions of authority should rule "with diligence," realizing their high responsibility to preserve the peace and maintain the purity of the Church of Christ! (3) *Giving.* Under this head may be included not only what is here called "giving," but also those branches spoken of as "ministering" and "showing mercy." Christians who are not teachers or rulers ought at least to be givers. If they have money to give for Christ's cause, let them give it, and give it, too, with liberality, in no selfish and in no niggard spirit. Every Christian can give something for the building up of the Church of Christ. We can give our time. We can give our attention to the poor, to the sick, to the stranger. Let Christians remember that in the natural body there are no useless or idle members. Each member has its own distinct function. So is it in the Christian Church. There is some special work for every one to do.—C. H. I.

Vers. 9—21 (omitting vers. 11 and 12, for which see below).—*The Christian's duty to his fellow-men.* In these closing verses of this chapter the apostle sets before us the duty of a Christian man. It is a picture of what the Christian ought to be. What a world it would be if these precepts were carried out, if even every Christian was careful to observe them! Six features the apostle mentions which should characterize our dealings with others.

I. SINCERITY. "Let love be without dissimulation" (ver. 9). Unreality, falsehood, insincerity, untruthfulness,—these are prevalent evils in our day. They weaken all

confidence between man and man. They destroy domestic peace, social intercourse, and commercial morality. Truthfulness and sincerity are much needed.

II. DISCRIMINATION. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (ver. 9). The spirit of indifference is another prevalent evil of our time. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil." Dr. Arnold at Rugby, trying to elevate the standard of character there, found this difficulty—indifference about evil. He said, "What I want to see in the school, and what I cannot find, is an abhorrence of evil; I always think of the psalm, 'Neither doth he abhor that which is evil.'" We want more discrimination. The young especially need to discriminate in their friendships, and to choose the society of good men and good women.

III. GENEROSITY. "Distributing to the necessity of saints" (ver. 13). In exercising generosity, God's people, our brethren in Christ, should have the first claim upon us. But we are not to limit our attentions to them. "Given to hospitality," we shall show kindness to strangers, just because they are strangers and are away from home and friends. How truly the Christian religion teaches men consideration for others!

IV. SYMPATHY. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (ver. 15). Sympathy is a Christ-like quality. Sympathy for the perishing brought Jesus Christ to earth. Sympathy sent Henry Martyn to Persia, Adoniram Judson to Burmah, David Brainerd to the Red Indians, David Livingstone and Bishop Hannington to Africa. Sympathy led Mr. E. J. Mather to brave the dangers of the deep in order to do something for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the deep-sea fishermen of the North Sea. We want more sympathy for those near us—for the poor, the sick, the suffering, the careless, at our own doors. We need to learn also how to sympathize with innocent enjoyment. The mission of the Christian Church is not a mission of amusement, but it can show that it does not frown upon, and can thoroughly enter into, the innocent pleasures and recreations of life. We are not only to "weep with them that weep," but also "rejoice with them that do rejoice."

V. HUMILITY. "Mind not high things, but condescend to man of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits." There is too much pride even in the Church of Christ—pride of rank, pride of wealth, pride of learning. The condition of things so severely satirized and rebuked in the second chapter of James is still too common in the Christian Church. The Church of Christ needs to condescend a little more than it does "to men of low estate." Christian ministers need to think more of the humbler members of their congregations, while they do not neglect the spiritual welfare of the rich. A little more of the humility of Christ would make the Church of Christ and the ministers of religion more respected among the working classes and the poor.

VI. PEACEFULNESS. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (ver. 18). This peaceful relation may be secured: 1. *By not cherishing a vindictive spirit.* "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (ver. 17). "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves" (ver. 19). Offenders against peace would do little harm if they did not find others only too ready to take offence. What an example is that of Cranmer!—

> "To do him any wrong was to beget
> A kindness from him; for his heart was rich,
> Of such fine mould, that if you sowed therein
> The seed of hate, it blossomed charity."

2. *By meeting enmity with kindness.* "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (ver. 14). "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Your kindness will be like coals of fire to melt his hardened heart, just as Jacob's prudent act of kindness, following on his prayer, turned away the anger of his injured brother Esau. So we may destroy our enemies, as the Chinese emperor is said to have done, by making them our friends. Thus we shall "overcome evil with good."—C. H. I.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The Christian's duty to himself.* While we are to think of others, we are to think of ourselves also. Herbert Spencer has contrasted the "religion of enmity," or the religion of heathenism, with what he calls the "religion of amity," or the religion of Christianity. But he speaks as if the Christian precept was, "Thou shalt

love thy neighbour better than thyself." It is not so. The command is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

"To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

The apostle enumerates some duties which the Christian owes to himself.

I. DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS. Each man should have some definite work or business in life. Especially should the Christian be free from the sin of idleness. Whatever our work is, let us be diligent in the performance of it. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

II. EARNESTNESS OF SPIRIT. "Fervent in spirit." It is a strong phrase. Fervent means "burning," "on fire." Yes, we need more Christians who are on fire. It is the enthusiasts who have done the best and most lasting work in the world. They are usually called fanatics at first, but the day comes when their memory is blessed. St. Paul was a fanatic to Festus. Festus could not understand the fire that burned in Paul's heart and in his words. "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." William Wilberforce, the emancipator of the slaves; John Howard, the prisoner's friend; Samuel Plimsoll, the sailor's friend; Lord Shaftesbury, the friend of the overworked artisan;—all these men at first were sneered at and ridiculed by the multitude of indifferent and interested men. Earnestness and enthusiasm may be incomprehensible to the world, but they are indispensable to the true Christian.

III. A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT. "Serving the Lord." That spirit consecrates life, sweetens life, saves life. Serving the Lord does not lead us to the drunkard's degradation, the disgrace of the dishonest or fraudulent, the cell of the murderer or the grave of the suicide. The Christian will serve the Lord in every relationship of life—in his home, in his business, in his amusements. Can we all say as St. Paul did (Acts xxvii. 23), "Whose I am, and whom I serve"?

IV. HOPEFULNESS AND JOY. "Rejoicing in hope." The apostle elsewhere in this Epistle uses the same phrase, "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (ch. v. 2). Dr. Chalmers has somewhere said, "That which distinguishes wisdom from folly is the power and habit of anticipation." The Saviour himself, in his earthly life, was sustained by the hope of what lay beyond. "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. xii. 2). So it was with St. Paul. He looked forward to the crown of righteousness. Therefore the Christian should be full of joyousness. Why should we groan under life's heavy burdens when we think of the rest that remaineth to the people of God? Why should we be unduly distressed by life's trials when we remember that they that are tried shall receive the crown of life? This, too, is a duty the Christian owes to himself. Work becomes no longer a burden when it is done with hopefulness and joy.

V. PATIENCE UNDER TROUBLE. "Patient in tribulation." The true Christian will know how to suffer. He knows that trials have their meaning and their place in the discipline of the children of God. He knows that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and that "though no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby."

VI. PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER. "Continuing instant in prayer." Prayer is the beginning and the end of the Christian life. We should ever go forth to the discharge of our duties, humbly asking for the Divine guidance and the Divine help. And then, when the duties are performed, we should not forget to pray that the Divine blessing should follow the work that we have done. This thought is well brought out by St. Paul in his description of the Christian's armour (Eph. vi. 11—18). Having exhorted his readers to put on the whole armour of God—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit—he adds, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." This is the fitting climax of the whole. It is the fitting conclusion of any exhortation about Christian warfare or Christian work. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

Such, then, are the Christian's duties to himself. Diligence. Earnestness. Religious spirit. Hopefulness. Patience. Prayerfulness. Let us cultivate them.—C. H. I.

Ver. 21.—*The Christian's assurance and the Christian's duty.* "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." There is a great danger to the spiritual life of many, which arises from undervaluing the power of sin. But there is another danger. It is the danger of thinking too much of the power of evil. A Christian may be overcome by evil, not because he thinks too little of it, but because he thinks so much of its power that he regards the struggle as hopeless, and gives up striving against it. Against this spirit of pessimism or despondency the exhortation of this verse is well fitted to fortify us.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE. When the apostle says, "Overcome evil with good," he implies that *the good has power to overcome the evil.* He implies even more than this; he implies that *the good, as manifested and practised by the Christian,* will prove a sufficient weapon with which to vanquish the forces of sin. It is not merely that the good, in some general or abstract sense, will overcome the evil, but that you Christians, men and women, flesh and blood though you be, may overcome the evil by the good which you can exhibit and exercise. Is not this something worth having the assurance of? Is not this something worth living for? My life, if it be a good one, shall not then be in vain. Humble though my position, my talents, my influence, I may, nevertheless, be a part of the Divine power against evil, a labourer together with God, and a partaker of the great and final triumph of righteousness over sin. This is faith in Jesus Christ in its practical side. In ourselves we could not vanquish sin. But we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. This is the Christian's assurance. Ever afraid of evil, yet never afraid of it. Ever on the watch against sin, yet never disheartened by its power. Ever distrustful of self, yet never distrustful of God, never wavering in our confidence that when God is on our side success and victory are sure. If men had only this trust in God, they would never transgress his law to obtain a temporal blessing or a temporary success. They would not be so impatient to vindicate themselves. Committing their character and their cause into God's hands, they would not be so ready to revenge themselves on those who do them injury or wrong. Let this, then, be our confidence, *that the good is always better than the evil; that it is always best to do the right, no matter how hard it may be; and that the day is coming when evil shall be entirely vanquished and overthrown, and righteousness shall prevail throughout the earth.* "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good. . . . Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Not only is there a warfare between the evil and the good, a warfare which shall ultimately result in the triumph of what is good; but it is the duty of every Christian to take part in that warfare. This duty applies first to *his own character and life.* The best way to drive out evil thoughts, evil passions, is to fill your mind with what is good. Seek the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Be filled with all the fulness of God. Let your thoughts be much occupied with the precepts and promises of God's Word, and then sin will not easily gain dominion over you. Those who occupy their days with all the good they may do will not have time to think of what things they may not do. The same rule of duty holds good in regard to others, in our relations to the world without us. When evil things are said of us, when unkind or angry words are spoken to us, it is hard not to feel provoked, it is hard not to answer back, it is hard to keep down the desire for revenge. But here again we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. Divine grace can wonderfully restrain such tendencies of our human nature. To feel anger, or to exhibit anger in such a case, is to be "overcome of evil." To look upwards for help, and in the strength of Divine grace to restrain our anger—this is to "overcome evil with good." To crucify the flesh, this is the Christian's work. This to so show that Christ is our Life, when we try to act as he would have acted, and speak as he would have spoken. Christians may overcome the evil in the world *both by being good and by doing good. By being good.* For every consistent Christian life tells upon the world. It is a light shining in the darkness. It

bears witness to the power of Divine grace. It is a protest against worldliness, ungodliness, and sin. If the personal character of every professing Christian was what it ought to be, what a power for good the Church of Christ would exercise! *By doing good also.* Ignorance and error are to be overcome by the activity of Christians in educational and evangelistic effort. Unkindness and uncharitableness are to be overcome by the active manifestation of kindness, charity, and love. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The living sacrifice.* The great argument of the Epistle to the Romans is to the effect that God's favour is not to be earned, but accepted, and this is justification by faith. The earlier chapters dealt with this; and the apostle now proceeds to a development of the doctrine which completely reverses the old ideas. Judaism sought mercy by sacrifice and service; St. Paul teaches that God seeks man's true sacrifice and service by showing mercy. We are to come to him, not that he may love us in the end, but because he loves us from the beginning. Our obedience to God is to be, therefore, no task-work, but love-work; not servitude, but sonship. God's love is the great motive-power of the new life. We consider here the results which such love should produce: the sacrifice and service of the body; the renewing of the mind.

I. THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE OF THE BODY. There was a total change from Judaism to Christianity in the point of sacrifice. The old dispensation was one of blood and death. Daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly, on various ever-recurring occasions, the altars of the temple ran with blood from the dead bodies of slain beasts and birds. The temple was one vast slaughter-house. But Christianity said, "This no more!" For there has been offered one sacrifice for sins for ever; and what is wanted now, says the apostle, is your bodies, not the bodies of beasts and birds, and these bodies living, not dead. There was a vast change in the point of service (λατρεία) also. What an elaborate ritual of service had gathered round the sacrifice! part ordained by God, part added by man. There were feasting and fasting; times and seasons, days and years; meats and drinks; purifyings, prayers. Christianity swept this away too, in all its ceremonial character. And what is wanted now, says the apostle, is not an elaborate ritual and minute observance, but the life; a service, not mechanical and befitting children, but rational and befitting men. All this the apostle points to by his words. Your own living bodies are to be the sacrifice; the holy, consecrated life of your bodies is to be the service. But let us gather the significance of his words more fully. The body is an integral part of man: consider in this connection the creation, death, and the resurrection. The body is sacred: consider old dualistic heresy, leading to severe repression or gross sin; also the modern error of despising the body now, and hoping to be freed from it as from a burden by-and-by. The body? it is the instrument of our active life in God's creation—deed, speech, thought. The spirit in itself may live towards God; but only by the medium of the body can it live for God amongst men. And to present the body a living sacrifice is thus to offer the whole life to God. Think, then, of the meaning of this. Think of your life: busy work, with manifold industries of limb, or speech, or brain, and intervals of rest which continually re-create you for new work; social relationships, with all the continuous interchange of affection and thought which they involve; of the life of your own mind, your reasonings, your beliefs, your fancies, your memories, your hopes: think of all these things, and a thousand others; and then remember that all this is to be offered up to God, a living sacrifice. This demands that the life be pure. Jewish sacrifices without spot. So conduct, words, imaginings, must be undefiled. Demands also that the life be consecrated. Just as sacrifice, when pronounced pure, was offered on altar, so our activities, being undefiled, are to be all given to God, that they may be employed for him. Nothing neutral: activities of brain, of tongue, of hand, having many subordinate ends, must be governed by the great controlling purpose to please God and do his will. Is it so? Is the undefiled life God's life? Do you make everything inexorably bend to this? Is your great "sacrifice" the sacrifice of the life? your great "service" the service of the life? All else is as nothing compared with this.

II. THE RENEWING OF THE MIND. But how? The "age" is against us. Whether or not conspicuously an age of impurity, certainly an age of greed and self-worship. Consider the plastic and binding influences exerted by the world: it imperceptibly

educates us to itself if we yield; it restrains us as with iron bands if we attempt to break away. And the current of our own nature sets with the stream (Eph. ii. 2, 3). Self-seeking; self-pleasing. Not only are the lusts (ἐπιθυμίαι) of the flesh worldwards, themselves controllable if the inner life were right; but the desire (θέλημα) of the mind is worldwards too. The interior springs of life are bad; the "willing" nature (νοῦς) is diseased. And the secret of all this is that the inward life is wrong with God; there is death, not life (Eph. ii. 1). For this reason, God's governance and succour being lost, the will is sunk in the lusts that it should control, and it is thus that the desires of the flesh (ἐπιθυμίαι) have become actually volitions (θελήματα) of the flesh (see Eph. ii. 3 again). Hence "be not conformed" is immediately followed by "be transformed." This is the great doctrine of the new birth: a re-attachment to the life of God, which shall make all things new. Has been fully elaborated in ch. vi.—viii., in which the apostle sets forth regeneration as the natural and necessary accompaniment of true justification. It is here insisted upon once more, as the only guarantee of a life of consecration such as he is about to set before his readers in the following chapters, which are an unfolding of the principle of the first verse of this chapter. The Spirit of God is the regenerating power: what is the regenerating principle? Love—love evoked, fed, perfected by the mighty, changeless love of God. An enthusiasm for the highest good, which wings its way through all that obstructs a lower energy of life, and triumphs evermore. So now the νοῦς is renewed, the θελήματα set with the current of the new life, and the ἐπιθυμίαι of the flesh fall into their proper place. Thus a power of nonconformity to the "course of this world" is ours; the bonds are broken, and the plastic influences break like spray upon a rocky shore. And so, with the altar set in order, the sacrifice is offered up; with the worshipful heart restored, a living service is rendered. We "prove" what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God; it is known, loved, obeyed.

In conclusion, let us remember that we are besought to this renewal and consecration by the yearning pity (οἰκτιρμῶν) of our God. His tears! Oh, let us be persuaded to accept our healing at his hands!—eyesight for blindness, love for our dead, cold, barren selfishness. And being alive unto God within, let us live to God without. Away with fictitious sacrifices and fictitious service! The sacrifice is to be the living sacrifice of ourselves; the service the rational service of a pure and consecrated deed and speech and thought.—T. F. L.

Vers. 3—8.—*Christian humility.* The life of Christian consecration is now set forth in its practical bearings. We have life in the Church, including its attitude towards those that are without (ch. xii.), and life in the state (ch. xiii.). The life of members of the Church, as such, is set forth as controlled by two great vital principles: humility, as regards one's self; love, as regards others. Here the grace of humility is insisted on, as regulating each one's thoughts and work.

I. First, we are to have a sober and proper estimate of ourselves and our aptitudes. 1. The tendency amongst men is to exalt themselves in their own thoughts as compared with others. An unholy rivalry of heart is easily possible even in the Christian brotherhood. We magnify our own importance out of all proportion to the actual place we fill. How contrary to the very initial requisite of the kingdom of heaven: "Blessed are the poor in spirit"! We must, on the contrary, think soberly. We must in all seriousness know ourselves and our place. We must indeed gauge and estimate our sanctified powers, but only that we may know to what holy purpose we shall put them—"according to the capacity, in the realm of faith, which God has given us" (see Godet). 2. And so we must think of our various gifts, not as in rivalry, but as supplementing one another. The figure of the many members, and their diverse offices: so the body of Christ. Variety in unity: this the lesson taught us by God's works, and by his constitution of human society in general; we Christians must learn the lesson, as teaching us that we all are "members one of another."

II. Secondly, we are to give ourselves with all diligence to the fulfilment of our several works. We trench here upon the second principle. If humility teaches us to confine ourselves soberly to our own God-appointed labour, love teaches us to throw ourselves with holy zeal into such labour that the several members may all profit by our diligence. And the great truth brought out prominently here is that the cause of

Christ is best advanced when each one does earnestly what he can do best. The apostle says, "Use your own sanctified gifts to the best of your ability, so will God be well-pleased, and your brethren and the world be blessed." 1. Prophecy: the spiritual insight that apprehends with increasing clearness God's purposes of saving grace. Ministry: the official attention to financial and business matters of the Church, in which the "deacon" wins his good degree. Teaching: the assiduous inculcation of received truth, that the people of God may be built up in the faith. Exhorting: the earnest pleading with men, that their hearts may be won, or more fully won, to that which is Divine and good. Such the more official duties. 2. The more private and spontaneous duties are to be similarly performed. Giving: for some who are so favoured have it as their special work to hold in trust for others, and to bestow as they have opportunity, the good things of this world. Let this be with all liberality of heart. Ruling: there will be committees for such philanthropic work, and men of enterprise will have it as their special business to lead the way. Let this be with diligence, for success or failure will follow according to their devotion or half-heartedness. Showing mercy: some will have it for their work personally to dispense the help which perhaps the liberality of others affords. Let it be with a cheerfulness that shall make the blessing doubly blessed; let their presence be hailed everywhere as it were sunshine in the gloom.

Such is the principle of a true Christian humility, merging into love. The old Greek wisdom urged upon its students, "Know thyself." Our Christian faith inculcates the same lesson upon us. Not by our seeking to do others'-work, but by our fulfilling, as best we may, our own, will the common weal be advanced. Yes, know thyself, and know thy Saviour; so shalt thou save thyself, and promote the salvation of the world. —T. F. L.

Vers. 9—21.—*Christian love.* Now we come to the great central principle of the Christian life in its social relations among men—true love. And, as the apostle addresses Church-members, he paints this love, by a few vivid strokes, as they owe it to their fellow-members, and also to those that are without.

I. First, as members of Christ, they are to love one another. 1. *The ethical character of this love.* It is holy. Not a mere sentimental tenderness, but a love that abhors the evil, in whomsoever found, and cleaves only to the good (comp. Jas. iii. 17, "first pure," etc.). 2. *The manifestations of the love.* Tender affection, as of the members of one loving family; self-sacrificing respect, so contrary to the spirit which asks, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"—zealous to practise this regard for others with a diligent industry; animated to this diligence by the fervour of the spiritual life; sanctifying the love and service by loving and serving them in Christ. 3. *The supports of such love.* The exultant joy of Christian hope, in view of that appearing of our Lord; the patient endurance of trial and pain, by the power of that hope; the abiding fellowship with God, which ever rekindles the hope and makes it holy. 4. *The practical working of this love in the matters of the life that now is.* Relief of needy ones, as being the needy ones of God's household; hospitality to all who for the Lord's sake have left their home and rest. 5. *The forbearance of this love.* When, unhappily, even Christian brethren misunderstand and strive and persecute, they are still to be loved and blessed; not for any provocation is cursing to be rendered back. 6. *The sympathies of the love.* A real and manifested joy, in sympathy with rejoicing ones; a real and manifested sorrow, in sympathy with sorrowing ones. 7. *The unity of love.* Of the same mind. 8. *The humility of love.* Not high, ambitious aspirations, but willingness for lowly work; and to this end, not self-conceited wisdom, but the heart of a little child.

II. Secondly, as showing forth Christ to men, they are to love even those that are without. 1. *No revenge to be allowed.* Think of their temptations to old habits and practices. 2. *Honourable conduct to be strictly maintained.* Yes, even with the emphatically "heathen" man. 3. *Peace to be sought with all.* On our side at least it is possible, and so the sanctities of the Christian's own heart shall not be violated. 4. Again, *no vengeance towards those whose crimes may seem to cry for vengeance upon them.* No, not even in the way of justice, for a higher One is Judge, and all wrath must be left to him, whose very wrath is love; and, in truth, our rising wrath itself must be transformed to love, a love which shall even feed and give drink to the enemy in his

distress. And shall not this shame his heart? and his shame may be to him for salvation. So shall the evil not conquer us, but be itself conquered by the good.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" The high perfection of this Christian love seems far beyond our reach. But it has been shown forth once, in him who said, "I have overcome the world." Yes, its evil was vanquished by his sacrifice of love. And, through him, we may conquer too. May the living Christ be ours, and his grace shall be sufficient!—T. F. L.

Ver. 1.—"*A living sacrifice.*" The text suggests to us the spiritual teacher's platform. He does not so much command or threaten as "beseech his brethren." Various terms are, indeed, used in the Authorized Version to translate the word παρακαλέω. But the feature of the word is speaking to some one for a particular purpose, to get him to do or refrain from something, to help him in difficulty or console him under trouble. The Saviour is spoken of in John's Epistle as our "Advocate," our Paraclete, according to our Lord's own description of himself when he promised, "I will send you *another* Comforter." And who has so great a right to speak faithfully as a brother? The very nearness of kin implies affectionate solicitude, precludes evil suspicions. As brethren should the members of Churches stimulate each other with kindly jealousy for each other's welfare.

I. THE DEDICATION DESCRIBED. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." The law of offerings is not abrogated, is spiritually fulfilled. The daily Christian sacrifice is not propitiatory like the Saviour's, but consequent upon that one efficacious atonement, and intended in like manner to glorify the righteousness and goodness of God, and to redeem man from evil. Sin has corrupted the entire organism, and the sacrifice is to consist of the whole being. The body is expressly named as the part which visibly was immersed in sin, and bowed under idolatry. But as the organ and symbol of the life, and the vehicle of information and action, bringing the powers of the soul into exercise, the surrender of the body to Christian principle means that the entire self is yielded to God. If sacrifice signifies self-denial, there is yet a joy that swallows up the pain of privation in the thought of the honour conferred on the garlanded victim accepted by the Most High as an act of worship and praise. *Note some of the qualities of this sacrifice.* It is "*living*," as contrasted with the dead sacrifices of Jewish rites. True religion is not a galvanized life, but an inward principle that vivifies the entire frame. The mere saying of prayers, attendance at God's house, the avoidance of ill places and company, is a dead and worthless sacrifice if unaccompanied by love and devotion. The love of Christ flaming within the body makes it no longer a dull lump of clay, but an illumined spiritual temple. It is a "*holy*" sacrifice; the sacredness of consecration to a holy Being rests upon it, and there is real and actual holiness of heart and life. It is "*acceptable*," well-pleasing to him who despises not the weak, but rejoices in humble, devout sincerity, where the leaven is cast out in order to a true celebration of the feast. We need not fear the rejection of our offering, since to us has been revealed the proper mode of approach; nor will the shortcomings and sinful accompaniments that in spite of our best attempts mingle with our words and deeds cause them to be abhorred of him who perceives therein the sweet savour of Christ and incense of the Spirit. The "calves of our lips" will not pollute his courts, nor our "doing good and communicating" pollute his holy altar. We have also *a general characterization of the sacrifice.* It is a "*reasonable service.*" It is engaged in and ratified by the highest powers, the enlightened intellect and the quickened spirit. Unlike an unmeaning ritual, the service of the Christian is to him emblematic of deepest truths. He sees himself not an isolated unit which has itself merely to please and cherish, but a child of God, a constituent of society, with the obligation and dignity of obedience and self-abnegation for the service of God and man. And there is great meaning in the word employed to denote our "service." It compares our lives to the ministrations of the priests in the temple. When we raise our voices in supplication to the throne, when we seek to lead others to the Saviour of our choice, when we strive to discharge the duties of our calling as unto the Lord, when we relieve the distressed or comfort the afflicted, we are as much employed in temple-worship as if, like Aaron, we wore the high priest's robes, or, like Zacharias, offered incense before the veil. What a noble idea of the vocation of the people of God this metaphor conveys! Expect not a

path of flowery ease—that the mountains should be levelled and the valleys raised to facilitate your progress! At the altar say, "I feel the cord that binds me; the knife is keen that severs the tender flesh; the flames are hard to bear; but withal I can rejoice that I am exalted to the honour of a holocaust accepted of God, and not consumed but purified by the sacrifice."

II. THE WEIGHTY ARGUMENT TO URGE THE DEDICATION. There is a "*therefore*" in the text; the exhortation is grounded on previous reasoning and previously stated facts. Herein lies the strength of the religious teacher. He may have no excommunication with bell, book, and candle to pronounce, no fire and sword with which to wring reluctant assent; but he has decisions of a recognized court to allege, and motives of unequalled potency to appeal to. Every one who has to do with machinery knows the importance of motive-power. And Christianity is strong where philosophical systems of ethics are weak. "You admit," the apostle seems to say, "these premisses; now supply the practical conclusion." He has been rehearsing the "*mercies of God*" to Jews and Gentiles. Gratitude for the Divine goodness impels to his service, and the hope of future benefits is a lawful constraining force. Surely the grace that has granted pardon, peace, eternal life, is a voice to demand, a magnet to attract to, such a sacrifice as that entreated. Providential mercies cry aloud, "Yield yourselves unto God." Where shall we begin, how end their recital? There are seasons, such as the beginning of a new year, or the anniversary of a birthday, when the remembrance of the Divine forethought and loving-kindness overwhelms the soul with thankfulness and praise. The darkest night has had its star; in the coldest day some gleam of sunshine has cheered our landscape. Family and household mercies, blessings bestowed on Church and town and country, fresh discoveries in nature or art, "sweet voices from the distant hills,"—all these renewed compassions of a benevolent God evoke the old inquiry, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The text furnishes the answer, the full New Testament programme, outlined in the psalmist's "cup of salvation" and "thanksgiving," and "payment of vows" and "prayer."—S. R. A.

Ver. 2.—*Christian character a metamorphosis.* Advice as to conduct, in order to be complete, should be both negative and positive in exhortation; it should say what ought to be done as well as what ought to be avoided. Christianity repels from evil and attracts to goodness. He runs best who not only flees from peril, but knows the refuge for which to shape his course.

I. NOT THE FASHION OF THE AGE, BUT THE WILL OF GOD, IS THE TRUE STANDARD OF DUTY. The Scriptures contrast this world with the kingdom of God. The one is fleeting, the other eternal. The one is carnal, the other spiritual; the one appeals to the bodily senses, the other is a vision of faith. The kingdom which Christ has established realizes the desire and purpose of God's heart. Those who enter it are not thereby removed from the sphere of worldly need and influence and activity, but there is a difference in the spirit with which these temporal objects are pursued. A touch-stone of value is introduced, and occupations and possessions are appraised according to its decisions. The will of God is the Ariadne clew which guides the traveller safely through the maze of shifting opinions and bewildering dictates. The disciple of Christ asks not—What will my companions say? what is the prevailing etiquette? what is the code of honour prescribed by the circle to which I belong? or what is the amount of kindness, purity, and justice which will save me from public censure? but—What would God have me do? what will he approve? what is his Divine intent in my upbringing and redemption? From how many petty anxieties is such a man freed, and what noble cares supplant his former subservience to custom! Commerce, politics, the Church, every arena needs such men. The face of God is not reflected in his servants like coins stamped with the sovereign's identical image, but varies like the reflection of the sky, according to the lake, river, or sea that mirrors its glory.

II. A RENEWED MIND IS THE CHANNEL OF TRANSFORMATION. God has created man intelligent, and men act generally according to their perception of the fitness of things. Alter their views, modify their tastes, direct their inclinations, and their career is changed. If they do the same things, they do them with reference to a higher Being and a wider landscape. Some things loved before appear loathsome now; the eyes are opened, and the old order is deserted for the beauties and satisfactions of the new state.

The will of God may be traced in his works and ways, in creation and providence; but Jesus Christ in the Scriptures is to us the fullest revelation granted of the mind of God, and by studying him is the conscience quickened, the reason enlightened, the affection sanctified. Christianity thus works from within outward. It does not try to transfigure appearances by gilding the apples of the tree, or appending fruit to its boughs, but it transforms the sap, and lets the new life produce its appropriate harvest. The renewing of the judgment implies a restoration of man to a primitive condition from which he has fallen. The lineaments of God in human nature which had grown dull, almost obliterated by the wear and tear of a godless existence, are made vivid again. Like the whitewash removed from the walls of an ancient edifice, and no longer allowed to conceal the glorious frescoes or carving beneath, so the chamber of the heart is renovated by the reception of the Spirit of Christ, and the defilements and deceptions give place to the pristine conception of man in the likeness of God, retouched, remodelled by him who maketh all things new. The blood-stained cross is the measure of devotion to the will of God and of self-sacrifice for the common good. The risen Christ is the ideal of the future to which Christian hopes turn and to which conformity is lovingly sought.

III. THE COMPLETER THE TRANSFORMATION, THE MORE SURELY IS THE WILL OF GOD DISCERNED, AND THE MORE INTENSELY IS IT PRIZED. It is the universal law condensed into a proverb that "experience teaches." Not all at once can the ear distinguish sounds, or the eye form and colours. Not immediately does the reason discriminate between logical and illogical arguments and procedures, nor the taste discover and apply its canons of judgment. Practice and discipline are required. And it were absurd to expect that in the regenerated man the old habits of liking and behaviour could be thrown off by one effort like a worn-out garment. The man rescued from drowning slowly comes to himself, and gradually does the eye of the saved believer learn to recognize in every place the presence of his Lord, and his ear to at all times catch the faintest whisper of his voice. The early converts made sad blunders in their celebration of Christian ordinances, in their governance of the gifts with which they were endowed, and in their application of Divine morality to the questions of the day. But they were in the school of Christ, and made steady progress. And every advance in knowledge and life has confirmed our appreciation of the will of God as being good, and worthy of the utmost maturity of ethical manhood. The Saviour's prayer is the verdict of the saintliest lives, the last word of Christian judgment: "Thy will, not mine, be done." As an encouragement it may be noted that our standard of duty ever rises as we understand better the mind of God and approximate to its requirements. And we must not be disappointed if to ourselves we seem as far off as ever from the ideal development. This is only as, in climbing to some mountain summit, the top appears more distant because progress reveals more accurately the total height.—S. R. A.

Ver. 3.—*A proper estimate of self.* The fount of knowledge and utterance is the "grace" of God. The apostle claims to be heard as one who has received a message, not excogitated a thought, which it is his business to deliver and enforce. This is ever the prophet's function, to announce the mind of God, and he needs continual "grace" to be faithful to the truth, not to hide nor to alter nor to add.

I. IT IS NOT SELF-DEPRECIATION WHICH IS HERE COMMANDED. Aristotle's dictum of right action is that virtuous behaviour lies in a mean between two extremes. And whilst not a sufficient account, this often serves as a ready criterion. Proper humility is not to be confounded with mock modesty and diffidence on the one hand, nor on the other hand with arrogance and pride. He acts injuriously to himself who, comparing himself with others, despises what he is and can do, because higher and larger gifts have been bestowed on his fellows. Such self-despising is ingratitude to God, and casts a slur on the Divine equity. We dare not make light of any post he enables us to fill, or of the simplest service he permits us to render. He who has dignified humanity, first by creating it "in his own image after his likeness," and then by the incarnation of his beloved Son, may expect in every man a certain reasonable degree of self-respect. And the apostle implies that there is a way in which each "ought to think" of himself, ought to honour his position and abilities. Shall the lark refuse to trill forth melody in his upward flight because he cannot pour forth the luscious

changeful notes of the nightingale? or the robin refuse to chirp merrily in the winter because he cannot undertake the long flight of the swallow? Shall the violet withhold its delicious fragrance because the sunflower is so conspicuously gorgeous? or the lofty elm not clap its hands in praise of God because of its nearness to the wide-spreading beech? That is not true humility, but scornful indolence, which buries its talent in the earth. Of a lowly beast of burden it was said, "The Lord hath need of him."

II. IT IS UNDUE SELF-ESTEEM WHICH IS REPROVED. An immoderate estimate of our personal worth is unmindful of obvious facts. It forgets that God regards quality rather than quantity, and that all we possess we have received, even the ability to use our gifts, and by use to augment and perfect our capacity. We gain a humble estimate of our powers by coming into the society of truly great men. As we measure little hills by the sky-piercing mountains, so we may profitably turn our thoughts to the almighty and all-wise, the ever-living and holy God. And, to assist us in our judgments, his grace has sent a pattern of merit in the character and life of his Son, attempering the glory of the Most High to our weak vision, and allowing us to see Divine greatness humbling itself to the form of a servant and the death of a criminal. We have to own our imperfect rectitude when we place it side by side with the obedience and righteousness of Christ. As with a douche of cold water, is the most intoxicated with his own grandeur sobered into due modesty. Through pride the angels "kept not their first estate," and it is a favourite device of the tempter to allure men into a sense of self-sufficiency and importance. "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged." Wounded vanity prevents many a member of the Church from seeking to glorify a lowly position; the foot wants to be where the eye is, and the hand objects to serve the head. The elder brother loses the joy of the prodigal's return. Remember that in the Saviour's reckoning the widow's offering far outweighed the costly contributions of the wealthy.

III. THE RULE IS TO BE UNIVERSALLY APPLIED. "I say to every man that is among you." *Every man needs this regulation.* The precepts and promises of Scripture addressed to all are only effective as each severally appropriates them. We are individualized in God's sight, not lumped together in the mass. The danger lies at the door of each, and each must calculate his proper worth and position. We cannot do this for one another; to his own Master does each stand or fall. *Every Christian has obtained some amount of faith.* There are gradations in spiritual as in temporal life, and the rank of honour is according to the service rendered to the body to which we belong. But none is entirely destitute; let none, therefore, be despised or down-hearted. All Christians are landed proprietors; an estate large or small is allotted to them to occupy and cultivate. The Spirit distributeth as he will. Our business is not to quarrel with the distribution, but to be diligent stewards of the deposit entrusted to our care. He that is faithful in little or in much shall be rewarded. Such a consideration abates envy and discontent, abolishes boasting and self-complacency.—S. B. A.

Ver. 15.—*Sympathy.* The two clauses of this verse remind us of the two main emotions of the human breast, of their diverse nature, and their common association. Sorrow ever treads at the heels of joy. The sigh and the laugh may be heard at once. Scarce has prosperity brightened one threshold than adversity overshadows another. As in the plagues, there is light in Goshen and darkness in Egypt. If every house were painted to reveal the condition of the inmates, what startling contrasts would be seen side by side! It is of little use to try and measure the sum of happiness and of misery, to calculate which preponderates in life; better is it to adapt ourselves to these two prevailing states, and by appropriate words and deeds to evince our sympathy both with those who mourn and those who exult, not shrinking from distress nor envying the fortunate. Many reasons concur in recommending the apostle's injunction.

I. GOD HAS MADE MAN A SOCIAL BEING. He is the "God of the families of Israel." The Law commanded convocations, social observances; the people encamped not as individuals, but as households and tribes. Besides the appetites and affections that concern ourselves personally, there are others which respect our fellows and cannot be gratified without their presence. Love, gratitude, pity, all suppose their existent objects, so that the moral constitution of man exhibits the social capacities with which

he has been endowed. There is a basis for sympathy in our physical nature. The appearance of one man acts and reacts on his companions. The mirthful induces merriment in the company, and the entrance of a gloomy countenance damps the spirits of a whole party. Infants are quickly affected by the attitude of those near them; and the lower animals are prone to frisk and leap when their masters are glad, and to be depressed by their melancholy. To shut one's self up in solitude, to take no notice of the circumstances of others, is therefore to sin against the laws of our being.

II. JESUS CHRIST HAS PROVIDED FOR THESE SOCIAL INSTINCTS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS CHURCH. He has instituted a community of believers, united for mutual counsel and support. One by one we resort to the Saviour for individual teaching and healing, but "those that are being saved" are "added to the Church," and the visibility of the fact assists in that redemption from selfishness which is the essence of sin. "Bear ye one another's burdens" is the recognition of our unity. The limb which shares not in the thrill of pain or pleasure is on the way to atrophy, disunion, death. Love and service to the Head of the body bind the members together as an organism, and love ministers to trouble and enhances joy. Such sympathy cannot, however, be restricted to the members of the Church. Family ties lead to efforts for the salvation of outsiders, and a desire for the glory of the Lord and the enlarging usefulness of his kingdom prompts to imitation of his beneficence who came to lighten our woes and to augment our gladness.

III. OUR DEVELOPMENT UNTO PERFECTION DEMANDS THE CULTIVATION OF SYMPATHY. It was not "good" for Adam to be alone. A high pitch of civilization cannot be reached or maintained in isolation. Left to ourselves, we grow careless of refinement or progress. To shut ourselves up like flowers that close their petals at the rude blast, to crawl inside our shell, and, closing the aperture, to dwell simply on our own satisfactions and uneasinesses, is the pleading of mistaken self-love that overreaches itself and misses the pure happiness of sharing others' delights and of doing good. Spiritual growth is not attainable any more than physical strength by a life within-doors. Avoid the heat and the icy wind, and health suffers by too-great confinement. What lessons may be learnt from the successes and misfortunes of our neighbours! Their lot may be ours soon; it were well to be wise betimes. To look on others is to gaze at a mirror that reflects our own image.

IV. THE FULFILMENT OF THIS PRECEPT WOULD MATERIALLY LIGHTEN THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THE WORLD. The savageness of unrestricted competition vanishes where a due regard is paid to the happiness or suffering of our companions. Nothing like a visit from the employer to the homes of his servants, or a sight by the speculator of the misery his unjust gains have entailed, to abate the fierceness of greed and to remedy grievances and wrongs. The world sorely needs brotherly kindness. Then would men and nations realize that what elevates one raises all, what depresses one truly enriches none. We may note that obedience to the latter clause of the text is perhaps more needful than compliance with the former. The distressed require help, the prosperous can do without it. But any separation of the two duties weakens both. It is not always easy to congratulate a fortunate compeer, any more than to assist the unlucky. No doubt we like to bask in the sunshine, and to withdraw from gloom. But the "elder brother" refused to join in the household felicitations, and the Levite and the Pharisee "passed by" the wounded traveller. Guard against the mere indulgence of passive sympathy. The rejoicing and mourning of the text imply an active sympathy, and action forms habits of good will and benevolence as Butler has described. Copy the Redeemer. No ascetic or misanthrope was he, who multiplied the innocent gaiety of the marriage feast, and mingled his tears with those of the weeping sisters of Lazarus. Even a hearty grasp of the hand adds to joy, and a moistened eye comforts those that mourn. The poorest in point of worldly goods may be rich in God-like sympathy. Many a man has been saved from utter despair by the knowledge that another was interested in his welfare.—S. R. A.

Ver. 21.—*Victory that blesses both the conqueror and the conquered.* No chapter in the Bible is richer and more benign than this in practical exhortation. It breathes the spirit of the sermon on the mount, and the apostolic teaching has the advantage

of the illustration and commentary furnished by the beneficent life and self-sacrificing death of the great Preacher.

I. THE MOMENTOUS CONFLICT. "Be not overcome of evil." A man has been wronged by his neighbour. The feeling of injury begets a desire for retaliation. The resentment is just, is a testimony to the sense of righteousness imbedded in the conscience. But the feeling tends to go too far, and to become a longing for revenge in any shape that may present itself. Here is the subtlety of temptation, making evil appear as good. Undisguised vice is easy to repel, but a righteous indignation may open the gate through which unrighteous passion enters like a flood. This is one form of the universal battle against sin, which is ever ready to take advantage of lawful natural impulses and to push them to excess. The warning of the text applies, therefore, to the whole sphere of life. All good conduct implies the possibility of the reverse. Solicitations to evil are everywhere about us. Physical evil, such as a painful disease, may become moral evil when it produces murmuring, peevishness, utter idleness, and blasphemy. The struggle is fierce and prolonged, for "we wrestle against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places." As the gifts of God in the material universe are secured at the expense of painful thought and toil, so the blessings of the spiritual life are not to be had at our ease, but only by strenuous wrestling.

II. THE METHOD OF WARFARE. "Overcome evil with good." To resist the evil inclination is the first part of the duty, but it is not alone a sufficient maxim. We have a weapon to wield; we must occupy ourselves in the practice of what is good. Not only arrest the hand that is about to strike an angry blow, but find some service for the hand to render to our opponent. They sin least, are least subject to temptation, who are engrossed like the Saviour in "doing good." He could move uncontaminated in the presence of "publicans and sinners." The outrush of active benevolence barred the influx of evil. The moment we try to see if we cannot benefit a would-be foe, we are conscious of a changed sentiment within; we pity instead of hating and condemning; we lose our worse to find our better self. This is a law to be remembered in all attempts to combat the forces of evil. "Resist the devil; draw nigh to God." The drunkard may sign the pledge of abstinence, but he needs meetings, society, efforts for others, to occupy his leisure moments. Do not gaze at the Sirens, but make for the home whose pure pleasures will profitably engage your energies. Let the young man have his study, and his proper recreation, and thus by the pursuit of what is elevating rise above petty meannesses and degrading amusements.

III. THE INSPIRING PATTERN. Christ is our Exemplar, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." He "committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously," and instead of heaping reproaches on his persecutors, prayed for their forgiveness, died for their salvation. The spurious Gospels, with their narrative of the Saviour's boyhood as a scene of vengeance wreaked on his youthful companions for their opposition and insult, condemn themselves as contradictory to the after-life of the "meek and lowly" One. He never exerted his power to harm his foes. His only miracles of judgment were on the swine and the barren fig tree. In Gethsemane the band of traitors were awed to the ground, but not injured. He knew that "to whomsoever much is forgiven, the same loveth much." Afterwards "a great company of priests became obedient to the faith." Saul the persecutor was changed by appealing love into Paul the missionary. The Lamb "led to the slaughter" unresistingly has proved himself in victorious submission the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

IV. THE SUCCESS OF THIS METHOD. Good is stronger than evil because it is on the side of God and the angels; it is backed by eternal laws. Like produces like. Strife leads to more strife; war sows a crop of dragons' teeth that yield a harvest of future enmities and battles. Germany, exacting a heavy indemnity from France and seizing two fair provinces, has laid herself under crushing armaments and ceaseless fears of coming reprisals. The peace principles of Christ, wherever faithfully adhered to, prove their soundness and fruitfulness. The man who resists not tames the spirit of his opponent. Obstinacy that defies the chilling blast is forced to relax when the warmth of Christian kindness shines on its outer crust. The coals of such a fire do not fiercely burn, but they melt the unjust into contrition and confession. The disuse of duelling has contributed to courtesy amongst men. We are not fit to take the law into our

own hands and mete out justice, but we cannot do wrong in cultivating mercy and generosity. The observance of what is good works no mischief, whereas we may run into many an error if we fight evil with evil either in ourselves or others, and fancy that the end may justify the means.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—3.—*Individualism.* After the lengthened exposition of the Divine "mercies" given in the preceding eleven chapters, the apostle feels himself in a position to apply the truth and enforce Christian morals. He accordingly proceeds to base his exhortation upon the "mercies of God," and the first matter he urges is becoming individuality. These brethren at Rome ought to dedicate themselves as living sacrifices unto God, realizing how reasonable such a service is, and exhibiting due unworldliness of character in all things. Let us, then, with Paul as guide, consider the elements of Christian individualism as here set before us.

