

Romans 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

The penman of this Epistle, viz. Paul, was so called (as some think) because he was little or low of stature. Others suppose he had this name first given him upon the converting of Sergius Paulus the deputy; of which see Ac 12:1-25, and Hierom. Com. in Ep. ad Philem. But others are of opinion, that his name was not changed at all, and that he had two names, as all those Jews had who were freemen of Rome. The text in Ac 13:9 doth favour this opinion; there you read of Saul, who was also called Paul. (So John was surnamed, or also called, Mark, Ac 12:12,25.) And because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and his work lay mostly amongst them, he was called at last altogether by his surname, or Roman title.

As to the order of it: all are agreed, that it was not written as it is placed in our Bibles: that the Epistles to the Thessalonians, to the Corinthians, and other of his Epistles, were written before this; and the reason why it is placed before the other Epistles is, because of the dignity of the Romans, to whom it was directed; Rome being, at that time, the imperial city: or, because of the prolixity and largeness of it, this being the longest of all the Epistles: or, because of the excellency and fulness of it; so full and excellent is this Epistle, that some have called it "the marrow of divinity". Chrysostom had such an esteem of it, that he caused it to be read to him twice every week. Melancthon called it "the confession of the churches"; he is reported to have gone over it ten several times in his ordinary lectures. Mr. Perkins adviseth, in the reading of the Scriptures, to begin with the Gospel of John, and this Epistle to the Romans, as being the keys of the New Testament.

The subject matter of it seems to be much the same with the Epistle to the Galatians. The body of this Epistle (not to speak any thing of the preface, or conclusion) is partly doctrinal, and partly practical. In the doctrinal part, the apostle handles (and that purposely, and at large) that fundamental article of a sinner's justification in the sight of God: so that this Epistle (as one saith) is the proper seat of that doctrine; and from hence it is principally to be learned. Here we are taught the way and manner of our justification before God, that we are *justified by faith, without the deeds of the law*, by a righteousness which is imputed to us,

and not by any righteousness inherent in us. This is proved in the first four chapters, by many irrefragable arguments, and vindicated from all objections. And then it is amplified in the seven following chapters. The amplification is first from the glorious effects and sweetest privileges of justification by faith, viz. *peace with God*, which no tribulation can hinder or interrupt, Ro 5:1-10. Then there is rejoicing with God, as reconciled through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, who doth abundantly transcend the first Adam in many particulars, Ro 5:11-21. Then there is sanctification, in both the parts of it, as mortification and death to sin; and vivification, or newness of life, Ro 6:1-23 throughout. The next is freedom from the law, as the first husband, now dead, Ro 7:1-25. And in the Ro 8:1-39 you have divers other privileges closely couched, as noncondemnation, adoption, the indwelling of the Spirit, the co-operations of all things for good, the certainty of the love of God, together with the triumph we have over all our enemies upon that account. Further, this doctrine of justification is amplified from the remote cause of it; and that is, God's predestination or eternal counsel. This is brought in to obviate an objection against this doctrine, as not true, because the Jewish nation (God's ancient people) received it not. Thereupon the apostle shows, that justification belonged not to the whole nation of the Jews, but only to the elect amongst them; the rest being rejected of God till the fulness of the Gentiles was come in; and then the Jews should more generally believe and be converted. This you have at large in Ro 9:1-11:36. The practical part of this Epistle follows, in which you have many useful exhortations, from Ro 12:1-15:14. These are either more general, or more particular, showing Christians how they should behave themselves with respect to the church of Christ, and the fellowship thereof, every one attending upon the calling and ministry wherein God hath placed him, Ro 12:1-21; with respect to the civil society, and the government which God had set over them in the world, yielding all subjection thereunto, Ro 13:1-14; and with respect to their brethren and neighbours, exercising Christian charity towards all, avoiding censoriousness on the one hand and offences on the other, Ro 14:1-15:33. These duties he largely presseth, interweaving now and then many ethical and theological aphorisms, of which in their proper place.

Chapter Summary

Ro 1:1-7 Paul, commending to the Romans his calling,

greeted them,

Ro 1:8-15 and professes his concern for, and desire of coming to see them.

Ro 1:16,17 He shows that the gospel is for the justification of all mankind through faith.

Ro 1:18-32 And having premised that sinners in general are obnoxious to God's wrath, he describes at large the corruption of the Gentile world.

Ver. 1. *A servant of Jesus Christ*, is a higher title than monarch of the world: several great emperors styled themselves Christ's vassals. He so calls himself, either in respect of his condition, which was common with him to all true Christians; or else in respect of his office. Of old, they who were in great offices were called *the servants of God*: see Jos 1:1 Ne 1:6 Ps 132:10. Or else in respect of his singular and miraculous conversion: by reason of which, he thought himself so obliged to Christ, that he wholly addicted or devoted himself to his service.

Called to be an apostle; appointed to that high office by the immediate call of Christ himself: see Ga 1:1 Tit 1:3. The history of this call you have in Ac 9:15.

Two things are couched in this phrase:

1. That he did not take this honour to himself, but was thereunto appointed and called of God.
2. That this apostolical dignity was not by any desert of his, but by grace only, and the free gift of him that calleth.

It was formerly matter of admiration, and so it became a proverb in Israel: *Is Saul also among the prophets?* And we may say, with great astonishment, *Is Saul also among the apostles?* He that a little before had seen him doing what he is recorded to have done, Ac 26:10,11, would never have dreamed of any such thing.

Separated; either from his mother's womb, in the purpose of God, Ga 1:15; so Jeremiah of old, Jer 1:5. Or else it may have respect to Ac 13:2, where the Holy Ghost did actually order he should be separated for the

work to which he had called him. The Greek word, in both places, is the same. Or else it may respect the more immediate commission he had from Christ himself, Ac 9:15 26:16-18. Some think he alludes to the name of Pharisee, which is from separating: when he was a Pharisee, he was separated to the law of God; and now, being a Christian, he was separated to the gospel of God.

Unto the gospel of God; that is, to the preaching and publishing of it. The gospel is sometimes called *the gospel of God*, as in this place; and sometimes *the gospel of Christ*, as in Ro 1:16; it is said to be the gospel of God, because he is the author of it, it is not a human invention; and it is said to be the gospel of Christ, because he is the matter and subject of it.

Romans 1:2

Ver. 2. *Which he had promised;* the meaning is not, that the history of the gospel was promised by the prophets, but that Jesus Christ, with all his benefits, (which is the direct subject of the gospel history and revelation), was promised or foreshown by them.

Afore; this word is added to prevent the imputation of novelty: q.d. Let none object and say, the gospel is a new and modern doctrine; for it was promised or foretold of old, by all the *prophets which have been since the world began*, Lu 1:70.

By his prophets: by *prophets* we may understand, not only those that were commonly dignified with that title, but all those also whom God condescended to converse with in a familiar manner, revealing his secrets to them: that such are called prophets, see Ge 20:7 Ps 105:15.

In the holy Scriptures; to wit, of the Old Testament; he hath respect to the oracles and promises therein contained, concerning Christ and his kingdom; chiefly to Ge 3:15 49:8,10 De 18:18 Ps 16:10 Ps 22:1-31 40:1-17 110:1 Isa 7:14 9:6 53:1-12; 63:1-3 Da 9:24-26 Mic 5:2 Zec 9:9 Mal 3:1, &c. He hereby intimates, that there is a great harmony and consent betwixt the prophets and apostles, the doctrine of the Old Testament and the New; see Lu 24:44 Joh 12:16 Ac 10:43. Our modern translators include this verse in a parenthesis; the ancients did not.

Romans 1:3

Ver. 3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: this phrase either respects the Holy Scriptures, mentioned immediately before in Ro 1:2; the sum and substance of them is, concerning the Messiah, the Son of God: or else it respects the gospel, that was spoken of in the Ro 1:1,2 being only a parenthesis, as was before hinted; then the meaning is, that the apostle Paul was separated to the gospel of God, which only or mainly concerns his Son Jesus Christ. And this seems to show the excellency of the gospel, that it doth not treat of vulgar and ordinary matters. as of the gods of the Gentiles, or the actions of Alexander, Caesar, the Scipios, or such like heroes; but of the Son of God himself.

Which was made; i.e. as he afterwards expresseth it, according to the flesh, or his human nature: in regard of his Divine subsistence, he was begotten and not made; in regard of his manhood, he was made and not begotten. When he says the Son of God *was made*, &c., it is undeniably implied, that he did exist before his incarnation, and was the Son of God before he was the Son of man. This place proves clearly these two truths:

1. That in the person of Jesus Christ there are two natures.
2. That there is between these a communication of properties; here the Son of God is said to be made of the seed of David; and elsewhere the Son of man is said to have come down from heaven: see Joh 3:13: cf. Joh 6:62 Ac 20:28 1Co 2:8.

Of the seed of David; i.e. of the virgin Mary, who was of David's lineage and posterity; the promise was expressly, that the Messiah should be *of the fruit of his loins*, Ac 2:30, compared saith Isa 11:1 Jer 23:5 Eze 34:24. Yea, this promise was so fully known to the Jews, that when they spake of the Messiah, they called him *the Son of David*: see Mt 21:9 22:42 Mr 10:47,48 Joh 7:42. Hence it is that the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, are so careful and industrious to prove, that the virgin Mary, and Joseph to whom she was espoused, did come of David's line and race.

Romans 1:4

Ver. 4. Not made the Son of God, as he was said before to be *made of the seed of David*; but *declared*, or demonstrated, *to be the Son of God*.

With power: this refers either to the word declared, and then the meaning is, he was powerfully or miraculously declared to be the Son of God; the Greek word ordinarily signifies a miracle in the New Testament: or else it refers to the last words, *the Son of God*; and then the sense is, he was declared to be the powerful and omnipotent Son of God, of the same power and majesty with the Father.

By the spirit of holiness, some would understand the Third Person in the blessed Trinity, which is often called the Holy Spirit, and here the Spirit of holiness; but others, and they more rightly, do understand the Deity and Divine nature of Christ; this is called *the Spirit*, 1Ti 3:16 1Pe 3:18; and *the eternal Spirit*, Heb 9:14 and here it is called *the Spirit of holiness*, or the most Holy Spirit, and that, probably, because of its effects; for thereby he sanctified his natural body, and still sanctifies his mystical body, the church. That this is the meaning is evident, by the opposition between the flesh and the Spirit: *as according to the flesh*, in the former verse, did signify his human nature; so *according to the Spirit*, in this verse, doth signify his Divine nature. See the like antithesis in 1Ti 3:16 1Pe 3:18.

By the resurrection from the dead: because it is said, the resurrection of the dead, not *from* the dead, some would understand the words of Lazarus, and others, who by the power of Christ were raised from the dead; and others would understand the words of those who were raised with Christ, when he himself arose: see Mt 27:52,53. But in Scripture *the resurrection of the dead*, is put for the resurrection from the dead; see 1Co 15:42 Heb 6:2; and hereby is meant the resurrection of Christ himself: he rose again from the dead, and thereby declared or manifested himself to be the Son of God with power: see Joh 2:19,21 5:26 10:18 1Co 15:4. And though it be said in Scripture, that the Father raised him from the dead, Ac 2:24 13:30,33; yet that doth not hinder but by his own power he raised himself; seeing the Father and he were one, and the works of the Three Persons in one and the same Essence are undivided.

Romans 1:5

Ver. 5. *By whom;* or of whom; by whom, as Mediator, or of whom, as Author and Giver.

Grace and apostleship: some make these two distinct gifts; the one common, which is grace; the other special, which is apostleship: others think, that, by an hendiadis, he means the grace of apostleship; which he so calls, because it was conferred upon him, not for any desert of his, but by the mere favour and free grace of God. It is his manner to call his apostleship by the name or style of *grace*: see Ro 15:15 Ga 2:9 Eph 3:2,8.

For obedience to the faith; you have the same phrase, Ro 16:26, and there it is rendered *for the obedience of faith*. By *faith* here some understand the gospel or doctrine of faith; it hath this sense, Ac 6:7 Jude 1:3, &c.; and then the meaning is, God, of his mere grace, hath given me this office, that I might bring the nations to believe, and work in them obedience to the doctrine of the gospel. Others understand the grace of faith; and then the meaning is, I have received this office, that I might bring the nations to believe, and so to obey the gospel. Therefore obedience is joined with faith, because by faith we obey the commands of God; and faith itself consists in obedience, and is the great command of the gospel.

Among all nations; according to the general commission, Mt 28:19, and a more special commission to this apostle; see Ac 9:15 Ga 2:7,8 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11.

For his name; that the nations might believe in his name; so some: others suppose these words are added to declare the end of Paul's preaching and apostleship, which was to set forth the glory and praise of Christ: see 2Th 1:12.

Romans 1:6

Ver. 6. *Among whom are ye also;* the Romans are in this number, and a part of the nations to whom I have a commission, and for whom I have received the grace of apostleship. He adds this, to show his warrant for writing to them, he did it by virtue of his office; as also to humble them;

for though they were Romans, and such as bore the greatest sway in the world, yet they were formerly pagans and idolaters.

The called of Jesus Christ: though such were some of you, to wit, heathen idolaters; yet now you are Christians, and *the called of Jesus Christ:* called outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit. By effectual calling you are become his disciples and followers.

Romans 1:7

Ver. 7. *To all that be in Rome;* he doth not direct this Epistle to all that there inhabited, as to the emperor and senate, &c.; but to the church, and all the Christians there, as appears by the two following phrases. He wrote not to those only which were Romans by nation, but to all the faithful, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, for they were all one and alike in Christ. They are deceived that think this Epistle, because directed to the Romans, was written in Latin. The Greek tongue was well understood in that city. Juvenal calls Rome a Greek city, because the inhabitants, as well natives as strangers, did some of them use, and most of them understand, that language.

Called to be saints, or, called saints; though there might be hypocrites amongst them, yet they were denominated from the better part. The Jews of old were only accounted a holy nation or people; and the Gentiles, common or unclean; but now that difference is taken away, faith in Jesus Christ, and effectual calling, makes the Gentiles holy as well as the Jews. The name *saint* doth not denote a perfection in holiness, but one that is devoted and consecrated to God, who is holy in heart and life, though he hath many imperfections.

Grace to you, and peace: under these two words, *grace* and *peace*, are comprehended all spiritual and temporal blessings. It is a usual salutation or benediction in the Epistles of this apostle: see 1Co 1:3 2Co 1:2 Gal 1:3 Eph 1:2 Php 1:2 Col 1:2 2Th 1:2 1Ti 1:2 Tit 1:4 Phm 1:3. See the like in the Epistles of Peter, 1Pe 1:2 2Pe 1:2. See also 2Jo 1:3 Re 1:4.

From God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: why is there no mention made here of the Holy Ghost?

Answer. Because he is implied in his gifts: grace and peace are the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In other salutations the Holy Ghost is expressed; see 2Co 13:14; and here, when the Father and Son are named, he is plainly implied.

Romans 1:8

Ver. 8. *First*, here, is not a word of order, for there follows no secondly, &c.; but it serves to show, that here the Epistle begins, for all before was but a preface or inscription: q.d. In the first place. See the like, 1Ti 2:1.

Throughout the whole world, that is, through many parts of it; it is a figurative speech: see the like, Joh 12:19. Or else, by *the whole world* may be understood the Roman empire, which ruled at that time over a great part of the known world. See the like, Lu 2:1. Besides, there was a resort to Rome from all parts of the world, and so this report might be diffused far and near. The faith of the gospel at Rome made it more famous than all its victories and triumphs. Oh, how is Rome degenerated! We may take up the complaint concerning her which we find, Isa 1:11,12. The Romanists urge this place to prove Rome the mother church; but without reason: the church of Thessalonica had as high a eulogy: see 1Th 1:8.

Romans 1:9

Ver. 9. *God is my witness*; in these words there is the force, if not the form, of an oath. See the like, 2Co 1:18 11:31 Ga 1:20. His great love and care of them was a hidden thing, and known only to God; to him therefore he appeals for the truth thereof. Oaths, in certain cases, are allowable under the New Testament, as well as the Old.

With my spirit, i.e. sincerely, or with my whole heart: see Eph 6:6 2Ti 1:3.

Without ceasing, i.e. as often as he prayed. This was a great indication of his hearty affection to them.

Romans 1:10

Ver. 10. *Making request;* this was one thing he requested of God, that what he had long desired and designed might happily (if it seemed good in God's sight) be at last accomplished, that he might come in person to them. This desire of Paul to see the Romans might be one cause of that appeal which he made to Rome, Ac 25:10,11,

By the will of God; he adds this, because, in publishing the gospel, he followed the order which God, by his Spirit, prescribed him: see Ac 16:7,9,10.

Romans 1:11

Ver. 11. He declares his end in desiring to see them; it was not his own profit, but their edification.

By some spiritual gift, he means some one or other of those gifts of the Spirit, of which particular mention is made, 1Co 12:7-11.

To the end ye may be established: q.d. I do not intend to bring any new doctrine to you, but to confirm and establish you in that which you have already heard and received. Establishing grace is that which all Christians stand in need of. See Ro 16:25 1Th 3:8,13 2Th 2:15-17.

Romans 1:12

Ver. 12. This is added to qualify what he had said before, lest he should seem to arrogate too much to himself; he tells them, he hoped not only to comfort them, but to be comforted by them. The meanest of Christ's members may contribute somewhat to the edifying even of an apostle. The apostle John did hope to be quickened and comforted by the graces of a woman and her children, 2Jo 1:12. Great is the benefit of the communion of saints.

By the mutual faith both of you and me; i.e. by the faith which you and I have in Jesus Christ; which he elsewhere calls *the common faith*, and *the*

faith of God's elect. All true comfort springs from faith.

Romans 1:13

Ver. 13. He prevents a cavil; they might say, If Paul hath such a longing desire to see us, why doth he not come to us? To this he answers, it was not for want of will or affection; for he often intended and attempted it.

But was let hitherto; either by Satan, as 1Th 2:18; or by the Holy Spirit otherwise disposing of him, as Ac 16:6,7 Ro 15:22. It is possible that he might be hindered also by his own infirmities, or by others' necessities and entreaties, Ac 10:48 16:15 28:14.

That I might have some fruit, i.e. of my ministry and calling, as the apostle of the uncircumcision. He hoped the gospel he should preach among them would have good success, and bring forth fruit in them, as it had done in other churches of the Gentiles. See Col 1:6.

Romans 1:14

Ver. 14. *I am debtor;* as being obliged by virtue of my calling, and as being intrusted by God with talents to that purpose. You are not beholden to me for this desire, as if it were an arbitrary favour, for it is my bounden duty.

Both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; i.e. to all nations, which he divides into these two sorts, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*. The Jews he mentions not, because he was the doctor of the Gentiles.

Both to the wise, and to the unwise; by these he understands particular persons among the Greeks and Barbarians, for there were among either of them some wise, and some unwise. The gospel is adapted to all sorts of persons, whether wise or simple.

Romans 1:15

Ver. 15. q.d. I have preached it at Antioch, at Athens, at Ephesus, at Corinth, &c.; and I: am ready (if God permit) to preach it in the most splendid city of Rome likewise. So the reason is not in myself, or in my own will, why I have not come to you all this while.

Romans 1:16

Ver. 16. Though Rome be the head of the empire, and the Romans bear the name of wise and learned persons; and though the gospel hath the show of simplicity, and is foolishness to the wise men of this world; yet *I am not ashamed* to own and publish this *gospel of Christ*. I do not shrink back, and withdraw myself, as men do from these things whereof they are ashamed. Neither indeed need I, because, how mean soever it seems to be to carnal eyes, yet *it is the power of God unto salvation*, &c.; not the essential power of God, but the organical power. See the like, 1Co 1:18. The meaning is, it is a powerful means ordained of God for this purpose. Touching the efficacy and excellent power of the gospel for the conversion and salvation of the souls of men, see Isa 53:1 1Co 4:15 2Co 4:7 2Co 10:4,5 Heb 4:12 Jas 1:21.

To every one that believed; the gospel is offered unto all, but it profiteth unto salvation only those that believe; as a medicine is only effectual to those who receive or apply it.

To the Jew first, and also to the Greek; the gospel was first to be published to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, whom he here calls Greeks: see Lu 24:47 Ac 1:8. This order the apostles accordingly kept and observed, Ac 13:46.

Romans 1:17

Ver. 17. It will give light to this whole Epistle, to explain what is here meant by *the righteousness of God*. Some do thereby understand the whole doctrine of salvation and eternal life, which is revealed in the gospel; and they make it the same with *the faith of God*, Ro 3:3, and with *the truth of God*, Ro 3:7. Others, by *the righteousness of God*, do understand that righteousness whereby a man is justified, or stands just and righteous in

the sight of God: and it is called *the righteousness of God*, to distinguish it from our own righteousness, Ro 10:3, and because it is appointed, approved, and accepted by him, it being such as he himself can find no fault with. Further, it is called *the righteousness of God*, because it was performed by him, who is God as well as man, and imputed unto us: hence he is said to be *made righteousness* unto us, and we are said to be *made the righteousness of God in him*; we having his righteousness, as he had our sins, viz. by imputation. This is often called *the righteousness of faith*, because by faith it is apprehended and applied. And again, it is called *the law of righteousness*, Ro 9:31, in opposition to that law of righteousness whereby the unbelieving Jews sought to be justified.

Revealed; the law of God discovers no such way of justifying a sinner, nor is it taught by reason or philosophy: the gospel only makes a revelation of it; which occasioned the apostle's glorying in it.

From faith to faith: this apostle seems to delight in such repetitions, and there is an elegancy in them: see Ro 6:19 2Co 2:16 2Co 3:18. The words are variously interpreted: from the faith of the Old Testament to the faith of the New; so that no person ever was or shall be justified in any other way. Or, from a lesser faith to a greater; not noting two faiths, but one and the same faith increasing to perfection. He saith not, from faith to works, or from works to faith; but *from faith to faith*, i.e. only by faith. The words *to be* must be understood: q.d. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God *to be* from faith to faith. The beginning, the continuance, the accomplishment of our justification is wholly absolved by faith.

The just shall live by faith: some refer these words, *by faith*, to the subject of this proposition, *the just*; and thus they render it: *The just by faith shall live*; and so read, the foregoing proposition is the better proved thereby. There is some difficulty to understand the fitness of this testimony to prove the conclusion in hand; for it is evident, that the prophet Habakkuk, in whom these words are found, doth speak of a temporal preservation; and what is that to eternal life?

Answer. The Babylonian captivity figured out our spiritual bondage under sin and Satan; and deliverance from that calamity did shadow forth our deliverance from hell, to be procured by Christ: compare Isa 40:2-4, with Mt 3:3. Again, general sentences applied to particular cases, are not

thereby restrained to those particulars, but still retain the generality of their nature: see Mt 19:6. Again, one and the same faith apprehends and gives us interest in all the promises of God; and as by it we live in temporal dangers, so by it we are freed from eternal destruction.

Romans 1:18

Ver. 18. He proceeds to prove the principal proposition laid down in the foregoing verse; the causal particle *for* implies as much. Men must be justified by the righteousness of God, because they have no righteousness of their own to justify them, they themselves are all unrighteous. This he proves both of the Gentiles and Jews. He begins with the Gentiles, and proves it upon them, from this verse to Ro 2:17; and then he proves it upon the Jews also, from thence to the end of the 3rd chapter (Ro 2:18-3:31).

The wrath of God is revealed; it is revealed in the word of God, or rather, by the judgments which he inflicteth. *From heaven;* i.e. from God in heaven. Plagues and judgments spring not out of the dust, proceed not originally from second causes, much less do they come by chance.

Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men: the abstract is put for the concrete; he means unrighteous and ungodly men; but he chooseth this way of speaking, because God, when he punisheth, aims at the sins of men; and would not punish their persons, but for their sins. By *ungodliness*, understand sins against the first table, which are mentioned Ro 1:21,23; by *unrighteousness*, sins against the second, of which there is mention at large, from Ro 1:26 to the end of the chapter.

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness: by *truth*, understand all that light which is left in man since the fall. There are in all men some common notions of God, his nature and will; some common principles also of equity and charity towards men, which nature itself teacheth, and upon which the consciences of the Gentiles did accuse or excuse them. These natural notions concerning God and their neighbour they did not obey and follow, but wickedly suppressed them. They imprisoned the truth which they acknowledged, that they might sin the more securely. The metaphor is taken from tyrants, who oppress the innocent, and imprison them: so the Gentiles did by the truth which they had by nature, they kept it in and

under.

Romans 1:19

Ver. 19. *That which may be known of God;* or, that which is knowable of God, viz. by the light of nature. The apostle, by a prolepsis, prevents an objection which some might make in excuse of the Gentiles: how could they suffocate or suppress the truth, seeing they wanted the Scripture, and were without the knowledge of it? To this he answers, that they were not wholly without knowledge, for that which might be known of God was manifest in them, and revealed to them.

Is manifest in them, i.e. in their heart and minds; see Ro 2:15: or, to and among them; as appears by many of their learned writers, who have left behind them many clear discourses, and wise essays and sayings, about this matter, though they themselves did act contrary thereunto.

For God hath showed it unto them; i.e. as before, by the light of nature in their consciences, or by the consideration of the creatures, as it follows in the next verse.

Romans 1:20

Ver. 20. Because it might be further objected in behalf of the Gentiles, that the notions of God imprinted in their nature are so weak, that they may be well excused; therefore the apostle adds, that the certainty of them is further confirmed by the book of the creatures, which was written before them in capital letters, so that he that runs may read.

The invisible things of him: the apostle tells us afterwards himself what he means by the invisible things of God, viz. his being and his attributes, particularly his eternity and almighty power; to which we might add, his wisdom, goodness, &c. These, though invisible in themselves, yet are discernible by his works, and that ever since the creation of the world. By what they see created, they may easily collect or understand, that there is an eternal and almighty Creator; they may argue from the effects to the cause.

So that they are without excuse: some render it, that they may be without excuse; but it is better rendered in our translation: the meaning is not, that God gave them that knowledge for this end and purpose, that they might be inexcusable, for they might catch even at that for an excuse; but the plain sense is this, that God hath given all men such means of knowledge as sufficeth to leave them without excuse, there can be no pretence of ignorance.

Romans 1:21

Ver. 21. *Because;* either this must be referred to the words immediately foregoing, and then it is a reason why the Gentiles are inexcusable, *because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, &c.;* or else it refers to Ro 1:18, and then it is a proof of their withholding the truth in unrighteousness, *because, &c.*

They knew God; they had a natural knowledge of God, it was taught them, as before, by the light of nature, and by the book of the creatures. Though this was not sufficient to save them, yet it was sufficient to save them without excuse.

They glorified him not as God; they did not conceive of him and worship him as became his Divine excellencies and perfections; see Ps 29:2.

Neither were thankful; they did not own God to be the Author and Giver of all the good things they enjoyed, and return him thanks accordingly; but referred all to chance and fortune, their own prudence and providence, the influence of the stars, &c.

But became vain in their imaginations, or reasonings. This hath chief respect to the conception and opinions that the heathen framed to themselves of the Divine Being. For though some denied there was a God, and others doubted thereof, yet generally it was acknowledged by them; yea, some owned a multiplicity of gods, and those either corporeal or incorporeal. Others acknowledged but one God, as Plato, Aristotle, &c.; but then they either denied his providence, as the Peripatetics, or tied him to second or inferior causes, as the Stoics. This is the vanity which the

apostle here speaketh of. Note also, that idols, the frame of idle brains, are called *vanities*: see De 32:21 Jer 10:15 Ac 14:15.

And their foolish heart was darkened: by the heart is meant the mind, their very understandings were darkened, the natural reason in them was obscured. This was a just judgment upon them for their abuse of knowledge, and pride, of which in the next verse (see Ro 1:22).

Romans 1:22

Ver. 22. Some think, that all along this context the apostle hath reference to the Gnostics, a sort of heretics in the first age, (of which see Dr. Hammond *in locum*), and that the meaning of the words is this, That they, assuming the title of Gnostics, of knowing men, and of men wiser than others, have proved more sottish than any. Others think the words refer to the heathen philosophers, who though they were learned and wise in secular and natural things, yet they became fools in spiritual and heavenly matters; though they well understood the creature, yet they erred concerning the Creator. And as fools delight in toys, neglecting things of great value; so they set up puppets and idols of their own devising, in the room of the true God; which the apostle gives us in the next verse, as a demonstration of their folly. Socrates, who was accounted one of the wisest amongst them, desired his friends, when he was about to die, to offer for him a cock to Aesculapius, which he had vowed.

Romans 1:23

Ver. 23. *Changed the glory of the uncorruptible God;* you have the same phrase, Ps 106:20 Jer 2:11; and from thence it is borrowed.

Into an image made like to corruptible man, &c.: the apostle proceedeth from the more worthy to the less worthy creatures, that the grossness of their idolatry might the better appear; and these four are put for all other kinds. This gross idolatry of the heathen in worshipping such images as are here spoken of, was practised by the Israelites; see Eze 8:10,11: and so it is by the Romanists to this day; nor doth it avail them to say, they do not worship images, but the true God in or before those images; for the same

plea was made by the idolaters of old. Symmachus, in a learned oration, wherein he craved of the emperors Valentinian and Theodosius the restitution of the Roman gods, affirms, that they had respect only to one God; but they had divers ways to bring them to that God: they did not hold such things as they worshipped to be God, but in them they said they worshipped the true God. That worship which is intended to God by an image, is not the worship of God, but of the image. Compare Ps 106:19,20, with Ex 32:4,5.

Romans 1:24

Ver. 24. *Wherefore;* their impiety was the cause of what followed: this is repeated again, that it may be the better observed. The contempt of God and of religion is the cause of all wickedness.

God also gave them up; this phrase is thrice used in this context, viz. Ro 1:24,26,28: it seems to be taken out of Ps 81:12. Some think his giving them up, is only' his withdrawing his grace from them, and permitting them to sin; but there seems to be more in it than a bare subtraction or permission. He did not only leave them to themselves, but, in a judicial way, he put them, into the hands of Satan, and of their own lusts; as it is said, Ps 69:27, he added iniquity to their iniquity, making the latter iniquity a punishment of the former.

Between themselves; some read it, in themselves, and some read it, one among another; so the same word is rendered, Eph 4:32 Col 3:13. The apostle here speaks more generally of all kinds of pollution and uncleanness that was committed by them, whether natural or unnatural.

Romans 1:25

Ver. 25. *Who changed the truth of God into a lie;* i.e. the God of truth, or the true God, into an idol, which is a lie, which seems to be that which it is not: or else, by *the truth of God*, understand those true sentiments and notions that they had of God, and were taught them, as before, by the light of nature, and the book of the creatures; these they changed into lying imaginations and conceits.

And worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; or, besides the Creator: some understand it comparatively, they worshipped one more than the other; others exclusively, they worshipped one and not the other. They were guilty of two great errors; one was in their minds, they changed the truth of God into a lie; the other in their wills, they served the creature more than the Creator.

Who is blessed for ever. Amen: when the Hebrews of old made mention of the true God, they were wont to add these words: Let him be blessed for ever.

Romans 1:26

Ver. 26. *For this cause;* i.e. for their idolatry and uncleanness both, for now their idolatry is aggravated by the uncleanness accompanying it.

Vile affections; Gr. affections of dishonour, i.e. the most dishonourable and shameful affections; for as we are exhorted, 1Th 4:4,5, to possess our vessels in honour, that is, to withhold our body from uncleanness; so they that give up themselves to uncleanness, dishonour themselves and their own bodies; see 1Co 6:18: if they, as this scripture tells us, that commit fornication dishonour their own bodies; then much more do they that practise the unnatural uncleanness hereafter mentioned.

For even their women, &c.; i.e. γυναικες ανδριζονται, so Clem. Alexandr. *Ad praeposteros et sodomiticos concubitus sese maribus prostituerunt.* See Paraeus: a filthy practice not to be named, Eph 5:3.

Romans 1:27

Ver. 27. This was the sin of the Sodomites of old, for which they were destroyed, Ge 19:5: see Le 18:22. How meet was it that they who had forsaken the Author of nature, should be given up not to keep the order of nature; that they who had changed the glory of God into the similitude of beasts, should be left to do those things which beasts themselves abhorred! God only concurred as a just judge in punishing foregoing with following

sins: see Ro 1:25.

Romans 1:28

Ver. 28. *To retain God in their knowledge;* or, to have God in acknowledgment. The apostle proceeds to show the analogy betwixt their sin and their punishment. The evil he here taxed them with is much the same with that in Ro 1:21; though they had some knowledge of God, yet they did not acknowledge him as God, by glorifying him, and giving thanks to him; it did not seem good to them so to do.

God gave them over to a reprobate mind; or, an injudicious mind, a mind void of judgment. It is just and equal, that he, who in his judgment disapproves of God, should be left either to be of a corrupt judgment, or of none at all. The word may be taken passively, for a mind disapproved of God; or actively, for a mind which disapproves of all good. They were not given up to this reprobate mind all at once, but by degrees. First, they were given up to *their own hearts' lusts*, Ro 1:24; then, to *vile affections*, Ro 1:26; and then, lastly, to a mind void of judgment; to such an evil habit, that they could do nothing but evil.

Romans 1:29

Ver. 29. Now follow the sins against the second table, which reigned amongst the Gentiles; amongst which *unrighteousness* is as the fountain, from whence the rest as streams do flow. This is the genus that comprehends all the evils hereafter enumerated. It is not to be supposed that all the following vices were found in every individual person; but the meaning is, that all were guilty of some, and some were guilty of all of them.

Fornication, wickedness; in the Greek there is all elegant paronomasia, πορνεία, πονηρία. So there are two more in the following verses, φθονου, φονου, ασυνητοι, ασυνηθετοι. The design of the apostle is, to set down a particular vice; therefore, instead of *wickedness*, some read troublesomeness, or a desire to procure trouble and molestation to another. The devil is called ο πονηρος, the troublesome one.

Maliciousness; or, mischievousness, the better to distinguish it from envy.

Malignity; or, morosity and churlishness, taking all things in the worsser part.

Whisperers: whisperers speak evil privily of others; backbiters, openly.

Romans 1:30

Ver. 30. *Haters of God;* the original word hath a passive termination, and therefore some read it, hated of God. But words passive are sometimes actively taken: see 2Pe 1:3. And the apostle here intendeth a catalogue of the Gentiles' sins, whereof this was one: see Ps 81:15.

Despiteful; or, injurious.

Inventors of evil things; they were not contented with old usual evils, but they invented new; whether we refer this to evils of pain, or evils of sin, we may find examples thereof amongst the heathen. Phalaris propounded a reward to him that could devise a new torment; and Sardanapalus offered rewards to such as could find out new venereal pleasures.

Disobedient to parents, either natural or political.

Romans 1:31

Ver. 31. *Without understanding;* or, without conscience; $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, or $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\iota\delta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$, being much the same.

Without natural affection; this evil also reigned amongst the Gentiles, who sacrificed their very children to their idols, and otherwise exposed them to ruin: see 2Ti 3:3.

Implacable; or, irreconcilable and vindictive.

Romans 1:32

Ver. 32. *Knowing the judgment of God;* i.e. his just law and statute, or his justice in punishing sin and sinners. This the Gentiles knew by the light of nature, and by the examples of God's justice in the world.

That they which commit such things are worthy of death; the barbarians of Melita judged murder worthy of death, Ac 28:4: see Ac 23:29 26:31. The heathen also had some knowledge of future and everlasting punishment, as appears by their writings: and were persuaded that the sins be dementioned, and such like, did really deserve it.

Have pleasure in them that do them; or, patronize and applaud such; see Ps 10:3. This is set last, as worst of all; it is the highest degree of wickedness: such come nearest the devil, who take pleasure in evil because it is evil.

Romans 2:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 2:1-5 They that condemn sin in others, and are guilty of the like themselves, cannot escape God's judgment,

Ro 2:6-13 which will be according to every man's deserts, without distinction of Jew or Gentile.

Ro 2:14-16 The Gentiles are not left without a rule of conduct.

Ro 2:17-24 The Jew, who boasteth of greater light, is doubly criminal in sinning against it,

Ro 2:25-29 nor will circumcision profit him, except he keep the law.

Ver. 1. It is much disputed to whom the apostle directs his discourse in the beginning of this chapter. Some think that having discovered the sins of the Gentiles in the former chapter, he here useth a transition, and turneth himself to the Jews, and lays open their more secret wickedness and hypocrisy. But the particle therefore in the front of the chapter, doth seem to intimate, that this is inferred from what went before, and is a

continuance of the same argument. It is of the Gentiles then that he is still discoursing, and he begins by name to deal with the Jews, Ro 2:17. Some think he speaks more particularly of such as were judges and magistrates amongst the Gentiles, who, though they made laws for to judge and punish others for such and such crimes, did yet commit the same themselves. Some think he intends more especially such as were philosophers, and men renowned for virtue, as Socrates, Aristides, Fabricius, Cato, Seneca, &c., which last, as is said, was well known to the apostle. These, in their speeches and writings, did censure the evil manners of others, and yet were as bad themselves. As Cato is said to have used extortion, prostituted his wife, and to have laid violent hands upon himself; and yet he was affirmed by Velleius to be *homo virtuti simillimus*, a most virtuous man. But the received opinion is, that the apostle in general doth tax all such as censure and find fault with others, and yet are guilty of the same things themselves.

Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: q.d. Thou art without all excuse, that dost assent and subscribe to the righteous judgment of God, that they who do such things as are mentioned in the foregoing chapter, are worthy of death, and yet doest the same thyself; if not openly, yet secretly and inwardly thou art guilty of the same or as great sins. Thou canst make no apology or pretence, why the sentence of death and condemnation, which is due to others, should not likewise pass upon thee.

For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; i.e. in that very thing, or by that very law, whereby thou censurist and condemnest others, thou pronouncest sentence against thyself; thy own mouth condemns thee in the person of another: see Mt 7:3 21:40,41,45 Joh 8:4,9.

Romans 2:2

Ver. 2. We know assuredly, and it is evident, both from Scripture and reason, that God's judgment, both here and hereafter, is true and upright; see 1Sa 16:7. He judgeth righteous judgment; he judgeth of persons and things, not as they are in appearance, but as they are in reality.

Against them which commit such things; this indefinite manner of speaking includeth both those that judge others, and those who, for the

aforementioned sins, are subject to the censures of others.

Romans 2:3

Ver. 3. When other men's facts escape not thy censure, who art but a man; what folly and madness is it to imagine, that thine own evil deeds should escape the judgment of God! See 1Jo 3:20.

Romans 2:4

Ver. 4. Here he taxeth such as thought God approved of their persons and courses, at least that he would not regard or punish their evil actions, because he had hitherto forborne them, and heaped up abundance of worldly blessings upon them, as he did upon the Romans especially, above other people. It is common for men to grow secure, and promise themselves impunity, when God forbears them, and gives them outward prosperity: see Ps 50:21 55:19 Ec 8:11 Ho 12:8.

Despisest thou? the word signifies, to think amiss; he despiseth the goodness of God, who thinks otherwise of it than he should, that it is extended to him for other ends than it is: or, to despise the goodness of God, is, to turn it into wantonness.

The riches of his goodness; i.e. The abundance of his goodness: see Ro 9:23 Eph 1:7,18 2:4,7 3:8.

Forbearance and long-suffering; God's long-suffering is a further degree of his forbearance: the Scripture speaks much of this attribute of God, and of his abounding therein, Ex 34:6 Nu 14:11,18 Ps 86:15 Mt 23:37 Ro 9:22 1Ti 1:16 1Pe 3:20.

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; that is one great end of God's goodness and forbearance; see Ho 11:4 2Pe 3:9. God's goodness is abused when it is not used and improved to this end.

Romans 2:5

Ver. 5. *Treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath;* this passage seems to respect De 32:34,35, or Job 36:13. You have a parallel place, Jas 5:3. The meaning is, Thou provokest more and more the wrath of God against thee; by heaping up sins, thou heapest up judgments of God upon thyself: just as men add to their treasure of wealth, so dost thou add to thy treasure of punishment.

Revelation of the righteous judgment of God; this is a periphrasis of the day of judgment, or of the last day: then will God visit for those sins that here escape punishment; then the justice and equity of his proceedings shall appear, and all shall have reason to approve thereof.

Romans 2:6

Ver. 6. This proves what he had said, that the judgment of God, in that day, will be according to righteousness, or most righteous judgment. Parallel places you will find, Ps 62:12 Mt 16:27 2Co 5:10 Re 22:12. The papists from hence infer the merit of works; but the reward to the godly is a reward of grace, and not of debt. The word *αποδοῦναι* imports not only a just retribution, but a free gift, as in Mt 20:8, and elsewhere. Good works are the rule of his proceeding, not the cause of his retribution: see Lu 17:10.

Romans 2:7

Ver. 7. What he had laid down in general, he amplifies more particularly.

Patient continuance; or perseverance *in well doing*, which implies patience: see Mt 10:22 24:13 Heb 10:36.

Immortality; or incorruption: he adds this to show, that the *glory and honour* he speaks of was not such as the Gentiles usually sought, who made worldly glory the scope of their actions; but it was eternal in the heavens, and such as never fades away.

Eternal life; i.e. God will render eternal life to such: the word *render* must be supplied out of the former verse.

Romans 2:8

Ver. 8. *That are contentious*; or, that are of contention: so, *they of the circumcision*, for such as are circumcised, Ac 10:45 Ga 2:12. By *contentious*, understand such as are refractory and self-willed; that, from a spirit of contradiction, will not be persuaded; that strive and kick against the righteousness of God, from an opinion of their own righteousness, Ho 4:4.

Do not obey the truth: see Ro 1:18, and the note there.

But obey unrighteousness; that are the servants of sin, and of corruption, Ro 6:12 2Pe 2:19.

Indignation and wrath; these two differ only in degree: thereby understand the judgments of God upon the wicked, which are the effects of his anger: the cause is commonly put for the effect.

Romans 2:9

Ver. 9. *Tribulation and anguish*; the word *render* is here again understood, he shall render tribulation and anguish. Some refer the former to the punishment of sin, the latter to the punishment of loss; or the one to the unquenchable fire, the other to the never dying worm: it seems to be a rhetorical exaggeration: see Ps 11:6 Mr 9:43-48.

Every soul of man; a double Hebraism: first, the soul is put for the person, as Ge 12:5 14:21 17:14 36:6 46:26. Secondly, *every soul of man*, is put for the soul of every man; as before, Ro 1:18, *all unrighteousness of men*, is put for the unrighteousness of all men. The soul of man shall not be punished only, but chiefly.

Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; the Jew is first placed in order of punishment, because he better knew God's will, and had more helps: see

Mt 11:22,24 Lu 12:47.

Romans 2:10

Ver. 10. *Peace*; what he called immortality, Ro 2:7, he now calls *peace*; which word, according to the usual acceptation of it amongst the Hebrews, is comprehensive of all good and happiness, both here and hereafter.

To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; as the ungodly and unbelieving Jews shall have the first place in punishment, so those that believe and are godly amongst them shall have the first place in reward, though yet, for the reason mentioned in the next verse, the godly and believing Gentiles shall share with them therein.

Romans 2:11

Ver. 11. This seems to be borrowed from 2Ch 19:7, and De 10:17. You have the same again, Ac 10:34: see Job 34:19 Ga 2:6 3:28 Eph 6:9 1Pe 1:17. *Obj.* God loved Jacob, and hated Esau, when they were yet unborn, and had done neither good nor evil.

Answer. This was not properly a respecting of persons, because God did not this as a judge, but as an elector: so the apostle states it, Ro 9:11-13. God is gracious to whom he will be gracious, and may do what he will with his own.

Romans 2:12

Ver. 12. By the former he means the Gentiles, by the latter, the Jews; the like distribution he makes, 1Co 9:20,21.

In the law; i.e. under the law, or against it.

Romans 2:13

Ver. 13. This and the two following verses are included in a parenthesis, and they serve to obviate an objection against what was said, Ro 2:12. The Jews might plead, that they were superior to the Gentiles, and should be exempted or privileged, in judgment, forasmuch as they knew and professed the law of God, which the Gentiles did not. To this he says, that to know and learn the law was not sufficient, unless in all things they yielded obedience to it, which they neither did nor could. The scope of the apostle is not simply to show how sinners are now justified in the sight of God; but to show what is requisite to justification according to the tenor of the law, and that is, to do all that is written therein, and to continue so to do. And if there be any man that can bring such perfect and constant obedience of his own performing, he shall be justified by God; but inasmuch as no man, neither natural nor regenerate, can so fulfil the law, he must seek for justification in some other way. The text, thus expounded, doth no way militate with Ro 3:30, and Ga 3:11, which at first reading it seems to do. And it further shows, that the Jews are comprehended under the general curse, as well as the Gentiles, and are bound to have recourse to the righteousness of God by faith.

Romans 2:14

Ver. 14. Here he preoccupates the Gentiles' plea. They might object, that having not the law, they could not transgress, nor be culpable in judgment: see Ro 4:15. To this he says, that though they had not the law written in tables of stone, as the Jews had, yet they had a law written in their hearts, which was a copy or counterpart of the other, and had in a manner the effects of it; for thereby they were instructed to do well, and debarred from doing evil, which are the two properties of all laws.

Do by nature; nature is opposed to Scripture and special revelation: by the direction of the law, and light of nature, they did many things which the law of Moses commanded, and forbore many things which it forbade.

Are a law unto themselves; i.e. they have in themselves such principles of reason and rules of equity, as are to them instead of a law, prescribing what they ought to do and avoid.

Romans 2:15

Ver. 15. By *the work of the law*, either understand the sum of the law, which is, To love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves; or the office of the law, which consists in directing what to do, and what to leave undone; or the external actions which the law prescribes.

Written in their hearts; this seems to be a covenant promise and privilege, Jer 31:33; how then is it predicated of the Gentiles?

Answer. Jereremiah speaks there of a special and supernatural inscription or writing in the heart by grace; and the apostle here, of that which is common and natural.

Their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; interchangeably, now one way, anon another. Not as though the thoughts did, at the same time, strive together about the same fact; nor is it meant of divers men, as if good men were excused, and bad men accused, by their own thoughts; but in the same persons there were accusing or excusing thoughts and consciences, as their actions were evil or good.

Romans 2:16

Ver. 16. These words may be referred to Ro 2:12, and so they express the time when Jews and Gentiles shall be judged. Though some annex them to the words immediately preceding: q.d. Now the consciences of men do testify for or against them, and their thoughts accuse or excuse them; but in the day of judgment they will do it more especially. Shall judge the secrets of men; so that the most secret sins shall not escape the notice and censure of the Judge: see Ec 12:14 1Co 4:5. *My gospel*; i.e. the gospel which I preach. So, Joh 12:48, our Saviour calls his word, his disciples word. He calls it his gospel, not as the author, but as the publisher of it; it was not his in respect of revelation, but in regard of dispensation, Ro 16:25 1Co 9:17 2Co 5:18,19 2Ti 2:8. As for the fiction of a Gospel written by Paul, as was by Matthew, Mark, &c., the papists themselves begin to be ashamed of it.

Romans 2:17

Ver. 17. He now comes to deal more particularly and expressly with the Jews, reciting their privileges, in which they trusted, and of which they boasted; and shows, that notwithstanding them, they stood in as much need of the righteousness of God as the Gentiles did.

Thou; he speaks in the singular number, that every one might make the readier application of what he said.

Art called a Jew; so called from Judah; as of old, Hebrews from Heber, and Israelites from Israel: the title was honourable in those days, and imported a confessor or worshipper of one God. Thou art so called, but art not so indeed: see Ro 2:28, and Re 2:9.

Restest in the law; putttest thy trust in it.

Makest thy boast of God; that he is thy God, and in covenant with thee; and that thou hast a peculiar interest in him: see Joh 8:41. The phrase seems to be borrowed from Isa 45:25.

Romans 2:18

Ver. 18,19. *Art confident;* thou dost proudly arrogate all that follows to thyself, and conceitest that thou hast all the points of the law in thy breast, and full knowledge of all the secrets thereof.

Romans 2:20

Ver. 20. *Babes;* such as have little or no knowledge. *The form of knowledge;* a scheme or system of notions, a compendious model or method, which is artificially composed; such as tutors and professors of arts and sciences, do read over again and again to their pupils and auditors.

Romans 2:21

Ver. 21. *Teachest thou not thyself?* q.d. Dost not thou thyself do what thou pressest upon others? see Mt 23:3.

Dost thou steal? the Jews were infamous of old for this sin, Ps 50:18 Mt 23:14.

Romans 2:22

Ver. 22. *Dost thou commit adultery?* to this sin also the Jews were greatly addicted: see Ps 50:18 Jer 5:8.

Dost thou commit sacrilege? Here he varies the crime; he does not say: Dost thou commit idolatry, but sacrilege. The Jews, after their return out of captivity, kept themselves free from idolatry; but it seems they were guilty of a sin that was near akin to it. Here it may be questioned, what the sacrilege was that the Jews were guilty of. Some think, their covetousness is here taxed, which is a kind of idolatry. The Jews took those things which were consecrated to idols, and which, by the law of God, should have been destroyed, and turned them to their private advantage. Others think, that their sacrilege consisted in withholding from God that which they should have consecrated and offered up to him; see 1Sa 2:13 Mal 3:8,9: they converted to their own use such things as were dedicated to God. Much to the same purpose is their opinion, that think it consisted in robbing God of his due. By the imperial law in the code, it is declared sacrilege to take from the emperor any thing that is his; it ought to be much more accounted sacrilege to deal so with God. Some think their sacrilege lay in polluting the worship of God, and making his commands of no effect, through their corrupt additions and traditions.

Romans 2:23

Ver. 23. Dost thou bring a reproach upon religion, and give occasion to the Gentiles to blaspheme his name? So it follows in the next words (see Ro 2:24).

Romans 2:24

Ver. 24. *Through you;* because of your and your forefathers' sins.

As it is written: the apostle doth not tell them where it was written; he supposeth they were not ignorant of it: see Isa 52:5 Eze 36:20,23.

Romans 2:25

Ver. 25. The Jews might object: If the former privileges availed not to righteousness and salvation, yet circumcision at least might stand them in some stead. In answer whereunto you have,

1. A concession; circumcision indeed is profitable.
2. A limitation; *if thou keep the law;* which is illustrated by a large antithesis, Ro 2:26,27.
3. A distinction; circumcision is of two sorts, outward and literal; inward and spiritual; the latter stands in force, and hath acceptation with God, Ro 2:28,29.

If thou keep the law; if thou keep it perfectly, to which circumcision obligeth, Ga 5:3; or if thou use thy utmost care and endeavour so to do.

But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision; i.e. if otherwise thou transgress the law, thy circumcision avails thee nothing, it gives thee no privilege above the uncircumcised. A wicked Jew is to God as an Ethiopian, Am 9:7. The apostle corrects the carnal confidence and hypocrisy of the Jews, who valued themselves upon the account of this outward ceremony, and thought it sufficient to be circumcised in the flesh. Some think the apostle hath respect in these words to the time of the law, whilst circumcision was an ordinary sacrament of the covenant; then indeed it was profitable and available; but now, in the times of the gospel, it is abrogated: see Ga 5:2,6.

Romans 2:26

Ver. 26. *The uncircumcision;* i.e. the uncircumcised; a figurative and frequent way of speaking: see Ro 3:30 4:9.

Keep the righteousness of the law; which none of them ever did; but admit they could, or else, which some of them have done, in sincerity, though with manifold imperfections; such as the two centurions, one of which is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke, the other in the Acts: if in this sense the uncircumcised keep the righteousness of the law, shall they not be all one in the account of God as if they were circumcised? See Ro 4:10.

Romans 2:27

Ver. 27. *Uncircumcision which is by nature;* a periphrasis of the Gentiles, who want circumcision, or are by nature without it.

Fulfil the law; here is another word; before it was *keep*, but now it is *fulfil the law*: though the word be varied, yet the sense is the same: see Jas 2:8.

Judge thee; i.e. rise up in judgment against thee; or else, shall he not do it by his example? as in Mt 12:41,42, the men of Nineveh, and the queen of Sheba, shall judge the Israelites. The meaning is, the obedient Gentile shall condemn the disobedient Jew.

By the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law; i.e. the outward literal circumcision; or, by the *letter* understand the law; see 2Co 3:6. The sense is, by means of the law and circumcision, and resting in them, as pledges of the love of God, (so Ro 2:17), they are the more secure and bold in sinning against God; it is to them an occasion of transgression.

Romans 2:28

Ver. 28. *He is not a Jew;* a right or true Jew, who is heir of the promises made to the fathers.

That is one outwardly; the word *only* is to be understood: see 1Co 1:17.

Neither is that circumcision; the right and true circumcision, which God principally requires, and is available unto salvation: that circumcision is not much to be accounted of which is only the cutting off an outward skin.

Romans 2:29

Ver. 29. He is a right and true Jew, an Israelite indeed, that hath taken away the foreskin of his heart, Jer 4:4; that is cleansed from all corrupt affections, and hath laid aside all superfluity of naughtiness; that worshippeth God in the Spirit, rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and hath no confidence in the flesh. Such are the circumcision and Jews indeed: see Php 3:3.

Romans 3:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 3:1,2 The Jew's prerogative,
Ro 3:3,4 which is not vacated by the unbelief of some,
Ro 3:5-8 nor is God's justice impeached in punishing their sinfulness.
Ro 3:9-19 The law itself convinceth the Jews also universally of sin,
Ro 3:20 so that no flesh is justified by the deeds of the law,
Ro 3:21-30 but all indiscriminately by God's grace through faith in Christ,
Ro 3:31 yet without annulling the obligations of the law.

Ver. 1. *What advantage then hath the Jew?* An elegant prolepsis or anticipation of what might be objected against the apostle's assertion in the foregoing words. If the Jews (might some object) lie equally exposed to condemnation with the Gentiles, then they have no excellency above them. Or thus, If external things do not commend us to God, (as it is affirmed,

Ro 2:28,29), but the Gentiles are brought into the church without them, then the Jews have no prerogative above the Gentiles, though God hath owned them so long for his peculiar people.

What profit is there of circumcision? i.e. what is the use of it, or for what end was it instituted, seeing the uncircumcised are brought in and accepted, as being circumcised notwithstanding, and clean in heart?

Romans 3:2

Ver. 2. He answers the before mentioned objection by a liberal and free concession. The answer doth particularly relate to the first member of the objection, though comprehending the other.

Chiefly; this word is not to be referred to the order of speech, as Ro 1:8, for he doth not begin any discourse here; nor to the number of privileges and advantages, for he names but one in all; but to the quality, and so the excellency, of this privilege here spoken of; q.d. It is the chief of all.

Unto them were committed the oracles of God: profane writers make this word to signify the answer that was given by the demons, or heathen gods; and yet the Holy Ghost doth not disdain to make use of this word, (as well as divers others), though abused to heathenish superstition. The sense is, To the Jews were credited, or given in custody, the Holy Scriptures, containing all the books of the Old Testament, in particular the legal covenant, or law of God, given on Mount Sinai, which Stephen calls *the lively oracles*, Ac 7:38; more especially yet the fundamental articles of religion, and doctrines of grace, and salvation by the Messiah, called *the oracles of God*, Heb 5:12, though more hid, it is true, in types, promises, and predictions.

Romans 3:3

Ver. 3. *If some did not believe;* if some did remain in infidelity, Ac 28:24, if they would give no credit to the oracle, and to the promise of a Messiah.

The faith of God; i.e. the truth and faithfulness of God, Ps 33:4. The

whole verse is another prolepsis. The implied objection is this, That the Jews are nothing the better for these oracles, or have no advantage by them, if by unbelief they have rendered themselves unworthy or incapable of benefit by them. The answer to this is anticipated by propounding another question; Can the infidelity of some be any hinderance of God's performing his promise to others, to his chosen ones? The interrogation is a negation, q.d. It cannot be, as the following words show: see 2Ti 2:13.

Romans 3:4

Ver. 4. *God forbid;* the negation that was closely couched in the former verse, is in this expressed by a note of indignation, and of the greatest detestation.

Let God be true; let him remain or appear faithful to his promises and covenant; or, let him be acknowledged to be so, according to the frequent testimonies of Scripture: see Nu 23:19 Tit 1:2 Heb 6:17,18.

But every man a liar; or, although every man should be a liar; or, whatsoever we say of men, who are all mutable creatures, who are liable to mistakes in their own natures, and so may easily deceive others: see Ps 116:11.

That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings; that thou mightest be acknowledged just in thy promises and threatenings; in which sense the word is used in divers places, Mt 11:19 Lu 7:29,35 Lu 10:29.

Mightest overcome; that thou mightest be clear or pure, so it is in the Psalm. The apostle honours the Seventy, which was the common translation, and minds the sense rather than the words. He that is clear, is like to overcome in a just judgment.

When thou art judged; or, when thou judgest: the word may be taken actively or passively; i.e. when thou dost execute judgment upon any, or, when any do presume to censure you.

Romans 3:5

Ver. 5. *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God;* an anticipation of another objection, which might be made upon the preceding words: that if the faithfulness of God, in keeping his promises, doth appear in and notwithstanding the unfaithfulness of men, then we gather thus much, that the fidelity of God is rendered a great deal more commendable by the perfidiousness of man.

What shall we say? Thus we object, or this will be the inconvenience.

Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? i.e. then God is unjust in punishing the Jews, or any other wicked men, for that which tends to his own glory, and the commendations of his veracity.

I speak as a man; this is the language of carnal men, and such blasphemy they speak; I recite the objection of some men, and speak after their carnal manner.

Romans 3:6

Ver. 6. *God forbid;* he rejects the cavil with his usual note of detestation, as not thinking it worthy of answer.

For then how shall God judge the world? q.d. If God were in the least unrighteous, how could he govern the world at present, and judge it at last in righteousness? Which is affirmed, Ps 96:13 98:9. Or, how could he be God and supreme, if he were not just by his nature and essence, and his will the very rule of righteousness: see Ge 18:25 Job 34:12.

Romans 3:7

Ver. 7. By *truth* he means the faithfulness and veracity of God; as by *lie*, the perfidiousness and inconstancy of man; *ut supra et alibi*.

Why yet am I also judged as a sinner? q.d. If more glory accrues to the name of God by my wickedness, what reason is there that I should be

punished, and proceeded against as an offender, who have occasioned this further glory to God? The apostle doth plainly personate in this place a wicked objector, or he speaks in the name and person of such a one. This way of speaking and writing is very frequent among all authors; and it is found sometimes with the penmen of the Holy Scriptures: see Ec 3:19-22 1Co 15:32. The apostle tells the Corinthians, 1Co 4:6, that in a figure he transferred some things to himself and to Apollos for their sakes, that they might not be puffed up; he, counted such schemes and figures as these to be most profitable and efficacious to the reader.

Romans 3:8

Ver. 8. The placing of these words makes them sound harshly, and consequently causeth obscurity. Critics make a great stir about them, some including them in a parenthesis, others affirming there is a transposition in them. They seem to be a refutation to the former cavil, and must be accommodated to that sense. It is as if the apostle should have said, If sinners deserve no punishment, because God reaps glory to himself by their sins; then that is a good proverb, or saying, which is in some men's mouths, and we ourselves are slandered with it, as if it were our opinion and doctrine, That we may do evil, that good may come of it. But this saying is generally exploded; none dare to vouch it, and therefore the former cavil is of no force.

Whose damnation is just; i.e. their damnation is just, who teach such doctrine, and practise accordingly; who *do evil, that good may come* of it. The apostle doth not vouchsafe to refute this absurd saying, but simply condemns it, and those that put it in practice. Or else his meaning in these words is this, that they justly deserve damnation, who calumniate the apostles and publishers of the gospel, and raise false reports and slanders of them: their damnation is just, who affirm we say or hold, That evil may be done, that good may come thereof.

Romans 3:9

Ver. 9. *What then? are we better than they?* the apostle here returns to the argument that he had been handling in the beginning of the chapter. He

brings in the Jews propounding a question, Seeing it was confessed that the oracles of God were committed to them, then it followed, that they excelled the Gentiles, and stood upon better ground than they.

No, in no wise; he doth not contradict himself as to what he had said of the Jews' prerogative, Ro 3:2. They did indeed excel the Gentiles as to some external benefits, of which you have a larger account, Ro 9:4,5, but not upon the account of any evangelical righteousness, or their own supposed merit.

We have before proved; viz. separately and apart, in the foregoing chapters; and the same is now to be asserted of *both Jews and Gentiles*, conjunctly and together; that notwithstanding the Jews boasted of their law, and the Gentiles of their philosophy, yet as to the evangelical faith and righteousness, they were both in the same case.

Under sin; under the power of sin, but chiefly under the guilt of sin: see Ro 3:19.

Romans 3:10

Ver. 10. *As it is written;* viz. in several places of Scripture, which he quotes in the following verses, giving us the sense, though not so strictly tying himself to the words; and this is a proper proof, to the Jews at least, whom he had called a little before the keepers of these oracles.

There is none righteous, no, not one: the more general proof with which he begins, is taken out of Ps 14:3, and Ps 53:1, upon which places see the annotations.

Romans 3:11

Ver. 11. *There is none that understandeth;* a more particular proof of the corruption of the soul, and the faculties thereof; and first of the mind, taken out of the forecited Psalms, which may be compared with the scriptures which speak of the ignorance and blindness of the mind, De 32:29 Job 32:9 Isa 1:3 Jer 4:22 10:14.

There is none that seeketh after God; a proof of the corruption of the will, which follows also in the forecited Psalms.

Romans 3:12

Ver. 12. *They are all gone out of the way:* viz. of truth, or life: see Ps 14:3 36:4 58:3. This doth illustrate thee former charge.

They are together become unprofitable; unuseful, and, which is more noisome, fit only for the dunghill, as the word signifies: this follows also in Ps 14:1-7 see Job 15:16.

There is none that doeth good, no, not one; the same as Ro 3:10, though more exactly according to the words of the Psalm, where also it is twice repeated: see Ps 14:1,3.

Romans 3:13

Ver. 13. *Their throat is an open sepulchre;* he proceeds to instance in the corruption of man with respect to the members of his body; and he mentions the organs of speech in four several expressions, much to the same purpose: the first is allegorical, taken out of Ps 5:9, upon which see the annotations.

With their tongues they have used deceit; this text doth plainly express the corruption of the tongue, because of lies, calumnies, perjuries, flatteries; and it is taken out of Jer 9:3-5.

The poison of asps is under their lips: the third expression is allegorical, as the first, taken out of Ps 140:3, upon which see the annotations.

Romans 3:14

Ver. 14. This last and very plain expression of the corruption of the tongue, is taken out of Ps 10:7: See Poole on "Ps 10:7".

Romans 3:15

Ver. 15. If we consider this member also, we may see the corruption of man; witness that testimony, Pr 1:16, and Isa 59:7; on both which see annotations.

Romans 3:16

Ver. 16,17. Both which assertions lie together, and follow in that Isa 59:7,8.

Romans 3:18

Ver. 18. This last assertion gives us one true cause of all the aforesaid evils, taken out of Ps 36:1: See Poole on "Ps 36:1".

Romans 3:19

Ver. 19. Another anticipation of an objection, to this purpose: All these testimonies (might the Jews say) do not concern us, they concern the impure and Gentile world only, unless possibly some profane wretches amongst ourselves also. But to this the apostle says; We know (which some think hath the force of an asseveration) that whatsoever the law of God, more especially the Mosaical law, or more generally all that is contained in the Scripture, saith of the wickedness and defection of mankind, it saith to the Jews more particularly, to whom the law was given, and who are under the conduct of it; much the same with that phrase, Ro 2:12: see Ro 6:15 1Co 9:20.

That every mouth may be stopped; i.e. hindered from boasting, to which the Jews were so prone; or rather, that conscience might so press them, that they should silently, or as it were speechless, expect their own damnation. without being able to frame any excuse: see Ps 63:11 Eze

16:63 Mt 22:12.

And all the world may become guilty before God; that Jews and Gentiles and all mankind, as depraved, might be obnoxious to the judgment and condemnation of God: see Ro 3:9, and Joh 3:18.

Romans 3:20

Ver. 20. *Therefore;* i.e. Seeing the Gentiles, by the law of nature, and the Jews, by the written law, are thus subject to the judgment of God; and seeing no one is able to fulfil the law, and satisfy for the breach of it; *therefore, &c.*

By the deeds of the law; he means the moral law, and not the ceremonial law only or chiefly; even that law that forbids theft and adultery, as Ro 2:21,22, and concupiscence, as Ro 7:1-25; and by which, as this text says, *is the knowledge of sin;* to which Gentiles as well as Jews are obliged, and by which therefore they are condemned.

No flesh; a common synecdoche: see Ge 6:3,12, and elsewhere. The same with *no man living*, in the psalmist; especially being depraved with original corruption, which is called *flesh* in Scripture.

Be justified in his sight; or be discharged in the court of heaven: the phrase is taken from Ps 143:2, see annotations there.

For by the law is the knowledge of sin: lest any should think that the law hereupon is useless, he goes on to show its use, but a quite contrary one to what they intended. It convinceth us of our guilt, and therefore is far from being our righteousness, Ro 7:7 1Co 15:56.

Romans 3:21

Ver. 21. *But now:* q.d. Though justification be not by the law, yet it is to be obtained in another way, as follows.

The righteousness of God: see Ro 1:17.

Without the law; inasmuch as the law, pressing obedience to be performed by us in our own persons, seems plainly ignorant of the righteousness of another imputed to us.

Is manifested; this righteousness nevertheless is revealed plainly, now since the coming of Christ, and in the gospel, as in Ro 1:17.

Being witnessed by the law and the prophets; that there may be no suspicion of novelty: see Joh 5:46,47. The testimonies he refers to are very numerous: see Ge 3:15 15:6 22:17,18 Isa 53 Jer 31:31,33 Da 9:24,25. See the same argument used, Ac 24:14 26:22 28:23.

Romans 3:22

Ver. 22. He mentions *the righteousness of God* again, that he may further explain it, by the means or instrument by which it is received, viz. *faith*; see Ro 4:11,12 9:30 Php 3:9; where there are several expressions to the same purpose, that this righteousness is without the law indeed, but it is by the hand of that faith by which we believe in Jesus, called therefore here, the *faith of Jesus Christ*.

Unto all and upon all them that believe; whether they be Jews or Gentiles, if they believe, excluding the self-justiciaries amongst the one, and the philosophers amongst the other.

For there is no difference; they are not justified two several ways: see Ro 3:9.

Romans 3:23

Ver. 23. *For all have sinned:* q.d. No wonder there is no difference, when both the one and the other have the guilt of Adam's transgression imputed to them, and have original corruption inherent in them, from whence proceed very many actual transgressions.

And come short of the glory of God; i.e. of the glorious image of God, in

which man was at first created; or, of communion with God, in which the glory of a rational creature doth consist; or rather, of the eternal glory, which they come short of, as men that run a race are weary, and fall short of the mark.

Romans 3:24

Ver. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace;* i.e. Being in this case, they can by no means be acquitted and freed from the accusation and condemnation of the law, but in the way and manner that follows. He mentions the great moving cause of justification first, (which doth comprehend also the principal efficient), that it is without any cause or merit in us; and by the free favour of God to undeserving, ill-deserving creatures, Eph 1:6,7 2:8 Tit 3:7.

Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: the meritorious cause is expressed by a metaphor taken from military proceedings, where captives taken in war, and under the power of another, are redeemed upon a valuable price laid down: see Mt 20:28 Mr 10:45 1Ti 2:6 Heb 9:12.

Romans 3:25

Ver. 25. *Whom God hath set forth;* i.e. God the Father hath proposed this *Jesus*, in the eternal counsel, and covenant of redemption, Eph 1:9 1Pe 1:20,21; or in the types and shadows of the old tabernacle; and hath now at last shown him openly to the world.

To be a propitiation, or atonement, 1Jo 2:2. He alludes to the mercy seat sprinkled with blood, which was typical of this great atonement; and from whence God showed himself so propitious and favourable to sinners, Le 16:2 Nu 7:89.

Through faith in his blood: he goes on to show the instrumental cause of justification, to wit, *faith;* i.e. the close adherence and most submissive dependence of the sinner; together with the peculiarity of the object of faith, viz. the *blood,* i.e. the death and sacrifice, of Christ; in contradistinction to his dominion, (with which yet on other accounts faith is so

much concerned), and in opposition to the blood of beasts slain and sacrificed.

To declare his righteousness; i.e. for the showing forth either of his goodness and mercy; see 1Sam 12:7,8,10 Ps 36:10; or of his faithfulness in his promises, and fulfilling all types and prophecies; or else of his vindictive justice, in the just proceedings of God against sin, which he hath condemned in his Son, though he justify the sinner. Or further, it may be understood of the righteousness of faith, of which Ro 3:22, which is hereby shown to be his; and to manifest itself in the forgiveness of sins, which is so declared as to be exhibited.

For the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; he means, either the sins committed before justification, while God bore so patiently with the sinner, and did not presently take the forfeiture; or else the sins committed under the Old Testament, before the proposed propitiation was exposed to the world, when God so indulged our fathers, as to pardon them upon the account of what was to come: see Heb 9:15-18.

Romans 3:26

Ver. 26. *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness;* he repeats the final cause of justification, viz. the making the after said declaration of the righteousness of God, in the time of the gospel, and dispensation and ministry thereof, 2Co 6:2, which is taken out of Isa 49:8.

That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus; i.e. that no wrong might be done to the essential purity of his nature, or rectitude of his will; nor yet to his immediate justice, by which he cannot but hate sin, and abhor the sinner as such; though in the mean time he gives a discharge to him that is of the faith of Jesus, (as it is in the original), or of the number of those that believe, and cast themselves upon a Saviour.

Romans 3:27

Ver. 27. *Where is boasting then?* the apostle doth, as it were, insult over

them: q.d. Where is now the former boasting of the Jews, as if they were so much better than the Gentiles? Or what is become of the ground of boasting, that they, or either of them, might think they had in the law, or philosophy, or any moral performances? See Jer 9:23,24.

It is excluded. By what law? of works? If it be inquired upon what account this boasting is excluded, we answer plainly, It cannot be by that law that commands works, as the condition of acceptance and justification, and tells us nothing by whom that condition should be fulfilled; the law being become weak to us, for such a purpose. by reason of sin, Ro 8:3.

Nay: but by the law of faith; i.e. the gospel law which requires faith, by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and attained by us. And this is called a *law of faith*, as some think, in condescension to the Jews' custom of speaking, who are so much delighted with the name of the law; and so that he might not be suspected of novelty: but, as most, it is a Hebraism, denoting no more than the doctrine or prescript of faith.

Romans 3:28

Ver. 28. Here is the conclusion of the whole matter that he had been discoursing of, from Ro 1:17 to this very place. When he says, *we conclude*, he means, we have reasoned or argued well, as logicians do; or this is the full account that we have taken, and summed up, after the manner of arithmeticians.

A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law; a phrase equivalent to that which is so much spoken against, that we are justified by faith only; as if we should say, That God is to be worshipped, excluding angels, idols, images, &c., it would be as much as to say, God is to be worshipped only.

Romans 3:29

Ver. 29. By answering his own proposed questions, he plainly shows us, that the covenant of grace, by which God is God of his people, does not belong to the Jews only, that they only should have justification and bliss,

but to the Gentiles also, according to the promise, Ge 17:5 22:18 Ps 2:8 Isa 11:10,12, and many others; which promises are more especially to be accomplished, now the wall of partition is broken down, as Eph 2:13,14.

Romans 3:30

Ver. 30. That it may not be thought that God is variable in the action of justifying sinners, but that it might be known that he is one, i.e. unchangeable, he shows, that both the circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles are justified by the same God in Christ, and by the same way and manner, viz. by and through faith, with no more difference than there is betwixt these two phrases, (*by faith* and *through faith*), which cannot be distinguished the one from the other.

Romans 3:31

Ver. 31. *Do we then make void the law through faith?* A very material objection is here to be anticipated and answered, viz. that by establishing justification by faith alone the law is rendered useless, and the obligation thereto destroyed.

God forbid: yea, we establish the law: having rejected this objection, by his usual note of abhorrency, he proceeds to show, that nothing more establishes the law, inasmuch as by faith we attain a perfect righteousness, we are interested in the most complete obedience of Christ to the moral law; and that hereby every type, promise, and prophecy is fulfilled; see Mt 5:17 Lu 16:17: and we ourselves also being enabled thereunto by a gospel spirit, have a more exact conformity to the law, though we cannot reach to a fulfilling of it.

Romans 4:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 4:1-8 Abraham himself was justified by faith,
Ro 4:9-12 which was imputed to him for righteousness before circumcision, that he might be the common father

of believers, whether circumcised or not.

Ro 4:13-17 The promise was not given him through the law, else had it been void from the very nature of the law; but being of faith by grace is sure to all the destined seed, and not to those of the law only.

Ro 4:18-22 The acceptableness of Abraham's faith, Ro 4:23-25 which stands recorded not for his sake only, but for the sake of all who shall profess a like faith in God through Christ.

Ver. 1. The apostle proceeds to prove his main conclusion, Ro 3:28, which is, that a sinner is justified by faith without works, from the example of Abraham. He was a man that had faith and works both, yet he was justified by faith, and not by works; and who doubts but the children are justified after the same manner that their father was: there is but one way of justification; this is the connexion.

As pertaining to the flesh: these words may either be referred to *father*; and then they import no more but that Abraham was their father according to the flesh, Ro 9:5. Or else they may be referred to the following word *found*; and then the question is, What hath Abraham found, i.e. got or attained, according to the flesh? The sense is, What hath he got by his righteousness, which stands in works, and are done in the flesh? Abraham obtained not righteousness by any works, ceremonial or moral. So the word *flesh* is taken, (see Php 3:3,4), when under the word *flesh* came circumcision, our own righteousness, which is by the law, or whatsoever is or may be opposed to that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ.

Romans 4:2

Ver. 2. *He hath whereof to glory;* he hath cause or matter of glorying and boasting; he hath something from whence he may take occasion of so doing.

But not before God; something must be supplied to fill up the sense, i.e. he hath nothing whereof to glory before God. The argument of the apostle might be thus formed: If Abraham had obtained justification by works, he should have had somewhat whereof he might glory before God: but he had

nothing whereof to glory before God; therefore he was not justified by works. God's way of justifying sinners is such, as shuts out all glorying and boasting, as he had before laid down, Ro 3:27.

Romans 4:3

Ver. 3. The scripture referred to is in Ge 15:6. The apostle a little varies the words; in Genesis it is *he believed in God*, but here *he believed God*: again, in Genesis it is expressed actively, *he counted it to him for righteousness*; but here passively, *it was counted to him for righteousness*. The answer is, That the apostle in both followed the Septuagint, which was then more in use than the Hebrew text; and both are capable of an easy reconciliation, the difference being more in sound than in sense.

Abraham believed God; i.e. the promises of God: that he would be his *shield and exceeding great reward*, Ge 15:1; that he would give him an heir of his body, Ge 15:4; that he would multiply his seed, Ge 15:5, whereby he understood not only his fleshly seed, but also the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, which was come of his loins; *He took on him the seed of Abraham*, Heb 2:16. And besides these promises in Ge 15:1-21, he believed that promise which was made him, Ge 12:3, That in him and his seed all families of the earth should be blessed. That in these promises the Messiah is understood, is evident from Ga 3:8,16; and that Abraham had an eye to him is evident, without exception, from Joh 8:56.

It was counted unto him for righteousness; i.e. he was justified thereby: to have faith imputed for righteousness, and to be justified by faith, is the same thing. Faith is not our righteousness materially, but objectively and organically, as it apprehends and implies the righteousness of Christ, which is the matter of our justification. Our adversaries the papists oppose the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; they cavil at the very word, and call it putative righteousness: and yet the apostle useth the word ten times in this chapter, and in the same sense that word ten times in this chapter, and in the same sense that we take it. But how shall we reconcile our apostle with St. James, about the manner of Abraham's justification: he says expressly, Jas 2:21, that *Abraham our father was justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac*; and thence he infers, Ro 4:24, that *by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*. They are easily

reconciled, forasmuch as the one discourseth of the cause of our justification before God; the other, of the signs of justification before men. The one speaks of the imputation of righteousness; the other, of the declaration of righteousness. The one speaks of the office of faith; the other, of the quality of faith. The one speaks of the justification of the person; the other, of the faith of that person. The one speaks of Abraham to be justified; the other, of Abraham already justified.

Romans 4:4

Ver. 4. He proceeds to prove, that Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith, and free grace, and so had no cause of boasting. This he illustrates by a comparison betwixt one that *worketh*, and one that *worketh not, but believeth*. *To him that worketh*; i.e. to him that worketh with a design or intent to obtain or merit justification by his works, for else he that believeth also worketh; only he is said not to work, *secundum quid*, after a sort, to the end or intent that he might merit by it.

Is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; he speaks this by way of supposition, in case he should have fulfilled the condition of perfect obedience: and yet, to speak properly, there is no reward, as a due debt from God to him that worketh, Ro 11:35; only he speaks after the manner of men, and useth a civil maxim, taken from human affairs.

Romans 4:5

Ver. 5. *To him that worketh not*; i.e. to him that worketh not to the end or intent before mentioned, or with respect to justification, but takes the other way to be justified and saved, and that is, the way of believing.

That justifieth the ungodly; that makes him, who is wicked in himself, just and righteous in Christ; or justifies him that was ungodly, but after justification is made godly. By *ungodly*, some would understand such as want that perfection of godliness, as they may build the hopes of justification upon; because the proposition is drawn from the instance of Abraham, a man not void of godliness.

His faith is counted for righteousness; not considered in itself as a work, but in relation to Christ, the object of it, and as an act of receiving and applying him; as eating nourisheth, though it be the meat that doth it.

Romans 4:6

Ver. 6. To the example of Abraham taken from Moses, he adjoins the testimony of David, that so he might more fully prove what he had asserted, Ro 3:21: both the one and the other were of great authority amongst the Jews. Here it may be objected, that David no where says, that he is blessed *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.*

Answer. Though the words be no where extant in David, yet the sense is, as appears in what follows (see Ro 4:7).

Romans 4:7

Ver. 7. This testimony is taken out of Ps 32:1, and it is well enough accommodated to the occasion, for those two, to remit sin, and to impute righteousness, are inseparable. The one is put here figuratively for the other. They mistake, who take occasion from hence to make justification to consist only in remission of sin: the text will not bear it. The apostle's design is, not hereby to declare the full nature of justification, which he had done before; but only to prove the freedom of it from any respect to works, in the instance of this principal and essential part of it. Remission of sin and the imputation of righteousness differ, as the cause and the effect. Remission of sin presupposeth imputation of righteousness; and he that hath his sins remitted, hath Christ's righteousness first imputed, that so they may be remitted and forgiven to sinners.

Romans 4:8

Ver. 8. The same thing is expressed three several ways; there are three things in sin to be considered:

1. There is an offence against God, which is said to be *forgiven*.

2. There is a filthiness in sin, which is said to be *covered*.

3. There is guilt in it, which is said not to be *imputed*.

Romans 4:9

Ver. 9. This word *cometh* is not in the original, but it is aptly inserted by our translators.

Circumcision again is put for the circumcised, and *uncircumcision* for the uncircumcised: see Ro 2:28.

For we say; q.d. This we have proved, and it is on all hands confessed, *that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness:* now, therefore, the question is, whether this blessedness of justification belongs to the circumcised only, or to the uncircumcised also.

Romans 4:10

Ver. 10. And if this be the question, the way to resolve it, is, to consider in what circumstances Abraham was when his faith was thus reckoned to him for righteousness; it was a long time before he was circumcised. The promise to which Abraham's faith had respect, was made to him fourteen years, at least, before his circumcision: compare Ge 15:2, and Ge 17:24,25: also see Ge 16:16. If the blessedness, therefore, of justification was not annexed to circumcision, the Gentiles are no less capable of it than the Jews.

Romans 4:11

Ver. 11. *The sign of circumcision;* or, circumcision, which is a sign. Two things are here affirmed of circumcision:

1. That it was a *sign*. Of what? Of the circumcision of the heart, of original sin and its cure.

2. That it was a *seal*. Of what?

Of the righteousness of faith: of the meaning of which, See Poole on "Ro 1:17".

This is a periphrasis of the covenant of grace, wherein righteousness is promised, and made over to us in a way of believing: and this is not the only place where *the righteousness of faith* is put for the new covenant; see Ro 10:6, and the notes there. Circumcision is called a *seal*, because it was a confirmation of the covenant of grace, and the righteousness therein promised. The common use of a seal amongst men is to confirm and ratify a matter, and make it more firm and sure: it is joined often with an earnest, which is for the same end and purpose. The Corinthians' conversion is said to be the seal of Paul's apostleship; i.e. it was a confirmation of it, and made it more evident that he was sent of God. What the apostle says of an oath, that we may say of a seal; it is for confirmation, and for putting things out of controversy. When God made a promise to Abraham, he confirmed it with an oath; and when he made a covenant with him, and with his seed, he confirmed it by a seal, and that was circumcision, which he calls in Genesis the *covenant* of God, and here, the *seal* thereof. And what is said of circumcision is not spoken of it barely as circumcision, but as a sacrament; and it shows the nature and use of all sacraments, both of the Old Testament and New, that they are seals of the new covenant. That which the apostle mentions here of circumcision, hath nothing proper and peculiar in it to circumcision as such; but it may, with equal reason, be applied to any other sacrament: it belongs as well to the passover, yea, to baptism, and the Lord's supper: e.g. The apostle first calls circumcision a *sign*; so was the passover, so is baptism, and the Lord's supper. Again, he calls it *a seal of the righteousness of faith*, or of the new covenant, as before; and so is each of the other sacraments: take, for instance, the Lord's supper; our Saviour calls the *cup* therein *the new testament*, or covenant, that is, it is a seal and confirmation thereof. And what is here affirmed of Abraham, may be affirmed as well of the eunuch, or the jailer, or any baptized person; he received the sign of baptism, a seal of the righteousness of faith, and of remission of sins, &c.

That he might be the father of all them that believe; i.e. that he might be known or declared to be the father of such: see the like phrase, Mt 5:45.

Though many of the fathers did believe before Abraham, yet none of them are said to be the fathers of the faithful, as Abraham was, because God made to none of them the like promise, concerning their posterity, as he did to Abraham. See the next verse.

Romans 4:12

Ver. 12. The former verse tells you he was the father of the believing Gentiles, for the covenant was made with him, for all his believing seed, when he was uncircumcised, which shows, that righteousness is and may be imputed to them also without any outward circumcision: and then he is the father of the believing Jews; especially of as many of them as unto circumcision do add the imitation of his faith; who, besides circumcision, which they derived from him, do also transcribe his divine copy, and follow his example of faith and obedience; who leave their sins, as he did his country; who believe all God's promises, and adhere to him against all temptations to the contrary.

Romans 4:13

Ver. 13. Some by *the world* do understand, the world of the faithful, or believers dispersed over all the world: and so in effect it is the same which he said before, that Abraham should be the father of all that believe, whether of the circumcision or uncircumcision. Others by *the world* do understand the land of Canaan, under which also heaven was typically promised and comprehended: see Heb 4:3 Heb 11:9,10,16. This, by a synecdoche, is put for all the world; and so also Tabor and Hermon are put for the east and west of the whole world, Ps 89:12. This was promised to Abraham and to his seed, Ge 12:7 15:18.

Was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith; i.e. it was not made to Abraham because he had merited it by keeping the law; but because he had believed God, and obtained the righteousness of faith. In the whole verse is couched an argument for justification by faith without works, which is the apostle's drift; and it may be thus formed: If the promise of inheritance to Abraham and his seed was to be accomplished not by legal obedience, but by the

righteousness of faith; then it follows, that we are justified by faith, and not by works; but the promise of inheritance to Abraham and his seed was to be accomplished, not by the law, but by the righteousness of faith.

Romans 4:14

Ver. 14. i.e. If they that trust to the fulfilling of the law, be heirs of the promise of God, and so the inheritance come by works; then faith is to no purpose, neither is there any use of it; and so also the promises which are made to believers are vain and useless. This is the sun, of this verse; a more particular explication follows.

If they which are of the law: compare this with Ga 3:9,10. There the apostle sorts them that seek righteousness and salvation into two kinds. First, some are *of faith*, and they are such as seek salvation in that way. Again, others are *of the works of the law*, and they are such as seek salvation by means thereof. These phrases, *of the law*, and *of the works of the law*, are all one.

Be heirs; that is, of the promises of God; of the heavenly rest, of which, as before, Canaan was a type.

Faith is made void; i.e. if they which seek the inheritance of the law can by the law obtain it, then there is no use of faith: to what end should we by faith go out of ourselves to seek righteousness and salvation in Christ, if we could obtain it by the legal obedience? See the like, Gal 5:4.

And the promise made of none effect; i.e. the promise itself, which was made to Abraham and his seed, that also is ineffectual, and brought to nought; no man shall be saved by it; forasmuch as the law can bring no man to the obtaining of what is promised.

Romans 4:15

Ver. 15. *The law worketh wrath;* i.e. the wrath of God: and this it doth not of itself, but occasionally, in respect of our disobedience. This is a confirmation of what was said in the foregoing verse, that the inheritance

is not by the law, and the works thereof; he proves it from the effect and work of the law, such as it hath in all men since the fall; it worketh wrath; it is so far from entitling men to the promised blessing, that it exposeth men to the curse and wrath of God, Ga 3:10.

For where no law is, there is no transgression: q.d. And that it worketh wrath is evident, because it discovers and occasions transgressions, between which and God's wrath there is an inseparable connection. This assertion is simply true of things indifferent, as were all ceremonial observations before the law required them, for then before the law it was no sin to omit them: but of things which are evil in their own nature, it must be understood respectively, and after a sort; that is, there was no such great transgression before the law was given, as afterwards. The reasons are; Because we are naturally bent to do that which is forbidden us; and so by the reproofs of the law, the stubbornness of man's heart is increased. As also, because by the law comes the clear knowledge of man's duty; and so the servant that knows his master's will, and doth it not, is worthy of the more stripes.

Romans 4:16

Ver. 16. Here are two new arguments to prove that the inheritance is not of the law, but of faith.

It is of faith, that it might be by grace; for to be justified by faith and by grace are all one with the apostle. Again, that *the promise might be sure to all the seed;* whereas if it were of the law, it would be usure and uncertain, because of man's weakness, who is not able to perform it. Abraham's seed is of two sorts. One sort is of the law, to wit, the Jews. Another sort is of such as walk in the steps of Abraham's faith, whether Jews or Gentiles. To all these the promise must be sure; which cannot be, if the law be made the condition or the means of the inheritance.

Romans 4:17

Ver. 17. *Before him whom he believed;* i.e. in the sight or esteem of God. He was not the *father of many nations* by carnal generation in the sight of

men, but by spiritual cognation in the sight of God. Or, as it may be read, like unto God, after his example; and then the meaning is, that God so honoured Abraham's faith, that he made him a father, in some respects like himself. As God is a universal Father, not of one, but of all nations, so was Abraham. Again, as God is their spiritual Father, not by carnal generation, so was Abraham also.

Even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were; i.e. Abraham believed in him as omnipotent. His omnipotency is described by two great effects of it. The one in making that to have a being again, which had ceased to be, as in the resurrection. The other, in causing that to be which never was; or to make all things of nothing, as in the creation: he expresseth this by calling things, to intimate the great facility of this work to God: he only spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and all was created. And as Abraham thus generally believed the power of God, so it is likely he made a particular application of it to his own state at present; as he believed that God could raise the dead, so, that he could raise him seed out of his own dead body, and Sarah's dead womb. And as he believed that God could create things out of nothing, so, that he could give him seed that had none; yea, and make the Gentiles a people that were not a people.

Romans 4:18

Ver. 18. Here the apostle digresseth a little from his principal argument, and falls into a commendation of Abraham's faith.

Who against hope believed in hope: Abraham, when he had no natural or rational grounds of hope, either in respect of himself or Sarah his wife, did yet believe and hope he should have a son; and so be a root or stock, from whence many nations should spring: and this faith and hope of his was grounded upon the power and faithfulness of God.

So shall thy seed be; so as the stars of heaven for multitude, which must be supplied out of the promise, in Ge 15:5.