I. OUR BODIES ARE TO BE LAID AS LIVING SACRIFICES ON GOD'S ALTAR. (Ver. 1.) If we have been called with a holy calling, if the risen Saviour has given us the needed helping hand, then we are bound to realize our obligation to him in dedicating our bodies as "living sacrifices" unto him. The reason why we can dedicate them as *living* sacrifices is that he has offered the atoning sacrifice our pardon and acceptance require, and we can consequently dedicate ourselves living to his glory. Now, when we look into the order of the Jewish sacrifices, we find that the sin offering came first, then the burnt offering, and then the peace offering. The leading idea in each was atonement, consecration, and fellowship. The sin offering emphasized atonement, the burnt offering or holocaust emphasized consecration, and the peace offering emphasized fellowship. Now, the self-dedication to which the apostle here calls us corresponds in the ritual to the burnt offering; and just as in this particular sacrifice the entire carcase was consumed in the sacred fire, so the idea is that our whole personality, body, soul, and spirit, is to be consecrated by the fire of the Holy Spirit to the service of our Lord and Master. The idea, in short, is that our bodies should be organs of the Holy Ghost. What a holy and blessed thought is thus associated with the body of the believer! It dare not be dedicated to any profane use. It is a holy thing, and is to be laid on God's altar and thus dedicated in its entirety to him. Miss Havergal's "Hymn of Consecration" will occur to every one, with the dedication of "hands," and "feet," and "voice," and "lips," and, in a word, "all" we are, to the glory of our Lord. Dean Goulburn, in his suggestive work on the 'Study of the Holy Scriptures,' gives a sketch upon this passage, from which the following will be found useful: "Consider the members of the body which must thus be yielded: (1) The eyes. The lust of the eye must be mortified, and the eye employed in reading God's Word, or surveying his works. (2) The ears. We must be 'swift to hear' the voice of instruction, and must turn away the ear from temptation and from flattery (see Acts xii. 22, 23). (3) The hands. 'Let him that *stole* steal no more; but rather let him *labour, working with his hands* the thing which is good, that he may have to *give* to him that needeth' (Eph. iv. 28). (4) The feet. 'I was sick, and ye *visited* me; I was in prison, and ye *came* unto me' (Matt. xxv. 36). (5) The mouth. 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers' (Eph. iv. 29). 'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt' (Col. iv. 6)."[1]

II. WE ARE TO REALIZE THAT THIS ENTIRE DEDICATION IS ONLY OUR REASONABLE SERVICE. (Ver. 1.) It seems at first a large demand. But it becomes reasonable the moment we consider our obligation. If Jesus has dedicated his body in life and in death to our interests and salvation, the dedication of our living bodies in return to him is surely a reasonable service. M. de Rougemont has brought out the reasonable character of this self-dedication in his own pointed fashion. Writing in his 'La Vie Humaine avec et sans la Foi' upon this passage, he says, "The word *body* signifies here the complete man; the *victim*, it is ourselves, and the sacrifice, to which St. Paul exhorts us, is that of our soul, of our will, of our thought, of our heart, without which that of our flesh would be impossible. But on hearing this term 'sacrifice,' the vicious

[1] See also a fine sermon on "Self-Dedication," by John Howe, Bohn's edition in one volume, p. 412, etc.; and a suggestive sermon on "The Self-Sacrifice," in Baldwin Brown's 'Divine Life in Man,' 2nd edit., p. 139.

takes to flight, the honest man is up in arms (*résiste*), the semi-Christian frets. All say it is impossible, or at least it is too difficult. And St. Paul contends that it is *reasonable!* Yes, reasonable, and irrational, senseless, absurd, to refuse God such a worship (*culte*). In fact, to refuse it to him is to refuse him all worship; it is to condemn ourselves to a life of worldliness and irreligion. Is it a true religion which consists in giving to prayer a half-hour a day, to the Divine service two or three hours on Sunday, when, even during those hours, one says to God, 'I give thee, indeed, a part of my time; but my heart?—no, I keep that for myself'? If at least, by guarding thus for ourselves our heart, we were happy! Let us leave aside here the lusts and passions which enslave and shame us. Let us speak only of our plans of happiness, of our favourite occupations, of our legitimate affections. We cannot bring ourselves to lay them on the altar, to present them to God, and *minus* these to sacrifice ourselves to him. But are we then our masters? do we dispose events according to our will? do we hold in our hands the threads of our life and of the life of our relatives (*la vie des nôtres*)? Can we do anything against God? If he wishes to take away from us the objects of our affections, to snatch us away from our labour or our pleasures, to overturn all our projects, who are we to struggle against him? Is it not more reasonable to offer ourselves altogether unto him, like docile and trustful lambs, and to say to him, 'Here we are; make us what thou pleasest: thou canst take no more from us, since we have given all to thee; we are besides without fear, because we know by Jesus Christ how great are thy *mercies*'? Can such *living* and *holy victims* be anything but *acceptable to God*? and is not this worship the only *reasonable* one, as it is also the only loyal, free, and joyous one?" (pp. 122—124).

III. SUCH A SELF-DEDICATION IMPLIES NONCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD AND TRANSFIGURATION INTO THE DIVINE WILL. (Ver. 2.) The conduct of others is not to be our standard, but the will of God. Worldliness consists essentially in this—making the *fashion* our standard of life. Now, in this respect we are not to conform to the worldly and prevailing ideas. Saurin has a fine sermon on this verse, in which he exhorts his hearers not to conform to the multitude in *faith*, or in *worship*, or in *morals*, or in our *exodus at death*.[1] And then, if we take the Divine will as our proper standard, we shall find ourselves "transfigured" (μεταμορφοῦσθε) by the renewing of our minds, so that we shall "test" (δοκιμάζειν) and so come to understand what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (cf. Shedd, in *loc.*). Now, it is in this way, by surrendering ourselves to the Divine idea concerning us, that we shall realize that individuality and influence among men which is so desirable. In fact, we become most original, in the best sense of that term, when we do not try to be original, but simply to be and do what is God's will concerning us. It was the same with our blessed Master. He professed to do nothing of himself, but simply to mediate to men what the Father gave him (John v. 19); and yet he has been out of sight the most original personality which has ever appeared in this world. So will it be with us in our little spheres if we will only allow God to transfigure us.

IV. SUCH ABANDONMENT TO THE DIVINE WILL SECURES DUE SOBRIETY IN OUR ESTIMATE OF OURSELVES. (Ver. 3.) The gospel delivers us from egotism; we dare not think highly of ourselves; we can only think of how we are realizing God's will concerning us. And so, as merely mediating God's wiser will, we think soberly and humbly of ourselves. The apostle thus commends to the Romans and to all men what Leighton calls that "gracing grace of humility, the ornament and safety of all other graces, and what is so peculiarly Christian." Our individualism will thus be found delivered from the egotism and self-esteem of worldly men, and projected along the path of meekness and lowliness of heart which the Master trod before us. Such sober self-knowledge makes the Christian life a wondrous power. Contrasting with the self-assertion and self-esteem which are so valuable in the world's regard, the humility of the Christian becomes a power and influence radically different in kind from, but far more fruitful in results than, the noisy efforts of the world. May the Master help us all to follow in his meek and lowly steps!—R. M. E.

Vers. 4—8.—*Churchmanship.* Having seen what Christian *individualism* is meant to be in the preceding verses, we now enter upon the wider relation of *Churchmanship.*

[1] 'Sermons,' tome vi. p. 340, etc.

For the apostle is not here speaking of human nature in its social aspects, as we find it so powerfully expounded for us in Bishop Butler's 'Sermons upon Human Nature,' but in its Church aspect, the relation of the individual to the one body which has its organic existence "in Christ." The apostle would have us to believe that we are united as closely to our fellow-believers as the members of one body are to one another. In fact, we are members one of another. A selfish individualism is out of the question; we are bound to the body of believers by vital and eternal ties. Hence we are to consider in this section the constitution of the body of Christ, that is the Church. And—

I. BELIEVERS ARE TO REGARD THEMSELVES AS ORGANICALLY UNITED, AND ARE CONSEQUENTLY TO CO-OPERATE FOR THE COMMON END. (Vers. 4, 5.) We are not meant to be isolated units, but members in sympathy. We are "joint-heirs" with Jesus Christ; we are consequently *partners* with one another in the great Christian enterprise. Co-operation, rather than competition, should be the guiding star of Christian people. We are distinctly made for the Christian Church, and it is our duty to promote the happiness and welfare of all our fellow-believers. Organic connection implies co-operation and sympathy of the sincerest character.

II. AS MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER, BELIEVERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES DISTRIBUTED IN A VARIETY OF POSITIONS, JUST AS THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY. (Vers. 6—8.) While believers are members one of another, we are not reduced to a dead level of uniformity. Edification is doubtless to be in the body as every joint supplieth it, but the joints are not all alike; if they were, it would be a curious medley—a conglomeration of mere atoms, which we should have in place of a body. In the body there is subordination of member to member, and part to part. The foot is not to usurp the place of the head, nor the hand that of the eye, else will the body be turned upside down, and become a monstrosity instead of a thing and form of beauty. Consequently, we find that in the apostolic Church there were a variety of offices, and the apostle here specifies the spirit in which they should be filled and their duties discharged. Let us briefly notice the offices as here described. 1. *Prophecy.* The apostle puts this in the very forefront. Parallel passages go to prove that it was most highly esteemed in the apostolic Church. Thus it is placed immediately after the working of miracles (1 Cor. xii. 10). In another place it is spoken of as "the gift of prophecy," and is associated with the "understanding of all mysteries, and of all knowledge" (1 Cor. xiii. 2). It is further represented as the necessary adjunct to speaking with tongues (1 Cor. xiv. 6, 22). And it was evidently regarded as the prime requisite in the edification of the public congregation; for St. Paul declares, "If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). Now, the more this matter is looked into, the more clearly are we landed in the conclusion that we have the prophetical office continued in Christ's Church in the *ministry of the Word.* Every minister who is called by Christ to the preaching of the gospel, and endowed by him for the work, is a prophet of the Highest just as really as Elijah or John the Baptist. If, then, to any of us this grace of prophecy has been committed, we must exercise it "according to the proportion of faith" (ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως). That is, "the prophet must be true and sincere, communicating only what God has given him." Moreover, and chiefly, must he show no disposition to exaggerations in the exposition of religion, but must give to each subject its due place and proportion.[1] Hence Dr. Shedd, in his 'Commentary' upon the passage, declares, "This injunction of St. Paul is the key to systematic theology. No alleged Christian tenet can be correct which conflicts with other Christian tenets. All Christian truth must be consistent with Christianity. For example, the Deity of Christ supposes the doctrine of the Trinity; monergistic regeneration involves the doctrine of election; and an infinite atonement for sin, by God incarnate, logically implies an infinite penalty for sin." 2. *The diaconate.* For it is evidently to this particular ministry (διακονίαν) the apostle is here referring. To the apostolic Church this set of officers was given to attend to the temporalities of the Church, especially the care of the poor, the sick, and such like. The idea, then, is that

[1] Cf. Goulburn's 'Thoughts on Personal Religion,' part iv. ch. vii., "Of the Mischief and Danger of Exaggerations in Religion."

thoroughness should characterize the diaconate just as well as the prophetical office. 3. *Teaching.* Now, the office of teacher is distinguished from that of prophet in such passages as 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11. It has been suggested that the prophetical office implies inspiration, while the teacher's only the common knowledge of a devout and disciplined Christian mind (Shedd, *in loc.*). There is evidently need of a teaching order in the Church as well as of a preaching or prophetical order. If any is called to teach, let him be thorough in his teaching. 4. *Exhortation.* This is a gift which can be exercised by men who do not aspire to either the prophetical or the teaching office. It deals with the heart and will. "Evangelists" are for the most part of this character; they go about to stir up the souls of men to decision and activity, while their teaching is of necessity of a very limited description. 5. *Giving.* This applies to the distribution by the deacon of the Church's charity, and it may also apply to the private beneficence of the Church-member. In either case simplicity of motive and of aim is to characterize the giver. Charity should be exercised without parade and without any ulterior or selfish end. 6. *Ruling.* This undoubtedly refers to the function exercised by the officers of the Church, and it implies that nothing but diligence can succeed. Zeal (*σπουδή*) for the Church's purity and honour, and for the glory of the Church's Head, should characterize all who have authority in the Church. 7. *Showing mercy.* This applies to the attention the deacons and private Christians show to the sick and the suffering. Well, it is to be exercised "with hilarity" (*ἱλαρότητι*). What a difference it often makes when we set cheerfully about our merciful ministrations, entering with alacrity into them, and not doing them "against the grain"! Our "pity," as it has been very properly said, "should be impulsive, and not an effort; an inclination, and not a volition" (so Shedd, *in loc.*). Now, if Churchmanship were entered into in this noble and sympathetic spirit, what a different tale would our different Churches have to tell! It would be a tale of tender and gracious ministration, a tale of real because spiritual success! May the merciful Master grant it!—R. M. E.

Vers. 9—21.—*Christian socialism.* From *Churchmanship*, which was discussed by the apostle in the preceding verses, we now pass to the Christian in *society*; and our endeavour will be to appreciate the Christian socialism which Paul here inculcates. The great error of the Christless socialism which prevails, alas! in many lands, is that it tries to do from without and by mere material manipulation what can only come from within through the Christian spirit. Into the various forms which socialism has assumed it would be improper here to enter; but any who wish to get some idea of the subject will do well to get the late Dr. Roswell D. Hitchcock's powerful and compendious treatise on 'Socialism,' where, after treating of "Socialism in General," "Communistic Socialism," and "Anti-Communistic Socialism," he reaches his climax in expounding the meaning of "Christian Socialism."[1] Our duty just now is to appreciate the spirit of *love* which Christianity infuses into society, thereby securing all that socialism could possibly reach by its coarse materialistic methods, and infinitely more.

I. CONSIDER THE CHARACTER OF LOVE. (Vers. 9, 10.) For this is the one thing needful (1 Cor. xiii.). Well, the apostle tells us it is not to be hypocritical (*ἀνυπόκριτος*); not to be a profession, but the reality of love. It is from this loving spirit that Christianity proceeds to the regeneration of society. If, then, we start with a genuine spirit of love, we shall not be found rejoicing at evil, but always abhorring it; while to good at all costs we shall ever cleave. Thus "pure Christian love manifests itself in two phases—the ethical recoil from moral evil, and the cleaving to moral good. The former, full as much as the latter, evinces the sincerity of the affection. Indifference towards sin, and especially an indulgent temper towards it, proves that there is no real love of holiness. The true measurement of a man's love of God is the intensity with which he hates evil (cf. Ps. xcvii. 10). The ethics produced by the sentimental idea of God and of moral evil, is 'easy virtue'" (so Shedd, *in loc.*). Such love, then, will bloom into the intense "brotherly love" (*φιλαδελφίᾳ*), which is the great evidence of the Christian spirit (John xiii. 35). And when brotherly love is entertained, instead of a selfish race for honours, there will be a pushing of worthy brethren forwards—a contest not *for* the first rank, but for worthier men than we are to put therein. How striking a Chris-

[1] 'Socialism,' published by Randolph and Co. of New York. See also Kaufmann's 'Socialism,' and Pook's 'Social Wreckage.'

tian spirit becomes in presence of the severe competition going on around it, when it is seen exerting itself to honour others rather than to honour itself! It is this self-effacement which the world cannot understand.

II. LIFE IN EARNEST. (Vers. 11—13.) Now, when a Christian declines honour, and seeks to put the better man thereinto, it is not that he may shirk work. For, as a matter of fact, hard work and honour are not inseparably associated in this world. Hence the Christian can show his "zeal for the Lord" while setting no store by honour for it. The next element, therefore, in the Christian life and spirit is earnestness. As Luther puts it, "In regard to zeal, be not lazy." The Christian will show a zealous spirit in all legitimate lines of effort.[1] His life will be *intense*. And to maintain it in intensity, it will require to be "fervent in spirit," and in all "serving the Lord." The serving of the opportunity, as in some ancient manuscripts, is not so likely, nor so emphatic, as "serving the Lord;" for the Christian is one who has learned to serve God in everything—to "do everything as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord he shall receive the reward of the inheritance as he serves the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 23, 24). Moreover, with this fervent, faithful spirit there will come a buoyancy and hopefulness which is most important in all Christian work; a patience too in tribulation; a prayerfulness at all times; a liberality towards the saints; a hospitality towards all men. The Christian keeps "open house" because he is open-hearted. Now, if such an earnestness were infused into all Christian living, society would soon be regenerated.

III. LIFE MAGNANIMOUS AND SYMPATHETIC. (Vers. 14—16.) Jesus set the great example of magnanimity. He blessed his persecutors; he prayed for his murderers; he converted some of them at Pentecost. Hence, if we would carry out his spirit, we must bless them that persecute us; we must meet the weak spirit which descends to intolerance and persecution with the one weapon of blessing. The Christian martyrs have crushed the opposition to the gospel by blessing their persecutors. But we must show sympathy as well as magnanimity, prepared to congratulate those in joy, to weep along with those in tears. Sympathy adds largely to the experience and benefit of life.[2] And this sympathy is to be genuine all round; we are to be "of the same mind one towards another." We are not to be selecting for our sympathy those in good positions, but we are to "condescend to men of low estate." This is, indeed, the luxury of the Christian spirit to be able to take men up in a low condition, and treat them as God has treated us. We are also to avoid being "wise in our own conceits." In this way the Christian will exhibit large-heartedness; there will be nothing small or petty about his movements; he will be the noble brother-man in his little sphere that Christ has been and is in the wide sphere of the Church.

IV. LIFE LOVINGLY AGGRESSIVE. (Vers. 17—21.) We pass, lastly, to love encountering opposition, yet triumphing over it. And first we are not to take the law into our own hand and recompense evil for evil. Now, the world cannot well understand this Christian spirit. It can appreciate better "the blow for blow" which characterized the early ages. "Thomas Paine, in reference to our Lord's injunction to turn the other cheek to the smiter, charges Christianity with the 'spirit of a spaniel,' asserting that it destroys proper self-respect, and renders man indifferent to insult and affront" (see Shedd, *in loc.*). But when the Christian is charged to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," the meaning being "things honourable" (Revised Version), then it couples with forbearance true Christian dignity.[3] In strict accordance with this Christian dignity is to be our living peaceably with all men, *if possible*. It may be necessary by Christian testimony sometimes to provoke and exasperate worldlings; but, at the same time, pugnacity will be seen not to belong to the Christian spirit. And as for vengeance, let us leave all that with God. He will do justly at last. Meanwhile it is our prerogative to feed and give drink to an enemy; and by every means in our power to heap coals of fire on his head. The only vengeance allowed in the code of love is to kill our enemy with kindness. As the king was directed by Elisha to feed

[1] See Dr. James Hamilton's 'Life in Earnest,' Works, vol. i. pp. 1—98; also Barrow's 'Sermons,' vol. i. p. 479, etc.

[2] See Butler's sermons on 'Compassion,' based on ver. 15.

[3] See Mozley's remarkable sermon, "Our Duty to Equals," in his 'University Sermons,' 2nd edit., p. 183, etc.

the Syrian soldiers and send them home in peace, and as they came not in that generation into Palestine again, so we are to avenge ourselves by kindness.[1] The apostle leaves us here in the last verse with the great principle in the aggressive Christian life. Evil can only be overcome by good. We are not to be exasperated by the enemy; we are to turn the tables on him by love. And has not this been God's own plan? Is not his government and administration to overcome evil by good? Even "everlasting punishment" will be covered by the principle of good. May we entertain and practise the Christian spirit in all our intercourse with men!—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Vers. 1—8.—From admonitions to keep peace, if possible, with all men, whether or not within the Christian circle, and to act honourably and benevolently towards all, the apostle now passes to *the duty of Christians towards the civil government and the laws of the country in which they lived.* It is well known that the Jews were impatient of the Roman dominion, and that some held it to be unlawful, on religious grounds, to pay tribute to Cæsar (Matt. xxii. 17). Insurrections against the government had consequently been frequent. There had been the notable one under Judas the Gaulonite of Gamala (called ὁ Γαλιλαῖος, Acts v. 37), who left followers behind him, called Gaulonites, and to whose tenets Josephus attributes all subsequent insurrections of the Jews ('Ant.,' xviii. 1. § 1). Recently one had broken out in Rome, which had caused Claudius to order the expulsion of all Jews from the city (Acts xvii. 2; cf. Suetonius, 'Claud.,' 25; Dio Cassius, lx. 6). The Christians, being regarded as a Jewish sect, and known for their acknowledgment of a Messiah and their refusal to comply with heathen usages, were not unnaturally confounded with such disturbers of the peace (cf. Acts xvii. 6, 7; xxi. 37). It was, therefore, peculiarly needful that the Christian communities should be cautioned to disprove such accusations by showing themselves in all respects good law-abiding subjects. They might easily be under a temptation to be otherwise. Feeling themselves already subjects of Christ's new kingdom, and regarding the second advent as probably near at hand, they might seem to themselves above the powers and institutions of the unbelieving world, which were so soon to pass away. St. Paul himself condemned resort to heathen tribunals in matters which Christians might settle among themselves (1 Cor. vi. 1, etc.); and many might go so far as to ignore the authority of such tribunals over the saints at all. Peter and John had at the first defied the authority even of the Sanhedrin in matters touching conscience (Acts iv. 19); and many might be slow to distinguish between temporal and spiritual spheres of jurisdiction. St. Paul, therefore, lays down the rule that the civil government, in whatsoever hands it might be, was, no less than the Church, a Divine institution for the maintenance of order in the world, to be submitted to and obeyed by Christians within the whole sphere of its legitimate authority. He does not refer to cases in which it might become necessary to obey God rather than man: his purpose here does not call on him to do so; nor were the circumstances so far such as to bring such cases into prominence; for he was writing in the earlier part of Nero's reign, before any general persecution of Christians had begun. Nor does he touch on the question whether it may be right in some cases for subjects to resist usurped power or tyranny, or to take part in political revolutions, and even fight for freedom. Such a question was apart from his subject, which is the general duty of obedience to the law and government under which we are placed by Providence. This is the only passage in which he treats the subject at length and definitely. In a doctrinal and practical treatise like this Epistle, addressed as an

[1] On this "Christians' Conflict with Life," see Rothe's 'Sermons for the Christian Year,' p. 137; also Beck's 'Christliche Reden,' ii. s. 326; Caspari's 'Von Jenseit des Grabes,' i. s. 114; Hofacker's 'Predigten,' s. 783; and Barrow's 'Sermons,' vol. i. pp. 258, 553, etc.

*apologia pro fide suâ* to the metropolis of the world and the seat of government, it was fitting that he should express clearly the attitude of the Church with regard to the civil order. But his teaching in other Epistles is in accordance with this; as where (1 Cor. vii. 21) he bids slaves acquiesce in the existing law of slavery, and (1 Tim. ii. 1, etc.) he desires especially prayers to be made in behalf of kings and rulers. And he himself notably carried out his principles in this regard (cf. Acts xxiii. 5; xxv. 8—11). There is a closely similar passage in the First Epistle of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 12—18).

Ver. 1.—**Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of** (rather, *from*) **God: the powers that be are ordained of God.** It is of God's ordering that there should be human governments and human laws. Without them there could be no order, security, or progress among mankind. Imperfect as they may often be, and in some instances oppressive and unjust, still they exist for a purpose of good, and form part of the Divine order for the government of the world. In this sense all are from God, and ordained of God; and in submitting to them we are submitting to God.

Vers. 2—5.—**Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they which withstand shall receive to themselves condemnation** (*i.e.* really God's, operating through the human "power;" not meaning *damnation* in the common sense of the word). **For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.** It is the theory of the laws of all civilized governments to uphold justice, and only to punish what is wrong; and in the main they do so. The principles of the Roman law were just, and Paul himself found protection from its officers and tribunals, whose fairness he had, and had reason to have, more confidence in than in the tender mercy of either Gentile or Jewish zealots (cf. Acts xix. 35, *seq.*; xxi. 31, *seq.*; xxii. 30; xxiv. 10; xxv. 10, 11; xxvi. 30, *seq.*). As has been observed already, the Neronian persecutions had not yet begun. **For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain** (though "the sword" might possibly be understood as only the familiar symbol of power, yet the mention of it may be taken to imply the apostle's recognition of the legitimacy of capital punishment, such as he also expressed distinctly, Acts xxv. 11): **for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.** *Wrath* here expresses the familiar idea of the Divine wrath against evil-doing, for the execution of which, in the sphere of human law, the magistrate is the appointed instrument (see note on ch. xii. 19). **Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.** Not only for fear of penal consequences, but because it is your duty, whatever might ensue, to submit to the ordinance of God. Similarly, in 1 Pet. ii. 13, submission to every ordinance of man is enjoined "for the Lord's sake (διὰ τὸν Κύριον)."

Ver. 6.—**For for this cause ye pay** (so, rather than, as in the Authorized Version, *pay ye*. The γὰρ suggests this interpretation. So in the Vulgate, *Ideo enim et tributa præstatis*. The Christians, we may suppose, did pay all legal dues and taxes; it was a recognized principle that they were bound to do so; perhaps because of Christ himself having settled the question in his dictum about the tribute-money (Matt. xxii. 21). And what the apostle means may be that the same principle on which they paid their taxes extended to all legal requirements) **tribute also: for they** (*i.e.* the officers who exact tribute) **are God's ministers** (not, as in ver. 4, διάκονοι, but λειτουργοί. This word, with its correlatives, is used in the New Testament especially with reference to the ceremonial services of the temple, and to their counterpart in Christian devotion; but not exclusively so (see ch. xv. 27; Phil. ii. 25). In classical Greek it denotes peculiarly persons performing public duties, or works of public use. This well-known use of the word may have suggested it here, the apostle meaning to say that such as in any such way served the state were in fact serving God), **attending continually upon this very thing**; *i.e.* on λειτουργία for God.

Ver. 7.—**Render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.** Whatever, either by law or by the constituted order of society, may be due to any, in the way of deference and honour, as well as payments, Christians, as members of society, are bound to render.

Vers. 8—10.—From specific admonitions on this subject, the apostle passes naturally to the principle which, in these regards as well as others, should inspire all our dealings with our fellow-men. **Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another** (literally, *the other*, meaning the same as *his neighbour*) **hath fulfilled law.** Νόμον here is anarthrous, denoting law in general, not the Mosaic Law in par-

ticular, though the instances of transgression that follow are from the Decalogue. The idea of the passage is but a carrying out of our Lord's saying, Matt. xxii. 39, 40. We find it also in Gal. v. 14 more shortly expressed. **For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended (or, *summed up*) in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of law.**

Vers. 11—14.—There is now interposed among the particular admonitions a call to watchfulness, with a view to holiness in all relations of life, on the ground that *the day is at hand*. There can be little, if any, doubt that the apostle had in view the second coming of Christ, which he with others supposed might be close at hand. Our Lord had said that of that day none knew but the Father (Matt. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32; cf. Acts i. 7), and that it would come unexpectedly (Matt. xxiv. 27, 37—44; Mark xiii. 36). Further, in the same addresses to the disciples before his death in which these things were said, he seems to have disclosed a vista of the future, after the manner of the ancient prophets, in which more immediate and more distant fulfilments of the prophetic vision were not clearly distinguished; so that words which we now perceive to have pointed to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was typical of the final judgments, might easily have been understood as referring to the latter. Such are, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; cf. also John xxi. 22, 23). Hence it was natural that the apostolic Church should regard the second advent as probably imminent. We find in the apostolic Epistles several intimations of this expectation (cf. 1 Thess. iv. 13, *seq.*; 2 Cor. v. 2—5; Phil. iv. 5; Heb. x. 25; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 1 John ii. 18, 28; Rev. xxii. 20); and though it was not realized in the event, the authority of the apostles as inspired teachers is not thus disparaged, this being the very thing which Christ had said must remain unknown to all. Nor does their teaching, enforced by this expectation, lose its force to us; for, though "the Lord delayeth his coming," and may still delay it, yet to each of us at least this present world is fast passing away, and the Lord may be close at hand to call us out of it. The duty of watchfulness and preparedness remains unchanged. The *Parousia*, or, as it is called in the pastoral Epistles, the *Epiphany* (in 2 Thess. ii. 8, ἐπιφανεία τῆς παρουσίας) of Christ is here, as elsewhere, presented under the figure of the *day* appearing (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 13; Eph. v. 14; 1 Thess. v. 4; Heb. x. 25; 2 Pet. i. 19), the previous ages of the world being regarded as the time of night. The figure is found in the prophets with reference to *that day*—the coming *day of the Lord* (cf. *e.g.* Isa. ix. 2; lx. 1—3; Mal. iv. 2). But though the *day* has not yet come, Christians are viewed as already in the radiance of its dawn, in which they can walk as children of the day, and be on the watch, and not be surprised asleep, or doing the deeds of darkness, when the full daylight bursts upon them. For in the first advent of Christ the day dawned, though, to those who loved darkness rather than light, but as a light that shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (John i. 5, *seq.*; iii. 19, *seq.*; cf. 2 Pet. i. 19; 1 John ii. 8; and also Luke i. 78, *seq.*; ii. 32).

Vers. 11, 12.—**And that** (for a similar use of καὶ τοῦτο, or καὶ ταῦτα, cf. 1 Cor. vi. 8; Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 28; Heb. x. 25; xi. 12), **knowing that it is high time for you to awake out of sleep** (more literally, *that it is the hour for you to be already roused out of sleep*); **for now is our salvation nearer** (or, *now is salvation nearer to us*. The *salvation* here meant is "the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21), the "manifestation of the sons of God" (ch. viii. 19), "the regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28), the "gathering together in one of all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10), which is yet to come) **than when we believed** (*i.e. than when we first became believers*; cf. Acts xix. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 5; xv. 2; Gal. ii. 16. Time has been gradually advancing since then, bringing the consummation we look for ever nearer). **The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.** Former habits of life are here, as elsewhere, regarded as clothing once worn—a man's habitual investment, though not part of his real self—which is to be *put off* (cf. Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 8, 9); instead

whereof are to be *put on*, as a new investment, the graces and virtues, supplied to us from the region of light, which constitute the Christian character (cf. 1 Thess. v. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 7; Eph. vi. 11, *seq.*). In all these passages the new clothing to be put on is designated as armour, the idea being carried out in detail in Eph. vi. 11, etc.; and thus the further conception is introduced of Christians being as soldiers on the watch during the watches of the night, awaiting daybreak, equipped with arms of heavenly proof, careful not to sleep on their post, or to allow themselves in revelry or any deeds of shame, such as are done in the night under the cover of darkness.

Vers. 13, 14.—**As in the day**, let **us walk honestly** (in the sense which *honeste* bears in Latin of *decently, becomingly, with decorum*. The word εὐσχημόνως occurs also in 1 Thess. iv. 12; 1 Cor. vii. 35; xiv. 40. It denotes here a walk of life the entire opposite of ἀσχημοσύνη (ch. i. 27), and of the things done in secret of which it is a shame to speak; cf. Eph. v. 11, 12); **not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying** (rather, *jealousy*, denoting jealous wrath, cf. Acts xiii. 45). **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.** The figure of a new investment being renewed from ver. 12, it is here Christ himself who is to be *put on*. So also Gal. iii. 27. For the idea implied, cf. Eph. iv. 23, 24; Col. iii. 12; ch. viii. 9, 10; 1 Cor. vi. 15, 17. "Induere autem Christum hic significat virtute Spiritus ejus undique nos muniri, qua idonei ad omnes sanctitatis partes reddamur. Sic enim instauratur in nobis imago Dei, quæ unicum est animæ ornamentum" (Calvin). It may be observed that in Gal. iii. 27 Christians are said to have already put on Christ in their baptism; here they are exhorted still to do so. There is no real contradiction; they are but exhorted to realize in actual life the meaning of their baptism. **And make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof** (literally, *unto lusts*).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—7.—*Loyalty.* There was danger, in the first age of Christianity, lest the nature of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus should be misunderstood even by its subjects, and misrepresented by those without. A spiritual empire was a new conception, and carnal minds were prone to confound the dominion over souls with civil and political authority. Hence the importance and appropriateness of the admonitions so emphatically addressed by the apostle to the Christians of Rome.

I. THE INSPIRED CONCEPTION OF CIVIL AUTHORITY. By this the apostle understood the actually constituted power of the state. The Roman emperor was the head and chief of the greater part of the population of the then known world, and Rome was the centre of political rule and authority. The proconsuls and prætors represented in the provinces the imperial majesty and sway of senate and of emperor. But it is evident that the view of civil power taken by the apostle was equally applicable to monarchies and to republics. Whatever the form of government, whatever the designation of the ruler, whatever the rank of the administrator of the law, *authority* was recognized as of Divine origin and right. It has sometimes been deemed a reproach to the apostle that he should have written thus when Nero was on the throne. But this fact rather emphasizes the principle that the authority is Divine, although the person or persons who wield it may be unworthy of the trust. Nero was at this time under the influence of the wise and moderate counsels of Seneca and of Burrhus, yet this language which Paul employed would probably have been unaltered had the apostle been writing during the subsequent and infamous period of the tyrant's sway. It would be straining this passage to deduce from it

"The right Divine of kings to govern wrong,"

and it would be unjust to argue from it that it is always unlawful to resist and to dethrone a tyrant. But we may learn to regard subordination, rule, subjection, loyalty, as all part of a Divine order imposed upon human society by the Lord of all.

II. THE SCOPE OF LOYALTY. 1. *Respect and honour* are due from the governed to the governor. Even where there is a lack of those qualities which command personal respect, honour may be rendered to the office which is held, and the duties of which are faithfully fulfilled. 2. *The payment of taxes and tributes* is required. In this precept Paul followed the teaching of his Master, "Render unto Cæsar the things that

are Cæsar's." Subjects are not responsible for the use made of the money which is exacted from them by just authority. When a king who has no constitutional right to levy taxes without the consent of a parliament demands money upon his own authority, such a demand may be refused without disobedience to the injunction of the text. 3. *Obedience and subjection* are enjoined. The extent and range of this injunction are very large. "Every soul"—every intelligent member of society—is under an obligation to obey; and resistance to the ruler is resistance to God, and entails just punishment and retribution. 4. *Virtue generally* is commended as contributive to the well-being of society. Good works are to evince the sincerity of the Christian's faith. The Roman law was the highest expression the ancient world attained of *justice* in the relations subsisting between man and man. It has been the foundation of the codes of many civilized Christian nations in modern times. Obedience to the law was the duty of every good citizen, every well-wisher of society, every true member of the human family. For the law was the sanction of virtue and righteousness. Doubtless there have been and are unjust laws; yet it is the duty of the citizen to obey them when obedience does not come into conflict with the higher duty to God.

III. THE GROUNDS OF LOYALTY. These, as adduced by St. Paul, are two. 1. *Personal considerations* are advanced. The wrath of the magistrate is to be feared; rulers are a terror to the evil; they that resist shall receive retribution; the ruler bears not the sword in vain. Such motives are almost the only motives to which the coarse and vicious are accessible. They are motives to which none are altogether superior. The consequences of injustice have to be borne in mind by those who are liable to the passions of cupidity or of revenge. 2. *Religious motives* are presented. Government is an ordinance of God, and rulers are the ministers of God. A bad subject, then, cannot be a good Christian. In our own days, individualism is carried to such an extent that authority is often disdained and defied, even by those who are by no means the dregs of society, who make pretensions to intelligence and virtue. It is well, therefore, that the inspired teaching should be pondered which attaches importance so great to order, patriotism, and loyalty.

Vers. 8—10.—*Love and law.* To the unthinking, and at first sight, there seems a contradiction between *law*, which expresses authority, and is sanctioned by force, and *love*, which is spontaneous, and is of the heart. Christ himself, however, brought the two into harmony when he said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and the apostle, in this passage, shows that, really and essentially, the two are one.

I. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL LIFE IS LOVE. The new commandment which Christ gave was, "Love one another;" and his peculiar canon of conduct was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Of this principle we may remark that: 1. It is in harmony with our own constitution. Our true nature is to live in mutual affection and confidence; it is the depraved nature that develops hatred, malice, and uncharitableness. 2. It is imposed and sanctioned by the Divine Head of the new humanity, the Lawgiver of the spiritual kingdom. 3. It provides the radical cure for human ills. 4. It has not only a negative, it has also a positive virtue; it is the proper and natural origin of the several virtues, supplying their motive, prompting to their exercise.

II. THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE. The apostle, whose mind was as thoroughly ethical and practical as it was theological and doctrinal, traced the working of this principle of love, in preserving human nature and protecting human society from the vices, crimes, and sins which have cursed the world. In this passage he teaches us that love must act in keeping Christians from wronging their neighbours. He whose heart is filled with true love will neither covet nor steal his neighbour's goods, nor take his neighbour's life, nor make inroads upon his neighbour's domestic happiness, nor in any way inflict injury upon his neighbour's interests, or deprive him of his rights. For to love our fellow-men is to count their welfare our own, and to do to them as we would they should do to us.

III. THE ACQUISITION OF THIS PRINCIPLE. It may be argued that the counsels of the apostle are unpractical; that whilst love is a cure for human ills, it is not shown how love may be acquired, any more than it is how sin may be avoided. But the fact is that revelation links together the love of man and the love of God, and teaches us

that the one way to the cherishing of Divine love is the reception of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Manifestation of Divine love to human hearts. "We love him, because he first loved us;" "He that loveth God loveth his brother also."

Vers. 11—14.—*A startling summons.* The admonition of this passage is especially addressed to Christians; yet to Christians who stand peculiarly in need of a rousing appeal and summons, to call them to a more spiritual and a more watchful life.

I. THE CRISIS OF LIFE. 1. *The night is well-nigh gone.* Between our Lord's first and second comings stretches the *dawn* of the world. Behind his first coming lay the night of humanity. Beyond his second advent the daylight beams, with the brightness of knowledge, of holiness, of happiness, of glory. 2. *Salvation is nearer than ever.* In one sense, indeed, salvation is a present blessing; for we are delivered from condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus. In another sense it is future; for we shall hereafter receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. It is something to be looked forward to with keenest joy of hope, something the prospect of which may well inspire us to endurance and to toil.

II. THE SUMMONS OF GOD. 1. To *spiritual energy.* To such a period, drowsy, slumberous inactivity is utterly inappropriate. 2. To *the renunciation of all that interferes with the fulfilment of our calling* and the realization of our hope. 3. To *a spiritual warfare and campaign.* 4. To *purity of body and of mind,* as those who are in their whole nature redeemed, that in their whole nature they may be consecrated.

Vers. 11—14.—*Night and day.* Christian motives are brought forward to incite to moral duties. We are called upon to do right, not only by the voices of expediency and of authority, but by the voice of revelation. Christians are addressed as those who know the seasons, who discern the signs of the times, who regard the present as a period of probation, of discipline, of education, and whose gaze is ever forwards, whose hope is in their Lord's return to judge and to save.

I. THE RETROSPECT OF THE PAST. "The night is far spent." 1. The spiritual night of the world is passing away. The true Light is shining, and the radiance of his beams is illumining the darkest and most distant shores. 2. The night of time is departing, and eternity, resurrection, the new heavens and the new earth, are about to dawn. 3. The night of life is nearly spent, and the day of immortality approaches. If this is the case with all, how manifestly is it so with the aged!

II. THE PROSPECT OF THE FUTURE. 1. "The day is at hand." So far as the opportunity for labour is concerned, we may admit that "the night cometh, when no man can work." But, in another sense, it is a welcome truth that "the day dawns, and the shadows flee away." Full light shall soon be shed upon our intellectual and spiritual darkness. The fears, the ignorance, the doubts of the present shall cease to be; we shall see Christ as he is, and we shall know even as we are known. 2. "Salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed." A fortress is beleaguered by the forces of the foe. The garrison, long besieged, is feeble, weary, and all but exhausted, ill supplied with provisions and ammunition, and in great straits. But relief is planned, and is approaching. At night the prospect seemed dark. But now, when the morning breaks, the besieged, looking from their walls, behold the banners of the deliverer drawing near, and hear the welcome music of his march. Salvation is at hand! It is in this light that we are encouraged to look at life, at time. Now we are besieged by our spiritual foe, and our condition is often apparently desperate. But our redemption draweth nigh, and our salvation is nearer. The perfection of our salvation, the fulfilment of the promise of victory,—this is in the future.

III. THE DUTY OF THE PRESENT. This is not the time to indulge mere sentiment, whether of retrospect or of anticipation. The living present demands all our energy. 1. "It is time to awake out of sleep;" to arouse ourselves from indifference to concern, from half-belief to earnest faith, from inactivity to zeal. 2. To "cast off the works of darkness." By the clothing, the impediments thus designated, we understand the negligences, the sins, which are inconsistent with true spirituality. 3. To "put on the armour of light." Holiness and diligence, patience and devotedness,—these are the spiritual exercises appropriate to those who have a hope so glorious and promises

so sure as ours. Let the soldier see to his weapons, the servant to his work, the steward to his trust!

APPLICATION. Every crisis of human life, of Church history; every day which tells of the flight of time; every instance of human mortality,—speaks loudly to us, summoning us, as children of the day, to live as in anticipation of the Divine Deliverer's speedy and welcome approach.

Vers. 11—14.—*Awake and arm!* It is strange that, at the very commencement of a new dispensation, the prospect of its close should be so often presented to the view. No sooner had Christ's first coming ended, than his people were taught to anticipate his second coming. Thus the thoughts and affections of Christians are clustered around their Lord, and the revelation of the past suggests the approaching epiphany. The contrasts of this passage are very striking. When carefully analyzed, they appear—

I. As applied to CONDITION. 1. The night of *danger* is nearly over. This applies to the individual, to any community, to the whole Church. 2. The morning of *deliverance* is dawning. An inspiration and comfort to the pilgrims, the soldiers, who are often oppressed by the gloom of the present perils.

II. As applied to CHARACTER. 1. The works of night are to be abandoned. These belong to the era which now lies in the remote distance, and from which Christ has emancipated his people. 2. The life of the spiritual day is to be adopted. If the flesh and its lusts are to be crucified, what is to be crowned? The Lord Jesus is to be "put on," the armour of light is to be taken and worn; and the Christian soldier is to go forth to meet the coming day, with his face towards the rising sun, with his heart bounding with delight at his great Captain's long-expected appearance.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—7.—*The Christian as citizen.* The duty of Christians as citizens is in our day not sufficiently recognized. Many Christians keep aloof from public life and the duties of citizenship because of the political corruption and party strife which are so common. Others, again, enter into public duties, but seem to leave their religion behind them. The result is a sad want of Christian statesmanship and of Christian legislation.

I. THE CHRISTIAN RECOGNIZES THE NECESSITY OF GOVERNMENT. "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (ver. 1). This is not to be understood as meaning that every individual ruler is ordained of God. That would make the Divine Being responsible for many acts of despotism and oppression. We might as well say that every minister of religion who had received the form of ordination was therefore chosen of God, no matter what his personal character might be. The meaning rather is that government is an ordinance of God—that God has ordained or appointed it, that there should be authority and rulers. Government is necessary: 1. *For the protection of life and property.* 2. *For the repression of crime.* "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil" (ver. 3). Governors, says St. Peter, are appointed "for the punishment of evil-doers" (1 Pet. ii. 14). 3. *For the rewarding and encouraging of virtue.* "Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (ver. 3). So St. Peter also speaks of governors as "a praise to them that do well." Wise rulers will not only repress crime, but they will seek to encourage well-doing. They will show special favour to those who, by their own character and efforts, promote morality and temperance and honesty, and thus help to make government easy. How often do rulers forget this! How often the Christian people of a nation are ignored or even discouraged, while the godless and the immoral are high in place and favour!

II. THE CHRISTIAN RECOGNIZES THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF RULERS. Rulers are here called "ministers of God" (vers. 4, 6). Our sovereign entitles herself "Victoria, by the grace of God." All who are concerned in government have a solemn responsibility, whether they be kings or queens, ministers of state, members of the legislature, judges, magistrates, or jurymen. All must appear one day before a higher tribunal. Then the judge will be asked, "Have you done justice as between man and man?" The

juryman will be asked, "Have you rendered a verdict according to the evidence?" The sovereign will be asked, "Have you been faithful to your coronation vows?" *Therefore the Christian should pray for rulers.* "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 2). *The Christian should do all he can to secure good rulers.* What we need in our day is less of party politics, and more of Christian politics. Christian people, Christian Churches, should band themselves together, laying aside all political and all ecclesiastical differences, to secure Christian representatives, Christian law-makers for our professedly Christian nation.

III. THE CHRISTIAN RECOGNIZES HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY. There are two duties distinctly specified here for the Christian citizen. 1. *Obedience.* "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (ver. 1); "Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (ver. 2); "Wherefore ye must needs be subject" (ver. 5). If the law is to be upheld, there must be an obedient and submissive spirit on the part of every good citizen. Yet there are limits to all this. We are to interpret this passage in the light of other Bible teaching and the examples which it sets before us. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of passive obedience or non-resistance. At Babylon, Daniel resisted the reigning power. The royal mandate was issued, but Daniel did not obey it. "He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." The Apostles Peter and John declined to obey the Jewish council at Jerusalem when they were commanded to speak no more in the Name of Jesus. They boldly answered, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Where the law of a nation or the command of an earthly ruler conflicts with the law of God, then it is clearly the Christian's duty to obey God rather than men. The English people in their past history have acted upon this principle. Twice under the reign of the Stuart sovereigns the subjects of the realm asserted, on conscientious grounds, their right of revolution and resistance. So also did the Covenanters of Scotland. Yet resistance to constituted authority should ever be a last resort, and is only to be resorted to when all more peaceful means have utterly failed to obtain justice and redress of wrongs. 2. *Taxation.* "For this cause pay ye tribute also" (ver. 6). This also was the teaching of Christ. No government can be maintained without expense. National defences, public institutions, all of which have for their object the protection and the well-being of all the citizens, require to be kept up. Every citizen is responsible for bearing his share in meeting expenditure for the common good. He may not approve of every item of expenditure, but that is no valid reason for refusing to contribute his share of taxation, where the representatives of the nation have decreed that the expenditure is wise and necessary. This rule, of course, has its exception also in the case of any expenditure which would do violence to the individual conscience. 3. *There are other practical duties.* The Christian will ever co-operate with rulers in securing and promoting peace and temperance, morality and honesty, truthfulness and justice. All these virtues are necessary to national well-being. Government would be easy if every citizen was a Christian, and if every Christian would realize his duties as a citizen. The words of Sir Arthur Helps ('Friends in Council') may be fittingly quoted here: "He who does not bring into government, whether as governor or subject, some religious feeling, some higher motive than expediency, is likely to make but an indifferent governor or an indifferent subject. . . . Without piety there will be no good government."—C. H. I.

Vers. 11—14.—*The Christian's duty in the present age.* The Christian is not to be insensible to the movements of the world. "Knowing the time," says the apostle (ver. 11). Mr. Spurgeon says he reads the newspapers to see how God is governing the world. It is well for us to know what are the current beliefs and motives of our fellow-men.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONFIDENCE. 1. "*The night is far spent.*" (1) *The forces of evil are far spent.* Some Christians are always looking on the dark side of things. They see no traces of the breaking day. With them it is always night. They would have us believe, with Canon Taylor, that missions are a failure. They would have us believe, with Lord Wemyss, that prohibition of the liquor traffic is a failure. They

would have us believe that Sunday closing is a failure. But it is those who want such movements to fail that usually originate such a cry. There is no failure in the forces of right. Failure is written on the forces of sin. Its night is far spent. (2) *The clouds of mystery will soon be lifted.* There are difficulties in reconciling religion and science. Yet the difficulties are only apparent. They are only temporary clouds. There are difficulties in God's providence that we cannot understand. But by-and-by they will all be made plain. Every mystery will be solved. "Now we know in part; but then shall we know even as also we are known." (3) *The dark hours of pain and sorrow will soon be over.* How dark is the hour of sickness! how dark the hour of bereavement! What shadows disappointment causes to pass over our lives! But the night is far spent. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." 2. "*The day is at hand.*" The day of our Saviour's coming is rapidly drawing nearer. Already we may hear the sound of his chariot-wheels. Gradually his kingdom has been making progress in the earth, his truth has been gaining the victory over error. The Reformation shook off the dust of centuries from the Word of God. The discovery of printing had already prepared the way for the spread of the emancipated Bible. Old kingdoms that encouraged error and fostered ecclesiastical despotism have been falling. New nations have arisen to sway the destinies of the world—the nations of the Bible-loving, liberty-loving, Anglo-Saxon race. Old wrongs have been redressed. Our King is coming. "The day is at hand."

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S CALL. 1. *A call to activity.* "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (ver. 11). It is plain that this exhortation is addressed to Christians, for the writer adds, "for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Many Christians are asleep. They are inactive and idle, and are doing nothing to prepare the way of the Lord. It may be addressed also to the unconverted. This very passage, the closing part of this thirteenth chapter, was the means of converting St. Augustine. 2. *A call to amendment.* "Let us cast off the works of darkness" (ver. 12). Some works are literally works of darkness, as for example those specified in the thirteenth verse. Drunkenness and impurity are most practised in the night. "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." But "works of darkness" may be regarded as including all sinful works. Sin loves concealment. The Christian is to cast off everything that will not bear the light, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. "The day is at hand." How shall we abide the day of our Lord's coming if we do not, by Divine help, separate ourselves from sin? 3. *A call to conflict.* "Let us put on the armour of light" (ver. 12). We are to wage war with our own temptations, and with the evil that is in the world. Let our armour be the armour of light. Let us not fight the world with its own weapons—with hatred, or bitterness, or deceit. Let our weapons be good weapons—the weapons of truth, justice, love. They will conquer. Let us never do evil that good may come. 4. *A call to Christ-likeness.* "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 14). That is to say, "Be clothed with his spirit." This is the secret of strength. Like Sir Galahad, whose strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure, the man who is Christ-like in spirit will overcome all temptations, and will grapple victoriously with all difficulties. This is emphatically a call which the Christian needs to hear in the present age, when there is so much in the Church as well as in the world that is contrary to the spirit of Christ. Let us, then, hear the trumpet-call of duty, and, as we go forth, let us brace up our spirits with the inspiring thought that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—7.—*Christian submission.* We now pass from ecclesiastical to civil relations. Because the Christian has entered upon a new brotherhood in Christ, he does not cease to belong to the old brotherhood of natural society. And as in the spiritual brotherhood humility and love are the twin principles that should regulate all our conduct, so in the natural commonwealth of the state there should be, analogously, submission towards the powers, and a love-inspired justice towards private members of the same. In these verses is inculcated the duty of conscientious submission to state authorities.

I. THE REASONABLENESS OF SUBMISSION. The submission to authority is spoken of as of a twofold nature—obedience to law generally, and payment of all dues. And

the spirit in which such obedient and loyal conduct should be exercised is the spirit of reverence and honour. For even in state duties the heart should be concerned equally with the life. 1. It is reasonable, then, that we: (1) Obey the laws in general well-doing. For viewed merely as a human institution of a utilitarian nature, the authority of law is for our good, if we obey. "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same." (2) And is it not equally reasonable that we pay the dues to constituted authorities?—tribute, custom. For here again we are only contributing towards the expenses of our own protection. 2. But our obedience and payment of dues will only be properly rendered by us, and will only tend to the proper rendering of the same by others, if our heart go with our deed. Let there then, as is reasonable, be fear, let there be honour, towards those to whom fear, to whom honour is due.

II. THE RIGHTNESS OF SUBMISSION. The natural man, on the grounds of mere reason, then, should submit to authority, with deed and with heart. But surely the Christian man should submit on some higher ground than this? It is not only reasonable, it is divinely right, that such submission be rendered to the powers. 1. It is right that we: (1) Obey law. For the authority which gives the law is not arbitrarily instituted by man; it is of God's appointment. Generally: for "there is no power but of God;" *i.e.* whenever the exigencies of society demand that one shall exercise power over others, these very exigencies show that the exercise of some such power is divinely purposed. Specially: for in his providential governance of the world he has foreseen and ordained the exercise of the power by these very individuals who for the time have authority committed to them. And can a Christian resist God's ordinance? In so doing he will not merely be punished by man, but judged by God. The sword is God's sword; the wrath, God's wrath. (2) And so of tribute and custom. This is not merely a payment because of personal interest accruing, but in recognition of their high office as "ministers of God's service." They fulfil a Divine vocation, and, like the priests in the temple, must be supported as servants of God. 2. So the spirit in which we obey and pay tribute is to be one of reverence and honour, not only on the lower ground of the reasonableness of the same, but because in these human powers we discern God.

Here, then, as in the whole of life, the religious penetrates and sanctifies the natural. There is to be a perpetual transfiguration, in our eyes, of the human with the Divine. This is but an application of the injunction, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—T. F. L.

Vers. 8—10.—*Christian righteousness.* We here pass from public to private relations. Still in the civic sphere, viewing men as men, not as Christian brethren. And reminded by thought just advanced, the thought of tribute, custom, etc., as being "due" to those in power, that there are dues also which we owe each one to his neighbour. And it is of the very essence of justice that we "render to all their dues;" or, in the words of the eighth verse, that we "owe no man anything." Here, then, we may consider the justice which binds together human society; and the love by which the justice is fulfilled.

I. JUSTICE. Justice is the bond of human society. To do to others as we may reasonably expect them to do to us is indeed the golden rule which conserves all security and peace among men. To be just towards them is to respect their rights. And what are the rights of man? God has set them forth strongly, in their essentials, in that Decalogue which was the Divine code of justice for a barbarous nation. Think of them—rights without which life amongst others would be intolerable. 1. *The right of life.* "Thou shalt not kill." Sacredness of existence; but frailty. So precious, and yet so easily destroyed. And in wantonness, or in malice, man may destroy his brother-man. But the "Thou shalt not kill" sounds in his ears, a spoken law of God: the right of life must be conserved. 2. *The right of sacred relationship,* dearer than the right of life. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Organic union of men. Relationships interwoven into human nature—husband and wife, parent and child, brother and brother. The conjugal relation the foundation of the rest. Any tampering with this relation is, in its degree, adultery, and loosens the whole relational fabric; any violation of the sacrament of this relation, "They twain shall be one flesh," is in the highest degree adultery, and goes far to destroy the whole relational fabric.

But tho "Thou shalt not commit adultery" sounds in our ears, a spoken law of God: the rights of sacred relationship must be conserved. 3. *The right of property.* "Thou shalt not steal." An instinctive acquisitiveness in man; he lords it over the world. This acquisitiveness sanctioned by God: "have dominion." Same acquisitiveness, perverted from its proper use, may lead us to acquire that to which we have no right, to "steal" the property of our brother. But the "Thou shalt not steal" sounds in our ears: God utters his sanction of the sacredness of property. 4. *Fundamental to all these main rights of man is the right to be secure from even the unlawful desire of a brother.* "Thou shalt not covet." For "out of the heart proceed," etc. (Matt. xv. 19). So to covet another's life, or wife, or property, even in the first faint beginning of desire, is to allow the lust from which all evil flows; and, as against "sin in its beginning," the "Thou shalt not covet," of God is uttered with solemn emphasis as the last commandment.

II. LOVE. The last commandment? Nay, for Christ has said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." We have seen how this is the bond of the new brotherhood in Christ; it is set forth here as the Christian's own safeguard of the rights of man. As a man amongst men you must respect the rights of men, *i.e.* you must fulfil the law; as a Christian amongst men you must love them for the Lord's sake, and so you assure your respect for all their rights, for "love is the fulfilment of the Law." Need this be proved? Law says sternly, "No ill to one's neighbour;" love says, "Give all good." Ah! here is a yet Diviner impulse, and covering a broader ground. And the Christian will be content with nothing less than this Diviner impulse and broader ground. But if there be the higher impulse, the lower shall be secure; if there be the wider range, the narrower shall be covered. Yes; love men, and you will work no ill.

The importance of justice amongst men demands that, as good citizens, we see to it that justice is everywhere advanced; hence our parliaments, our courts. But that justice may be advanced, to say nothing of yet higher ends, let us, as Christians, cherish this principle which constitutes the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—T. F. L.

Vers. 11—14.—*The day breaketh!* "And this"—the work of progressive sanctification, in all its aspects and relations—this surely claims our strong attention now, when the day of God is nigh unto dawning! For, visibly to us, the shadows pass and the morning breaks. It is the night-watch still, but the day is at hand. We have here to consider—the nearness of the day of God; our full awaking.

I. THE DAY OF GOD. In and through all the declarations of the Scriptures there mingles this warning note—the day of God will come! Men seem to have their day, and work their will; God will have his day, and will work his will. We must not narrow the meaning of this presentment of the Scriptures: whenever God interferes amid the doings of men to show forth his power, his day has come. In our individual life-histories, in the histories of nations, as well as in the larger history of the race, God has come, does come, many times and in many ways. For mercy? Yes; to deliver those who trust in him and seek to work his will. And for judgment: for "wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." But amid these many manifestations of God's power, there are some which stand out conspicuously, like the mountain-peaks among the lower hills. Such was the advent of the Christ, looming large before the vision of Old Testament seers. Such is the second advent of the Christ, looming large to the view of the apostles and to us. For mercy and for judgment was the former; for mercy and for judgment shall be the latter. To the Christian believer, for full salvation! Oh, what a hope is this! It has glowed before us as we have traced God's purposes declared in foregoing chapters; Paul would have it burn as our beacon-light, ever brighter and more near! A beacon-light? Nay, rather it is the dawn of the new day, when the shining of God's full-orbed love shall scatter for ever all the lingering shades of night.

II. OUR FULL AWAKING. But what shall be our attitude in view of such a day-break? We must surely be watchers for the morning, children of light! The very regeneration of those to whom he writes was truly an awaking out of sleep; but there might be need still for a more thorough arousal and readiness. Nay, is there not, in

each one, this need? The works of darkness will cling to us, if we do not ever resolutely cast them off. We may forget that the day is shining, and sink back into our sleep. 1. The works of darkness? Yes, such works as pertain to the corruption of the night-time of the world—base revelry, impure pleasures, passion, and strife. The works of the flesh, which are manifest (Gal. v. 19—21). And oh, what a night-time the world has had! what a night-time has been ours! We have loved the darkness, because our deeds were evil. 2. But we, as children of light, are to put on the armour of light, to walk honestly, as in the day. The gleam of that dayspring has already caught our vision and lit up our brow; it is to irradiate all our path. We are to walk as though the cloudless eternity were about us now. Your citizenship is in heaven! So then, while the children of the darkness "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," seek ever to gratify their low desires, and make their whole life subservient to this, we are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." He is to be our clothing and adornment; the pure, spiritual nature which he showed to the world is to be our arraying for the new sunrise, bringing the world's new year!

And that glorious goal of our best hopes, "salvation" in its fullest scope and working, is "nearer to us than when we first believed." Let us gladden our hearts and rekindle all our longings. We are not to be ever battling, weary, sad; but he whom we look for shall come; yes, "the second time, unto salvation!"—T. F. L.

Vers. 1—6.—*Submission to constituted authority.* The reception of a new truth requires its adjustment to previously accepted truths. The introduction of a new system like Christianity necessitated an examination of its relationship to existing systems of government. There was a danger of Jewish fanaticism being fanned into heated sedition in Jewish converts to the gospel by the very joy of finding the Messiah and of hopes concerning a literal temporal kingdom. And the novelty of the views opened up before Gentile converts might easily beget in them a feeling of freedom from and superiority to all law and custom. Yet the advice to such, in order to be practical and effective, must be simple and concise. The apostle, therefore, enunciates a principle, and leaves its limitations to be afterwards discovered.

I. THE DIVINE FOUNT OF AUTHORITY. Government is traced to its source in God. "Order is Heaven's first law." Where no order reigns, there is no security, no progress to better things. Absolute equality is impossible amongst men; society has no safeguards, no cohesion, without a recognized tribunal of authority. Whether this authority is taken and exercised as a matter of course by the wisest or strongest, or is the acknowledged result of station conferred by the community, the necessity for such leadership and oversight manifests the will of God, and authority as such is seen to emanate from him. The Creator controls the works of his hands. The camp of Israel maintained a certain disposition of tents and tribes at rest and on the march, because of a Divine ordinance. Disorder would ill have befitted the presence of the Monarch Jehovah. Whatever the forms which government assumes, we are compelled to ascend in thought by rising steps and hierarchies up to him who sitteth on the great white throne, the mighty Arbiter of all events, the Judge of quick and dead. Recall the majestic passage from Hooker: "Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

II. THE HUMAN ADMINISTRATORS OF JUSTICE. "The powers that be are ordained of God." Not that he has placed each ruler in office or assents to each judicial function. But the leaders of human society represent the authority of God on earth. They are the "ministers" of God, acting in subordination to him; at least this is the fundamental idea of their position, however overlooked in practice. "They bear the sword" for God, are his vicegerents, and herein lies the honour and accountability of their decisions. Let them recollect that "One higher than the highest regardeth." "He that ruleth over men righteously, ruling in the fear of God, he shall be as the sunny light of a cloudless morning." Cf. Samuel's account of his judgeship, that he had defrauded none, oppressed none, nor taken a ransom from any. As families are governed

by their natural head, the father, so is the universal family named after and ruled by the great Father in heaven, whom earthly parents are to copy. The fact that parents use delegated authority lends weight and responsibility to their behaviour. For the superintendence of Israel the seventy elders received a special donation of the spirit of Moses. How needful that rulers in Church and state, in households and in municipalities, should seek wisdom from him that giveth to all men liberally! Many a riotous subject has become a thoughtful, self-restrained governor when realizing the momentous grandeur and obligations of his office.

III. THE GENERAL RULE OF OBEDIENCE. Submission follows the recognition of the Divine authority at the back of magistrates. To rebel, to disobey, is to cast off allegiance to God. Even the apostle, smarting under the illegal order of Ananias, regretted his strong language when informed that he had reviled the high priest. To refuse due honour to rulers and parents is to demoralize society. The Saviour resisted not the officers of justice, though he was unjustly condemned to death. The apostle urged slaves to be quiet, and subject to their froward masters, that by well-doing they might silence malicious accusers of Christianity. This did not signify that the gospel sanctioned slavery and despotism when the time arrived for their peaceful overthrow. Submission to persecution has been mightier, more lasting in its effects than an armed resistance, for it enlightens public opinion without kindling strife, and prepares for a change that shall be virtually unanimous. The two sanctions of the magistrate's authority are mentioned in ver. 5, viz. "wrath," that is, punishment, and "conscience," that is, the assurance which the peaceable subject has that he has acted in accordance with the mind of God.

IV. PARTICULAR EXCEPTIONS. No public edict has a right to coerce any man's conscience. Let the ruler attempt to promulgate a law that sins against morality, and obedience must be refused at all hazards. When Cæsar steps out of his province into the realm of religion, no regard for the "powers that be" can for a moment be suffered to suspend compliance with the felt dictates of the Almighty. The proclamations of Nebuchadnezzar commanding to worship the golden image, and of Darius prohibiting prayer to any save the king, were rightly unheeded by God-fearing men. But let each protester take great care to have his conscience illumined, lest he erect his individual judgment into a law of God. Again, when a government has shown itself incapable of protecting the good and punishing the transgressors, and is notorious for its reversal of the true principles which should guide its action and for its forgetfulness of the intent of its functions, it has put itself outside the pale of respect and submission; it may lawfully be overthrown and another substituted. Allowance must, however, be made for the human infirmities even of kings and councillors. In modern states agitation can effect needed reforms in public administration. It behoves each citizen to think, speak, and vote as he deems will best promote the interests of the state. Indifference, on whatever spiritual grounds, to evils which he can remedy, carelessness respecting the general welfare,—this is a crime. It is a refusal to employ a talent which Providence has committed to his care. Modern legislation does not hesitate to withdraw children from the custody of parents who act with cruelty or surround their offspring with deleterious influences.—S. R. A.

Vers. 8—10.—*Love, the fulfilment of the Law.* The Lord's Prayer speaks of forgiving "our debtors." But it is the bounden duty of every man to strive to discharge his pecuniary obligations, otherwise he is guilty of living contentedly on stolen goods. The command, "Owe no man anything," if obeyed, would hinder many a bankruptcy and prevent many a business scandal. The apostle proceeds, with one of his skilful turns of thought, to speak of that debt which never can be entirely liquidated—a debt under which we must be content to rest, paying portions of it as opportunity occurs; only to discover, and that with gladness, that the obligation magnifies with every attention to it. Could a man by love so serve his neighbour as not to owe him any more love, then might he feel free to disregard in future the interests of his neighbour, and he would thus sin against the second table of the Law. Love alone fulfils the Law, yet never exhausts the Law's requirements.

I. OFFENCES AGAINST OUR NEIGHBOURS ARE VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW OF LOVE. The ten commandments are mainly prohibitory. The Levitical statutes, however,

enjoined many kindly and beneficent acts, these positive precepts filling up the outline thundered forth from the mount. The Saviour educed from the lawyer the statement that the Mosaic Law clearly enunciated the one principle underlying every regulation of social conduct. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." God has committed to each man specially the care of himself, to preserve and develop his various faculties. And just as no sane man voluntarily injures himself, so must he guard against damaging the well-being of his fellows. Cynicism, greed, tyranny, cannot survive the entrance of this humanizing agent, love, which evokes compassion, benevolence, philanthropy, as set forth so beautifully in 1 Cor. xiii. Adultery, murder, coveteousness, in all degrees of desire and behaviour, imply that men are careless of another's happiness if they can secure some additional gratification for themselves.

II. CONTRAST LOVE AS A MOTIVE WITH A SENSE OF DUTY. The only answer to the question, "Why should altruism be a regulating principle in my life?" is that God has made us "members one of another;" that he has implanted in our nature, together with the instinct of self-preservation, certain affections towards others; that God's intention is thus plainly indicated in our constitution; and that experience shows that to make self the sole factor in our consideration is to rend the ties of society, and ultimately to ruin our own welfare and enjoyment. Congregation, not segregation, is the law of human life. Nevertheless, even this conviction, "I ought to pay respect to my neighbour's interests and needs," may stop far short of that proper care for others which the perfect law expects. The house of duty is a dark temple if unlit by the Shechinah of love. Obligation may lead some citizens to pay the taxes claimed; it never suggests willing offers of further help to the body politic to which they belong. Duty draws rigid lines, examines each article of a bond for fear of excess. Love delights in all extra occasions of service. Duty is cool and calculating; love rises to boiling pitch, and its energy longs for work, like the pressure of steam. Duty moves with measured tread; love runs upon its errands, takes pleasure in obedience, whereas duty is glad when the business is accomplished. The law of obligation is a huge skeleton; love clothes it with flesh and sinew, endues it with life and beauty.

III. THE STRENGTH WHICH JESUS CHRIST HAS GIVEN TO THE LAW OF LOVE. He has furnished a unique example of love in his incarnate condescension, in his words and deeds of grace, helping and healing men, and like a good Shepherd yielding up his own life to save his flock. His miracle of love sheds love abroad—love to God and man, in the hearts of his disciples. Gratitude to Christ fills the soul with generous emotion. A spark of Divine generosity is sufficient to kindle the inflammable material in the human heart, diffusing light and warmth. Christ has emphasized the worth of humanity. He came to redeem not a particular race or sect, but men. He despised none, taught the salvability of all except wilful rejectors. How can we treat contemptuously the "brother for whom Christ died"? Under the dark skin of the negro, under the barbarous superstition of the African, under the stolid impassiveness of the Chinaman, under the rags of the English beggar, love discerns a possible regenerated member of the Christian family, a child of God, a jewel in the Saviour's crown. Christ has exalted self-sacrifice into a heroism that charms the beholder, as he realizes the true glory of an intelligent will, that wins life by losing it, and imparts instead of egoistic happiness a Divine blessedness.—S. R. A.

Vers. 11—14.—*The approach of day.* Sin has been defined as "an act or state inconsistent with the relations" in which we stand. To act as our position demands is to act rightly. The apostle appeals to Christians as reasonable individuals desiring to behave as befits their condition. Incongruities excite ridicule, as when the sailor walks on land as if he had to steady himself against the tossing of his ship. Who has not dreamed of being found in daylight in the street attired in the garments of sleep, and felt the peculiar shame of such an incident? How different the decorations that look well enough by gaslight appear when the scene is surveyed in sunshine! the tinsel and gaudy brilliancy disgust a healthy eye.

I. A CRITICAL SEASON. *The daybreak is at hand,* when the labourer should be found at work, the soldier engaged in conflict, and the traveller started on his journey. Night is the time in which Christianity has to struggle for existence, its adherents sometimes forced to resort to obscurity for fear of persecution. Christ's departure was the setting

as his advent shall be the rising again of the sun; the interval is summer night. *Our salvation is nearer* than when we began to believe. Faith commenced the process of sanctification, ushered us into that kingdom of God on earth, whose consummation, whose outward triumph and glory, are approaching. The apostle may have deemed Christ's appearance nigh. Like the ancient seers, he viewed coming events in a picture, where the distinction could not always be accurately perceived between the background and the foreground. He knew, however, that certain occurrences must precede the Parousia. Surely this incentive to vigilance should be operative with us, to whom later centuries have rolled. Who shall say when the cry may resound, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh"? No doubt, too, that the apostle foresaw a rapid extension of evangelistic endeavours. The nearing downfall of Jewish hopes would cause many to turn to the gospel as the only possible fulfilment of their Messianic aspirations. Such times of potency are ever occurring to us individually and collectively. Like ardent men of business, we should be on the look-out to seize our opportunities. Both at home and abroad this is an unequalled season for missionary effort; doors are being opened on every side. To spend the night in rioting is to slumber during the day: the morning will find us heavy-eyed and dull of brain. And to each one the day of death is drawing near—a day of deliverance, of full salvation to the faithful. Who would indulge the ambition of standing before the blaze of glory from the throne in filthy garments, with marks of sin upon the brow, and defiling stains upon the person? This night is our earthly day of service and opportunity. The day of heaven closes for ever the night of earth. The remembrance of wasted moments will diminish the splendour of the heavenly reward. "Work, for the *day* is coming!" The anticipation of such a season of disclosure is calculated to melt the stoniest heart into contrition. All deeds will stand confessed.

> "My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale."

II. THE CONDUCT REQUISITE IN SUCH A CRISIS. 1. *Cultivate a spirit of wakefulness.* "When the sun ariseth, man goeth forth to his labour." Those who sleep heavily, like the drunken, know nothing of the signs of dawn, and are surprised that the morning could come without their noting its approach. "Awake thou that sleepest," for thy sleep is that of death! His voice sounding through the cavern shall give thee strength to arise, and in his light thou shalt see all things clearly. It is death to the sentinel to sleep at his post. The lover cannot rest when he pictures the joy of the morrow, and the bride of Christ may well watch with intense delight the multiplying tokens of her Lord's arrival. 2. *Indue the appropriate attire.* This involves, first, the "casting off" of the vestments of the night, and secondly, the "putting on" of the costume of day. The works of darkness are like an infected garment, which the instructed wearer throws aside as worse than no covering at all. The panoply of light, the faith, hope, and love in which Christ arrays his followers,—this is the armour which will bear the scrutiny of the Captain, and prove a sure defence against the powers of evil. This negative and positive preparation is in essence one and the same, as the entrance of light scatters the darkness. Armour was the favourite dress of Romans, and though they would doff it for night revels, they would scorn to lack their accoutrements in the daytime. The cross of Christ is the tiring-room of his servants; there they die to sin and live unto righteousness; there they "put on Christ," imbibe his spirit, and receive his colours. The Northumbrian earl, conscious of the advent of death, desired to be clothed in the suit of mail in which he had won so many fights; but the eye became glazed, the nerveless hand could not grasp the spear, the ashen hue of mortality overspread his face. The Christian dons his equipment, never to lay it aside; in it he shall join the throng of those who have overcome. 3. *Exert a decorous activity.* Avoid evil by pursuing good. "Walk honestly," not indulging in intemperance, impurity, and discord, but leading a righteous, sober, godly life. Deeds of darkness are condemned by the light, revealing their hideousness, whilst habits of integrity and virtue shrink not from any scrutiny; they shine most lustrous in the brightest rays. Attain "to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," "growing up into him who is the Head in all things." We are now weaving and sewing and donning the vestments that shall be our glory or our shame through eternity.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—7.—*Citizenship.* From the admirable spirit which Christianity infuses into society, the apostle next takes us to the spirit which should regulate the believer's relations to the civil magistrate. It is most important that Christianity should leaven all these relations to the powers that be. "I could not," says Dr. Arnold, "name easily any branch of human conduct from which the influence of the gospel has been more completely shut out than this; any one on which worldly motives are avowed more boldly and more exclusively. In fact, many men seem to have vaguely confounded the gospel and the clergy in their notions about these matters; and because clergymen, like other men, have often interfered in them in the worst possible spirit, not setting an example of Christian conduct, but plunging into the lowest motives of passion or interest by which other men are actuated, there seems a sort of fear that the gospel itself will teach something mischievous to the public welfare or liberty. But, indeed, in all moral wisdom, in all duty, whether as private men or citizens, there is but one Master, even Christ, from whom we can draw nothing but what is pure and upright."[1] It is most important, then, to see how the gospel handles the question of citizenship.

I. CIVIL GOVERNMENT IS AN ORDINANCE OF GOD. (Ver. 1.) We are tempted, in thinking on civil society, to look upon it "either as a matter of mutual convenience between man and man, or else as an injustice and encroachment made by the rich and powerful on the rights and welfare of others." But in this we are mistaken. It has grown up as a Divine ordinance, and we are not in right relation to it until we recognize this. And this is true not merely of the Jewish commonwealth, where Divine ideas were more or less regarded and embodied, but also of the other nations of the world. They have organized themselves and performed a certain mission, and passed, it may be, from the stage, in fulfilment of a Divine purpose. For each of these nations, as it has been recently said, "he had an office; for each he had appointed a beginning and an end. One by one they rose in orderly succession, those stupendous kingdoms of the East. Babylonian and Persian, Egyptian and Greek, God had required their armies; he had laid his hand upon their captains; Assyria was his hammer, Cyrus was his shepherd, Egypt was his garden, Tyre was his jewel; everywhere he was felt; everywhere the Divine destiny directed and controlled; . . . the shuttle of God passes in and out, weaving into its web a thousand threads of natural human life. All history is put to the uses of God's holier manifestation; he works under the pressure laid upon him by the wants and necessities of social and political progress."[2] Of course, this does not imply that we are calmly to accept of all a government chooses to inflict; but simply that, speaking generally, civil society and civil government are ordained of God to prevent us descending to beastly levels again.

II. CIVIL GOVERNMENT IS ESTABLISHED AS A TERROR TO EVIL-DOERS. (Vers. 2, 3.) This is the rough yet salutary morality it undertakes. If we will only consider what a state of society we should have if there were no public government to punish crimes, we can have no difficulty in recognizing in it a Divine institution. The arrangement about the manslayer in the olden time was to reinforce the rude justice of the early age before public justice had grown up into the recognized power which in civil government it has now assumed.[3] We thus see that civil government is an institution which professes to favour morality, and, if it professed anything else, it would break down. It may not always succeed, but this is its profession. We are bound to give it a loyal trial, and to submit to it, so far as it does not dictate anything to its subjects contrary to the clear command of God. "The fact that an earthly government may be corrupt and tyrannical does not disprove the Divine origin of government; any more than the fact that parents may be unfaithful to their duties proves that the family is not divinely originated; or the fact that a particular Church may become corrupt proves that the Church is not Divine in its source. St. Paul, however, does not teach here that any degree of tyranny whatever is to be submitted to by a Christian. If the government attempt to force him to violate a Divine command—for example, to desist from preaching

[1] 'Sermons on Interpretation of Scripture,' p. 534.

[2] See Canon Holland's sermon on "The Powers that be," in his 'Logic and Life,' pp. 241, 242.

[3] Cf. Mozley's 'Ruling Ideas in Early Ages:' "The Law of Retaliation," and "The Law of Goel."

the gospel, or to take part in pagan worship—he must resist even unto death (see Acts iv. 19; v. 29). Most of the apostles suffered martyrdom for this principle" (so Shedd, *in loc.*).

III. THE BELIEVER IS EXPECTED TO BE LOYAL TO THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT AS A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE. (Ver. 5.) We have already seen where the duty of resistance to the civil magistrate comes in—where he interferes with God's province and assumes the lordship of the conscience. But when he keeps clear of this we are to yield him obedience as a matter of conscience, and not as a matter of fear. Treason is a business outside a believer's functions altogether. His simple duty is submission; *under protest*, sometimes, it may be; but he should not incur the curse of taking the sword and perishing by it. "In respect to things pertaining only to this life," says Dr. Shedd, "and in cases in which the rights of conscience and religious convictions are not infringed upon, both Christ and his apostles taught that injustice, and even tyranny, should be submitted to, rather than that revolutionary resistance be made. And this, because merely earthly liberty, and the rights of property, are of secondary consideration. The same rule applies to the relation of the individual to the state, in this case, that applies to the relation between man and man. If a Christian is defrauded of his property by a fellow-believer, he ought to "take the wrong, and suffer himself to be defrauded," rather than "go to law one with another" (1 Cor. vi. 7). In like manner, in regard to merely worldly good, the Christian should forego his rights, and allow himself to be ill treated even by the government under which he lives, rather than organize a rebellion and bring on war with its untold evils."

IV. TAXATION IS THE SUPPORT OF A DIVINE ORDINANCE. (Ver. 6.) It may be hard to believe that ministers of state are at the same time ministers of God, and that heavy taxation for government extravagance is stipend to God's officers; yet so it is. They are "servants of the people appointed of God," and so must get their tribute. Of course, it is open to the Christian citizen to criticize the government management, and seek that the ordinance of civil government do not become a tax such as no citizen will be able to bear. When the Church and the state are compared, the Church is out of sight the *cheaper institution*. Still, it does not become the Christian, any more than his Master, to be haggling about tribute; and there will usually be some way, though not perhaps through a fish's mouth, of meeting the tax-gatherer's demands.

V. THE RECOGNITION OF STATE CLAIMS AND HONOURS BECOMES, IN FACT, RELIGIOUS. (Ver. 7.) All are to get their due, whether direct taxes, or duties of excise, or fear and honour; for these arrangements of state are, as a rule, favourable to good morals, and deserve to be respected. Now, there are one or two objections to the principle of Christian citizenship as here laid down which, before concluding this homily, we may dispose of. 1. *How about a state when it proceeds to persecution and injustice?* Answer: The believer in such a case must protest against the injustice, and patiently bear it, while he respects the *Divine principle* embodied in the persecuting state. He avoids *disloyalty*, yet advocates *reform*. 2. *Is the Church to be the tool of the state?* Answer: By no means. They have distinct spheres. It is as false to put the *Church against the state*, as to confound the *Church and the state*. The Church recognizes the state as a *moral* institution for securing *justice*, and the state should recognize the Church as a Divine institution for securing *love*. The state enforces justice by penalties; the Church promotes love by persuasion. There need be, and should be, no confusion between them.—R. M. E.

Vers. 8—14.—*Christ-likeness.* From *citizenship*, which is disposed of in the preceding verses, the apostle passes on to the Christian spirit as manifested in neighbourly relations. He here enters into the very spirit and essence of God's law, showing it to be love. And here we have—

I. THE DEBT WHICH CAN NEVER BE DISCHARGED. (Ver. 8.) We may pay all other debts, and should owe no man anything; but love is a debt that can never be discharged, an obligation which abides, a blessed law laid on us in perpetuity. All the commandments of the second table are covered by this one law of love. No one in his senses would ever seek discharge from such a law. Could it be a privilege to hate one's neighbour? "Good haters," as they are pleased to call themselves, are usually public nuisances. We are under this law of love for ever, because we are under grace. It is

here that our Divine sonship is realized; it is here that Christ-likeness begins. God is love; and in proportion as we are loving are we like Christ and his Father above.[1]

II. WITH THE CHRIST-LIKE LIFE HAS CEASED TO BE A DREAM. (Ver. 11.) This is the case with the worldly; they fancy they are "wide awake," and yet they are asleep so far as eternal realities are concerned. How time slips through their fingers, as it does with those in sleep! Life is not in earnest; they have pillowed themselves upon success, and are dead to things Divine. But when Christ comes, then we awake and find ourselves in the morning hours. That Sun of Righteousness arises and our dream and night are over, and the activities of the new day are come. The Christ-like feel that life is earnest, and no time should be lost in dreams. As Feuchtersleben has pointedly said, "Life is no dream. It only becomes so by the fault of man, and when his mind disobeys the summons to awake."[2]

III. THE WORKS OF DARKNESS AND THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH ARE OUT OF DATE. (Vers. 12—14.) While life is only a dream, while the night of indifference and neglect is around the soul, indulgence will be tolerated and provision made for the lusts of the flesh. Pleasure will be the pole-star of life, and decency will not deter the soul from its satisfactions. Of course, the primitive Church had to deal more with the lusts of the flesh than we have; or perhaps they went more thoroughly into the morals of their members. "The primitive Church," it has been said, "was more under the influence of the 'lust of the flesh' than of the 'pride of life;' the modern Church is more under the influence of the 'pride of life' than of the 'lust of the flesh.' But pride is as great a sin, in the sight of God, as sensuality. This should be considered in forming an estimate of the modern missionary Church" (Shedd, *in loc.*). But the soul which has awaked through the advent of Jesus regards these deeds of darkness as out of date. They would be anachronisms of the day. The light has come and put to flight the darkness.

IV. THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT ALONE BEFITS THE DAY. (Vers. 12, 13.) Now, it is wonderful what a protection light, even in its physical form, is against pollution. There are deeds which can only be done in darkness. Turn the light upon them, and they are annihilated through sheer shame. In the same way, when the full spiritual light which Jesus Christ, our Sun, embodies, plays upon our life, we are instantly aroused and elevated, and the tone of life improves. This is our panoply in the morning hours. Christ with us, near us, observing us, encircling us with his light, becomes our great protection.

V. CHRIST-LIKENESS THROUGH CLOTHING OURSELVES WITH HIM IS THE GREAT SECRET OF A USEFUL AND HAPPY LIFE. (Ver. 14.) As the Sun of Righteousness shines around us we contract a luminosity like his. We get sanctified through contemplating him. The same image that is in him becomes ours from glory to glory, as with unveiled face we behold the face of God (2 Cor. iii. 17). It is this likeness to our Lord which makes us increasingly earnest and useful and happy in life's young day. We feel that salvation, in all its length and breadth, is nearer realization than when we first believed. The morning hours give promise of the perfect day.[3] As one has well put it, "*The pilgrims of the dawn* tolerate nothing in themselves that the light of day would rebuke. Hence it is the counterpart of this that they *make no provision for the flesh*; whatever provision they take for their heavenly journey, the flesh has no share in it. The sin adhering to their nature, the *old man* not yet dead, is an enemy whose hunger they do *not* feed, to whose thirst they do *not* administer drink, whose dying solicitations they regard not, but leave him to *perish by the way*. But the supreme preparation—uniting all others in one—is the *putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ*. In him alone the dignity and the purity of our nature meet; transformed into his character, we need nothing more to fit us for the holiest heavens; but nothing less will suffice his expectation at his coming. He will come to be *glorified in his saints*—already the likeness in ten thousand reproductions of himself; and they shall in turn *be glorified in him*. Hence the great

[1] See Butler's sermon on "The Love of our Neighbour;" also A. W. Hare's on "Love the Fulfilling of the Law," in 'Sermons,' vol. ii. p. 393; and Hofacker's 'Predigten,' s. 183, on "Brotherly Love."

[2] 'Dietetics of the Soul,' p. 194.

[3] See Newman's sermon on "Self-denial the Test of Religious Earnestness," in vol. i. p. 57. etc.

business of the pilgrims is to occupy the precious moments of the morning in weaving into their nature the character of Christ as the apparel of the eternal day. And if in faith that worketh by love—the love that fulfilleth the Law—they diligently co-operate with the Holy Spirit, it will be his blessed function to see to it that before the Bridegroom cometh, his bride, and every individual soul that makes up her mystical person, shall be found clothed in his spiritual perfection as with a *garment without seam, woven from the top throughout.* Beyond this we cannot go. This is the close and the secret of the whole exhortation to the pilgrims of the dawn. They have come up out of the night at the sound of his awakening voice, and have left their Egyptian darkness for ever. They are wrestling with the dangers of the morning, rejoicing in its partial satisfactions. But supremely and above all they are intent upon the coming day; *in their pathway there is no death,* but they wait for the *more abundant life*; they are full of trembling and solemn expectation of all that the day will pour out of its unfathomable mysteries. But the *end* of all their expectation is the Person of their Lord. And to prepare for him by being like himself is the sum of all their preparation."[1] May we all thus put on Christ and be like him!—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1—23.—F. *The duty of enlightened Christians towards weak brethren.* From moral duties in general of Christians towards each other and towards all the apostle now passes to such as they owe peculiarly to each other as members of a religious community, united by a common faith. He has already (ch. xii. 16) admonished his readers to be "of the same mind one toward another;" but, as was remarked under that verse, this did not imply agreement of view on all subjects, such as is impossible where there are many minds. In this chapter he recognizes the impossibility, having immediately before him what was then patent, the inability of some, through prejudice or slowness of conception, to enter into views of the meaning of the gospel which to himself and the more enlightened were apparent. He by no means departs from what he says elsewhere (cf. Gal. i. 6—10) about no denial of fundamental doctrine being allowable in the communion of the Church; but in matters not touching the foundation he does here inculcate a large and generous tolerance. In these, as in all other relations between men on the earth together, the all-inspiring principle of *charity* is to rule. Who the "weak brethren" were whose scruples he especially inculcates tolerance of in this chapter cannot be decided positively. It will be seen that they were persons who thought it their duty to abstain from animal food, and perhaps also from wine (vers. 2, 21); and there is allusion also to observance of certain days (ver. 5). The views that have been taken are as follows:—

(1) That they were the same class of Jewish Christians as are spoken of in 1 Cor. viii. as over-scrupulous about eating of things that had been offered in sacrifice to idols.

(2) That they were such as were scrupulous in avoiding unclean meats, forbidden in the Mosaic Law. (Or, as Erasmus and others suggest, views (1) and (2) may be combined.)

(3) That they were *ascetics.*

In favour of view (1) is the fact that the drift and tone of the exhortation is exactly the same here as in 1 Cor. viii., with similarity also of expressions, such as ὁ ἀσθενῶν, ὁ ἐσθίων, βρῶσις, βρῶμα, ἀπολύειν, πρόσκομμα, σκανδαλίζειν. Against it are the facts (*a*) that in the chapter before us there is no allusion whatever to idol-meats, as there is throughout so markedly in 1 Cor. viii.; and (*b*) that abstinence from all animal food whatever (and apparently from wine too) is spoken of in this chapter. Objection (*a*) has been met by saying that the ground of the scrupulosity referred to might be so well known that St. Paul did not think it necessary to mention it when he wrote to the Romans. To objection (*b*) it is replied that there might be some who, in order to guard

[1] Pope's 'Kingdom of Christ,' pp. 376, 377.

against the risk of buying at the shambles, or partaking in general society of viands connected with heathen sacrifices, made a point of abstaining from meat altogether, and (it has been suggested) from wine too, which might have been used in libations. This is the view of Clement of Alexandria, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine, among the ancients.

View (2) is that of Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, and others, among whom Chrysostom accounts for the *total* abstinence from meat as follows: "There were many of the Jews that believed, who, being still bound in conscience to the Law, even after believing still observed the ordinances about meats, not as yet venturing to depart from the Law; and then, in order not to be conspicuous in abstaining from swine's flesh only, they abstained from all flesh, and ate herbs only, that their practice might seem to be rather fasting, and not observance of the Law" (so also Œcumenius and Theophylact). But this seems to be a conjecture only, and hardly a likely one. And further, it fails to account for abstinence from wine, which seems to be implied, on the part of some at least, in ver. 21. (It may be observed, however, that this is not of necessity implied. Abstinence from meat is all that has been spoken of before, and again in ver. 23; and St. Paul may possibly mean only to say, in ver. 21, that if by abstaining from wine also he could avoid offence to a weak brother, he would willingly so abstain. Still, the natural inference is that he would not have mentioned wine had there not been some who made it a point of conscience to abstain from it.)

If the weak brethren were ascetics, according to view (3), it is most probable that they were Jewish Christians who had imbibed the principles of the *Essenes*. These were a Jewish sect, spoken of especially by Josephus, who aimed at scrupulous observance of the Law of Moses, and strict personal purity. With this view they lived in communities under rule, partaking of the simplest fare, and some abstaining from marriage. It does not appear that they were strict vegetarians when living in community; but we are told that they might only eat such meat as had been prepared by their own members, so as to be secure against any pollution, and that, if excommunicated, they were consequently compelled to eat herbs. (For what is known of them, see Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' ii.; viii. 2—5; 'Ant.,' xiii. 5. 9; xv. 10. 4, 5; xviii. 1. 2, etc.; Philo, 'Quod Omnis Probus Liber,' sec. xii., etc.; Pliny, 'Hist. Nat.,' v. 16, 17.) It is far from unlikely that some of these would be attracted to Christianity; and this especially as some of their principles, as described by Josephus, seem to have been endorsed by Christ himself (see art. on "Essenes," in 'Dict. of Christian Biog.,' vol. ii. p. 202); and, if so, they would be likely to carry their prejudices with them into the Church, and, when living outside their original communities, they might abstain entirely from flesh as well as wine. Or it might be that other Jews, Essenic in principle and feeling, had sought admission into the Church. Philo, in Eusebius, 'Præp. Evan.,' viii. fin., and Josephus, 'Vit.,' 2. 3, intimate that supra-legal asceticism, under the influence of Essenic principles, was not uncommon in Judaism in their time. The latter (c. 3) speaks of certain priests, his friends, who were so God-fearing that they subsisted on figs and nuts, and (c. 2) of one Banus, who had been his master, who ate no food but vegetables. What is still more to our purpose is that we find evidence of pious ascetics of the same type subsequently among Christians. Origen ('Contra Cels.,' v. 49) speaks of some as living in his time; and even the apostle St. Matthew, and James the Lord's brother, were afterwards credited with a corresponding mode of life. Clement of Alexandria ('Pædag.,' ii. 1) says of the former, "Matthew the apostle partook of seeds and acorns and herbs, without flesh." Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius (ii. 23), says of the latter that "he drank not wine or strong drinks, nor did he eat animal food; a razor came not upon his head; he did not anoint himself with oil; he did not use the bath." It is to be observed that abstinence from ointments was one of the practices of the Essenes (Josephus, 'Bell. Jud.,' viii. 2. 3). Augustine ('Ad Faust.,' xxii. 3) transmits the same tradition as to the abstinence of James from flesh and wine. Whatever foundation there might be for these traditions, they at any rate show that in the second century, when

Hegesippus wrote, abstinence such as is intimated in this chapter was regarded as a mark of superior sanctity by some Christians. Further, in the 'Apostolical Canons' (Canon li.), Christians who abstained from marriage, or flesh, or wine, are allowed to be retained in the communion of the Church as long as they did so by way of religious restraint only. Against the above view of the weak brethren of the chapter before us having been ascetics of the Essenic type, is alleged the strong condemnation of persons supposed to have been of the same sort in Col. ii. 8, 16, *seq.*, and 1 Tim. iv. 1—5, which is said to be inconsistent with the tender tolerance recommended here. But the teachers referred to in the later Epistles, though inculcating practices similar to those of the "weak brethren," appear to have been heretical theosophists, the germ probably of later Gnosticism. Their tenets may indeed, in part at least, have been developed from Essenism; but it was no longer mere conscientious scrupulosity, but principles subversive of the faith, that St. Paul set his face against in writing to the Colossians and to Timothy. Canon li. in the 'Apostolical Canons' above referred to may be adduced as distinguishing between the principles on which asceticism might be practised allowably or otherwise; it being therein laid down that any who abstained from marriage, flesh, or wine, not by way of religious restraint, but as abhorring them, forgetting that God made all things very good, and that he made man male and female, and blaspheming the work of creation, should be cast out of the Church.

It remains to be observed that there was diffused among the Gentiles also, through the influence of the Neo-Pythagorean philosophy, an asceticism similar to the Essenic (see Senec., 'Ep.,' 108, and Porphyr., 'De Abstin.'), which Eichhorn supposes the "weak brethren" of this chapter to have been affected by, regarding them as mostly Gentile Christians. But Jewish influences are much more probable; the scruples referred to in 1 Cor. viii. were certainly due to them; and observe ver. 5 in this chapter, which cannot but refer to Jewish observances. Further, Origen, in the treatise above referred to, expressly distinguishes between Christian and Pythagorean asceticism. His words are, "But see also the difference of the cause of the abstinence from creatures having life as practised by the Pythagoreans and by the ascetics among ourselves. For they abstain because of the fable concerning the transmigration of souls; . . . but we, though we may practise the like, do it when we keep under the flesh and bring it into subjection" ('Contra Cels.,' 4).

Ver. 1.—**Him that is weak in the faith** (rather, *in faith*, or *in his faith*). The article before πίστει does not denote *the faith* objectively. Cf. ch. iv. 19, μὴ ἀσθενήσας τῇ πίστει. In 1 Cor. viii. 12 it is the *conscience* that is spoken of as weak, τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν. Persons are meant whose faith is not sufficiently strong and enlightened for entering fully into the true spirit of the gospel so as to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. **Receive ye** (*i.e. take to yourselves* with kindness—with reference, it may be, both to persons seeking admission into the Church and to those already in it who could not get rid of their scruples. The verb, which is προσλαμβάνεσθε, occurs in a like sense in Acts xxviii. 2, and Philem. 12, 17. It may be regarded here as the opposite of ἐκκλεῖσαι θέλειν of Gal. iv. 17), **but not to doubtful disputations**; rather, *unto*—i.e. so as to result in—*judgments of thoughts*. The Authorized Version has in margin, "*to judge his doubtful thoughts*," which is probably nearer the true meaning than the text. Διακρίσις means elsewhere *dijudicatio* (1 Cor. xii. 10; Heb. v. 14), not "disputation" or "doubt" (as has been supposed from the verb διακρίνεσθαι, meaning "to doubt"). "Non dijudicemus cogitationes infirmorum, quasi ferre audeamus sententiam de alieno corde, quod non videtur" (Augustin, 'Prepos.,' 78).

Vers. 2, 3.—**One believeth that he may eat all things** (literally, *believeth to*—or, *hath faith to—eat all things*), **but he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.** "He that eateth" is the one that has faith to eat all things; and it is against *contempt* on his part of the weak in faith that the admonition is mainly directed throughout the chapter (cf. also ch. xv. 1). But the weak require an admonition too. Their temptation was to *judge* those who indulged in freedom which to themselves appeared unlawful; and here, in ver. 5, the apostle gives such as did so a sharp reproof. There is a tone of indignation in his σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων; reminding us of his tone towards the Judaists in Galatia, who would have crippled Christian liberty. "God hath received him" refers evidently, as appears

from its position and from the following verse, to *him that eateth*. God hath received him to himself in Christ, whosoever may sit in judgment on him. We observe that the verb προσελάβετο is the same as in ver. 1 and in ch. xv. 7.

Ver. 4.—**Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?** (observe the emphatic position of σὺ) **to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand: for the Lord** (better supported than *God*, as in the Textus Receptus) **is able** (or, *has power*) **to make him stand.** The *standing* or *falling* here spoken of may be taken to mean standing firm in, or falling from, a state of grace (cf. ch. xi. 20, 22), rather than acceptance or rejection at the last judgment. "For God is able," etc., seems to require this meaning. The non-abstainer's freedom does not endanger his position; for God is powerful to sustain him, and to God alone he is accountable.