Romans 4:19

Ver. 19. He regarded not the impotency of his own body, which was as it were dead, because of his age, in respect of any desires or powers of generation. Abraham several years after married Keturah, by whom he had divers children; how then doth the apostle say his body was now dead, or unable for generation? Some say that the deadness of Abraham's body was only in his own opinion. Augustine hath two answers:

1. That his body was not dead simply, but in respect of Sarah; he might be able to beget children of a younger woman.
2. His body was revived, and he received a new generative faculty of God. Another question may be moved, and that is, how the apostle could say that Abraham *considered not his own body, being dead*; seeing we read, Ge 17:17, that Abraham, upon the promise of a son, *fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old?* &c. Some answer, that Abraham at first doubted, but afterwards he recollected himself, and got over that unbelief; his faith overcame all difficulties. Others say, that he doubted not at all of the truth of God's promise, but was uncertain only how it should be understood, whether properly or figuratively: see Ge 17:19. Others say, that these words of Abraham are not words of doubting, but inquiring; they proceed from a desire to be further instructed how that thing should be. It was a question like that of the virgin Mary's, How shall these things be? Augustine says, that Abraham's laughter was not like Sarah's. Hers proceeded from distrust; his, from joy and admiration.

Romans 4:20

Ver. 20. *The promise of God*; viz. in Ge 15:5, and Ge 17:16.

Giving glory to God; as all do that rely upon the power and promise of God, setting to their seals that he is true.

Romans 4:21

Ver. 21. He looked upon God as one that was perfectly able to do whatever he had promised, and as one that was most faithful, and sure never to fail in the performance; collecting nothing else from the difficulty and improbability of the matter, but that it was the fitter for an Almighty power to effect.

Romans 4:22

Ver. 22. See Ro 2:3. By reason of his faith he was as sufficiently disposed and qualified for the obtaining of the promise, as if he had had all the righteousness required by the law.

Romans 4:23

Ver. 23,24. Here it may be inquired, If Abraham's faith did justify him, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, what doth this concern us? The apostle answers, it was recorded of him for our sakes; see Ro 15:4; and to us there shall be the like imputation, if we believe in God, *that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*. This a greater act of faith than Abraham's was. And the nature of justifying faith lies rather in affiance, or in putttag trust in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, than in assent, or in giving credit, to the truth of his promise.

Question. Why doth the apostle single out this act of raising Christ from the dead to describe the Father by?

Answer. To maintain the proportion betwixt the faith of Abraham and the faith of his seed; that as he respected the power of God, in raising, as it were, the dead, so in like sort should ours. So some. But the apostle speaks as if there were some special reason and ground for confidence in God for justification in this act of raising Christ from the dead; and indeed nothing is more fit to establish our faith in persuasion of our justification than this; for when God raised up our Lord Jesus Christ, having loosed the pains of death, he gave full assurance that his justice is fully satisfied for our sins. Had not Christ Jesus, our surety, paid the utmost farthing that was due for

our sins, he had still continued in prison, and under the power of death. Hence it is that the apostle Peter tells us, 1Pe 1:3, that God *hath begotten us to a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance by the resurrection of Christ from the dead*; there being no more effectual means to persuade us of the pardon of sin, of reconciliation with God, and of acceptance to eternal life, than that Jesus Christ, our surety and sponsor, is risen from the dead.

Romans 4:25

Ver. 25. *Who was delivered*; he saith *delivered* rather than crucified, to lead us by the hand to the first cause thereof, the determinate counsel of the blessed Trinity: see Ac 2:23 4:27,28 Ro 8:32.

For our offences; i.e. for the expiating of them, Isa 53:10.

And was raised again for our justification; not that his death had no hand in our justification; see Ro 3:24; but because our justification, which was begun in his death, was perfected in his resurrection. Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation by his death and passion, but the efficacy and perfection thereof with respect to us depend on his resurrection. By his death he paid our debt, in his resurrection he received our acquittance, Isa 53:8; when he was discharged, we in him, and together with him, received our discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins. This one verse is an abridgement of the whole gospel.

Romans 5:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 5:1 Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,

Ro 5:2 we glory in our hopes,

Ro 5:3-5 and in present afflictions,

Ro 5:6-10 from the best experience of God's love, looking with more assurance for final salvation.

Ro 5:11 we glory in God also, to whom we are

reconciled by Christ.

Ro 5:12-19 As sin and death came upon all men by Adam, so the grace of God, which justifieth unto life, cometh more abundantly unto all mankind through Christ.

Ro 5:20,21 Under the law sin abounded unto death; but grace hath much more abounded unto life.

Ver. 1. Hitherto of the cause and manner of our justification; now follow the benefits and effects.

Being justified by faith; as he had before asserted and proved particularly, in Ro 3:28 4:24.

We have peace with God; i.e. we have reconciliation with God, who before were utter enemies to him, Col 1:21; he is now become our Friend, as he was Abraham's.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Mediator of reconciliation: see 2Co 5:19 Eph 2:14-16 Col 1:20 1Ti 2:5.

Romans 5:2

Ver. 2. We have not only reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ, but also by faith in him we are admitted to his presence, his grace and favour. One may be reconciled to his prince, and yet not to be brought into his presence: witness Absalom, &c. See Eph 2:18 3:12 1Pe 3:18.

This grace is either that whereof he spake, Ro 3:24; or else rather it may be understood of that excellent state of reconciliation, friendship, and favour with God, which God hath graciously bestowed upon us.

Wherein we stand; or, in which we stand or abide, not stirring a foot for any temptation or persecution: a metaphor from soldiers keeping their station in fight. A man may obtain his prince's favour, and lose it again; but, &c.

And rejoice in hope of the glory of God; in the glory hoped for, a Hebraism; see Lu 10:20 1Pe 1:8,9; even in that glory which God hath

promised, and which consists in the enjoyment of him.

Romans 5:3

Ver. 3. *We glory in tribulations also;* as old soldiers do in their scars of honour: see Ga 6:17 2Co 12:9-11. Believers do not only glory in their future happiness, but in their present sufferings and afflictions: yet not so much in affliction itself, as in the issue and fruitful effects thereof, of which he speaks in what follows.

Knowing, finding by experience, that tribulation worketh patience; not as if affliction of itself and in its own nature did this, for in many it hath a contrary operation; but God, who is the author and giver of patience, Ro 5:15, doth make use of it for this purpose; it is a means sanctified of God for the exercising, obtaining, and increasing thereof.

Romans 5:4

Ver. 4. *And patience, experience;* viz. of God's sustentation and care of us, and of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, Ps 91:15 Isa 43:2 2Co 1:4,5; as also of our own sincerity, and strength to endure and persevere, Mt 13:21.

And experience, hope; i.e. of the glory of God, as before in Ro 3:2, or hope of further mercy and seasonable deliverance. Believers find and feel that God hath delivered them, and doth deliver them, and in him they trust and hope that he will still deliver them.

Romans 5:5

Ver. 5. *And hope maketh not ashamed;* it doth not disappoint or deceive us. Frustrated hopes fill men with shame and confusion, Job 6:19,20. This passage seems to be taken out of Ps 22:5.

Because, &c.; this is either rendered as the reason of all that went before; Therefore the justified by faith have peace with God, access to him by

faith, hope of glory, joy in tribulation, &c., because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts: or else it is a reason of what immediately preceded; Therefore hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad, &c.

The love of God; understand it either actively, of our love to God, or rather passively, of his love to us, (of which he speaks, Ro 5:8), and of the sense thereof.

Is shed abroad in our hearts; is greatly manifested, or abundantly poured forth: a frequent metaphor, both in the Old and New Testament: see Isa 44:3 Joe 2:28 Zec 12:10 Joh 7:38 Ac 2:17.

By the Holy Ghost which is given unto us; not excluding the Father and Son; it is the more proper work of the Spirit, both to make us feel the love of God, and to fill our hearts with love to God.

Romans 5:6

Ver. 6. *Without strength;* utterly unable to help or redeem ourselves.

In due time; some read it, according to the time, and refer this clause to the foregoing words, making this to be the sense: When we were weak in time past, or in the time of the law, before grace appeared, then Christ died, &c. Others rather refer it to the following words, and so our translation carries it, that in due time, i.e. *in the fulness of time*, as Ga 4:4, or in the time that was before decreed and prefixed by the Father. The Scripture every where speaks of a certain season or hour assigned for the death of Christ: see Mt 26:45 Joh 8:20 12:27 17:1.

Christ died for the ungodly; i.e. for the sake, or instead of, such as were enemies to God, (as Ro 5:10), and so could deserve no such favour from him.

Romans 5:7

Ver. 7. He amplifies the love of Christ in dying for the ungodly, and shows

that it is unparalleled and without example. By *a good man* you must understand one that is very kind and bountiful, or one that is very useful and profitable; that is, a public and common good. Instances may be given of those that have sacrificed their lives for such. Lilloe stepped between the murderer and king Edward his master. Nicholas Ribische lost his life to preserve Prince Maurice at the siege of Pista.

Romans 5:8

Ver. 8. *God commendeth his love toward us;* i.e. he declareth or confirmeth it by this, as a most certain sign, he makes it most conspicuous or illustrious: see Joh 3:16 1Jo 4:9,10.

In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; i.e. in a state of sin, and under the guilt and power of sin. Believers in some sense are still sinners, 1Jo 1:8, but their sins being pardoned and subdued, they go no longer under that denomination. Sinners in Scripture are said to be those in whom sin dwells and reigns; see Joh 9:31. Such we were by nature. Yea, we were not only sinners, but enemies to God, which further commendeth the love of Christ in dying for us: there is no greater love amongst men, than when one layeth down his life for his friends; but herein Christ's love excelled, that he gave his life for his enemies.

Romans 5:9

Ver. 9. The apostle's arguing is cogent, for it is more to justify and reconcile sinners, than to save them being justified; Christ therefore having done the former, he will much more do the latter.

By his blood; i.e. by faith in his blood or sufferings.

From wrath; the Greek reads it with an article, from that wrath, whereby is meant the wrath to come, or eternal punishment.

Romans 5:10

Ver. 10. *We were reconciled to God;* put into a capacity of reconciliation, God being by Christ's death made reconcilable, and also actually reconciled, when we believe, through the merits of the death of Christ.

We shall be saved by his life; i.e. by the resurrection to life. Salvation is ascribed to the resurrection and life of Christ, because he thereby doth perfect our salvation, he ever living to make intercession for us, Heb 12:25; and because by his resurrection and life we shall be raised to eternal life at that day.

Romans 5:11

Ver. 11. *And not only so, &c.:* q.d. We do not only rejoice in the hope of glory, and in tribulation, of which he had spoken, Ro 5:2,3, (all that fell in between being a long parenthesis), but we rejoice and glory in God himself, who is become our God and merciful Father in Jesus Christ.

By whom we have now received the atonement; this is rendered as the reason why we should rejoice in God through Jesus Christ; for by him God is atoned or reconciled, satisfaction being made for our sins in his blood. The particule *now* hath its emphasis, to show the privilege of those who live in these times of the gospel.

Romans 5:12

Ver. 12. From this verse to the end of the chapter, the apostle makes a large comparison between the first and Second Adam, which he joins to what he had said by the causal particule *wherefore*: q.d. Seeing things are as I have already said, it is evident, that what was lost by Adam is restored by Christ. This verse seems to be lame and imperfect; the reddition is wanting in the comparison; for unto this, *as by one man sin entered into the world*, there should be added, so by Christ, &c. But the reddition, or second part of the comparison, is suspended, by reason of a long parenthesis intervening to Ro 5:18,19, where the apostle sets down both parts of the comparison.

By one man: viz. Adam. *Objection.* Eve first sinned, 1Ti 2:14.

Answer. He is not showing the order how sin first entered into the world, but how it was propagated to mankind. Therefore he mentions the man, because he is the head of the woman, and the covenant was made with him: or, *man* may be used collectively, both for man and woman; as when God said: *Let us make man, &c.*

Sin; it is to be understood of our first parents' actual sin, in eating the forbidden fruit; this alone was it that affected their posterity, and made them sinners, Ro 5:19.

Entered into the world; understand the inhabitants of the world; the thing containing, by a usual metonymy, is put for the thing contained.

And death by sin; as the due reward thereof.

Death here may be taken in its full latitude, for temporal, spiritual, and eternal death.

And so death passed upon all men; seized upon all, of all sorts, infants as well as others.

For that all have sinned; others read it thus, in which all have sinned, i.e. in which one man; and so it is a full proof that Adam was a public person, and that in him all his posterity sinned and fell. He was our representative, and we were all in him, as a town or county in a parliament man; and although we chose him not, yet God chose for us.

The words εφ' ω are rendered *in which*, in other places, and the preposition επι is put for εν; see Mr 2:4 Heb 9:10; and if our translation be retained, it is much to the same sense; for if such die as never committed any actual sin themselves, (as infants do), then it will follow that they sinned in this one man, in whose loins they were: as Levi is said to have paid tithes in Abraham's loins, Heb 7:9.

Romans 5:13

Ver. 13. *For until the law sin was in the world:* q.d. It appears that all have

sinned, because sin was always in the world, not only after the law was given by Moses, but also before, even from the beginning of the world till that time.

But sin is not imputed when there is no law: q.d. It appears there was a law before the law of Moses, for if there had been no law all that while, then sin would not have been imputed to men, so as to make them liable to punishment or death; but sin was imputed or charged upon men before the law of Moses, and death passed upon all. Therefore there must have been a law, by the transgression of which men were sinners, before that time. And that was either the law of nature, or the positive law which God gave to Adam, the transgression whereof is imputed to all, as we shall see, Ro 5:19. Some think the apostle doth here obviate a cavil: q.d. Let no man think that sin began to have its being together with the law, for there was sin before there was any written law to forbid it. The same acts that were forbidden afterwards by the law, were before committed, and were really sinful in the sight of God. But sin was not so well known, nor so strictly charged upon the sinner, as it is since the law was given. It was not imputed comparatively, though absolutely it was, as may appear by many instances, as the drowning of the world, the destruction of Sodom, &c.

Romans 5:14

Ver. 14. He proceeds to prove his assertion in the foregoing verse, that sin was in the world before the law, because *death*, which is the wages of sin, *did reign*, and had power over all mankind, *from Adam to Moses*, which was about two thousand five hundred years.

Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; i.e. over very infants, that had not actually sinned as Adam did. But though infants did not sin like Adam, yet they sinned in Adam; the guilt of his sin was imputed to them, else death could have had no power over them. Infants (as one saith) are not altogether innocents; the very first sheet or blanket wherewith they are covered is woven of sin and shame, of blood and filth, Eze 16:4,6.

Who is the figure of him that was to come; of his offspring, (so some), which came of him in after times; his posterity (as before) was represented

in his person: but others better expound it of Christ, who is the Second Adam; and of whom Adam was a figure or type, not in respect of such things as were personal to either of them, but of that which by them redounded to others. The first Adam was the original of man's natural and earthly being; the Second Adam, of his spiritual and heavenly. By the first, sin and death came into the world; by the Second, righteousness and life.

Romans 5:15

Ver. 15. *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift:* q.d. But yet the resemblance betwixt the first and Second Adam is not so exact as to admit of no difference; differences there are, but they are to great advantage on Christ's part: e.g. Compare Adam's sin and Christ's obedience, in respect of their efficacy and virtue, and you will find a great difference.

For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many: the obedience of Christ (which is the product of his grace and favour) is much more powerful to justification and salvation, than the sin of Adam was to condemnation. If the transgression of mere man was able to pull down death and wrath upon all his natural seed, then the obedience of one, which is God as well as man, will much more abundantly avail to procure pardon and life for all his spiritual seed. He doth not give the pre-eminence unto the grace of Christ in respect of the number, but of the more powerful efficacy and virtue.

Romans 5:16

Ver. 16. q.d. As there is a difference between Adam and Christ in respect of their persons, so also in respect of their acts, and the extent thereof; for one sin of Adam did condemn us; the mischief arose from one offence; but the free gift and grace of Christ doth absolve us not only from that one fault, but from all other faults and offences; it reacheth to the pardon, not only of original sin, but of all other personal and actual sins.

Romans 5:17

Ver. 17. Here he shows the difference in respect of the effects and consequents of their acts. If by means of one man and his one offence death had power over all mankind, then much more shall the grace and gift of righteousness, which is by Jesus Christ alone, obtain eternal life for all that have received abundant grace and mercy from him.

Romans 5:18

Ver. 18. Here, after a long parenthesis, the apostle returns to what he had begun to say in Ro 5:12; and now he makes the comparison full in both members, which there, by reason of intervening matter, was left imperfect, as I before hinted.

Judgment; guilt, which exposeth to judgment.

Came upon all men; all the posterity, or natural seed, of the first Adam.

The free gift; that which all along he calls *the free gift*, seems to be the benefit believers have by Christ's obedience.

Came upon all men; not all universally, but all sorts of men indifferently, Gentiles as well as Jews; or all that are his spiritual seed. Or *all men* here is put for many men; see elsewhere, Lu 6:26 Ac 22:15.

Many is sometimes put for *all*, as Da 12:2, and again *all* for *many*; and indeed these two words, *all* and *many*, seem to be used reciprocally by this context in particular, Ro 5:15,19.

Romans 5:19

Ver. 19. *One man's;* i.e. Adam's: see the notes on Ro 5:12.

Many; i.e. all, as before; many is here opposed to one, or a few; the meaning is: Though Adam was but one, yet he infected many others, his sin rested not in his own person.

Were made sinners; brought into a state of sin. This is more than when all the world were said to sin in him. The word is used to signify great and heinous sinners. The apostle here informs us of that which all philosophy was ignorant of, viz. the imputation of Adam's sin, and our natural pollution flowing from it. Yea, this was more than the naked history of man's fall by Moses did discover; there indeed we see the cause of death, how that came upon all mankind; but that Adam's sin was accounted to us, that by his disobedience we are involved in sin and misery, that is not clearly revealed in the books of Moses. We are beholden to the gospel, and particularly to this text and context, for the more full discovery hereof.

By the obedience of one; i.e. of Christ. He leaves out the word man, either for brevity sake, or because Christ was not a mere man, as Adam was. Here the apostle concludes the collation he had made between Adam and Christ, whom he had all along represented as two public persons, or as two common roots or fountains, the one of sin and death, the other of righteousness and life. And indeed there are throughout the context (as one observes) several textual and grammatical obscurities, as also redundant and defective expressions, which are not unusual with this apostle, whose matter runneth from him like a torrent, and cannot be so well bounded by words. Another saith, upon the consideration of the difficulties in this context: We do not need Theseus's twine of thread, but the Holy Ghost, and that light by which this Epistle was wrote, to guide us into the understanding of it.

Romans 5:20

Ver. 20. Here he shows the reason why the law was given; although (as it is in Ro 5:13) before that time sin was in the world, it was *that the offence might abound;* either strictly, the offence of that one man, or rather largely, the offence of every man. The particle *ὅτι* (rendered *that*), is to be taken either causally, and so it is interpreted by Ga 3:19, where it is said, *the law was added because of transgressions*, that thereby the guilt and punishment of sin being more fully discovered, the riches of God's free grace and mercy might be the more admired; or else eventually, it so falls out by accident, or by reason of man's corruption, that sin is thereby increased or augmented.

The law is holy, just, and good, (as Ro 7:12), how then doth that increase sin? Either as it irritates the sinner, Ro 3:20; and Ro 7:8,11, or makes manifest the sin, Ro 7:7,13; thereby sin is known to be, as indeed it is, out of measure sinful.

But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: this is added by way of correction, to mitigate the former assertion, and it lays down a second end of giving the law; the former was the increase and manifestation of sin, the latter is the abounding or superabounding of God's grace. There is this difference to be observed; that the first end is universal, for in all men, both good and bad, the law worketh the increase and knowledge of sin; but tho other is particular, and peculiar to the elect: to them only the grace of God is superabundant after that they have abounded in sin, and by how much the greater is their guilt, by so much the greater is the grace of God in the free forgiveness thereof.

Romans 5:21

Ver. 5. Before he ascribed dominion and reign to death, now to sin; the reason is evident, because death indeed reigneth by sin. Before also he had made the comparison between Adam and Christ, here it is between sin and grace, the power of one and of the other. The sum is, that as sin hath prevailed over all mankind to bring death upon man, not only a temporal but eternal death, so the grace of Christ prevails, and becomes effectual, to confer upon us eternal life.

Righteousness; i.e. imputed or imparted.

By Jesus Christ our Lord: see how sweetly the end answers the beginning of this chapter, and how Jesus Christ is both the Author and Finisher of all.

Romans 6:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 6:1-13 Though justified by grace, we may not live in sin; since the very figure of baptism requireth us

to die with Christ unto sin, that we may lead a new life of holiness unto God.

Ro 6:14-20 The dispensation of grace freeth us from the dominion of sin; but we are still the servants of sin, if we obey it; therefore being freed from sin, we are bound unto holiness.

Ro 6:21-23 The end and wages of sin is death; but the fruit of holiness through God's grace is eternal life.

Ver. 1. Another anticipation; this Epistle abounds therewith. The apostle here prevents an objection, which might be occasioned, either by the foregoing doctrine in general, concerning justification by the free grace of God, and by a righteousness imputed to us; or by what he said more particularly in the close of the foregoing chapter, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. Some might hence infer, that there was no need then of inherent righteousness, that persons might abide and abound in sin, that so grace might be the more exalted in the forgiveness thereof. The apostle Jude speaks, Jude 1:4, of some that made this ill improvement of the grace of God. Those that draw such inferences from the premises, they put a false construction upon the apostle's doctrine, and a paralogism or fallacy upon themselves. They make the apostle's words more general than he meant or intended them: for the abounding of sin is not the occasion of the abounding of grace in all, but only in some, even in those who confess and forsake their sins. And they apply that to the time to come which the apostle only uttered of the time past. The abounding of sin in men before their conversion and calling, doth commend and exalt the abundant grace of God, in the forgiveness thereof; but not so if sin abound in them after they are converted and called. He propounds this objection by way of interrogation, partly to show his dislike that his doctrine should be so perverted, and partly to show the peace of his own conscience, that he was far from such a thought.

Romans 6:2

Ver. 2. *God forbid;* be it not, or far be it; he rejects any such inference or consequence, as unworthy of an answer: q.d. Away with all such doctrines, as, under pretence of advancing grace, do promote sin, or obstruct a godly life. This phrase is frequent with the apostle, when he is speaking of any

absurdity: see Ro 3:4,6,31.

How: by this particle he shows the impossibility, or the incongruity, of the thing: see Mt 6:28 Ga 4:9. The following argument is very convincing, and may be thus formed: They whose property it is to be dead to sin, cannot any longer live therein; but the justified by faith are *dead to sin*. They are said to be dead to sin, who do not live under the power and dominion of it; who mortify sin, and suffer it (so far as they can) to have no life or power in it. Fall into it they may, but live and lie in it they cannot. It is not falling into the water that drowns a man, but it is his lying in it; so it is not falling into sin that damns a man, but it is his living in it.

Romans 6:3

Ver. 3. *Know ye not?* q.d. This is a truth which you ought not to be ignorant of and which confirms what I say.

Baptized into Jesus Christ: to be baptized into Christ, is either to be baptized in the name of Christ; see Ac 10:48, and Ac 19:5; or else it is, incorporated, ingrafted, or planted into Christ, and so to be made members of his mystical body by baptism.

Baptized into his death: to be baptized into the death of Christ, is to have fellowship with him in his death, or to have the efficacy of his death sealed up to us; and that is the blessed privilege of as many as are baptized or planted into Christ; they are not only partakers of the merit of his death for justification, but of the efficacy of his death for mortification. See a parallel place, Ga 3:27.

Romans 6:4

Ver. 4. *Therefore:* q.d. Because we are thus dead with Christ, *therefore,* &c.

We are buried with him; i.e. we have communion with him in his burial also, which represents a farther degree of the destruction of sin, by putting it, as it were, out of our sight, Ge 23:4, and having no more to do with it.

By baptism into death: he seems here to allude to the manner of baptizing in those warm Eastern countries, which was to dip or plunge the party baptized, and as it were to bury him for a while under water. See the like phrase, Col 2:12. Baptism doth not only represent our mortification and death to sin, but our progress and perseverance therein. Burial implies a continuing under death; so is mortification a continual dying unto sin.

That like as Christ was raised up from the dead; look as, after the death and burial of Christ, there followed his resurrection, so it must be with us; we must have communion with, and conformity to, the Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrection as well as in his death; both these are represented and sealed to us by the sacrament of baptism.

By the glory of the Father; i.e. by the power of the Father, which is called, Col 1:11, *his glorious power*. God is said elsewhere to have raised him *by his power*, 1Co 6:14; and in 2Co 13:4, he is said to live *by the power of God*. Some read it thus, he was raised from the dead, to the glory of the Father.

The preposition $\delta\tau\alpha$ is sometimes rendered *to*: see 1Pe 1:3.

Walk in newness of life; i.e. live a new life, being actuated by new principles, aiming at new ends, and bringing forth new fruits of holiness: see Ro 7:6.

Romans 6:5

Ver. 5. He prosecutes what he had before propounded, and illustrates it by an apt similitude, which is taken from grafting or planting. He takes it for granted, that believers are *planted together in the likeness of Christ's death*, i.e. are made conformable to him in his death: see Php 3:10. Christ died, and believers die; the one a natural, the other a spiritual death: the one by way of expiation, suffering, and satisfying for the sins of others; the other by way of mortification, killing and crucifying their own sins.

We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: in the original the sentence is elliptical and imperfect, the words running thus, *we shall be of*

his resurrection; our translation therefore fills up the sense with a word borrowed from the preceding clause. See the like, Joh 5:36, *I have a greater witness than of John*, i.e. than that witness of John. The sense of the whole is this, That believers are not only dead, but risen with Christ, Col 3:1. They partake of such a resurrection as resembles his; as Christ arose from the dead to a new life, so we rise from dead works to *walk in newness of life*, Ro 6:4. Moreover, they are raised and quickened by a power and virtue that flows from Christ and his resurrection: this is that virtue which the apostle Paul so earnestly desired to be made a partaker of, Php 3:10. The graft revives with the stock in the spring, and that by a virtue which it receives from the stock; so as a believer is raised to newness of life, by virtue flowing from Christ, into whom he is ingrafted.

Question. Why doth he say believers *shall be* planted, &c.? Are they not so already, upon their believing in Christ?

Answer. The apostle rather chooseth to speak in the future, than in the present tense; rather *we shall be*, than we are, or have been; because the work is only begun; it daily increaseth more and more, until it comes to a full perfection in heaven.

Romans 6:6

Ver. 6. By the *old man* is meant, that corrupt and polluted nature which we derive from Adam, the first man: see Eph 4:22 Col 3:9,10. The old and new man are opposites; as then the new man is the image of God repaired in us; so the old man is a depravation of that image of God, and a universal pollution of the whole man.

Is crucified with him; by virtue of our union with him, and by means of his death and crucifixion: see Ga 2:20.

The body of sin is the very same that he called before the old man. The corrupt nature is sometimes called *the body*, Ro 8:13, sometimes a *body of death*, Ro 7:24, and here *the body of sin*. It is indeed a mere mass and lump of sin; it is not one sin, but all sin seminally. It is with respect to this body of sin, that particular lusts and corruptions are called *members*, Col 3:5.

Might be destroyed; weakened more and more, till at last it be destroyed.

That henceforth we should not serve sin; as we did before regeneration, and as they still do who voluntarily commit it, Joh 8:34. They do not only act sin, but are acted by it, having as many lords as lusts, Tit 3:3. See more of this, Ro 6:16.

Romans 6:7

Ver. 7. *He that is dead,* i.e. to *sin,* is freed from it; not only in respect of the guilt thereof, which sense the marginal reading of the word seems to respect, but also in regard of the service of it. This agrees best with the context; look, as he that is dead is freed and discharged from the authority of, those who had dominion over him in his lifetime, so it is with those that are dead to sin. There is a parallel place, 1Pe 4:1.

Romans 6:8

Ver. 8. i.e. If we have fellowship with Christ in his death, we have reason to believe we shall have fellowship with him also in his resurrection and life: see Ro 6:5. Though everlasting be not excluded, yet a spiritual life is principally intended; we shall so live with Christ, as no more to return to dead works. The next words show this to be the sense.

Romans 6:9

Ver. 9. q.d. Of this you know you have an example or copy in Christ himself; he so rose again, as never more to come under the power of death.

Romans 6:10

Ver. 10. For when *he died unto sin,* i.e. to take away sin, he died but once; see Heb 9:28, and Ro 10:10,14; but when he rose again from the dead, he lived with God for ever an immortal, endless life. By this phrase is

expressed that eternal and indissoluble union which the Son hath with the Father.

Romans 6:11

Ver. 11. So we in like manner must make account, that by virtue of his death we are dead to sin, and by virtue of his resurrection are alive to God, and so alive as never to resume our former courses, or return again to our former sins.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; or, in Jesus Christ our Lord; i.e. after the similitude of Jesus Christ, who so lives as to die no more. Or else this phrase imports that Jesus Christ is the root of our spiritual life; even as the scion lives in the stock. so believers are alive unto God in Jesus Christ, receiving from him that virtue whereby their spiritual life is begun, maintained, and perfected.

Romans 6:12

Ver. 12. *Let not sin therefore:* q.d. Seeing this is the case, that you are dead to sin, baptized into Christ, are planted together into the likeness of his death, &c., therefore the rather hearken to and obey the following exhortation. By *sin* he means the sin or corruption of our nature, the same that before he called the *old man*, and the *body of sin*. There are remainders thereof in the regenerate; in them it is mortified, but not eradicated; therefore to them this exhortation is not unnecessary.

Reign; he doth not say, let it not be or reside, but let it not reign or preside; let it not bear sway or have dominion in you; let it not have the upper hand of the motions of the Spirit of God.

In your mortal body; the body (called here a *mortal* or frail *body*) is put by a synecdoche for the whole man; and he the rather makes mention of the body, because the parts and members thereof are the usual instruments of sin. Therefore it follows in the next verse, *Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness.*

That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; i.e. that you should obey sin in the lust of the body. The gender of the relative article of the Greek, requires it should be so read and understood. The meaning is not as if lusts were in the body alone, for Christ teacheth the contrary, Mt 15:19,20; but because all sinful lusts do mostly show and manifest themselves in and through the body, Ga 5:19.

Romans 6:13

Ver. 13. He fitly compares our bodily members to tools that artificers work, or weapons that soldiers fight withal; for as those, so these, may be used well or ill: e.g. With the hand one man giveth an alms, another stealeth; with the tongue one man blesseth, another curseth. By members here we are not only to understand the parts of the body, as the hands, eyes, ears, &c.; but also the faculties of the soul, as the understanding, will, affections, &c. These bear some proportion to the bodily members, as the understanding to the eye, &c. All of them must be employed by us as weapons to fight, not under the command of Satan for sin, but under the command of God for righteousness.

As those that are alive from the dead: these words contain a reason why we should not serve sin and Satan, but bequeath and dedicate ourselves to the service of God, because we are endued with a spiritual life, after a spiritual death; or because we have received so great a benefit as to be raised in Christ from the death and power of sin.

Romans 6:14

Ver. 14. In the Ro 6:12 it was an exhortation, but in this it is a promise, that sin shall not reign in and over us. Rebel it may, but reign it shall not in the regenerate. It hath lost its absolute and uncontrolled power. It fares with sin in such as with those beasts in Da 7:12, who, though their lives were prolonged for a season, had their dominion taken away. It is an encouragement to fight, when we are sure of victory.

For ye are not under the law, but under grace: he adds this as a reason of that he had asserted and promised: you are not under a legal, but gospel

dispensation; so some expound the words; *grace* is often put for the gospel: or, you are not under the old but the new covenant.

The law and grace thus differ; the one condemns the sinner, the other absolves him; the one requires perfect, the other accepts sincere, obedience; the one prescribes what we must do, the other assists us in the doing of our duty. This last seems to be the genuine sense: q.d. You may be sure sin shall have no dominion over you; for you are not under the law, which forbids sin, but gives no power against it, or which requires obedience, and gives no strength to perform it (like the Egyptian taskmasters, who required bricks but gave no straw); but under the gospel or covenant of grace, where sin is not only forbidden, but the sinner is enabled to resist and overcome it.

Question. But what shall be said of the godly in the times of the law; were not they under grace?

Answer. They were, Ac 15:11 Heb 4:2; but not in the same degree. The godly had help and assistance under the law, but they had it not by the law. How believers are said not to be under the law: see Ro 7:4.

Romans 6:15

Ver. 15. *What then?* doth it follow from hence that we are lawless, and may live as we list?

God forbid: q.d. No, by no means, the premises afford no such conclusion; though we are not under the curse and rigour of the law, yet we are under its directions and discipline: the gospel allows of sin no more than the law. The apostle is careful, both here and elsewhere, to prevent licentiousness, or the abuse of Christian liberty: see Ga 5:13 1Pe 2:16: see Ro 6:1, and See Poole on "Ro 6:1".

Romans 6:16

Ver. 16. He refutes the aforementioned cavil by a common axiom, that every one knows and apprehends.

Of obedience unto righteousness; which will be rewarded with eternal life. But why doth he not say of obedience unto life? Then the antithesis had been more plain and full. Because though sin be the cause of death, yet obedience is not the cause of life, (as Ro 6:23), but only the way to it.

Romans 6:17

Ver. 17. *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin:* q.d. But as for you, God be thanked, that though once you were the servants of sin, viz. when you were ignorant and unregenerate, yet now you are freed from that bondage, and set at liberty from the power and dominion of sin.

But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you: this phrase expresses the efficacy of Divine doctrine in the hearts of believers; it changeth and fashioneth their hearts according to its likeness, 2Co 3:18. Hence in Jas 1:21, it is called an *ingrafted word*; it turns the heart and life of the hearer into its own nature, as the stock doth the scion that is ingrafted into it. The doctrine of the gospel is the mould, and the hearer is the metal, which, when it is melted and cast into the mould, receives its form and figure.

Romans 6:18

Ver. 18. *Made free from sin;* i.e. the servitude of sin; having received a manumission from that hard and evil master, you have given tap yourselves to a better and more ingenuous service.

Romans 6:19

Ver. 19. *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh:* q.d. I accommodate myself to your capacity, because of the weakness of your understanding in spiritual things; therefore I use this familiar similitude of service and freedom, that by these secular and civil things you might the better understand such as are spiritual: see Joh 3:12.

For as ye have yielded, &c.: q.d. The great thing that I desire of you (and it is most reasonable) is this, that you would be as sedulous and careful now to obey God, as you have formerly been to obey and serve sin; to do good, as you have been to do evil.

To uncleanness; to fleshly lusts, which defile you.

To iniquity unto iniquity; i.e. adding one sin to another; or else by the former you may understand original, by the latter actual sin. He useth three words about the service of sin, and but two about the service of God; wicked men take great pains for hell; oh that we would take the same for heaven.

Romans 6:20

Ver. 20. q.d. When you served sin, you knew that God and righteousness had no whit of your service; why then should sin have any of your service now, when ye have delivered up yourselves to righteousness, or godliness, to be the observant followers thereof? Why should not ye now abstain as strictly from all sin, as then ye did from all good?

Romans 6:21

Ver. 21. q.d. And this will be much more equal and reasonable, if you consider these three things:

1. How little fruit and satisfaction your former sins have afforded you in the very time of committing them.
2. How nothing but shame and sorrow doth follow upon the remembrance of them.
3. How death, yea, eternal death and damnation, (unless pardoning grace and mercy prevent it), will be the certain conclusion of them. And whether these things are true or not, I appeal to yourselves.

Romans 6:22

Ver. 22. q.d. But now, on the contrary, being set at liberty from the service of sin, and admitted to be the servants of God, you plainly perceive a difference: for:

1. In your lifetime you increase in grace and holiness, and that is no small fruit or advantage; and then,
2. At your death you shall have everlasting life.

Romans 6:23

Ver. 23. q.d. Now therefore compare the office of both these services together, and you shall easily see which master is best to serve and obey; the wages that sin will pay you, in the end is death; but the reward that God will freely bestow upon you (if you be his servants) *is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Wages; the word properly signifies victuals. The Romans of old paid their soldiers with provision and victuals in recompence of their service; afterward they gave them money, but still the old term was retained, and now it is used to signify any reward or stipend whatsoever.

Is death: by *death* here we must understand not only temporal, but also and more especially eternal death, as appears by the opposition it hath to *eternal life:* this is the just and true hire of sin.

The gift of God is eternal life; he doth not say that eternal life is the wages of righteousness, but that it is the gracious or free gift of God. He varies the phrase on purpose, to show that we attain not eternal life by our own merits, our own works or worthiness, but by the gift or grace of God; for which cause he also addeth, *through Jesus Christ our Lord.* See Aug. lib. de Gratia et Libero Arbitrio,

c. 9. Let the papists (if they can) reconcile this text to their distinction of mortal and venial sins, and to their doctrine of the meritoriousness of good works.

Romans 7:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 7:1-3 No law having power over a person longer than he lives,

Ro 7:4 we therefore, being become dead to the law by the body of Christ, are left free to place ourselves under a happier dispensation.

Ro 7:5-13 For the law, through the prevalency of corrupt passions, could only serve as an instrument of sin unto death; although it be in itself holy, and just, and good.

Ro 7:14-23 As is manifest by our reason approving the precepts of it, whilst our depraved nature is unable to put them in practice.

Ro 7:24,25 The wretchedness of man in such a situation, and God's mercy in his deliverance from it through Christ.

Ver. 1. The apostle, having showed in a former chapter how believers are freed from the dominion of sin, proceeds in this chapter to declare, that they are free also from the yoke of the Mosaical law, because that was dead to them, and they to it. This he illustrates, and proceeds by the familiar allegory of a husband and his wife: Look, as a wife is free from her husband when he is dead, and may then marry another, and be no adulteress; so believers are dead to the law, and are free to be married to another, even to Christ, that is raised from the dead, that upon their marriage they may bring forth fruit unto God.

By *the law* here he means the law of wedlock, or the law of Moses about that matter, as appears by the instance given in the next verse.

The word *man* here is common to both sexes, and may be applied to either, for both are subject to the aforementioned law.

Romans 7:2

Ver. 2. He here exemplifies and illustrates the foregoing assertion.

The woman is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: see a parallel place, 1Co 7:39. This is the general rule, yet there is an exception in the case of fornication or desertion: see Mt 5:32 1Co 7:15.

From the law of her husband; from the obligation of the law of marriage.

Romans 7:3

Ver. 3,4. *Ye also are become dead to the law;* i.e. ye are taken off from all hopes of justification by it, and from your confidence in obedience to it, Ga 2:19. The opposition seems to require that he should have said, the law is dead to us; but these two phrases are much the same.

Question. What law does he mean?

Answer. Not only the ceremonial, but the moral law, for in that he instances, Ro 7:7. The moral law is in force still; Christ came to confirm, and not to destroy it; but believers are freed from the malediction, from the rigid exaction, and from the irritation thereof. Of this last he speaks, Ro 7:8,9, and from it we are freed but in part.

By the body of Christ; i.e. by the sacrifice of Christ's body upon the cross; thereby he delivered us from the law, in the sense before mentioned.

Fruit unto God; i.e. fruits of holiness and good works, to the glory and praise of God.

Romans 7:5

Ver. 5. *For:* q.d. For bringing forth of which fruit unto God, we have now better helps than formerly we had; or we are in much better circumstances than formerly we were: and so he proceeds to show how our present state does differ from the former.

When we were in the flesh; i.e. in our carnal, fleshly state, before we were regenerated, or under the carnal pedagogy of the law; for in the next verse he speaks of our being *now delivered from the law*.

The motions of sins which were by the law; i.e. the corrupt inclinations to sin, which are drawn forth by the law, as ill vapours are raised out of a dunghill by the sun; or which are irritated by the law; of which by and by.

Did work in, our members: see Ro 6:13,16.

To bring forth fruit unto death; i.e. such ill fruit as ends in death, Ro 6:21.

Romans 7:6

Ver. 6. *But now;* i.e. being brought out of our fleshly state.

We are delivered from the law: see the notes on Ro 7:4.

That being dead wherein we were held; the relative is not in the Greek text, but it is well supplied to fill up the sense. The antecedent must be either sin or the law; by both of these we were held or detained whilst unregenerate; but now neither of these have any power to hold us with. Some read it, he being dead; the old man, of which he spake in the foregoing chapter.

That we should serve in newness of spirit; i.e. that we should serve God, or Jesus Christ, our new husband, in true holiness, which is wrought in us by the renewing of the spirit; or serve him in a new spiritual manner.

And not in the oldness of the letter; i.e. not in an outward and ceremonial manner, according to the letter of the law; which service, or way of worship, is now antiquated, and grown out of date. The word *oldness* insinuates the abolishing thereof, because of insufficiency, Heb 8:13.

Romans 7:7

Ver. 7. *Is the law sin? God forbid:* here is another anticipation of an

objection, which might arise from what the apostle had said, Ro 7:5, that sin was powerful in us by the law. Some might object and say, that the law then was sin, i.e. that it was the cause of it, and a factor for it. To this he answers, by his usual note of detestation, *God forbid*.

Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; i.e. I had not known it so clearly and effectually, so as to humble and drive me to Christ; for otherwise, nature itself teaches a difference of good and evil in many things. He adds this as a reason why the law cannot be the cause of sin, because it discovers and reproveth sin, it detects and damns it; and that it so doth, he proves from his own experience.

For had not known lust; i.e. I had not known it to be sin. By *lust* here some understand that concupiscence which the school men call unformed concupiscence, which hath not the consent of the will: for the concupiscence to which we consent, the heathens themselves know to be sinful; but that which hath not the consent of the will, or the first motions to sin, they held to be no sin; as neither did the Pharisees, amongst whom Paul lived; nor do the papists to this very day. Some by *lust* understand original sin, which is the fountain from whence all particular lusts flow; the hot furnace from which all sinful motions, as so many sparks, continually arise: this is called *lust*, likewise, in Jas 1:14; and this is forbidden in every commandment; for where any of sin is prohibited, there the root also is prohibited; but more particularly it is forbidden in the tenth commandment.

Except the law that said, Thou shalt not covet: some understand the law in general; but the article used in the Greek seems to restrain it to a particular precept. Besides, they are the very words of the tenth commandment. But why doth he not mention the objects that are specified in that commandment, as, *thy neighbour's house, wife, &c.?* The answer is: That that was not material; for the apostle speaking of inward concupiscence, which without the law is latent and undiscovered, it was enough to name the sin itself, seeing the objects about which it is conversant are of all sorts, and can hardly be numbered.

Romans 7:8

Ver. 8. *But sin;* i.e. the corruption of our nature, the depraved bent and bias of the soul, called before *lust*.

Taking occasion by the commandment; i.e. being stirred up or drawn forth by the prohibition of the law. The law did not properly give occasion, but sin took it. The law (as before) is not the cause of sin, though by accident it is the occasion of it. In a dropsy, it is not the drink that is to be blamed for increasing the disease, but the ill habit of body. Such is the depravedness of man's nature, that the things which are forbidden are the more desired: the more the law would dam up the torrent of sinful lusts, the higher do they swell. The law was given to restrain sin, but through our corruption it falls out contrarily. The law inhibiting sin, and not giving power to avoid it, our impetuous lusts take occasion or advantage from thence, the more eagerly to pursue it.

Wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; i.e. inordinate affections and inclinations of all sorts.

For without the law; i.e. without the knowledge of the law.

Sin was dead; i.e. comparatively dead. Sin hath not so much power, either to terrify the conscience, or to stir up inordinate affections; it is like a sleepy lion, that stirs not.

Romans 7:9

Ver. 9. *For I was alive without the law once:* q.d. Take me, if you please, for an instance. Before I knew the law aright, and understood the Divine and spiritual meaning of it, or whilst the law stood afar off, and was not brought home to my conscience, *I was alive*, that is, in my own conceit; I thought myself in as good condition as any man living; my conscience never gave me any trouble. So it was with me once, or heretofore, when I was a Pharisee, or in an unregenerate state.

But when the commandment came; i.e. when it came nearer to my conscience; when I came to know and understand the spiritual meaning and extent of it, that it condemned sinful lusts, affections, and inclinations.

Sin revived; i.e. its sinfulness and guilt appeared, and I had a lively sense thereof imprinted upon my soul; or my corruptions began to gather head, and seemed, as it were, to receive new vigour and life.