Ver. 5.—**One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day** alike (literally, *one judgeth day beyond*—or, *in comparison with—day: another judgeth every day*. For κρίνειν in the sense of "estimate," cf. Acts xiii. 46; xvi. 15; xxvi. 8. For sense of παρὰ with accusative, cf. i. 25; Luke xiii. 2. *Days* being here only briefly referred to in a chapter the main subject of which is *meats*, some have supposed *fast-days* only to be meant; in which case the sense might be that some make it a necessary point of conscience to abstain from food, or from certain kinds of food, on particular days, while others make no such distinction between days as a matter of essential import. But a comparison with Gal. iv. 10 and Col. ii. 16 suggests rather a general reference to days of observance under the Jewish Law. The same class of weak brethren with Jewish prejudices that was scrupulous about meats would be likely to be also scrupulous about days and seasons; and if scruples on the latter head seem to be mentioned only incidentally in this chapter, it may be because the others were at that time mainly conspicuous, and threatening to disturb the peace of the Church. One view that has been taken is that this short allusion to observance of days is introduced only in the way of illustration and argument; it being supposed that difference of practice with regard to days *was* allowed without dispute, and that what St. Paul means to say is, "You do exercise mutual tolerance in this matter; extend the same principle to the matter of meats, to which it is equally applicable. This view of the meaning of the passage would derive support from the reading of γάρ at the beginning of ver. 5, which rests on fair authority. The supposed reference to Jewish days of obligation in general is not inconsistent with the apparent condemnation of the observance of such days by Christians in Gal. iv. and Col. ii. For see what has been said above about the drift of Col. ii. 16 and of 1 Tim. iv. 3, etc. When the observances came to be insisted on as obligatory on principle, it was a different thing from mere conscientious scrupulosity. **Let every man be fully persuaded** (for the verb in this sense, cf. ch. iv. 21) **in his own mind.** To St. Paul himself the observance or non-observance of the days referred to was a matter in itself of no importance. He was content that each person should act up to his own conscientious convictions on the subject.

Ver. 6.—**He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord** (omit, as ill-supported, as well as unnecessary, *and he that regardeth not*, etc.); **he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.** Both parties are supposed to be equally desirous of serving God. The eater of whatsoever is set before him is so, as is shown by his thanking God for it—observe "*for* he giveth," etc.—and no creature of God can be polluting "if received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 5); the abstainer gives thanks too; and so his dinner of herbs is also hallowed to him. (Though it is not necessary to confine the thought to the practice of saying grace before meat, this is doubtless in view as expressing the asserted thankfulness. For proof of the custom, cf. Matt. xv. 36; Acts xxvii. 35; 1 Cor. x. 30; xi. 24; 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.) The general principle on which, in eating and drinking, as in all beside, Christians are of necessity supposed to act, and which both parties are to be credited with desiring to carry out, is set forth in vers. 7, 8, 9, which follow.

Vers. 7, 8.—**For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.** The mention of *dying* as well as *living* unto the Lord, though it does not seem needed by the context, makes complete the view of the entire devotion of redeemed Christians to him; and introduces the thought, which follows, of their union with him in his own death as well as in his life.

Ver. 9.—**For to this end Christ both died and lived** (so certainly, rather than, as in the Textus Receptus, *died, and rose, and revived*. His *living* means here his entering on the heavenly life after the human death), **that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.** "Nam mortem pro salute nostra obeundo dominium sibi acquisivit quod nec morte

solveretur; resurgendo autem totam vitam nostram in peculium accepit; morte igitur et resurrectione sua promeritus est ut tam in morte quam in vita gloriæ nominis ejus serviamus" (Calvin). For the idea of this whole passage (vers. 7—9), cf. 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 15.

The apostle now returns to his immediate subject, warning (as in ver. 3) the one party against *judging* and the other against *despising*, on the ground of all alike having to abide hereafter the Divine judgment (cf. Matt. vii. 1, *seq.*; 1 Cor. iv. 3, 5). The distinction in ver. 10 between the two parties, marked in the original by the initial Σὺ δὲ and the following ἢ καὶ σύ, is somewhat lost in our Authorized Version.

Vers. 10—13.—**But thou, why judgest thou thy brother? or thou too, why settest thou at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God** (so, rather than *of Christ*, as in the Textus Receptus). **For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God** (Isa. xlv. 23, quoted very freely from the LXX.). **So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us therefore no longer judge one another.** This concluding appeal is addressed to both parties. In all that follows St. Paul returns exclusively to the more enlightened ones, whose feelings were in accordance with his own; and he now presses a further thought upon them, namely of the harm they might be doing to the very souls of the weak ones by tempting them, either by word or example, to disobey their own consciences. **But judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling** (σκάνδαλον). For the meaning of the word, cf. Luke xvii. 1; oh. ix. 33; xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 23; Rev. ii. 14.

Ver. 14.—**I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus** (I myself know it; my very faith in Jesus carries to me the conviction of it; I do not hesitate to declare my own decided view, that the scruples of these weak brethren are unfounded) **that there is nothing unclean of itself** (cf. Matt. xv. 11; Mark vii. 18; Acts x. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 4); **save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.** To him it becomes defiling, because partaking of it defiles his conscience (cf. 1 Cor. viii. 7).

Ver. 15.—**For** (γὰρ here certainly, rather than δὲ as in the Textus Receptus. It introduces a reason for the general admonition beginning at ver. 13) **if on account of meat** (not here, *thy meat*, as in the Authorized Version) **thy brother is grieved, thou no longer walkest charitably** (literally, *according to love*, or *charity*; i.e. in continuing to set at naught his conscientious scruples). **With thy meat destroy not him, for whom Christ died** (cf. 1 Cor. viii. 11, Καὶ ἀπολεῖται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἀδελφὸς . . . δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν). "Destroy" seems to denote causing his moral and religious ruin by shaking his conscientiousness, and perhaps upsetting altogether the faith he has, which, though weak, is real.

Ver. 16.—**Let not then your good be evil spoken of.** "Your good" is *your enlightenment*, which is in itself a good thing; but it will be "evil spoken of" as a bad thing, if it leads to superciliousness and uncharitableness.

Vers. 17, 18.—**For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.** The concluding clause here has reference to "let not your good," etc., preceding. It is the practical fruits of faith that commend it to men, as well as being the test of its genuineness before God.

Vers. 19—21.—**Let us therefore follow after the things that make for** (literally, *the things of*) **peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another** (literally, *the things of the edification of one another*). **For meat's sake destroy not the work of God.** "Destroy," or rather, *overthrow*—the word is κατάλυε, not ἀπόλλυε as in ver. 15—is connected in thought with the *edification*, or *building up* (οἰκοδομήν) before spoken of. "The work of God" is that of his grace in the weak Christian's soul, growing, it may be, to full assurance of faith (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 9, "ye are God's building"). Upset not the rising structure, which is God's own, as ye may do by putting a stumbling-block in the weak brother's way. **All things indeed are pure** (*i.e.* in themselves all God's gifts given for man's service are so); **but it is evil to that man who eateth with offence** (*i.e.* if the eating be to himself a stumbling-block. The idea is the same as in ver. 14). **It is good** (καλὸν, not of indispensable obligation, but a right and noble thing to do) **neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.** The concluding words in italics are of doubtful authority: they are not required for the sense. For St. Paul's expression of his own readiness to deny himself lawful things, if he might so avoid offence to weak brethren, cf. 1 Cor. viii. 13.

Ver. 22.—**Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.** Hast thou an enlightened faith, showing thee the unimportance of these observances? Do not parade it need-

lessly before men. Θέλεις μοι δεῖξαι ὅτι τέλειος εἶ καὶ ἀπηρτισμένος; μὴ ἐμοὶ δεῖκνυε ἀλλ' ἀρκείτω τὸ συνειδός (Chrysostom). **Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.** Thy weak brother, if he abstains conscientiously, is thus happy; take care that thou art equally so in the exercise of thy freedom; for he that alloweth himself in anything that he is not fully convinced is lawful passes, *ipso facto*, judgment on himself.

Ver. 23.—**But he that doubteth** (or, *wavereth*) **is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.** For sense of διακρίνεσθαι, cf. ch. iv. 20; Matt. xxi. 21; Mark xi. 23; Jas. i. 6. *Faith* here denotes an assured belief that what one does is right; nor is it necessary to give the word a wider or different sense in the concluding clause (Ταῦτα δὲ πάντα περὶ τῆς προκειμένης ὑποθέσεως εἴρηται τῷ Παύλῳ, οὐ περὶ πάντων, Chrysostom). Hence to see in it (as has been done) the doctrine of the sinfulness of all works done apart from faith in Christ is to introduce an idea that is not there.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—6.—*Ceremonial and spiritual religion.* This passage is one of many instances occurring in St. Paul's writings in which circumstances of local and temporary interest suggest the statement of great moral truths and principles, applicable over a far wider area. To us these questions—as to whether certain food should be eaten, and certain days should be observed—seem trifling enough; yet to how grand and comprehensive a law of Christian action do these considerations lead the mind of the deep-thinking and far-seeing apostle!

I. THE PRINCIPLE. Our actions should be with a view to the Lord Christ. The *motive* of Christian conduct is the love of Christ; its aim is the glory of Christ. The personal relation between the Saviour and his people is not such as to lose anything of its dignity and sacredness, when introduced as a motive into the ordinary activity of Christian people. And this principle, so lofty on its Divine side, is most practical upon the human side. Love to Christ, and sympathy with his self-denial, leads his followers to regard the welfare of their brethren, for whom Christ died. Thus Christ's sacrifice becomes the inspiration and the model of ours.

II. THE OUTWORKING OF THE PRINCIPLE. Two special illustrations are mentioned in this passage, from which we may learn how to apply the great Christian law to the varying circumstances of human life. 1. Eating and drinking are necessary acts; but the manner of eating and drinking have often been regarded as associated with religion. Some of the early Christians were so scrupulous that they would eat no flesh, lest they should inadvertently eat what had been offered to idols; others never troubled themselves to inquire about their food. The apostle decides that neither flesh-eater nor herb-eater must despise the other. If each is animated by a regard to God's glory and to Christ's kingdom, each deserves respect and esteem. 2. The observance of sacred days has usually been an outward mark of the religious. Of the primitive Christians some regarded and others disregarded such days. The apostle blamed neither party; if they did what they did conscientiously, and unto the Lord, this was enough. It is not in such observances that true religion consists; but in the *spirit* that governs actions, and the *intention* with which they are undertaken.

III. THE UNIVERSAL APPLICABILITY OF THE PRINCIPLE. Occasions are continually arising for remembering the wise counsel of St. Paul. Zealous religionists are wont to push their own views, and zealous controversialists are given to attacking the doctrines and practices of others. Men substitute human dogmas, human fancies, and human remedies for moral and social ills, for the great principles of Christianity. But we shall do well to be guided by *liberty* for one's self, by *consideration* for one's neighbours, and by *charity* with reference to the conduct of our fellow-Christians.

Ver. 7.—*Life a trust.* Our life is not a possession to do as we like with. Yet many act as if it were; as if they were at liberty to be idle or to work, to employ their time and their powers in one way or in another, without giving account to any. Christians are summoned to take a different and a nobler view of this earthly existence.

I. WHAT IS ENTRUSTED BY THE CREATOR. 1. Life itself; the successive years and stages of which it is composed. 2. Its advantages; both the capacities and endow-

ments which are natural, and the education and associations which Providence has secured to us. 3. Its opportunities; both of acquiring good and of doing good. It is to be remembered that, strictly speaking, it is not for these, but for the use we make of them, that we are responsible. We are to bear in mind that, though we live, we do not live unto ourselves.

II. HOW THE TRUST SHOULD BE DISCHARGED. 1. The motive and law of this discharge and fulfilment of trust we are to find in Christ. Our life will be lived aright, if its principle be grateful love to him who loved us; if his Spirit and example be our inspiration, if his glory and approval be our aim and hope. 2. The range within which this trust should be fulfilled is a wide one, including our fellow-men, for whom Christ died. In the household, in professional and business life, in the Church, in the nation, the Christian finds a sphere for consistent and unselfish service. The lessons of the parable of the talents may be appropriately studied in this connection.

III. THAT THE TRUST INVOLVES RETRIBUTION. Christ is a Judge as well as a Lord. Our life must be tested by his scrutinizing, searching eye, his just and faithful judgment. Fidelity will be rewarded, unfaithfulness will be condemned, by him. For the faithful, the unselfish, the benevolent, the serviceable, there is secured the blessed prospect of sharing "the joy of their Lord."

Vers. 7—9.—*Life unto the Lord.* This is language which is doubtless deemed by some the language of extravagance and enthusiasm. But, in fact, it is sober enough. Nothing inferior to the law and principle here enounced can be accepted by the Lord Christ as the law and principle of his people's life. And that the standard is one which may be attained is undeniable; St. Paul himself was a living exemplification of its practicability. What he taught that others should be, he was himself.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We "live unto the Lord." This personal relation between the Saviour and those who are saved by him is a distinctive feature of the new and Christian life. When we consider this expression, what do we find it to involve? 1. We live as in the Lord's sight, with his wise, observant, just, and yet friendly eye upon us. 2. We live under the motive and inspiration of the Lord's love and sacrifice. He has lived and died *for* us; we live and die *unto* him. 3. We live in obedience to his will; as the scholar lives to his master, the soldier to his general, the statesman to his country or his king. 4. We live with the help of his Spirit. 5. We live to our Lord's glory; losing sight of all that concerns ourselves, and become absorbed in and devoted to the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the honour of Christ's name. Even thus we do not exhaust the fulness of this noble utterance, "We live unto the Lord."

II. THE RANGE OF THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE. 1. Life, in all its varied experiences, in all its successive stages, is to the Christian life unto the Lord. No aspect, no period, no interest, is exempt; it is the joy of Christ's servant to devote all energies, and to consecrate all influence, that life confers, unto him who redeemed life and made it a new and blessed thing. 2. Death is embraced within the wide range of this principle. An uninspired writer would not have ventured upon so sublime a representation as this. But Paul, who said, "To me to live is Christ," was constrained to add, "To die is gain." So here he says, "We die unto the Lord." This was obviously and beautifully true of those who perished in the discharge of offices suggested by Christian benevolence, and of those who "resisted unto blood, striving against sin," who died as martyrs, as witnesses to the truth. Yet none of any age or condition of life, who died in the discharge of duty however ordinary, were exempt from this privilege of dying unto Christ. It was doubtless often asked concerning a departed brother, "By what death did he glorify God?"

III. THE DIVINE POWER UNDERLYING THIS PRINCIPLE. A principle so contrary to selfish human nature can only be accounted for by a Divine interposition and provision. The apostle traces this: 1. In Christ's death, and: 2. In his resurrection, in virtue of which he has become to man not only the universal Saviour, but the universal Lord.

Ver. 12.—*Individual responsibility.* Men are prone to pass judgment one upon another. It is a tendency against which we have all occasion to watch. For our habit is to be lenient to ourselves and severe towards others. A corrective to this

tendency is to be found in the great fact that all are accountable to God. Remembering this, we shall not, except where the authoritative society, the ordinance of Heaven, requires it, be willing to pass sentence upon our fellow-men.

I. THE FACT OF JUDGMENT. It is a fact to which conscience, and the constitution of human nature and human society, undeviatingly testify. Men sometimes strive to forget it, but seldom venture to deny it. 1. Judgment involves a Divine Judge. God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, a Judge qualified, both by his Divine knowledge and his human sympathy, for fulfilling this awful office. 2. Judgment involves an accountable moral nature on the part of those who are subjected to it. Man is so fashioned that it is just that he should be judged. He has knowledge of right and wrong, power of independent action arising from his voluntary nature, and the capacity to appreciate inducements to righteousness. 3. Judgment, always a fact, will in the future be explicit, pronounced, and manifested. Doubtless the Judge observes, approves, and censures every day; but there will be a period in which this shall be apparent. "The day will declare it!"

II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF JUDGMENT. Wherever is a moral nature, amenable to law, there responsibility exists, and there the judicial exercise of Divine authority shall take place. Babes, idiots, madmen, are not subject to moral accountability; but all beside—according to light and privilege—must appear for retribution before the bar of God. None is so high in this world as to be superior to justice; none is so low as to escape it. The omniscience of Deity cannot be deceived; the justice of Deity cannot be evaded.

III. THE INDIVIDUALITY OF JUDGMENT. 1. Each shall stand alone at the bar; every one shall give account of *himself*. In this sense, "every man shall bear his own burden." For his own character, and for his own acts, shall each separate person be held responsible. 2. None shall escape responsibility by casting blame upon Providence, by pleading that he was not favourably circumstanced, that he was not one of "the elect." 3. Nor can any evade judgment by throwing the blame of his sin upon society. The influence of others makes human life a discipline, but it does not reduce it to irresponsible mechanism. 4. Nor can any escape by casting censure upon the Church. Whether or not professing Christians have done their duty by one another, the fact of individual responsibility remains unaffected.

APPLICATION. 1. To all hearers of the gospel this fact is a reason for accepting the good tidings of reconciliation. 2. To all Christians it supplies a motive to watchfulness and diligence.

VERS. 17, 18.—*The kingdom of God.* Christianity furnishes a moral perspective. It throws all things into their proper relations to one another, and elevates those things which are of supreme importance to the loftiest position of eminence. Instead of occupying themselves about outward actions, ceremonial observances, and ritual distinctions, Christians are in this passage recommended to aspire to those virtues which are of highest importance in the sight of God, and which bear the most powerfully upon the welfare of human society.

I. CHRISTIANITY CREATES A SPIRITUAL KINGDOM. It is not, like many human religions, a system of regulations as to conduct or observances. It is not "eating and drinking." It is a kingdom conceived in the Divine mind, and worthy of its Divine Author; a kingdom established upon the mediation of a Divine Saviour; a kingdom consisting in the rule of spiritual powers and principles. It is a kingdom over spiritual natures, acting by spiritual agencies, and issuing in spiritual subjection and obedience. At the same time, it is a kingdom whose subjects are governed in their whole life by the power it introduces and applies to the inner nature. It is a kingdom in a measure realized in human society, and destined to be perfected in the glorious future.

II. THE SPECIAL CHARACTERS OF THIS KINGDOM. 1. In relation to God—*righteousness.* His law of justice is obeyed. Introduced into right and harmonious relations with the supreme Ruler, the subject of the kingdom practises righteousness in human relationships. Righteousness is what man was made for, or is what the Christian attains to. 2. In relation to men—*peace.* Strife and hatred are the curse of human society. Christianity alone has discovered and applied the principle which remedies this evil. True peace is based on righteousness, on the prevalence of those principles

which are in harmony with the nature of God and the constitution of human society. 3. In the heart of the subject—*joy*. Cheerfulness, serenity, happiness,—these are the portion of the sincere believer in Christ, the loyal subject of Christ. "Rejoice evermore!" is the Christian admonition; "alway rejoicing!" is the Christian motto. The power of the Holy Spirit accounts for this change from the forced gaiety of the worldling, and the cold gloom of the sceptic, to the gladness of him who is at peace with God, and who cherishes a good hope of eternal life.

III. THE RESULTS OF THIS KINGDOM. These are very fully stated in ver. 18. 1. Christ is served. If he is the Lord and Head of the kingdom, this must be so. His Name is honoured and his cause promoted where truly Christian virtues prevail. 2. God is pleased. For the purposes of his holy benevolence are fulfilled, and his Son is glorified and his creatures blessed. 3. The approval of men is secured. It cannot be otherwise when dispositions and practices prevail which are corrective of human ills and promotive of human rectitude, concord, and happiness.

Ver. 18.—*The double aspect of Christian service.* The apostle's mind was as powerful and active in a practical as in a speculative direction. Christ's law had been, "By their fruits ye shall know them." And in this verse, Paul, reiterating his Master's principles, vindicates the principles of the new faith by appealing to the excellence of the fruits of the Spirit.

I. WHAT CHRISTIAN SERVICE IS. 1. It involves a personal relation between Master and servant. 2. It involves an acknowledgment of Divine authority. 3. It involves a powerful motive to a consecrated life. 4. It involves the inclusion of all activities and relationships within its sphere.

II. SUCH SERVICE IS WELL PLEASING TO GOD. 1. For it resembles that of Christ himself, who came to do the will of him who sent him, and who "pleased the Father alway," in whom the Father was "well pleased." 2. It is in conformity to the Divine will. It is the prerogative of the spiritual nature of man that it is capable of apprehending and voluntarily accepting and obeying the perfect will of God. 3. It tends to the Divine glory. This is by no other means so effectively promoted as by the willing consecration to the Lord of all intelligent and moral natures.

III. SUCH SERVICE IS APPROVED OF MEN. 1. Even those who do not render it themselves, approve it in others. 2. Even those who verbally censure, in their inner conscience commend it. 3. Legislators and rulers approve it, as contributive to the harmony and just development of human society at large.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—9.—*The Christian's dependence and the Christian's independence.* The composite character of the Christian community at Rome—the Jewish origin of many of its members on the one hand, and contact with heathenism on the other—had doubtless given rise to differences of opinion. Some there were who still retained their Jewish prejudices and ideas. They abstained from meats. They observed special days. They were inclined to judge harshly and even to look down upon those who did not think and act as they did (ver. 3). And, on the other hand, those who partook of all meats, and regarded all days as alike, were disposed to find fault with those who attached a religious significance to the partaking of food and the observing of days. The apostle here lays down some general principles which are of use in all such cases where differences of opinion arise about non-essentials.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S DEPENDENCE. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (vers. 7—9). There is no such thing as absolute independence. The relation of each individual to Christ, dependence on him and responsibility to him, is here asserted. 1. *We depend upon the Lord's death.* In the cross is our hope of forgiveness, pardon, cleansing. 2. *We depend upon the Lord's resurrection.* In his resurrection is our hope and assurance of the life and immortality beyond. "Because

I live, ye shall live also." 3. *We depend upon the Lord's continual intercession.* In his intercession is our hope and assurance of answered prayer. 4. *We depend upon the Lord's continued gifts to us.* The Lord's day; the Word of the Lord; the Lord's house; the Lord's Supper;—how much our spiritual life is dependent upon these precious blessings provided for us by our Lord and Master! "Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." 5. *This dependence upon Christ brings with it corresponding obligations.* "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 20).

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S INDEPENDENCE. The independence of the Christian is the correlative of his dependence. He is dependent upon Christ, and therefore he is: 1. *Independent of external circumstances.* "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." And again, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Even death can bring no alarm to those who can say, "We are the Lord's;" for Christ is the Conqueror of death. 2. *Independent of human criticism.* "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (ver. 3); "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth" (ver. 4); "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (ver. 5). Here the apostle asserts the great principle of liberty of conscience, and inculcates the great duty of charity and toleration. Alas! how often the principle and the duty have been forgotten in the Christian Church! Christian men have excommunicated one another and treated one another as enemies because they differed on some minor detail of doctrine, of government, or of worship. Even the Protestant Churches, and Protestant Christians, one of whose distinctive principles is liberty of conscience, have sometimes failed to extend to others that toleration which they claim for themselves. "God alone is Lord of the conscience," says the Westminster Confession of Faith, "and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men."—C. H. I.

Ver. 7.—*The influence of our lives upon others.* "None of us liveth to himself." The apostle, as we have seen, was here enforcing certain Christian duties, and he strengthened his exhortation by reminding his readers that they were not their own, but Christ's. But the words are capable of a wider application.

I. THE INFLUENCE WHICH ONE MAN MAY EXERCISE FOR GOOD. Many who would like to do good are sometimes disposed to say, "What use can I be in the world? What influence can my life have upon others? What good can I do to others? I am too young. I am too humble. I have no intellectual gifts. I have no opportunities such as some people have of exercising influence upon others." This is to underestimate the influence of the individual life. Whether we are conscious of it or not, the life of each of us, whether we are rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, is exercising some influence upon others. It is not necessary that we should know another in order to exercise an influence upon him. Thousands of men are influenced by persons whom they never saw. The Reformation began at Cambridge University very early in the sixteenth century by Bilney, a solitary student, reading a Greek Testament with Latin translation and notes, which Erasmus had published. Bilney had never seen Erasmus, but the quiet work of Erasmus was the means of bringing Bilney to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Bilney, again, influenced Latimer, who was one of the fathers of the English Reformation, and who suffered martyrdom for the truth. Thus the Reformation in England may be largely traced to the quiet work of Erasmus as he sat at his desk, and used his vast learning and intellect to make the Word of God more familiar to the people of his time. A young American student, more than seventy years ago, happened to read a printed sermon which had fallen into his hands. The sermon was entitled "The Star in the East," by Dr. Claudius Buchanan, and described the progress of the gospel in India, and the evidence there afforded of its Divine power. That sermon, by a man whom he had never seen, fell into the young student's soul like a spark into tinder, and in six months Adoniram Judson resolved to become a missionary to the heathen. That little printed sermon, preached in England, perhaps, with no apparent fruit, became, through God's blessing, the beginning of the great work of American foreign missions. You may not be an Erasmus or a Claudius Buchanan,

But God may have as great a work for you to do as he had for them. What an influence for good Christian parents may exercise upon their children, with far-reaching results to the world! The faithful sabbath-school teacher may leaven with gospel truth young minds that may yet control the destinies of a nation. Young women, by the power of their own Christian character, may change for the better the muddy current of many a godless life. The great matter is for every one of us to live near to God, to cultivate a Christ-like character, and then our life is sure to be a blessing. *You must walk with God if you would have weight with men.* Personal holiness is the key to personal influence for good.

II. THE INFLUENCE WHICH ONE MAN MAY EXERCISE FOR EVIL. The wise man says, "One sinner destroyeth much good." Everyday experience will supply many illustrations of this truth. One bad man, one bad woman, will be a centre of corruption to the whole circle in which they move. One bad boy often corrupts a whole school. How terrible is the power of evil to propagate itself! How terrible is the guilt of those who have become the corrupters of others! The evil that we do has consequences far beyond the injury that we may do to ourselves.

"Unto a loving mother oft
We all have sent, without a doubt,
Full many a hard and careless word,
That now we never can rub out;
For cruel words cut deeper far
Than diamond on the window-pane;
And, oft recalled in after-years,
They wound her o'er and o'er again.

"So, in our daily walk and life,
We write and do and say the thing
We never can undo nor stay
With any future sorrowing.
We carve ourselves on beating hearts!
Ah! then, how wise to pause and doubt,
To blend with love and thought our words,
Because we cannot rub them out!"

The great poet of Scotland, Robert Burns, on his dying bed wished that he could have recalled some of the foolish things that he had written. But it was too late. Better far to leave the wrong undone than afterwards to regret the doing of it. "None of us liveth to himself," should be constantly before our minds as a restraining memory to keep us from evil, and an inspiring memory that will cheer us on to make the world better than we have found it.—C. H. I.

Vers. 10—23 (with ch. xv. 1—3).—*Three laws of Christian life.* In these closing verses of the fourteenth chapter and the opening verses of the fifteenth, three principles are laid down, one or other or all of which would cover almost every case of difference between fellow-Christians. These are—

I. THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY. Where we differ from our fellow-Christians in details of doctrine, worship, or practice, we are very prone to be uncharitable in our judgments. We are inclined to doubt their Christianity because they do not just see as we do on such matters. One great fact the apostle would have us remember when we are tempted to condemn our brethren. It is the fact of the judgment to come. "Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ" (ver. 10). "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more" (vers. 12, 13). It is not we who are to be the judges of our fellow-Christians, but God. We should not like that they would be *our* judges: then why should we judge *them*? The thought that we ourselves must stand before a higher judgment-seat, where all our sins and secret thoughts and unchristian motives shall be known, should make us more cautious in our condemnation of others. And, as regards our fellow-Christians, is it not enough for us that God will judge them? Surely we may leave their trial with confidence in his hands.

II. THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN SELF-DENIAL. There is a gradual progress in the prin-

ciples here laid down. First of all, it is shown that we ought not to judge our brethren. This is a purely negative command. The next command is somewhat more positive. "But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (ver. 13). The apostle enforces the exhortation to Christian self-denial by three special reasons. 1. *The Christian should not injure those whom Christ has died to save.* "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (ver. 15). *This is the true basis of total abstinence.* "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (ver. 21). 2. *The Christian has higher enjoyments than those of selfish indulgence.* "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (ver. 17). The giving up of a merely bodily comfort or enjoyment should not be a great hardship to the Christian. God is able to give us much more than this. 3. *The example of Christ is an example of self-denial.* "For even Christ pleased not himself" (ch. xv. 3). Self-denial is an essential part of truly following Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." This law of Christian self-denial covers a wide field. Not merely abstinence from meats and drinks, from bodily indulgences which do harm to others; but also to put a bridle on our tongues, lest by our words we should give offence to others; to abstain from gratifying even lawful desires and wishes where the attainment of our purpose would cause pain or injury to others;—this is self-denial, this is to follow the example of Christ. Self-pleasing is a besetting sin with most of us.

III. THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN HELPFULNESS. Here the apostle takes another forward step. Here he states a still higher principle. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (ver. 19); "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (ch. xv. 2). Here is the truly positive principle of Christian life. The Christian life should not be merely an abstinence from evil, but a positive doing of what is good. We should not merely refrain from injuring our neighbours, but we should be actively engaged, as Christians, in rendering them all the spiritual help we can. As a rule, our Christianity is negative rather than positive. It is too selfish. Many Christians are perfectly content with attaining the salvation of their own souls, and going through the world as harmlessly as possible. This, after all, is but a low type of Christianity True Christianity, the Christianity of the sermon on the mount, is as the salt, the light, the leaven; an active, helpful, beneficent influence upon those around us.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—23.—*Christian liberty.* The general treatment of the ethics of the gospel is concluded, and now the apostle deals with a particular application which the condition of the Church at Rome required. There were some there, a minority probably, who were more or less in subjection to the spirit of the old Judaic economy, making distinctions of meats and of days. And when they came together for the Christian love-feasts, the differences were of awkward consequence. The stronger ones doubted whether they should admit these, so weak in the faith, as they deemed them; the weaker ones were scandalized at the unscrupulousness, as they thought it, of the strong, or perhaps, overborne by the weight of their example, against their own convictions they joined in the common meal. Was there not grievous wrong in this? The stronger ones despising the weak, and overbearing their scruples, by disputations, perhaps by ridicule; the weaker ones, grieved in their hearts, and judging the strong, or otherwise, to their own condemnation, sinking their scruples and joining in the feast? But surely the Divine ethics of the gospel can meet this case: the apostle applies them. He will espouse, not the scruples of the weak, but their weakness, as against the overbearing ridicule of the strong; but first, to guard himself and them, he will defend the liberty of the strong as against the censorious judgments of the weak.

I. THE DUTY OF THE WEAK. The weaker man had his scruples; his strong judgments as to this or that mode of outward living being right, and this or that wrong. And he was quick to condemn the man whose opinions and practices were unlike his own. Not so, says the apostle. 1. *He has another Master.* Certainly he has yielded himself to Christ, and Christ, not another, must measure the fidelity of his service. If faithful, he abides his servant; if unfaithful, he falls. But he shall not fall. The heart is right, and even if the freedom of outward observance were a mistaken freedom,

Christ is not such a Master as to cast him off for a mistake. No; "he shall be made to stand." Is not this the determining principle of the Christian life? Not the minute observance, right or wrong, but the motive, makes the Christian man. It matters nothing comparatively whether we eat or do not eat, whether we observe days or observe them not, whether we live or die: "none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." The aim of the whole life is Christ-wards, and the aim, not the details, determines the life. 2. *He has another Judge.* This follows from the former. If Christ be the Master now, he shall judge the service itself at the last. And if we may not measure the fidelity of another's servant, neither may we pass sentence on his deeds. No; "the day shall declare it, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. iii. 13). For it is true that the details of the life will be taken into account, but not by our brethren: "Each one of us shall give account of himself to God."

II. THE DUTY OF THE STRONG. So, then, the weak are warned not to judge the men of liberty; and the men of liberty, men of strength as they thought themselves, are to show their strength by gentleness, and their liberty by self-sacrifice. For the conscience of the weak, if erring, was to be respected, and neither were they to be grieved by a needless exhibition of the liberty of the strong, nor above all led to sin against their convictions by the example or ridicule of the preponderant party. 1. *They were not to be grieved.* Could the stronger ones ruthlessly cause pain to the scrupulous ones by their own seeming unscrupulousness? That was not walking in love. And for the sake of showing that they could eat meat! Away the thought: this was not God's kingdom. Let them rather know that, eating or not eating, to respect the rights of others, to have peace with all, and to rejoice with a common joy in God,—*this* was God's kingdom. So also would their spirit commend itself to men and to God. Christians then indeed; as Christ died for the weaker ones, so they sacrificing their liberty for them. 2. *They were not to be made to fall.* Let them know that, innocent as their eating of flesh might be, it was not innocent to the doubting man, and each one's conscience must approve his own deeds, or he is condemned. Nay, he falls! Oh, surely they were not prepared for that? For this was, not merely to destroy the weak brother's peace and charity of heart, but to overthrow the work of God in him! And all for the sake of meat! Better sacrifice all your liberty than this. Have your faith to yourself; have all tender solicitude for your weak brother's conscience.

Then receive the brother, care for him, sacrifice your freedom for him. For while faith, liberty, strength, are good, the best of all is love!—T. F. L.

Ver. 5.—*Individual decision.* Questions concerning conduct greatly interest and occupy the minds of the majority. They involve the translation of abstract principle into concrete rules, and the visible concrete stirs us more deeply than abstractions. Yet it is these matters of application and detail which have often rent and grievously damaged the fellowship of the saints. The wise, magnanimous prudence of the apostle lays down one duty in relation to these vexed questions, which crop up to-day in modern forms. For instance, many are perplexed as to the rigid obligatoriness of sabbath observance, as to what is implied in keeping a day of rest as "the Lord's day." Others moot the topic of contributions for religious purposes, whether a tithe is the scriptural proportion, and how far this is compulsory. Other subjects coming under the same category are amusements, abstinence from spirituous liquors, business policy, and politics.

I. EACH HAS TO SETTLE SUCH QUESTIONS FOR HIMSELF. "Let each be assured in his own mind." Others cannot do our part in investigation and decision. No one is authorized to come between us and God in such matters; even the apostle does not intrude on the province of several judgment. We must decide what our conscience prescribes, and where our conception of Christian service requires us to draw the line. Only let each see to it that he be not satisfied with giving the least amount or rendering the slightest obedience possible. He is wrong and condemns himself who asks, "How near the dangerous cliff can I walk without peril?" or, "What is the minimum religious work I can undertake as a servant of Christ?" We need to study Scripture, to prayerfully ponder on its law of life, its principles, and the illustrations afforded by the lives and acts of the noblest heroes. Nor are we precluded from seeking the help

and enlightenment which other books and companions may furnish. Yet the conclusion come to must be felt to be our own, in harmony with the dictates of our conscience, and ratified by our independent judgment. Then we may go fearlessly forward. Men differ in the conclusions they reach honestly enough, according to their breadth of intellect, their natural temperament, their surroundings, and their education, mental and experimental.

II. WE CANNOT BE ENDLESSLY ARGUING THESE QUESTIONS. He who is ever debating with himself settles nothing. He wastes his brief moments in deciding what to think and do, instead of beginning at once the discharge of his duties and the exercise of his gifts. Much in Christian doctrine and practice is unambiguous. To cultivate love, peace, godliness, to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in activity, benevolence, holiness, —the rightness of this needs no process of reasoning. The man possessed by an idea is the man who influences his fellows; not he who is sure of nothing, who has only conundrums to propound instead of a way of salvation to proclaim and suggestions for usefulness to enforce. The ring of conviction in the voice begets assent and confidence in the hearers. "We believe, and therefore we speak," this is the preaching which is mighty unto conversion. A dainty scepticism has but negative chilling power. Doubters can hardly be fruit-bearers. Once a decision has been arrived at, the reasons on which it was founded may not be always present to the mind, but the impression remains. This does not forbid a growth of opinion, the gaining of a wider outlook and clearer penetration modifying previous conclusions. Time and experience confirm or alter views by imperceptible degrees, without the ferment that attends constant restlessness of debate.

III. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO IMPOSE OUR PARTICULAR JUDGMENT AND EXAMPLE AS ARTICLES OF FAITH ON OUR FELLOW-MEMBERS. There must be mutual concessions. Let not the strong contemn the weak as narrow-minded, nor the scrupulous censure the liberty of others as an infraction of Christian morals. Teetotallers err when they pass strictures on non-abstainers, and the latter are equally guilty when they ridicule the former's self-denial. The good of the society, though best secured by the welfare of each unit composing the alliance, is yet of greater worth than the satisfaction and triumph of any separate section. "Follow after the things which make for peace." Divine charity, which bears long with all sorts and conditions of men, is reflected in the membership which knows how to be tolerant without laxity, and comprehensive without indefiniteness. The building up of the temple of God will take long if we are always deliberating on the right of individual stones to a place in the structure. Is the mark of the Master-mason on the stone? Has God received such? Then it is not for us to question or exclude.—S. R. A.

Ver. 9.—*The dominion of Christ.* It is characteristic of apostolic ethics to turn from details of conduct to the main principles which should permeate every Christian life. The central truth governing all religious behaviour is our relationship to God, as manifested and actualized in Christ Jesus. Thus the historical facts of Christ's death and resurrection necessarily give rise to doctrine, and they cannot be separated from our belief without tending to overthrow the whole edifice of Christian living based on Christ as its Foundation. It matters comparatively little whether a man eats meat or abstains from it, observes certain days or disregards their special sanctity, provided that the scruple alleged or the freedom enjoyed is conscientious, springing out of his conception of the nature of the religion Jesus Christ has revealed. It is not for others to despise the punctilious or to blame the informal. Each will be judged by his Master. That Master is Lord of both quick and dead; he presides not only over our earthly life, but over our departure to the larger life. Christians may differ in point of intellectual attainment and particular opinion, but every face believingly turned to the Sun of Righteousness reflects some of its glory; every worshipper is brought near to every other as he gathers at the feet of the Infinite Object of adoration and praise.

I. THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST. 1. *Christian freedom is not unconditioned liberty.* "Ye are not your own" is the watchword of grateful service. The emancipation of a slave does not set him free from all law; he is released from degrading servitude to be useful to his country and king. Modern civilization teaches the compatibility of numerous statutes with true essential freedom. The rule of Christ is recognized and illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles. "Thou, Lord, show which of these two thou

hast chosen;" "The Lord added to them daily." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the first question of the new life. There would be no difficulty in any department of Church-fellowship if the authority of Christ were fully recognized. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Finances, activity, brotherly regard, all flourish where hearts are surrendered in entirety to the sway of Christ. 2. *This Lordship means protection as well as government.* As under Roman law each noble patrician had his clients, whose wrongs he redressed and whose interests he promoted, so the Saviour throws the ægis of his love over his subjects, directing them by his wisdom, shielding them by his interposition. "Fear not; no man shall set on thee to harm thee." The very end of government is the welfare of the governed. Old ideas that the monarch has no duties and the people no rights have passed for ever; and we are warranted in seizing nobler conceptions of the sovereignty of God than prevailed when despotism reigned unquestioned. Let men beware lest they lop off limbs from the body of Christ, and by their divisions and excommunications rend his seamless garment. 3. *The dominion of Christ may well console us as we think of the dead.* He is the Lord of all worlds, has "all authority in heaven and earth." His voice comforts the bereaved, sounding amid the stillness of the sepulchre, "Fear not: I have the keys of death and of Hades." "He is not the Lord of the dead, but of the living." The dead pass not into a dreary unillumined state; they "depart to be with Christ." And where mournful reflections on wasted lives, sudden departures, check hopeful sorrow, and memory emits little fragrance from the past; yet we may leave all in his hands who, as the supreme Architect of humanity, rejoices in restoration rather than destruction. "Shall not the Judge . . . do right?"

II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS LORDSHIP WAS WON. 1. *By stooping to the condition of his subjects.* He is Lord by creation, but still more by virtue of his redemptive work. Well has he earned his title who entered into our humbling nature, tasted our sorrows, and drank the cup of bitterness as our Sin Offering. He himself passed through the gloomy portals of death, and in rising again revealed both the love and the might of God. Only he can be a true Master who first subordinated himself to service. For the suffering of death is he crowned with glory and honour. He can declare, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." "Because I live, ye shall live also." 2. *After this model, service to the Church becomes the stepping-stone to honour.* Christ has furnished the pattern to his followers according to which office and rank are conferred. He who is most profitable to the body is to be most esteemed by the members. Empty sinecures are unknown in his kingdom. And if we would benefit our fellows, we must by real sympathy share their need and trouble. "He that will be greatest, let him be your minister." Christ rose as the Firstfruits, and in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own rank.—S. R. A.

Ver. 17.—*Essentials of the kingdom of God.* Differences of opinion respecting festivals to be observed and foods to be abstained from were certain to arise in communities composed of Jews of every sect and Gentiles of every race. And we may be thankful that these differences manifested themselves so early in the primitive Church, since they furnished an occasion for a deliverance by the apostle on such a theme. We are glad to have such a valuable weighty aphorism as that of the text. The apostle's firmness and meekness equally diplay themselves. He wants none to suffer bondage, nor yet does he permit their liberty in Christ to be harmful to their brethren, and thus a topic of reproach in the world outside. And he makes the position clear by distinguishing between what is fundamental in religion, and what is temporary, local, and adventitious.

I. THE NON-ESSENTIALS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. The "kingdom of God" is a comprehensive phrase, denoting the new sovereignty established by Christ in the hearts of individuals where he rules in power and grace, and likewise embracing the whole company of those throughout the globe who, by personal reception of the truth, have entered into a society with duties and privileges emanating from the Kingship of the Redeemer. *The code of life lays down no hard specific rules of abstinence or conformity.* "Eating and drinking" are no necessary part of Christian living. It is the spirit in which certain actions are performed or certain privations submitted to rather than the things themselves which make men Christians. *External observances do not constitute religion.*

They are a visible embodiment of it, but not its vital principle. Let us not set too high an estimate on rites and ceremonies and forms of worship, or we may glorify the husk to the neglect of the kernel, and the shapely bark may conceal a rotten tree. Ordinances of touching, tasting, handling, concern things that perish in the using. Discussions respecting amusements, pleasures, occupations, as to which may lawfully be enjoyed and which not, seldom advance any man's obedience to Christ; they are the fringe, not the vesture, of religion, and talk concerning them is apt to degenerate into trifling and casuistry. Let each decide for himself with prayerful meditation what his course shall be, and try to secure the best, most lasting possessions. He who is always deliberating about the necessary outworks will never reach the heart of the palace of truth.

II. WHEREIN THE KINGDOM OF GOD CONSISTS. Having dismissed the negative aspect of Christianity, the apostle proceeds to set forth the main qualities of the Christian life. These are "righteousness," just, honourable dealing, keeping the commandments of God with a pure conscience, mindful of the claims of God and our neighbours. Also "peace," the tranquillity of the child resting on the Father's bosom, unruffled by storms without, not over-anxious about daily cares, nor depressed by bereavements or affliction. And "joy," which is peace brimming over into exultation, triumphant like snow brightened by the sunlight, even made rosy by the setting rays. *These are spiritual qualities.* They are spiritual in source and nature, are "fruits of the indwelling Spirit," are enjoyed and perfected "in the Holy Ghost." Righteousness is not the laborious toil of the legalist; nor is peace the apathy of the stoic or the sleepy contentment of the epicurean; nor is joy the momentary excitement of the sensualist. They are pure inward feelings, springs that flow spontaneously into outward behaviour. *They are very practical,* dealing not with abstruse or knotty points of conduct, but with qualifications easily understood, and unambiguous as to the method of attainment. It is not holding a certain creed, but cultivating a certain disposition and character. *They tend to the harmony and usefulness of the Church.* Dissension is impossible where these graces prevail. Unprofitable arguing is abandoned for mutual comfort and service. Engaged upon the higher business of the kingdom, petty details sink into their rightful insignificance, minor matters settle themselves. Would that the Church had attended to this dictum of the apostle, and been ever distinguished by these amiable virtues, instead of one section quarrelling with and persecuting another, making Church history a weariness to read, and confirming rather than quieting the doubts of the sceptical! Volumes of theology are not so powerful to convince of the truth of Christianity as a holy life. Men quickly discriminate between ritualism and religion, and detect the asceticism which mortifies the body, yet nourishes the pride of the soul.—S. R. A.

Ver. 21.—*A self-denying ordinance.* A society is formed for mutual help. The prosperity of the whole is a prime factor in all our working and living. Wondrous the effect of the gospel in levelling distinctions of class, in banishing national enmities, and in making Jew and Gentile realize their adoption into the same family of God, their oneness of blood, their community of interests.

I. THE STRONGER CAN HELP THE WEAKER, AND THE HIGHER STOOP TO THE POSITION OF THE LOWER, MORE EASILY THAN VICE VERSA. It is the glory of the greater to include the less. And the man of far-reaching spiritual views can accommodate himself to his less intellectual brother more readily than the latter can lay aside his prejudices and rejoice in the removal of all restrictions. Hence those in our assemblies capable of assimilating the richest food placed before them are called upon to remember the plainer fare that suits the spiritual digestion of their brethren. Those who delight in climbing to the peaks of spiritual knowledge can learn to moderate their ardour, and sit with their fellows in happy concord in the plain, because otherwise there can be no general assembly, many being devoid of the strength and agility needful for an ascent to the summit. Our exhortation and worship must ever, though not exclusively, take account of the weaker and less educated, the children and the simple.

II. IT IS SAFER TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF SELF-REPRESSION RATHER THAN OF LIBERTY. Every man endowed by the Spirit with a clearness and amplitude of vision that discriminates between the essential and the non-essential may refuse to have his freedom compulsorily narrowed by others. But he does well, and acts in the spirit of Christ

who "pleased not himself," if he spontaneously renounces part of his privileges, in order that he may remove a possible stumbling-block from his brother's path. And there is a danger of man's natural tendency to self-assertion leading him to a violation of conscience. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth" implies the possibility of insisting on freedom with low motives. An instructive tradition of Christ is recorded by Codex Bezæ after ver. 4 in Luke vi.: "On the same day he beheld a man working on the sabbath, and said unto him, Blessed art thou if thou knowest what thou doest: but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed and a transgressor of the Law." To disregard days and unclean food without a perception of the reason found in Christ's universal cleansing and sanctification is not to justify, but to aggravate, the offence. To act against a conscientious feeling is always wrong. Many a man who boasts of his ability to pass unscathed through a fiery ordeal is being singed and maimed by his recklessness.

III. TO HARM A BROTHER IS TO WOUND CHRIST. "Destroy not thy brother, for whom Christ died." See in the weakest member of the community the face and form of thy Lord! The essence of Christianity is self-abnegation; love makes the sacrifice welcome. Christ in us is our better self, and self-love wards off self-injury. The leader of a band anxious for its prosperity and progress feels a pang when any element of discord or weakness is introduced. Jesus Christ is the sensitive Head of the Church, and the inefficiency of any member is a grief to him; the suffering of any limb impairs his joy. Could we more often place ourselves in thought in his position, we should quickly abate aught that lessens the unity and power of the body of Christ. Every pastor of a flock, every teacher of a class, has to think of the effect of his example, lest what he might enjoy without risk himself should exert a dangerous influence on others. It is more blessed to yield than to receive a concession.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—12.—*The risen Saviour as Lord of the conscience.* The apostle, as we have just seen, has been discussing the neighbourly character of Christian living, and showing that the Christ-like soul will love his neighbour as himself, and do no ill to him. And this leads by an easy transition to the whole class of *weak consciences*, and how they are to be dealt with. For there are people painfully scrupulous, who have come, for example, to fancy that vegetarianism is the only lawful system of diet; or to fancy that holy days ought to be strictly kept; and there is a terrible temptation for strong-minded people to judge harshly the weaker brethren, and so to bring about endless friction in Church and private relations. It is with this whole practical question that the apostle here deals. Differences of opinion upon non-essentials must not break up the brotherly feeling; and Paul shows with wonderful power where the safety lies. It is in the assertion of Christ's Lordship over the conscience.

I. LET US BE CLEAR ABOUT WHO ARE THE WEAK AND WHO ARE THE STRONG. (Vers. 1—6.) We are all creatures of association, and so some of these primitive Christians came to think that meat which had been offered to an idol was thereby polluted, and so unfit for Christian use. Not knowing, therefore, where the meat offered for sale in the shambles had previously been, and naturally suspecting that it *may* have been in the idol's temple, they thought it prudent to become strict vegetarians, rather than run the risk of defilement. They would not touch, taste, or handle flesh-meat, but confined themselves to vegetables. Others had no such scruples, but ate whatever was laid before them, asking no questions for conscience' sake. Now, the apostle manifestly regards the scrupulous vegetarians as weaker in conscience than the Christian who allowed none of these scruples to affect him. Again, some were scrupulous about *holy days*. New moons and set feasts, characteristic of paganism as well as of Judaism, claimed regard from weak and uncertain consciences; while others of stronger make regarded all days as alike. The question as to the Lord's day does not seem to be here involved at all, though Robertson of Brighton has based a whole sermon on the supposition.[1] The over-scrupulous in these instances were the *weak*; the others, more certain of their line of action, were the *strong*.

II. THERE IS A GREAT TEMPTATION IN THE STRONG TO RIDICULE THE WEAK. The strong are tempted to despise the weak, to judge and ridicule their scruples; and, if

[1] See 'The Sydenham Palace and the Religious Non-Observance of the Sabbath,' in the 2nd series, No. xiv.

there is not watchfulness, there will be constant friction between them. Now, this is a menace to the peace of the Church; and Paul has here to guard against it. There is a great danger in the indulgence of scorn. A weak brother, if "roasted" and ridiculed by the stronger, may be made a burden to himself, and his personal peace be sacrificed on the altar of his neighbour's criticism. Hence in this passage Paul argues: 1. *There should be as little controversy as possible within the Church.* The weak brother is to be received, but not to doubtful disputations. He is not to be involved in profitless disputes. The Church is wise which discourages debates between brethren. 2. *There should be mutual respect for conscientious difference of opinion.* If each man is fully persuaded in his own mind, as Paul declares he ought to be, then let the weak brother admit that his less scrupulous brother has reached his opinion before God, and that God is the only competent Judge of his conduct, while the strong brother is to give the weak one credit for similar conscientiousness. It is a great matter gained if each lays his brother's case before the Lord, and prays and hopes that God will enable him to stand. It is a great thing gained when we are able to see guilt in contemptuous judgment.[1]

III. IN THE RISEN SAVIOUR EACH ONE MUST RECOGNIZE THE LORD OF HIS CONSCIENCE. (Vers. 7—9.) To Jesus, our risen Saviour, and to him alone, are we responsible, and so let us live, and die unto him. Now, it is important for us to appreciate the purpose of Christ's death and resurrection. It was no less than this, to secure universal dominion over man both here and hereafter. "The Redeemer's dominion over men is forcibly declared to have been the end of his ministry on earth. The apostle's words are very express and emphatic. *To this end that* signifies, in language as strong as could be used to note design, that the purpose of the Passion was the attainment of universal dominion over the human race in time and in eternity. To this end, and no other; for this purpose, and nothing short of it; with this design, embracing and consummating all other designs. But we must view it under two aspects—it was a purpose aimed at before the death; in the Resurrection it was a purpose reached. He *died* that he might have the dominion; he *lived* that he might exercise it."[2] Now, of this mighty realm of the risen Christ, the dead constitute the vast majority. "What, in comparison of the uncounted hosts, numbered only by the Infinite Mind, are the few hundreds of millions that any moment are called *the living*? It is in the realm of the shades that we contemplate our great family in its vastest dimensions, as it has from the first generation been gaining on the numbers of the living, and swelling onwards to the stupendous whole bound up in the federal headship of the first and second Adam."[3] Now, in all this vast domain, there is but one rightful Lord of the *conscience;* there may be other lords with dominion, and they may be many; but in the realm of conscience there is only one Lord, and he is the risen Saviour![4]

IV. THIS LORDSHIP OF JESUS LEADS DIRECTLY TO THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF LIFE AS A LIFE UNTO OUR LORD. (Ver. 8.) We cannot live unto ourselves, even if we tried. We cannot coop up our life so as that it should have no relations to any but ourselves. We must live to influence others; we *ought* to live for the glory of our risen Lord. In the Christian idea of life "nothing is indifferent, nothing self-willed; all is consecrated to Heaven. The scruples of the weak rise from the fear of God, and are, therefore, to be considered sacred; the freedom of the strong rises from the dedication to the Lord, and is, therefore, equally sacred. Life, with its energies and purposes, is one prolonged act of consecration. Death, with its silent endurance and great transition, is a consecration too."[5] As another has faithfully put it, "As he always exists, as a Christian, in and by his Master, so he always exists for his Master. He has, in the reality of the matter, no dissociated and independent interest. Not only in preaching and teaching, and bearing articulate witness to Jesus Christ, does he, if his life is true to its idea and its secret, 'live not unto himself;' not with aims which terminate for one moment in his

[1] See Robertson's sermon on the "Guilt of Judging—Contemptuousness," in his 'Human Race and other Sermons,' No. xv.

[2] Pope's 'Kingdom of Christ,' p. 184. [3] Ibid., p. 141.

[4] See Saurin's sermon on "The Empire of Jesus Christ in the Church," in tom. viii. p. 84, etc.

[5] See the fine fragment by Mr. Hull of King's Lynn on "The Christian Idea of Life," 'Sermons,' ii. p. 76.

own credit, for example, or his own comfort. Equally in the engagements of domestic life, of business life, of public affairs; equally (to look towards the humbler walks of duty) in the day's work of the Christian servant, or peasant, or artisan; 'whether he lives, he lives unto the Master, or whether he dies, he dies unto the Master;' whether he wakes or sleeps, whether he toils or rests, whether it be the term or the vacation of life, 'whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does,' he is the Master's property for the Master's use.

"'Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as to thee.

"'A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine.'"
(Moule's 'Thoughts on the Spiritual Life,' pp. 150, 151.)

V. INSTEAD OF JUDGING OTHERS, WE OUGHT TO THINK OF BEING JUDGED AT THE JUDGMENT-BAR OF JESUS OURSELVES. (Vers. 10—12.) Paul points the lesson home. He would have his readers to give up the judgment-seat and think of the judgment-bar. Better to think how we shall meet Christ's scrutiny ourselves than be contemptuously condemning weak brethren around us. Leave the weak and the strong with the Lord, who is no respecter of persons, and let us judge ourselves only, and make sure of a proper appearing at the judgment-bar of Christ. Thus, when all relations are carried up to the feet of Christ, peace is preserved and progress through self-knowledge secured!—R. M. E.

Vers. 13—23.—*Deference to weak consciences, not condemnation of them.* Having taken his readers up to the judgment-bar of Jesus, the only Lord of the conscience, he now proceeds to show how we are to help weak brethren. It will not be by condemning their scruples, but by following Christ in seeking their salvation. We are to defer to conscience so far as our weaker brother's spiritual interests are concerned, and surrender meat or wine, if by our total abstinence we can promote his salvation.

I. WE ARE BOUND TO CONSIDER WHETHER OUR MANNER OF LIVING MAY NOT BE A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO OUR WEAK BROTHER. Having taken his readers to Christ's judgment-bar, he now asks them to examine themselves as to the influence of their mode of living. Is their freedom an offence to the weak? Then in the spirit of the Master, who gave his life to save the weak brother, they ought to surrender their freedom in deference to their scruples. Surely, if Jesus surrendered life for the weak brother, dying to redeem him, we ought to be ready to surrender meat or to surrender wine, if by so doing we can promote our weaker brother's welfare. Paul's position was a noble one. He knew that nothing was unclean of itself. He was none of your squeamish and scrupulous individuals. He could eat whatever was set before him; he could drink without the least excess. But he was ready to surrender both meat and wine for the weak brother's sake. And this is the very spirit of Christ. It is here that we base our temperance reformation; not on partaking being a sin, but being inexpedient in view of the weak brother's dangers.[1]

II. DOUBT AS TO OUR DUTY SHOULD LEAD US TO ABSTAIN RATHER THAN INDULGE UNTIL WE ARE FULLY PERSUADED IN OUR OWN MINDS. The apostle wants every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind as to his course of action. One who is not, one who has no real faith in the course of action he is pursuing, is self-condemned. Paul wishes to bring all such to the side of abstinence. Better abstain from meat or drink until such times as the path of duty is clear. Now, there are multitudes that act quite differently. They go on indulging themselves because they have not made up their minds. Now, this is moral indifference, and deserves reprobation.

III. THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE GREAT MORAL LEVER WITH CONSCIENTIOUS SOULS. The apostle bases his whole plea for the endangered brother on the death of Christ for him. If Christ died for him, we should surely abstain for him. The death of Jesus

[1] See Sortain's sermon on "Deference to Conscience," in his 'Sermons,' p. 352, etc.

is thus seen to be the great moral leverage for the world. Into the midst of *things indifferent*—for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"—the self-sacrifice of our Master enters and compels conscientious souls to make some sacrifices for the sake of the brethren. *Their edification* becomes our aim, since the things are indifferent. We are not selfishly to assert our liberty, but self-denyingly we are to forego it, and bind ourselves to abstinence for whatever may be a brother's snare. If we could get such a deference to conscience practised in the Christian Church, society would very soon be regenerated.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1—ch. xvi. 24.—IV. SUPPLEMENTARY. (See summary of contents, p. xvi.) Questions have been raised and much discussed as to the connection of the last two chapters, xv. and xvi., with the rest of the Epistle. The facts and the opinions founded on them may be summarized as follows.

(1) There is sufficient proof that in early times copies of the Epistle existed without these two chapters. The evidence is this—

(*a*) Origen (on ch. xvi. 25—27) speaks of some copies in his time being without the concluding doxology, and also without any part of these two chapters, attributing the omission to Marcion, for his own purposes, having mutilated the Epistle. His words are, "Caput hoc (*i.e.* ch. xvi. 25—27) Marcion, a quo scripturæ evangelicæ et apostolicæ interpolatæ sunt, de hac Epistola penitus abstulit; et non solum hoc, sed ab hoc loco ubi scriptum est, Omne autem quod non ex fide est peccatum est (*i.e.* ch. xiv. 23) usque ad finem cuncta dissecuit." Tertullian also ('Contra Marcion') speaks of Marcion having mutilated this Epistle, though not specifying these two chapters.

(*b*) In Codex Amiatinus (a manuscript of the Latin Bible of the sixth century) there is a prefixed table of contents, referring by numbers to the sections into which the Epistle was divided, and describing the subject of each section. In this table the fiftieth section is thus described: "On the peril of one who grieves his brother by his meat," plainly denoting ch. xiv. 15—23; and the next and concluding section is described thus: "On the mystery of the Lord kept secret before his Passion, but after his Passion revealed," which description can only refer to the doxology of ch. xvi. 25—27. Hence it would seem that in some Latin copy of the Epistle to which the table of contents referred, the doxology followed ch. xiv. 23 with nothing between.

(*c*) Tertullian, Irenæus, and Cyprian, who quote largely from the Epistle, have no references to ch. xv. and xvi. It may be observed, however, that mere omission to quote is not in itself conclusive, though it may be corroborative of other evidence.

(2) The concluding doxology (ch. xvi. 25—27), though placed, as in the Textus Receptus, at the end of ch. xvi. in the uncials generally and by the Latin Fathers, is found at the end of ch. xiv. in the uncial L, in most cursives, in the Greek Lectionaries, and is so referred to by the Greek commentators. Some few manuscripts have it in both places, and some few omit it altogether. Origen also (*loc. cit.*) says that in some copies of the Epistle which contained ch. xv. and xvi., the doxology was placed at the end of ch. xvi., and in others at the end of ch. xiv.

(3) In one manuscript (G) all mention of Rome in the Epistle is omitted; and in one cursive (47) there is a marginal note to the effect that "some one" (*i.e.* probably, some commentator) makes no mention of the words ἐν Ῥώμῃ either in the interpretation or the text.

In view of these facts, it may be held that the Epistle, as first written, ended at ch. xiv. with the doxology appended, ch. xv. and xvi. (ending at ver. 24 with the usual concluding benediction, "The grace," etc.) having been an addition. Baur, after his manner—and this partly on supposed internal evidence—disputes the two last chapters having been written by St. Paul at all, regarding them as an addition by a later hand. But his reasons are too arbitrary

to stand against the authority of existing manuscripts, to say nothing of the internal evidence itself, which really appears to us to tell the other way. Such internal evidence will appear in the course of the Exposition. One view, put forth by Rückert, and recently supported by Bishop Lightfoot (*Journal of Philology*, 1871, No. 6), is that St. Paul, having originally written the whole Epistle, including the two chapters, but without the doxology, reissued it at a later period of his life in a shortened form for general circulation, having then appended the doxology. This theory, however, is but a conjecture, put forward as best accounting for all the facts of the case, including that of all mention of Rome having been apparently absent from some copies. This, however, might be accounted for by the Epistle having been issued, after St. Paul's time, in a form suited for general circulation. On the whole, we may take it as probable that the apostle, having first concluded his Epistle with ch. xiv. and the doxology, felt himself urged to resume a subject which lay so near his heart, and so appended ch. xv., and then the salutations, etc., in ch. xvi., before the letter was sent.

This supposition would in itself account for copies of the Epistle having got into circulation without the additions to it. Possibly Marcion took advantage of finding some such copies to deny the genuineness of the two final chapters altogether; and his doing so would be likely to promote circulation of the shorter copies. It will be observed that the Epistle, as a doctrinal treatise practically applied, is complete without the last two chapters; and also that ch. xv., though connected in thought with the end of ch. xiv., might be, and indeed reads like, a resumption and further enforcement of its ideas. It seems, indeed, as if three appendices, or postscripts, had been added by the apostle; the first ending with the benediction of ch. xv. 33; the second (commending Phœbe, who was to be the bearer of the letter, and sending salutations to persons at Rome) with the benediction of ch. xvi. 20; and the third (which might be added at the last moment) with that of ch. xvi. 24. All the benedictions are thus accounted for, being the apostle's usual concluding authentications (cf. 2 Thess. iii. 17; Col. iv. 18).

As to the proper position of the doxology, if the view last given be correct, its original one would be most naturally at the end of ch. xiv.; since otherwise the Epistle, as first completed, would have nothing answering to the usual benedictions in conclusion. And though this is not a benediction, but a doxology, embodying in solemn terms the main idea of the preceding treatise, such a conclusion is in keeping with the peculiar character of the Epistle to the Romans.

Finally, though uncial authority is decidedly in favour of the position of the doxology at the end of ch. xvi., this does not seem to be a sufficient reason for concluding it to have been originally there. If there existed anciently two editions, one with, and the other without, the two chapters appended, transcribers of the longer edition would be likely to place the doxology at the end of what they believed to be the true conclusion of the original Epistle.

After all, the question cannot be considered as settled. It has been deemed sufficient here to state the main arguments for or against the various views that have been taken.

Vers. 1—13.—H. *Renewed admonition to bear with the weak, enforced by Scripture and the example of Christ.*

Vers. 1—3.—**We then** (rather, *but we*, or *now we*. The δὲ here certainly seems to link this chapter to the preceding section; but it is not inconsistent with the chapter being an addition to a completed letter, of which it takes up the concluding thought) **that are strong** (St. Paul, here as elsewhere, identifies himself with the more enlightened party) **ought** (ὀφείλομεν expresses *obligation of duty*) **to bear the infirmities of the weak** (cf. Gal. vi. 2), **and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good** (rather, *for that which is good*) **to edification. For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.** The quotation is from Ps. lxix. 9; one in which a righteous sufferer under persecution calls on God for deliverance, and to some parts of which even the details of Christ's Passion strikingly correspond. The first part of the verse here quoted, "The zeal of thine house," etc., is applied to him in John ii. 17.

Ver. 4.—**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning** (in the old sense of *teaching*, or *instruction*), **that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures** (or, as the form of the Greek rather suggests, and as is confirmed by the repetition of the words conjoined in ver. 5, *through the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures*) **might have hope.** This verse, introduced by γὰρ, gives the reason why the words of the ancient psalmist are adduced for the instruction of Christians. Christ, it is said, exemplified the principle of it, and it is for us to do so too. By bearing the infirmities of the weak, and submitting, if need be, to reproach, we exhibit Christ-like *endurance* (ὑπομονὴ), such as Scripture inculcates; and therewith will come *comfort*, such as Scripture contains and gives, and so a strengthening of our *hope* beyond these present troubles. The psalm quoted was peculiarly one of endurance and comfort under vexations and reproaches, and of *hope* beyond them. It was written aforetime for our instruction, that so it may be with us, as it was with Christ. In the next verse the apostle returns definitely to the subject in hand.

Vers. 5—7.—**Now the God of patience and comfort** (the same word as before, though here in the Authorized Version rendered *consolation*) **grant you to be like-minded** (see on ch. xii. 16), **one with another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one accord with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (so certainly, rather than, as in the Authorized Version, "God, even the Father of," etc.). **Wherefore receive ye one another** (cf. ch. xiv. 1, and note), **even as Christ also received us** (or *you*, which is better supported, and, for a reason to be given below, more likely) **to the glory of God.** As in ver. 3, the example of Christ is again adduced. The connection of thought becomes plain if we take the admonition, "Receive ye one another," to be mainly addressed to "the strong," and these to consist principally of Gentile believers, the "weak brethren" being (as above supposed) prejudiced Jewish Christians. To the former the apostle says, "Receive to yourselves with full sympathy those Jewish weak ones, even as Christ, though sent primarily to fulfil the ancient promises to the house of Israel only (see ver. 8), embraced you Gentiles (ὑμᾶς) also within the arms of mercy." Thus the sequence of thought in ver. 8, *seq.*, appears. "Unto the glory of God" means "so as to redound to his glory." Christ's receiving the Gentiles was unto his glory; and it is implied that the mutual receiving of each other by believers would be so too. The idea of God's glory being the end of all runs through the whole passage (cf. vers. 6, 9, 11).

Vers. 8, 9.—**For** (the reading γὰρ is much better supported than δὲ. The essential meaning, however, of λέγω γὰρ is the same as of λέγω δὲ) **I say** (*i.e. what I mean to say is this*; cf. 1 Cor. i. 12; Gal. iv. 1; v. 16) **that Jesus Christ was** (rather, *has been made*, γεγενῆσθαι being the more probable reading than γενέσθαι) **a minister of the circumcision** (*i.e.* of the Jews) **for the truth of God, to confirm the promises** made unto **the fathers** (literally, *the promises of the fathers*): **and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.** Observe the expressions, ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας Θεοῦ, etc., and ὑπὲρ ἐλέους, with reference respectively to the Jews and Gentiles. Christ's primary *ministry* was to "the house of Israel" (cf. Matt. xv. 24), in vindication of God's *truth*, or faithfulness to his promises made through the patriarchs to the chosen race: his taking in of the Gentiles was an extension of the Divine *mercy*, to his greater glory. The infinitive δοξάσαι, in ver. 9, seems best taken in the same construction with βεβαιῶσαι in ver. 8, both being dependent on εἰς τὸ. **As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy Name.** This quotation from Ps. xviii. 49 or 2 Sam. xxii. 50, with those that follow, are for scriptural confirmation of God's purpose, which has just been spoken of, to include the Gentiles in his covenanted mercies to Israel, so that they too might glorify him. St. Paul, after a manner usual with him, follows out a thought suggested in the course of his argument, so as to interrupt the latter for a while, but to return to it in ver. 13. All, in fact, from the beginning of ver. 8 to the end of ver. 12, is parenthetical, suggested by "even as Christ received you," at the end of ver. 7. All this, it may be observed, is confirmatory of Pauline authorship. The first quotation introduces David, the theocratic king, confessing and praising God, not apart from the Gentiles, but among them. The second, from Deut. xxxii. 43, calls on the Gentiles themselves to join in Israel's rejoicing; the third, from Ps. cxvii. 1, does the same; the last, from Isa. xi. 10, foretells definitely the reign of the Messiah over Gentiles as well as Jews, and the hope also of the Gentiles in him.

Vers. 10—13.—**And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye peoples. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust** (rather, *hope*—ἐλπιοῦσι—which is the word in the LXX.; thus bringing back the thought of

the *hope* spoken of in ver. 4, with a prayer for the abundance of which to his readers, as the result of peace in the faith among each other, the apostle now concludes his exhortation). **Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.**

Vers. 14—33.—I. *Expression of confidence in the general disposition of the Roman Christians, and of the writer's desire to visit them, and his intentions in accordance with that desire.*

Ver. 14.—**And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.** It is St. Paul's courteous as well as kindly way to compliment those to whom he writes on what he believes to be good in them, and to cling to a good opinion of them, even where he has some misgivings, or has had reason to find fault (cf. 1 Cor. i. 4, *seq.*; 2 Cor. i. 7; iii. 1, *seq.*; vii. 3, *seq.*). Here "I myself also" (καὶ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) may have tacit reference to the general good report of the Roman Church (cf. ch. i. 8 and xvi. 19), which he means to say he himself by no means doubts the truth of, notwithstanding his previous warnings. "Ye yourselves also" (καὶ αὐτοί) implies his trust that even without such warnings they would of themselves be as he would wish them to be; "full of goodness" (ἀγαθωσύνης), so as to be kind to one another, as they were enlightened and replete with knowledge (γνώσεως).

Ver. 15.—**But I have written unto you the more boldly, brethren, in some measure** (so, as in the Revised Version, or, *in part* (ἀπὸ μέρους), rather than *in some sort*, as in the Authorized Version. The allusion seems to be to the passages in the Epistle in which he has been bold to admonish urgently; such as ch. xi. 17, *seq.*; xii. 3; and especially ch. xiv.), **as putting you in mind** (reminding you only of what you doubtless know), **because of the grace given me of God**; *i.e.*, as appears from what follows, of apostleship to the Gentiles (cf. ch. i. 5, 14; also Acts xxii. 21; Gal. ii. 9). Though the Church of Rome was not one of his own foundation, and he had no desire, there or elsewhere, to build on another man's foundation (ver. 20), yet his peculiar mission as apostle to the Gentiles gave him a claim to admonish them. The reason thus given is, it will be observed, a confirmation of the view, otherwise apparent, that the Roman Church consisted principally of Gentile believers.

Ver. 16.—**That I should be the minister** (λειτουργὸν) **of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles, ministering** (ἱερουργοῦντα) **the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified in the Holy Ghost.** As to the words λειτουργὸς and λειτουργεῖν, see on ch. xiii. 6; and on λατρεύω, λατρεία, on ch. i. 9 and xii. 1. Here they are evidently used in their sacrificial meaning, but applied metaphorically; the "acceptable offering" which Paul offers to God is that of the Gentiles whom he brings to the faith. "The preaching of the gospel he calls a sacrificial service (ἱερουργιάν), and genuine faith an acceptable offering" (Theodoret). "This is my priesthood, to preach and to proclaim" (Chrysostom); cf. Phil. ii. 17.

Ver. 17.—**I have therefore whereof I may glory through** (rather, *I have my boasting in*) **Christ Jesus in the things that pertain unto God** (τὰ πρὸς Θεόν—the same phrase as is used in Heb. v. 1 with reference to priestly service). St. Paul's purpose in this and the four following verses is to allege proof of his being a true apostle with a right to speak with authority to the Gentiles. It is evident, he says, from the extent and success of my apostolic labours, and the power of God that has accompanied them. So also, still more earnestly and at length, in 2 Cor. xi. and xii. As to his reason for frequently thus insisting on his true apostleship, and for asserting it in writing to the Romans, see note on ch. i. 1.

Vers. 18, 19.—**For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought through me unto the obedience of the Gentiles** (meaning, I will not dare to speak of any mere doings of my own, but only of those in which the power of Christ working through my ministry has been displayed) **by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders** (*i.e.* displays of miraculous power. It is noteworthy how St. Paul alludes incidentally in his letters to such "signs and wonders" having accompanied his ministry, as to something familiar and acknowledged, so as to suggest the idea of their having been more frequent than we might gather from the Acts of the Apostles. Had the alleged "signs and wonders" been unreal, we might have expected them to be made more of in the subsequent narrative of an admirer than in contemporary letters), **by the power of the Spirit of God** (al. *the Holy Spirit*. This *power*, if taken as distinct from that of *signs and wonders*, may denote the power of the Holy Spirit displayed in the conversion of believers, and the gifts bestowed upon them); **so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum, I have fully preached** (literally, *I have fulfilled*) **the gospel of Christ.** In thus designating the

sphere of his ministry the apostle is denoting its local extent, rather than the course he had taken. He had, in fact, preached first at Damascus (Acts ix. 20), and afterwards at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 29); but he mentions Jerusalem first, as being the original home of the gospel in the East, and, indeed, the first scene of his own preaching in fellowship with the original apostles. Thence he had extended it in various quarters (for the meaning of κύκλῳ—trans. "round about"—cf. Mark vi. 6; Luke ix. 12), and carried it into Europe, Illyricum being the western limit so far reached. It is true that there is no mention in the Acts of his having actually visited Illyria. In the journey of Acts xvii. he plainly got no further west than Berœa, which is, however, not far off; and he might possibly mean here only to say that he had extended the gospel to the borders of Illyricum, but for the word πεπληρωκέναι, and his seeming to imply afterwards (ver. 23) that he had gone as far as he could in those regions, and consequently contemplated a journey to Spain. Hence, the narrative of Acts not being an exhaustive history, it may be supposed that he had on some occasion extended his operations from Macedonia to Illyricum, as he may well have done on his visit to the latter mentioned in Acts xx. 1—3, where διελθὼν τὰ μέρη ἐκεῖνα allows for a visit into Illyricum.

Ver. 20.—**Yea** (or, *but*), **so striving** (or, *earnestly desiring*, or *making it my aim*. The word is φιλοτιμούμενον, cf. 2 Cor. v. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 11) **to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.** In the compact between St. Paul and the apostles of the circumcision referred to in Gal. ii. 1—7, it was agreed that he should confine his apostolic ministry to the Gentiles. Consequently, we find him selecting as centres of his work the principal cities of the heathen world. But he was further careful to avoid places, wherever they might be, in which Churches were already founded. It was the function of an apostle to extend the gospel by founding new Churches, rather than to invade the provinces of others. Those founded by himself, and thus under his immediate jurisdiction, as *e.g.* the Corinthian Church, he visited as need arose, and addressed them in authoritative letters, commanding as well as exhorting. But his rule in this respect did not preclude his writing also letters of general encouragement and admonition to any whom his peculiar commission as apostle of the Gentiles gave him a claim to be heard by. Thus he wrote to the Colossians, though he had never seen them (Col. i. 4; ii. 1); and thus also to the Romans, at the same time (as we have seen, ch. xv. 15, *seq.*) almost apologizing for doing so; and, though he proposes visiting them, it is not with the view of staying among them long, so as to take up the superintendence of them, but only on his way to Spain for mutual comfort and edification (see ch. i. 11, 12; xv. 24).

Vers. 21—24.—**But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand** (Isa. lii. 15, as in the LXX. The passage is Messianic; but St. Paul need be understood to be quoting it as predictive or directive of the rule he follows. Enough if it expresses his meaning well). **For which cause also I have been much hindered** (or, *was for the most part*, or *many times hindered*) **from coming to you.** The hindrance had been, mainly at least, as is evident from Διὸ (ver. 22), the obligation he was under of completing his ministry in the first place in other quarters (see on ch. i. 13). **But now having no longer place in these regions** (*i.e.*, according to the context, there being no additional sphere for my activity there. He had now planted the gospel in all the principal centres, leaving disciples and converts, and probably an ordained ministry, to carry on the work and extend it in the regions round. In this his proper apostolic work consisted; cf. 1 Cor. i. 14—17), **and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I hope to see you on my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your** company. The sense of this verse is no way affected by the omission of "I will come unto you," which authorities are against retaining. If "for," after this omission, be retained, the sentence is incomplete, as St. Paul's sometimes are. The omission of "for" (for which there is some little authority) leaves the sentence improved. The apostle's selection of Spain as his next intended sphere of labour might be due to the notoriety of that Roman province, and the facility of communication with it by sea. His omission of Italy, except for a passing visit, is accounted for by his principle, already enunciated, of not building on other men's foundation, there being already a flourishing Church at any rate at Rome. He hoped, as appears from this verse, that some of the members of it might join him in his mission to Spain. For the word προπεμφθῆναι would imply their going all the way in the case of a sea-voyage. For the use of the word, cf. Acts xv. 3; xx. 38; xxi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 6; 2 Cor. i. 16. Observe the characteristic courtesy of the concluding clause, which is literally, "should I be first *in part*" (*i.e.* not

as much as I should wish, but to such extent as my short stay with you will allow) "filled with you," *i.e.* enjoy you.

Vers. 25—27.—**But now I go to Jerusalem ministering unto the saints. For it hath pleased** (εὐδόκησαν, implying good will) **Achaia and Macedonia to make a certain contribution** (κοινωνίαν, intimating the *communion* of Christians with each other, evinced by making others partakers of their own blessings; cf. ch. xii. 13; 2 Cor. ix. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 18; Heb. xiii. 16) **to the poor of the saints which are at Jerusalem.** As to this collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, which St. Paul seems to have been intent on during his journeys, and which he was now on the point of carrying to its destination, cf. Acts xix. 21; xxiv. 17; 2 Cor. viii. 1—ix. 15. **It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister** (λειτουργῆσαι; here in the general sense of *ministry;* see on ch. xiii. 6) **to them in carnal things.** Here we have the same idea of salvation being derived to the Gentiles from the Jews as is prominent in ch. xi. 17, 18, and apparent in ch. xv. 7, *seq.*

Vers. 28, 29.—**When therefore I have accomplished this, and sealed to them** (*i.e.* ratified and assured to them) **this fruit, I will come away by you into Spain. And I know that when I come to you** (ὑμᾶς here is intended emphatically) **I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.** How different from his anticipations were the circumstances of his first visit to Rome we know from the Acts. So man proposes, but God disposes, and all for final good (cf. Phil. i. 12, *seq.*). That he afterwards carried out his intention of visiting Spain cannot be alleged with certainty, though there is distinct evidence of an early tradition that he did so (Canon Muratori, Eusebius, Jerome, Theodoret. Cf. Clem. Rom., Ep. 1, who speaks of St. Paul having gone to "the boundaries of the West"). Certainly before the end of his detention at Rome he had given up any idea he might have had of going thence at once to Spain; for cf. Phil. ii. 19; Philem. 22; which Epistles are believed, on good grounds, to have been written during that detention. Still, he may have gone during the interval between his release and his final captivity at Rome, during which the pastoral Epistles were probably written.

In what follows (vers. 30—32) some apprehension of dangers attending his visit to Jerusalem, which might possibly thwart his intentions, already appears; sounding like an undertone allaying the confidence of the hope previously expressed. In the course of his progress to Jerusalem this apprehension appears to have grown upon him; for see Acts xx. 22, 23, 28; xxi. 4, 11—14). It may be here observed that such signs, evidently unintentional, of conflicting feelings in the letter, and such consistency between the letter and the narrative, are strong confirmations of the genuineness of both.

Vers. 30—33.—**Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judæa; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.** Here he seems to imply a possibility of even the Jewish Christians not receiving him, with the alms he brought them, kindly. In 2 Cor. viii. 18, *seq.*, he had shown signs of being anxious to avoid any possible suspicion of malversation with regard to the contribution. The danger probably arose from the suspicions against himself, his authority, and his motives, entertained by the Judaistic faction. That this faction was then strong at Jerusalem appears from the precautions he was advised to take on his arrival there (see Acts xxi. 20—24). **That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.**

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—3.—*Self-pleasing and self-denial.* The controversy which gave rise to this statement of Christian principle was local and temporary, and seems to us somewhat trivial. It was, however, the occasion for an inspired publication of important, practical moral truths and precepts, of world-wide and lasting application. When a difference arises between two parties, who are accustomed to think and act together, there is danger of each party becoming bitter and overbearing, and resolving to thrust its own convictions and preferences upon the other. Paul teaches us that the true remedy for this evil is unselfishness, and that the true motive to unselfishness is to be found in the cross of Christ.

I. THE MORAL PRECEPT. The authoritative counsel of the apostle is both negative and positive, dissuasive and persuasive. 1. *Selfishness is forbidden.* It need scarcely be said that undue opinion of self, an undue confidence in one's own judgment, an undue regard to one's own interest, are common faults. We are all naturally prone to please self, even when to do so is injurious to others and displeasing to God. The unrenewed man is in the habit of following the lead of his own appetites, tastes, and inclinations, though these be worldly and sinful. This is not to be wondered at. Of the wandering sheep it is said, "They have turned every one to his own way." Few are the sins, vices, crimes, which cannot be traced to the action of this powerful principle, which induces men to prefer their own gratification to all beside. But it must not be supposed that this is a fault from which the disciples of Christ are universally or generally free. They are not only tempted to please themselves in worldly pursuits; they are in danger of carrying selfishness into their very religion. How often do we find Christians trying to thrust their own views, their own tastes, their own practices, upon their neighbours, whether these are willing or unwilling! There may be a want of consideration and forbearance within Christian societies, and in the relation of such societies to one another. And there are too many whose one idea of religion is this—how they may themselves be saved and made happy. Let it be remembered that the admonition of the text was addressed to Christians. If these Romans needed it, perhaps *we* may likewise. 2. *Unselfishness is enjoined.* This passage reminds us that this self-denying posture of mind is to be maintained with regard to *a special class.* Suppose that you are strong; yet it must not be lost sight of that some are *weak.* Are their infirmities to be despised? The apostle enjoins us to consider them, and to bear with them. There may be those whose infirmity is owing to youth and inexperience, and those whose infirmity is that of age. There are some who are weak physically, and who perhaps are therefore irritable. Many are weak mentally; their ability is small, their education has been neglected. And some are weak spiritually—babes in Christ, though perhaps men in years. Such are not to be despised or derided by such as are strong. Deal patiently, tenderly, forbearingly with such as these. The admonition is more *general.* We are to please *our neighbour*, i.e. every one we have to do with, whether weak or strong. This does not mean that we are to gratify all his foolish whims and caprices—to try, as some do, to please everybody, at all costs; to flatter the vain, and cajole the ignorant, and humour the petulant. By "pleasing" here we may understand benefiting and serving. If there be any doubt about this, the limitation here introduced by the apostle solves such doubt; it is "for that which is good," and "unto edifying." As regards our fellow-Christians, our service will naturally take the form of helpfulness to them in their need, and spiritual ministrations according to our capacity and opportunity, with effort for their elevation and happiness. As regards our irreligious neighbours, our unselfish service will be mainly effort for their enlightenment and salvation. Probably such effort will displease, rather than please, the careless and self-indulgent, whom we seek to awaken to a better life. Yet the time may come when even such will look back with thankfulness and delight upon benevolent effort and earnest prayer, by which they have received imperishable good. Selfishness, then, is the curse of the world and the bane of the Church; whilst, on the other hand, they obey their Lord, and promote their own welfare and that of society, who are considerate and forbearing towards the weak, and who aim at pleasing and benefiting all who come within the range of their influence.

II. THE RELIGIOUS GROUND FOR THE PRECEPT. Christianity bases every duty upon a Divine foundation. 1. The virtue of unselfishness is for Christians *a virtue springing from their relation to their Lord.* Sympathy is in its rudiments a natural principle; but this stands a poor chance when it comes into conflict with natural self-love. Both these principles are good, and virtue lies in their proper adjustment. It is the sacrifice, the spirit, the example of our Divine Saviour, which assure victory to unselfish benevolence. 2. In Christ we observe *the sublimest illustration of self-denial and self-sacrifice.* We cannot fail to see these qualities in his giving up his own ease and pleasure, and accepting a life of poverty and homelessness. He would not accept an earthly kingdom or worldly honours. In carrying out the purposes of his mission, he set himself against the powerful and the influential among his countrymen. There was no day and no act of his public ministry which was not a proof of the assertion, "Even Christ

pleased not himself." 3. We remark in the Lord Jesus *perfect obedience to the Father.* Prophecy put into his lips the language, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." He himself declared that he came to do the will of him that sent him, and he was conscious that this purpose was carried out. "I do always those things that please him." He even shaped this principle into the remarkable prayer, "Not my will, but thine, be done." Consider that the only way to make sure that life is not self-seeking and self-pleasing is to consecrate it to the high end of pleasing God. 4. Our Saviour endured *reproaches and wrongs in the procuring of human salvation.* These revilings and injuries were inflicted by sinners, and they came upon the innocent. He "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;" he endured the cross, despising the shame." And this he did willingly and without a murmur. For "with his stripes we are healed." The "joy that was set before him" reconciled him to hardship and privation, to insult and mocking, to anguish and death. Thus the pleasing of self was utterly absent; the mortification and crucifixion of self were conspicuously present; reproaches were welcomed, that the reproachers might be redeemed. 5. The passage presumes *the action of the distinctively Christian principle in such a way as to influence the conduct of Christ's people.* Not only have we, in our Lord's spirit and conduct, the one perfect example of self-denial and of devotion to the cause of human welfare. We have a provision for securing that Christ's people shall resemble their Lord. His love, personally apprehended and experienced, becomes the motive to their gratitude, affection, and consecration; and is the seed of its own reproduction and growth in their renewed nature. His Spirit is the Agent by whose energy men's natural selfishness is vanquished, and the new life is fostered and sustained.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Admire the Divine wisdom in the provision made for overcoming the natural selfishness of mankind. What inferior agency could suffice for such a task? 2. If unhappy, consider whether self-seeking is not at the root of restlessness and dissatisfaction; and fall in with the Divine plan, by seeking earnestly the welfare of your neighbours. And you shall find such action will bring its own reward. 3. Cherish the divinely justified hope for the world's future welfare. Neither interest nor philosophy can effect what Christianity is capable of doing. The prospects of humanity are bound up with the rule and the grace of him of whom we read, "Even Christ pleased not himself." 4. Let the strong please, and bear with the infirmities of, the weak, by supporting such institutions as are designed to relieve suffering and to supply need.

Ver. 4.—*The Scriptures.* In many ways the New Testament lends its support and sanction to the Old. Our Lord himself bade his auditors and disciples "search the Scriptures." The evangelists support the Divine authority of Christ's ministry, by exhibiting many of its incidents as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. And the Epistles abound with quotations from the ancient Hebrew writings which they approve as of inspired authority. In this passage, Paul records in explicit language his own view of the character and purposes of Old Testament Scripture.

I. THE INTENTION THAT THE SCRIPTURES SHOULD BE OF PERPETUAL USE. "These things were written for our learning," *i.e.* for our instruction and improvement. This may be shown to be the case with the historical lessons, the biographical examples and warnings, the moral precepts, the prophetic promises, of the Word of God. Nothing is purposeless or valueless.

II. THE METHOD IN WHICH THE SCRIPTURES PROVE SERVICEABLE. They are not like an amulet, a charm, the mere possession of which is supposed to be advantageous. They are to be used in conformity with our intellectual and moral nature. Only by entering into the soul, and acting upon its passions, principles, and powers, can the teachings of inspiration profit and help us. The apostle mentions two ways in which the Scriptures thus act. 1. By *patience.* That is to say, the Scriptures represent our human nature and life as exposed to suffering, temptation, and many evils, against which the power of religion alone can fortify, and from which it alone can deliver. The Scriptures contain representations of God himself which are fitted to sustain his people to endure, and to inspire them to persevere. They contain actual illustrations of the power of patience exhibited in the life of many of the saints of God. 2. By *comfort.* If patience is exercised by man, consolation is afforded by God. The

strengthening and consolatory power of Divine grace is exhibited both in the declarations and doctrines, and also in the practical and living exhibitions and manifestations of piety, which abound in Holy Scripture.

III. THE ULTIMATE AND EXACT PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE SCRIPTURES HAVE BEEN GIVEN. That is, that we may have *hope*. 1. Why is this needed? Because in this life, and in our experience, there is very much to occasion depression and despondency. Our own weakness and liability to error and to sin, and the ills of human society, are such as to account for frequent discouragement. 2. How is hope awakened and fostered by the Scriptures? By their express declarations of Divine mercy, and their explicit promises of succour and guidance and blessing. 3. Whither are our hopes directed? Primarily to God: "Hope thou in God." And then also to earthly deliverance and to heavenly rest. 4. What is the moral power of hope? It both cheers and sustains the soul, and makes it brighter and more confident in fulfilling Christian service.

Vers. 5, 6.—*Unity.* Mutual forbearance and considerateness tend to true spiritual unity. In the presence of a hostile world, it was evidently of the highest practical importance that the early Christians should exhibit the power of the truth and the Spirit of God to draw them together, and to make them one. How dear this aim was to the heart of Christ, is evident alike from his frequent admonitions and from an urgent petition in his great intercessory prayer.

I. THE DIVINE SOURCE OF UNITY. That true unity is from God appears: 1. From the nature and character of God, as "the God of patience and of comfort." 2. From the apostolic prayer, "grant you to be like-minded," etc., from which it is apparent that, in the view of the inspired apostle, the true fountain of concord and brotherly love is in heaven, in the heart of the infinite Father. 3. From the mediation of Jesus Christ, whose design in redemption was first to "make peace" between a righteous Ruler and rebellious subjects; and then to break down every wall of partition that divided man from man, and to constitute one new, unbroken humanity in himself—the glorious Head.

II. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF UNITY. 1. Where this grace exists, there is *one mind*, with mutual love. By "the same mind" the apostle does not mean "of the same opinion." This is not possible where men think freely and independently. But he means "of similar disposition towards Christ," "of like sentiments of brotherly love one towards another." This is pleasing to the God of peace and love. 2. Where this grace exists there is "one mouth," with common praise. There is a sacrifice in which all devout souls, all holy assemblies, constantly unite—it is the sacrifice of gratitude and praise. The several voices in this offering to Heaven blend in sweetest concord, and form a Divine and exquisite harmony. The more the notes, the vaster the variety, the more marvellous and beautiful is the spiritual concert. As with one only mouth, the living Church offers to the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" the anthem of spiritual, acceptable, and unending praise—the Church on earth herein preparing for the eternal song of heaven.

APPLICATION. Unity must be, not merely in word or in outward association, but in the spirit of love and in the tribute of grateful adoration.

Ver. 13.—*The office of the Holy Spirit.* Paul was not one of those upon whom the Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost. He was at that time a scholar; living probably in Jerusalem, and certainly studying the Law and the traditions of his nation, with all the energy of an ardent, zealous, and persevering mind. He may have known at the time of the remarkable events which occurred; but if he did, they made no great impression on him. For only two or three years afterwards, when Stephen was stoned, Saul was one of those who "consented to his death." And, as we read, he "made havoc of the Church," and "breathed out threatenings and slaughter" against the disciples of the Lord. But if for a while neither the crucifixion of Christ nor the descent of the Holy Spirit had any effect upon the Pharisee who boasted himself to be of the school of Gamaliel, the time came when the faith which he despised and persecuted laid hold upon his great heart, and assumed the lordship over his active life. And now observe two things very noticeable in Saul's history. First, when Ananias was sent to the smitten and blinded persecutor, to release him, in the name

of Jesus, from his privation and doubt, and, in the same name, to commission him as the apostle to the Gentiles, the servant of the Lord declared the purport of his visit to be that, Saul might be "*filled with the Holy Ghost!*" And secondly, when, at Antioch, the Holy Ghost called Barnabas and Saul to a missionary enterprise, they are said by the inspired historian to have been "*sent forth by the Holy Ghost.*" So, although Paul was not present when Peter and the rest of the brethren were made partakers of the spiritual outpouring by which the new dispensation was inaugurated, it is clear that he received, and that he knew that he received, the Holy Ghost as well as they. In his *conversion*, his whole nature was influenced by the Divine enlightenment and quickening; in his *commission*, the impulse and the authority of his missionary life were conferred by the living Spirit of God. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the apostle of the Gentiles, in his preaching and his writings, *laid stress upon the office of the Divine Comforter.* He could not have exalted the Spirit more constantly and gratefully even if he had listened to the Master's discourses in which the Paraclete was promised; even if he had been amongst the favoured company on the Day of Pentecost, when cloven tongues of fire sat upon the heads of the disciples of the Lord. In fact, just as the mediatorial work of Christ is at least as fully stated and explained by Paul as by the other apostles, so is he not behind them in the exposition of the offices of the Comforter, and the results of his perpetual indwelling in Christian hearts, in Christian society. It needs not be said that *the offices of the Holy Spirit are not only precious, but manifold.* Paul was well aware of this fact. But attention is asked especially to *one result of the dispensation of the Spirit;* to one valuable fruit which all Christians growingly appreciate. The Divine Spirit is set before us in the text as *the Author and Inspirer of a cheerful and hopeful disposition* of the mind: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." It is often observed that, in a cultivated and reflective state of society, there is *a tendency to a mournful and even desponding disposition.* When people have much leisure to think, and large knowledge of human life and history, they often cherish gloomy and hopeless forebodings. Unable to resolve their own difficulties, disappointed with efforts made to improve society, they are prone to abandon themselves to scepticism, and to ask whether all things do not exist in vain, and whether the philosophy of the royal sage is not sound and just: "Vanity of vanities," saith the preacher; "all is vanity!" The Holy Spirit was given to *banish such a temper of mind*, and to inspire us with cheerfulness and with hope. He is the Spirit of life, quickening the spiritually dead; the Spirit of truth, revealing the realities of the Divine character and government; the Spirit of holiness, fostering in the soul of man all pure thoughts and purposes. And our text brings before us the welcome truth that the Spirit of God has power to fill us with "joy and peace in believing," and to cause us to "abound in hope." There is no broader and more obvious distinction between Christians and unbelievers than that which is suggested by our text. The *Christian*, speaking generally, is the man who *hopes;* the *infidel* is the man who is *hopeless.* The preacher has known in the course of his life, and has conversed with, many unbelievers—some of them honourable, virtuous, and, within limits, benevolent men. But they have been, without exception, neither happy nor hopeful. Their view of human life is invariably melancholy, and their forebodings for humanity's future are usually dark and despondent. At the time when our Divine faith was first preached in the world, observant and thoughtful men were under a cloud of depression. Dissatisfied with the superstitions of their fathers, disgusted with the corruptions of society, they were without any faith that could sustain and cherish a lofty hope for the race. It did not enter into their minds that any moral power could be introduced into the world capable of even attempting, far less achieving, the regeneration of society—of raising the uncivilized, and redeeming those who were civilized and cultivated, but corrupt and cynical and selfish. What a revelation must Christians—not merely Christianity, but Christians—have brought to the ancient society! Here was a sect of men, distinguished, indeed, by their beliefs and practices, their pure and beneficent life, from those around them, but in nothing more distinguished than in this—*they were the men in the world who hoped!* Whilst the multitude, and even many of the philosophers, were saying, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die;" whilst the thoughtful and high-minded mourned the corrup-

tions of the times, and despised their degraded fellow-creatures, and saw no prospect of the salvation of society; the followers of Christ appeared, each one with *a hope which death could not tear from him, for himself*; each one with a yet sublimer hope, that no disappointment could quench, for the unhappy but not forsaken race of which he was a member. You remember the honour which was bestowed upon a patriot—that, in days of darkness and of threatening, he did not despair of his country. Of every lowly Christian the yet more remarkable eulogy would have been true, that *he did not despair of his race*. And this, in days when Christianity had yet its triumphs to win, its great renown to achieve! The Holy Spirit was given to reveal to the disciples of Christ *a "God of hope."* Men's dejection and despair arise from their want of faith in God. And nothing but a sound and rational belief in God can bring them to a better mind. What so fitted to inspire with cheerfulness as the conviction that a God of righteousness and of grace lives and reigns, takes the deepest interest in men, and provides for their true well-being? Now, when the Holy Ghost was given, on the Day of Pentecost, he was given as "the promise of the Father," as the bestowal of a gracious God. Let the truth be recognized that a good hope must begin in God. The counsel of the ancient psalmist was sound as well as pious: "Hope thou in God." Fix your hopes, as many do, upon human beings, upon human institutions, upon human plans, and their failure will involve you in cruel disappointment. But if for you the Lord liveth and reigneth, if he be the God of man, the God of salvation, then there is a sound basis for your hopes—a basis which no power on earth, and no power from hell, can overturn or even shake. It was the power of the Spirit that *ratified the words and sealed the authority and authenticated the mission of Christ*. Jesus had promised that, if he went away, he would "send the Comforter." He knew that the approach of his departure filled their hearts with sorrow, and he bade them rather rejoice, inasmuch as this was the condition of the gift of the Comforter. And when, in fulfilment of his assurance, he shed forth the gifts they needed for their spiritual quickening and for their qualification for apostolic service, the friends of Christ must have felt the encouraging and inspiring influence of the faithfulness and grace of their Lord. After his resurrection, the disciples were "glad when they saw the Lord." After his ascension, "they returned to Jerusalem with great joy." And when the Spirit was poured out, their confidence in their Saviour was naturally confirmed; and their habitual demeanour was that of happy and hopeful spirits. They "ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God;" and, when persecuted, they "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name." It was Jesus Christ who brought hope, even as he brought every other blessing, to this benighted and unhappy world. That he cherished hope, is known full well. His parables regarding the progress of his kingdom, his assurance that when lifted up he would draw all men unto him, his prediction of his reign and his return—all show an unwavering confidence and a calm expectation regarding the future. And in order that this attitude might be shared by his disciples, he provided for the descent of his Spirit, by whose influences they should be brought into living sympathy with himself. Our hope may be said to have *three main outlooks*: (1) towards our personal future; (2) towards the prospects of Christianity and Christ's Church; and (3) towards the progress and destiny of humanity. In all these respects is apparent the power of the Holy Ghost to inspire us with, and to cause us to rejoice in, hope.