And I died; i.e. in my own opinion and feeling. I felt my conscience deadly wounded. I was convinced I was in a state of death and damnation. I lost the confidence I formerly had of my good estate.

Romans 7:10

Ver. 10. q.d. So it came to pass, that the commandment, which was ordained to be a rule of life, and, if I could have kept it, a means of life also, Ro 10:5 Ga 3:12, I found it to be to me (through my corruption and transgression) an occasion of death; it bound me over to punishment; and so, by accident, it tendeth to death. Some by *life* and *death*, here, understand peace and perturbation of spirit.

Romans 7:11

Ver. 11. *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment:* see the notes on Ro 7:8.

Deceived me; i.e. seduced and drew me aside, Heb 3:13 Jas 1:14.

And by it slew me; i.e. it drove me into despair, or delivered me over to death and damnation, and made me obnoxious thereunto.

Romans 7:12

Ver. 12. *Wherefore the law is holy;* and so the objection, Ro 7:7, was a groundless objection: for though the law were the occasion of sin, or were made advantage of by sin, as Ro 7:8, yet it was not the cause of it; that, on all hands, is acknowledged to be holy, &c.

The law; the law in all the branches of it.

The commandment; particularly the precepture part of the law, and every particular precept.

Holy, and just, and good: the three epithets here given the law of God may be thus distinguished; it is *holy* in respect of the ceremonial part, it is *just* in respect of the judicial part, and *good* in respect of the moral part of it. Or else the law is *holy*, as it teacheth us our duty unto God; *just*, as it showeth us our duty to our neighbour; *good*, in regard of the effect and end, as it works goodness in the observer thereof, and is conducive to his temporal and eternal good.

Romans 7:13

Ver. 13. *Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid:* another anticipation. The apostle denies that the holy law was in its own nature deadly, or the cause of death to him; the fault was not in the law, but in his own depraved nature: but the plain case is this that follows.

But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin, that so it might appear every way like itself, wrought death in him, by occasion of that law, which yet itself is holy, just, and good.

That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful; so as hereupon sin, which in the time of his ignorance and unregeneracy seemed not worthy of any notice, appeared to be exceeding foul and sinful. Sin is so evil, that he cannot call it by a worse name than its own. Jerome thinks, that the apostle here commits a solecism, by joining an adjective of the masculine gender with a substantive of the feminine; but Beza and Erasmus have observed, that this is usual in the Attic dialect. See the like, Ro 1:20. Some read sinner for *sinful*, and make the apostle to speak of sin as of a certain person; and therefore all along the context sin is said to work, to be dead, to revive, to deceive, to kill, &c., which is properly attributed to persons, and not to things.

Romans 7:14

Ver. 14. He goes on to clear the law, and excuse it, giving it another

commendation, that it is *spiritual*; i.e. it requires such obedience as is not only outward, but inward and spiritual; it forbids spiritual as well as fleshly sins. Read Christ's exposition of it, in Mt 5:1-48.

I am carnal; i.e. in part, because of the remainders of sin and of the flesh that are still in me; in respect of which, those who are regenerated are said to be carnal. Compare 1Co 1:2, with 1Co 3:1.

Sold under sin: he did not actively sell himself to sin, or to commit sin, which is said of Ahab, 1Ki 21:20,25, and of the idolatrous Israelites, 2Ki 17:17. He was not sin's servant or slave; but many times he was sin's captive against his will; see Ro 7:23. Against his will and consent, he was still subject to the violent lusts and assaults of sin, and not able wholly to free himself: though he always made stout resistance, yet many times he was overcome. Hitherto the apostle hath spoken of the power of the law and sin in unregenerate persons, even as he himself had experienced whilst he was yet in such a state; but now he cometh to speak of himself as he then was, and to declare what power the remainders of sinful flesh had still in him, though regenerated, and in part renewed. That the following part of this chapter is to be applied to a regenerate person, is evident, because the apostle (speaking of himself in the former verses) uses the preter-perfect tense, or speaks of that which was past; but here he changeth the tense, and speaks of the present time. From Ro 7:7-14, he tells us how it had been with him formerly; and then from Ro 7:14-25, he relates how it was with him now; *I was* so and so, *I am* thus and thus. The changing of the tense and time doth plainly argue a change in the person. They that list to be further satisfied in this point, may find it fully discussed in our own language, by Mr. Anthony Burgess, in his excellent discourse of Original Sin, part iv. c. 3, and by Dr. Willet, in his *Hexalta in locum*; and they that understand the Latin tongue, may find it argued *pro* and *con*, in Synops. Critic. &c., and by Aug. *Retractat. lib. i. c. 23*; *Contra Julian. lib. v. c. 11*.

Romans 7:15

Ver. 15. *For that which I do*; i.e. what I do contrary to the command of God.

I allow not: in the Greek it is, I know not: q.d. Many times I am surprised

and overtaken, not knowing or considering what I do. Or when he says, I know not, his meaning is, (as our translation renders it), *I allow* or approve *not*. So the word is used, Mt 7:23, and elsewhere: q.d. Even now, in my converted and regenerate state, I am many times greatly divided, and feel a strife or combat in myself; so that the good I would do upon the motions of God's Spirit in me, I do not; and the evil that I hate, and am utterly averse to, so far as I am regenerated, that I do. See a parallel place, Ga 5:17.

But what I hate, that do I: he doth not speak here so much of outward actions, as of inward motions and affections: he doth not speak of gross sins, as drunkenness, uncleanness, &c., but of such infirmities as flow from the polluted nature, and from which we can never be thoroughly cleansed in this life.

Romans 7:16

Ver. 16. This very thing is an argument, that the law is such as I have before asserted, Ro 7:12,14. This shows my consent to the holiness and goodness of the law; I vote with it, and for it, as the only rule of right or righteousness.

Romans 7:17

Ver. 17. *It is no more I that do it;* i.e. it is not I as spiritual or renewed, it is not my whole self, *but it is sin that dwelleth in me,* that inhabits in me as a troublesome inmate, that I cannot get rid of, that will not out so long as the house stands; as the fretting leprosy in the walls of a house would not out till the house itself were demolished. It is such an inhabitant as is never from home; it is not in us as a stranger for a season, but it makes its constant abode with us.

Romans 7:18

Ver. 18. *In my flesh;* i.e. in my fleshly part, or my nature in and of itself.

No good thing; no goodness at all, or no spiritual good.

For to will is present with me; i.e. I can, so long and so far as I follow the motions of God's Spirit, will that which is good; *but how to perform the good* that I would, *I find no* power or might, at least to perform it in that manner that I desire: the meaning is not that he never did the good he desired; but it often so fell out, he began many good things, but he could not go thorough-stitch with them.

Romans 7:19

Ver. 19,20. These two verses are a repetition of what he had said, Ro 7:15,17. Every new man is two men; there is in him an I and an I. The apostle in his unregenerate state, could make no such distinction as now he doth.

Romans 7:21

Ver. 21. This verse hath greatly vexed interpreters. The apostle speaking simply and abstractly of *a law*, the question is: What law he means? Some take the word improperly, for a decree or condition, which was imposed upon him, and to which he was necessarily subject, that when he would do good, evil should be present with him. Others by *law* here do understand the law of sin; of which he speaks afterwards, Ro 7:23,25. Sin is like a law, and so powerful and imperious in its commands and dictates, that we have much ado, the best of us, to resist it, and shake off its yoke. q.d. I find by sad experience such a forcible power in sin, that when I would do good, I am hindered, and cannot do it so freely and fully as I desire. Others by *law* here do understand the law of God; and those that so understand it, have given no less than eight interpretations, to make the grammatical connexion: the best is of those that say the preposition *κατα* is understood, a frequent ellipsis in the Greek tongue, (see Jas 1:26), and then the sense is this; I find that when, according to the law or command of God, I would do good, evil is present with me.

Evil is present with me; another periphrasis of original sin, of which there are many in this chapter. Just now it was the sin that dwelleth in us, and

here it is the evil that is present with us: it inheres and adheres, or hangs upon us continually. It is adjacent, so the Greek word signifies, and always at hand; we carry it about with us at all times, and into all places; whithersoever we go, it follows us; or, as it is here, in our doing of good it is a very great impediment to us.

Romans 7:22

Ver. 22. This shows yet more expressly that the apostle speaketh in the person of a regenerate man, or of himself as regenerate. Certainly, to *delight in the law of God* is an inseparable property of such a one: see Ps 1:2, and Ps 119:77,111.

The inward man; i.e. the new man, or regenerate part within me: this is called *the hidden man of the heart*, 1Pe 3:4; see Ro 2:29 2Co 4:16.

Romans 7:23

Ver. 23. *Another law in my members;* i.e. a law quite different from *the law of God*, mentioned in the foregoing verse. By the *law in the members* understand natural corruption, which, like a law, commandeth and inclineth by sensual rewards and punishments; and by the *law in the mind* understand a principle of grace, which, as a law, as well as the other, commandeth and inclineth to that which is good. The *law in the members* and the *law in the mind*, are the same that are called *flesh* and *Spirit*, Ga 5:17. These two laws and principles are in all regenerate persons, and are directly contrary to one another; hence there is continual warring and combating betwixt them; as is expressed in both these places, as also in Jas 4:1 1Pe 2:11.

Bringing me into captivity to the law of sin; i.e. drawing and hurrying me to the commission of sin, against my will and consent. He pursues the metaphor; the flesh doth not only war in the regenerate, but many times it overcomes and hath success: see Ro 7:15.

To the law of sin which is in my members; i.e. to itself. The antecedent is put in the room of the relative: see Ge 9:16, and elsewhere. The *law in the*

members and the law of sin in the members are the same.

Romans 7:24

Ver. 24. *O wretched man that I am!* The word signifies one wearied out with continual combats.

Who shall deliver me? It is not the voice of one desponding or doubting, but of one breathing and panting after deliverance: the like pathetic exclamations are frequent: see Ps 55:6. One calls this verse, *gemitus sanctorum*, the groan of the godly.

From the body of this death; or, from this body of death; or, by a Hebraism, from this dead body, this carcass of sin, to which I am inseparably fastened, as noisome every whit to my soul as a dead carcass to my senses. This is another circumlocution, or denomination of original sin. It is called *the body of sin*, Ro 6:6, and here *the body of death*; it tends and binds over to death.

Romans 7:25

Ver. 25. *I thank God;* who hath already delivered me from the slavery and dominion of sin; so that though it wars against me, I still resist it, and, by the strength of Christ, do frequently overcome it, 1Co 15:57.

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin: this is the conclusion the apostle maketh of this experimental discourse. q.d. So far as I am renewed, I yield obedience to the law of God; and so far as I am unregenerate, I obey the dictates and suggestions of the law of sin.

Objection. No man can serve two contrary masters.

Answer. The apostle did not serve these two in the same part, or the same renewed faculty; nor did he do it at the same time, ordinarily; and for the most part he served the law of God, though sometimes, through the power of temptation and indwelling corruption, he was enforced, against his will,

to serve the law of sin.

Romans 8:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 8:1-4 Under the gospel we are free from condemnation, walking after the Spirit.

Ro 8:5-8 The evil of being carnally minded, and the good of being spiritually minded.

Ro 8:9-11 Christians have God's Spirit to guide and assist them,

Ro 8:12,13 by which if they mortify the flesh, they shall live.

Ro 8:14-18 For they that are led by the Spirit are sons of God, and heirs of glory,

Ro 8:19-22 whose manifestation the world hath long earnestly looked for, hoping to be rescued thereby from the bondage of corruption.

Ro 8:23 And even they who have the first fruits of the Spirit do still long after it,

Ro 8:24,25 being hitherto saved by hope only,

Ro 8:26,27 the Spirit in the mean time aiding their infirmities in prayer.

Ro 8:28-30 Nevertheless the final good of them that fear God is all along pursued, being fore-ordained of God, and brought about according to the course of his providence.

Ro 8:31-39 The ground and assurance of the Christian's hope.

Ver. 1. *There is therefore now;* seeing things are so as I have said, since believers do not allow themselves in sin, Ro 7:15, and are in part delivered from it, as Ro 8:25, therefore it follows as it is here.

No condemnation; or no one condemnation. He doth not say, there is no matter of condemnation, or nothing damnable in them that are in Christ, there is enough and enough of that; but he says, there is no actual condemnation to such: see Joh 3:18 5:24. There is a meiosis in the words, more is understood than is expressed; he means, that justification and

eternal salvation is the portion of such. The positive is included in the negative; it is God's condemnation only, from which such as are in Christ are exempted; they are nevertheless condemned and censured by men, and sometimes by their own consciences too.

To them which are in Christ Jesus; so we fill it up, but in the original it is only, to them in Christ Jesus. The phrase imports, that there is a mystical and spiritual union between Christ and believers. This is sometimes expressed by Christ's being in them, Ro 8:10; 2Co 13:5 Col 1:17; and here by their being in Christ: see 1Co 1:30 1Jo 5:20. Christ is in believers by his Spirit, and believers are in Christ by faith.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: this clause describes the persons who are united to Christ, or who are exempted from condemnation; they are such as *walk not*, &c. By *flesh* understand the corrupt nature that is in man: see Ro 7:18,25 Joh 3:6 Ga 5:17: to *walk after* it, is to be led and guided by the motions of it. That is, it is not their principle and guide, there is another nature or principle in them, by which they are guided and acted; and what that is the next words tell you.

By *the Spirit* some understand the person of the Spirit; others, the grace of the Spirit, the new or divine nature (as it is called) which is implanted in the soul in the work of regeneration: this is called *the Spirit*, Mt 26:41 Joh 3:6 Ga 5:17. To *walk after the Spirit*, is to be led and guided by the counsels and motions thereof. It is to regulate and order the whole conversation according to the rule of the new creature, or according to the line and square of God's word and Spirit. You have the same phrase, Ga 5:16,25. To *walk after the Spirit*, is not only now and then to have some good motions, or to do some good actions, but it is to persevere and go forward therein; walking is a continued and progressive motion. The connexion of these two shows that negative holiness is not enough; we must not only abstain from evil, but do good.

Romans 8:2

Ver. 2. *The law of the Spirit of life;* some understand hereby the doctrine of the gospel, which is called *the law of the Spirit of life*, because it is the

ministry of the Spirit and of life. Others understand the efficacy and power of that grace and holiness, wherewith the living and quickening Spirit of God hath filled the human nature of Christ. Others rather understand a regenerating and working the new and heavenly life in the soul, with great power and efficacy.

In Christ Jesus; i.e. which was poured out upon him, and doth still reside in him after a very eminent manner: see Isa 11:2 Lu 4:1. Or, *in Christ Jesus,* is as much as by Christ Jesus, it is he that gives and conveys this Spirit, how, when and to whom he pleases.

Hath made me free from the law of sin: by sin here he aims chiefly at original sin; he doth not say, that those who are in Christ are simply and absolutely delivered from sin, but *from the law of sin;* i.e. the power, dominion, and tyranny thereof.

And death; i.e. from sin that is deadly, or of a deadly nature; as *the Spirit of life* is the living Spirit, so *sin and death* is no more, say some, than deadly sin. Others take *death* to be distinct from *sin,* and think he speaks of a double deliverance; and then by *death* they understand eternal or *the second death:* see Re 20:6. The sense of the whole is this: That the mighty power of the renewing and quickening Spirit did free the apostle, and does free all believers, from the command and rule of sin, so that it does not reign over them, as formerly it did; and being thus freed from the power of sin, they are also freed from the power of death and eternal condemnation. So it seems as a proof of the foregoing proposition, That *there is no condemnation to them, &c.*

Romans 8:3

Ver. 3. In this verse is a further proof of the main proposition in Ro 8:1. There are two things in sin that may endanger us as to condemnation, the power and the guilt of it. As to the freeing us from the former, viz. the power of sin, of that he had spoken in the foregoing verse; as to taking away the guilt of sin, of that he speaks in this verse.

For what the law could not do: by *the law* here he means the moral law, *the righteousness* whereof is to *be fulfilled in us,* Ro 8:4. What is it the

law cannot do? There are several answers; but this is principally meant, it cannot justify us before God. It can condemn us, but it cannot exempt us from condemnation: see Ac 13:38,39 Ga 3:21 Heb 7:18,19.

In that it was weak through the flesh: by *flesh*, as before, we must understand the corrupt nature; that is, every man since the fall. This is that which puts a weakness and inability upon the law. The impotency of the law is not from itself, but from the condition of the subject with whom it hath to do. The law is weak to us, because we are weak to it: the sun cannot give light to a blind eye, not from any impotency in itself, but merely from the incapacity of the subject it shines upon.

God sending his own Son: to justify and save fallen man, was impossible for the law to do; therefore God will find out another way, that shall do it effectually. What his own law cannot do, his own Son can; and therefore him he will send.

In the likeness of sinful flesh; i.e. such flesh as sin hath made now to be subject to many infirmities and weaknesses. Flesh in this clause carries quite another sense than it did in the first verse; and in the former part of this verse, than it doth in the following verse; there it is taken morally for the corrupt nature of man, here physically for the human nature of Christ. The word *likeness* is to be linked, not with flesh, but with sinful flesh; he had true and real flesh, but he had only the appearance and likeness of sinful flesh: see 2Co 5:21 Heb 4:15 7:26 1Pe 1:19.

And for sin; either this clause is to be joined to what goes before, and then the sense is, that God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might take away sin. Or else it is joined to what follows, and then there is an ellipsis in it; something is cut off, or left out, which must be understood. The margin of our common Bibles insert the word sacrifice: q.d. By a sacrifice for sin, or by a sin-offering, he *condemned sin*. &c. This ellipsis is usual in Scripture. Isa 53:10, *When thou shalt make his soul sin;* that is, (as our translation renders it), *an offering for sin*.

Eze 45:19, *The priest shall take of the blood of the sin;* we read it, *of the sin-offering*. See the like in Hos 4:8 2Co 5:21 Heb 10:6.

Condemned sin in the flesh; the Syriac reads it, in his flesh. The meaning

is, that God severely punished sin, and inflicted the curse and penalty of it, that was due to us, in and upon the person of his own Son; God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and he bore them in his body upon a tree: see Ga 3:13 1Pe 2:24.

Romans 8:4

Ver. 4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us:* here is another end of God's sending his Son, as before; it was that he might perfectly fulfil the righteousness of the law in or for us, which for us ourselves to do in our own persons was utterly impossible; and yet upon which (as being imputed unto them, and accepted of God on our behalf) we shall be accounted just and righteous, as if we had done it ourselves. Christ's being a sacrifice for sin was not sufficient to answer all the ends and demands of the law; there must be doing of what it commanded, as well as suffering of what it threatened: therefore Christ was sent for both, and both were accomplished by him; and what he did and suffered is accounted unto us as if we had done and suffered it. This is the imputed righteousness which was so often spoken of, Ro 4:1-25; and in reference to this he is said to be *made righteousness* for us, 1Co 1:30, and we are said to be *made the righteousness of God in him*, Ro 5:19 2Co 5:21.

Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: this was the description before of those that had union with Christ, and exemption from condemnation; and it is again set down, as the description of those who partake of the righteousness of Christ in this way of imputation; and it is added here again, to stave off all others from laying claim to this grace. None but holy walkers can warrantably apply Christ's fulfilling or satisfying the law to themselves: because Christ hath fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us, none may infer there is nothing for us to do, we may live as we list; for though Christ hath fulfilled the law in all respects, yet all those for whom he hath so done, or have benefit thereby, are, and must be, such as *walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:* for the opening of which terms, see Ro 8:1.

Romans 8:5

Ver. 5. *For they that are after the flesh;* i.e. that are carnal and unregenerate persons, in a mere natural state.

Do mind the things of the flesh; either such things as are absolutely evil, and are called, *the works of the flesh*, Ga 5:19-21; or else such things as are occasionally evil, as riches, honours, pleasures, &c. These are also called *the things of the flesh*, and are such as carnal persons mind; i.e. they savour, affect, and take delight in them.

But they that are after the Spirit; i.e. that are spiritual and regenerate, in whom the Spirit dwells.

The things of the Spirit; i.e. they mind spiritual and heavenly things, they relish them most of all; see Ps 4:7 73:25.

Romans 8:6

Ver. 6. In this verse we have an account of the different end of those that are carnal and spiritual, as in the former we had a description of their different carriage and disposition.

For to be carnally minded is death; i.e. to be of that temper before described, Ro 8:5; to mind and affect *the things of the flesh*, doth cause death, or will end in it: the second or eternal death is chiefly intended.

But to be spiritually minded; i.e. to mind and savour the things of the Spirit, to find a sweetness and excellency therein, so as that the bent and inclination of the mind shall be thereto.

Is life and peace; it is the way to eternal life hereafter, and to a sound peace here, Ps 119:165 Pr 3:17 Ga 6:16.

Romans 8:7

Ver. 7. Neither can the carnal man look for any better issue, *because the carnal mind is enmity against God*. He doth not say it is an enemy, but in the abstract, it is *enmity*, which heightens and intends the sense: an enemy

may be reconciled, as Esau was to Jacob; but enmity cannot be reconciled; as black may be made white, but blackness cannot.

For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: this is rendered as a reason of the foregoing assertion, and it is taken from the property of enmity. Those that are at enmity, cross each other's wills, and will not submit to one another: and the carnal mind is rebellious in the highest degree against the will of God, unless it be changed and renewed; it is impossible it should be otherwise; there is in it a moral impotency to obedience: see Joh 8:43 1Co 2:14.

Romans 8:8

Ver. 8. *So then;* this verse is a consequtary, or it follows from that which went before.

They that are in the flesh; not they which are married, as a pope once expounded it; the next verse refels such an absurd conception; but they that are carnal and unregenerate; the same with those who, in Ro 8:5, are said to be *after the flesh*.

Cannot please God; neither they, nor any thing they do, is pleasing unto him; their best works are dead works, and silken sins (as one expreseth it): it must be understood with this limitation, so long as they continue in such a state: see Ps 5:4,5 Heb 11:6.

Romans 8:9

Ver. 9. Here he applies what he had laid down more generally to the believing Romans in particular.

Not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; i.e. not *after the flesh*, but *after the Spirit*, (as in Ro 8:5), or not carnally, but spiritually minded.

If so be that; the conjunction here is causal, not conditional; it may be rendered, seeing that, or forasmuch as: see Ro 8:17,31 2Th 1:6.

The Spirit of God dwell in you; the Spirit of God dwells in the regenerate, not only by the immensity of his presence, so he is every where and in all things; but by the presence and efficacy of his grace. The indwelling of the Spirit in believers denotes two things:

1. His ruling in them: where a man dwells as Lord, there he doth command and bear rule.
2. His abiding in them, and that for ever, Joh 14:16.

If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; if he has not the same Spirit which in the former part of the verse is called *the Spirit of God*: it is called *the Spirit of Christ*, because it proceeds from him, and is procured by him, Joh 14:26 Joh 16:7 Ga 4:6. When he saith such a one is none of Christ's, he means, that he doth not peculiarly belong to Christ, he hath no special interest in him, is no true member of him. As a merchant sets his seal upon his goods, so doth Christ his Spirit upon his followers, Eph 1:13.

Romans 8:10

Ver. 10. *If Christ be in you;* before he said, the Spirit of God and Christ dwelt in them; here, Christ himself. Christ dwells in believers by his Spirit.

The body is dead because of sin: by *body* some understand the corrupt and unregenerate part in the godly, as if that were as good as dead in them. But others take the word in its proper signification, and think no more is meant thereby than that the bodies, even of believers, are mortal bodies; so they are called in the next verse: they are subject to death as the bodies of other men.

But the Spirit is life: some by *Spirit* here do understand the Spirit of God; and he *is life*, that is, he will quicken and raise up your bodies again to an immortal life.

Others by *Spirit* do understand the soul, yet not simply and absolutely considered, but as renewed by grace; that is life, or that doth live; it lives a life of grace here, and it shall live a life of glory hereafter.

Because of righteousness; by righteousness here understand, either imputed righteousness, which gives us a right and title to salvation; or inherent righteousness, which is a necessary condition required in every person that shall indeed be saved. The sum is: If you be Christians indeed, though your bodies die, ye; your souls shall live, and that for ever; and your dead bodies shall not finally perish, but shall certainly be raised again; so it follows in the next verse.

Romans 8:11

Ver. 11. *Him that raised up Jesus from the dead;* a periphrasis of God the Father. The Son raised himself, Joh 2:19 10:18; and yet the Father is said here to raise him from the dead: see notes on Ro 1:4.

Quicken your mortal bodies; raise them from a state of mortality, and all the attendants, to a glorious immortal life.

By his Spirit that dwelleth in you: q. d. If you are sanctified by the Spirit, you shall be raised up by the Spirit also, as Christ was. The wicked also shall be raised at the last day. But the righteous shall be raised after a peculiar manner; they shall be raised, as by the almighty power of God, so by virtue of their union with Christ as his members, and by virtue of their relation to the Spirit as his temples. They only shall partake of a resurrection that is desirable and beneficial to them. Therefore it is called emphatically *the resurrection of the just*, Lu 14:14; and these two are joined together, as belonging one to the other; *the children of God*, and *the children of the resurrection*, Lu 20:36.

Romans 8:12

Ver. 12. *Therefore;* this illative particle sends us to the things before delivered: q. d. Seeing we are not in the flesh, but have the Spirit of God dwelling in us; not only sanctifying and enlivening our souls for the present, but raising and quickening our bodies for the time to come; *therefore we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh;* i.e. we are not debtors to sin, or the corrupt and sinful nature that is in us; we owe it

no service, there is nothing due to it from believers, but blows, and the blue eye that the apostle gave it. The antithesis is omitted, but it is necessarily implied and understood; and that is, that we are debtors to the Spirit, to live and walk after it.

Romans 8:13

Ver. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;* viz. eternally, and never partake of the glorious resurrection before spoken of. The godly themselves need this caution; they must not think, that because they are elected and justified, &c., that therefore they may do and live as they list.

Through the Spirit; i.e. by the grace and assistance of the Spirit.

Mortify; i.e. kill and put to death. It is not enough to forbear the actings of sin, but we must kill and crucify it. Sin may be left upon many considerations, and yet not mortified.

Evil deeds are called *the deeds of the body*, because the body is so instrumental in the doing thereof. There are some, that by *body* here do understand the corrupt nature, the same that before in many places he calls the flesh: this was called, Ro 8:6, *the body of sin*, and here it is called *the body*.

Ye shall live; viz. eternally. See a parallel place, Ro 6:22 Ga 6:8: see Ro 8:6.

Romans 8:14

Ver. 14. This proves the latter part of the foregoing verse: Such as by the Spirit do mortify sin, shall live, for *they are the sons of God*; and that appears, because they *are led by the Spirit of God*. He doth not say, as many as live by the Spirit, but, *as are led by the Spirit*; to show (says one) that the Spirit must be the guide and ruler of our life, as the pilot is of the ship, and as a rider is of his horse. The phrase is borrowed (says another) either from those who are guided and directed as a blind man in his way; or from those who, wanting strength of their own, are borne and carried of

others: so we are both ways led by the Spirit, for we can neither see our way, unless the Spirit direct us; nor have we strength to walk in it, unless the Spirit assist and draw us along. The Spirit leads and draws us irresistibly and necessarily, and yet not violently or against our wills; though we were unwilling before, yet we are made willing afterwards; so willing, that we desire and pray to be led by the Spirit. See Ps 25:5 143:10 So 1:4.

Romans 8:15

Ver. 15. This verse proves the former, that we *are led by the Spirit of God*, and are his children, and that by an effect of the Spirit in them, which is to enable them to call God *Father*. He doth not here speak of two distinct Spirits, but one and the same Spirit of God, in different persons and at different times, is both *the spirit of bondage* and *the Spirit of adoption*.

The spirit of bondage seems to respect either that state of servitude, which the people of God were under in the time of the ceremonial law; see Ga 4:3,9; or it respects the publishing of the moral law upon Mount Sinai, which was with horror and fear. Compare Ex 19:16, with Heb 12:18-21: see Ga 4:24. Or else it respects that horror and slavish fear, which the Spirit of God doth work in men's hearts and consciences, by the ministry of the law, when he opens the eyes of men to see they are in bondage and slavery to sin and Satan, and that they are subject and obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of God; this is many times preparatory and introductory to their conversion; but when they are regenerated they are delivered from it: see Lu 1:74 Heb 2:15 1Jo 4:18.

Objection. Many of God's children are full of doubts and fears.

Answer. These are not always from the suggestions of God's Spirit, but the misgivings of their own spirits. Some distinguish between the spirit of bondage and desertion; the children of God are delivered from the former, but exercised with the latter. The Spirit of God is called *the Spirit of adoption*, both because he works and effects it in us, and because he testifies and assures it to us. He might have said, the Spirit of liberty; the antithesis required it; but he said as much, when he called him *the Spirit of adoption*, for children are free.

Whereby we cry, Abba, Father; or, by whom we cry. Acceptable prayer is wrought in us by the Spirit, Ro 8:26. *Abba* is a Hebrew or Syriac word, signifying Father; why then is the word Father added in the Greek? To signify, that God is the Father both of Jews and Gentiles, Ro 3:29 10:12; or to show the double paternity that is in God, he is the Father of all men by creation, of believers only by grace and regeneration: or, rather, to denote the importunity and earnestness which ought to be in prayer; and so it agrees with the former word, crying. Ingeminations carry an earnestness with them. There are two places more where these two words are repeated or used together, Mr 14:36 Ga 4:6.

Romans 8:16

Ver. 16. The Spirit of adoption doth not only excite us to call upon God as our Father, but it doth ascertain and assure us (as before) that we are his children. And this it doth not by an outward voice, as God the Father to Jesus Christ; nor by an angel, as to Daniel, and the virgin Mary; but by an inward and secret suggestion, whereby he raiseth our hearts to this persuasion, that God is our Father, and we are his children. This is not the testimony of the graces and operations of the Spirit, but of the Spirit itself. Conceive it thus; A man's own spirit doth witness to him his adoption, he finds in himself, upon diligent search and examination, the manifest signs and tokens thereof. But this testimony of itself is weak, and Satan hath many ways and wiles to invalidate it; therefore, for more assurance, it is confirmed by another and greater testimony, and that is of the Spirit himself; he witnesses with our spirits, and seals it up unto us; he first works grace in our hearts, and then witnesseth to it. This testimony is not alike in all believers, nor in any one of them at all times; it is better felt than expressed. He witnesseth to our spirit (so some read) by a distinct and immediate testimony, and witnesses with our spirit (so the word properly signifies) by a conjunctive and concurrent testimony.

Romans 8:17

Ver. 17. *And if children, then heirs;* there is a parallel text in Ga 4:7. It is not so with the children of earthly princes: see 2Ch 21:3.

Joint-heirs with Christ; or co-heirs with Christ; he is our elder Brother, and is not ashamed to call us brethren: the inheritance is his by nature, ours by grace.

If so be that we suffer with him; the cross of Christ is the condition of our heavenly inheritance. The pronoun *him* is not in the original, but fitly supplied in our translation. Suffering *with him*, is much the same with suffering for him: suffering believers do but pledge Christ in the cup that he began to them.

That we may be also glorified together; or, glorified with him, not with equal glory, but according to our proportion; he was glorified in this way, Lu 24:26, and so must we. Three things are implied in our being *glorified together*:

1. Conformity; we shall in some measure be like him in glory: see Joh 17:22 Php 3:21.
2. Concomitancy; we shall be present with him in glory, Joh 17:24 1Th 4:17.
3. Conveyance; our glory will be from him; his glory will reflect on us, and we shall shine in his beams.

Romans 8:18

Ver. 18. *For I reckon;* i.e. I make account, I certainly conclude: see Ro 3:28. The word is borrowed either from arithmeticians, who by casting their accounts do find the true and total sum; or from logicians, who by considering the premises do draw the conclusion.

Not worthy to be compared; the word properly signifieth that part of the balance which goeth down: q.d. If the sufferings of this life be weighed with the glory to come, they will be light in comparison. These words, *to be compared*, are supplied in our translation to make up the sense.

Revealed in us; it is revealed to us, and it shall be revealed in us. This text

is a confutation of the popish doctrine of merit and human satisfaction.

Romans 8:19

Ver. 19. The apostle Peter, speaking of the Epistles of our apostle, in 2Pe 3:16, saith, that there are *some things* in them *hard to be understood*; and some think, by reflecting upon some particular passages in that chapter, he doth more especially respect this context; there is indeed a great deal of obscurity in it.

The creature: this word is four times used in this and the three following verses, only in Ro 8:22 it is rendered *creation*; that is the subject of which all that followeth is predicated. One main question therefore is this: Of what creature the apostle here speaks? Divers answers are or may be given; I will fix upon two only.

1. By *the creature*, or *the creation*, (and, Ro 8:22, *the whole creation*, or every creature), is meant all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, and especially the latter: see Mr 16:15; there Christ gives it in commission to *preach the gospel to every creature*; it is the same word. And in 1Pe 2:13, they are commanded to *submit themselves to every ordinance of man*: in the original it is, to every human creature, the same word which is in the text before us: he means the Gentile or heathen magistrates in authority over them. In the Scripture the Gentiles are sometimes called *the world*, Ro 11:12,15, and sometimes *the creature*, or *the creation*.
2. By *the creature* is meant the whole world with all the creatures therein, or the whole frame and body of the creation.

The creature in this sense, by a prosopopoeia, is here spoken of as a rational person; it is usual with the Spirit of God, in Scripture, to fasten upon unreasonable creatures such expressions as are proper only to those that are reasonable: see Ps 96:11,12 Heb 2:11 Jas 5:4. So here *the creature* (in this sense) is said to expect, wait, &c.

Waiteth; the expectation of the creature expecteth: a Hebrew pleonasm: it expecteth with the head lift up or stretched out, Php 1:20.

The manifestation of the sons of God; i.e. the time when the sons of God shall be manifested. The Arabic interpreter puts the word *glory* into the text, and reads the word thus, *The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the glory of the sons of God;* their glory for the present is hidden, but it shall be discovered and manifested, 2Co 3:18.

The creature, in the sense of the word as above, *waiteth* for this, because then it shall be restored to its primitive liberty and lustre, at that time there will be a *restitution of all things*, Ac 3:21. But those who understand *the creature* in the first sense, do put a quite different interpretation upon this last clause; and that is, that the Gentile world are now earnestly expecting and waiting to see what the Jews will do, whether they will discover themselves to be *the sons of God*, or not, by their receiving or rejecting Christ.

Romans 8:20

Ver. 20. If these words be understood of the world, and all the creatures therein contained, then they show the creature's present condition; it is *subject to vanity*, and that, either in regard of its insufficiency, it falling short of that for which it was first created and ordained; then a thing is said to be vain, when it doth not answer or reach its proper end: or in respect of its transitoriness and uncertainty, of which see 1Co 7:31 Heb 1:11,12 1Jo 2:17. The next verse tells us it is subject to *the bondage of corruption* as well as vanity. Now this must needs be an unwilling subjection, therefore it is here said it is *not* subject *willingly*, i.e. of its own accord, or of its proper instinct and inclination. What the will is in those that are rational, the inclination is in those things that are natural; how comes it then into this condition? The next clause tells us, it is *by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope*: i.e. God, for the sin of man, hath cursed the creature, and subjected it to vanity and corruption: see Ge 3:17 4:12 Le 26:19,20. And though he hath done this, yet there is ground to expect and hope that the creature shall return again to its former estate wherein it was created; that it shall be delivered and restored into a better condition, as in the next verse. Those that by *the creature* understand the Gentile world, give a different interpretation of these words; they say that the Gentiles are *made subject to vanity*, i.e. to idolatry, or a vain, superstitious worship,

(idols are called *vanities*, Ac 14:15), or to a miserable, wretched estate; that (as Hesychius notes) is the import of the word *vanity*. And this not so much of their own accord, or by their own free choice, but by the power and malice of Satan, to whom they are justly given up of God; he rules in their hearts, carries them captive at his will, subjects them to all villany and misery. And it is reasonable to suppose of these poor heathens, that they are willing to be rescued (at least some, and a considerable number of them) from under this vanity and slavery, as it is said, Ro 8:22.

Question. But if he that thus subjects them be the devil, how is he said to do this *in hope*?

Answer. These words, *in hope*, belong to the end of the former verse; all the rest of this verse being read or included in a parenthesis: q.d. The creature attends the manifestations of the sons of God in hope: meanwhile it is subject to vanity, &c.

Romans 8:21

Ver. 21. If this verse be understood of the heavens and the earth, and the things therein, the meaning is, that *the creatures*, in their kind, and according to their capacity, shall be partakers of that liberty and freedom, which in the children of God is accompanied with unspeakable glory; they shall not partake with the saints in glory, but of that liberty, which in the saints hath great glory attending it, and superadded to it. The creature, at the day of judgment, shall be restored (as before) to that condition of liberty which it had in its first creation; as, when it was made at first, it was free from all vanity, bondage, and corruption, so it shall be again at the time of the general resurrection: see Ac 3:19,21 2Pe 3:13. Those that by *the creature* would understand the Gentile world, give the sense of this verse: That the very heathens also shall, by the gospel and grace of Christ, be rescued from those courses of sin and corruption, to which they have been long enslaved, into that glorious condition not only of free-men, redeemed by Christ out of their bondage to sin and Satan, but even of the sons of God, to have right to his favour, and that never fading inheritance.

Romans 8:22

Ver. 22. If here again the heavens and the earth, with what is therein, be understood, then the apostle further enlargeth upon their present state and condition; before they waited and expected deliverance, now they groan and travail in pain. They also are metaphorical expressions; one is taken for a man who hath upon him a heavy burden, another from a woman that is near her delivery. And this they do *until now*; i.e. from the fall of Adam to this present day. They that understand the words of the Gentile world, thus interpret them: We, the apostles and ministers of Jesus Christ, do find by experience, that the Gentiles are very forward to receive the gospel when they hear it, whilst the Jews generally reject it. The Gentile world is, as it were, in pangs of travail ever since Christ's time till now, ready to bring forth sons and daughters to God.

Romans 8:23

Ver. 23. The apostle had asserted and concluded, Ro 8:18, that there is a future glory to be revealed hereafter in the saints, such as infinitely transcends their sufferings now; and this he had confirmed from the earnest expectation of the creature, (the pronoun *they* is not in the original), and now he further confirms it from the expectation which is in believers themselves.

The first-fruits of the Spirit; hereby he means that righteousness, joy, and peace, which believers have in this life; these are the fruits of the Spirit, and called *first-fruits* in regard of their order; and in regard of their quantity, they are but a handful in comparison of the whole, little in regard of the fulness which they shall have in heaven; and in regard also of their signification, the grace and comforts of the Spirit of God in this life are pledges to us of that abundance and fulness of joy, which we shall partake of in the life to come, as the first-fruits of the Jews were an evidence to them of the ensuing crop.

Groan within ourselves; among ourselves, say some, but it is better read in our translation, *within ourselves*. It expresses the manner of the saints groaning under sin and affliction; it is inward, and from the heart.

Waiting for the adoption: now we are the sons of God; why then should we wait for what we have already?

Answer. We have the right, but not the full possession, of our inheritance: the apostle himself explains his meaning in the next words.

The redemption of our body; i.e. our perfect deliverance from sin and misery; this phrase is used in other places; see Lu 21:28 Eph 4:30.

But why *of our body*, and not of our souls? Because their souls would be in actual possession of the inheritance before that day, or because the miseries and troubles of this life are conveyed to the whole man by the body, so that the redemption of the body is in effect the redemption of the whole man.

Romans 8:24

Ver. 24. Though we certainly believe there is such a redemption or salvation belonging to us, according to the promise of God, yet for the present we have no possession of it; all the salvation we have at present is in *hope*, which, according to the nature of it, is of things not yet enjoyed, for vision or possession puts an end to hope; no man hopes for what he sees and enjoys.

Romans 8:25

Ver. 25. q. d. If we indeed hope for redemption and salvation, which is out of sight, then it is meet that we do with patience digest and bear all our present evils and sufferings; true hope is accompanied always with a patient waiting for the things hoped for; therefore you read of the *patience of hope*, 1Th 1:3; see Heb 6:12 10:36.

Romans 8:26

Ver. 26. *Likewise:* this referreth us, either to the work of the Spirit, before noted, Ro 8:11; he quickeneth, and he likewise helpeth: or rather, to *hope*,

in the foregoing verse; hope helpeth to patience, so also the Spirit.

Helpeth our infirmities; the word imports such help, as when another of greater strength steps in, and sustains the burden that lies too heavy upon our shoulders; or it is borrowed from nurses, that help their little children that are unable to go, upholding them by their hands or sleeves.

For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: one way whereby the Spirit helps us, is by teaching us to pray. Prayer doth greatly relieve us under the cross, and is a great refuge in trouble: but we knowing not how to pray *as we ought*, either in regard, of matter or manner, herein therefore the Spirit aids or helps us, as it follows. But how is it said *we know not what to pray for*, when we have the Lord's prayer, which contains a perfect rule and summary of all things meet to be prayed for? Though the Lord's prayer be a rule in general, yet we may be to seek in particulars: God's own children many times ask they know not what; see Job 6:8 Jon 4:3 Mr 10:38 2Co 12:8.

But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us: there is a twofold intercession, one of Christ, of which we read, Ro 8:34; the other of the Spirit, of which this place speaks. How doth the Spirit make intercession for us?

Answer. By making intercession in us, or by helping us to pray. The Spirit is called, Zec 12:10, *the Spirit of supplications*. It is by him, Ro 8:15, that we cry, *Abba, Father*: he cries so in our hearts; Ga 4:6, *God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father*. The Spirit of our Father speaketh in us, Mt 10:20: he suggests to us what we should pray for; he helps us to suitable dispositions, and many times to suitable expressions in prayer: see Eph 6:18 Jude 1:20.

With groanings which cannot be uttered; with inward sighs and groans, which cannot be expressed by words. There may be prayer, where there is no speech or vocal expression. A man may cry, and that mightily to God, when he uttereth never a word: see Ex 14:15 1Sa 1:13.

Romans 8:27

Ver. 27. *He that searcheth the hearts;* this phrase is a periphrasis of God, and is spoken of him after the manner of men. God doth not properly search or inquire into any thing; but because amongst men knowledge comes by searching, therefore, by way of resemblance, this is attributed to God, though that which is intended by it is only this, that God knoweth the heart, Jer 17:10 Ac 1:24.

Knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, both with the knowledge of apprehension and approbation.

Maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God: our prayers shall be sure to speed, if they are of this sort, 1Jo 5:14,15. Praying according to the will of God, respects;

1. The matter of our prayers.
2. The manner of our praying.
3. The end thereof, Jas 4:3.

Romans 8:28

Ver. 28. Another argument to comfort us under the cross, from the benefits of it; *We know that all things, &c.* It is not matter of guess only and conjecture, but of certainty and assurance. How is this known?

1. By the testimony of God; the Scripture tells us as much, Ps 128:1,2 Isa 3:10.
2. By our own experience; we are assured of it by the event and effects of all things, both upon ourselves and others.

All things, even sin itself; because from their falls, God's children arise more humble and careful. Afflictions are chiefly intended; the worst and crossest providences, those things that are evil in themselves, they *work for good* to the children of God.

Work together; here is their operation, and their co-operation: First, they *work together* with God. What the apostle says of himself and others in the ministry, 2Co 6:1, that may be said of other things, especially of

afflictions; they are *workers together* with God. Some read the words thus, God co-operates all to good. Again, they *work together* with us; we ourselves must concur, and be active herein; we must labour and endeavour to get good out of every providence. Once more, they *work together* amongst themselves, or one with another. Take this or that providence singly, or by itself, and you shall not see the good it doth; but take it in its conjunction and connexion with others, and then you may perceive it. One exemplifies it thus: As in matter of physic, if you take such and such simples alone, they may poison rather than cure; but then take them in their composition, as they are made up by the direction of a skilful physician, and so they prove an excellent medicine.

For good; sometimes for temporal good, Ge 1:20; always for spiritual and eternal good, which is best of all. All occurrences of providence shall serve to bring them nearer to God here, and to heaven hereafter.

According to his purpose: these words are added to show the ground and reason of God's calling us; which is nothing else but his own *purpose* and good pleasure; it is not according to our worthiness, but *his purpose*: see 2Ti 1:9.