I. HOPE CONCERNING ONE'S SELF—concerning one's own future—is generally supposed to be matter of temperament. There are persons of a sanguine temperament, who always expect the best possible, and sometimes are confident in hope, though on the slightest ground. And others are given rather to foreboding, and their forecasts are of evil. Now, Christianity does not destroy temperament; but it gives a just bent to the outlook of the hopeful, and instils into the despondent a different spirit. Based, as the Christian life is, upon faith, *it must proceed to hope*. The God who has loved us with an everlasting love will "never leave and never forsake us." The Saviour who has "loved his own" will "love them unto the end." The Word in which we trust is a "Word which liveth and abideth for ever." It is the office of the Spirit of God to bring these great and inspiriting truths home to the minds of Christians, to make them a power real and effective. If hope were based upon confidence in chance

and good fortune, or if it were based upon the character and promises of fallible fellow-men, it would in such cases need rather to be checked and sobered than to be encouraged. But just as faith depends for its value upon the person on whom it rests, so is hope justifiable and wise only when *based upon the promises of the Being* whose character is unchanging, and whose word is never broken. The Christian's hope *extends beyond this earthly life.* There have been cases in which the followers of Jesus have been tempted to exclaim, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But nothing is more distinctive of the Christian revelation than the clearness with which it speaks of a life to come. By the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead, we are begotten "unto a living hope, of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And the hope which we have is "an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, that entereth into that within the veil." *By the power of the Holy Spirit, this blessed hope is awakened and fostered.* His gracious influences counteract the earthly and depressing powers by which we are all beset, and make the mediation and the promises of our Saviour effective and helpful to us; so that we are led to abound in hope. The text reminds us that *faith, and the joy and peace* which faith brings, and these in Divine fulness, are the *antecedents of the abundant hope* of the Christian. And this is so. The heart that knows nothing of the cheerful gladness which religion imparts to the present can know nothing of the glowing anticipations which religion inspires with reference to the future. If we are to judge the future merely by what we see now, our outlook might be dim and cheerless. But the present is beheld by the medium of faith; and the same glass, when turned towards the coming ages, affords to us the blessed prospect of Christian hope. It is instructive to observe the close connection between the joy and peace which Christians now have in believing, and the hope to which they are introduced by the gospel. The cheerful mind is likely to be the hopeful mind. The rule and the love of God have reference alike to the present and to the future. Our earthly privileges are the earnest of our immortal prospects. And these, in turn, cast something of their inspiring radiance upon the difficulties and the sorrows of the present.

"Oh, who, in such a world as this,
Could bear his lot of pain,
Did not one radiant *hope* of bliss
Unclouded yet remain?
That hope the Sovereign Lord has given,
Who reigns above the skies;
*Hope* that unites the soul to heaven
By faith's endearing ties."

II. But HOPE, THAT IS WORTHY OF THE NAME, WILL TRANSCEND OUR INDIVIDUAL PROSPECTS. We are united, by innumerable bonds, to our fellow-Christians and to our fellow-men; and our hopes must include others within their scope and range. Nothing was further from the generous heart and expansive charity of the apostle than any thought of limiting within narrow bounds the prospects and the hopes born of Christianity. Our religion is emphatically *unselfish.* And being so, those who come under its sway and share its spirit are constrained to take a wide, expansive view. They are members of a mystical body, and are concerned for the health and well-being of the whole. It is not enough to have a good hope of our own salvation; if the mind of Christ is in us, we shall desire "the edification of the body," as St. Paul phrases it. Enlightened and large-hearted Christians are more interested in the spread of Christianity than in anything beside on earth. It is their hope and prayer that the holy leaven may penetrate and vivify the whole mass of human society; that the tree of life may grow and spread, until all nations shall sit with delight beneath its shadow. Taught by the Spirit of truth, they rely upon the faithful word of Christ, who has unfolded before his vanity hopes so bright and glorious. *Error* may seem to prevail, and we may tremble for the truth. *Superstition* may encroach upon the simplicity of the gospel, and we may ask—Is the old paganism to revive? *Lukewarmness* may seem to steal over nominal Christians, and to paralyze the activities of the Churches. Yet the Christian is not daunted by these "signs of the times," distressing though they be. He can join in the triumphant chant, "We will not fear, though the earth

be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge!" When the infidel rejoices over what seem to him tokens of the decrepitude of the Church of Christ; when the atheist foretells the destruction of all religion, and the approach of the millennium of animalism; Christ's followers do not yield to fear. They remember that their Divine Lord has promised that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against" his Church. Its dead branches may be lopped off, and its living branches may be pruned; but life shall only be the more vigorous, and fruit the more abundant. The gold may be cast into the furnace, and the dross be consumed; but the precious metal shall only be refined and purified, and shall shine with brighter lustre, and be fitter for the Master's use.

III. Is there HOPE FOR HUMANITY? Is this race of man destined to deteriorate; is it doomed to remain for ever a prey to strife, to vice, to sin; or is it appointed to sure progress and to final happiness? Questions these which have disturbed many a sensitive and philanthropic mind; clouded many a generous, disinterested life with sorrow and with gloom. The *pessimism* which is a sort of fashion in some circles refuses to take any comfort in looking forward to the future of mankind. As the individual is of necessity unhappy, as life is of necessity a calamity, a disaster, and death the only alleviation, annihilation the only thing worth looking forward to; so for the race, composed of units thus unhappy, no destiny that is desirable can be in reserve. Progress is an illusion, and the general happiness a baseless dream. The Spirit of God—the God of hope—has taught the Christian a very different lesson from this. That Spirit encouraged Hebrew prophets of old to anticipate a universal reign of righteousness, knowledge, and peace. That Spirit directed evangelists and apostles to base, upon the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God, the broadest of all beliefs and the brightest of all hopes. That Spirit has sustained the faith and inspired the energy of Christ's people, amid the darkness of human ignorance, the din of human conflict, and the desolation of human despair. The omen of the birth of Christ and Christianity has not been falsified. The progress of the truth has been slow, the hindrances have been many, the corruptions and distortions have been serious. War, cruelty, slavery, vice, ignorance, brutality, are still scourging this human race. But no candid observer can say that the religion of Christ has attacked these evils in vain. And no Christian, convinced of the supernatural powers of his religion, can do other than bravely hope in the progress of enlightenment, the victory of righteousness, the reign of Christ.

"Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring!
Oh hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

"The promised time is hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its undimmed splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing!"

Observe *the richness and fulness* of the apostle's prayer: "That ye may *abound* in hope." This is an emotion which admits of many degrees. There are cases in which men say, "There is no hope!" and melancholy indeed was the inscription which the poet read over the infernal portals: "Leave every hope behind, all ye who enter here." Sometimes there is a little hope, a faint glimmer, as it were, to relieve the darkness. Hope can grow, as the dawn brightens into the morning. And hope can become a strong, happy, unhesitating persuasion, with no shade of anxiety, fear, or doubt. When the wish is uttered that we may "abound in hope," it is implied that hope is good, and so good that there is no possibility of our having too strong a hope.

Abundance is "more than enough;" and what is besought for Christ's people is the "full assurance of hope." This is a "living hope," a hope whose life is vigorous and vital; a "hope which maketh not ashamed," which is confident, and which produces happiness and peace. The Christian should be the possessor of such a hope. Let the unbeliever walk, if he will, in the twilight; it is for us to come out into the fulness of the noonday light. This we may enjoy, not through the power of reason, or of fancy, or of public opinion; but through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the Divine Spirit, and not a spirit of error or illusion, that prompts our hope. Hope is of God, and is in God; and such a hope may well be abundant. For there is no hope which he inspires which he cannot and will not satisfy; and when Divine fulness meets with human hope, our vessel is filled, and filled to overflowing, from the heavenly, the perennial spring.

Ver. 13.—*Hope.* Perhaps ordinary and even Christian moralists would not assign to hope the place which it occupies in the teaching of the apostle. But Paul had good reason for extolling and enjoining this beautiful and most inspiring and influential virtue. In this verse he sets forth—

I. THE SOURCE OF HOPE. His language is a prayer, and the prayer is addressed to "the God of hope." He is so called because there can be no true, well-founded, far-reaching hope which is not fixed on God, on his providential rule, on his gracious purposes, on his consolatory promises. He suggests and inspires hope; he justifies and expects hope; he approves and rewards hope. All true and worthy hope for ourselves and for others is fixed on God, centres in God.

II. THE POWER OF HOPE. The Holy Spirit is represented as the Agent by whose aid hope is experienced and enjoyed. When the spirit is downcast and sad, when the prospect is gloomy and dark, when human help seems far and feeble, then the Comforter brings near the grace of God, unveils a glorious prospect, and inspires a blessed confidence.

III. THE MEANS OF HOPE. If any one is bidden to cherish hope, he will reply, "Where is the ground upon which I may hope? By what means can I arise from the Slough of Despair?" The steps by which rational hope can be fostered are here described. 1. Believing; *i.e.* in Christ as the true Object of hope—"Christ our Hope." 2. Joy; *i.e.* the emotion produced by a believing appropriation of the blessings of the gospel—joy which may even rise to be "unspeakable, and full of glory." 3. Peace; *i.e.* another of the fruits of the Spirit, the growth from the root of Christian faith. A disturbed mind is a mind uncongenial to hope; tranquillity in the present is contributive to hopefulness as to the future.

IV. THE ABUNDANCE OF HOPE. When God gives, he gives liberally, royally. Observe in what respects the Christian's hope abounds. 1. For himself, his personal future being gilded with radiant, celestial light. 2. For the Church, that it shall arise and shine and fulfil the ministry it has received. 3. For the world, that it shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. 4. For both time and eternity.

Ver. 29.—*Fulness of blessing.* Commissioned and endowed as he was, the apostle might lawfully and confidently speak thus. Yet every minister of Christ may, in his measure, cherish the same assurance, and look forward to intercourse with those to whom he ministers with a similar expectation and hope.

I. THE ORIGIN AND GIVER OF BLESSING. The word "blessing" has something vague in it; yet this is because of its comprehensiveness. We cannot always be sure what is best to wish for on behalf of others; but we cannot err in seeking for them blessing from God. Poor and few are the gifts man can bestow upon his fellow-men; but "the blessing of God maketh rich, and with it he addeth no sorrow."

II. THE CHARACTER AND IMPORT OF BLESSING. What the apostle anticipates is "the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Here there opens up to us a boundless field, for in this are comprehended all that Christ can bestow, all that man can receive; *e.g.* Christ's blessing of peace, of life, spiritual and eternal, of confidence and hope, of purity and strength, of fellowship, of service.

III. THE MEASURE OF BLESSING. 1. Fulness corresponding to the Giver, whose riches and resources are inexhaustible. The expression "fulness" is a favourite one

with the apostle, and indicates his sense of the abundance of the gifts and promises of that new covenant which it was his privilege to explain to the Jews and the Gentiles. 2. Fulness for every applicant and partaker. The nature of each Christian is such that he is capable of receiving from the fulness of God in Jesus Christ. Consider the multitudes who have sought and found in the Mediator the supply for all their spiritual wants: and you will feel what a witness is such a fact to the infinite provision of Divine mercy and beneficence. 3. Fulness unexhausted and inexhaustible for each participant. When Paul came to a city, he had some conception of the immense variety of human need; and when he ministered to a congregation, he did so knowing that it contained individuals with many, varied, urgent, incessant needs—all to be supplied from the fulness which is in Jesus Christ. It is a most encouraging and inspiring thought that, whatever the heart may crave of blessing, may be surely appropriated and enjoyed upon application to God through Jesus Christ. The preacher may be but an earthen vessel; but the treasure he conveys is both priceless and inexhaustible.

IV. THE CONDITION AND OCCASION OF BLESSING. "When I come unto you." It appears that Christians meeting in fellowship are the means of such mercy to human souls. On the one hand, there is the faithful preacher and teacher of the Word; on the other hand, there are receptive and believing hearers of the Word. The Lord gives to the disciples, and the disciples distribute to the multitude.

V. THE ASSURANCE OF BLESSING. The language of Paul is very confident: "I am sure." Such a conviction must be based upon confidence in Divine declarations and promises, and upon past experience of Divine faithfulness and grace. Such persuasion, and the sober yet confident expression of it, are honouring to God.

APPLICATION. 1. Here is an example of the spirit in which bishops, pastors, and evangelists should approach those whose spiritual welfare is entrusted to their charge. 2. Here is also an example of the expectations which Christians should cherish when they place themselves under the influence of an enlightened and spiritual ministry.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 5, 13, 33.—*The Divine character in relation to the human.* "The God of patience and consolation;" "the God of hope;" "the God of peace." The great object of Christ's coming into the world was to save sinners. *He does this by revealing God.* He is Emmanuel, "God with us." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Christ reveals the Divine character. He reveals it in his teaching—the Divine holiness. He reveals it in his cross—the Divine mercy. He reveals it in his resurrection—the Divine power. Christ saves us also *by reproducing or restoring in us the image of God.* In the renewed nature God becomes part of us. He dwells in us and we in him. The law of heredity emphasizes the fact that children bear not only the bodily, but the mental and moral characteristics of their parents. The character of the parent reappears in the child. So the character of God reappears in his people. Three features of God's character St. Paul speaks of here, and wants his readers to think of them in relation to their own character and life.

I. THE GOD OF PATIENCE. 1. *The Divine Being manifests patience in waiting. He waits patiently for the fulfilment of his plans.* Thousands of years he waited for the sending of the Saviour. All that time he occupied in the training of Israel, and in the preparing of the nations, till, at the time when Jesus came, the world was ripe and ready for his coming. What a lesson for us! How impatient we are! If we do not see immediate results, we think our work is a failure. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." 2. *The Divine Being is patient in enduring.* How he bore with Israel, with all Israel's backsliding and repeated sins! How he bears with us, with our disobedience and our inconsistencies! His patience with us is in marked contrast with our impatience toward our fellow-men. How impatient we are with our subordinates or our fellow-workers, with the slowness and stupidity which they sometimes manifest! *Let us imitate the patience of God.* We need to learn how to bear with others. Strife is the result of impatience, of intolerance. Unity is the result of patience. This was the apostle's idea, and his

practical purpose in referring to the patience of God. "The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (ver. 5). Let us be patient in enduring all suffering and trial.

"Angel of patience! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling palm;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear;
The throbs of wounded pride to still,
And make our own our Father's will!

"There's quiet in that angel's glance,
There's rest in his still countenance!
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Nor wounds with words the mourner's ear;
But ills and woes he may not cure,
He kindly trains us to endure.

"O thou who mournest on the way
With longings for the close of day;
He walks with thee, that angel kind,
And gently whispers; 'Be resigned;
Bear up; bear on; the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.'"

II. THE GOD OF HOPE. *Nature is full of hope.* Day follows night. Spring follows winter.

"And ever upon old decay
The greenest mosses cling."

*The life of humanity is a life of hope.* We are always looking forward. The little child looks forward eagerly to its school-days. The boy or girl at school looks forward to the time of manhood or womanhood. In hope the young man leaves his father's roof. Hope leads the emigrant across the seas. *Yet nature and humanity unaided have no hope beyond the grave.* The ancient heathen had indeed their goddess of hope. But the lamp of hope flickered as old age came on, and expired with the last breath that left the body. The heathen symbol of death is the broken column, or the torch of life turned upside down. But our God is in truth *the God of hope.* Do we enjoy life? He tells us of a better life beyond. Is this world fair and beautiful? He tells us of a better country, even an heavenly. Are we weary with the toils and burdens of this life? He tells us that there remaineth a rest for the people of God. Hope in itself can hardly with strictness be called a part of the Divine character, any more than faith. But it is part of the Divine character, and peculiar to it, that he produces in the human heart hope of the life to come. Hence he is truly called "the God of hope." We see the impress and influence of his Divine hope on God's people in all ages. Abraham and the patriarchs "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And "they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The prophets in Israel's exile spoke of a hope which they knew they would never see fulfilled. The apostles and martyrs, and the missionaries of to-day, have laboured and suffered in hope. Here also is *the practical influence of the Divine character in relation to the human.* "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, *that ye may abound in hope*" (ver. 13). In sorrow; in adversity; in the day when the wicked seem to triumph, and injustice and oppression seem to gain the upper hand—Christians, hope on! The truth will prevail over falsehood and error; purity over impurity; righteousness over wickedness. Abound in hope!

"We hope in thee, O God,
In whom none hope in vain;
We cling to thee in love and trust,
And joy succeeds to pain."

*To the sinner also the message of Divine hope extends.* "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

III. THE GOD OF PEACE. "The God of peace be with you all" (ver. 33). Peace is essentially a part of the Divine character. No storms disturb his rest. No sinfulness is in his being, and therefore no conflict in his moral nature. If the God of peace is with us, then peace will pervade our own spirit and life. There will be not only the peace that comes from pardon, but also the peace that comes from the victory over indwelling and besetting sin. There is a striking phrase in the next chapter: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (ch. xvi. 20). If the God of peace is in our hearts, we shall cultivate peace with our fellow-men. "Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 11). Thus we see how profitable it is to contemplate the character of God, the God of patience, the God of hope, the God of peace, so that endurance and forbearance, hopefulness and joy, unity and peace, may be manifest in our lives.—C. H. I.

Vers. 7—27.—*The mutual relationship of Jews and Gentiles.* The apostle tries further to heal any existing differences between the various sections of the Christian community at Rome, and still further to enforce the duties of charity, self-denial, and mutual helpfulness, by reminding them of how much they have in common. This is the true method of uniting Christians. Some Christians think they will succeed in bringing others to their view of the truth by exposing the errors of those who differ from them. Consequently, we have bitter controversies between the various denominations, because Christians will persist in emphasizing the points on which they differ, rather than the points—often far more numerous and more important—on which they agree. To draw nearer to Christ, and to draw one another nearer to Christ, this is the true *eirenicon*.

I. THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST. "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us" (ver. 7). Both have been received by Christ: why not, then, by one another? Why should our views of Episcopacy or Presbytery, Calvinism or Arminianism, interfere with our relationship as brethren in Christ? St. Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles have a direct personal interest in Christ and relationship to him. "Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision" (ver. 8). Therefore the Jew should not look upon Jesus of Nazareth as an alien, but as his kinsman according to the flesh. He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil. But because he is a Jew, he is not, therefore, without an interest in the Gentiles. The apostle shows how even the Jewish writings looked forward to an incorporation of the Gentiles with the people of God, and to their sharing the blessings which the Messiah was to confer (vers. 10—12). "In him shall the Gentiles trust." How precious, then, should be the Name of Jesus to all the children of humanity! How the universal brotherhood of Christians is here enforced!

II. THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOSPEL. Not only was it predicted that both Jews and Gentiles would be joint partakers in the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, but in actual fact the gospel has come to both. St. Paul, who was himself a Jew, experienced the blessings of the gospel. He, in his turn, communicated those blessings to the Gentiles. He was "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God" (ver. 16). Truly, the gospel is a great reconciler. How it breaks down the prejudices of race and class and caste! Let the gospel only become a real, living power in our own heart and life, and we shall go forth, like St. Paul, to share its blessings with others, winning them by a spirit of love, no matter what our prejudices against them may have been.

III. THEIR DUTY OF MUTUAL HELPFULNESS. At the time of writing this Epistle St. Paul was on an errand which gave practical proof of the mutual sympathy between Gentile and Jewish Christians. He was on his way to Jerusalem (ver. 25). He was taking with him a contribution which the Gentile Christians of Macedonia and Achaia had made for their Jewish brethren at Jerusalem, who at this time were in poverty (ver. 26). He takes the occasion to say that this act of generosity, cheerfully performed, was indeed a Christian duty. "For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (ver. 27). *Here is a reason for missionary efforts among the Jews.* They have been the channel through which blessings have flowed to us: shall we not be the channel through which the blessings of the gospel shall flow to them? *Here is a reason for the*

*support of the Christian ministry.* It is wise and prudent that those who are to be teachers and preachers of the Word, and pastors of the flock, should devote themselves to that work only. How, then, are they to be supported? By the generosity of those to whom they minister. If the latter are "partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." Such mutual helpfulness all Christians ought to cultivate towards one another.—C. H. I.

Ver. 29.—*An apostle's confidence.* St. Paul has been stating his plans as regards the future, and especially regarding his intended visit to Rome. There is much that is uncertain. But one thing was a certainty to him. "I am sure that, when I come to you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Had Paul any grounds for this expectation? Was his confidence warranted by facts? Let us see. About two years after this he came to Rome a prisoner. What was his chief occupation then? Preparing his defence? No. "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii. 31). There were two elements in his confident expectation.

I. HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL. "The fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." St. Paul felt that the best blessing he could bring to any city, or any people whom he visited, was the blessing of the gospel. Four features in the gospel have made it a blessing to the world. 1. *It is a gospel of love and mercy.* This was a new message to the world. What a contrast to the cruel gods of heathenism is the merciful God whom the gospel proclaims! 2. *It is a gospel of salvation.* It not only shows us the evil of sin and the guilt of it, but it tells us of a Saviour. Here is its transcendent superiority over the best of the heathen religions. Not only so, but the Saviour of whom it speaks is a Divine Saviour. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through him. 3. *It is a gospel of everlasting life.* What hopes it opens up! What a stimulus it gives us to exertion to remember that they that are faithful unto death shall receive the crown of life that fadeth not away! It teaches us that this life is eternal in its consequences, and thus exercises a purifying and elevating influence upon the lives of men. What comfort it brings to the bereaved to know that the grave does not end all, but that there is another and a better life beyond! The hope of the agnostic has recently been expressed in a popular novel, 'John Ward, Preacher.' The heroine expresses her hope for the future by speaking of it as "an eternal sleep." Where is the stimulus to exertion there? Where is there any comfort for the bereaved? When death is drawing nigh, the dying Christian and those who are to be left behind can appreciate the blessing of that gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. 4. *It is a gospel of light and guidance.* It points out to us the path of duty. It gives us not only wise precepts, but the personal example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here also it transcends all human systems of religion and morality. The best of human teachers have not been free from imperfection and sin. Christ alone can truly say, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." He alone has the right to say to us—a right vindicated not only by his Divine authority, but by his perfect character—"Follow me." The influence of Jesus Christ and his example is one of the most precious blessings of the gospel. In the year 1876 the centennial of the United States was celebrated. General Grant was then president. The editors of the *Sunday School Times* wrote to him, requesting him to give them a message for children and youth in their centennial number. In his reply he said, "My advice to Sunday schools, no matter of what denomination, is—*Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties, write its precepts on your hearts, and practise them in your lives.* To the influence of this book are we indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future." He, too, had confidence in the gospel, and in the blessings which it brings to the individual and the nation.

II. HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE CHRISTIAN'S POWER TO COMMUNICATE THIS BLESSING. The apostle's words express not only his belief in the blessing of the gospel, but also his confidence that he can and will communicate that blessing. "I am sure that, when I come to you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." And yet it was not a confidence in self, in his own learning or eloquence. It was a

confidence in Christ. He knew whom he had believed. Twenty-five years he had been serving him, and he had more than once proved the Divine power of Christ's presence and help. *Our power to communicate the blessings of the gospel depends on two things.* 1. *A personal knowledge of the gospel.* 2. *Constant communion with Christ.* A life of prayer is indispensable if we would live a life of usefulness. These two things, personal knowledge of the gospel and personal communion with Christ, will make us independent of time and circumstances. They impart strength and confidence. *It was all the same to St. Paul how or when he went to Rome.* As if he said, "No matter how, no matter when I come to you, one thing I am sure of, that I shall bring the rich blessing of Christ's gospel with me." As a matter of fact, he came there as a prisoner, but even thus he brought a blessing. Whether we are rich or poor, learned or unlearned, we shall be sure to carry a blessing to the circles in which we move, if only we have first of all experienced the power of the gospel in our own hearts, and then realize our constant dependence upon Christ. *There are two ways in which we can communicate this blessing.* 1. *By our Christian character.* The Corinthian Christians became living epistles (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). Their changed life was a remarkable testimony to the power of the gospel. 2. *By our personal testimony.* If we know by personal experience the preciousness of Christ and the blessings of the gospel, let us be more ready to proclaim them to others.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—13.—*Union in God.* Here, as Godet says, "the particular question treated in ch. xiv. broadens; the point of view rises, and the tone is gradually heightened even to the elevation of a hymn, as at the end of all the great parts preceding (ch. v. 12, *et seq.*; viii. 31, *et seq.*; xi. 33, *et seq.*). Paul first exhorts, by the example of Christ, to mutual condescension (vers. 1—3); he points out (vers. 4—7), as an end to be reached, the common adoration to which such conduct will bring the Church; finally (vers. 8—13), he indicates the special part given to Jews and to Gentiles in this song of the whole redeemed race." It is not now so much the particular question which has just been dealt with, as the whole question of which that was but a part, viz. the relation of a free, spiritual Christianity to the more or less Judaic Christianity of some, to which the apostle here directs his words. They are to be of one mind, that they may with one mouth glorify God.

I. A MUTUAL LOVE. The strong ought to show their strength by bearing the infirmities of the weak. And not only will their strength thus be most perfectly shown, but the love, which is more than strength. For this love is the law of the new life. Shall we then please ourselves, by pluming ourselves on our liberty, our superior faith? Nay, rather, we must seek, in love, to please our neighbour. But not merely as pleasing him, though this is an end to be sought; but as pleasing him in harmony with all right principle, viz. for his good, unto edifying. There must be the desire to contribute comfort, joy; but, above this, and as controlling all else, the desire to contribute to his building up in holiness and love. And what is our great inspiration to this helpfulness of sacrificing love? We have the mind of Christ! Did he please himself? How, then, had we been saved? Nay, rather, for our sake he gave up all. In him was seen pre-eminently the spirit of sacrifice expressed in the ancient words, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me." And as generally the ancient Scriptures were written that we might also endure all things for God's sake, being comforted of God, and so have hope of the perfect salvation at last, ought we not in this particular respect to make the sacrifice required, bearing even the weak scruples of our brethren, that together, through God's comfort, we may have hope of heaven? Yes, we must be "of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus."

II. A COMMON PRAISE. What shall be the result of loving like-mindedness, in which all differences are sunk? A glorifying of God, with one accord. And the one united psalm shall be but the expression of one common thanksgiving, filling the hearts of all, for the love wherewith God hath loved them. Is not this the end of all God's redeeming work, that all should join in loving praise to God, being redeemed with one common redemption—a praise shown forth, not only with the lips, but in the lives? So should all things be made new. To this end was Christ's work, that Jew and Gentile together might be saved by a true and merciful God. The ancient Scriptures foresaw this grand result, the blending of Gentile and Jewish praise in one large harmony. So David's

declaration (Ps. xviii. 49); so the invitation of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 43); so again the psalmist (Ps. cxvii. 1); and so Isaiah's prophecy of hope: all of which could find their true fulfilment only in such a loving union of the Jewish and Gentile world in the glad service of their one God and Christ as now filled the apostle's view.

One chief guarantee of the mutual love and common praise shall be the united hope of a perfect salvation. Let them look to God for this, and he shall grant them a faith, and a realized power of God through faith, which shall give them joy and peace now, amid whatever outward disturbances, as being the pledge of all things good guaranteed to us for that future. So should their songs abound; so should their hearts be one: praise helping love, and love helping praise, and God all in all!—T. F. L.

Vers. 14—33.—*Farewell words.* The apostle in these verses touches, as at the first (see ch. i. 1—15), on his personal relations to the Church at Rome. And he reintroduces the subject with much delicate courtesy. He may have seemed to be speaking somewhat boldly, to have assumed a knowledge and goodness superior to theirs: not so! They, he was sure, were "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge," and therefore "able to admonish one another." But he might at least remind them of what they knew; and this, not by any superiority of himself to them, but only by the grace of God; not as a better or wiser Christian man, but as an apostle commissioned by God. We have here set forth, then, much as before, his apostleship, his purpose respecting them, and his request for their prayers on his behalf. By this last, again, with much delicacy, making prominent his dependence on them, rather than theirs on him.

I. His APOSTLESHIP. He was put in trust by God with the gospel for the Gentiles. And his fulfilment of this trust was as a priestly service, which he should perform, not proudly, but faithfully. And what a service! ministering the gospel in this great temple of the new kingdom, that he might offer up as a sacrifice the whole Gentile world! His thoughts, perhaps, revert to the words he has used in ch. xii. 1; and what a vision greets his view as he looks into the future—all the kindreds, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues of this manifold world, praising God with the harmonious psalm of a consecrated life, offering themselves a living sacrifice! Better this than all the bleeding victims of the older dispensation; all man's intellect and affection and energy of action, all science and art, all industry and commerce, all the multifarious activities of all lives, offered to God! And this was his work, to minister the gospel that the offering might be made, acceptable because sanctified by the Holy Ghost. He would glory in such a work as this, for Christ's sake! For all was through Christ, and the great work already done was only Christ's work.

II. His PURPOSE. Now, there was one aim which governed him in the fulfilment of this work—he would preach the gospel only where it was not known before. Thus from place to place he went, proclaiming the glad tidings to those who had not heard. And hence to this present, having so much room for such work in those eastward parts, he had been hindered from visiting Rome. Now the hindrance was removed: he had "no more any place in these regions." And still impelled by the constraining purpose to preach the gospel to those "to whom no tidings of him came," he must now turn westwards, even to Spain. And, in passing to Spain, there is every reason why he should pause for mutual refreshment, as he delicately puts it, amongst a people who were, indirectly at least, the fruit of his labours—the Christians at Rome. And coming to them, he would come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ.

III. His REQUEST. But, meanwhile, there is another mission to fulfil—the mission of charity to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Prominence of this matter among the Churches (see 1 Cor. xvi.; Acts xx. 4). Probable cause of necessity, withholding of custom from Christians on the part of their fellow-Jews. Mere charity demanded that help should be given; and not only so, the Gentiles were bound in honour to pay, as it were, in this way, a debt they owed; for their salvation was "of the Jews." But what further constrained Paul to be urgent in this matter was his desire that the charity of the Gentile Churches might overcome all the prejudices that still subsisted amongst the Jewish Christians against the full and free admission of the Gentiles into the Christian Church. And for this, and also for his own security amongst many enemies, he asks the prayers of the Christians at Rome. Then he shall come to them

in joy, and find rest. In any case, be he troubled or not, may the God of peace be with them!

So does he exemplify, by his yearning love and courtesy of love, the spirit which he seeks to foster in them; so does he, as he would have them do, refer all his doings to the Lord Christ and the will of God. Most surely the God of peace was with him!—T. F. L.

Vers. 3, 4.—*Unselfishness.* That alliance is beneficial which lends the aid of the strong to bear the burdens of the weak. Sympathy renders this possible by its real participation in another's distress. Sometimes the infirmities of others are succoured by yielding up our own gratification, or by restricting our own liberty in order not to shock the scruples of the less enlightened. What is our guide in such cases? The reply is—To live in the spirit of Christ, to walk as he walked.

I. CHRIST HAS INTRODUCED INTO MORALS A BEAUTIFUL MODEL AND A POWERFUL MOTIVE. His pattern life is best appreciated by comparing it with ancient heathen manners. The impossibility of inventing such an ideal is the proof of the genuineness of the Gospel narratives. The story is vivid and consistent because a record of fact. An example instructs more than any prolixity of statement or precept. Lecturers know this by their illustrations and experiments. It is one thing to hear of truth, goodness, beauty, from the lips of Plato; quite another to see it live and breathe before our eyes. Cicero could describe the "perfect man" according to his conceptions of perfection; Christ alone exemplified it. And the relationship of Christ to his followers, as not only Teacher but Saviour, imparts tenfold force to his example. He has definite claims upon our obedience, and dearest links of love bind us to the imitation of our Master. His life on earth has been a stream irrigating the parched desert, and has taught us how to make canals of philanthropic benevolence, deriving their idea and element from the river of his love. In fanatical Jerusalem and luxurious Antioch, in philosophic Athens and pleasure-loving Corinth, in colonial Philippi and imperial Rome, this river of grace proved its power to fertilize and beautify. And to-day we trace a likeness to Christ in the missionary, content to dwell in malarial swamps, and yield his life for the salvation of the degraded; in the tired mother cheerfully continuing at her household toil whilst she uplifts her thoughts to the Redeemer; and in the Church officer leaving his comfortable fireside after his day's work is done to minister to a brother in sickness. In the repression of a hasty word and biting sarcasm, in the gift unostentatiously placed in the hands of the poor, we behold reflected the self-sacrifice of Christ.

II. THE FEATURE OF CHRIST'S LIFE ON WHICH STRESS IS HERE LAID. He was unselfish; he "pleased not himself." This does not imply that he felt no personal pleasure in his mission of mercy. "I delight to do thy will, O my God." But: 1. *He sought not to promote his own ease and comfort, but the edification of others.* He would not pander to vitiated taste; he taught what men most needed to know, not what gratified the vanity of his hearers, though he, thereby aroused their enmity and created the storm which burst in wrath upon his head. At great cost of physical labour and spiritual weariness he performed works of love. See him asleep from fatigue in the heaving vessel, and fainting under the load of his cross. 2. *He glorified not himself, but the work he came to accomplish.* He might have summoned angels to his side, he might have led an uprising of the populace, have overawed the rulers, and selected the wisest and wealthiest as his companions and disciples. But the truth was more than all to him. His meat and drink were to do the will of his Father. He had left for this the splendour of the upper realms, and stooped to the form of a servant, and the obedience of a shameful, agonizing death.

III. TO FOLLOW CHRIST IS TO MAKE THE OLD TESTAMENT A WELLSPRING OF PATIENCE AND HOPE. The persecution which Christ met with showed him treading in the steps of Scripture heroes. The language of the psalmist is quoted by the apostle as typically expressing the lot of Christ. The chief pangs of a devoted life are caused by the opposition of an ungodly world. Our Lord exposed the hollow pretensions of the Jewish religionists by declaring that true love to God in the heart would listen to the teachings of his Son, would acknowledge in him the promised Messiah, and would recognize in his deeds the echo of the Scriptures. It fortifies Christian sufferers to

know that they are in the line of the faithful. No new thing hath happened, for the same afflictions were accomplished in our brethren before. If, then, others have bravely endured and maintained their confidence, so may we. And the ancient writings testify that men, in pleasing God and serving their day and generation, realized true satisfaction, an inward peace and joy indestructible. So we, too, may discover that the road to happiness is holy self-denial. We are slow to learn that the bitter rind covers grateful fruit, that death is the gate to life, and humility the stepping-stone to honour. Obedience prepares us to wield authority; and to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing is to prove how inseparably the kingdom of God and our own good are combined. Miserly selfishness overreaches itself; the restricted heart dies of inanition. He who will always get from others knows not the blessedness of giving. The wine of Christian charity flushes the spirit with a generous emotion, pure and God-like, the nectar of the skies.—S. R. A.

Ver. 7.—*Warm-hearted Christian courtesy.* Many points of dispute arose in Churches composed of Jews and Gentiles. Not easily or joyfully could Jewish Christians throw off the trammels formed by the habits and traditions of ages, and welcome the admission into the new brotherhood on equal terms of men who had never been trained to compunction on account of ceremonial regulations neglected. Like the mother in the days of Solomon, more anxious for the safety of her child than for the strict settlement of a legal problem, the apostle was concerned for the welfare and peace of the community. He would have both parties waive their rights, and unite in holy fellowship instead of holding aloof. A chief part of our modern difficulties consists in the proper treatment of others, especially of our fellow-Christians. More anxiety, embarrassment, sin, is displayed here than in any other direction. The ancient matters of controversy do not perhaps trouble us, though signs are not wanting on the horizon of clouds no bigger than a man's hand which may at any time overspread the sky and disturb the harmony of the Churches. We still need guidance lest trivial differences in thought and behaviour should estrange us from one another. Let us look at the rule of behaviour laid down. It is contained in those golden words, the pivot of Christian conduct, "Even as Christ also." Our treatment of others is to resemble Christ's behaviour towards us. Here is the path we are to tread, and the source of skill and strength to enable us to proceed therein.

I. CHRIST RECEIVES MEN GLADLY. Not reluctantly, but heartily, with outstretched arms and promise of blessing. See this evinced in the Gospel narratives. He was moved with compassion toward the multitudes; gave royal invitations—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;" "Come unto me, all ye that labour." This can be verified in our own experience; for Christ lives and rules over our hearts and lives, dispenses his favours freely; and the peace and joy that filled our hearts in trusting him were the testimony of his delight, the fire descending from heaven to certify the acceptance of our sacrifice. Contrast Christ's interest in Saul's conversion with the latter's cool reception by the Church at Jerusalem, where the apostle had been abandoned to utter neglect but for Barnabas. The kingdom of God is no close corporation, like a city company, afraid of its membership growing too large for the spoils to be divided; or a House of Lords, where a large influx lessens individual importance. But our desire must be for the Church to increase till it sways the globe. Our Christian societies should be as a fostering greenhouse to young life, or as a warm bath that dissipates spiritual rheumatism, where the outside chill may be forgotten, and men may flee from a hostile crowd to a sanctuary of peace and love.

II. CHRIST RECEIVES MEN IN SPITE OF THEIR IMPERFECTIONS Though sin-stained and despairing of righteousness, helpless with frequent falls, ignorant with a dulness which is realized more each day, yet our worthlessness was not spurned by the Saviour. For this reason he drew us to himself, to heal and save us, to instruct and improve us, to develop into maturity any latent germ of good. He sees what men may become under genial influences—the image of God renewed; the dry stick swelling into life and blossom; the plot of barren ground a garden. If we wait till our brethren are faultless, we shall have little communion this side of heaven. If they are not as cultured or as large-hearted, all the more do they need our stimulating converse; and if not doctrinally perfect, they will learn.

III. CHRIST RECEIVES MEN IMPARTIALLY, making no invidious distinctions. This was Peter's argument for the admission of the Gentiles (Acts xi. 17; xv. 9). One presented at court may demand the countenance of any ambassador; for whom the sovereign hath received, all her servants must honour. Whom Christ hath admitted to his grace we are bound to acknowledge. *The Saviour on earth demanded sincerity* in would-be followers. This is the explanation of any apparent sternness. He would have none enter on a Christian career without counting the cost, and showing a whole-hearted readiness to obey. Feeble faith, if genuine, he never refused to bless. Hypocrisy, delusion, he pitilessly unmasked; but trembling seekers he smiled upon with Divine encouragement. Why distrust his magnanimity now? Why fear a scornful rejection of your prayers and service?

IV. CHRIST REGARDS IN ALL THINGS THE GLORY OF GOD. Note his constant reference to the Father's will. He preached that misunderstandings respecting God might be cleared away. He relieved and cheered the suffering that they might know and praise the mercy of God. He gave his life that the dark shadow of human guilt might no longer eclipse the glory of the Divine government. The end cometh, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, having subjected all things to God. And through him the same principle actuates his disciples. It is men who have some noble end in view that can rise above petty meannesses and jealousies, caring no longer for personal rank and power, content to be abased if thereby the kingdom of God may be advanced. The zeal of God's house consumes the fleshly, ease-loving, envious "me," and substitutes a bright blaze of pure, affectionate solicitude for God and man. There are doubtless seasons when individual dignity must be asserted; there is no season when it is not in place to consider the glory of God. That glory includes our own highest good. It is no car of Juggernaut trampling on the devotees; any contradiction is on the surface merely, and in the future life a lasting reconciliation shall be seen established between man's satisfaction and the authority of his Maker.—S. R. A.

Ver. 13.—*Hopefulness prayed for.* The sense of a passage is clearer if the connection with the context be ascertained. The Revised Version, by translating the same root-word in the same manner, enables the reader to take up the thread of thought from the twelfth verse. Guests introduced to the same host are placed on terms of fellowship with each other. So Jew and Gentile had been received by Jesus Christ, in whom the veracity of God towards the Jews had been confirmed, and his mercy displayed towards the Gentiles. Thus both could unite in praising God, as had been predicted by the Law, the Psalms, and the prophets. "In him shall the Gentiles *hope*." And this leads the apostle to utter the supplication of the text.

I. THE TITLE GIVEN TO GOD. "The God of hope." The names of God in the Scriptures emphasize his personality and close relationship with his creatures more than any designations in philosophy or mythology. He has established a plan of salvation which is the substantial warrant for hope, and, besides this objective provision, does himself inspire hope subjectively in his people. The bestowment of every grace is attributed to him. Naturally does the apostle, in his anxiety for the hopefulness of Christians, invoke a blessing from the God of hope. Our prayers are fashioned according to our conception of the Hearer of prayer. Hope concerns two things—what we desire, and what we anticipate. When either of these characteristics is absent, hope fails. And we are not to imagine that hope belongs only to us limited beings; for though to the omniscient eye the future is visible, God, like ourselves, cherishes confident expectations. He, too, welcomes the era when his fair dominions shall not be defiled with sin. He is as much delighted with the prospect of triumphant grace as any of us can be. If we wonder why the period is not hastened, the solution is to be found in the nature of man. Forcibly to overcome man's power of resistance would be to destroy the plant in the moment of its flowering, or to crush the drowning in the very act of rescue. The trophies of redemption are to be monuments of moral suasion. The kingdom spreads not by sword and garments rolled in blood, but by the kindling of the fuel of love in the heart of man. What an idea of the patience of the Almighty is presented in the myriad ages through which this earth has been slowly prepared for the residence of man! We are like children, who cannot wait cheerfully for the coming feast; we lose heart if the chariot delays.

II. THE PRAYER. "Fill you with all joy and peace in believing." *We may lawfully seek*, not only to obey the precepts, but *to enjoy the comforts of the gospel.* True, the gospel ideal is blessedness rather than happiness; yet its intent is to bring present serenity and gladness, not to leave us all our life trembling in doubt. It is a remedy for present ills, a foretaste of coming bliss. Peace and joy are virtues; there is no merit attached to disquiet and mournfulness. *Faith is the ground of peace and joy*, or the instrument through which God communicates these blessings. "In believing" is put for the whole of Christian conduct. Expect peace and joy whilst you hold fast to the message which imparted glad tranquillity at the first, whilst you remember the obligations and partake of the privileges of the gospel. Without faith, joy and peace can no more enter the soul than hunger and thirst can be relieved without eating and drinking. Faith grows by exercise, mounts aloft on experience like the vine on the trellis. It is not honourable to be for ever questioning the credibility of Christ. Faith knocks at the door and gains admittance into the mansion of light and song; unbelief examines the door, and questions the resources of the palace. When our right to our inheritance is challenged, we may examine again the title-deeds; but it is not in the law courts that we learn to prize our possessions. *The prayer of the text teaches not to rest content with meagre supplies.* How exuberant the apostle's language! "*Fill* you with *all* peace," etc. There is joy of every kind arising from service and communion—joy intellectual and emotional; joy in our own advance and in the widening bounds of the kingdom of Christ. We are too apt to sink to a certain level of monotony. Our course is circular, too seldom spiral reaching upwards.

III. THE END IN VIEW. "That ye may abound in hope." Here again see the spiritual vehemence of the apostle. He knew that every Gentile believer cherished hope; but he would have this hope to abound in every season, under every circumstance. Some Christians, like birds in an eclipse of the sun, are sure that the shades betoken night. Now, the Christian who is rich in peace and joy cannot help reasoning from the present to the future; his ecstasy tints every cloud with roseate hues. He is youthful in spirit, lives in a

> ". . . boyhood of wonder and hope,
> Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope."