Romans 8:29

Ver. 29. Having let fall a word in the former verse concerning the *purpose* of God, he thinks good, in what follows, to pursue that subject, and a little to enlarge upon it.

Whom he did foreknow; i.e. with a knowledge of approbation; for otherwise, he foreknew all persons and things: or, whom he did foreknow for his own, Joh 10:14,27 Ro 11:2 2Ti 2:19. This *foreknowledge of God* is the ground of our election: see 1Pe 1:2.

He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; whom he was pleased to approve of, and to pitch his free love and favour upon, he severed from the common lump and mass of mankind, and did appoint them *to be conformed to the image of his Son*; i.e. to be conformed to him in holiness and sufferings here, and in glory hereafter: see 1Co 15:49 2Co 3:18 Eph 1:4-6 Php 3:20,21 1Jo 3:2.

That he might be the first-born among many brethren; this is the limitation of the forementioned conformity; though there be a likeness in us unto Christ, yet there is not an equality; he still retaineth the dignity of the first-born, and hath a double, yea, a far greater portion; he is Head and Ruler of all the family in heaven and in earth, Ps 45:7,8.

Romans 8:30

Ver. 30. He hath already given them the beginning and pledge thereof in grace; and will in due time bring them to the possession of eternal life and glory. Some, under this term of glorification would have sanctification included; because, otherwise, they think there is a great defect in this chain of salvation, here set down by the apostle, of which sanctification is one special link; but this is rather to be couched and included in effectual calling, which is the third link, and already spoken of.

Romans 8:31

Ver. 31. *What shall we then say to these things?* Some refer this question to what is said in the verses immediately preceding; others, to what he had said, Ro 8:28; and others go higher, and refer it to all that he said before. Some by *these things* understand afflictions and sufferings more especially; What shall we say to these, or what need we be disheartened by these? For if God, &c.

If God be for us; i.e. seeing God is for us; it is a note of certainty, not of ambiguity; see Ro 8:9. He takes it for granted, as that which cannot be denied; see Ps 46:7,11 118:6,7.

Who can be against us? i.e. none can; none can be against us successfully, none can be against us safely; such will harm themselves more than us: see Ps 56:1. Maximilian, the emperor, so admired this sentence, that he caused it to be written over the table where he used to dine and sup; that having it often in his eye, he might have it also in his mind.

Romans 8:32

Ver. 32. *He that spared not his own Son:* this phrase either shows the bounty of God, that he did not withhold Christ; or the severity of God, that he did not favour, but afflict and punish him, Isa 53:4,5,11.

But delivered him up: see Ac 2:23. This doth not excuse Judas, no, nor Pilate and the Jews; though they executed God's purpose, yet they acted their own malice and wickedness.

For us all; this plainly refers to such persons as he had before mentioned, such as God foreknew, predestinated, called, &c., which is not all men in general, but a set number of persons in particular: it is an expression both of latitude and restriction; of latitude, in the word all; of restriction, in the word *us*.

How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? q.d. Without question he will; it may be confidently inferred and concluded: He that hath given the greater, will not stick to give the less. Christ is more than all the world, or than all other gifts and blessings whatsoever.

Romans 8:33

Ver. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Who can implead such, or put in any accusation against them? There is nothing to accuse them of, they are justified; and there is none to accuse them: *It is God that justifieth;* the Supreme Judge hath absolved them. This seems to be taken out of Isa 50:8,9. They were Christ's words there, and spoken of God's justifying him; they are every believer's words here, and intended of God's justifying them. Here seems to be two reasons of their indemnity; one is implied, i.e. God's electing them: the other expressed, i.e. God's justifying and acquitting of them.

Romans 8:34

Ver. 34. *Who is he that condemneth?* As none can accuse the elect of God, so much less can any condemn them, see Ro 8:1.

It is Christ that died; and it is he that is the Judge, and must condemn them, if they be condemned. His death frees them from condemnation; thereby he hath made a sufficient atonement and satisfaction for all their sins; and that which hath long ago satisfied in heaven for the sins of all the elect, may very well serve to satisfy the heart and conscience of a believing sinner here on earth. Such a one may throw down the gauntlet, as the apostle doth, and challenge all the world. Let conscience, carnal reason, law, sin, hell, and devils, bring forth all they can, it will not be sufficient to condemnation; and that because of Christ's death and satisfaction.

Yea rather, that is risen again: the resurrection of Christ hath a special influence upon our justification; and therefore the apostle puts a *rather* upon it, and that comparatively to the death of Christ: see Ro 4:25, and; See Poole on "Ro 4:25".

Who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us: faith finds matter of triumph, not only from Christ's death and resurrection, but from his session at the right hand of God, and intercession for us.

Romans 8:35

Ver. 35. *Who shall separate us?* He continues his triumph: he does not say what, but *who*; though he instanceth in things, and not in persons, yet it is expressed personally, because that these things do commonly do us hurt in the improvement of persons, whether of Satan or wicked men, who are instrumental thereunto.

From the love of Christ; understand it either actively, from our love of him; or passively, from his love of us. The latter seems to be chiefly intended;

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, or from the sense and manifestation thereof?

Shall tribulation, &c. He makes an enumeration of particular evils, of

seven in number; and he begins with the lesser, and rises to the greater; placing them in order, not casually, but by choice. The word *tribulation* signifies any thing that presseth or pincheth us.

Or distress? The word properly signifies straitness of place, and is transferred from the body to the mind, to point out the anguish or perplexity thereof.

Or persecution; the word properly signifies a driving from place to place; banishment is implied therein, if not chiefly intended: see Mt 10:23.

Or peril; any danger or hazard of life, in any kind whatsoever: see 2Co 11:26.

Or sword; this is put figuratively for death itself, especially violent death.

Romans 8:36

Ver. 36. He cites this testimony to prove that none of the forementioned evils, no, not death itself, can separate believers from the love of Christ: it is taken out of Ps 44:22. The argument seems to be this: The saints of old have endured all manner of sufferings, and yet were not separated from the love of God; therefore such sufferings cannot separate them now.

For thy sake; not for our sins' sake, but for Christ's, or *for righteousness' sake*, Mt 5:10 10:18,39 1Pe 3:14.

We are killed: how could they say this? Killing takes away all complaining, and makes the parties so dealt with incapable of saying how it is with them. This expression notes the danger and desperateness of their condition. It is usual in Scripture to set forth an eminent danger under the notion of death: see 1Co 15:31 2Co 1:10 4:11.

All the day long; i.e. continually, without ceasing: see Ps 38:6,12; 71:24 73:14 Pr 23:17 Ro 10:21.

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; i.e. we are designed for destruction. Our enemies make account they can destroy us, as men do

sheep, that they have by them in the slaughter-house. They reckon they have us at command, and can cut us off when they list. Or rather thus, they make no reckoning of our destruction; they make no more of killing us, than butchers do of killing sheep: our death is very cheap in their account, Ps 44:11,12. Here let me insert a tragical story of the Christians of Calabria, that suffered persecution, A.D. 1560. They were all shut up in one house together, as in a sheepfold: an executioner comes in, and among them takes one, and blindfolds him with a muffler about his eyes, and so leadeth him forth to a larger place, where he commandeth him to kneel down; which being done, he cutteth his throat, and so leaveth him half dead; and taking his butcher's knife and muffler, all of gore blood, he cometh again to the rest, and so leading them one after another, he despatcheth them, to the number of eighty-eight, no otherwise than a butcher doth his sheep. *Fox's Acts and Monuments*.

Romans 8:37

Ver. 37. *Nay, in all these things; i.e. in tribulation, distress, &c. as before, Ro 8:35.*

We are more than conquerors; or, we overcome. We conquer when we ourselves are conquered; we conquer by those which are wont to conquer others; we beat our enemies with their own weapons. The meaning seems to be this: The devil aims, in all the sufferings of God's children, to draw them off from Christ, to make them murmur, despair, &c.; but in this he is defeated and disappointed, for God inspires his children with such a generous and noble spirit, that sufferings abate not their zeal and patience, but rather increase them. "We Christians laugh at your cruelty, and grow the more resolute", said one of Julian's nobles to him.

Through him that loved us: a short description of Christ, together with a reason of a Christian's success. The conquest he hath over sin, and over sufferings also, is not from himself, or his own strength, but from Christ, &c.: see Ro 7:24,25 1Co 15:57 2Co 2:14 2Ti 4:17.

Romans 8:38

Ver. 38. *For I am persuaded;* or, I am fully assured, not by any special revelation, but by *the same spirit of faith*, which is common to all believers, 2Co 4:13.

Neither death, nor life; i.e. neither fear of death, nor hope of life.

Nor angels.

1. The evil angels; for the good angels would not attempt the separating us from the love of Christ.
2. There are some, that think the good angels to be also here intended; and they understand it by way of supposition: q.d.

If they should endeavour such a thing, they would never effect it: and thus they make the apostle here to argue, as he doth in another place, Ga 1:8.

Nor principalities, nor powers; some would have the evil angels to be here intended, and the good angels in what went before; in Col 2:15, they are thus termed: but others, by *principalities and powers*, do rather understand persecuting princes and potentates.

Nor things present, nor things to come; i.e. the evils and pressures that are upon us now, or that shall be upon us hereafter. He makes no mention of the things past, for they are overcome already.

Romans 8:39

Ver. 39. *Nor height, nor depth;* i.e. neither the height of honour and worldly advancement, nor the depth of disgrace and worldly abasement. Some take *height* and *depth* for a comprehensive expression, which the Scripture uses, when he takes in all, and leaves nothing out.

Nor any other creature; this is added to the rest, as an &c. at the end of a sentence; and to supply whatever our fancies might in this case, frame to themselves. Or the apostle here makes an end of his induction; and because it had been endless to reckon up all the creatures, he closeth in this manner: If there be any other creature.

Shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; which he bears to us, as members of Christ, and by faith united to him: see Ro 8:35, and the notes there.

Romans 9:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 9:1-5 Paul professeth an unfeigned sorrow for the Jewish nation,

Ro 9:6-13 but proveth by instance from Scripture that the promise to Abraham did not necessarily include all his descendants,

Ro 9:14-18 asserting that there is no unrighteousness in God's bestowing his unmerited bounty on whom he pleaseth,

Ro 9:19-24 and that he was unquestionably free to suspend his judgments, where deserved, either for the more signal display of his power in taking vengeance on some, or of his mercy in calling others to glory.

Ro 9:26-29 The calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews, foretold.

Ro 9:30,31 Accordingly, the Gentiles have attained the righteousness of faith, which the Jews refused.

Ro 9:32,33 The cause of such refusal.

Ver. 1. The apostle being about to treat of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, before he enters upon it, he premiseth a preface, to prepare the minds of the Jews to a patient reading or hearing the same; and in this preface, he solemnly protesteth his love to his nation, and his hearty grief for their rejection, that so it might the better appear, that these things were not written out of any spleen or malice, but out of conscience towards God and the truth.

I say truth in Christ; or, by Christ: so the word *in* is taken, Mt 5:34-36. This is the form of an oath, which the Scripture elsewhere useth in matters of importance: see Ge 22:16 Da 12:7 Eph 4:17.

I lie not; this is added for confirmation, or to gain the greater credit to what he said or swore. It was the manner of the Hebrews, to an affirmative to add a negative: see 1Sa 3:18 Joh 1:20.

My conscience also bearing me witness; as being for this purpose placed in man by God, and is instead of a thousand witnesses.

In the Holy Ghost; i.e. in the presence of the Holy Ghost, who is privy to what I say, and who is a witness also to the truth thereof: or, as some, by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who cannot lie.

Romans 9:2

Ver. 2. His grief for his nation and people he expresseth,

1. By the greatness of it; it was such as a woman hath in travail so the word imports.
2. By the continuance of it; it was *continual*, or without intermission.
3. By the seat of it; it was in his *heart*, and not outward in his face. The cause he doth not here set down, but it is easily gathered from what follows, viz. the obstinacy and infidelity, together with the rejection, of the Jews.

Romans 9:3

Ver. 3. *I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ;* or, separated from Christ. This verse hath greatly vexed interpreters. Some read it, I did wish myself accursed from Christ: q.d. Before my conversion, I was willing to be accursed from Christ, to be a violent persecutor of the Christians, and so to be held of them as accursed for my brethren's sake. The vulgar Latin, and many Romanists, thus render the word ηυχομην, in the text; but the generality of interpreters read it as we do, not indicatively, but potentially; and they make an ellipsis in the words, ηυχομην *pro* ηυχομην αν; the like is frequent; see Ac 25:22 1Co 2:8 2Co 11:1. But then still the difficulty is, how, and in what sense, the apostle wished

himself *accursed*, or separated *from Christ*. The received opinion is, that out of zeal to the glory of God, and love to his brethren, he was willing to be damned, that they all might be saved. Many of the ancients did thus expound this place: "Christ became a curse for us; and what marvel is it" (says one) "if the Lord would be made a curse for the servants, that a servant should be willing to become an anathema for the brethren." "He doth not wish" (says another) "for his brethren's sake to be separated from the love and grace of Christ, but from the comforts of Christ, and the future happiness that we have by him: he is content to lose his part in the heavenly glory, if that might promote the glory of Christ, which would be more illustrated by the saving a whole nation, than a particular person: q.d. If this might be the fruit of it, if it would gain this end, I could, methinks, be content to part with all my hopes in Christ, even my eternal happiness, upon condition my brethren might be partakers thereof; so passionate and abundant love have I to and for them." This exposition is not satisfactory; therefore so, he think the apostle here speaks of being accursed only for a season, or of being an anathema in this world. An anathema sometimes signifieth corporal death and destruction: of old, in times of common calamity, they were wont to sacrifice men to their idols and infernal gods, for the pacifying of their anger; such a sacrifice they called *anathema*, which is the word here used: q. d. For my brethren's sake, that so they might be saved, I could be content to be cut off, to be made a sacrifice, to die the worst of deaths. But if this be admitted, how then is that clause to be understood, *from Christ*? It is not, I could wish myself an anathema, but an anathema from Christ. To this they answer that favour this interpretation, That instead of *from Christ*, you may read, by Christ: q.d. I could be content to be cut off or destroyed by Christ, that my brethren might be saved. This sense of the words suits well with the zeal and kindness of Moses to his brethren, Ex 32:32; rather than they should not be pardoned and spared, he prays, that God would blot him out of the book that he had written: see annotations there. There is yet another, and a more probable, interpretation of this wish of the apostle. It is as if he had said, I could be willing to be separated or excommunicated from the church of Christ, for the sake and salvation of my country and nation. Anathema (says Hesychius) signifies ακοινωνητος, excommunicate; 1Co 16:22: *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*; let him be removed from the Christian assemblies, deprived of those Christian privileges that are afforded there. Ga 1:8,9, Let him be an anathema that teacheth another gospel; i.e. turned out of the church of Christ, and

avoided by all true Christians. If this sense be admitted, then *from Christ* must signify, from the body of Christ; and so the word *Christ* is used, 1Co 12:12 Ga 3:27. Christ being the Head of the body, he that is cut off from the body may be truly enough said to be cut off from Christ. Thus the apostle Paul, who was accused and persecuted by the Jews, for having made a defection from the law of Moses, and setting up Christian assemblies in opposition to their Judaical service, doth fitly express his kindness and love to them, in wishing himself deprived of those most valuable privileges, on condition they might be partakers thereof. To this it may be added, that in the primitive times, this anathematizing, or excommunicating, was attended with delivering up to Satan, and that with destruction of the flesh, with very sharp and severe punishments upon the bodies of men. And so *anathema*, in this notion, may be taken with this improvement, and may contain all those temporal calamities that he was willing to endure and undergo for their good: see D.H. in loc.

My kinsmen according to the flesh; so the Jews were by natural descent: see Ge 29:14.

Romans 9:4

Ver. 4. In this and the following verse, he rehearseth the privileges and advantages the Jews had from God, above all other nations of the earth; and this he doth to show, that he had good reason to make such a wish, as in the foregoing verse; as also, that what he should declare concerning the Jews, and their ejection, did not proceed from any disrespect or disesteem of them.

Israelites; i.e. the offspring of that holy patriarch Israel: this was the Jews' first title of honour, that they descended from him, who by God himself was surnamed Israel, or *a prince that had power with God, and prevailed*, Ge 32:28.

The adoption; adoption is not here to be understood as before, in Ro 8:15, or as in Eph 1:5, and elsewhere. But thereby we must understand the peculiar privilege of the seed of Jacob; that they, of all the nations of the earth, were pitched upon to be nearly related to God, to be his *children* (as they are called) and his *firstborn*: see Ex 4:22 De 14:1 Jer 31:9,20 Mt

15:26.

The glory; the ark and the temple; so called, because in them God did manifest his glorious presence, 1Sa 4:21,22 Ps 26:8 78:61.

The covenants; some understand by covenants, the tables of the law: see Heb 9:4. Others rather understand the covenant made with Abraham, Ge 15:8 17:2,7; and with the Jewish nation, Ex 24:7,8 Ex 34:27, &c. Circumcision also may be intended, for that is called God's covenant, Ge 17:10.

The giving of the law; the judicial, ceremonial, but especially the moral law. This is spoken of as a great privilege, De 4:8,32. It may refer both to the law itself, and to the circumstances, also, with which the law was given.

The service of God; the true manner of worshipping God, which was a great privilege. Other nations knew there was a God, and that he must be worshipped, but they knew not how; and so they ran into superstition and idolatry.

The promises; of this life, and that to come; particularly of the Messiah, and of the benefits and blessings by him. These are found in Moses and the prophets, and were entailed upon the Jews and their children, Ac 2:39 Eph 2:12, till God at last cut off the entail.

Romans 9:5

Ver. 5. *Whose are the fathers;* who are lineally descended of the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with other holy fathers and prophets, and of the same blood. This was also a great privilege, of which the Jews boasted.

Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came; or out of whom; understand the people of the Jews, not the fathers. The meaning is, Christ took his human nature of their stock. It is the great honour of mankind, that Christ took not the nature of angels, but of man; and it is a great honour to the nation of the Jews, that he took the seed of Abraham their father.

Who is over all, God blessed for ever; this is the fullest place to express the two natures that are in the person of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ; he was God as well as man: yea, this is the title by which the one and supreme God was known amongst the Jews.

Romans 9:6

Ver. 6. An objection is here obviated: the Jews might object and say: If they were cast off and rejected, then God is unfaithful, and all his promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, are ineffectual. To this he answers by a distinction of Israelites. Some are Israelites only in respect of their carnal generation; and others, again, are true Israelites, children of the promise, and of the faith of Abraham: see Ro 2:28,29. Now the promises of God were made to the true Israelites, and in all such it is effectual: and under the name of Israel, or true Israelites, all those are comprehended, who imitate the faith of Abraham, and walk in his steps, whether they descended from him by fleshly generation or not. This he further asserts in the following verse.

Romans 9:7

Ver. 7. He had before made a difference of Israelites, and now he makes a difference of the seed of Abraham. This was ever and anon in the mouths of the Jews: *We are Abraham's seed*, Joh 8:33. But here he tells them, that all Abraham's seed were not the children of the promise; for it was said to Sarah, Ge 21:12, that the promised seed should be confined to Isaac's line, of his issue should the Messiah come, and all the true seed of Abraham, who are born after the manner of Isaac, by the word and promise of God. And as Ishmael, though Abraham's natural seed, was cast out, and therein was a type of those who are born only according to the flesh; so Isaac is a type of Abraham's spiritual seed, who are born not of the power of nature, but by virtue of the promise of God.

Romans 9:8

Ver. 8. q. d. That I may speak more plainly, all those that are the children of Abraham according to the flesh, are not therefore the adopted children of God; it is not their blood, but their faith, must make them such. There are some of Abraham's seed, that are selected from the rest, to whom the promise was made, who are therefore called *children of the promise*; and of this sort are all they who are *born after the Spirit*, (as Isaac is said to be, Ga 4:29), whether Jews or Gentiles. The sense of this verse is fully expressed, Ga 3:8,14,29: see Ga 4:28.

Romans 9:9

Ver. 9. The birth of Isaac was a thing extraordinary; for which, neither Abraham nor Sarah had any ground to hope, but only that promise made, Ge 18:10, in these words: *At this time*, or according to this time, i.e. the time of bearing children after conception, *will I come, and Sarah shall have a son*; i.e. I will manifest my power in fulfilling my promise of giving thee a son. By which it is clear, that the birth of Isaac was an effect of God's promise, and nothing else. So that they to whom the promise belong, (whosoever they be), they are the seed of Abraham, and, upon the obedience of faith, shall be accepted for the children of God. The apostle Peter tells women, (whether Jews or Gentiles, it matters not), that by well-doing they become the daughters of Sarah.

Romans 9:10

Ver. 10. *And not only this*; some read it, *And not only she*; the particle *this* is not in the Greek.

When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: this instance is added, because there might be some objection against the former; as if there were some reason why God chose Isaac, and refused Ishmael. Isaac was born of a free-woman, and when Abraham was uncircumcised: besides, Ishmael no sooner came to years, but he showed some tokens of perverseness, and of a wicked spirit. Therefore, in this and the three following verses, he gives another, which was beyond all exception; and that is in Esau and Jacob, betwixt whom there was no disparity, either in birth or in works: they had both one and the same

mother; Rebecca conceived with them at one and the same time, and that by no other person than our father Isaac; and yet the one of these is chosen, and the other refused. Till now was an undeniable proof, that the promise belongs not to all the children of Abraham, or of Isaac, according to the flesh; all the seed of neither are the children of the promise.

Romans 9:11

Ver. 11. *For the children being not yet born:* q. d. As there was nothing in the birth of those twins, so neither in their works, that occasioned the difference that God made between them; for when God spake of what should happen to them, they were unborn, and had done neither good nor evil.

Neither having done any good or evil; he means, actual good or evil, such as might difference them one from another. As for original sin, they were both alike tainted therewith.

That the purpose of God; this purpose of God is to be understood about reprobation, or (if you will) rejection, or preterition, as well as about election.

Might stand; be firm or stable.

Not of works, either done or foreseen.

But of him that calleth; i.e. of the good pleasure and undeserved favour of God, who also effectually calleth those that he hath elected, as Ro 8:30. See a parallel place, 2Ti 1:9.

Romans 9:12

Ver. 12. This verse is to be read with Ro 9:10,11 being a parenthesis. Then when she resorted to the Lord for counsel, about the struggling of the children in her womb, it was told her, or revealed to her of God, that *the elder should serve the younger:* of the sense of which words, see annotations on Ge 25:23, where they are recorded.

Romans 9:13

Ver. 13. The foregoing oracle is expounded by another, taken out of Mal 1:2,3; see the annotations there. Because the foregoing passage of Esau's serving Jacob doth not seem so full and clear, to betoken the election of Jacob, and the rejection of Esau, in the purpose of God, therefore the apostle brings this place to explain the former; and proves that the service or subjection of Esau to Jacob, was accompanied with God's eternal and undeserved love of the one, and his just and righteous hatred of the other. There are some, that by Esau and Jacob do understand their posterity, and not their persons; that say, the love and hatred of God, in the forecited text, doth only or chiefly respect temporal things; God loved Jacob, i.e. he gave him the Land of Promise; but hated Esau, i.e. he gave him a dry and barren country, and made his mountain waste: that by God's hating Esau, is only meant he loved him less than Jacob, &c. Such should consider, that the scope of the apostle is to show, that some are the children of God, and of the promise, and not others; and they must not make him cite testimonies out of the Old Testament impertinently. Much is written *pro* and *con* upon this argument. But I remember, he that writes a commentary must not too far involve himself in controversy.

Romans 9:14

Ver. 14. Another anticipation of an objection. Some might object and say: If God elect some, and reject others, their case being the same, or their persons being in themselves equal and alike, then he is unjust and partial. To this he answers,

1. More generally, with his repeated note of detestation: *God forbid*; the Syriac translator reads it, God forgive; noting thereby the heinousness of such a thought and then he answers this cavil more particularly; showing:
 1. That God is not unjust in electing some, Ro 9:15,16. And,
 2. That he is not unjust in rejecting others, Ro 9:17.

Romans 9:15

Ver. 15. q.d. God is not chargeable with any injustice in electing some, and not others; for this is an act of mere mercy and compassion, and that can be no violation of justice. To prove this, he cites a testimony out of Ex 33:19, which see. There he tells Moses, that the good pleasure of his will was the only rule of all his favourable and merciful dealings with the children of men. The same thing is intended and expressed in two several phrases: and the ingemination imports the freeness of God's mercy; nothing moves him thereunto, but his own gracious inclination; and also the arbitrariness thereof; it depends only upon his good will and pleasure. The sum is, if God show mercy to some, and not to others, he cannot be accused of injustice, because he injures none; nor is he obliged or indebted to any.

Romans 9:16

Ver. 16. q.d. God's election is not of Jacob's, or of any other man's, willing or running; i.e. it is not from his good desires or deeds, his good inclinations or actions, or from the foresight thereof; but it is of God's mere mercy and good pleasure. This text wounds Pelagianism under the fifth rib. *Nec volenti, nec volanti*, was the motto of a noble personage.

Romans 9:17

Ver. 17. This verse shows, that God is not unjust in rejecting others of equal condition with the elect; for the proof of which, he cites a testimony out of Ex 9:16. This verse must be joined with Ro 9:14.

God forbid; for the Scripture saith, i.e. God saith in the Scripture: Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up; i.e. I have created or promoted thee to be king in Egypt. Or, (as some), I have raised or stirred thee up to oppress my people. Or, I have hardened thee, as it follows in the next verse, and given thee up to thy own rebellious and obstinate mind.

That I might show my power in thee, it &c.: I have done what I have done for this very end, that the whole world may ring of my power and glory. And this shows, that it is not unjust in God to reject sinners of the children of men, because thereby he furthers his own glory. For this end all things are made, and all things are accordingly ordered and disposed, Pr 16:4.

Romans 9:18

Ver. 18. This verse is a short repetition of the foregoing argument.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy: see Ro 9:15, and the notes there.

And whom he will he hardeneth; i.e. in a judicial way. Besides natural hardness, which is in all men, and is hereditary to them; and habitual hardness, which is contracted by a custom in sin, as a path is hardened by the continual trampling of passengers; there is judicial or judiciary hardness, which is inflicted by God as a punishment. Men harden their own hearts sinfully, (so it is thrice said of Pharaoh in Exodus, that he hardened his own heart, Ex 8:15,32 9:34), and then God hardens their hearts judicially: so it is often said of God in Exodus, that he hardened Pharaoh's heart, Ex 7:13 Ex 9:12 10:1,20,27 14:8. God is not said properly to harden the hearts of men; i.e. he doth not make their soft hearts hard, nor doth he put hardness into the hearts of men, (as our adversaries slanderously report us to affirm), nor doth he barely permit or suffer them to be hardened (which is the opinion of the papists about this matter); but two ways may he be said to harden sinners:

1. By forsaking them, and not softening their hearts: as darkness follows upon the sun's withdrawing of his light, so doth hardness upon God's withholding his softening influence.
2. By punishing them; he inflicts further hardness, as a punishment of former hardness; and this he infuseth not, but it is effected either:
 - a) By Satan, to whom hardened sinners are delivered up; or,
 - b) By themselves, they being given over to their own hearts' lusts; or,

- c) By God's word and works, which accidentally harden the hearts of men, as might be shown (see Ro 9:19).

See Poole on "Ro 9:19".

Romans 9:19

Ver. 19. Here he obviates a third objection or cavil. The first was, that God is unfaithful, Ro 9:6; the second, that God is unjust, Ro 9:14; now the third is, that God is severe and cruel. Some might object and say, If God, in those courses which he takes with men and sinners, doth follow only his own will and pleasure, and all things are done thereafter; why then doth he complain of sinners, and find fault with them? It seems it is his will to reject them; and who hath resisted, or can make resistance thereunto? It seems to be a common saying amongst the Hebrews, that None can withstand God: Ro 9:2 2Ch 20:6, and elsewhere.

Romans 9:20

Ver. 20. Here follows the answer to this cavil; which is either personal to the caviller, in this and the next verse, or real to the cavil, in the two following verses.

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? The apostle seems to speak these words with some warmth, as if his spirit and zeal was stirred at the sauciness of the caviller: q.d. Dost thou consider what thou art? Thou art but a man, a piece of living clay, a little breathing dust, a contemptible worm in comparison; and darest thou to word it with God, to dispute with thy Maker, to question or call him to an account? You may argue matters with your fellow creatures, but not with your Creator: see Isa 45:9,10, from whence this seems to be borrowed, and Job 40:2.

Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? q. d. Shall the wood quarrel with the carpenter, the iron with the smith; or, as it is in the next verse, the clay with the potter?

Romans 9:21

Ver. 21. He argueth from the less to the greater, that if a potter hath power over his clay, to form it as he pleaseth, then God hath much more power over his creatures, to form them or order them as he listeth. God's authority over his creature, is greater than that of a potter over his clay. The potter made not his clay; but both clay and potter are made by God. Here is something implied, that as there is no difference in the matter or lump out of which the potter frameth diversity of vessels, so there is no difference in mankind; all men are alike by nature, and in the same corrupt state; both those who are elected, and those who are rejected, that are made vessels of mercy, or vessels of wrath. And here is this expressed, that as the potter maketh vessels of honour or dishonour, of nobler or viler use, out of the same lump, as he listeth, and is not bound to give a reason of his so doing to his pots; so God may choose some, and reject others, and give no account thereof unto his creatures. The potter takes nothing from the clay, of what form soever he makes it; and the Creator doth no wrong to the creature, however he doth dispose of it.

Romans 9:22

Ver. 22. In this and in the next verse, is a real answer to the cavil in Ro 9:19. The apostle having spoken before of God's absolute right and power over his creatures, to dispose of them at his pleasure, as the potter doth his clay; lest any should tax God with tyranny and partiality towards his creatures, he subjoineth the reasons of his different proceedings with the one and with the other. q.d. What hast thou to answer or object against God, if he take a severe course with some? Seeing:

1. He thereby manifesteth his great displeasure against sin, and his power to take vengeance of sinners. Seeing:
2. He bears long with them in their sins; exerciseth great patience towards them in the midst of their provocations, giving them space to repent, if they call or will. And seeing:
3. They are *vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction*; partly by themselves,

and their own sensual courses; partly by God's righteous judgment, who gives them up thereunto.

Romans 9:23

Ver. 23. q. d. Again, on the other side, what hast thou to say, if he proceed more mercifully with others? Seeing:

1. He thereby manifesteth *the riches of his glory*, or his glorious grace; and seeing:
2. They are *vessels of merey, which he had afore prepared unto glory*; i.e. he had done it by election from eternity, and by regeneration and sanctification of the Spirit in time. He speaks here of two sorts of *vessels*, some of *wrath*, and some of *mercy*, as he had before spoken of *vessels of honour*, and of *dishonour*. Concerning the latter, he speaks passively, that they are *fitted to destruction*: see Ro 9:22. Concerning the former, he speaks actively, that God hath *prepared them unto glory*.

Romans 9:24

Ver. 24. Hitherto he hath been showing, that the promise was never made or meant to the carnal seed of Abraham. This argument he began, Ro 9:6,7, and he continues it (using several apostrophes and amplifications, which were to his purpose) till he comes to these words; and here he tells you plainly who are the true seed of Abraham, and the children of the promise, even the called of God of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles. And he takes occasion to fall into it, by speaking of some in the foregoing verse, that were *vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto glory*: now here, in this verse, he tells you, who these are; (and to be sure they are the persons he is inquiring after, viz. the spiritual seed of Abraham, and the children of the promise:) he says, they are such as God called; i.e. effectually called, *not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles*; and that this is so, he further proves in the following verse.

Romans 9:25

Ver. 25. Here the apostle proves, that the Gentiles were children of the Promise, or that the promise belonged to them, as well as to the Jews: and because the Jews could not endure to hear of this, he cites two testimonies out of Hosea, to convince them: one is in this verse, and it is taken out of Ho 2:23; the other is in the following verse.

Romans 9:26

Ver. 26. This testimony is taken out of Ho 1:10; and it is as if he had said: This that I affirm concerning the conversion and calling of the Gentiles, is nothing else but what the prophet Hosea long ago did preach to our fathers. Some think, these places in Hosea do speak primarily of the Jews, and but secondarily, or by consequence, of the Gentiles. Others think, that they speak chiefly of the Gentiles; those terms (*not beloved, and not a people*) being in Scripture mostly used of them.

Romans 9:27

Ver. 27. In this and the two next verses he proves, that it was foretold of old, by Esaias the prophet, that God should pass by the greatest part of the Jews, and save only a remnant, or a few of them.

Crieth; hereby is noted the prophet's zeal, or his openness and plainness. The testimony recorded, is found in Isa 10:22,23.

As the sand of the sea; for number or multitude, for so the promise was to Abraham, Ge 22:17 32:12.

Shall be saved: Isaiah saith, *shall return;* i.e. from the captivity, or from sin, as it is, Isa 10:21. This shows, none can be saved but they who return and repent.

Romans 9:28

Ver. 28. This verse is also found in that forecited place, Isa 10:22,23. The apostle in this, and in the other citations, follows the Seventy, which was a received translation, and had been in request about three hundred years, though in this, and in other places, it is very different from the Hebrew text. That which God is said to *finish*, and *cut short*, is his *work*; the Greek is λογος, which signifies his word, or the account, as some read it. This is brought in as a reason why a remnant only should be saved; because God would shorten the account, or (as we read it) make *a short work*, in the Jewish World. He would bring a sudden destruction upon that people. Sennacherib and the Assyrians, or Titus Vespasian and the Romans, shall make a complete and speedy conquest of them; few of them shall remain, the greater part being involved, first in infidelity, then in destruction. The apostle makes those few to be a type of God's elect among that people, that should be saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:29

Ver. 29. *As Esaias said before; in Isa 1:9.*

The Lord of sabaoth; or, of hosts: the mighty God, whose hosts all creatures are, which execute his will, as soldiers the will of their commander.

Had left us a seed: he means by a seed, the same that he meant before by a remnant, a small number. These were left as a little seed, out of a great heap of corn: that which is chosen, and left for seed, is little in comparison of the whole crop.

We had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha; i.e. utterly wasted and destroyed as they were, Jer 50:40.

Romans 9:30

Ver. 30. This is the conclusion of the apostle's discourse about the election of some and the rejection of others; as also about the calling of the Gentiles and the casting off the Jews.

Which followed not after righteousness; that never minded or regarded it; instead of following after it, they fled from it. They were full of all unrighteousness, Ro 1:18, to the end; Eph 2:2,3.

The righteousness which is of faith; viz. gospel righteousness, or the righteousness of Christ, which is received by true faith.

Romans 9:31

Ver. 31. *Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness; i.e. the unbelieving Jews, who paid great reverence to the law of God, regarding and observing the outward precepts and ceremonies thereof.*

Hath not attained to the law of righteousness; they came short of that righteousness which the law requires, which God will accept, and which is to be attained, not by works, but by faith, as it follows in the next verse (see Ro 9:32).

Romans 9:32

Ver. 32. *Here is the reason of the foregoing seeming paradox; why they, who followed after the law of righteousness, should not attain it, rather than other.*

Because they sought it not aright; they sought it not in a way of believing, but of working. These two are opposed in the business of justification, as before at large, in Ro 9:3,4.

As it were by the works of the law; i.e. as if they could have attained righteousness or justification in that way, which it was impossible to do.

They stumbled at that stumbling-stone; i.e. the true Messiah: q.d. So far were they from seeking righteousness by Christ, that, on the contrary, they took offence at him, to their own destruction, Mr 6:3; 1Co 1:23. They thought it impossible that he should give them a righteousness better than their own. This happened to them according to the prophecy that went before them: so it followeth;

Romans 9:33

Ver. 33. *As it is written*; viz. in Isa 8:14, and Isa 28:16; to which prophecy also the apostle Peter refers, in 1Pe 2:6-8.

A stumbling stone; Jesus Christ is properly a corner-stone, elect and precious; but accidentally and eventually a stumbling-stone, Lu 2:34.

Ashamed; or confounded. Isaiah saith, *he that believeth*; the apostle, *whosoever believeth*; which is much the same: an indefinite proposition is equivalent to a universal. The prophet saith: *He that believeth shall not make haste*; the apostle, *he shall not be ashamed*. He that is rash and hasty will at last be ashamed and confounded.

Romans 10:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 10:1-3 Paul's prayer for Israel, who were misled by blind zeal.

Ro 10:4-10 The difference between justification by the law and by faith explained from Scripture.

Ro 10:11-13 Salvation open to all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles.

Ro 10:14-18 The necessity of preaching to the Gentiles inferred.

Ro 10:19,20 God's acceptance of the Gentiles known before to the Jews,

Ro 10:21 as also their own refusal of his offered mercy.

Ver. 1. The apostle begins this chapter with another prolepsis, or rhetorical insinuation, professing his unfeigned love of his nation, and his hearty desire of their salvation: q.d. As before, (c.g.) so now again I declare openly, (O ye Christian Jews, my brethren), that whatever the generality of the Jews do think of me, as if I hated them, or were their enemy; yet there is none more passionately and tenderly affected to them than I am: and

from hence it is, that I do so heartily desire and pray to God, for all that people, that they might be saved.

That they might be saved; that they may obtain eternal salvation, and escape that deluge of wrath and destruction that hangs over their heads.

Romans 10:2

Ver. 2. *For I bear them record,* i.e. I must testify this of them, or of many of them, *that they have a zeal of God;* that they have a fervent desire to maintain the law of God, with all the Mosaical rites and ceremonies, as thinking thereby to promote the glory of God.

But not according to knowledge; i.e. true and right knowledge. Though it be a warm, yet it is a blind zeal. They know not the will of God, or what that righteousness is which he will accept. They know not for what end the law and worship of God, under the Old Testament, was instituted. They knew not that Christ, in, and by whom, that law is fulfilled.

Romans 10:3

Ver. 3. *They being ignorant of God's righteousness:* here he shows more particularly what knowledge the Jews wanted. They knew not *the righteousness of God;* of which see Ro 1:17, with the notes there. This was abundantly *manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, Ro 3:21;* and a thing very needful to be known, as being that wherein man's happiness consisted; but they were ignorant of it.

Going about to establish their own righteousness; their personal and inherent righteousness, a home-made righteousness, which is of their own spinning; this they designed to set up in the room of God's righteousness.

Have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; this notes the pride that accompanied their ignorance, and that is in the hearts of men by nature. They will not go abroad for that which they think they have, or may have, at home. They will not be beholden to another for that which they suppose they have in themselves. They have righteousness enough of

their own working; and therefore they reject and withdraw themselves from that which is of God's appointing.

Romans 10:4

Ver. 4. He proves that the Jews were ignorant of the righteousness of God, because they were ignorant of Christ, the true *end of the law*. *Christ is the end of the law*: q. d. The law was given for this end, that sinners being thereby brought to the knowledge of their sins, and their lost and damned estate, by reason thereof, should fly to Christ and his righteousness for refuge; see Ga 3:19,24. Or else: *Christ is the end of the law*; i.e. the perfection and consummation thereof. The word is taken in this sense, 1Ti 1:5. He perfected the ceremonial law, as being the substance whereof all the ceremonies of the law were shadows; they all referred to him as their scope and end. He perfected also the moral law, partly by his active obedience, fulfilling all the righteousness thereof, partly by his passive obedience, bearing the curse and punishment of the law, which was due to us. Whatever the law required that we should do or suffer, he hath perfected it on our behalf: see Ro 8:4.

Romans 10:5

Ver. 5. In this and the following verses, he shows the great difference that is between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith; and this difference is taught us in the books of Moses himself. As for the righteousness of the law, that is plainly described by Moses, Le 18:5; and it tells us expressly: That the man who doth personally, perfectly, and constantly observe and do whatsoever the law requires, shall be rewarded with eternal life: see Ro 2:13, and the notes there. And on the contrary, it implies thus much: That whoso fails, or falls short, shall incur death and damnation. This also it declares in other places, De 27:26 Ga 3:10. This is a hard saying; who can hear it? It shuts us all out of heaven, it turns us into hell, it lays upon us impossible conditions. Let us hearken therefore to the righteousness of faith; of which in the next, (see Ro 10:5).

Romans 10:6

Ver. 6. *The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise:* by a prosopopoeia (a frequent figure in Scripture) he puts the person of a reasonable creature upon the righteousness of faith, and bringeth it in speaking and declaring itself as followeth; or else the meaning is, that the Scripture, or Moses, speaketh thus of the righteousness of faith. These words are taken out of De 30:12,13. The question is, Whether Paul doth properly allege this place in Deuteronomy, or only allude to it? Some think the latter, that Moses directly speaks of the law, and that the apostle, by an allusion, or by way of accommodation, applies it unto faith; hence it is, that he doth not cite the very words of Moses, but alters and adds to them, as best served his purpose. But others think, that this would extenuate the force of St. Paul's argument, if he should only allude unto this testimony of Moses, and not confirm that which he intended by the same. Therefore their opinion is, that these words are properly cited; and that Moses himself, in that place, doth speak (though very obscurely) of the righteousness of faith; yea, the foregoing words in De 30:12,13 do belong to the times of the gospel. Some of the Jewish rabbis have confessed, that Moses in that chapter, especially the beginning of it, hath reference to the days of the Messiah. He speaks there of the Israelites being driven among all nations, and unto the utmost parts of heaven, which chiefly happened to them a little after the ascension of Christ, and will abide upon them till their conversion, of which see Ro 11:1-36; and then God will restore them again to the Land of Promise, to that Jerusalem which is from above, the true church of Jesus Christ; then he will circumcise their hearts, and the hearts of their seed, to love the Lord with all their heart, and with all their soul; then will the Lord rejoice over them to do them good, as he rejoiced over their fathers; then, according to God's covenant promise, the law of God shall be written in their hearts; it shall not be hidden, or afar off, but nigh them, in their mouths, and in their hearts. Thus the apostle convinceth the Jews by a testimony out of Moses, in whom they trusted.

Say not in thine heart; i.e. think not anxiously and despondingly within thyself.

Who shall ascend into heaven? i.e. to learn the will of God there concerning our righteousness and salvation, and then teach it to us; or, to see if there be any admission or room for such as I am there, and to carry

me thither.

That is, to bring Christ down from above; this is in effect to deny that Christ has already come down from heaven to reveal it to us; and that he must now come to do it: or else, this is as much as to deny that Christ hath already descended from heaven, to procure and purchase salvation for us; and that he must come down again for that purpose. It were to deny the ascension of Christ into heaven; for he is gone thither, not as a private, but as a public person: he is gone thither as our Head, and thither he will bring all his members; he is there as our forerunner, as one that is gone before to prepare a place for us. For Christians to distrust their going to heaven, is to doubt whether Christ be in heaven; he had never gone thither if he had not perfected our redemption and salvation here.

Romans 10:7

Ver. 7. *Who shall descend into the deep?* By *the deep*, here, understand hell: see Lu 8:31 Re 9:1 20:1,3. q. d. Do not inquire distrustfully, and despairingly, whether thou shalt go to hell, or who shall go thither, to see, and bring thee word, if such as thou are there.

That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead; this were in effect to frustrate and make void the death of Christ; it is as much as to say, he never died for us, or he must come again, and suffer, and shed his blood for the remission of our sins. He died to deliver us from death and damnation; he endured the wrath of God, that we may escape it. The sense of the whole is this, That the doctrine of justification by faith, doth not propose such difficult and impossible terms, as the doctrine of justification by works. The righteousness of the law, that speaks terror, and puts us into a continual fear of hell, and despair of heaven; but the righteousness of faith, that speaks comfort, and forbids all amazing fear and troubles about our salvation or damnation.

Romans 10:8

Ver. 8. *But what saith it?* i.e. what saith the text in De 30:14? or what saith the righteousness of faith? What is its style and language? In the Ro 10:6,7

he did but tell us what it said not, but here he tells us what it saith.

The word is nigh thee; i.e. the matter required of thee, in order to life and salvation. He seems in these words to declare the readiness and easiness of the way of salvation, as taught us in the gospel, and by the righteousness of faith. God requires no hard thing of us, to cross the seas, to climb the mountains, to take long and painful journeys, to find it out. The way of salvation under the gospel hath but a short cut; it requires not so much the labour of the hand, as the confession of the mouth, and the belief of the heart: or, *The word* that teacheth it is at hand, it is as if it were *in thy mouth and heart*: a proverbial speech, (as some think), to show the readiness of it.