Hope is imprinted on his countenance, radiates from every action. Advancing age brings him nearer the westering sun; there is a rich ripeness of harvest glory. Two old men, alike in everything else but in the possession of this buoyant expectancy, are really wide as the poles asunder. The one laments that he has seen the best of his days; the other has something better than the best to prepare for. Christian hope is set on an excellent object, rests on a stable foundation, works a purifying, elevating gladness. The hope desired for the Romans was a collective hope, to be fostered as a common solace and strength. Only by dwelling in harmony could it produce its proper fruits. There should be no panic amongst the followers of Christ—hence the importance of the prayer.

IV. THE CONDITION EXPRESSED. "Through the power of the Holy Ghost." The human condition was "believing;" the Divine is the energy of the Spirit. And since he dwells in believers, his aid may surely be reckoned on. This hope, therefore, is neither painted in water nor written in dust. It is not made so much dependent on our reasonings or struggles as on that life from God which is the answer to all man's pleas and excuses. He says, "I am weak, I cannot." God says, "I will pour my Spirit upon you." How vast the difference between the dull, timid disciples and the same when "filled with the Spirit"—enthusiastic, vigorous, ready to preach and to take joyfully the spoiling of their persons and property! Let our cry be, "Come, Holy Spirit, come!" Breathe about our wintry chills, scatter our darkness, raise our plane of thought and feeling!—S. R. A.

Ver. 27.—*Debts pleasurably paid.* The ties formed by the reception of the gospel exhibited the expulsive power of a new affection to cast out national jealousies and antipathies. Macedonians and Achaians united in solicitude for their destitute fellow-believers in Jerusalem and in an active endeavour to send them relief. Stronger than the bonds of kinship and race were the new feelings of attraction to each other through their relationship to the one Saviour.

I. EVERY BENEFIT RECEIVED LAYS US UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO OUR BENEFACTORS. As stewards of the gospel the saints in Judæa had betrayed their trust if guilty silence restrained their lips from communicating to the world the panacea revealed for human ill. But this fact did not set the Greeks free from indebtedness to the Churches which, recognizing their responsibility, had sent to them the message of life. Whatever the reason that has procured us some kindness or favour, gratitude is incumbent upon us. Not to acknowledge it betrays baseness of soul. And the greatest benefits are those pertaining to our spiritual well-being. These are nobler, more satisfying, more lasting than any treasures of gold or marble, any appeasing of temporal hunger or nakedness, or any rescue from earthly distress or danger. The knowledge, the consolation, the stimulus which a missionary, a teacher, or a pastor imparts are of incomparable value. Is it a matter for wonder that, in return for spiritual gifts, men bestow of their carnal things? Those who clamour for a cheap ministry display woeful inappreciation of the riches of Christ. The return which our Lord demands for his own self-sacrifice is that his servants and brethren be honourably treated and succoured. He still regards his poor; hence our collections at the Lord's Supper.

II. TO THE RIGHT-MINDED THE DISCHARGE OF SUCH AN OBLIGATION IS A SOURCE OF PLEASURE. Not in order to get rid of any sense of liability; this would be mean, even if possible; but we are glad of an opportunity of visibly certifying our gratitude. The outward expression of any inward feeling is a delight. A generous emotion ministers a pure joy, which ever seeks for ways and means of demonstration. The memory of Christ's gift of himself to us bestirs us to seek out worthy objects, needy souls on whom the mantle of charity may fittingly fall. "He became poor for our sakes." The disinclination to give liberally melts away under the impulse of Divine love. Men who grudge the demands of the tax-collector will voluntarily, cheerfully contribute to the dissemination of Christian truth.

> "The poorest poor
> Long for some moments in a weary life
> When they can know and feel that they have been
> Themselves, the fathers and the dealers out
> Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
> As needed kindness; for this single cause,
> That we have all of us one human heart."

That is the office of religion to make the stern face of duty break forth into a smile. The task blossoms into a joy; one kind act prompts to further and larger benevolence.

III. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE REQUITAL MUST BE MEASURED BY OUR RESOURCES AND THE WANTS OF OTHERS. God provides for his family by the mutual interdependence and assistance of the members thereof. Whilst unlimited competition and the survival of the strongest tend to make life a battle of hell, unrestricted helpfulness blesses every heart and land. The Christian law of supply and demand is designed to correct the injuries and supplement the deficiencies of close-fisted political economy. Power is, rightly understood, a capacity to help, not a weapon of destruction to the weak. The men of leisure can visit the sick and suffering; the rich have ability to relieve the needy; and the cultured may bestow on others the results of their mental diligence. "Such as I have give I you." "It is accepted according to that a man hath." As the world is one great market supplied by every land, so the special distress of one country appeals to all for relief. "We do not well, if this be a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."—S. R. A.

Ver. 29.—*A promised visit.* A great writer in her preface to a story of Florence pictures an inhabitant revisiting his city after four centuries. He notes many changes. The towers and walls are gone; different questions are mooted in trade, scholarship, and politics; garments of altered texture and form are worn. But as the sunlight and shadows are the same, so the dawn still breaks upon rosy sleeping children and hard-handed labourers arising to their toil; the same chants are sung in the churches, and the faces of worshippers still turn to the same image of Divine anguish for a beneficent end. Like the river-courses which shape the lives of men, so those other currents which ebb and flow in human hearts have scarcely altered, pulsating to the same needs, the same great loves and terrors. The broad features of the moral landscape

altor not. It is this essential sameness of the human lot which lends to the Bible perennial interest. We have the same battle to fight, the same need of divinely instructed wisdom and divinely furbished weapons. We are taking the same journey as ancient heroes, and share their perplexities and convictions.

I. AN INTENSE LONGING. The apostle frequently alluded to his desire to visit Rome and see the brethren there. Aquila and Priscilla must often have conversed with him respecting the famous city, and the vast influx of strangers to be witnessed there continually. The apostle had high hopes kindled in his breast, thoughts of the metropolis as the "pulpit" of the world. The words of a speaker amid the seven hills would, like the faith of the disciples there, be trumpeted to every part of the globe. After some years the apostle resolved to carry his desire into effect (see Acts xix.). This Epistle offers explanations of the circumstances which had hitherto prevented the realization of the wish. Here is *a lesson of patient submission to the guidance of God.* Whilst doors of entrance and utterance were opening in the East, and the Gentiles were becoming obedient by word and deed, the Holy Spirit plainly signified that fields so ripe for the sickle must not be deserted. Let those impatient for another sphere of labour beware lest through some burning impulse they neglect the crops ready to the reaper's hands. The wider scope may be presented hereafter. We learn, too, *the apostle's missionary method.* He liked not to build on another's foundation. He chose of two regions the one most like fallow ground. He loved to evangelize rather than proselytize, and whilst unoccupied territory was near it did not seem right to visit a Church where Christ had been already proclaimed. It is matter for thankfulness that denominations and missionary societies are beginning to recognize the evil and sin of overlapping agencies and districts. Note *the apostle's justification of his desire* to see Rome. He intended to make it not his terminus, but a temporary resting-place, and a starting-point for further excursions. His eager vision beheld Churches rising in the furthest western limits of Europe, his ear caught the sounds of prayer and praise soon to ascend from countries debased by superstition and vice. The victories won over Satan in Asia Minor and Greece he hoped to repeat in Italy and Spain. He perhaps projected tours through France, for to this Christian warrior, as to Alexander of Macedon, there could be no rest as long as there were kingdoms, if not conquered, at least unassailed. Oh for more of this crusading spirit, this holy ambition!

II. AN UNCERTAINTY as to the time of the expected visit. "When I come." There seemed no reason why Paul should not proceed to Rome immediately after the Pentecostal feast at Jerusalem. But he saw a cloud arising which contained the materials for a storm, though in what way it would burst, or whether it might not pass over, he could not foresee. He knew the vindictive watchfulness of "them that did not believe in Judæa," enemies who never forgave his desertion of their cause. The story in the Acts tells how his suspicions were confirmed by the predictions of Agabus, and how the apostle's yielding to the excessive caution of the saints furnished an occasion for the fury of the fanatical Jews. Imprisonment and shipwreck lay on the apostle's course, and when ultimately his wish to visit the metropolis was gratified, he entered as a prisoner with a prospect of a wearisome captivity. How strangely the hoped-for differed from the actual! Nor is it by any means rare to find the fruition of our hopes attended with far other than the bright-hued environment imagination forecasted. Plans are executed, the projected castles built, the rank secured, the home obtained, yet the accompaniments vary *in toto* from those anticipated. Sometimes we have asked selfishly, and the cup petitioned has held a bitter potion indeed. Yet the Christian may say confidently, "The will of the Lord be done." There are times when our Master leads his servants purposely through flood and flame. Then be it ours like Paul to accept the post of honour and bravely do our best.

III. A FULL ASSURANCE that his arrival would be fraught with good. "I know that I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ." 1. *He would enter the city as a messenger of Christ.* Not for purposes of pleasure and sight-seeing, but as the bearer of sacred tidings would he in any case approach Rome. Along the Appian Way had many a renowned general returned laden with the spoils of conflict, many an orator and philosopher had passed through the gates, but none more honoured by posterity than this servant of Christ. When seeking our own ends we may ever doubt of a celestial convoy, but when seeking the things of Christ, the ambassador of Christ shall

be treated as such. 2. *He could not conceive of the absence of that spiritual power which had thus far attended him.* "Lo, I am with you alway," was the promise. Like Joseph in Potiphar's house, and the ark in the house of Obed-Edom, a true man of God brings a blessing where'er he sojourns. Who should separate the apostle from the love and equipment of his Lord? To rely on this is not presumption, but God-honouring confidence. 3. *No scanty measure of spiritual gifts ever satisfied or was expected by this devoted labourer.* He made little mention of tongues and healing, of priestly functions and intellectual displays; he looked to the blessing which maketh endlessly, joyously rich; that knowledge, proclamation, and practice of the gospel which bears fruit unto eternal life. Next to the presence of the Lord himself the advent of a faithful minister profits our gatherings. With what delight, like members of a family long separated, would these primitive Christians confer on the holy theme of the new faith! Let our anxiety be not to fritter away time in idle gossip, but to make each other wiser and better for the meeting. If we more often expected seasons when, like the river Jordan in harvest-time, our hearts should be filled to overflowing, the testimony would more frequently rejoice us: "It was good to be there." Prepare the vessels for the fulness of the blessing which alone can banish poverty and weakness of the spirit. This conviction did not preclude the apostle from requesting the prayers of the Church for the fulfilment of his beloved project. To our short-sighted reason it is unnecessary to pray to the Father who orders all things aright. But our conclusion is based on too narrow premisses; there are other ends subserved by prayer. It has respect to the plans of the Almighty and the character of his creatures. Prayer is one of the laws of the kingdom, and "effectual fervent prayer availeth much."—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—13.—*The Christ-like duty of pleasing our neighbour.* Having just counselled the strong to defer as far as possible to the consciences of the weak, the apostle continues the subject in the thirteen verses now before us. He urges as the principle of the Christian life, not self-pleasing, but neighbour-pleasing. He limits this, of course, by the condition of edification. In short, a Christian is to be a *public* character, regulating his life by the spiritual interests of all around him. In this respect he will be following Christ.

I. THE PLEASING OF OTHERS, NOT THE PLEASING OF OURSELVES, IS TO BE THE RULE OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIVING. Now, this does not mean: 1. *Popularity-hunting.* For this is securing a selfish end by means of gratifying our neighbours. It is self-pleasing in a subtle and deceptive shape. It is self-pleasing, even though it may involve the degradation of our neighbour. And it does mean: 2. *The conciliation and even humouring of our neighbour with a view to his edification.* This is real love, going all lengths to serve and edify a neighbour. We will bear with him, even humour him, with the thoroughly unselfish end of securing his edification. It is the very essence of *public service.* What a contrast it presents to the self-seeking which, alas! goes on among men under the name of public services!

II. IN THIS LIFTING UP OF OUR FELLOWS WE SHALL BE STRENGTHENED BY LOOKING UP TO CHRIST. For the whole spirit of our Master's ministry consisted in pleasing others and not himself. Not, indeed, that men understood his plan. The gospel does not appear at first to promote men's pleasure. It humiliates, it breaks them down, it calls for penitential tenderness; but it secures peace through pardon, and the joy which comes through believing. Our Lord's sufferings were consequently in the long run with a view to the real and abiding pleasure of men. And so he was constantly lifting them up, so far as they would allow him. His very crucifixion was to please others, and secure their edification. A broad view of Christ's history, therefore, shows it to have been a pleasing of others, not of himself. He became a servant of the circumcision that the Jews might be brought to peace and joy; he became the Saviour and so the Joy of the Gentiles. In both respects he was pleasing and edifying others, not pleasing himself. His self-sacrificing life becomes thus the fountain-head for public service.

III. THE GOSPEL THUS DISTINGUISHES ITSELF FROM UTILITARIAN TEACHING. For instead of directing us to regulate our conduct by self-pleasing, which is at bottom the utilitarian principle, it directs us to please our neighbour unto edification, and in the spirit of Christ. Nor is our pleasing of our neighbour to secure personal comfort; this

may ultimately be given into the bargain, but it will assuredly be missed if made our end. "A great German poet and philosopher," says Dr. Martineau, "was fond of defining religion as consisting in a reverence for *inferior* beings. The definition is paradoxical; but though it does not express the *essence* of religion, it assuredly designates one of its *effects*. True, there could be no reverence for lower natures, were there not, to begin with, the recognition of a Supreme Mind; but the moment that recognition exists, we certainly look on all that is beneath with a different eye. It becomes an object, not of pity and protection only, but of sacred respect; and our sympathy, which had been that of a humane fellow-creature, is converted into the deferential help of a devout worker of God's will. And so *the loving service of the weak and wanting* is an essential part of the discipline of the Christian life. Some habitual association with the poor, the dependent, the sorrowful, is an indispensable source of the highest elements of character."[1]

IV. A BUOYANT, HOPEFUL SPIRIT SHOULD BE OURS IN ALL OUR PUBLIC WORK. For it is "the God of hope" with whom we have to do. And humanity is being lifted up by the Christian spirit of service. And great things are in store for the earth. Peace, joy, hope, should in consequence characterize every one who names the name of Jesus and professes to follow him in service. God grant it to us all!—R. M. E.

Vers. 14—33.—*The apostle's programme.* The didactic and hortatory portions of the Epistle are now over, and a few personal explanations and salutations are all that remain. They need not detain us long. And here we have—

I. PAUL'S REASONS FOR WRITING TO THE ROMANS. (Vers. 14—21.) It is not because the Church at Rome is deficient in either knowledge or preaching power. The list in last chapter shows how many able men and women composed the Church. But the reason is: 1. *Because Paul is apostle to the Gentiles.* The Church at Rome should enjoy his care as well as the other Gentiles. The only difference is that in this case he has not been the pioneer, as he had been in so many other Gentile Churches. And regarding this apostleship he is careful to speak of: (1) Its *sacred character.* He has not only been a minister of Jesus Christ (λειτουργὸς), but has also been "doing holy service" (ἱερουργοῦντα) in the matter of the gospel of God, that the Gentiles might be got ready as an offering. It is a pre-eminently holy office which the apostle has been exercising. (2) *The means employed have been the gospel of God.* Paul carried "good tidings" from God to the Gentiles, and this splendid Epistle shows how full a message he brought. Then: (3) *Its end was that the Gentiles should become an acceptable offering.* Consecration is the great purpose of salvation, to make them obedient in word and deed and dedicated in heart and life to God's glory. (4) *He has had a wide success in his enterprise.* Signs and wonders have been wrought by the power of the Spirit of God round a large district of the heathen world. 2. But *having been prevented hitherto from coming to Rome, he indites this Epistle to them.* It is as a token from the unavoidably absent apostle that he writes the Epistle.

II. HE SKETCHES HIS PROGRAMME FOR THEM. (Vers. 22—28.) And first he has to go up from Corinth with money for the poor saints of the mother Church at Jerusalem. From that Church the gospel has come to the Gentiles, and it is only reasonable that there should be now a return in the time of their need. A return in carnal things is to be expected after the reception of spiritual things. He hopes when he has got through this service at Jerusalem to come by Rome to Spain. He hoped to make his advent to Rome as a free man—he did not then think it would be as a prisoner.

III. HE IS CERTAIN HE WILL COME AS A BLESSING TO THEM. (Ver. 29.) He is inspired with moral certainty that his advent will not be in vain. It is such an assurance of blessing through us that should animate every worker for the Master. Rome was to feel the effects of Paul's visit for years. And so it did.

IV. PAUL'S REQUEST FOR INTERCESSION. (Vers. 30—32.) His assurance of blessing, instead of minimizing, only intensified his prayer, and led him to ask others to intercede for him. And here we notice: 1. *The ground of the request.* It is "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit." By all that Christ has been for them and the Spirit has been with them and in them, he asks them to inter-

[1] 'Endeavours after the Christian Life,' 4th edit., p. 434.

cede. 2. *The substance of the request.* For deliverance from unbelievers in Judæa, for acceptance among the poor saints, and for a joyful and refreshing advent to Rome. Of these the last two were answered and the first was denied. Yet his apprehension by the unbelievers was overruled for great spiritual good.

V. THE BENEDICTION. (Ver. 33.) The God of peace, the great Peace-maker, is asked to be with them, making them a peaceful, happy Church at Rome. It is a message of peace that an apostle brings.—R. M. E.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XVI.

Vers. 1—20.—K. *Commendation of Phœbe, and salutations to Christians at Rome.*

Vers. 1, 2.—**I commend unto you Phœbe our sister** (*i.e.* fellow-Christian), **who is a servant of the Church that is in Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, worthily of the saints, and assist her** (παραστῆτε, literally, *stand by her*) **in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she too hath been a succourer** (προστάτις, corresponding to παραστῆτε) **of many, and of mine own self.** This Phœbe was probably the bearer of the Epistle. She appears to have had business, perhaps of a legal kind, that took her to Rome; and St. Paul took advantage of her going to send the letter by her, desiring also to enlist the aid of her fellow-Christians at Rome in furtherance of her business, whatever it might be. Her having business at Rome, and her having been "a succourer of many," suggests the idea of her being a lady of means. Her designation as διάκονος of the Church at Cenchrea probably implies that she held an office there corresponding to that of *deaconess*, though there is no reason to suppose the distinguishing term διακόνισσα to have been as yet in use. Her function, and that of others (as perhaps of Tryphena and Tryphosa, mentioned in ver. 12 as "labouring much in the Lord"), might be to minister to the sick and poor, and to fulfil such charitable offices as women could best discharge. Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 11, where γυναῖκας, mentioned in the midst of directions as to the qualifications of *men* for the office of deacons, probably denotes *women* who fulfilled similar duties. Cf. also Pliny's celebrated letter to Trajan (circ. A.D. 107), in which he says that he had extorted information as to the doings of Christians, "ex duabus ancillis, quæ *ministræ* dicebantur." The Latin *ministra* answers exactly to the Greek διάκονος. Cenchrea was the port of Corinth on the Saronic Gulf; and it appears from this passage that there was a Church or congregation there, as well as one or more in Corinth itself. It is an interesting conjecture that St. Paul, in speaking of Phœbe having been a succourer of himself as well as of others, may refer to an illness of his own at Cenchrea, during which she had ministered to him, and that his shaving his head at Cenchrea because he had a vow (Acts xviii. 18) may have been during, or on his recovery from, that illness.

Vers. 3—5.—**Greet Priscilla** (al. *Prisca*, which is but another form of the same name) **and Aquila my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own neck: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles. And greet the Church that is in their house.** For other notices of them, cf. Acts xviii. 2, 18, 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; 2 Tim. iv. 19; whence we learn that Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, who, with his wife Priscilla, had been settled at Rome, whence, when the Jews were expelled by Claudius, they had gone to Corinth, where St. Paul found them on his first visit to that city; that St. Paul abode with them there, working with Aquila at tent-making, which was the craft of both; that they left Corinth with St. Paul for Syria, and were for a time left by him at Ephesus, where they instructed Apollos on his arrival there; that, when St. Paul wrote from Ephesus his First Epistle to the Corinthians, they sent greetings by it, having then a congregation of Christians which assembled at their house; that, having returned to Rome when the Epistle to the Romans was written, their house there also was made available for the same purpose; and that, when St. Paul was for the last time a prisoner at Rome before his martyrdom, they were once more living at Ephesus. They were probably in good circumstances, having had both at Rome and Ephesus houses large enough to be used as churches; and they were evidently leading and active members of the Christian community. It would seem that Priscilla, the wife, was especially so, and she may have been, like Phœbe, officially employed; for though, when they are first mentioned (Acts xviii. 2) as having lately come to Corinth, and when they themselves send greetings to Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 19), Aquila's name naturally comes first, yet St. Paul in all other mention of them reverses the order. The occasion of their having apparently risked their own lives in defence of St.

Paul is unknown. It may have been at Corinth at the time of the Jewish insurrection against him (Acts xviii. 12), or at Ephesus at the time of the tumult raised by Demetrius the silversmith (Acts xix. 23, etc.), when St. Paul had been in imminent danger. The phrase, "laid down their neck" (not, as in the Authorized Version, "necks"), seems only to denote, figuratively, "exposed their lives to danger." It appears, from the large number of greetings which follow, that there were now many Christians at Rome known to, or any rate known of by, the apostle. It does not follow that he was acquainted with all of them personally. He may have heard of them in the frequent inquiries he had doubtless made about the Roman Church (cf. ch. i. 8). Many of them, however, he evidently knew, and with some had been associated. It was likely that many known to him in various quarters might have had occasion to resort to Rome. There are in all twenty-six individuals to whom greetings are sent, together with two households of slaves, and probably three congregations, as will appear below. **Salute** (or, as before, *greet*. The verb is the same as before, and so throughout the chapter) **my beloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Asia** (certainly so, rather than *Achaia*, probably introduced into the text from 1 Cor. xvi. 15) **unto Christ.** *Asia* means the proconsular province so called, being the western part of Asia Minor, of which the capital was Ephesus. Epænetus may have been St. Paul's own first convert there during his second missionary journey (cf. Acts xvi. 6). The fact of the apostle having been then "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia" does not preclude there having been converts thence.

Vers. 6, 7.—**Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on you** (ὑμᾶς, rather than, as in the Textus Receptus, ἡμᾶς). **Salute Andronicus and Junia** (or *Junias*: it is uncertain whether this is masculine or feminine; if the latter, Junia might be the wife of Andronicus), **my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles who also were in Christ before me.** It is a question whether by "my kinsmen" (τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου) here and afterwards St. Paul means that the persons so called were his relations, or only that they were Jews (cf. ch. ix. 3, where he speaks of the Jews generally as τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα. There are in all five persons so designated in this chapter. The designation "fellow-prisoners" implies that these two had been, like himself, at some time imprisoned for the faith, but it does not follow that he and they had been in prison together. If, in speaking of them as "of note among the apostles (ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις)," he means to designate them as themselves apostles, this is an instance of a wider use of the term "apostle" than is generally understood (see note under ch. xii. 6, etc.). The phrase, however, will bear the interpretation that they were persons held in honour in the circle of the original twelve. The term, οἱ ἀπόστολοι, is certainly often used distinctively of them, as in Acts ix. 27 and in Gal. i. 19, by St. Paul himself, the reference in both texts being to his own relations to them; and so here, speaking of two persons, who he also says had been in Christ before himself, he may only mean to point to their having been, as they still were, distinguished in association with the original apostles even before his own conversion.

Vers. 8—10.—**Greet Amplias** (or, *Amplia-tus*) **my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urban** (*i.e. Urbanus*) **our fellow-worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.** As to who Aristobulus might be (viz. a grandson of Herod the Great, mentioned by Josephus, 'Ant.,' xx. 1, 2, as being at Rome in a private station), see Lightfoot on 'Philippians,' p. 172, and 'Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Biog.,' under "Aristobulus," 5. "Those of Aristobulus" (τῶν Ἀριστοβούλου) would probably be his *familia* of slaves (cf. τῶν Χλόης, 1 Cor. i. 11, and below, τῶν Ναρκίσσου). The salutation is not to the whole household, but to the Christians among them, as intimated by τοὺς ἐκ τῶν, and more definitely expressed below in the case of the household of Narcissus.

Ver. 11.—**Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them of the household of Narcissus that are in the Lord.** This Narcissus may possibly have been the powerful freedman of Claudius, mentioned by Tacitus, 'Ann.,' xi. 29, *seq.*; xii. 57; and by Suetonius, 'Claud.,' 28. The fact that he appears from 'Ann.,' xiii. 1, to have been put to death on the accession of Nero, A.D. 54, is not inconsistent with the supposition. For his human chattels would be likely to pass into the possession of Nero, and so become part of Cæsar's household, and might still be called by their late master's name. This may also have been the case with the household of Aristobulus above referred to. It is observable that, at a later period, the apostle, writing from Rome to the Philippians, sends special greetings from them "that are of Cæsar's household" (Phil. iv. 23).

Ver. 12.—**Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.** All these seem to have been Church workers; and the last at least, from the way St. Paul

speaks of her, must have been known by him personally, and done work of which he was cognizant. It is to be observed how, in calling her "the beloved," he avoids, with delicate propriety, adding "my," as he does in speaking of his male friends.

Ver. 13.—**Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.** Observe the graceful way in which St. Paul intimates his obligation to the mother of Rufus, who at some time (though when and where we know not) had been as a mother to himself. Similar delicate courtesy of language is especially observable in the Epistle to Philemon.

Vers. 14, 15.—**Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas** (not, surely, as Origen supposed, the author of 'The Shepherd of Hermas,' which is said in 'Canon Muratori' to have been written by a brother of Pius I., and cannot well have been of earlier date than the second century), **Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren that are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia** (these, being coupled together, may have been man and wife, or brother and sister), **Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.** The "brethren" in ver. 14, and the "saints" in ver. 15, saluted in connection with the groups of persons named, may possibly mean the congregations that assembled under the leadership, or perhaps at the houses, of those persons. If so, there would appear to have been three congregations in Rome known of by St. Paul; for see ver. 5, which, indeed, seems in itself to imply that the Church that was in the house of Priscilla and Aquila was not the only one.

Ver. 16.—**Salute one another with an holy kiss. All the Churches of Christ salute you.** For allusions to the *kiss of peace* among Christians, cf. 1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 14. Justin Martyr ('Apol.,' 85) speaks of it as exchanged before the Eucharist, and it is alluded to by many Fathers, directed in the 'Apostolical Constitutions,' and has its place in ancient liturgies (see Bingham, xv. iii. 3). St. Paul, of course, in enjoining it here and in other Epistles, has in view the concord which it expressed. In sending salutations from "all the Churches of Christ" (πᾶσαι, omitted in the Textus Receptus, having authority decidedly in its favour), he may be understood as conveying to the Roman Christians the feeling towards them that had been expressed generally by the Churches he had visited. He may have spoken wherever he went of his intention of visiting Rome, and perhaps of meanwhile sending a letter thither; and the several Churches may have charged him with kind messages. Before authenticating these salutations with his usual autographic benediction, he feels bound to add one additional warning. The thought occurs to him, and he cannot but give expression to it. The warning is against a class of persons whose mischievous activity he had had experience of elsewhere, and attempts by some of whom to disturb the peace of the Roman Church he may possibly have heard of. They may have been Judaists, or others who taught views contrary to the received faith, and so caused divisions and offences in the Churches. For allusions to such elsewhere, cf. Gal. i. 6, *seq.*; iii. 1, *seq.*; Col. ii. 8, *seq.*; 2 Cor. xi. 13, *seq.* For proof of such having been at work afterwards at Rome, cf. Phil. i. 15, *seq.*; iii. 2, 17, *seq.*

Ver. 17.—**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause the divisions and offences** (τὰ σκάνδαλα, meaning "causes of stumbling." Both the words have the article, so as to denote things known of) **contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and avoid them;** rather, *turn away from them;* i.e. shun them; have nothing to do with them. The allusion seems to be, not to persons within the Church, but rather to outsiders, who come with new notions to disturb its peace.

Vers. 18—20.—**For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly** (cf. Phil. iii. 18, 19). Had St. Paul thought these people sincere though mistaken, he would doubtless have treated them with the tenderness he shows towards the weak brethren. But he regards them as self-interested, and of the flesh; and against such disturbers of the Church's peace he is, here as elsewhere, indignant (cf. Gal. i. 7, 8; ii. 4; iii. 1; v. 11, 12). In speaking of them as serving, or being slaves to, their own belly, it cannot be concluded certainly that he attributed to them habits of sensuality. He may only mean that it is the gratification of the lower part of their nature that they have in view; and there may be allusion to the motive of such persons being the desire of eating and drinking at the cost of the Churches. In 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' (alluded to under ch. xii. 6, *seq.*) the desire to live without working at the cost of the Church is set down as one of the marks of a false apostle or a false prophet. **And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple** (rather, *innocent*, or *harmless*. So the word ἄκακος is translated in Heb. vii. 26. It is different from ἀκέραιος in ver. 19, though the Authorized Version makes no difference). **For your obedience is come abroad unto all men.** This is apparently adduced as a reason for his exhorting them to beware of those seducers, with a confidence that they will not be seduced by them, ver. 19 being

thus dependent on ver. 17. **I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, but simple (ἀκεραίους) concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

Vers. 21—24.—L. *Greetings from Corinth.*

Vers. 21, 22.—**Timotheus my workfellow** (Timothy may have joined St. Paul at Corinth before the letter was finally sent, not having been with him when it was begun. For his name is not conjoined with St. Paul's in the opening salutation, as it is in 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1. Still, it does not of necessity follow that this would have been so in the case of a doctrinal treatise such as this Epistle mainly is), **and Lucius** (not to be identified with St. Luke), **and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you in the Lord.** It was St. Paul's habit to dictate his letters to an amanuensis (cf. Gal. vi. 11; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17). Here the amanuensis interposes his own greeting in his own person.

Vers. 23, 24.—**Gaius mine host, and of the whole Church, saluteth you.** Probably the person mentioned in 1 Cor. i. 14 as baptized by St. Paul himself at Corinth. There is no reason for identifying him with those of the same name mentioned in Acts xix. 29; xx. 4; 3 John 1. Gaius was a common name. He appears to have been one who exercised extensive hospitality to Christians, which the apostle was enjoying at the time of writing. **Erastus the chamberlain** (rather, *treasurer*) **of the city** (not to be identified with the Erastus of Acts xix. 22 and 2 Tim. iv. 20), **and Quartus the brother. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**

Vers. 25—27.—G. *Doxology.* (For its original position, see above.) It may have been written by the apostle with his own hand. It differs, indeed, in form as well as fulness, from other autographic conclusions of his Epistles; but it is a suitable and grand ending of an Epistle of the peculiar character of this; summing up pregnantly in the form of a glowing thanksgiving the essential ideas of the whole Epistle, which had been more or less intimated in its preface.

Vers. 25, 26.—**Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel** (*i.e. the gospel committed unto me to preach*; cf. ch. ii. 16; 1 Tim. i. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 8), **and the preaching of Jesus Christ** (*i.e.*, as appears from the use of *κήρυγμα* elsewhere, *concerning Jesus Christ*, or *the announcement of Jesus Christ*. The phrase seems to be added as declaring what Paul's gospel was, rather than as referring back to Christ's personal preaching), **according to the revelation of the mystery** (on the meaning of *μυστηρίου*, see note on ch. xi. 25), **which was kept secret** (literally, *kept in silence*) **since the world began** (literally, *in times eternal*), **but is now made manifest, and through the Scriptures of the prophets** (literally, *prophetic Scriptures*), **according to the commandment of the eternal God, made known unto all the nations unto the obedience of faith.** We have seen throughout the Epistle how the Scriptures of the Old Testament are referred to as foretelling the revelation in Christ of the long-hidden mystery (cf. also ch. i. 2); and it was through showing them to be fulfilled that, in all the apostolic preaching, the *mystery*, now *manifested*, was *made known* to all the nations; and this according to the *commandment* or *appointment* of God, that the *mystery* should thus be now at last made known.

Ver. 27.—**To God only wise, through Jesus Christ, be glory for ever. Amen.** The great preponderance of ancient authorities, including all uncials but B, have "to whom" (ᾧ) after "to God only wise." But the intended sense is not affected by the insertion, the ascription of glory being still *to the only wise God*, and not to *Jesus Christ*. Otherwise there would be no sequence to *τῷ δυναμένῳ* and *μόνῳ σοφῷ Θεῷ*. "In the lively pressure of the great intermediate thoughts connected with the mention of the gospel, vers. 25, 26, the syntactic connection has escaped the apostle" (Meyer).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*A ministering woman.* Although we know of Phœbe no more than is recorded here, we know enough to feel an interest in her; for she was a friend and helper of the Apostle Paul, and she was probably the bearer of this Epistle to the Roman Church. Observe—

I. THE COMMENDATION OF PHŒBE, BY PAUL, TO THE CHRISTIANS OF ROME. She is described in this passage by three several designations, which could not but favourably introduce her to the notice and regard of the Christian community in the great metropolis of the world. 1. She is described as "a *sister*." Christianity taught man-

kind that a true relationship might exist amongst those widely sundered by time and space, and widely severed by education and social position. The followers of Jesus learned to regard one another as brothers and sisters in the great spiritual family, of which God is the Father, and Christ the elder Brother and Saviour. Coming from afar, even in the vast and populous city of Rome, this godly matron would find brethren in Christ, would be recognized as a sister. 2. "A *servant* of the Church at Cenchrea." Literally, a deacon, or deaconess. This shows us how, from the beginning of Christianity, woman's position was recognized and honoured. Christ has taught humanity the dignity of service; and as when on earth he accepted the ministrations of devout and attached women, so now he delights in their labours and self-sacrifice in his cause on earth. 3. The form of her service is mentioned; she was "a *succourer* of many." Probably a matron of means and social consideration, she had, and used, the opportunity to show kindness to her kindred in the faith, and to others in necessity. She may have shown hospitality to Christian ministers, have visited and relieved the sick poor, have rescued the fallen and neglected. "Of myself also," says the apostle, gratefully and gracefully acknowledging gentle and kindly ministrations. Possibly he had been sick at Cenchrea, upon the occasion when he is recorded to have made a vow, and Phœbe may have entertained and nursed him.

II. THE REQUEST MADE BY PAUL TO THE ROMANS ON HER BEHALF. 1. The *footing* is described upon which they were enjoined to receive her—"in the Lord," *i.e.* in the Lord's Name, and for the Lord's sake. This was the light in which Jesus himself had taught his disciples to regard one another. In receiving any in Christ's Name, we receive Christ himself. The Romans were to consider that the Divine Lord did, in a sense, in the person of his faithful disciples, come amongst them. 2. The *law of treatment* is laid down—"as saints." That is to say, it was to be borne in mind, in their social and religious intercourse, that they were not as the heathen around, that they were a select and consecrated people. Going into this great sinful city, this Cenchrean matron might look for treatment and conversation becoming to saints; she might expect religious privileges, and something more than courtesy—even Christian cordiality and kindness. 3. Such being the sentiments enjoined, it is interesting to see that Paul expected such feelings to prompt to corresponding action. The Roman Christians are desired to assist Phœbe in her business. Whether this was domestic, commercial, or legal, we do not know. In any case, she might well be grateful for an introduction which would secure for her the countenance, counsel, sympathy, and aid of men of wisdom and experience, of character and position. Scripture constantly warns us against allowing good feeling to pass away without leading to suitable expression in action. It is a lesson which even religious and well-meaning people need to have inculcated and repeated.

APPLICATION. 1. Let Christian communities aim at realizing the fellowship which such passages as this imply and commend. 2. Let Christian women seek, according to their station, opportunity, and ability, to live as servants of Christ and of Christ's Church. 3. Let all Christian people hold in honour those godly women who devote themselves to the succouring of the needy, the neglected, and the sinful.

Vers. 3—5.—*Fellowship in toil and suffering.* Paul had a marvellous power of drawing around him like-minded natures, to whom, by God's grace, he imparted much of his own spirit, and whose assistance vastly increased the effect of his benevolent ministry. Among these were Aquila and his wife Prisca, or Priscilla, whom he first met at Corinth, and to whom he was drawn by their common occupation as tent-makers. If not at that time Christians, they evidently became so through his instruction and influence. They laboured with Paul in the gospel, first at Corinth and then at Ephesus. They returned, at a later period, to Rome, whence, in common with the Jews generally, they had been expelled by Claudius. And they were at Rome, carrying on the same work of evangelization and promoting Christian fellowship, when Paul wrote this Epistle to the Romans. Hence the salutation which occurs in this place.

I. EXAMINE THE SERVICES, MERITS, AND CLAIMS, OF THIS CHRISTIAN COUPLE. They are commended for: 1. Their *fellowship with Paul in work.* The Christian life, and emphatically the life of the Christian evangelist, is a life of labour. Not mere activity or business-like effort and assiduity; but labour "in Christ Jesus;" which means, for

the sake of Christ, upon the model of Christ, in the Name of Christ, with a view to the approval of Christ. The Lord is himself the bond binding true workers in one. 2. They had *endangered life for his safety.* Whether in Corinth, or amidst the tumult at Ephesus, these two faithful friends had shielded the apostle from the wrath and violence of the enemies of the faith, and this at the risk of their own life. This was a practical exemplification of the duty and excellence of brotherly love. Thus Paul learned to say, "For a good man some would even dare to die." Thus St. John could teach, knowing that the advice was not impracticable, "We also ought to lay down our life for the brethren." 3. They had *cultivated social religion.* Wherever they went, these devoted Christians consecrated part of their dwelling to Christian assembly and worship. Being tent-makers, needing large premises, and probably employing many work-people, they had accommodation for such gatherings. Often in the New Testament we read of the "Church in the house." The expression not only reminds us of the duty and privilege of family religion, and household worship; it also teaches us that all our possessions and circumstances should be turned to account in the service of Christ, and especially that we should bring neighbours together to hear the gospel, and fellow-Christians to realize Christian fellowship and to cultivate brotherly love.

II. OBSERVE THE RECOGNITION BY THE APOSTLE OF THESE SERVICES AND CLAIMS. "Honour to whom honour"—a maxim nowhere better justified than in cases like this before us. 1. *Paul shows gratitude.* Although their ministrations and self-sacrifice were now events of the past, the recollection of them was fresh in the apostle's mind. There are those who think it unwise to express gratitude and admiration; the apostle was not one of these. He gave thanks. And he tendered the thanks, not only of his own heart, but of "all the Churches of the Gentiles"—an expression this, all the more graceful, in that Aquila and his wife were themselves Jews. But they had laboured largely among the Gentiles, who were very sensible of their services. And they had probably saved the life of "the apostle of the Gentiles," on which account those for whom Paul especially laboured owed them a special measure of gratitude. 2. *Paul sends greeting.* Among the worthies of the Christian community at Rome, the names of these natives of Pontus were included, and amongst them have come down to posterity. Paul obeyed the gospel admonition, "Be courteous," and often set an example of that kind and sympathetic consideration which goes far to ease the working and promote the happiness of human life.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Be devoted in Christian labour. 2. Delight in Christian fellowship. 3. Employ social influence for Christ's glory. 4. In Christian intercourse display Christian courtesy.

Ver. 5.—*The twofold bond.* Some men are known and remembered for what they have done; others for the position they have occupied in some great movement, or the friendships they have formed with some great characters. Paul's was a name which overshadowed most of his contemporary fellow-labourers in the cause of Christian evangelization; yet there were those, *e.g.* Timothy and Aquila, among those mentioned in this chapter who had no mean title to an independent position and memorial. On the other hand, some, like Epænetus, would never have been remembered except through association with the apostle of the Gentiles. It is a beautiful trait in Paul's character that his heart cherished warm, affectionate recollections of some persons, who, by reason of the obscurity of their position and the slenderness of their abilities, could add no lustre to the apostle's fame, and perhaps little efficacy to his mission. From this verse we learn that a twofold bond united Paul to Epænetus.

I. THE BOND OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE. The Lord Jesus had himself, by his example and by his precepts, constituted Christianity a religion of love. Speaking to his disciples, he said, "Love one another, even as I have loved you." "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." He even countenanced a tender, personal, and special friendship; for St. John is often described as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Now, the Apostle Paul inculcated, with frequency and urgency, the Divine lesson, saying, "Let brotherly love continue;" and eulogizing, especially in his Epistle to the Corinthians, the grace of charity. And he also exemplified the virtue of Christian love in his own spirit, and in the many friendships which he formed. His attachment to Epænetus was undoubtedly sincere and unfeigned; and what more natural

than that, when his friend was at so great a distance from him, Paul, in writing to the Romans, should send a greeting of affection to the beloved associate of bygone days? Christianity sanctifies and elevates human affection.

II. THE BOND OF MINISTERIAL INTEREST. Epænetus was the firstfruits of Asia's offering unto Christ. This being the case, it is somewhat singular that we know nothing more regarding him. Paul has spoken of himself as ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable. The conversion of the Gentiles was a harvest, a sacrifice; and the firstfruits accordingly must have been to the apostle's mind peculiarly precious. The expression is very suggestive. 1. Of what toil and sowing was this conversion the result! There is no crop without foregoing labour; and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles shows us at what expenditure of labour and suffering the harvest was secured. When the parent instils into the mind of his children from infancy the doctrines and precepts of religion; when the teacher endeavours to bring the youthful mind, otherwise perhaps uncultivated and uncared-for, under Christian training and influence; when the pastor faithfully and continuously scatters the seed of the kingdom in men's hearts, sowing beside all waters; when the evangelist and missionary toil, in uncongenial circumstances and amidst many discouragements, for the salvation of human souls;—all such effort is seed-sowing, of which sometimes only the springing blade may be discerned by the labourer, who is happy indeed if he be suffered to see here and there the firstfruits of his endeavours. 2. How rich, ripe, and promising were these firstfruits! It is proof enough of the Christian character of Epænetus, that the apostle regarded him as a beloved friend. In this case Paul's labours had proved manifestly not in vain. Here was doubtless a renewed and holy person, adorning the Christian profession, and by ripeness and beauty and serviceableness of character fitted to be regarded as the firstfruits of a province. Now, the firstfruits may be as good in quality as the harvest which follows. In fact, Christian ministers are justified in looking for such results to follow their patient and prayerful toil. Nothing else can reward them; spiritual results, and these only, are the desired recompense. 3. Of a harvest how wealthy and glorious was this individual Christian the earnest and promise! Genius and faith can see in the firstfruits, insignificant, it may be, in themselves, the promise of vast results, extending throughout spacious regions and enduring throughout long ages. So, doubtless, it was in this case; the Apostle Paul felt the image of Epænetus revived in his memory, nay, his very name awakened in his mind a glorious vision of the future evangelization of a vast and populous province, of the formation of large and flourishing Churches, of the final salvation of a multitude of precious souls. Such associations, such expectations, would naturally lend an additional interest and sweetness to this warm-hearted greeting communicated from afar.

APPLICATION. 1. Remark the beauty of Christian courtesy. It is right to remember and to greet ancient comrades in Christian toil, and all who are bound to us by ties of former fellowship. 2. Learn the lesson of Christian love—love unfeigned. Love should be not only of a general, a sentimental kind; it should be personal and faithful, love to individual souls with whom Providence may have brought you into contact. 3. Cultivate the disposition of hope. Regard in every convert to the faith of Christ the proof of Divine power and grace; and see in such the happy omen of a recovered and regenerated world.

Ver. 6.—*A woman's labours for Christ.* During our Saviour's earthly ministry, many devout and grateful women devoted their time, their substance, and their personal ministrations to the Lord. And Christ's apostles, as we may judge from the record in the Acts, were also frequently indebted to the hospitality, the zealous co-operation, and the sympathizing and generous spirit, of consecrated Christian women. From this chapter it appears that the early Churches were, in some cases, assisted in their benevolent and evangelistic work by feminine ministrations. Of Mary we know nothing but what is recorded to her honour and remembrance in this passage, that she bestowed much labour upon the Christians of the imperial city. If she be taken as a representative of pious and benevolent and laborious Christian women, the record concerning her may suggest reflections regarding the vocation of such persons in the Church of Christ.

I. THE NATURE OF WOMAN'S WORK FOR THE SAVIOUR. This is very varied. It may be more public, or more private; it may be domestic, or official. Some are called to nurse in homes or hospitals; some to teach in classes or schools; some to visit the neglected, the dying, the bereaved; some to restore the lapsed to the paths of industry and virtue; some to show hospitality.

II. THE QUALITY OF WOMAN'S WORK FOR THE SAVIOUR. It is often found to be characterized by tenderness and sympathy, by constancy and patience, by sobriety and diligence, by fervour and self-denial.

III. THE MEASURE OF WOMAN'S WORK FOR CHRIST. Mary laboured much; and many resemble her—directing their energies into various channels, spending strength of body and mind in holy service, continuing even amidst many interruptions, and misrepresentation and ingratitude, and labouring even to old age.

IV. THE MOTIVE TO WOMAN'S WORK FOR CHRIST. The Lord Jesus has done much for the elevation and happiness of the female sex, and gratitude for mercy received is in many women's hearts a powerful motive to zealous services. Means are sought by which the thankful may show the sincerity of their love.

V. THE RECOGNITION OF WOMAN'S WORK FOR THE SAVIOUR. This should be spontaneous and ungrudging, generous and expressed. Paul acknowledged the merits of this excellent woman, and by his written salutations admonished the Roman Christians to hold her in honour, and display their gratitude. Yet the best and most desired recognition valued by devout women is the approval and the recompense promised by the Lord himself to every good and faithful servant.

Ver. 7.—*A special salutation.* It is somewhat singular that, the description of these brothers, Andronicus and Junias, being so full and detailed, we should not meet with any other mention of them, either in the Acts or in St. Paul's Epistles. The connection between them and the apostle was close and manifold, and their claims to consideration were remarkably high.

I. There was FELLOWSHIP IN BLOOD between these brothers and St. Paul. Whether this was a close kindred, or simply consanguinity of race, the term does not make certain. In either case there is a recognition of the claims of kindred. Our blood-relationships, and even our ties of nationality and race, are of Divine appointment, and should not be disparaged or overlooked. When our kindred have a spiritual as well as a natural affinity with us, they should be doubly dear, and should be treated with special distinction and affection.

II. There was FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING FOR CHRIST. Paul was often in prison, and sometimes in companionship with those engaged in the same service, and therefore knowingly exposed to the same risks. It must have been a happy and honourable experience to be associated with such a man, even in bonds and imprisonment. Silas had joined him in his midnight hymns in the Philippian jail; Luke shared his imprisonment both on land and by sea; Aristarchus, Andronicus, and Junias had in some place unknown to us, been his fellow-prisoners. Such community was not to be forgotten. It is a distinction to suffer for Christ, and with Christ's people. "If we suffer with Christ"—and this we do when we suffer with his people, and for his sake—"we shall also reign with him."