That is, the word of faith, which we preach: by *the word of faith*, he means the gospel, and the doctrine of it: and the gospel is so called, either effectually, because it works faith; or objectively, because it is a received faith, and is the proper object of it.

Romans 10:9

Ver. 9. q. d. There are but these two things, which the gospel principally requires in order to our salvation: the one is, the confession of Christ with our mouths, and that in spite of all persecution and danger, to own him for our Lord, and for our Jesus; and to declare, that we are and will be ruled and saved by him, and by him only. The other is, to believe in our hearts, *that God hath raised him from the dead*. This article of the resurrection of Christ presupposeth all the rest, and fasteneth together, as by a link, all the antecedents and consequents of it; his ascension, session at the right hand of God, and intercession, which followed after. This article therefore, by a figure, is put for all the rest; and this is mentioned, because the death and passion of Christ had availed us nothing, unless he had risen again; for thereby he obtained a perfect victory over sin, death, and damnation, for all the elect. This is the principal ground of our justification, as hath been said, Ro 4:25.

Romans 10:10

Ver. 10. *With the heart man believeth;* in the former verse confession was

set first; in this, believing. Faith indeed goes before confession; *I believed*, says the psalmist, and the apostle after him, *therefore have I spoken*; yet our faith is discerned and known by our confession.

Unto righteousness; i.e. unto justification. This phrase may be expounded by Ro 4:5, or Ro 9:30.

With the mouth confession is made unto salvation: our adversaries the papists make great use of this text, to prove that good works, as confession, &c., are the cause of salvation; whereas confession is required here, not as the cause, but as the means thereof. The apostle makes faith here to be the cause, as well of salvation, as justification; because confession of the mouth, to which salvation is here ascribed, is itself an effect or fruit of faith; and so, according to that known rule in logic, the cause of the cause, is the cause of that which is caused thereby.

Romans 10:11

Ver. 11. The saving effect of faith and confession, spoken of immediately before, is here proved by Scripture. Either he refers to Isa 28:16, or Ps 25:3; or else he means, that this is the general doctrine of the Scripture. See notes on Ro 9:33.

Romans 10:12

Ver. 12. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek*: he gives a reason for that universal term, *whosoever*, which he had added in the precedent verse, and is not found in Isaiah, as was noted before, in Ro 9:33.

The same Lord over all; these words are a reason why there is no difference now between Jew and Greek. This title is to be referred more especially to Jesus Christ, who was called *Lord*, Ro 10:9, and is called: *Lord of all*, Ac 10:36. He is Head of all the elect, in all nations of the world.

Is rich unto all; i.e. is bountiful unto all. So that the Jews need not envy

the calling or coming of the Gentiles; they have never the less themselves; the Lord hath an inexhaustible store of grace and mercy. The fountain is above our thirst.

That call upon him; not to all, hand over head, but to such as call upon him in faith.

Romans 10:13

Ver. 13. That *the Lord is rich unto all that call upon him*, is confirmed here by a testimony out of Joe 2:32, which is also cited by St. Peter, Ac 2:21. The apostle's argument may be thus formed: If whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, then the Lord is rich to all that call upon him; for no riches are comparable to salvation; but the former is true, therefore the latter.

Whosoever, whether Jew or Gentile, *shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;* i.e. on him whose name is the Lord. Jesus Christ is principally meant, as appears by many passages in the prophet. Compare this with 1Co 1:2.

Romans 10:14

Ver. 14. The connexion of this verse and the following verses of this chapter is very obscure. Some connect these words with Ro 10:12. There he said: *There is no difference between Jew and Greek*, &c. And this he proves, because the means to attain salvation by the true invocation of God hath been made common to all; and consequently faith, and so, from time to time, the hearing and preaching the word of God, according as the one is occasioned by the other. Others make this the coherence: Seeing the righteousness of faith is the only true righteousness, and doth, in common, by the promise of God, belong to Jew and Gentile (as hath been said); it was therefore necessary, that some must be sent of God to both people, which is the ordinary way and means to beget faith, and to bring men to Christ. His way of arguing is such, as logicians call *sortes*; rhetoricians, a gradation; and it is very forcible and demonstrative: q. d. God hath, by his prophets, promised salvation indifferently to Jew and Gentile; but without

calling on him, there is no salvation; and without faith, there is no prayer; and without hearing, there is no faith; and without a preacher, there is no hearing; and without solemn mission, there can be no preacher. His manner of speaking all along is by way of interrogation, which is the more convincing, because it carries in it a kind of an appeal to the persons spoken to; every interrogation is equivalent to a negation.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? There is no foundation then for the popish doctrine of invoking saints and angels.

How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Amongst the elect of God, there may be some that are born deaf; and in these, God doth supply the want of outward means in an extraordinary way: but ordinarily, hearing is as necessary to faith, as faith is to prayer, or prayer to salvation.

Romans 10:15

Ver. 15. *How shall they preach, except they be sent?* viz. immediately, by God or Christ, as the prophets and the apostles: see Ga 1:1. Or mediately, by men; i.e. by such as have authority from Christ to separate and ordain others to this work. Without this orderly mission, or ordination, how can they preach? Saith the apostle; i.e. how can they do it duly or profitably, or in the name and by the authority of Christ? For otherwise, there were, and still are, those that run before they are sent, Jer 23:21.

How beautiful are the feet of them! Their arrival or approach. The persons of such are meant, though their feet be named, because they carried them up and down to do this work. The scripture referred to is found in Isa 52:7. The apostle here leaveth the Septuagint, and followeth the Hebrew text; yet he doth not cite the place in all points as the prophet hath it. He leaveth out some words, as *upon the mountains*, which had respect to the situation of Jerusalem; and he changeth the number, turning the singular into the plural.

Objection. But the text in Isaiah speaks of such a messenger as was sent to publish the deliverance of the Jews from the bondage of the Assyrians.

Answer. Though that be granted, it is applied and accommodated aptly enough to the preaching of peace and salvation by Christ; because that deliverance (as all other temporal deliverances) had its foundation in the redemption purchased by Christ.

Romans 10:16

Ver. 16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel:* he here preventeth a cavil of the Jews. Thus they might reason: If the apostles and preachers of the gospel are sent with so great authority from God, and bring such a welcome message, how comes it to pass that so few receive it, and yield obedience thereunto? To this he answers, that it need not seem strange, because it was foretold long ago by the prophet, Isa 53:1. It is not to be understood as if this was the cause of their unbelief, because Isaiah said thus. The particle *for* doth not show the cause, but the consequence: it was not because the prophet so said, that they did not believe; but because they believed not, the prophet so foretold.

Lord; this is added by the Seventy for explanation.

Who hath believed our report? i.e. Very few, none in comparison. Compare this with Joh 3:32.

Romans 10:17

Ver. 17. This is the conclusion of the former gradation, Ro 10:14. He speaketh here of the ordinary means whereby faith is wrought; not confining or limiting the Spirit of God, who worketh, or may work, by extraordinary means, yea, without any means at all. See Poole on "Ro 10:14".

By the word of God; by the command of God: q.d. The gospel could not be lawfully preached to them, for them to hear it, but by God's command; and therefore the apostles and others, in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, had good authority for what they did.

Romans 10:18

Ver. 18. He answers an objection, that some one might make in behalf of the Jews, to excuse them; that they could not believe, because they had not heard; and faith, as in the foregoing verse, comes by hearing. To this he answers, that the gospel was published to the whole world; therefore the Jews must needs have heard it. That the gospel had been preached all the world over, he proves by a testimony taken out of Ps 19:4: q. d. David tells you, that all have heard, or might hear; for the sound of the gospel is gone out into all the earth.

Objection. But David speaks of the works of God, as the heavens, the firmament, &c.

Answer. Some think the apostle only alludes to this place, (Ps 19:4), and doth not allege it. Others think that the psalmist doth literally and historically speak of the heavens, &c.; and prophetically of the apostles, and preachers of the gospel. By *all the earth*, in this verse, you may understand the greatest part of it; and by *the ends of the world*, the remote parts thereof.

Romans 10:19

Ver. 19. Here he proves by three testimonies out of the Old Testament, that the Jews must needs have heard the sound of the gospel, together with the Gentiles; only they rejected it, when the other embraced it. And so he layeth the ground of what he was purposed to handle in the following chapter, concerning the receiving of the Gentiles, and the casting off, and after calling, of the Jews.

Did not Israel know; here something must be supplied to make up the sense neither God, or the gospel, or the righteousness of faith, or the conversion of the Gentiles. The Israelites could not well pretend ignorance, considering what Moses and Isaiah had said, in whom, or in whose writings, they were conversant.

Moses saith; viz. in De 32:21. Still he follows the translation of the Seventy.

I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you; here God threateneth the Jews, that he would punish them with *jealousy* and *anger*, by preferring the Gentiles before them; at the sight whereof, their hearts should be sore vexed; to behold all their privileges taken from them, and given to a people whom they accounted most vile and despicable, to be *no people* in regard of them, to be dogs and beasts rather than men: see [Ac 13:45](#). Read the cited place in Deuteronomy [De 32:21](#) and you will find that God speaks of this as a fit punishment upon the Jews for their idolatry. They had chosen to themselves such as were no gods; and therefore, to requite them, God would take to him such as were no people: they had chosen to themselves (as it were) another husband; and God, to be even with them, had chosen another wife.

Romans 10:20

Ver. 20. *Esaias is very bold;* i.e. he speaks more boldly concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the casting off the Jews. He used a holy freedom, though it cost him dear; Jerome saith, he was sawn asunder with a wooden saw. This is a commendable property in a preacher: see [Ac 4:13 28:31](#).

And saith: viz. in [Isa 65:1](#). The apostle in this citation differs in some words, both from the Hebrew text and the Seventy, as may appear to him that will compare them together.

I was found of them that sought me not; compare this with [Ro 9:30](#), and see the notes there.

I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me; compare this with [Eph 2:2](#). The advantage and advancement of the Gentiles was altogether of free grace, and an effect of God's free election.

Romans 10:21

Ver. 21. *But to Israel he saith;* viz. in [Isa 65:2](#). In the former verse there is

a consolatory prophecy, foretelling the vocation of ignorant and profane Gentiles; and in this, there is a menacing prophecy, threatening the rejecting of the rebellious and stubborn Jews.

All day long; from the time of their first calling to their dissipation.

I have stretched forth my hands; as a father holds forth his arms to receive a rebellious son. Compare this with Mt 23:37.

Unto a disobedient and gainsaying people; the prophet Isaiah hath but one word, *rebellious*, and the apostle renders it by these two words, *disobedient and gainsaying*: they were disobedient in heart, and gainsaying with their tongues, contrary to those two gracious qualifications, mentioned Ro 10:9,10, belief in the heart, and the confession of the mouth. Compare this with Ac 7:51,52 Ac 13:45 19:9.

Romans 11:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 11:1-6 God hath not so far cast off all Israel, but that a remnant is saved by grace, not by works.

Ro 11:7-10 The judicial blindness of the rest is prophesied of in Scripture.

Ro 11:11-16 The consequence both of their fall and conversion with regard to the Gentile world.

Ro 11:17-22 The Gentiles are cautioned not to insult the Jews, but to make a proper use of the example both of God's goodness and severity.

Ro 11:23-32 The Jews may, and shall in time, believe and be saved.

Ro 11:33-36 God's judgments and ways are unsearchable.

Ver. 1. The apostle having shown, in the end of the foregoing chapter, that the Jews were for their obstinacy rejected, and the Gentiles called, he here prevents or answers an objection. Some might be ready to say: If this be so, then God hath cast away his covenant people, which he hath promised not to do; see Ps 94:14. To this he answers, first, by his accustomed form of denial: *God forbid*; and then he proceeds to show, that the rejection of

the Jews was neither total nor final. That it was not total, he proves, first, by a particular instance in the following words.

I also am an Israelite; i.e. I am a Jew by descent, of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and yet am not cast off by God.

Of the tribe of Benjamin: some think this is added to intimate, that he was born of an honourable tribe, out of which king Saul sprang, 1Sa 9:1, and Esther the queen, Es 2:5. Others think this is added for a contrary reason; lest his calling should be ascribed to the dignity of his tribe, he says, he was of Benjamin, the last and least of all the tribes. And others rather think, that this particular recital of his genealogy is only to show, that he was a Jew by nature and nation, and not a proselyte converted to the faith: see Php 3:5.

Romans 11:2

Ver. 2. *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew:* here he makes a further answer to the forementioned objection: by way of distinction, he distinguishes the people of God into such as are foreknown, and such as are not foreknown: and as for the former of these, he says, they are not rejected of God. By such as are foreknown of God, he means those that are elected and predestinated to eternal life, Ro 8:29: a foreknowledge with approbation is implied and intended, Joh 10:14 2Ti 2:19.

Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? Here is a third answer to the objection in Ro 11:1, and it is taken from an instance in Elias, which the Jews were well acquainted with. He cites or brings a book case for it. And he the rather brings this instance, lest the Jews should accuse him of insolency, for that he had spoken before only of himself; and therefore he gives them to understand, that there were many other believing Israelites, as well as himself, though possibly they were unknown to them. You know (saith he) *what the Scripture saith of Elias*, 1Ki 19:1-21.

How he maketh intercession to God against Israel. i.e. against the ten tribes, who were generally revolted from God, and fallen to idolatry: against those he complained, or those he impeached, ripping up their

impieties, as in the following words.

Romans 11:3

Ver. 3. See 1Ki 19:10,14.

Digged down thine altars: these were not the altars of the high places, for they are commended that cast them down; nor the altars in the temple at Jerusalem, for they were out of the reach of the ten tribes, against whom Elias complains: but such altars (say some) as the godly of the ten tribes did build to serve God with, when they were not permitted to go up to Jerusalem; in which case the building of private altars (as some learned Jews have affirmed) was allowed. Or else by *altars* you may understand such altars as Elias himself, by the special commandment of God, had erected. Others, by digging down God's altars, do understand their corrupting and destroying the true worship of God; and the words are to be taken synecdochically, or metonymically, the sign being put for the thing signified.

I am left alone; so it was, for aught he knew; for few, if any, did publicly own the true worship of God: so general was the defection of the ten tribes in those days.

Romans 11:4

Ver. 4. *The answer of God;* the word properly signifieth the oracle, or answer of God given in the tabernacle from the mercy-seat; but it is generally taken for any Divine answer, or direction received from God: see Mt 2:12 Heb 11:7, where the same word is used. The apostle doth not repeat the whole *answer of God*, as it is recorded in 1Ki 19:15-18, but so much only as was pertinent to his purpose.

I have reserved to myself; he saith not: They have reserved themselves, but, *I have reserved* them: q.d. Of my own free grace I have kept them from idolatry and apostacy.

Seven thousand men; a certain number for an uncertain. There were

doubtless women amongst them; but they are noted by the more worthy sex.

Who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal; the word *image* is not in the Greek; but the article being of the feminine gender, it was necessarily understood.

Romans 11:5

Ver. 5. q. d. As it was in the times of Elias, so it is now; *there is a remnant* of the Jews, which God hath graciously elected; therefore their rejection is not total, which was the thing to be proved. Though those that believe are few in respect of those that believe not, as a remnant is but little in respect of the whole piece, yet there are many thousands of them, as James said to Paul, Ac 21:20: *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe.*

Romans 11:6

Ver. 6. This verse depends upon the former; and though it doth not seem to appertain to the argument the apostle had in hand, yet, by the direction of the Spirit, he takes the little occasion that is offered, to show, that election and vocation are only by grace, and not by works. This he had spoken to before, Ro 4:4,5 9:11; but he toucheth upon it again: and here he delivers a truth, which the Jews of old either could not, or would not, understand; i.e. that there is no mixing of the merit of good works and the free grace of God, but one of these doth exclude and destroy the nature of the other; for if election and calling were both of grace and works, (as some that call themselves Christians, as well as the Jews, affirm), then grace is no grace, and works are no works. For whatsoever proceedeth of grace, that cometh freely, and not of debt; but what cometh by merit of works, that cometh by debt; but now debt and no debt, or that which is free, and by desert, are quite contrary things. Therefore to say, that men are elected and called, partly of grace and partly of the merit of foreseen works, that were to put things together that cannot agree, to make debt no debt, merit no merit, works no works, grace no grace; and so, to affirm and deny one and the same thing.

Romans 11:7

Ver. 7. *What then?* q. d. My discourse comes to this, or this is the sum of it.

Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; i.e. the body of the Jewish nation, seeking righteousness and life by the works of the law, have not obtained it, or they have not hit the mark; they aimed at it, but they shot wide; they took a great deal of pains to little or no purpose: see Ro 9:31.

The election; i.e. the elect; the abstract for the concrete: so before, *circumcision* for the circumcised.

The rest were blinded; i.e. those who are not elected; they are left, by God's just judgment, to their own ignorance and obdurateness; as also to Satan, who doth increase it in them, 2Co 4:4. The antithesis requires that he should have said: The rest have not obtained; but he speaks this of purpose to show the cause of their not obtaining, i.e. their own blindness of mind and hardness of heart.

Romans 11:8

Ver. 8. *It is written;* viz. in Isa 6:9 29:10.

The spirit of slumber; the word signifieth, such a dead sleep, as those have, who are pricked or stung with venomous beasts, out of which they hardly or never awake.

Unto this day: q.d. So it was of old, and so it is still. Or else these words (the former being included in a parenthesis) may be joined with the last words of the foregoing verse, thus, *the rest were blinded unto this day*.

Romans 11:9

Ver. 9,10. *David saith;* viz. in Ps 69:22,23. The apostle tieth not himself to the very words of the psalmist, but being guided by the same Spirit by which David wrote, he adds and alters some words, without diminishing the sense.

Let their table be made a snare, &c.: some take these words for a prayer; others, a prophecy. David, in the person of Christ, (of whom he was a type), doth complain and prophesy of the extreme injuries and oppressions wherewith the Jews (his own people) should vex him; as that they should give him *gall for meat*, and in his thirst, give him *vinegar to drink*, Ro 11:21. Therefore, by way of imprecation, he prayeth down the wrath of God upon them: particularly, he prophesies or prays, that all their most pleasant things might be turned to their destruction; that their understandings might be darkened, so as they shall discern nothing of heavenly things; that they might savour nothing but earthly things, and be unable to lift up their heads and hearts to God, and to his gospel. Now David having, by the Spirit of prophecy, prayed down such miseries upon the Jews, they must be fulfilled; therefore the general unbelief and hardness of heart that is amongst that people is not to be wondered at.

Romans 11:11

Ver. 11. Hitherto he hath showed that the rejection of the Jews is not total. Now he comes to prove that it is not final; that before the end of the world they shall be generally called and converted; that they, together with the Gentiles that believe, shall make one sheepfold, and one flock under one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. And for the proving of this, divers arguments are brought by the apostle, (who alone plainly handles this secret), on which he insisteth the longer, for the comfort of the poor Jews, as also for the administration and information of the Gentiles.

Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: here is another prolepsis or anticipation. The Jews might say: If the case be thus, that these holy prophets, Isaiah and David, have foretold our blindness and stumbling, then we are in a hopeless condition, and that for ever. To this he answers, that they have not so stumbled as that they should finally fall, so as never to rise again; far be it from me to affirm any such things: God

hath revealed the contrary to me; that he will one day call the Jews again, and restore them to his favour.

Through they fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles: q. d. Out of the forementioned evil there ariseth this good, that the gospel (being rejected by the Jews) is preached to the Gentiles, and they are thereby called and brought to salvation: see Ac 13:42,46. Because now at first a few Jews only, and a multitude of Gentiles, are converted, it hath so fallen out, that the ceremonial law is the more easily abrogated, and the doctrine of the gospel and the grace of God is the better established.

To provoke them to jealousy; i.e. the Jews who embrace not the gospel: q. d. This grace that God hath bestowed upon the Gentiles, he will make use of in his appointed time, as a prick of holy jealousy to the Jews; he will by means thereof stir them up to a holy indignation and emulation, to see themselves so far outstripped by those whom they contemned, and thereupon to embrace the gospel, and become the people of God again. Thus, as God hath ordered that the casting away of the Jews should be an occasion of the calling of the Gentiles; so again, on the other hand, the calling of the Gentiles shall be an occasion of the restoring of the Jews.

Romans 11:12

Ver. 12. Another anticipation. The apostle having showed, that the falling away of the Jews was an occasion of the coming in of the Gentiles, it might be objected, that the conversion of the Jews might likewise be an occasion of the falling away of the Gentiles. To this he answers negatively, and confirms his answer by an argument from the less to the greater; that if their fall and diminution were the riches of the Gentiles, their calling again would be so much more: q. d. If God hath made use of the fall and rejection of the Jews, for an occasion of pouring out the riches or abundance of his grace upon the nations; and if the number of believing Jews, being so very small, (which is meant by their *diminishing*), hath occasioned the conversion of such a multitude of Gentiles; then how much more will their fulness have the effect!

How much more their fulness! i.e. their general conversion, the coming in of the Jews, shall so fill the world with wonder, and the gospel with lustre,

that a much further accession will be made even to the number of the believing Gentiles.

Romans 11:13

Ver. 13. i.e. *I speak to you* of being rich in the faith above the Jews, because I challenge a special interest in you, *inasmuch as I am* appointed to be *the apostle of the Gentiles*, and am sent chiefly unto them: see Ro 15:16 Ac 9:15 13:2 22:21 26:17 Ga 1:16 2:7 Eph 3:8 2Ti 1:11. And therefore, in thus setting forth your privileges and blessings: *I magnify mine office*.

Romans 11:14

Ver. 14. q. d. And I thus extol God's favour and mercy to you, that it may be a means (if God please) to provoke the Jews, that are my own flesh and blood, to a holy emulation or jealousy, (see Ro 11:11), when they shall see the Gentiles possess what was promised to them.

Question. How doth he say, that he may save some of them? Is not God the author of salvation?

Answer. Yes; but he hath given his ministers to be instruments therein, and called them fellow workers with himself, 1Co 6:1: see 1Ti 4:16.

Romans 11:15

Ver. 15. This verse contains an argument to prove the calling of the Jews; not a new one, but that repeated which you had before, Ro 11:12; the substance is the same, only the terms differ: there he spake of the fall and diminishing of the Jews, here, of their casting away; there it was the riches, here it is the reconciling of the world: q. d. If the rejection of the Jews brought great profit to the Gentiles, their reception and restoration will bring abundantly more.

Be the reconciling of the world; i.e. an occasion of preaching the gospel to

the Gentiles, by means of which they were reconciled to God. The gospel is *the ministry of reconciliation*, 2Co 5:18-20.

The receiving of them, into the favour of God and the bosom of the church.

Life from the dead; a proverbial speech, to signify a great change for the better. The conversion of that people and nation, will strengthen the things that are languishing and like to die in the Christian church. It will confirm the faith of the Gentiles, and reconcile all their differences in religion, and occasion a more thorough reformation amongst them: there will be a much more happy and flourishing estate of the church, even such as shall be in the end of the world, at the resurrection of the dead.

Romans 11:16

Ver. 16. Here is another argument to prove the Jews are not finally rejected, because of the covenant made with their fathers.

If the first-fruit be holy: some make a difference between *the first-fruit*, and *the root*, in the latter part of the verse. By *the first-fruit* they understand the apostles and other godly Jews, that were at first converted to the Christian faith; and by *the root* they understand Abraham and the patriarchs. Others take them for the same, and understand Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the rest of the patriarchs, to be both *the first-fruit* and *the root*.

The lump is also holy; by *lump*, and *branches*, he means the people of the Jews that descended of these holy patriarchs, and spring from them, as branches from a root. The great question is, In what sense they are said to be *holy*? Or of what holiness doth he speak? It is not meant of inherent, but of federal, or covenant holiness; all in all outward and visible covenant with God, were called *holy*: see Ex 9:6 Da 8:24. Many common things are called *holy* in Scripture, because dedicated to God and to his service; yea, Jerusalem, though a place of great wickedness, is called a *holy city*, Mt 27:53. In such a sense as this, the Jews are still a holy people; they have an hereditary kind of dedication to God; they have a federal holiness, and relation to God, as being for ever separated to him, in the loins of their

progenitors; this can never be wholly forfeited, as being granted to all the posterity of the holy patriarchs: therefore they are called *the children of the covenant, which God made with their fathers*, Ac 3:25: see Ac 2:39. So then God will remember in his own time, his covenant with the Jews, the posterity of Abraham, &c., who are *beloved for the fathers' sakes*, Ro 11:28. Therefore, in the mean time, they should not look on themselves with desperation; nor should the Gentiles look on them with disdain, as it follows in the next words.

Romans 11:17

Ver. 17. In this, and some following verses, the apostle digresses a little, and takes occasion to prevent the insulting of the Gentiles over the Jews; as also to persuade them to take warning by their example.

If some of the branches be broken off; the unbelieving Jews.

And thou; a believing Gentile: though he speaks as to a particular person, yet he means the whole body of the believing Gentiles.

Being a wild olive tree; a scion taken from a wild olive tree; i.e. from the heathenish and unbelieving world.

Wert grafted in among them; the believing Jews. Some read, for them, or in the place of the branches that are broken off.

And with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree: by *the root* he means Abraham, &c. as before: by *the olive tree* he means the church of Christ; by *the root*, or sap of the root, and by *the fatness of the olive tree*, he means, all the promises and privileges, the graces and ordinances, the spiritual blessings and benefits, which belonged to Abraham and his seed, or to the true church of God.

Romans 11:18

Ver. 18. *Boast not against the branches;* i.e. against the Jews, who, because of their unbelief, are broken off; as if by nature thou wert better

than they, or more worthy of that grace which is bestowed on thee. The word signifies: Throw not up thy neck, do not carry thyself scornfully and insultingly.

But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee:

q. d. If any will needs be so insolent, let them know and consider, that as the root is not beholden to the branches, but the branches to the root; so the good things that the Gentiles have, they received from the Jews, and not the Jews from them: the Gentile church is incorporated into the Jewish, and not the Jewish into the Gentile. Or else the meaning is: Despise not the Jews, for they are the natural branches of the root that bears them. If thou insultest over the branches, thou dost in a manner lift up thyself against the root, that once bore them, and now bears thee; even Abraham, who is the father of all them that believe. Abraham is not the root, simply and absolutely, but relatively, or by way of relation to his posterity and offspring.

Romans 11:19

Ver. 19,20. Here he brings in the Gentiles, alleging a reason for their insulting over the Jews; because the Jews were broken off, that they might give place, or make way, for them; and the less worthy do always give place to the more worthy. To this he answers, first, by way of concession: Well, (saith he), it is true, and I do not deny it, that the Jews *were broken off*, that the Gentiles *might be grafted in*. But then he further adds, by way of correction or negation, that the worthiness of the Gentiles was not the cause why the Jews were broken off; but it was *because of* their own *unbelief*; they would not accept of Christ, Joh 1:11; they went *about to establish their own righteousness*, and would *not submit themselves to the righteousness of God*, as it is in Ro 10:3. Therefore, if you Gentiles shall reason after this manner, you plainly put a fallacy upon yourselves, and take that for a cause which is none: you do not distinguish between the cause and the event; it fell out, indeed, that the Jews, being cast off, the Gentiles were received in, but this was not the cause of that.

And thou standest by faith: q. d. Neither is thy worthiness the cause of thy present standing in the room of the Jews, or of having thy station in the church of Christ; but it is Lily believing in that Christ whom the Jews

rejected. By *faith* thou wast first ingrafted, and still continuest in the good olive tree.

Be not high-minded, but fear: q.d. Be advised, and take heed of being self-conceited and secure; if thou fall into their fault, thou mayst expect the same fate. Therefore stand in awe, and sin not; thou art subject to unbelief and apostacy, as well as they.

Romans 11:21

Ver. 21. This verse is a reason of the forementioned admonition:

q. d. If God proceeded with so much severity against his ancient people the Jews, you Gentiles may in reason expect as great severity, if you take not heed to yourselves, and to your standing.

Romans 11:22

Ver. 22. In this verse, he further persuades the Gentiles to humility and godly fear, and suggesteth several reasons for it. The first is taken from the example of God's *severity* to the Jews; they falling into apostacy and unbelief, are generally cut off and cast away. A second reason is taken from the free grace and undeserved goodness of God to the poor Gentiles, who were mercifully planted or grafted in the room of the Jews. A third reason is taken from the condition of their present standing, which is, if they *continue in his goodness*; i.e. if they continue in that state wherein his goodness hath set them. Some think the cause is here put for the effect, the *goodness* of God for faith, which was wrought in them by the goodness or grace of God. The antithesis, in the next verse, shows this to be the sense; for there he speaks of the Jews not continuing or abiding still in unbelief. A fourth reason is from the danger that would follow; if, through pride and security, they should fall and miscarry, they would be cut off, as the Jews, the natural branches, are. Some observe the change of the word; the Jews are said to be *broken off*, but the Gentiles would be *cut off*; they would, as it were, be stocked up by the roots: but that seems too critical and curious.

Romans 11:23

Ver. 23. Here he adds another argument, to repress the arrogance and insulting of the Gentiles; and it is taken from the hope of the Jews' restoration. Though for the present they seem to be in a desperate and forlorn condition, yet the restoring and re-ingrafting of them into the church is not impossible. The great obstacle is their unbelief, which God is able to remove. The same God that rejected them is able to restore them; to him all things are possible, he can cause dead and dry bones to live. An argument from the power of God (and that in the very words of this text) is frequently made use of in Scripture, to excite hope and assurance. Ro 4:21 14:4 2Co 9:8 2Ti 1:12 Heb 2:18 11:19.

Romans 11:24

Ver. 24. He here shows the probability, as well as possibility, of the Jews' conversion, because God hath done that which is more unlikely: q. d. If the Gentiles, which were a kind of wild olive branches, were grafted into a good olive tree, the church of God, which is contrary to nature, seeing men use to graft a good scion into a wild stock, (as an apple into a crab), and not a wild scion into a good stock; how much more shall the Jews, which are the natural branches, yea, branches of that olive tree into which the Gentiles are now ingrafted, be grafted into their own olive tree, to which formerly they did belong! According to the custom of grafting which was common amongst them, to graft one tree upon another of the same kind; and grounded on Le 19:19.

Romans 11:25

Ver. 25. Here he shows there is not only a possibility and probability, but a certainly of the Jews' conversion and calling. This he calleth a *mystery*, or a secret; though it was revealed in the Scripture, (as you will hear), yet it was not understood; nay, the manner, the number, and the time of their conversion, is still concealed and hid from us. The calling of the Gentiles was a mystery, and a great secret; see Eph 3:3; and so is the calling and restoration of the Jews. There are three particulars of this *mystery*, which

he makes known to the Gentiles (and he doth it the rather, lest they should swell with a high conceit of themselves, and proudly despise the Jews): two of them are in this verse; and the first is, *that blindness is happened to Israel in part* only; i.e. they were not all blinded or hardened; or this blindness should not last always, but for a time. The latter sense agrees best with the word *mystery*; for it was no secret that some of the Jews believed; this was told them before, Ro 11:2,5,7. Secondly, another part of this *mystery* was, that this blindness of the Jews should continue till *the fulness of the Gentiles came in*. By *fulness* here, (as in Ro 11:12), understand a great number or multitude of the Gentiles; greater, by far, than was in the apostles' days. There is another exposition of this clause, which I submit to consideration: by *the Gentiles*, here, you may understand the Romans, or the Roman monarchy and power; (see Ac 4:27 21:11;) and by the coming in of their fulness may be understood, the full time of their reign and continuance; after which their ruin follows. And so here is foretold the time of the calling of the Jews, which will be soon after the destruction of antichrist and the Roman monarchy. *Query*: Whether this doth not agree with the prediction of our Saviour? Lu 21:24.

Romans 11:26

Ver. 26. Here is a third and chief part of the aforementioned *mystery*, that in the end, *all Israel shall be saved*. By *Israel* is not meant the whole church of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles; so that word is used, Ga 6:16, and elsewhere; for then, what he spake would have been no mystery at all: but by *Israel* here (as in the precedent verse) you must understand, the nation and people of the Jews. And by *all Israel* is not meant every individual Israelite, but many, or (it may be) the greatest part of them. So *all* is to be taken in Scripture: see Joh 6:45 1Ti 2:6, and elsewhere. Look, as when he speaks of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the coming in of their fulness, there are many (too many of them) still unconverted; so, notwithstanding the general calling of the Jews, a great many of them may remain uncalled.

As it is written; the apostle had this by revelation, but he proves it also by Scripture. All are not agreed from whence these testimonies are taken; the former is found (with some little variation) in Isa 59:20: as for the latter, some think it is taken from Jer 31:33. Others think, that he joineth two

places in Isaiah together, (as he did before, [Ro 11:8](#)), and the last words are taken out of [Isa 27:9](#). The Seventy have the very words used by the apostle. These prophecies and promises, though they were in part fulfilled when Christ came in the flesh, (see [Ac 3:26](#)), yet there will be a more full and complete accomplishment thereof upon the Jewish nation and people towards the end of the world.

Romans 11:27

Ver. 27,28. Here an objection is obviated: the Gentiles might object and say, The Jews can never return and be saved, forasmuch as they have rejected the gospel, and are therefore hated of God. To this he answers by way of concession, that it was true indeed, they had rejected the gospel, and for this they were rejected and hated of God; but this happened well to the Gentiles, and was to their advantage. for the Jews' refusal of the gospel brought it sooner to them: see [Ro 11:11](#). Or else the meaning is: They are enemies of God, and of his gospel; and the rather reject it, because you Gentiles embrace it; they think the worse of the gospel because you believe and profess it. Then he adds by way of correction, that they were not yet in such desperate circumstances; but in regard of *election*, *they are beloved for the fathers' sakes*. By *election* he means, either God's choosing them to eternal life; or rather, his choosing that nation and people, above all other nations and people of the world, to be his peculiar people: see [De 7:6](#) [Ps 135:4](#) [Ac 13:46](#). And by God's love to them, he means his love of good will which he had to that people still, for their fathers' sakes: not because of the merit of their fathers, but because of the covenant made with their fathers; because they are descended of those fathers, to whom God had promised, that he would be their God, and the God of their seed after them; aye, and of their seed's seed for ever; which promises of God, the infidelity of many of them cannot wholly frustrate.

Romans 11:29

Ver. 29. These words, considered simply and abstractedly, afford this truth; That the special gifts of God, his election, justification, adoption, and in particular effectual calling, are irrevocable. God never repents of

giving, nor we of receiving them. It is otherwise with common gifts and graces, 1Sa 15:11. But if you consider these words relatively, as you respect what went before, the sense seems to be this; That *the gifts and calling of God*, whereby he was pleased to adopt the posterity of Abraham, and to engage himself by covenant to them, are inviolable, and are such as shall never be reversed or repented of.

Romans 11:30

Ver. 30,31. This is the last argument, to prove the conversion and calling of the Jews, which is further confirmed, Ro 11:32. The argument is taken from the like dealing of God with the Gentiles; after a long time of infidelity, he received them to mercy; therefore he will also at last receive the Jews. He argues from the less to the greater; If the infidelity of the Jews was the occasion of mercy to the Gentiles, much more shall the mercy showed to the Gentiles be an occasion of showing mercy to the Jews: q. d. There is more force in that which is good, to produce a good effect, than in that which is evil, to have a good event: therefore, if the unbelief of the Jews had so good an event, as to occasion the conversion of the Gentiles, why may we not think, that the calling of the Gentiles will contribute to the conversion of the Jews? See Ro 11:11,14. When the Jews shall see the Gentiles' mercy, i.e. God's mercy to them; how the whole world flourisheth under the profession of Christianity; how the Messiah is in vain expected by them; how their nation is dispersed, &c.; then they shall at last come in and cleave to Christ, and be mercifully received by him.

Romans 11:32

Ver. 32. q.d. God hath, in just judgment, shut up both Jews and Gentiles, equally and successively, in unbelief, as in a prison, that so, in his own time, he might fulfil the counsel of his will, in showing undeserved mercy unto all: i.e. unto both Jews and Gentiles; first the Jews, and then the Gentiles; and then at last, both to Jews and Gentiles. By *all* here he means, those that shall believe, whether of one sort or of the other, as appears from that parallel place, Ga 3:22. Luther, in a very great conflict, had

much support from this text.

Romans 11:33

Ver. 33. In this and the following verses is the conclusion of all that he had delivered, especially in this and the two preceding chapters. He had spoken of many profound mysteries, and answered many critical questions; and here he makes a pause, and falls into an admiration of God, his abundant wisdom and knowledge. He seems here to be like a man that wades into the waters, till he begins to feel no bottom, and then he cries out: *Oh the depth!* and goes no farther.

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! i.e. the unmeasurable, inconceivable abundance of his *wisdom and knowledge*. Some distinguish these two; others take them for the same: see Col 2:3.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Some distinguish betwixt the *judgments* and *ways* of God; by the former, understanding his decrees and purposes concerning nations or persons; by the latter, the methods of his providence in his dealings with them: others think the same thing is meant, by an ingemination, which is familiar amongst the Hebrews. He says of God's *judgments*, that they are *unsearchable*; therefore not to be complained of, censured, or to be narrowly pried into; and of his *ways*, that they are *past finding out*; the same in sense with *unsearchable*: it is a metaphor from hounds, that have no footstep or scent of the game which they pursue: nor can men trace the Lord, or find out the reason of his doings; as none can line out the way of a ship in the sea, or an eagle in the air, &c. Some restrain the sense to the ways of God in disposing and ordering the election and rejection of men.

Romans 11:34

Ver. 34. i.e. Who knoweth what God is about to do? Or who hath given his advice about the doing of it? This is taken out of Isa 40:13,14.

Romans 11:35

Ver. 35. q. d. If any man hath obliged God, by any thing he hath done for him, he shall have an ample reward: alluding (as some think) to Job 41:11. But seeing this cannot be, and that God is indebted unto none, therefore the salvation of all is of mere grace and mercy; and there is no cause of complaining, if he deal more bountifully with some than with others.

Romans 11:36

Ver. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;* i.e. *all things are of him,* as the efficient cause; *through him,* as the disposing cause; *to him,* as the final cause. They are *of him,* without any other motive; *through him,* without any assistance; and *to him,* without any other end, i.e. for his sake alone.

To whom be glory for ever. Amen: a usual doxology in Scripture: see Gal 1:5 2Ti 4:18 Heb 13:21 1Pe 5:11.

Romans 12:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 12:1-3 Paul exhorteth to holiness and conformity to God's will; and to think soberly of the gifts allotted every man respectively.

Ro 12:4,5 We are all members of one body in Christ,
Ro 12:6-8 and should diligently exercise our several gifts for the common benefit.

Ro 12:9-18 Sundry practical duties recommended,
Ro 12:19-21 Revenge is specially forbidden, and to do good for evil enjoined.

Ver. 1. Hitherto the apostle hath discoursed of matters of faith; in this and the following chapters he sets down precepts of holy life.

By the mercies of God: he useth the word in the plural number, to amplify

and set forth the manifold mercies of God, in election, justification, adoption, &c.: q. d. Seeing you Gentiles have received so many and so great mercies from God; seeing he hath preferred you to his ancient people the Jews, and hath chosen and called you, when he hath rejected them; as you value these mercies, let the consideration of them engage you to all manner of holiness and new obedience.

That ye present; that you give, dedicate, and offer up, as spiritual priests.

Your bodies; yourselves, or, your whole man; a part is put for the whole; the body is named, because it is the soul's instrument in the service of God.

A living sacrifice; the sacrifices of old were presented alive to God, and their blood was shed at the feet of the altar: a beast that died of itself, or was torn by wild beasts, was not so much as to be eaten, Ex 22:31 Le 22:8. Conformable hereunto, God will have us offer up ourselves *a living sacrifice;* i.e. we must be quickened and alive to God, and not dead in sins and trespasses.

Holy; as the sacrifices under the law were to be without blemish or defect, Ex 12:5 Le 1:10 De 15:21.

Acceptable unto God; or, well pleasing unto God. So were the appointed sacrifices under the law, Le 1:9; so was the sacrifice of Christ the Lamb of God, Eph 5:2; and so are all spiritual sacrifices under the gospel, Php 4:18 Heb 13:16.

Which is your reasonable service; or, which is agreeable to reason; nothing is more reasonable, than that you should devote yourselves to God in this manner. Some think this is added, to show a difference between the sacrifice here required, and that of the Jews, which was of unreasonable beasts. Others, by *reasonable service*, understand spiritual service, and expound this place by 1Pe 2:5, where you read of *spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*. Others think, that by *reasonable* you must understand such service as is according to the word of God; and this suits best with the Greek phrase in the text, λογικην λατρειαν. The same word is used, 1Pe 2:2, and there it is rendered the *milk of the word*, and not reasonable milk. And so the service or worship here spoken of is

opposed to that *will worship*, of which you read in Col 2:23.

Romans 12:2

Ver. 2. *Be not conformed to this world;* do not fashion or accommodate yourselves to the corrupt principles, customs, or courses of worldly and wicked men; and what they are, you will find in Ro 13:13 Eph 4:18,19 1Pe 4:3. You have somewhat the like counsel, Ex 23:2 1Pe 1:14.

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind: q. d. Be you regenerated, and changed in your whole man; beginning at the mind, by which the Spirit of God worketh upon the inferior faculties of the soul: see Eph 4:23.

That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God: by *prove*, understand discerning: by the *will of God*, his revealed will in his word; and so it best accords with the *reasonable service*, spoken of Ro 12:1, and with the scope of the text itself; which is, to exhort unto holiness and obedience, which is according to the rule of the word. He annexeth three adjuncts to the will or word of God: it is *good*; revealed only for our benefit. It is *acceptable*; i.e. by obedience thereunto we shall be accepted. It is *perfect*, and the observance thereof will make us so too, 2Ti 3:17. There are different readings of these words, but all to the same sense. Some thus, that you may prove the will of God, which to do, is good, acceptable, and perfect. Others thus, that you may prove what the will of God is, and what is good, acceptable, and perfect.

Romans 12:3

Ver. 3. Before he exhorted to a holy life in general, now he comes to more particular exhortations.

I say; i.e. I enjoin and command; see Gal 5:16. I do not only beseech you, as Ro 12:1, but I also require you, as one that hath authority.

Through the grace given unto me: (see Ro 1:5). See Poole on "Ro 1:5".

To every man that is among you; more particularly, to him that hath any

particular gift or office in the church.

Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; i.e. not to be drunk with a proud and overweening conceit of himself, his own wisdom, ability, &c.

But to think soberly, or modestly; let him contain himself within bounds, and not take upon him what doth not belong to him; let him not contemn others, and pretend to more than he hath. There is an elegant paronomasia in the Greek, which our language cannot reach.

According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith: *faith* here is put for the knowledge of God and Christ, and all other spiritual gifts and graces bestowed upon the faithful; these are called *faith*, because they are given with faith, and exercised by faith: of these, God deals to every man his *measure* or portion; not all gifts to one, nor the same gift to every one in the same measure or proportion: see Ro 12:6 Eph 4:7.

Romans 12:4

Ver. 4,5. These verses are a reason against arrogancy. All Christians are *members of one* and the same *body*; therefore, they should not pride themselves in their gifts, but employ them for the common good. It is with the church, the mystical body of Christ, as with a natural body that hath many members, and all these *have not the same office*, or the same action or operation (as the word signifieth); the eye hath one office, the ear another, the hand a third, &c. So the church of Christ, though one body in him who is the Head, hath many members; many in regard of their persons, and many in regard of their offices, which are various and diverse; and which is more, the members are every one *members one of another*; i.e. they are joint and fellow members; as they have a common relation to the same Head, so a mutual relation to one another. Therefore Christians, especially church officers. should not contemn one another, or intrude upon the office of each other; but all should use their gifts to the good and edification of others.

Romans 12:6

Ver. 6. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us;* or, seeing we have different gifts and offices, according as the grace of God hath bestowed them upon us, let us use them aright. This is added to prevent pride and envy: none should be proud of that he hath himself or envy what another hath, seeing all is of grace.

Whether prophecy, let us prophesy; the words, *let us prophesy,* are not in the text; but they are put in by our translators, to fill up the sense. There is an ellipsis in the words, and something must be inserted. Some make the supply from the last words in the foregoing verse: Let us be one another's members in prophesying, teaching, exhorting, &c. Others think it ought to be supplied out of Ro 12:3:

q. d. Whether we have prophecy, let us be wise unto sobriety in prophesying; and so in all the rest that follow: in all the several gifts and offices, he showeth how they should behave themselves. The Greek scholiast will have supplied in them all, *let us persevere.* By prophesying, in this place, you may understand an extraordinary gift that some had in understanding Divine mysteries and Old Testament prophecies, with a wonderful dexterity in applying the same; to which was joined sometimes the revelation of secret and future things: see Ac 11:27 21:9.

According to the proportion of faith; i.e. they that have this gift of prophesying, must exercise it according to the measure of knowledge, in heavenly mysteries, that God hath given them; or else, in their prophesying they must have regard to the articles of Christian faith, and see that they regulate themselves according thereunto. Some think he calls the Holy Scripture in general, an analogy or proportion of faith; by these, the false prophets of old were discerned, if they delivered anything contrary thereunto, De 13:1, &c. Others think he speaks of certain principles, or heads of Christian religion, (see Heb 6:1), from which the prophets and others were not to swerve; yea, some think he aims at the symbol and creed, called the Apostles', which, from the beginning, was called the analogy of faith.

Romans 12:7

Ver. 7. Ministry; under this word are comprehended all ordinary ecclesiastical functions, which afterwards divideth into two sorts; the first relating to the word; the second, to other pious works.

Let us wait on our ministering: the words, *let us wait*, are not in the text, but fitly supplied: q. d. Let all that be called to the office of the ministry be diligent in it, and attend to it: see Ac 20:28 1Pe 5:2.

Teaching, in the latter end of this verse, and *exhortation*, in the beginning of the next, are mentioned as the two great works of those that minister and labour in the word and doctrine. Some think they are distinct offices; see Eph 4:11; and that in the primitive church, where they had variety of ministers, some had the office of teachers, and chiefly exercised themselves in instructing their hearers in the principles of religion, in laying down sound doctrine and confuting of errors: others had the office of pastors, and attended chiefly to exhortation and admonition; pressing points of practice, and making application thereof. Others think that they are distinct gifts, but not diverse offices; some have a gift to teach that have none to exhort, and *e contra*. The apostle, Ro 12:6, calls them *differing gifts*: sometimes these two are found in the same persons, and they are excellently gifted both for teaching and exhorting.

Romans 12:8

Ver. 8. Exhortation: see the notes on the foregoing verse.

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; i.e. he that hath the office of collecting and distributing the church alms, (which was the deacons' work or charge, Ac 6:1, &c.), let him discharge it *with simplicity*, or with *singleness of heart*; (so the word is rendered, Eph 6:5); let him do it faithfully and impartially, and without favour or affection.

He that ruleth; or he that is a president, and set over others. There is great difference amongst expositors, who is meant by this ruler. It is not meant of state rulers, (of them he treats in the next chapter), but of church rulers. Some understand, all church officers in general. Others think, such are meant as were not properly pastors and teachers, put together with them had the oversight of the church, to rule the same; to regulate

misdemeanors, to pacify differences, to administer discipline in admonition and censures: these they call seniors or elders, or the censors of manners; and are the same the apostle calls *governments*, or governors, 1Co 12:28; see 1Ti 5:17.

He that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness: some understand this generally of all Christians, that they should be charitable, and that with cheerfulness. But the apostle is yet speaking of the special offices of the church. It cannot be meant of deacons, forasmuch as he had spoken of them before in this very verse. Such therefore may be intended, as had the care assigned them of the sick and impotent, of prisoners and strangers, &c.; see 1Ti 5:10; the same, it may be, that he calleth *helps* in 1Co 12:28. This charge he directeth them to discharge with cheerfulness; without being weary of that troublesome work, or being sour and froward to those they had to do with.

Romans 12:9

Ver. 9. The former exhortations respect church officers in particular; those that follow concern all Christians in general. He begins with *love*, because that is a radical grace; other graces, and gracious actions, do spring from it, and must be accompanied with it. By *love* here, you may understand the love of God, or of our neighbour: the latter seems chiefly to be intended. The great requisite in love is this, that it be *without dissimulation*, or (as the word is) without hypocrisy; i.e. that it be sincere and unfeigned, 2Co 6:6 1Pe 1:22. It must not be *in word* and *in tongue* only, *but in deed and in truth*, 1Jo 3:18.

Abhor that which is evil; do not only avoid it, but hate it, and that as hell itself. The simple verb imports extreme detestation, and it is aggravated by the composition: see Ps 119:104 Am 5:15.

Cleave to that which is good; be glued to it; so the word signifieth. Things that are glued together are hardly disjoined. The same word is used of the union and conjunction between man and wife: see Mt 19:5 Eph 5:31.

Romans 12:10

Ver. 10. *Be kindly affectioned one to another;* Christians ought to have such affection one to another, as parents have to their children, and as all creatures have to their young: so much the word here used imports.

In honour preferring one another: this clause is expounded by Php 2:3. It is exemplified in Abraham, Ge 13:9. Most desire preference and honour before others, which is contrary to the good counsel in this text. Some read it, prevent one another; do not tarry till others honour you, but do you go before them in this expression of *brotherly love*, and be examples to them.

Romans 12:11

Ver. 11. *Not slothful in business;* this clause may be expounded by Ec 9:10: q. d. In all the duties of thy particular and general calling, in every thing that respects the glory of God, thine own or neighbours' good, take heed of slothfulness: see Mt 25:26,27 Heb 6:12.

Fervent in spirit; this is added to the former, as the cure of it. Zeal and fervency will drive away sloth. This spiritual warmth is often recommended to us in Scripture; see Gal 4:18 Re 3:19. See examples of it in Ps 69:9 Joh 2:17 4:34 Ac 18:25.

Serving the Lord; i.e. diligently performing all things that are required to his service and honour: see Ps 2:11 Eph 6:7. Some copies read it, serving the times, in such a sense as it is in Eph 5:16, and Col 4:5.

Romans 12:12

Ver. 12. *Rejoicing in hope;* i.e. in hope of deliverance here in due time, and of eternal salvation hereafter: See Poole on "Ro 5:2".

Continuing instant in prayer; be instant and constant in the duty. A metaphor from hounds, that give not over the game till they have got it: see Lu 18:1 Eph 6:18 Col 4:2 1Th 5:17.

Romans 12:13

Ver. 13. *Necessity*; the word signifies uses. The saints must be succoured in things useful, as well as necessary. This apostle, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, spends two whole chapters about this sort of charity, in relieving the poor saints; viz. 2Co 8:1-9:15: see also Ga 6:10 Heb 13:16.

Given to hospitality; or, as the word may be rendered, pursue hospitality; hunt after it, as Abraham and Lot did, Ge 18:1,2 Ge 19:1,2. Concerning this duty of accommodating strangers, (which is here meant by hospitality), see De 10:18,19 Isa 58:7 1Ti 3:2 Tit 1:8 Heb 13:2 1Pe 4:9.

Romans 12:14

Ver. 14. *Bless them which persecute you*; i.e. pray for them, and wish well to them. This is borrowed from Mt 5:44 Lu 6:28: see the like in 1Pe 3:9. This is commended to us by the example of Christ himself, Isa 53:12 Lu 23:34 1Pe 2:23; of Stephen, Ac 7:60; of Paul, and the primitive Christians, 1Co 4:12.

Bless, and curse not: his doubling the exhortation shows the difficulty of the duty; it is contrary to corrupt nature: and it denotes the constancy of it; we must persevere therein. When he saith, *curse not*, he means, wish no evil to your enemies.

Objection. The prophets and apostles went contrary to this: see 2Ki 2:24 Ps 69:22,23 Ac 8:20 13:10,11 23:3.

Answer. These did it by a special vocation and instinct of the Spirit.

Romans 12:15

Ver. 15. i.e. Be touched with your neighbour's good or evil, as if it were your own. The reason of this sympathy, or fellow feeling, is rendered by the apostle, 1Co 12:26,27; Because we are members one of another, therefore, if *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*; and if one

member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Examples hereof we have in Lu 1:58 2Co 11:29: see Heb 13:3.

Romans 12:16

Ver. 16. *Be of the same mind one toward another*: this exhortation respects not so much unity in judgment, as in affection:

q. d. Bear the same good respect to others, as others bear to thee; let there be a mutual agreement in your desires and good wishes one for another: see Ro 15:5 Php 2:2 1Pe 3:8.

Mind not high things; i.e. things above your capacities and callings. Take heed of ambitious aspirings: remember what David said (one every way above you) in Ps 131:1.

Condescend to men of low estate: the word *low* only is in the Greek; the other words are put in by our translators: and it may be referred, either to things, and so it answers to *high things*, in the foregoing clause; or it may be referred to persons, according to our translation; and then the sense is, that we should not despise our poor brethren, but stoop to the lowest offices of Christian kindness.

Be not wise in your own conceits; this seems to be taken from Pr 3:7: see Ro 12:3.

Romans 12:17

Ver. 17. *Recompense to no man evil for evil*; our Saviour teacheth the same doctrine in other words, Mt 5:39,40: see parallel places in Pr 20:22 1Th 5:15 1Pe 3:9. See more against retaliating injuries and private revenge in the three last verses of this chapter. Revenge is so sweet to flesh and blood, that men are very hardly dissuaded from it.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men: q. d. Look carefully, as to your conscience before God, so to your honour and reputation with men. Let all your words and actions be justifiable, and unexceptionable, that evil men may have no occasion to reproach you as evil-doers. See a parallel

place, 2Co 8:21. See also Php 4:8 1Pe 3:16.

Romans 12:18

Ver. 18. The duty to which he exhorts in this verse, is a peaceable and quiet behaviour towards all men, as well infidels as Christians; those who are bad, as well as those who are good. The like exhortations we have, Heb 12:14. And to the discharge of this duty he annexeth a double limitation; first: *If it be possible*; secondly: *As much as lieth in you*: q. d. It may so fall out, that some men are of such froward and unpeaceable tempers, that it is impossible to live peaceably with them, or by them: or such conditions of peace may be offered as are not lawful for you to accept; it will not stand with the truth and glory of God, and with a good conscience, to agree with them. But, however, do your part, let there be no default in you why you should not live in peace with all men whatsoever.

Romans 12:19

Ver. 19. *Dearly beloved*; he useth this friendly compellation, the better to persuade to the following duty, which is so hard to flesh and blood.

Avenge not yourselves: you had an exhortation to this purpose, Ro 12:17; but considering the proneness of corrupt nature to private and personal revenge, he renews his exhortation, and enlargeth upon it. This seems to be borrowed from Le 19:18.

But rather give place unto wrath; i.e. say some, your own wrath: q.d. Be not angry, or suffer not your anger to hurry you to revenge; give way a little, and walk aside, as Ahasuerus did, when his wrath kindled against Haman. Others refer it to the wrath of those who wrong us; decline their wrath, as David did Saul's; put up wrongs and injuries. But it is better referred to the wrath of God, which they seem to prevent who seek revenge: q. d. Suffer God to vindicate and right you, to avenge you of your adversaries; commit your cause to him, and do not take his work out of his hand. This sense agrees well with what follows.

For it is written; viz. in De 32:35. This is cited also, Ps 94:1 Na 1:2 Heb

10:30.

Romans 12:20

Ver. 20. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:* q.d. Instead of rendering evil for evil to thine adversary, do him good for evil: see following verse.

Thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head; i.e. either make him relent, or bring down the greater vengeance from God upon him. This is taken out of Pr 25:21,22; See Poole on "Pr 25:21". See Poole on "Pr 25:22".

Romans 12:21

Ver. 21. This verse is a Divine aphorism: therein the apostle anticipates an objection. Some might be ready to say, If we should follow this advice we should be counted cowards and dastards, &c. To this he answers, that it is the ready way to be triumphers and conquerors. By *evil*, here, he means, the wrongs and injuries of men; and to be *overcome of evil*, is to be moved and provoked thereby to impatience or malice. When it is thus with a man, he is overcome, or conquered: in revenge of injuries, he is a loser that gets the better. Therefore he exhorts us, rather to *overcome evil with good*; that is a noble victory indeed: this is the way, not to be even with him that wrongs us, but to be above him. Thus David overcame Saul, and Elisha the bands of Syria. This is the way to overcome ourselves, and our adversaries too: ourselves, in denying our lusts that egg us on to revenge; our adversaries, in winning them to relent and acknowledge their miscarriages.

Romans 13:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 13:1-6 Subjection to magistrates enforced.

Ro 13:7 We must render to all their dues,

Ro 13:8-10 only love is a debt we must always owe, and virtually containeth the whole law.

Ro 13:11-14 Rioting, drunkenness, and other works of

darkness must be put away, as much out of season under the gospel.

Ver. 1. The former chapter is called by some St. Paul's ethics, and this his politics. He having said, in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, that Christians must not avenge themselves, but refer all to God, who says, that vengeance is his, and he will repay it; some might infer from hence, that it was not lawful for magistrates to right the wronged, and avenge them of their adversaries; or for Christians to make use of them to such a purpose; therefore, to set us right in this matter, he falls into the following discourse. Others think, that the apostle having spoken in several places concerning Christians' liberty, lest what he had said should be misconstrued, as if he meant that Christians were freed from subjection to the powers that were over them, he seasonably insists upon the doctrine and duty of obedience to authority; which point is more fully handled in this context than in any other place besides.

Let every soul; i.e. every person. In the first verse of the foregoing chapter the body was put for the whole man; here, the soul; and when he says every person, it is plain that ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.

Be subject: he doth not say, be obedient, but be subject; which is a general word, (as some have noted), comprehending all other duties and services. This subjection must be limited only to lawful things; otherwise, we must answer as they did, Ac 4:19: or as Polycarpus did; when he was required to blaspheme Christ, and swear by the fortune of Caesar, he peremptorily refused, and said: We are taught to give honour to princes and potentates, but such honour as is not contrary to true religion.

Unto the higher powers: though he speaks of things, he means persons; and he calls them *rulers* in Ro 13:3, whom he calls *powers* in this verse. So in Lu 12:11, Christ tells his disciples, they should be brought before *magistrates and powers*; it is the same word, and it is plain he means persons in power. Chrysostom notes, that he rather speaks of our subjection to powers, than persons in power; because, that howsoever their power be abused, their authority must be acknowledged and obeyed. He speaks of *powers*, in the plural number, because there are divers sorts and kinds thereof, as monarchy, aristocracy, democracy: under which soever of these we live, we must be subject thereunto. By *higher powers*, he means

the supreme powers; so the word is rendered, 1Pe 2:13. To them, and to those that are authorized by them, we must submit, for that is all one as if we did it to themselves, 1Ti 2:2 1Pe 2:14. There are other inferior powers, which are also of God, as parents, masters, &c.; but of these he doth not speak in this place.

For there is no power but of God: this is a reason of the foregoing injunction: q. d. That which hath God for its author, is to be acknowledged and submitted to; but magistracy hath God for its author: *ergo*. He speaketh not here of the person, nor of the abuse, nor of the manner of getting into power, but of the thing itself, viz. magistracy and authority: and he says, it is of God; he instituted the office, and he appointeth or permitteth the person that executes it. This clause is attested and illustrated by Pr 8:15 Da 4:32 Joh 19:11.

The powers that be are ordained of God: this passage is an exemplification of the former. Erasmus thinks it was inserted by some interpreter, by way of explanation; but it is found in all ancient copies, therefore that conceit of his is without foundation. The emphasis of this sentence seems to lie in the word *ordained*; power and civil authority is not simply from God, as all other things are, but it is ordained by him. This word (as one observes) implieth two things; invention, and ratification. God invented and devised this order, that some should rule, and others obey; and he maintaineth and upholdeth it.

Romans 13:2

Ver. 2. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:* these words are, either an argument to enforce the subjection enjoined in the former part of the foregoing verse; q. d. You may not resist; therefore, you must be subject: or else, they are an inference from the latter part of it; q. d. Seeing the civil power is of God, and of his ordination; therefore, it must not be resisted or opposed. To resist authority, is to wage war against God himself.

Damnation; the word properly signifieth judgment, and it is applied in Scripture, either to human and temporal punishment, as Lu 23:40 1Co 6:7 1Pe 4:17; or else to Divine and eternal punishment, as Lu 20:47 Heb 6:2

2Pe 2:3. Accordingly, it may be understood of eternal punishment, that the resister of authority shall receive from God; or of temporal punishment, that he shall receive from the magistrate.

Romans 13:3

Ver. 3. This verse contains a further argument for subjection to the higher powers, and it is taken from the benefit thereof, or from the end of magistracy, which is for the punishment of evil, and the encouragement of good works: see 1Pe 2:14. When he says, that *rulers are not a terror to good works*, he means, they are not so ordinarily; or they were not ordained for that end, but the contrary. Or else, by *are not* understand they ought not, so to be.

Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: q. d. Wouldst thou be free from fear of being punished by the magistrate? Do that which is good, and thou shalt not only be free from fear, but sure of praise and reward: see Pr 14:35 16:13.

By *good* he means, not that which is so theologically. but morally: q. d. Live honestly, hurt no man in word or deed, give to every man his due, &c. This is good in the sight of all men, of heathens themselves.

Romans 13:4

Ver. 4. *For he is the minister of God to thee for good:* q. d. That is the end of his office, and for this reason God hath invested him with his authority. The Scripture applieth the same title to him that preacheth the word, and to him that beareth the sword; both are God's ministers, and there is one common end of their ministry, which is the good and welfare of mankind.

But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: this is the reason why he that transgresseth the moral law of God, or the wholesome laws of the country where he lives, should be afraid of the magistrate, because *he beareth not the sword in vain*. The *sword* is figuratively put for power and authority: he alludes to the custom of

princes, who had certain officers going before them, bearing the ensigns of their authority: q. d. The magistrate hath not his authority for nothing, or for no purpose; but that he may punish the evil, as well as defend the good.

For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil: here is another reason why evil-doers (as before) should be afraid of the magistrate; or rather, the same reason in other and plainer words; because he is God's officer to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil; he is in God's room upon earth, and doth the work which primarily belongeth unto him: see Ro 12:19. By *wrath*, here, understand punishment: so in Lu 21:23 Ro 2:8. The word *execute* is not in the text, but aptly enough supplied by our translators.

Romans 13:5

Ver. 5. q. d. Seeing things are so as I have said; that magistracy is of God, that it is his ordinance, that it is for the benefit of mankind, and that it is armed with the sword; therefore there is a necessity of subjection, and that for a double reason: first, from fear of wrath, or punishment from the magistrate. Secondly, and more especially, from the obligation of conscience, because God hath so commanded; and to err in this particular, is to offend God, and to wound our own consciences: see 1Sa 24:5 Ec 8:2 1Pe 2:13.

Romans 13:6

Ver. 6. *For this cause*, i.e. in token, or in testimony, of that subjection you owe to magistracy, *pay ye tribute*: the word is plural in the original, and thereby is intended all taxes and burdens, which are legally and customarily imposed.

For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing: this is a reason why tribute should be paid to rulers; but it is for the support of their authority, and a due recompence for their great care and industry. When he says, they attend *continually upon this very thing*, the meaning is not, they attend always upon the receiving of tribute; but it is to be understood of the duty of magistrates, which is, to be continually

promoting the good and welfare of their subjects; to encourage the good, and punish the evil-doer, which is the very thing he had been before speaking of.

Romans 13:7

Ver. 7. This verse concludes his discourse about the civil powers. When he saith: *Render to all their dues*, he doth not mean all men, but all magistrates, whatever they be for quality, either good or bad; or whatever they be for degree, either supreme or subordinate. Render to them their dues; i.e. whatever of right belongs to them: see Mt 22:21. There are two things that more especially belong to rulers, and are due from those that are under them: the one is maintenance; the other is reverence. The first is expressed here by *tribute* and *custom*; if these two differ, then the former is a tax laid upon the substance, the latter upon the person. The second, by *fear* and *honour*; *fear* notes inward, and *honour* outward, reverence and respect.

Fear is the magistrate's due by reason of his authority; *honour*, by reason of his dignity.

Romans 13:8

Ver. 8. Having treated of special duties belonging to superiors, he now comes to that which is more general, and belongs to all.

Owe no man any thing; neither your superiors, nor your equals and inferiors; render and pay to every person what is due to him, let his rank and quality be what it will.

But to love one another: q. d. Only there is one debt that you can never fully discharge; that you must be ever paying, yet ever owing; and that is *love*.

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: this is a reason why we should love one another, and be still paying that debt; and it is taken from the excellency of love: *he that loveth another* (i.e. he that doth it in deed

and in truth) *hath fulfilled the law*; he means, the second table of the law, as the next verse showeth; he hath done what is required therein.

Romans 13:9

Ver. 9. This verse proves. that love is the fulfilling of the law. It is done by an induction or enumeration of the particular precepts of the second table. The fifth is not mentioned, because the Jews made that commandment a part of the first table; so some: or because he had treated before of duty to the higher powers and superiors, under which parents are comprehended; so others. It may be, he would only mention the negative precepts, as being most contrary to love. But, why doth he mention the seventh commandment before the sixth? Because of the commonness of adultery amongst the Romans; so some: because of the odiousness of it; so others. Hence *adultery* is first named amongst *the works of the flesh*, Ga 5:19. Possibly it is, because the Seventy, in Exodus, rehearse the commandments in this very order. The tenth commandment is summed up in one word: *Thou shalt not covet*; it seems, then, it is but one commandment, and their opinion is ridiculous who divide it into two. When he says, *if there be any other commandment*? He means a commandment of the same nature, requiring us to pay what we owe one to another; *ergo*, to honour our parents; or he means, any other in the Scripture, though not expressed in the decalogue. All commandments respecting our neighbour are summed up in this one: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*: see Mt 22:39 Ga 5:14 1Ti 1:5.

Romans 13:10

Ver. 10. This verse is an argument to prove what was proposed, ver. 8. It may thus be formed: That which *worketh no ill*, or doth no hurt to our *neighbour*, fulfilleth the law: but *love worketh no ill to his neighbour*; *ergo*. That this is the property of love, see 1Co 13:4,5. When he saith, Love doth no hurt, this is implied, that it doth good to his neighbour. Where only negatives are mentioned, the affirmative also is included; and the negative only is set down in this place, that it may the better correspond with the foregoing verse.

Romans 13:11

Ver. 11. *And that;* or, moreover; the speech is elliptical, something must be understood, as, I say, or add: q. d. Unto this exhortation to Christian love, I further add what follows.

Knowing the time; i.e. considering it is a time of great trial, or time of gospel light.

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; i.e. to shake off slothfulness, security, and all former sinful courses. See the like, 1Co 15:34 Eph 5:14 1Th 5:6-8. q. d. Consider, now it is the hour or season to awake or rise up, to lay aside your night clothes, as it is in the following verse.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; or, salvation is nearer to us than when we first began to believe. Some would understand it of temporal salvation, and deliverance from those persecutions which befell the Christians in the infancy of the church; from these they were saved and delivered by the destruction of the Jews their persecutors. This was foretold by Christ, and expected by the Christians; and it was nigher at hand than when they first embraced the Christian faith. But most understand it of eternal salvation, which he says was nearer than when they first believed. In which words is couched another argument to awaken or stir up the believing Romans; the first was taken from the consideration of the time or season; the second, from the nearness of the word. Therefore it should be with them as with those that run in a race; the nearer they come to the goal, the faster they run, lest others should get before them.

Romans 13:12

Ver. 12. *The night is far spent, the day is at hand:* some, by *night* and *day*, do understand the night of Jewish persecution and the day of deliverance and salvation; see Heb 10:25. Others, by *night*, understand the time of ignorance and infidelity; this, he says, *is far spent*, or for the greatest part it is past and gone: darkness is not perfectly done away in this life amongst believers themselves, 1Co 13:9,10. By *day*, they understand the time of gospel light and saving knowledge: so in the next verse, and in 1Th 5:5.

This, he says, *is at hand*, or is come nigh; it was dawning upon the world, and would shine brighter and brighter, till it were perfect day.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness; i.e. all our former sins, which are called *works of darkness*, here, and in Eph 5:11. They are so called, because they are usually committed by those that are in ignorance and darkness; and because some sins, such as he speaks of in the next verse, were wont to be committed in the darkness of the night, men being ashamed of them in the day time: see Job 24:15 1Th 5:7. These he exhorts the believing Romans to *cast off*: the word implieth, haste and hatred, Isa 30:22 31:7.

And let us put on the armour of light; i.e. all Christian graces, which are bright and shining in the eyes of the world, Mt 5:16; and which will be as so much Christian armour, to defend us against sin, and all the assaults of Satan.

Romans 13:13

Ver. 13. *Let its walk honestly, as in the day:* q.d. Let us behave ourselves decently, and with a holy shamefacedness, as becomes those to whom the grace of God, and the glorious light of the gospel, hath appeared. This honest walking is expressed by three adverbs in Tit 2:12; i.e. *soberly, righteously, godly*. He enumerates divers vices, which are contrary to this honest walking, and he sets them down by pairs. He makes three pairs of them: the first is *rioting and drunkenness*; by which he means intemperance, or excess in eating and drinking: see Lu 21:34. The second is *chambering and wantonness*; by which he means actual uncleanness, and all lustful and lascivious dalliances: see Ga 5:19 Eph 5:3 Col 3:5 1Th 4:3-5,7 1Pe 4:3. The third pair is *strife and envying*. All these vices are twisted and connected: intemperance causeth uncleanness, and both cause contention and emulation, Pr 23:29,30. The famous St. Augustine confesseth, that he was converted by reading and pondering this text.

Romans 13:14

Ver. 14. *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;* he exhorted, Ro 13:12, to *put on*

the armour of light; now, to put on Jesus Christ. This is necessary, for though grace may help to defend, yet it is Christ and his righteousness only that can cover us (as a garment doth our nakedness) in the sight of God. To put on Christ, is to receive him and rest upon him by faith; as also to profess and imitate him. You have the same phrase, Ga 3:27.

Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: by *flesh*, here, some understand the corrupt nature; others, the body. When he says, *make not provision for the flesh*, he doth not mean, that they should not provide things necessary for the body; this is allowed, Eph 5:29 1Ti 5:23; we are no where commanded to neglect or macerate our bodies; but he means, that we should not gratify it in its sinful lusts or lustings: see 1Co 11:27. Sustain it we may, but pamper it we may not: we must not care, cater, or make projects for the flesh, to fulfil its inordinacics and cravings.

Romans 14:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 16:1-6 Directions to treat a weak brother kindly, and not to despise or censure one another in matters of indifference.

Ro 16:6-9 Christ's right to our best services, whether we live or die.

Ro 16:10-12 We must all be answerable for our respective conduct at his judgment-seat.

Ro 16:13-23 We must be careful not to use our Christian liberty to the hurt or offence of tender consciences.

Ver. 1. In this chapter and part of the next, the apostle treats of some lesser matters of religion, about which there were great contentions in the church of Rome. Some of the Jews, though they embraced the gospel, did stiffly adhere still to the Mosaical ceremonies; and though a difference in meats and days should be conscientiously observed, yet they were ready to censure those that were contrary-minded, as profane persons, and contemners of the law of God. On the other side, the believing Gentiles, being better instructed about their Christiall liberty, when they saw the Jews insisting upon such things as these, that had never any real goodness

in them, and were now abrogated by Christ, they were ready to despise them as ignorant and superstitious, and to deny communion with them. The apostle therefore doth seasonably endeavour to arbitrate this matter, and make peace amongst them.

Him that is weak in the faith; that is, wavering and unsettled in some lesser points of faith, particularly in the doctrine of Christian liberty, and freedom from the ceremonial law: he means, the scrupulous and erroneous Judaizer, though yet, in proportion, it may be applied to other scrupulous and doubting Christians.

Receive ye; or, receive him to you, take him into your bosoms, admit him to communion with you, bear with his weakness, better instruct him with the spirit of meekness: see Ro 15:1 Php 3:15,16. Bucer received all, though differing from him in some opinions, in whom he found, *aliquid Christi*, any thing of Christ.

But not to doubtful disputations: q. d. Do not entertain him with disputes and vain janglings, which will not edify, but perplex and prejudice him. Do not make him question sick, as it is in 1Ti 6:4. This passage may be expounded by Tit 3:9. The marginal reading would make this to be the sense, that a scrupulous Christian should be received unto communion; yet not so as to encourage him to judge and condemn the thoughts of those that differ from him.

Romans 14:2

Ver. 2. *One believeth that he may eat all things;* i.e. one that is informed aright of his Christian liberty, is fully persuaded, and that upon good grounds, that he may eat any thing that is wholesome, though forbidden by the ceremonial law; that there is now no difference of clean and unclean meats: see Mt 15:11 Ac 10:12-15.

Another, who is weak, eateth herbs; i.e. *he that* (as before) *is weak in faith*, and not so well informed, such a one, for fear of offending God by eating any thing that is forbidden, will rather content himself with the meanest diet. The meaning is not, as if any, in those times, thought it lawful only to eat herbs, and so abstained altogether from other meats; but

they would rather satisfy themselves with herbs, and other fruits of the earth, in which the law of Moses made no difference, than eat meats that were forbidden, or not cleansed from blood, or offered to idols, &c.: see Da 1:8.

Romans 14:3

Ver. 3. *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not;*

i. e. Let not him that makes use of his liberty in eating any thing indifferently, vilify or contemn him that is of a contrary mind, as one that is ignorant and over scrupulous; and let not him that forbears such meats as were of old forbidden, judge and condemn him that is contrary-minded, as profane and over-venturous; notwithstanding such little difference in opinion, let one Christian love and communicate with another.

For God hath received him: it is disputed, whether this be meant of the weak or strong Christian; the word *judge*, which immediately goes before and follows after, carries it rather for the latter. But some think it is meant of both. He that eateth, and he that eateth not, is received by God into his church and family, and indifferently accepted with him, upon another and a higher account.

Romans 14:4

Ver. 4. *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:* a sharp reprehension of the forementioned evil. You have the like: Jas 4:12. q. d. This phrase is repugnant not only to the law of God, but to the very law of nature, which tells us, that one man must not condemn the servant of another, over whom he hath no right or power; much less may any man condemn him that is the Lord's servant. Every Christian hath Christ alone for his own or his proper Master; and it is his judgment by which he must abide; it is to him that he standeth or falleth, that he doth well or ill.

Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand:

q. d. If (as thou thinkest) he be fallen or falling, he shall be upheld and supported; *for God is able*, &c. But how doth this follow, because God

can make him stand, therefore he shall be holden up?

Answer. It is a rule in divinity, that in all God's promises, his power is joined with his will; so that where the latter is once revealed, there is no question of the former: now of the word of God in this matter, there was no doubt; for he had said, Ro 14:3, that God had *received him*. You had the like way of arguing, Ro 11:23, where the apostle proves the calling of the Jews by an argument taken from the power of God, because he is able to graft them in again: see Ro 4:21 Heb 10:23.

Romans 14:5

Ver. 5. *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike:* there were differences in the church of Rome about the observation of days, as well as the choice of meats; and in this he endeavours an accommodation as well as in the other. The converted Jew was of opinion, that the festival days appointed in Moses's law, were holier than other days, and that they should still be observed: see Ga 4:10 Col 2:16. On the other side, the believing Gentile was of opinion, that the difference in days under the Old Testament was now ceased, and he (the text says) esteemed or approved of all days. The word *alike* is not in the original, but it is aptly supplied by our translators.

Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; i.e. Let every man be satisfied as to the grounds of his practice; let him act by his own and not another man's, judgment and conscience; let him be so fully assured in his own mind of the lawfulness of what he doth, as to find no doubting or scrupulous hesitations in the doing of it; let him be able to say as the apostle himself doth, Ro 14:14. The reason of this counsel you have, Ro 14:23. He that doth what he thinks is a sin, is an offender against God, whether it be a sin or no. And yet a man may sin in that wherein he is fully persuaded he sinneth not. A full persuasion must be had, but it is not sufficient to make an action good or lawful.

Romans 14:6

Ver. 6. In this verse you have a reason why Christians should not censure

one another, upon an account of different opinions and practices, because they have all the same end and scope, which is the pleasing and glorifying of God. It is with regard to him that they eat, or eat not; that they observe those festival days, or observe them not; and so far they are on both sides to be commended; for that indeed should be our end, in all our actions, to glorify and please the Lord: see 1Co 10:31 Col 3:17.

He giveth God thanks; i.e. he is thankful unto God for the bountiful and free use of his creatures. Some would ground that laudable practice of giving thanks at meals upon this text, but it hath a clearer warrant from Mt 14:19 15:36 26:26 Ac 27:35.

He eateth not, and giveth God thanks; because he hath meat enough besides, which he is not forbidden, 1Co 10:28.

Romans 14:7

Ver. 7,8. Here he proves what he had before asserted, that Christians have regard to God and his glory in their particular actions; and that from their general end and design, which is to devote themselves, and their whole life, and death, to God. He tells them first, in the negative, that *none of us*, i.e. that none of us Christians and believers, do live or die to ourselves; we are not our own lords, nor at our own disposal: and then, in the affirmative, he shows, that we live or die to the Lord; we spend our lives in his service, and part with them at his appointment. His glory is the white, at which we aim, living or dying: he is the centre, in which all the lines in the whole circumference of our lives do meet, 2Co 5:9 Php 1:21.

Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's: this is an inference from what he had said before: q. d. At all times, and in all estates, whether of health or sickness, abundance or poverty, life or death, we are the Lord's property, and at his disposal; he hath an absolute dominion over us, living or dying; in this world, or in the next.

Romans 14:9

Ver. 9. *To this end Christ both died, and rose:* q. d. This is the fruit that accrues to Christ, by his death and resurrection, *that he might, &c.*

And revived: the Vulgar Latin leaves out this word. Chrysostom left out the former word, he *arose*. Ambrose inverts the order of the words, and reads them thus: To this end he lived, and died, and rose again. Some think the preter tense is here put for the present tense: he *revived*, i.e. he still lives, to intercede for us, and to exercise dominion over us. Others think that Christ's reviving here doth denote that new state of life which he had after his resurrection.

That he might be Lord both of the dead and living; or, that he may govern and lord it (τῷ κυριεῦσῃ) over all his, whether dead or alive; that he might obtain dominion, or rather the exercise of his dominion, over them. As God, he hath a universal dominion over all; but as Mediator, he hath a more special dominion over all the Father gave to him: this dominion he purchased at his death, and he had the full exercise of it when he rose again, Mt 28:18 Php 2:9,10.

Romans 14:10

Ver. 10. He goes on to persuade them to a mutual forbearance, to dehort them from condemning or contemning one another about indifferent things. He suggests two arguments against it in this verse; one (which is more implied) is taken from the relation they bore one to another; they were brethren, not by natural generation, but by regeneration and adoption; they had the same Father, even God. The second argument is more plainly expressed; and it is taken from the consideration of the day of judgment, when all shall stand before Christ's judgment seat; see 2Co 5:10; *all*, both the strong and the weak; and then he will determine who hath done well or ill. In the mean while, who art thou that dares to usurp his place or office? The interrogation hath the force of a strong denial; q. d. Have you no more grace, charity, or wisdom, than so to do.

Romans 14:11

Ver. 11. This verse proves what was before asserted, that all must *stand*

before the judgment-seat of Christ. The proof is from Isa 45:23. The prophet speaks only of God's swearing; the apostle sets down the form of his oath; which form is frequently mentioned in Scripture: see Nu 14:21,28 Jer 22:24 Eze 5:11 14:16,18 20:3. And instead of *every tongue shall swear*; the apostle, following the Seventy, saith, *every tongue shall confess*; and we are told, Php 2:2, what it shall confess, viz. *that Jesus Christ is Lord*. That which is generally spoken of Jehovah being here in a peculiar manner applied to Christ, it evidently showeth, that he is supreme Judge, and sovereign Lord, unto whom all knees must bow in token of subjection; and before whose tribunal all persons, will they, or will they not, must appear.

Romans 14:12

Ver. 12. Here you have the end of our standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, which is to give account: see Mt 12:36 1Pe 4:5. He saith: *Every one of us shall give account*, whether he be great or small, strong or weak; and that he *shall give account of himself*; i.e. of his own actions, and not another's. He shall give account of himself in his natural capacity, as a man; and in his capacity, as a rich or great man; and in his religious capacity, as one that hath enjoyed such education, such means of grace, &c.

Objection. Pastors must give account for their flock, Heb 13:17.

Answer. Pastors shall give account of their negligence, and want of care, whereby they suffered their sheep or flock to miscarry; but every particular sheep also shall give account of his own personal wanderings.

Romans 14:13

Ver. 13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more:* q. d. Seeing all must be judged by Christ, let us no more judge one another, but mend this fault for time to come.

But judge this rather: hitherto his counsel was more general, respecting both the strong and the weak. Here he begins, in a more particular manner,

to apply himself to the more strong and knowing Christians; counselling them to take heed, lest, by the abuse of their Christian liberty, they should be an offence to them that were weak and more ignorant. He entereth upon this with an elegant transition, making use of the same word in a different sense; for he doth not speak contraries, when he says, *judge not, but judge*; for the word in the former part of the verse signifies, to condemn and censure; but here, in the following part, to deliberate or consider: q. d. Instead of judging others, let us look upon this as a rule for ourselves, and our own deportment, that we put no stumblingblock, &c.

That no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way: q. d. Take heed of offending your brethren in any kind; do not, by an unseasonable use of your liberty, either drive them from their Christian profession, or provoke them to imitate you, and so to sin against their consciences. You have a parallel text, 1Co 8:9. There he speaks only of a stumblingblock; here he adds an occasion of falling, or, as it is in the original, a scandal. Though these two words do differ in their etymologies, yet they have one and the same signification. The latter word, as Stephanus observes, is peculiar to Holy Scripture, and seldom, if ever, used in any common author: it signifieth, properly, the bridge in a trap, which, by its falling down, catcheth a creature in a snare, and so occasions its ruin; and from thence it is used to denote any thing which is an occasion to others of stumbling or falling; any thing whereby we so offend another, as that he is hindered from good, drawn into or confirmed in evil. Scandal, or offence, is either passive or active. Passive scandal is, when that which is good is, by reason of man's corruption, an occasion of filling to him. So Christ himself, and his doctrine, was a scandal to the Jews: see 1Co 1:23 1Pe 2:8. Active scandal is, when any thing is done or said which gives occasion of offence to others, when it is an occasion of grief, or of sin to them, Ro 14:15,21. This occasion may be administered, either by evil counsel, Mt 16:23 Re 2:14; or by evil example, Isa 9:16 Mt 15:14; or by the abuse of Christian liberty in things indifferent, 1Co 8:9.

Romans 14:14

Ver. 14. Here he obviates an objection. Some might say, they were thoroughly persuaded, that no meat was unclean in itself, and therefore they might, and would, use their liberty in eating any thing that was before

them. To this the apostle answers, first, by way of concession; he grants what they say is true, and tells them, that for his own part he knew it full well, and was himself assured of it; and that he had this assurance from *the Lord Jesus*; i.e. that he was instructed therein by his word and Spirit.

That there is nothing unclean of itself; i.e. that no meat was unclean in itself; it was not so in its own nature: see Ge 1:31 9:3. Some creatures might be unwholesome, but none were in themselves unclean: to the Jews they were not unclean by nature, but by a positive law, which law was now antiquated and out of doors: see Col 2:16,17 1Ti 4:3,4.

But to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean: this he adds by way of restriction, that though no meat was unclean in itself, yet it was so to him that thought it to be unclean. If a man shall believe that there is yet a difference in meats, that some are still unclean, and that by virtue of God's prohibition, it would be evil in him to eat such meats, because he therein acts against his conscience, and doth that which he himself thinks to be a sin: see Ro 14:23.

Romans 14:15

Ver. 15. In this verse you have two reasons to induce the strong not to offend the weak: First, it is contrary to charity; to grieve a brother upon the score of meats, is to walk uncharitably; it is a violation of the royal law of love, which is against the grieving or offending others, 1Co 13:4. Two ways are weak Christians grieved, when others do unseasonably use their liberty.

1. They think such do offend God in eating that which he hath forbidden; and this is matter of grief to those that fear God, to see others transgress his laws.
2. They may be drawn by their example to do the like, against their own light and conscience; and this afterwards causeth grief and trouble; their consciences hereby are galled and wounded, 1Co 8:12.

Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died: this is the second reason why Christians should not use their liberty to the offence of others;

it may occasion their ruin and destruction: q. d. Hereby, as much as in you lies, you take a course to destroy them for whom Christ died. You will alienate and estrange them from the Christian religion, or you will draw them into sin, and induce them (as before) to act against their consciences, and so hazard their salvation. See a parallel place, 1Co 8:11. Here a question may arise, whether any can perish for whom Christ died? The answer is, They cannot; and for this the Scripture is express, in Joh 10:28. See also Mt 24:24 Joh 6:39 1Pe 1:5. How then is this text to be understood? The apostle doth not speak of those for whom Christ indeed did die, but of such as, in the judgment of charity, are held to be of that number. We must account all those who confess the faith of Christ, for such as he hath redeemed by his death.

Romans 14:16

Ver. 16. Here is another argument against offences; it will cause our *good* to be blasphemed, or *evil spoken of*. Some, by *good* here, would understand the Christian faith, or the gospel in general; but others do rather understand it of our Christian liberty in particular: q. d. Give none occasion for this great privilege of your Christian liberty to be traduced; use it so, as that neither the weak Christian nor the infidel may reproach or accuse you as licentious or contentious: see 1Co 10:29,30.

Romans 14:17

Ver. 17. This verse contains a new argument to persuade Christians not to strive about meats, or such like things; and that is, that the *kingdom of God* doth not consist in these, but in weightier matters. By the *kingdom of God*, you may understand the gospel, or true religion and godliness; that kingdom which God erects in the hearts of men, Lu 17:21 1Co 4:20. When he saith, *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, he means, that it doth not stand or consist therein.

Meat and drink are put by a synecdoche for all things of an indifferent or middle nature; such things as, the apostle elsewhere says, *commend us not to God*, 1Co 8:8: they are no part of his worship and service; the kingdom of God, or godliness, is not promoted, either by the use or the forbearance

thereof: see Ga 5:6 1Ti 4:8.

But righteousness, and peace, and joy: here he tells you positively wherein the kingdom of God consisteth; not in outward observations, but in inward graces and gracious dispositions. He doth not reckon up all, but contents himself with these three, *righteousness, peace, and joy*. By *righteousness*, some understand that which is imputed, of which you read, Ro 4:1-25: others, rather, that which is implanted and inherent; it is the same with holiness, both the habit of it in the heart, and the exercise of it in the life. By *peace*, some think, he means peace with God, or peace of conscience; others, that he rather means peace with men; or, if you will, peaceableness, or Christian concord and unity. This suits best with what follows, Ro 14:19, and it is often commended to us in Scripture. By *joy* may be understood that spiritual comfort. which ariseth from a present feeling of the favour of God, or from a well grounded hope of future salvation; as also, the comfort and delight which Christians take in the good allld welfare of each other. He that loveth his brother, rejoiceth in his welfare, 1Co 13:6; and therefore will not offend, or occasion him to sin.

In the Holy Ghost; this is added, to show the efficient cause of these graces, which is the Spirit of God; and to distinguish this righteousness, peace, and joy, from that which is merely civil and carnal.

Romans 14:18

Ver. 18. This proves the foregoing assertion, that *the kingdom of God* consisteth in *righteousness, peace, and joy*, because *he that serveth Christ in and by these things, is accepted of God, and approved of men;* this cannot be affirmed of meat and drink, &c. When he says that the serving of Christ in these things is approved of men, he means of such as are godly, and of sound judgment; for of others they are often hated and reviled for the exercise of these very graces: and yet righteousness and peaceableness have oftentimes their praise from the wicked themselves: see 1Sa 2:26 Pr 3:4 Lu 2:52 Ac 2:47.