III. These men were in THE CONFIDENCE AND ESTEEM OF THE APOSTLES. Some have inferred from the language used that Andronicus and Junias were numbered among the apostles, in the wider sense of that term. But it is more probable that they are mentioned as held in high respect and honour among the apostles generally. It is sufficient commendation for a man to be known as the trusted friend of the great and good. It is well to ask concerning any Christian—Who are his friends? Not—How is he regarded by the titled and the opulent? but—Is he in the confidence of those who are venerated and trusted servants of the Lord? "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise."

IV. There was PERSEVERANCE AND LONG-STANDING CONSISTENCY OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. The Apostle Paul, when writing to the Romans, had himself been "in Christ" for very many years. But these brothers are mentioned by him as having been Christians before he himself had been brought to subjection to the Lord. As "old disciples," whose witness to Christ had been long and faithful, and who remained

what they had been, Andronicus and Junias deserved greeting and commendation. "Time tries all;" and time sets an approving seal upon those who for a lifetime have adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour. Respect is due to our seniors in the spiritual life. "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning."

APPLICATION. 1. Learn a generous appreciation of the character and services of brethren in Christ. 2. Forget not the ties of Christian fellowship dating from distant years. 3. Admire the power of Christianity to sanctify the social nature; and seek to afford in social intercourse a living example of this benign influence.

Vers. 8—15.—*Grounds for greeting.* Salutations are often empty forms. Yet the original meaning is often very deep and beautiful and appropriate. Our "God bless you!" and "Good-bye!" and "Adieu!" are instances. If we sincerely send "respects" and "kind regards," it is well. Salutations are not to be neglected or despised because they are often meaningless or insincere. See in this passage how Paul greeted his friends in Christ. Even as Christ himself, coming to his own disciples, addressed them thus, "Peace be with you!" so the apostle, even in this important Epistle, did not think it beneath him to salute his friends.

I. CHRISTIANITY IS A BOND WHICH UNITES TOGETHER PERSONS OF MOST VARIOUS CONDITIONS AND EMPLOYMENTS. Of the persons greeted, some were Jews and some were Gentiles. Some were persons who had, to some extent, the command of their own time; for they are mentioned as having laboured much with the apostle, or as having entertained him with hospitality. Some undoubtedly were slaves. From the Epistle to the Philippians, written a very few years after this, it appears that members of Cæsar's household were numbered among the Christian community at Rome. Recent explorations near the old metropolis of the world have brought to light tomb-inscriptions, including many of the names mentioned in this chapter, in memory of persons in the imperial household. It is all but certain that some of these friends of Paul held such positions, it may be honourable and important, but probably of an ordinary kind. They may have been artificers and craftsmen and household attendants. Two other households are mentioned here—those of Aristobulus and of Narcissus. There seems no reason to suppose that the heads of these households were Christians. They may themselves have been dead at this time, and their bondmen may have passed over by bequest to the emperor. The list includes some Christian Jews, now permitted to return to Rome—persons whom, in their wanderings, Paul had met in various cities of Asia and of Europe, and whose memory he retained in his capacious and affectionate heart.

II. CHRISTIANITY CONFERS HONOUR UPON THOSE WHO ARE LITTLE ESTEEMED IN THE WORLD. The names mentioned in these verses are all, and utterly, unknown to fame. They here glint across our vision, like meteors in the midnight sky, which appear for a moment, only to vanish for ever. Yet Paul esteemed and loved them, and put their names upon this imperishable roll—more glorious and more lasting than the blazoned records of heraldry or the splendid memorials of the historian. It is better to be enrolled among the friends of Christ than to occupy the highest station in the regard of worldly minded men. To be his when he makes up his jewels, this will be honour and happiness indeed.

III. CHRISTIANITY PUTS ITS OWN MARKS UPON ITS ADHERENTS. For example, in this passage, one is described as "in the Lord," implying spiritual union with the Saviour. Another is said to be "chosen in the Lord," and yet another "approved in the Lord"—language which denotes those congenial in character, and obedient in life, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and which points on to a coming and glorious reward. Again, some are described as "brethren" and others as "saints," implying their incorporation into the spiritual family of God, and their holy character and devotion to the Lord's service. Such language assures us that, amidst many faulty and some unworthy Christians, there were not a few amongst the primitive believers who, by their principles and life, must have commended the gospel, and have yielded the truest satisfaction to the apostle's pure and benevolent heart.

IV. Observe, further, sundry RECOGNITIONS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. One is commended for his "labour in the Lord," and another as having "laboured much in the Lord," whilst a third is described as a "fellow-worker." That Paul laboured more

abundantly than all his brethren, he himself has recorded; and such being the habit of his spiritual ministry, he was able and disposed to appreciate the work of his diligent and effective colleagues. There is great discrimination in his language of approbation, and, at the same time, great generosity. We should learn the wholesome lesson, that it is right to appreciate the services of our fellow-Christians, and gratefully to recognize and remember their co-operation.

V. It must strike every reader of this passage that we have here illustrations of the way in which CHRISTIAN APPRECIATION IS INTENSIFIED BY PERSONAL RELATION AND FEELING. One member of the Roman Church he designates "my beloved." In another he recognizes a "kinsman." A third—an aged Christian matron—he designates his own "mother," referring, no doubt, to her tender and hospitable ministrations in former days. Beautiful indeed is natural feeling when thus sanctified by true piety. The Christian family, and the friendly circle, penetrated by Christian principle and sentiment, are nothing less than an earnest of the sacred fellowship of heaven. The Church below thus resembles and prepares for the Church of the Firstborn above.

APPLICATION. 1. The strongest of all social bonds are those of our common Christianity, which, binding hearts to Christ, binds hearts to hearts. Cultivate these bonds. 2. Christian labourers should never forget those who in former days have shared their toils and sacrifices. 3. Courtesy is a Christian grace, and its exercise smooths the path of social life. 4. Sympathy and brotherliness on earth will prepare for the sweet and immortal fellowship of heaven.

Ver. 20.—*Victory assured.* In viewing our human life, we are tempted into one or other of two extremes. To the worldly and the careless, especially when young and prosperous, life seems easy. They are conscious of no temptation, for they yield at once to each congenial suggestion. They are ignorant of struggles, for to them life has never shaped itself as a moral warfare. But there are those who are ever oppressed by a constant sense of the solemnity of life. To such the conflict is a daily and inevitable fact. They cannot drift adown the current; yet, strike out as bravely as they will, they feel as though they made no headway against the waters, as though they could never reach the shore. Struggle they must, they do; yet with many failures and with faint hope of final success. Now, Christianity rebukes the first of these classes for frivolity, the second for faithlessness. The Scriptures ever represent our life as a spiritual conflict; yet they ever summon us to fight the good fight of faith with hopeful hearts; the battle is fierce, but to the brave the victory is sure.

I. THE CONFLICT AND THE FOE. There is a power of evil, a personal and mighty power. Satan seeks to carry captive human souls; and in the effort employs every resource—the fiercest assaults, and the most unscrupulous, insidious wiles. In this Satan deals with men according to their circumstances, their character, their temperament. Over multitudes he triumphs openly. Yet there are those who resist him, who regard him as their deadly foe. Well is it for you if you are aware of your position, your danger, the attempts of the adversary, and your own weakness and insufficiency for a struggle so unequal. Faithful, consistent, experienced Christian! you have not yet finished the campaign; you are not yet beyond the reach of the fiery darts. Young and ardent Christian! dare not to indulge in boasting or to self-satisfaction. Just where and when you least expect it, then and there the attack may be made. "Resist the devil;" "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" "Take to you the whole armour of God."

II. THE HELPER AND DELIVERER. In a conflict such as human life, how can we be blind to our own helplessness and need? Whither shall the assaulted and imperilled turn? Upon whom shall they call? The Christian cannot answer these questions amiss; for he has already sought and experienced the saving strength of God's right hand. Yet he may well need to be reminded of his only hope and refuge. Let us lift up our eyes unto the hills, whence cometh our help. The God of peace is, in the text, set before us as our Saviour. Does it strike you as strange that the Most High should be so described in such a connection? Do you ask—Why is the God of *peace* invoked, to oppose and to vanquish the foe of souls? The answer is plain. God's nature is peace; his aim is peace; his rule is peace. But his is not the peace of compromise with sin His is the peace which comes with righteousness and with the reign of holy law

Such peace presupposes conflict. War with evil, until evil is vanquished, dethroned, and silent; and then peace, and only then;—such is the principle of the gospel, such is the purpose of God, such is the law of the Christian's life. Divine peace is pure and sincere and lasting. Remember that word of our Lord Jesus, "I am not come to send peace, but a sword."

III. THE RESISTANCE AND THE VICTORY. Here we are, as Christians, members of the Church *militant*. But Christ is the Captain of our salvation; and the language of the apostle implies that, through the might and grace of our Leader, we shall conquer in the holy war. Christ is the Victor, who has conquered *for* us. The history of our Saviour's earthly career is a history of conflict. The ministry of the Redeemer was a struggle with the prince of darkness. Witness his temptation, in which he encountered the foe in various guises, and ever vanquished his adversary and ours by the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Witness the crisis of his humiliation and suffering: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Yet in that crisis the Lord Jesus beheld Satan as lightning cast from heaven, and he spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly. Then was fulfilled the promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Christ is the Victor, who conquers *in* us. For it is in our own hearts that the real conflict is waged, that the true victory must be won. By the cross of Christ, through the presence and strengthening of the Spirit of Christ, the soldier who follows his Captain must come to share the Captain's triumph. He himself has promised that it shall be so. In his humiliation he encouraged his disciples, saying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." From his glory he cheers them on, saying, "He that overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne." The individual Christian shall, by Divine grace, be victorious over the tempter who is the foe of his soul. He shall not yield to the blandishments or fall before the onsets of Satan; he shall learn submission to God's will without murmuring; he shall serve without fainting; he shall rebuke without harshness; he shall trust without doubting. The world shall have less hold upon his affections, and heaven shall have more power to attract and charm. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The Church, too, shall go, with the Lord himself, from conquest to conquest. It shall shake off dependence upon earthly and carnal weapons; it shall learn the hard lesson of charity; its pity shall be practical, and its purity shall be glorious; and it shall realize the picture painted by the glowing imagination of the inspired artist.

IV. THE CHARACTER AND THE TIME OF TRIUMPH. On these points the text is especially explicit. God shall "bruise Satan under your feet." From this it appears that the victory shall be complete. Human wisdom is prone to pronounce this impossible, and represents the moral conflict as one most uncertain in its issues, in which the advantage seems now to be with this party, and anon with that. And so far as this life is concerned, we have no reason to believe that we shall reach a position from which we look down and back upon the battle-field, as those superior to Satan's assaults, delivered altogether from danger and from fear. Yet here we have an assurance of complete and lasting victory. If Satan is to be bruised beneath our feet, that implies that he shall be crushed. The figurative language depicts a conqueror, with his foe at his mercy, possessing no further power for resistance and mischief. "Is it possible," you ask, who have wrestled long and hard with the foe of souls—"is it possible that, over such an adversary, so feeble a soldier of righteousness as I shall ever triumph?" Here is the answer: "They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb." Nor have you long to wait; for this shall happen "shortly." The strife is fierce, but it shall not be protracted. When your fidelity is tried and proved, the power of the enemy shall be crippled, and he himself shall be thrust down, and you shall have the crown of life.

> "'Tis but a little while,
> And he shall come again,
> Who died that we might live, who lives
> That we with him may reign!"

Vers. 25—27.—*A comprehensive doxology.* It has often been noticed that the thoughts of the Apostle Paul rushed with such swiftness through his mind that they

could scarcely find coherent expression; one seems to follow and to efface that which precedes; and the unity of the whole is with difficulty discernible because of the pressure upon the attention of the several parts. It is so with these closing verses of the Epistle to the Romans; they introduce to the reader's mind so very many subjects, and they contain so many memorable observations, that he is likely to forget that they constitute a doxology. But to the mind of the writer the intention to utter closing words of praise was present and powerful; and the reasons and motives for praise crowded in upon his mind with such rapidity and force that he could hardly bring his Epistle to its conclusion. Let us endeavour to appreciate the comprehensiveness of this great doxology.

I. THIS DOXOLOGY CONTAINS A CELEBRATION OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES. Three are brought forward, two of them explicitly, and one implicitly, in such a manner as to enhance our conception of God's character, and to summon the Church of Christ to the congenial exercise of lowly and adoring praise. 1. Power. 2. Wisdom. 3. Benevolence. All these attributes are connected with the gospel which Christians have received, and which is intended for the illumination and salvation of all men. Though benevolence is not mentioned, it is implied in the statements of God's designs of mercy towards all nations, made at the close of ver. 26.

II. THIS DOXOLOGY CONTAINS A COMPENDIUM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. 1. The substance of Christian truth is contained in the Person and ministry of Jesus Christ. 2. This is represented as a gospel, or glad tidings from God to men. 3. And as a revealed mystery, something which existed in the mind and counsels of God from eternity, which was treated throughout the earlier ages of human history as a secret, concealed beneath promises and types and sacrifices, but only made manifest upon the institution of the new and spiritual kingdom of truth and righteousness.

III. THIS DOXOLOGY CONTAINS A PROMISE OF WORLD-WIDE BLESSINGS TO MAN. The large heart of the great apostle of the Gentiles was in perfect sympathy with the love of God revealed in Christ, and with the vast scheme of human redemption. It is like himself—the unselfish, compassionate, truly heroic nature that he was—that, in closing this Epistle, which has sometimes been misrepresented as teaching the limitation of Divine mercy and the substitution of arbitrariness for pity, St. Paul should thus refer to the glorious future of the kingdom of the Saviour upon earth. He glorified God that the glorious gospel of the blessed God should be published to all nations, that this should be by Divine prediction and by Divine command, and that the purpose of such publication was, not the condemnation of the sons of men, but salvation, as explained in that elevated and truly Christian phrase, "the obedience of faith."

IV. THIS DOXOLOGY IMPLIES A WISH AND PRAYER FOR THE STABILITY IN FAITH AND HOLINESS OF THOSE TO WHOM AND FOR WHOSE BENEFIT THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

V. THIS DOXOLOGY CONCLUDES THE EPISTLE WITH AN ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE AND HONOUR TO THE GOD OF ALL GRACE AND SALVATION. The whole treatise is inspired by a reverent and grateful spirit, and is evidently an effort to represent the true moral glory of the Lord of all; and it is appropriate that it should close as it does with ascribing glory, *through Jesus Christ*, to God the only wise.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—"*Phœbe our sister:*" *a sermon to young women.* The Rev. W. S. Swanson, speaking some time ago at Manchester, showed that the religions of the East were powerless to regenerate the heart and purify the life, and that, however excellent some of them may appear in theory, they utterly failed in practice. Among other things he said, "I ask what adaptation have we found in these religions to meet the wants, to heal the wounds of woman, and to give her her proper and rightful position? What have they done to free her from the oppression that imprisons, degrades, and brutalizes her? What has 'the light of Asia' done to brighten her lot? What ray of comfort have these religions shed into the shambles where she is bought and sold? What have they done to sweeten and purify life for her? Why! her place in the so-called paradises of some of them, in the way in which it is painted, only burns

the brand of shame more deeply on her brow." Christianity alone has given woman her rightful place. Woman occupies an honourable position in the Bible, and every wise provision is made for her, especially for the widow in her helplessness and loneliness. In the Old Testament we have such noble women as Deborah and Hannah, Ruth and Esther. In the New Testament we have Mary the mother of our Saviour, Mary of Bethany, Lydia, Dorcas, and many others. Women occupied an important place in the early Christian Church. At Philippi, for example, when St. Paul went to the place "where prayer was wont to be made," he found that little prayer-meeting entirely composed of women. In the Epistles of St. Paul we find him sending many messages to the Christian women of various Churches, and commending many of them for their faithfulness and devotion to the cause of Christ. Among those whom he thus mentions is Phœbe. We know nothing of Phœbe's history beyond what is stated here, and the additional fact mentioned in a note at the end of this Epistle that she was the bearer of this letter to the Christians at Rome.

I. PHŒBE WAS A SERVANT. It would appear that she was a lady of some means. She devoted her means and her time to assisting the poor and the helpless. She had been "a succourer of many" (ver. 2). But whatever position she occupied, she bears the name of servant. Now, there is nothing to be ashamed of in the name of servant. Every one who is worth anything is a servant in some sense. The less service any one renders, the more useless he or she is in the world. The sovereign upon the throne, the judges and magistrates, lawyers, medical men, men of business, ministers of the gospel, all are the servants of others. *Be faithful in your service.* The maxim of many in our time seems to be to take all the pay they can and render as little service as possible. That is not honest. Nor is it honest to work only when the eyes of your employer are upon you. "Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men." *Be trustworthy.* Regard what belongs to your master or your mistress with as much care as if it were your own. If your employer's children are committed to your care, how scrupulous you should be regarding them! Never let them hear from your lips a profane or evil word. If you are teaching them, seek to communicate to their youthful minds all the good principles that you can. Your work may be a quiet work, but if it is done faithfully it is a lasting work. You may not receive much notice or much thanks from your employer, but he that seeth in secret himself shall reward you openly.

II. PHŒBE WAS A SERVANT OF GOD. That was the secret of her useful and honoured life. It is the highest thing that could be said of any one. Employers are beginning to find out that God-fearing men and God-fearing women are not the worst servants. 1. *A servant of God will not be the servant of this world.* Many young ladies who call themselves Christians seem to spend their life altogether in the service of selfish pleasure and worldly amusement. 2. *A servant of God will not keep the company of the godless.* There is no subject on which young women in our towns and cities need to be more plainly warned than the choice of their companions of both sexes. How many happy and promising young lives have been blighted, how many hearts have been broken, by foolish companionships and too hasty intimacy! The casual knowledge obtained of any one at an evening party or a pleasure excursion is no basis on which to form an engagement on which depends the happiness of a lifetime.

> "Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
> Whose loves in higher love endure.
> What souls possess themselves so pure?
> Or is there blessedness like theirs?"

III. PHŒBE WAS A SERVANT OF THE CHURCH. That is to say, she was a helper of God's people. She was a helper in Christian work. There are many young women whose lives are absolutely wasted, who are utterly wretched and miserable, for want of something to do. How many forms of useful service there are in which a young woman may engage! She may teach in the Sunday school; visit the aged and the sick, and minister unto them in spiritual things, and perhaps also to their bodily comfort

and relief; she may invite the careless to the house of God. And a woman's influence is often powerful for good where even a Christian man would utterly fail to reach the hardened heart.—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—19.—*Words of counsel for a Christian Church.* The practical exhortations given in most of these closing chapters of this Epistle have reference mainly to the duties of individual Christians. The exhortations of this last chapter refer specially to the duty of the local Church in its corporate capacity.

I. ATTENTION TO STRANGERS. Consideration for strangers was constantly impressed upon the Jewish people in ancient times. "Oppress not the stranger" (Exod. xxii. 21; xxiii. 9, etc.); "The stranger that dwelleth among you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Lev. xix. 34). And Malachi denounces judgments upon those "that turn aside the stranger from his right" (iii. 5). So here Paul enjoins it upon the Church at Rome. "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister . . . that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you" (vers. 1, 2). *There is much need for such an exhortation in the Christian Churches of to-day.* Strangers go in and out of our Churches unnoticed and uncared for. False modesty or excessive etiquette prevents the members of the Church from speaking to them. *Consider the possible effects of such neglect.* A young man, far from home, exposed to many temptations and godless surroundings, enters a church. No one speaks to him. He drifts away. He knows that in the drinking-saloon, perhaps, he will find a welcome and a friendly shake of the hand. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Why should not Christians be as anxious to welcome the stranger to the house of God as the godless are to welcome him to their haunts of giddy pleasure and sin? Another, hovering on the verge of unbelief, unsettled by the silly popular literature of our day, enters a Christian church. He sees an element of unreality and of selfishness strongly marked. He too drifts away. Or some stranger enters a Christian church who is in trouble or in perplexity, and to whom a word of sympathy or guidance would be welcome. But from the self-absorbed and stand-off Christians no encouragement is received. Can we wonder that such persons are alienated from the Church, are often alienated from Christ? *And what does Christ think of all this?* Listen to his words on the great day: "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in." And when those whom he shall thus address shall say, "Lord, when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee not in?" then shall he answer them, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." Attention shown to the stranger is regarded by the Saviour as attention shown to himself. Such attention "becometh saints" (ver. 2). But however the Church may treat strangers, they need not remain strangers to Christ. He has a word and a welcome for all.

II. ATTENTION TO ONE ANOTHER. While we are to think of strangers we must not forget our own brethren.

> "We have careful thought for the stranger,
> And smiles for the sometime guest;
> But oft for our own
> The bitter tone,
> Though we love our own the best."

St. Paul here exhorts that they should greet one another as brethren. "Salute one another with an holy kiss" (ver. 16)—the customary mode of salutation at the time. Is not this exhortation also—namely, of friendliness and brotherly kindness among Christians—much needed in the Christian Church of to-day? How many professing Christians pass in and out of the same church, sit down at the same communion-table, and never exchange greetings with one another! Alas! after centuries of Christianity, we are but beginners in the school of Christ! Our profession of friendship for Christ is not worth much if we are not willing to make friends of his brethren. But it may be said, "We cannot ignore social differences. How am I to recognize in the street as a friend, how am I to shake hands with, one of lower social position?" Ah, yes! pride is the difficulty. Missionaries tell us that caste in Eastern countries is one of the

great hindrances to the spread of the gospel. It is the same at home. There is caste in Christian nations as well as in heathen lands. Yet it ought not to be so. Nowhere were such differences more marked than at Rome. There were the well-defined and sharply marked classes of patricians and plebeians. Yet Paul ignores them. Many of the persons whom he mentions by name in his salutations in this chapter were slaves. Yet they also were to be included in the attention of the other members of the Church. Some one may say, "This is quite revolutionary. It would upset all our social arrangements." Perhaps so. And Christianity must make greater revolutions yet in the character and habits of professing Christians if it is to win the world for Christ. More attention and kindness should be shown by one Christian to another than is commonly the case.

III. AVOIDANCE OF THE QUARRELSOME. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (ver. 17). And then he describes *the character and motives of the quarrelsome.* "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (ver. 18). That is to say, those who are quarrelsome in disposition are those who put their own ideas, their own comfort, their own selfish desires or feelings, in the forefront. Interfere with their plans, thwart their ambition, fail to respect their pride, and they are ready to take offence. *The duty of the Christian is to avoid such persons.* Such is the advice St. Paul gives here. Such advice he gave elsewhere. Speaking in his letter to Timothy of disputatious persons, he says, "From such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. vi. 5). Writing to the Thessalonians, he says, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 6). The reason of this is obvious. If quarrelsome persons are left to themselves, they will soon have nobody to quarrel with. It is an old saying that it takes two to make a quarrel. It might be added that it takes three to keep it up. A third party often fans the flame. If the Christian is brought into contact with quarrels at all, it should only be as a reconciler. "It is an honour to a man to cease from strife;" "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."—C. H. I.

Vers. 20—27.—*The object and the strength of a Christian Church.* With these two important thoughts St. Paul closes his Epistle.

I. THE CHURCH'S OBJECT. The Epistle ends with an ascription of glory to God (vers. 25—27). This was the great end the apostle had in view in writing his Epistle. And he would have his readers remember that this, too, is the great end for which a Church of Christ exists. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever." *We should glorify the love of the Father.* This is the potent influence to draw men's hearts from sin. "God so loved the world;" "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" *We should glorify the saving power of Jesus Christ the Son.* This gives the sinner confidence to come to him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." *We should glorify the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.* "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;" "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth."

II. THE CHURCH'S STRENGTH. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (ver. 20); "Now to him that is of power to stablish you" (ver. 25). *The Church's strength is not necessarily in its numbers.* Gideon's army was at one time too numerous. "The people that are with thee are too many" (Judg. vii. 2, 4). *Nor in its wealth.* Wealth has often been the weakness rather than the strength of the Christian Church. *Our strength is in having God in the midst of us, and in our living near to him.* This truth is wonderfully verified in the history of the little Church of the Vaudois. Through seven centuries of almost incessant persecution, that faithful and primitive little band—sometimes not exceeding a thousand in number—withstood the attacks of popes and princes, defied and defeated mighty armies, "out of weakness were made strong." Their strength was unquestionably in the presence of God with them, and in their unfaltering fidelity to the truth of the gospel. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."—C. H. I.

Vers. 1—16, 21—23.—*Christian salutations.* There remain now only salutations and conclusions. But the same courteous love shall be manifested to the end. Nowhere do the ethics of the new life come out more delicately than in these trivialities, as some would deem them, of epistolary correspondence. They are as the fragrance of the rose.

I. First, the letter-bearer is commended to their care. "Phœbe our sister, who is a servant of the Church." The mere sisterhood in Christ should be enough, but she was one in honour, the honour that comes of loving service, being a "deaconess" of the Church. How many offices of mercy could be filled then, as now, by the ministrations of gentle women! Some such office she fulfilled—she had been "a succourer of many." Nay, even of Paul also, perhaps in some illness. Surely here was an additional reason why they should receive her, and assist her in whatsoever matter she might have need of them.

II. Next, many Christians at Rome whom he knew are saluted by name—such doubtless as had removed thither from scenes of his former work, and through some of whom, perhaps, the gospel had first been made known at Rome: Prisca and Aquila, those earnest workers, through whom also, in some great peril, his life had been spared at the peril of their own; Epænetus the beloved; Mary, who in some way had wrought much for them; Andronicus and Junias, kinsmen, who had also shared his bonds, and were earlier than himself in the faith of Christ; Ampliatus the beloved in Christ; Urbanus the fellow-worker, and Stachys the beloved; Apelles, whose Christian faith had been sorely tested, but who had come forth approved from the fire; the household of Aristobulus, who himself perchance was not in Christ; Herodion, a kinsman; those of the household of Narcissus who were in the Lord; Tryphæna and Tryphosa, and Persis the beloved, earnest workers in Christ; Rufus the elect, and his mother, who had also acted a mother's part to Paul; Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brethren among whom they worked; Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them. And also, to those whom he knew not, but who were in Christ, as well as to those mentioned, whom he knew, he would have the salutation given: "Salute one another." And not on his behalf alone, but on behalf of all amongst whom he had preached Christ, and who, knowing his intent to visit Rome, had charged him with their love.

III. Yet, again, there are special ones who join him more formally in these salutings: Timothy, his fellow-worker, joined expressly with him in some Epistles (see 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon), but not in this, an authoritative exposition of the gospel, for which he, under Christ, must be alone responsible; Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, kinsmen; Tertius, the writer, suffered, by Paul's exquisite delicacy, to give his salutation in his own name; Gaius, the host of the Church; Erastus the treasurer; and brother Quartus.

It was done. The interchange of love was made. An illustration was given of that like-mindedness of love which he wished to see characterize the Churches of God. It only remained now that he should commend them to the grace of God.—T. F. L.

Vers. 17—20.—*A last warning.* There might, however, be some advent amongst them of a malign influence that should mar this brotherly love, and he must say one warning word. How had the trail of the serpent been on his path! At Galatia, in Corinth, and elsewhere, false teachers had come in, seeking to undo his work; those Judaizers, who sought to corrupt the young believers from the simplicity of the gospel. And would they not seek to undo the work at Rome? Yes, verily; for the obedience of the Roman Christians had come abroad unto all men, and the tidings of their obedience of faith would be but the signal to these destroyers for a new errand of cunning and greed. He warns them.

I. THE WARNING. The work of these false teachers is spoken of first in Acts xv. 1, where we read, "And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved;" "false brethren," the apostle calls them in Gal. ii. 4, "who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." And the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians, and large part of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, were occupied in the endeavour to counteract their poisonous representations. Their aim was to make the Gentiles enter the Christian Church by the Jewish

door, becoming indeed but an appanage of Judaic Christianity. A yet baser aim, as we learn here, and from 2 Cor. xi. 20 and Phil. iii. 2, 19, was their own sensual aggrandizement: they served their own belly. They would come to Rome, for they possessed truly a missionary zeal, without missionary love; they would come to Rome, and "their smooth and fair speech" might easily "beguile the hearts of the innocent." That these presentiments were sadly fulfilled, we learn from Phil. i. 15—17, and over these false teachers he weeps, as he tells us, in Phil. iii. 18, 19. What was to be the attitude and action of the Romans? The prescription was a simple one: they could tell from their observance of other Churches the fruit of their teaching, viz. "divisions and occasions of stumbling," and by their fruits they were to know them. And knowing them? to "turn from them." There was to be no parleying, no disputation; the bird was not to catch the glare of the serpent's eye, lest it be fascinated and drawn into the jaws of death! "Wise unto that which is good" they might be, using their powers of thought to advance themselves in all well-doing. But "simple unto that which is evil;" for any argumentation here is fatal, and a strong, sharp, unhesitating stroke is needed, that shall sunder us for ever from the deadly peril. Such was to be their action: an absolute avoidance of him who was obviously, at first sight, Satan, but who, if they tarried to gaze and hearken, might soon be "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14).

II. THE PROMISE. What! was *he* against them? Yes, the great foe. They well might tremble. But there was a greater One for them, even God himself; and the ancient promise of Gen. iii. 15 should be fulfilled to them, if they had faith in God. "The God of peace," who will conserve the harmony of his people, and the peace of the believer's heart, if there be faith in him; who can control all the confusions and malice of his foes, to work out his designs of good—he shall soon bruise Satan under them! The battle now may seem long, but when we look back from the heights of our triumph, it will be "but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Then

> "Fight, nor think the battle long;
> Soon shall victory tune your song!"

And meanwhile, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."—T. F. L.

Vers. 25—27.—*The final commendation.* The final commendation, left imperfect as regards mere form; but hearts were full, his and theirs, and full hearts do not utter all they feel. "I commend you"—so in Acts xx. 32. But they will understand his meaning, without the utterance of the words, and he need but point upwards, and say, "To him," etc. Shall we reverently gaze on this prayer of an apostle's full heart? So we note—the power of God; the principles of the exercise of God's power; the glad committal to that wise power through Jesus Christ.

I. God was "able to stablish" them. Paul had expressed the desire in ch. i. 11 to impart to them some spiritual gift, that they might be established. He yet hopes to see them with that intent. And surely he may well trust that this letter, written in fulfilment of his mission from Christ, may have such result. But only God's power can effect the result, when man has done his best. And God's power can accomplish all things; he is "able to stablish." The manifold stablishment: we need but glance along the line of the Epistle to determine that. In their faith, surely, in God's forgiving love, which was the basis of the new life; in their death to sin, and new life unto God, which such true faith in God's love through Christ must work; in their humility and love amongst one another as Christians; in their submission to the rightful powers of the state, and their true, love-inspired justice towards their fellow-citizens; in their hope of the coming of God's perfect kingdom; and in their determined resistance of all incoming evil: in this God could stablish them, and God alone.

II. And, "according to my gospel." The reception of God's power was conditioned upon the reception of God's truth, for "the power of God can act only in agreement with the thought of God" (Godet). If they would be firm in the faith, and in the new life of faith, they must intelligently believe the gospel of Christ. Yes, for Paul's gospel was Christ's gospel, and he preached not himself, but Christ Jesus. And this preaching of Christ was not according to his own skill and wisdom; it had been revealed from heaven (see Gal. i. 11, 12, 16). It had not been always revealed; a "mystery" once,

"kept in silence through times eternal:" hidden in the thought of God from the beginning, and through the earlier ages of the world's history. Oh, these blessed secrets of God, ready to burst upon us with a shock of surprise! This secret had broken on the world; the mystery was "manifested," and "made known unto all the nations:" manifested to the apostles, pre-eminently to Paul, and made known by them, not as an absolutely new thing, but as hinted at in earlier prophecies; made known in their teaching and writing, that all the world might know. And the end, as before, "obedience of faith"—the yielding of the whole mind and heart to the message and grace of the eternal God, that so his power might work in them to their salvation and eternal stablishment.

III. To such a One he commends them, and to the word of his grace. He had taught them according to his best wisdom; should he see them, he will build them up according to his best power. But his wisdom and power are nothing apart from the power of God "only wise;" and when his wisdom and power have done their best, still God's wise power must work all. He may see them; he may not: but, in any case, the eternal God is their Refuge, and round and underneath are the everlasting arms!

To him be the glory, through Christ! "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. Amen."—T. F. L.

Vers. 1, 2.—*A Christian commendation.* It is an honour and a help to receive an introduction from one high in authority. Men of exalted station incur a serious responsibility in the matter of granting or withholding letters of recommendation. The Apostle Paul had known what it was to be treated with scant courtesy by the Church at Jerusalem, until he was warmly taken by the hand by Barnabas. Doubtless this remembrance quickened his desire to support and shield others in a similar position. How strongly he advocates the cause of Phœbe!

I. CLAIMS TO THE REGARD OF A CHURCH. 1. *As a fellow-believer*, a "sister" in Christ. To the instinctive sympathy which nature fosters, grace adds a further reason in the reminder of the one communion to which all belong who have professed loyalty to the one Lord. "Work good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." This mark of distinction is of necessity more visible where the surroundings are not even nominally Christian, and where a confession of faith in the new doctrine is a signal for tribulation and persecution. 2. *As an officer of a sister Church.* She was a deaconess, a servant of the Church, set apart for special ministration to the female portion of the community. "Render honour to whom honour is due." Office is *primâ facie* an indication of worth, of high estimation by the electing body. There are ranks and orders in the heavenly hierarchy, as on earth. 3. *As one in need of hospitable succour.* Need is itself an argument for attention and aid. Other things being equal, the call of the necessitous is paramount. The prosperous can manage well enough, whereas the situation of the distressed is an opportunity for benevolence. Phœbe's errand to Rome implied difficulty and insufficiency, whether she sought redress in an imperial court of law, or the discovery of some lost relations, or the pursuit of some handicraft, or surgical assistance. 4. *As having herself contributed to the relief of the suffering.* This is the *lex talionis* in its benignant form. Who is such a proper recipient of charity as the man who has done good according to his means? With the merciful does God show himself merciful. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." The idle vagabonds are not the deserving poor. Charity organization can alone bestow alms without pauperizing. 5. *As having ministered to the writer.* Though Phœbe's privilege of tending the apostle in one of his sicknesses was also a duty, the grateful invalid by no means forgets her services. What is done to ourselves strikes us more forcibly than the aid we witness rendered to our neighbours. It is like a lantern whose rays are turned full upon our face; we perceive its brightness. Hence the impulse to Christian devotedness felt when with individual consciousness of indebtedness to Christ we say, not only, "He died to save sinners," but also, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

II. THE RECEPTION BEFITTING THE CHURCH. This is an illustration of the general maxim insisted on in ch. xv. 7. 1. *A hearty welcome beseems the saints.* Reserve and coldness melt away under the inspiring beams of kinship to the Saviour. The deeps of

apathy are for ever broken up by the entrance of Christ into the heart. To receive a a fellow-member "in the Lord" is to display some of the love and tenderness which Christ manifested towards his disciples. It is quite incompatible with that frigid etiquette which suspects new-comers, and resents as vulgar every outward token of emotion. 2. *To render aid to the whole body of Christ is an essential part of every Church's functions.* A Church exists, not for its own aggrandizement and glorification, but as an instrument for strengthening and enlarging the one kingdom of Christ. And every power at its command must be utilized as the very law of its life. Where a community or an individual wraps itself up in seclusion, indifferent to the welfare of others, there the process of decay and death has begun. And it is not in the mass, but by single persons, that the world is regenerated and service rendered. The recognition of the real brotherhood of Christians will usher in millennial days. Affection is the central fire of sainthood, burning up what is mean and selfish, and glowing like a coal from the altar of him whose incarnate love is our clearest revelation of Deity. 3. *That is poor admiration of an apostle which is content with a grudging compliance with his bidding.* Here was a chance presented to the Roman Christians at once to be generous to a visitor, and to fill the apostle's heart with thankfulness. And we to-day do best mark our reverence for apostolic authority and for the Master whose instructions are thus communicated by a whole-hearted endeavour to carry out the principles of New Testament liberality and beneficence. They have good security who lend unto the Lord. 4. *To honour woman for her place and work is a sign of high civilization.* It may not be true that only Christianity has treated woman with befitting dignity, but it is certain that Christ paid her signal respect, and that she has been foremost in the acceptance and promulgation of the faith. The prominence of woman in the primitive Church was succeeded by somewhat of obscurity and depreciation; but the Christian idea has again triumphed, and woman's special mission to soothe the aching head, and succour the weary, and to minister to distress as an angel of God, was never so fully discerned and so warmly appraised as now.

"Rise! woman, rise
To thy peculiar and best altitudes
Of doing good and of enduring ill—
Of comforting for ill, and teaching good,
And reconciling all that ill and good
Unto the patience of a constant hope."

Female labour in schools and missions affords the brightest prospects of evangelizing the world.—S. R. A.

Ver. 7.—*A noble encomium.* It is not without significance that this, the most abstruse and difficult of all the Epistles, should have appended to it the longest list of friendly greetings. Doctrine and argument are not necessarily productive of coldness of heart. The apostle was a beautiful example of the blending of the philosopher and the gentleman. Deep thought and elevated diction were not joined to forgetfulness of the courtesies of life. The true refinements of society are worthy of attention; they lessen the friction and harsh grating of the wheels of the machinery. Lofty pillars and strong buttresses may be graceful as well as useful. Of course, reality is ever preferable to mere show, and a rough demeanour covering sincere affection is better than superficial politeness. The tribute of respect which is here paid to Andronicus and Junias suggests several considerations.

I. THE BOND OF NATURAL KINSHIP IS IMMENSELY STRENGTHENED BY A COMMON RELIGIOUS FAITH. A philosophical Utopia which annuls special forms of alliance overlooks a fundamental element of our human constitution. A man's regard for his own family is the first fulfilment of the law to love his neighbour. From this starting-point affection may branch out in all directions. The apostle noted as one of the signs of a corrupt condition that men were "without natural affection." And though our Lord would not permit family claims to interfere with discipleship, he yet rebuked the Pharisees for encouraging gifts to the temple from men who left their own parents in want. The Saviour made provision for his mother's comfort even amid the agony of the cross. Christianity may divide some households like a sword and fire, but where

the members all receive the gospel, their earthly love is cemented, transfigured, eternalized by loyalty to the same Lord, and participation in the same heavenly hopes and aims. Like Andrew, who brought his own brother to Christ, should our efforts first be directed to the salvation of our own relatives and countrymen.

II. THE SINCERITY OF OUR RELIGION IS PROVED BY FELLOWSHIP IN SUFFERING. Andronicus and Junias had shown, by sharing the imprisonment of the apostle, that they were more than fair-weather Christians. Their fortitude increased the apostle's affection and esteem. They had flinched not when trial came, but underwent shame and loss for Jesus Christ. The Church has always need of stout-hearted disciples, ready to face obloquy, ridicule, poverty, rather than sacrifice principle. We could envy these Christians their imprisonment with the apostle. Who could not wish to be Silas to join Paul in his hymns and prayers in the stocks? One of the inmates of Bunyan's jail was permitted to take the manuscript of the immortal 'Pilgrim's Progress' and peruse it quietly in his own cell. Fancy being the first reader, permitted to pass judgment upon the work and to urge its publication! To suffer together in a righteous cause has ever bound men to each other in mutual respect and sympathy. Even the Peninsular and the Crimean veterans have liked to commemorate their common deeds of prowess by annual celebrations. If the apostle was not oblivious of the endurance of these Christians, we may be sure that One on high has never forgotten them. No act of heroism is unregistered in heaven. "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations."

III. IT WAS NO ORDINARY HONOUR TO BE OF HIGH REPUTE AMONG THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH. From a passage in the Acts we learn that Paul had relatives at Jerusalem who were interested in him, and these mentioned in the text may have belonged to that family well known at the apostolic head-quarters. No true man is insensible to the good opinion of men of acknowledged worth. It was one of the qualifications of a bishop that he should "have a good report of them that are without." How easy is it to value the suffrages of worldly society more than the esteem of the followers of Jesus! Yet the applause of the world is an empty breath, the praise of the newspapers soon dies away, military glory is a "bubble reputation." The desire of fame is one of the strongest passions. Eratostratus burnt the temple at Ephesus to secure notoriety. The gospel does not scorn these natural forces, but utilizes them by refining and purifying our motives. It persuades us to approve ourselves to him who searches the heart and tries the reins, whose eyes are as a flame of fire. "I know thy works and thy charity, thy service, and faith, and patience." Voltaire lamented on his death-bed, "I have swallowed nothing but smoke; I have intoxicated myself with the incense that turned my head." "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

IV. THEIR PROFESSION STOOD THE TEST OF YEARS. The apostle does not omit to notice their early conversion. They "were in Christ before" him. In any case discipleship signified a sharp struggle, and a wrench from old associations. One's real age is determined ethically, not physically. Seniority in Church-membership is not to take precedence of spiritual gifts, but demands courteous recognition. "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." Age is doubly venerable when like a mellow sunset it crowns a Christian day. We may well ask whether we have advanced in knowledge, spirituality, and usefulness, as others have who commenced with us the Christian race. Are we lagging behind, whilst they have marched to the front? That is a happy competition to be "first in Christ." There is room for all; there need be no disappointed competitors. To be "out of Christ" is to be hopeless and undone. Shall parents and friends press forward to the Master's feet while we remain irresolute, undecided? The law is, "He that asketh, receiveth." Paul outstripped many apostolic compeers. —S. R. A.

Vers. 17, 18.—*Fomenters of discord.* A bright galaxy of Christian stars has been enumerated in this chapter. In contrast with these "lights of the sky" are those wandering will-o'-the-wisps which lead men astray in the darkness; marshy exhalations conducting to quagmires of destruction. The only course to be pursued in relation to the latter is to avoid them as a plague, as moral lepers whose presence brings contagion.

I. PERSONS TO BE SHUNNED. Those "who cause divisions and offences." True Christianity ever makes for peace. There may be rending and outcries whilst the former evil spirit is undergoing expulsion; there are often searchings of heart and a forsaking of old companions and practices; but when Christ is acknowledged as King, tranquillity reigns in the breast, and peace and love spread their pinions over Christian fellowship. To break up "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is a sure method of placing stumbling-blocks in the path of the unwary. More harm has proceeded from this source to the body of Christ than has ever resulted from outside attacks. Safety lies in withdrawal from those who walk disorderly, rudely disturbing the peace of the Church.

II. WANTON PROMOTERS OF STRIFE HAVE A PERSONAL END TO GAIN. They "serve their own belly." Thus ruthlessly does the apostle analyze their motives, and he hesitates not to impute their action to a base desire for self-gratification. Perhaps they aim at notoriety, or they are jealous of the accepted leaders of religious life. The pugnacious see little chance of distinguishing themselves in seasons of serenity. The arm rebels against the governing head, and instead of counting it an honour to minister according to its functions, would rather force the rest of the frame to pander to its single indulgence. The simple are easily imposed on by specious professions and plausible protestations of a regard for the common weal.

III. JUDGE THE CONDUCT OF MEN BY THE STANDARD OF TRUTH. We are not left to our intuitive discernment. What is "contrary to the doctrine" of the apostles can never be allowed as a basis of division. Heavy is the responsibility those incur who initiate strife among Christians. Let them be certain first that what they bring forward as a test is truth, important fundamental truth. If it opposes the ethical rules or the elementary teachings on which the gospel is established, it carries its own condemnation. A speculative theory is not a sufficient reason for throwing a firebrand amongst the articles of faith. Such behaviour differs radically from a religious reformation like that of Luther, where it is a return to gospel simplicity that is contended for, and not an overlaying of sound words with superstition and ceremony. The apostle's warning applies, not to genuine seekers after truth, but to those who delight in making breaches in the Christian fortress. Discriminate between schismatics and dissenters!

IV. THE MAIN SECURITY AGAINST EVIL INFLUENCE AND THE CHIEF PRESERVATIVE OF HARMONY IS AN EARNEST DESIRE FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST. "Serve our Lord Christ." As a wire introduced into a solution promotes crystallization, so really Christian thoughts and purposes and acts group themselves around the Person of the Saviour. Petty longings are subordinated to the one grand idea of doing the will of the Lord. The foe cares little about the damage inflicted on the kingdom; the servant grieves over every disruption of its peace and power. Even necessary departures from a corrupt Christian society have been deplored as evil in themselves by the good men who have felt constrained thus to prove their loyalty to conviction.—S. R. A.

Vers. 1—27.—*Salutations and benedictions.* The programme being sketched, the apostle now proceeds to the salutations and benedictions with which his Epistles usually end. And here notice—

I. THE DISTINGUISHED PLACE OCCUPIED IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH BY WOMEN. There are no less than *nine* women specially referred to in this list, and all are active in the Church. Some were *deaconesses*; for instance, Phœbe, Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Persis. Oriental society separates the sexes in a way we do not in the West; hence the need of such officials there, and in zenana mission work still. Why should they not exist? Many a work which the Church should undertake can be better done by women than by men. But notice briefly: 1. *Phœbe.* She was a deaconess of Cenchrea, the port of Corinth. It was she who carried the precious Epistle to Rome. Some business led her thither. She is the bearer of the finest Epistle ever written to a Christian Church, and in it she has a magnificent introduction. 2. *Prisca.* Called Priscilla, and mentioned before her husband Aquila. Perhaps she was the better Christian. At all events, they had a "Church in their house." They had been very kind to the apostle, and had prosecuted with him their tent-making trade. 3. *Tryphena and Tryphosa.* Their names suggest voluptuous living—but they had been transformed by grace into hard workers (cf. Godet, *in loc.*). 4. *Persis.* Likely an aged deaconess.

Her work is over. She *had* done much—had doubtless done what she could, and did not need to go to her work in company, like the preceding pair, but could face it alone. 6. *Mother of Rufus.* She seems to have been the widow of Simon the Cyrenian, as Mark xv. 21 suggests. Paul had likely lodged with them when in Jerusalem, and received maternal sympathy from the good lady. Hence he speaks of her as his mother too.

II. NOTICE THE PARTICULAR KNOWLEDGE PAUL POSSESSES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN ROME. This long list is a very particular one, and shows how the apostle has them all at his fingers' ends. He seems to have had that very enviable faculty for remembering names. And his particularity in the matter was from the *love* he bore them, as references in the words used over and over suggest.

III. THE SALUTATION WITH THE KISS OF HOLINESS. The arrangement was men kissed men, and women women, as is the Oriental fashion. It indicated a deeper interest in one another's welfare than we are inclined for in the West.

IV. THE ADVICE TO AVOID TROUBLES OF THE CHURCH. (Vers. 17—20.) Prudence was necessary in the doing of good and a desire to avoid all pugnacity. On peaceful lines they might expect the victory over the evil one.

V. PAUL'S FELLOW-WORKERS AT CORINTH SEND GREETINGS TO THE CHURCH AT ROME. (Vers. 21—23.) The apostle had made good way at Corinth, from the greetings he was here enabled to send.

VI. THE DOXOLOGY. (Vers. 24—27.) He carries his praise and hope upwards, and lays all at the feet of God. So should it be always.—R. M. E.

# HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

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