Romans 14:19

Ver. 19. This verse is the application of the foregoing discourse, in which you have an exhortation to the practice of two great duties. The one is peace, or peaceableness; the other is mutual edification. He had persuaded before to peace with all men, Ro 12:18; and here he speaks more especially of peace and concord amongst brethren: see 2Co 13:11 Eph 4:3 Col 3:15 1Th 5:13 Heb 12:14. This peace is very necessary, and Christians should endeavour all things that will promote it, and avoid all things that will obstruct it. And they must not only live peaceably, but profitably one with another. They should build one another up in grace and knowledge.

Romans 14:20

Ver. 20. *For meat destroy not the work of God:* here you have a further argument against scandals: q. d. For so inconsiderable a matter as eating a little meat, or for the use of an indifferent thing, do not destroy the work of God. By *the work of God*, some understand the soul of a brother; that is styled God's work by way of eminency: it was one of the chiefest works of the creation, and made, as it were, with the consultation of the whole Trinity; the image of God, after a sort, was engraven therein: and if this be the sense, it is a repetition of the argument in Ro 14:15. But by *the work of God*, in this place, other things may be understood; e.g. the unity and peace which God worketh amongst believers of different persuasions in in different things; or else the work of grace, or faith, which God hath wrought by his mighty power in the hearts of men: see Joh 6:29 1Th 1:3.

The work of God, in either of these senses, may be disturbed or hindered by the abuse of Christian liberty; and he that scandalizeth his brother, goes about, as much as in him lieth, to dissolve and demolish that which hath God alone for its author and worker.

All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence: here you have a concession and an exception: he granteth, that *all things are pure* and clean; i.e. in themselves, or in their own nature; see Ro 14:14 1Co 6:12 Tit 1:15: but then he addeth, that *it is evil for*, or to, *that man who eateth with offence*, or that offends another with his eating: it is not evil simply in itself, but accidentally, by reason of scandal.

Romans 14:21

Ver. 21. The apostle proceedeth to enlarge his doctrine touching this particular, beyond the controversy that occasioned this his discourse; for he showeth, that to avoid the scandal or offence of our brethren, we are to abstain, not only from things prohibited by the law, but also from things that are not prohibited thereby; as from *flesh* or *wine*, or any indifferent thing whatsoever. These words, *any thing*, are not in the original, but they are understood, and well supplied in our translation. Thus to do, he says, *is good*, as the contrary, in the foregoing verse, was said to be *evil*: it is good in regard of God, to whom it is acceptable and pleasing; and in regard of our brethren, to whom it is profitable and advantageous; the positive (it may be) is pnt for the comparative; it is good, for it is better: so Mt 18:8,9.

Whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak: some distinguish these three words, *stumbleth*, *is offended*, *made weak*, making the first to be the greater, and the last the lesser injury: others will have the first to be the lesser, and the last the greater injury. But there are those that think they all three do signify the same thing; and the Syriac interpreter renders them all by one word, viz. is offended: and the same thing may be expressed by divers words, to insinuate the great care we should take, that we do not *put a stumblingblock* (as it is Ro 14:13) or an occasion of falling into our brother's way. The apostle seems to practise what he here prescribeth, in 1Co 8:13.

Romans 14:22

Ver. 22. *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God*: some read the first clause without an interrogation, thou hast faith; either way the sense is the same. The apostle here anticipates an objection. The stronger Christian might be ready to say, as it is in Ro 14:14: *I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself*; I firmly believe, that now, under the gospel, all meats are lawful, and that I have liberty to use or eat what I please; and is it not fit that my practice should be agreeable to my belief, that I should act according to my judgment? To this he answereth, that if a man hath such a faith or persuasion, he should not unseasonably discover it to the offence of his brother, but rather conceal it. He doth not speak of faith in the fundamentals of religion, this must be professed and

acknowledged, let who will be offended; but of faith in indifferent things (which are the subject matter he is treating of): our belief or persuasion therein is not to be unseasonably uttered or declared, so as to occasion scandal or contention.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth; an excellent aphorism respecting all, especially the stronger and more knowing Christian: the sense is: He is a happy man, that, when he knoweth a thing to be lawful, he doth so manage the practice of it, that he hath therein no reason to accuse or condemn himself: or else, that doth not inwardly condemn himself, for doing that against his conscience. which he openly alloweth or practiseth: such a one is happy in this respect, because he is free from those terrors that torment those who act against their consciences.

Romans 14:23

Ver. 23. In this verse is another aphorism, respecting especially the weaker Christian.

He that doubteth of the lawfulness of any meat, whether he may or may not eat it, is damned if he eat, i.e. His own conscience condemns him, or he makes himself liable to damnation, *because he eateth not of faith.* The word *eateth* is not in the original, but it is aptly inserted by our translators. What a man doth doubtingly, he doth sinfully: he showeth a wicked heart, that is not afraid of sin, but in great readiness to commit it.

For whatsoever is not of faith is sin; this is a confirmation of the foregoing assertion. By *faith* here is meant knowledge, or full persuasion, as Ro 14:22: q. d. Whatever a man doth with a wavering mind, without being persuaded that it is pleasing to God, and warranted by his word, he sinneth in the doing of it. Though we may not nourish doubts and scruples, yet we must not act against them. An erring conscience binds us to act nothing contrary to it: he sins that doth any thing against it, though the fact or thing done should not be sinful. Nature itself teacheth as much: that is a known saying of Cicero: *Quod dubitas, aequum sit an iniquum, ne feceris:* If thou doubttest whether a thing be lawful, or not lawful, thou shalt not do it. See Heb 11:6.

Romans 15:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 15:1-3 We ought, in condescension to the weak, to give up our own will for our neighbour's good, after the example of Christ.

Ro 15:4 The intent of the Scriptures.

Ro 15:5,6 Paul prayeth for unanimity among Christians.

Ro 15:6-12 Exhorteth to receive one the other, as Christ did all, both Jews and Gentiles,

Ro 15:13 and wisheth them all joy, peace, and hope.

Ro 15:14-16 He apologizeth for his freedom in admonishing them, as he was the apostle of the Gentiles,

Ro 15:17-21 and showeth the success and extensiveness of his labours.

Ro 15:23-29 He excuseth his not coming to them before, and promiseth them, a visit on his return from Jerusalem.

Ro 15:30-33 He requesteth their prayers.

Ver. 1. *We then that are strong:* the particle *then* showeth, that what followeth is inferred from what went before. By the *strong*, he means those who have attained to a good measure of knowledge and understanding, that are instructed in the Christian faith, and particularly in the doctrine of Christian liberty. He putteth himself in the number, not out of ambition, but that he may propose himself an example of the following duty.

Ought; i.e. we are obliged and bound both by the law of God and nature.

To bear the infirmities of the weak: by *the weak*, he means those who are weak in faith and knowledge, Ro 14:1. By their *infirmities*, he means their ignorance, frowardness, consorinousness, &c. He doth not speak of heresies and manifest enormities; but of such errors in doctrine and life, which proceed from ignorance or common infirmity. When he says, we must

bear their infirmities, his meaning is, that we must bear with them, as we do with children or sick persons in their waywardness: though it a great burden to us, yet we must bear it; we must not impatiently contradict them, but prudently instruct them: see Ex 23:5 1Co 9:22 Ga 6:2.

And not to please ourselves: q. d. We ought not to do what we please in indifferent thing's, and to act according to our own sentiments without any regard to others; we should not please ourselves in a proud reflecting upon our own knowledge, and in contemning of others because of their ignorance; we should not stand upon the terms of our liberty and contentment, but rather, for the sake of others, depart a little from our own right.

Romans 15:2

Ver. 2. Having said we must not please ourselves, he immediately subjoins, we must please others, viz. *every one his neighbour*: he means, that we should condescend and accommodate ourselves to others, and give them satisfaction in all things; at least so far as may tend to their good and edification. You had a like passage, Ro 14:19. The apostle exhorts the Corinthians to a practice some what like this, 1Co 10:24; and he leads them the way by is own example, 1Co 9:19 1Co 10:33. There is a pleasing of men which is sinful, and there is a pleasing of men which is lawful; and that is, when it is limited, as in this text.

Romans 15:3

Ver. 3. *For even Christ pleased not himself:* he backs his exhortation in Ro 14:1, with an argument taken from the practice of our Lord himself, who is our perfect pattern, and hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps: see Joh 13:15,34 1Pe 2:21 1Jo 2:6 4:17. By Christ's not pleasing himself, is meant his not indulging or sparing himself; he did not seek his own ease, nor to satisfy inclination of the human nature, which abhorreth pain, and the destruction of itself. He took such a course all along as sufficiently demonstrated that he respected our benefit, and not his own.

But; here is an ellipsis, something must he supplied to fill up the sense:

either the meaning is, he pleased not himself, but others; or, he pleased not himself, but bore our infirmities and reproaches: or else, he pleased not himself, but it happened to him; or he so carried himself that it might be truly applied to him, which is written, &c.

As it is written; viz. in Ps 69:9. That David uttered these words in the person of Christ, or as a type of him, may appear from Joh 2:17. Interpreters are divided about accommodating this testimony to the occasion for which it is brought. Either the meaning is, that Christ did willingly expose himself to all the reproaches and contumelies of men, in obedience to his Father's will; or else, that he and the same concerns with God the Father, so that what befell God did also befall him; he was as tender of the Father's honour as of his own: or else, that the sins of men, which are things that cast reproach upon God, were taken by Christ upon himself, and he bore them in his body upon a tree. Seeing then that Christ hath done so much for our sakes, and hath not sought his own ease and benefit, we ought also to seek the good of others, and to deny ourselves: see Php 2:6-8.

Romans 15:4

Ver. 4. Lest any should think, that the testimony before alleged concerneth only David or Christ, he showeth that it belongeth also unto us; that we may learn by their example to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Yea, he takes occasion from hence to inform us of the general use of the Scriptures, that whatsoever is written, in this or any other place, is written for our learning and instruction; we are concerned not only by all the precepts, but in all the promises, Heb 13:5, menaces, Ac 13:40,41, rewards, Ro 4:24, and punishments, 1Co 10:11, therein mentioned and declared: and though this passage is more especially to be understood of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, yet it is true also of the Scriptures of the New Testament; they, being written by the same Spirit, are profitable for the same ends: see 2Ti 3:16.

That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope; he proceeds to show more particularly the use and benefit of the Holy Scripture, which is, to confirm our hope and assurance of eternal life; see 1Jo 5:13. He saith, *the patience and comfort of the Scriptures*, because

they are both wrought in us by means thereof: see Re 3:10. We are armed with patience, and finished with consolations, from the examples and promises contained therein. It may be, the *hope* he here speaks of is to be understood not only of eternal life, but of salvation and deliverance in this life: q. d. One principal use of the Scriptures is this, that by the examples we find there of the patience of holy men, and of God's relieving and comforting them in their distresses, we might be confident that God will relieve and comfort us also in due time.

Romans 15:5

Ver. 5. *Now the God of patience and consolation:* he is called, *the God of all grace*, 1Pe 5:10, *the God of hope*, Ro 15:13, *the God of peace*, Ro 15:33, *the God of love and peace*, 2Co 13:11, and here, *the God of patience and consolation:* the meaning is, he is the author and worker thereof. You read in the former verse of the *patience and comfort of the Scriptures*; and here he showeth that the Scriptures do not work these of themselves, but God doth it in and by them.

Grant you to be like-minded one towards another; this is that to which he had exhorted them, Ro 12:16. See the like, 1Co 1:10 2Co 13:11 Eph 4:3 Php 2:2. God is the author, as of patience and consolation, so of peace and concord: the grace of unity and charity is his gift; he maketh men of one mind and of one heart, and for this he should be inquired of by his saints and people to do it for them.

According to Christ Jesus; i.e. according to his doctrine, command, or example.

Romans 15:6

Ver. 6. *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God:*

q. d. I further pray, that you may not only be like-minded one towards another, but *that ye may with one mouth glorify God*; that whether you be Gentiles or Jews, strong or weak in the faith, you may agree and be unanimous in his worship and service; that not only *with one mind*, but *with one mouth*, or as if you had all but one mouth. you may pray unto

God and praise him: that is one way of glorifying God, Ps 50:23, and it seems to be chiefly intended in this place. See Ac 4:32, what accord and unanimity there was among the primitive Christians.

Even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; a usual periphrasis of God in the New Testament: see 2Co 1:3 11:31 Eph 1:3 Col 1:3 1Pe 1:3. God is the Father of Christ, first, as he is the Son of God; so he begat him by an eternal and ineffable generation, Joh 3:16 1Jo 4:9. Secondly, as he is man: so he created him, Lu 1:35. Thirdly, as he is Mediator; so he appointed him to and qualified him for that office, Ps 40:8 Joh 20:17. This compellation of God includes all our comfort and happiness, for he is our Father because he is the Father of Jesus Christ. It is added here by way of limitation, to distinguish the true God from the false gods of the earth; and by way of explanation, to show how God will be glorified and worshipped under the gospel, viz. as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:7

Ver. 7. *Wherefore receive ye one another:* see Ro 14:1,3. He ends this discourse with the same terms in which he began it. Before, the strong only were charged to receive the weak, but here both are charged alike; the strong must receive the weak, and the weak the strong; they must all have communion one with another, continuing in brotherly love, accounting one another for brethren, exercising mutual forbearance and long-suffering.

As Christ also received us; i.e. after the example of Christ, who beareth with the infirmities of his followers, putting no difference betwixt Jews and Gentiles. The particle *as* noteth quality, not equality; there is no proportion betwixt the infinite love of Christ and the scanty charity of man. See the like, Mt 5:48 Eph 5:2.

To the glory of God; some join this with the former clause, that we should *receive one another to the glory of God:* God is glorified by that brotherly love and concord that is amongst his people. Others join it with the latter clause, that *Christ hath received us to the glory of God;* i.e. to make us partakers of the glory of God, or to declare and manifest the glory of God's truth to the Jews, and mercy to the Gentiles, as he showeth in the following verses.

Romans 15:8

Ver. 8. He explains himself, and declares more at large, how Christ received both Jews and Gentiles, thereby to admonish them to receive one another. As for the Jews, whom he calls here *the circumcision*, see Ro 3:30 4:9,12, he saith, Christ became *a minister* unto them; see Mt 20:28. He exercised his ministry in the days of his flesh amongst them only, Mt 15:24. He went indeed now and then into the coasts of Samaria to make way for the calling of the Gentiles, but his chief abode was in Jewry.

For the truth of God; or, because of the truth of God, that his truth or faithfulness might not fail.

To confirm the promises made to the fathers; i.e. the promises of the Messiah, made first to Adam, then to Abraham and to David, that the Messiah should come of their loins, that in their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

Romans 15:9

Ver. 9. Here he proves the second part, that Christ hath also received the Gentiles. There is a plain ellipsis in the words; this is understood, that there were promises made of or to the Gentiles, and Christ came to confirm them also. The sum of these promises was this, *that the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy*. Some have observed how the truth of God is spoken of in the foregoing verse with respect to the Jews, and the mercy of God with respect to the Gentiles; not that the one was without the other; for the salvation of the Jews, as it was of truth, so of mercy also, Mic 7:20; and the vocation of the Gentiles, as it was of mercy, so also of truth; for there were many promises of God concerning that matter, but mercy is predicated of the Gentiles, because that attribute of God appeared more eminently in their conversion and calling. You had the like distribution and difference in Ro 4:25 10:10.

As it is written: because the Jews were hardly persuaded of the mercy of God to the Gentiles, therefore he proves it by divers Scripture testimonies.

This first is taken out of Ps 18:49: See Poole on "Ps 18:49". David speaks this in the person of Christ. In the Psalm it is: *I will give thanks to thee*; but here, according to the LXX., *I will confess to thee*, or celebrate thee *among the Gentiles*. They then are received to mercy, forasmuch as it was foretold they should celebrate or praise God for his mercy.

Romans 15:10

Ver. 10. This is taken out of De 32:43. Here it is evidently implied, that the Gentiles should become the people of God, and join with the Jews in his worship and service, and rejoice in the sense of his goodness and mercy to them. The partition wall is now taken away, and they both became one sheepfold under one Shepherd.

Romans 15:11

Ver. 11. This is found in Ps 117:1. There the Gentiles are willed to praise God, which they could not do unless they knew him aright, and had obtained mercy from him.

Romans 15:12

Ver. 12. *And again, Esaias saith; viz. in Isa 11:10*: see the notes there. This is a plain prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles; their being received to mercy is implied in the former testimonies, but here it is expressed. The Son of David (the Saviour) shall rise and spring out of Jesse's root, and reign over the Gentiles by his word and Spirit. He shall gather them by the preaching of his cross, as by an ensign, and they, as it is in the prophet, shall *seek* to him; or, as it is here, shall *trust* or hope in him. The apostle, as he is wont, doth follow the LXX., which makes some little variation from the Hebrew text; but it is rather in sound than in sense. You have other prophecies and promises of the Gentiles' mercy, as Isa 42:1,6 Isa 49:22 60:3,5; but the apostle thought, that these he had mentioned were sufficient for his purpose.

Romans 15:13

Ver. 13. He finisheth here his long discourse about brotherly love and concord with a short and pithy prayer. Having said before, that the Gentiles should hope in God, he takes occasion from hence to style him, *The God of hope*. He is so, both objective, as being the only object of our hope, see Ps 146:5 Jer 17:7 1Ti 6:17; and effective, as being the only author of it, 1Pe 1:3.

With all joy and peace in believing; i.e. with much inward joy and peace, which riseth in the heart through a lively faith in Christ; or else, with all comfort and concord in the Christian faith. In this he prays they may *abound*; instead of those contentions that had been amongst them, he desires they may be filled with those things, wherein he told them, Ro 14:17, *the kingdom of God* consisted.

That ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; he doth not say, that you may have hope, but that you may abound therein, that you may arrive to a plerophory or *full assurance of hope*, as it is in Heb 6:11. Such hope as may be like an anchor to the soul, to keep it safe and steady in the midst of storms and tempests. This hope is wrought in us by no less power and virtue than that of the Holy Ghost. See before.

Romans 15:14

Ver. 14. Here begins the epilogue or conclusion of this excellent Epistle, wherein the apostle makes an apology, first for his manner of writing to them, and then for his not coming to them himself. His first apology is ushered in with a singular commendation of the Christians at Rome; he began with their commendation, Ro 1:8, and he ends with the same. There are three things which he commends them for. The first is their *goodness*; thus it is numbered among *the fruits of the Spirit*, Ga 5:22. It may be taken more largely, and so it comprehends all grace and virtue; or else more strictly, and so it is put for kindness, gentleness, and charity, in forbearing and forgiving others. The second is *all knowledge*; i.e. in things necessary, or in matters relating to Christian liberly; or, by *all knowledge*, he means a large measure and proportion of it. The third is ability *to admonish one another*, to inform others in things about which they were ignorant, or it

reprehend others for things about which they were negligent. Though there were many weak and ignorant persons among them, yet there were others of whom he was persuaded and fully assured they were thus qualified: see 1Co 1:5.

Romans 15:15

Ver. 15. q. d. Though I am thus persuaded of you, or of many of you, yet I thought good to write to you *in some sort*, or in part, or a little the more boldly and freely, that I may stir you up to the practise of that which you know already: see 2Pe 1:12,13 3:1. This he speaks to allay the sharpness of his former reprehensions, and that what he had written might be the better digested; for all men more easily endure to be noted of negligence, than of malice or ignorance. And further he tells them, he could do no less, *because of the grace that was given him of God*; i.e. because of his apostolical office and authority: see Ro 1:5 12:3.

Romans 15:16

Ver. 16. He proceeds to speak more particularly of his office and calling, which he had mentioned more generally in the foregoing words.

The minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles: see the notes on Ro 11:13. See also Ga 2:7,8 2Ti 1:11.

Ministering the gospel of God; i.e. preaching of it. Some read it consecrating, or working, in the holy service of the gospel of God. It is an allusion to the work or office of the priests under the law. The Jews and Gentiles, they both boasted of their priesthood and sacrifices: the apostle therefore showeth, that its ministry was far more excellent, being not occupied in sacrificing of beasts, but in offering up living men to be a holy sacrifice to God.

That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable: some understand it actively, that the Gentiles might, offer up themselves, as it is in Ro 12:1; or that they might offer up acceptable sacrifices to God, according to Mal 1:11. But it is better understood passively, that the apostle, converting

them by his ministry, might present or offer them to God, as an acceptable oblation: see Isa 66:20.

Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; not by any priest on earth, but even by the Holy Ghost himself; as the oblations of old had their external and legal purifyings, so this oblation is purified or *sanctified by the Holy Ghost*.

Romans 15:17

Ver. 17. q. d. Having received this grace of apostleship, and having had great success in my labours, multitudes being converted by my ministry: *I have whereof to glory,* or, I have matter of glorying and rejoicing. But then he adds, that this glorying of his was not in himself, but in and *through Jesus Christ,* by whose grace he did what he did: see 1Co 15:10. And also, that it was not in any thing that concerned himself, but in things pertaining to God, which concerned his worship and service, and wherein his ministry consisted. In the foregoing verse he described his apostleship in terms that were borrowed from the Levitical priesthood: and here, contriving the same metaphor, he calleth the execution of his function, a performing of things pertaining to God. which is that for which the priests of old were ordained, Heb 5:1.

Romans 15:18

Ver. 18. q. d. I dare not speak of more than is true, or of any thing that was not really done by me: or else the meaning is, I dare not speak of any thing that I have done of myself, I acknowledge that, whatever good hath come to the Gentiles by my means, it was wrought by Christ, whose instrument I have only been: see 1Co 3:5.

By word and deed: some join these words to the obedience of the Gentiles; by the preaching of the gospel they were made obedient in word and deed. But they are better joined with the former words; Christ wrought in and by the apostle Paul, believed word and deed. By *word* is understood his public preaching, and private instruction; and by *deed*, the example of his good works, or godly life: or else, by *deed* ye may understand the miracles that

he wrought, and the labour and travail that he underwent; of which in the following verse.

Romans 15:19

Ver. 19. *Through mighty signs and wonders;* or, by the power of signs and wonders, which served to confirm my commission from God, and the truth of what I preached, and so helped forward the obedience and conversion of the Gentiles: see 2Co 12:12. If there be any difference betwixt *signs and wonders*, it is only gradual. I find them often conjoined in Scripture, Mt 24:24 Joh 4:48 Ac 2:43 5:12 Ac 7:36 14:3.

By the power of the Spirit of God; which blessed the words, deeds, and miracles of the apostle, and wrought effectually by them in the Gentiles. The word *δυνάμις*, *power*, or *virtue*, is twice used in this verse; it is first applied to signs and wonders, to show their efficacy; and then to the Spirit of God, to show that he was the efficient cause of that efficacy.

So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum: this showeth the pains and travail of the apostle, to bring the Gentiles to the obedience of faith. Illyricum is said to be in the utmost parts of Greece, bordering upon the sea, which is thereupon called Illyricum Mare. It is thought to be the country now called Sclavonia, and that is distant from Jerusalem about three hundred and fifty German miles, which make above a thousand English miles; yet it seems he did not travel in a direct and straight line, but round about, or in a circle, as the word imports, fetching a circuit. Some writers have given us out of the Acts a particular history of his peregrination from Damascus, where he began his ministry: he went into Arabia, and after three years returned to Damascus, and from thence to Jerusalem; from Jerusalem he went to Caesarea, and so to Tarsus; from Tarsus Barnabas brought him to Antioch, and from thence to Jerusalem, to carry relief to the Jews. From Jerusalem they returned to Antioch; from Antioch he and Barnabas went to Seleucia, then to Cyprus, and to some cities of Pamphylia, and so to another Antioch in Pisidia; from thence to Lycaonia, and then returned to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended by the church. From Antioch they were sent to Jerusalem about the question of the circumcision, and returned to Antioch with the apostles' decree. From thence he went through Syria and Cilicia, visiting

the churches. Then he went through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia; then to Troas, where by a vision he was called unto Macedonia, and so came into the parts of Europe; first to Philippi in Macedonia, then to Thessalonica; from thence to Athens, and then to Corinth; from thence to Ephesus; and going to visit the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, returned to Ephesus. From Ephesus he went again to Macedonia; from thence to Troas and Miletus; and thence, by Tyrus and Caesarea, and other cities, he came to Jerusalem, where he was taken and put in bonds. Thus you have an account of the apostle's travels, which he abridgeth here, when he says, that it was *from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum*.

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ; i.e. I have filled all these countries with the gospel of Christ. The word signifieth to fulfil; see Col 4:17. This he calleth the finishing his ministry, Ac 20:24.

Romans 15:20

Ver. 20,21. He gives a reason why he chose to preach the gospel in these places, because Christ had not been named or preached there before; this, he saith, was his ambition, and a thing that he greatly coveted; he was unwilling to *build upon another man's foundation*, to put his sickle into another's harvest, to derive the glory to himself which would be due to others, 2Co 10:15,16. Again, another reason why he preached the gospel where Christ had not been named, was this, that so by him, as an apostle of Christ, and in his ministry, that scriptre might be fulfilled, which you have in Isa 52:15, *To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see, &c.* See Poole on "Isa 52:15".

Romans 15:22

Ver. 22. Hitherto he hath excused his manner of writing, now he makes an apology for his not coming unto them. They at Rome might be ready to say: If he had travelled into so many countries, why could he not all this while give us a visit? To this he answers, it was not from any want of respect or good will to them, but for another cause, which he had already assigned, and that was, the preaching of Christ where he had not been

named; for this cause, he says, he had been much hindered: he looked upon that as the more necessary work; the planting of churches is more than the watering of them. He told them, Ro 1:13, of his being hindered from coming to them, and now he acquaints them (more particularly with the reason, which he concealed before. The word (τα πολλά) rendered *much*, signifieth many; and it implies that he was many times hindered, and many ways; but this was the chief.

Romans 15:23

Ver. 23. Having given the reason why he came not to them hitherto, in the following words he assures them he would do it hereafter. And here he saith he was the more inclined so to do, first: Because he had no more place in those parts, i.e. as before, in those places where Christ had not been named, or his gospel preached, he had no new churches there to found, and he had ordained elders in every city to build upon his foundation. The word rendered *parts*, signifies climates; i.e. places which he on divers elevations of the pole. And then, secondly: Because he had long longed so to do, he had desired it for many years, Ro 1:10,11.

Romans 15:24

Ver. 24. Here he sets down the time when he would visit them, i.e. when he took his journey into Spain. He saith, he trusted he should see them then; he was not assured of it, he had no revelation from God concerning it, he could make no absolute promise. See Ro 15:28.

And to be brought on my way thitherward by you; i.e. by some of you; this he did promise himself from them, and indeed it was usually done by the churches he visited; see Ac 17:15: not that he affected any train or pomp, but it was done for his guidance and safety, as he travelled through unknown and dangerous ways.

If first I be somewhat filled with your company: this he adds, lest they should think he meant to make no stay with them; he gives them to understand, that he did not intend to leave them, till they were mutually filled and satisfied with one another's company and society.

Romans 15:25

Ver. 25. Some might be ready to say: If Paul hath no more place in those parts where he is, and hath such a longing desire to see us, why then doth he not presently come to us? To this he answers, that for the present he could not come, because he had a weighty affair upon his hands, which was to go up to Jerusalem to minister to the saints; i.e. to carry thither certain collections and contributions from the Gentile churches for their relief. He useth a participle of the present tense in the original, to show that this work is now in hand, and it would not stay or hold him long. Though indeed his work was to preach the gospel, and not to serve tables; yet it seems likely that the churches of the Gentiles, who were moved by him to this contribution, had committed the same to his care, 2Co 8:4.

Romans 15:26

Ver. 26. For the understanding of these words, you need only to read 2Co 8:1, and 2Co 9:2. When he saith, *it hath pleased them*, it is implied, that it was not extorted or squeezed out of them; but that it proceeded from a ready and willing mind, and that they took delight therein. The word here rendered *contribution*, properly signifieth communication, which implieth a mutual exchange or intercourse between the givers and the receivers; the one contributing alms, the other prayers and intercessions to God. He speaks elsewhere of communicating *concerning giving and receiving*, Php 4:15.

Romans 15:27

Ver. 27. *It hath pleased them verily*; he makes this repetition, as to commend the Grecians, so also to admonish the Romans to the like benevolence.

And their debtors they are; i.e. the Gentiles are debtors to the Jews; though what they sent them was a gift, yet it was also a debt, it was due by the law of charity, Ro 13:8, and by the law of gratitude and equity; they

had received from them, and they were obliged in some sort to make returns to them.

For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things: by the spiritual things of the Jews, of which the Gentiles were *made partakers*, you may understand all those things of which mention is made, Ro 9:4,5; more particularly, the gospel, with the ministry and ordinances thereof: the gospel was first preached to the Jews, and from Jerusalem it was spread abroad among the Gentiles: see Lu 24:47 Ac 1:4,8. By the *carnal things* of the Gentiles, you may understand their gold and silver, with all things needful for the sustentation of the body: you have a parallel place in 1Co 9:7.

Romans 15:28

Ver. 28. *When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit;* i.e. After that I have despatched this business, and safely delivered the alms of the Greek churches to the Jews, wherewith I am intrusted; it is put into my hands as a treasure sealed in a bag or chest, that it may not be diminished or embezzled: he calls it *fruit*, because it proceeded from their faith and love, and because it would abound to their account, Php 4:17; it would benefit them that received it, but much more them that gave it.

I will come by you into Spain; i.e. I will take you, or your city, in my way thither. He told them as much before, Ro 15:24. This he really intended, but it is generally concluded that he was prevented, that he never went this journey into Spain. The purposes of men are ruled and overruled by the providence of God, Pr 16:9.

Romans 15:29

Ver. 29. i.e. As some expound it, I shall find you furnished with all spiritual and gospel blessings: this sense agrees with Ro 15:14. But others rather think, that he speaks of what he should bring with him, and not of what he should find there: therefore it may better be expounded by Ro

1:11,12. He assures himself he should impart unto them much knowledge, grace, and comfort; that he should enrich and fill them with all *the blessings of the gospel of Christ*.

Romans 15:30

Ver. 30. In the conclusion, he commends himself to their prayers. This is usual with him in his other Epistles: see Eph 6:18-20 Col 4:3 2Th 3:1 Heb 13:18.

I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake: q. d. If not for my sake, yet for his sake, who is most dear to you.

And for the love of the Spirit: q. d. If you love the Spirit of God; or rather, if the grace of love be wrought in you by the Spirit, show it in this thing. This pathetic way of speaking is frequent with this apostle: see Ro 12:1 Php 2:1.

That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that you strive as those that be in an agony; it is a military word: he bespeaks their earnest and importunate prayers in his behalf. Jacob prayed after this manner; so did Elijah, and Epaphras, Col 4:12. He prayed himself, and he desired them to join with him, and help him, as Aaron and Hur helped Moses.

Romans 15:31

Ver. 31. Here are two things more particularly, which he desires them to beg of God in his behalf.

First: That ye may be delivered from them that did not believe, or were disobedient and refractory, in Judea. He knew the Jews were incensed against him; that troubles did abide him or wait for him in Judea, thither he was going; see Ac 20:23. And it happened accordingly, for the Jews went about to kill him, Ac 21:31. Therefore it is that he desires their prayers, that he might be *delivered from them*; see 2Th 3:2.

Secondly: That the alms he brought the poor saints at Jerusalem might be taken by them in good part; that they might be reconciled, both to the Gentile churches that sent it, and to him that brought it. It detracts greatly from a gift, when it comes, either from one, or by one, against whom we are prejudiced.

Romans 15:32

Ver. 32. *That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God:*

q. d. This would be a means to make me come unto you with the more comfort, if God will, or if God grant it to our prayers. This condition, if God will, he had before inserted upon this very occasion, Ro 1:10. See the like, 1Co 4:19 Jas 4:13,15. This he did to free himself from the suspicion of inconstancy, in case it should fall out otherwise; as also to show, that always, and in all things, he referred himself to the good pleasure and providence of God.

And may with you be refreshed; i.e. with your company and converse. This hath the same sense with Ro 1:12: see the notes there.

Romans 15:33

Ver. 33. *The God of peace;* this is a frequent title of God in Scripture; he is called *the God of peace*, Ro 16:20 2Co 13:11 Php 4:9 1Th 5:23 2Th 3:16 Heb 13:20. Here it fits his great argument, which was to persuade the believing Romans to be at peace amongst themselves, and not to contend about indifferent things.

Be with you all: three times in this chapter doth the apostle lift up a prayer for the believing Romans; see Ro 16:5,13; and this is more comprehensive than the other two. If God be with us, no good thing can be wanting to us. God's presence is inclusive of all good, and exclusive of all evil.

Amen: see Ro 16:27.

Romans 16:1

Chapter Summary

Ro 16:1,2 Paul commendeth Phebe to the Christians at Rome,

Ro 16:3-16 and sendeth salutations to many by name.

Ro 16:17-20 He warneth them to take heed of those who cause divisions and offences.

Ro 16:21-24 After sundry salutations,

Ro 16:25-27 he concludes with praise to God.

Ver. 1. This chapter is in the nature of a postscript. The apostle begins it with the recommendation of a certain woman to them. She went upon some occasion to Rome, and by her (as some have supposed) this Epistle was sent to the church there.

Phebe: the poets called the moon Phoebe, as they did the sun Phoebus. This name is likely to have been imposed by her parents, being Gentiles.

Our sister; i.e. in Christ, and by the profession of the same faith: see Jas 2:16.

Cenchrea; a port or haven belonging to Corinth, on the east side towards Asia: there was another on the west side towards Italy, called Lechea. By reason of this double haven, Corinth was called by the poets, *Bi maris*. Here Paul paid a vow, which he had made, Ac 18:18. Here also he preached and converted many, amongst whom this Phebe (as is probable) was one. When he saith, she was *servant of the church*, it is not meant she was a deaconness, or one of the college of widows, of whom he speaketh, 1Ti 5:9. But she served the church, in harbouring and succouring the saints that were driven out of their country; yea, as appears by the next verse, she was a succourer of the ministers of the gospel, and of the apostle himself. We read, Lu 8:3, of some that *ministered unto* the Lord *of their substance*; there the same word is used. And this Phebe seems to have been employed in the same works; she ministered unto Paul as Onesiphorus did, 2Ti 1:18; there the same word is used again.

Romans 16:2

Ver. 2. *Receive her in the Lord;* i.e. in the Lord's name, or for the Lord's sake: see Mt 18:5. Or else it is as if he had said: Receive her Christianly.

As becometh saints; as it is fit that saints should be received, or as it is fit for them, who profess themselves to be saints, to receive one another.

That ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; that you stand by her, and afford her your counsel, or any other assistance. She might have some business in the emperor's court, by reason of fraud, oppression, or some unjust vexations; and there might be those amongst them that could stand her in some stead. There were Christians of Caesar's household, Php 4:22.

For she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also: the word signifieth a patroness. She had been hospitable to many, and in particular, to the apostle himself. This showeth she was a woman of some account: it was but equal that the saints at Rome should assist her, who had been assistant unto so many others.

Romans 16:3

Ver. 3. In the next place, he saluteth several persons by name; the first are *Priscilla and Aquila*. Sometimes she is called *Prisca*, 2Ti 4:19; and by a diminutive, *Priscilla*. This was usual amongst the Romans. So Livia was called Livilla; Tullia, Tulliola; Petrona, Petronella, &c. The wife is named before her husband; so she is, Ac 18:18 2Ti 4:19. Some think she was first called; others, that she was most renowned for her zeal and charity. We need not to be curious in our inquiry after the reason; we find in other places Aquila is set before Priscilla, Ac 18:2,26 1Co 16:19. Hence it may appear how weakly the papists argue for Peter's primacy, because he was placed first on the catalogue of the apostles; for by the same argument, the wife should be preferred before her husband. This Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, and by occupation a tent-maker: with him the apostle Paul abode and wrought at Corinth, Ac 18:2,3. Though Claudius the emperor had commanded the Jews to depart from Rome, yet now, it seems, they were returned thither again; possibly, because Claudius was dead, or because

that severe edict was relaxed.

My helpers in Christ Jesus; in propagating the gospel in their place and calling, and as they had opportunity. Though they preached not publicly, yet they furthered the gospel many ways privately: see [Ac 18:26](#).

Romans 16:4

Ver. 4. *Who have for my life laid down their own necks;* i.e. they hazarded their own lives to save mine. The Scripture speaks of this as the duty of Christians, [1Jo 3:16](#). He refers (it may be) to that uproar that was at Corinth, of which see [Ac 18:12](#); or that in Asia, of which see [Ac 19:23](#).

Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and his preservation redounded to the benefit of them all.

Romans 16:5

Ver. 5. *Likewise greet the church that is in their house;* the word greet is supplied to fill up the sense: q. d. Declare my goodwill to them, and desires of their welfare. You have the same salutations, [1Co 16:19](#); and the like in [Col 4:15](#) [Phm 1:2](#). By *the church in their house*, is generally understood, their family or household; which he calls a church, because of the godly order and religious worship that was exercised amongst them. May Aquila and Priscilia be a pattern unto other housekeepers; may the families of Christians be every where as little churches. The house of George, prince of Anhalt, for the good and godly order therein observed, was said to be, as well a church as a court. There are some that think, that by *the church in their house*, is meant the Christians that were wont to assemble there for solemn worship; but this is not likely, because of the particular salutations of so many in the following verses.

Salute my well-beloved Epenetus: Epenetus, in the Greek tongue, is laudable and praise-worthy; so was this person, both in name and in deed.

Who is the first-fruits, of Achaia unto Christ: the same is affirmed of *the*

house of Stephanas, 1Co 16:15. The meaning may be this, Epenetus was the first person, and Stephana's family was the first family, that embraced the faith of Christ in the region of Achaia. This is a singular commendation; God's soul desires such first-ripe fruits, Mic 7:1.

Romans 16:6

Ver. 6. *Greet Mary*: this was a common name, but the person here meant was of special note. Ignatius highly commends one of this name, giving her an ample character for wisdom and godliness.

Who bestowed much labour on us; this is the commendation the apostle gives of this woman: it is to be understood of her labour and service in providing food and other necessaries for the entertainment of the faithful, especially the preachers of the gospel; which he acknowledgeth as done to himself, though he had not been at Rome, because of the communion of saints. Some think this woman dwelt before at Corinth, or Antioch, or in some other places, where she had ministered unto the apostle Paul himself.

Romans 16:7

Ver. 7. *Salute Andronicus and Junia*; it may be rendered Junius. Some think this Junia was a woman, and the wife of Andronicus; others take them both for men.

My kinsmen; so he calls them, either because they were Jews, Ro 9:3; or because they were of the same tribe; or because they were more nearly related to him by consanguinity and affinity.

My fellow prisoners; i.e. they had been imprisoned for the gospel, as well as he: the apostle had been often in prison himself, 2Co 11:23. We read, Ac 16:23, of his being imprisoned at Philippi, and it may be these two were his fellow prisoners, for we read of other prisoners there besides Paul and Silas, Ro 16:25,26.

Who are of note among the apostles; i.e. they were well known to the apostles, and were in good esteem with them: not only the twelve, together

with Paul and Barnabas, but other teachers are sometimes called *apostles*, or *messengers*; see 2Co 8:23 Php 2:25. Some have thought these two, Andronicus and Junia, were of the number of the seventy disciples, who are mentioned Lu 10:1. Others, that they were of the one hundred and twenty, who are mentioned in Ac 1:15; or of those that were converted by the first preaching of Peter, and the rest, Ac 2:41 4:4. By what follows, it appeareth they were of considerable standing in Christianity.

Who also were in Christ before me: there are three things for which he commends these two persons: the first is, their sufferings for Christ; the second is, their fame among the apostles; and the third is, their forwardness in conversion. This was Mnason's commendation, Ac 21:16. When he saith, they *were in Christ*, he intimates the virtue and power of faith to incorporate us into Christ, as branches into a vine.

Romans 16:8

Ver. 8. Some translations call him Ampliatus; it is a Roman name.

My beloved in the Lord; this is added, to show that he did not love him for his riches, or any outward respect, but for the Lord's sake; for the grace of Christ, which appeared in him.

Romans 16:9

Ver. 9. *Urbane*; this also is a Roman name; it was coveted afterwards by many bishops of Rome.

Our helper in Christ; the same that was said of Aquila and Priscilla, Ro 16:3. Possibly he might be one of their teachers.

Stachys my beloved; this is a Greek name, which signifieth an ear of corn. Some have reported, he was the first bishop of Constantinople: he was doubtless a person eminent in grace and gifts, or else the apostle would never have dignified him with this additional commendation, that he was *beloved* of him, or dear to him.

Romans 16:10

Ver. 10. Origen supposeth this *Apelles* to be Apollos, of whom you read, Ac 18:24, and in other places. Epiphanius saith, he was teacher in the churches of Smyrna, before Polycarpus.

Approved in Christ; one who hath showed himself a faithful and sincere Christian, who hath given many proofs of his sincerity, zeal, and constancy. This is a high encomium; to be *in Christ* is much, to be *approved in Christ* is more: tried gold is most precious. In a time of trial, to stand fast, and hold his own, is a Christian's greatest praise.

Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household; the word *household* is not in the Greek, but is added to fill up the sense; you have the like in the next verse, and in 1Co 1:11. Aristobulus himself is not saluted; either he was dead, or as yet unconverted to the faith of Christ; but it seems there were several Christians in or belonging to his family, whom the apostle here salutes. See the next verse.

Romans 16:11

Ver. 11. *Salute Herodion my kinsman:* see Ro 16:7.

Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus: this *Narcissus* is reported by Suetonius to have been in great favour with Claudius the emperor, and to have abounded in wealth, so that he was worth ten millions. He was a wicked man himself, yet it seems he had divers good Christians in his family. So we read that there were saints in Nero's house or court, Php 4:22. To what a degree of wickedness are they arrived, who will not suffer a religious person to dwell in their houses! This shows, that good Christians may serve wicked masters with a good conscience.

Which are in the Lord; this may be added, because that all in Narcissus's family were not Christians, or members of the church of Christ.

Romans 16:12

Ver. 12. He salutes several women as well as men: you read before of Priscilla, Ro 16:3; of Mary, Ro 16:6; and now he adds three more in this verse. He saith of the two first, that they *laboured in the Lord*; i.e. in the service of Christ and his church, according to their place and power. See the notes on Ro 16:6.

Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord; he gives this woman a higher commendation, calling her *the beloved Persis*; see Ro 16:8. He saith of the other two, that they *laboured*; but of this, that she hath *laboured much in the Lord*, noting some special favour or service for which she is here commended.

Romans 16:13

Ver. 13. *Salute Rufus*; the same (it may be) of whom you may read, Mr 15:21.

Chosen in the Lord; a choice Christian, one eminent for gifts and graces. So, 2Jo 1:1, you read of an *elect lady*: he is supposed not to speak here of eternal election.

And his mother and mine; *his mother* by nature, *mine* by affection: she hath tendered me as a mother her son: see 1Ti 5:2.

Romans 16:14

Ver. 14. i.e. The Christians that are their domestics, or that dwell with them.

Romans 16:15

Ver. 15. *Julia*; probably the wife of *Philologus*.

Olympas; this is thought to be the name of a man, rather than of a woman.

All the saints which are with them; that are in their several families: see Ro 16:14. There were, doubtless, many more Christians in the church of Rome, but either they were of no great note, or else not known to the apostle: and indeed it is matter of admiration, that he, who was never at Rome, should know the name and proper characters of so many there. And because he sendeth salutations to so many brethren at Rome, and makes no mention of Peter, it may be rationally inferred, that Peter was not there at the writing of this Epistle. It is questionable whether ever he were there at all; but it is without question, that he came not thither in the beginning of Claudius's reign, and in the forty-fifth year of our Lord, as the Romanists report; nor was he bishop there for the space of five and twenty years, as they affirm.

Romans 16:16

Ver. 16. From greeting them himself, he proceeds to exhort them to greet or *salute one another*: this he adviseth them to do *with an holy kiss*. You have the same exhortation, in 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12 1Th 5:26. This the apostle Peter calls *a kiss of charity*, 1Pe 5:14. Kissing is accounted a great symbol of love and concord: q. d. You have been much troubled with dissensions, about meats and days, &c.; therefore I beseech you that, forgetting all former offences, you would manifest for the future all signs of love to and peace with one another. Kissing was an old custom amongst the Hebrews; we find it used by the patriarchs, Ge 27:26 29:11. It is still retained more or less in all countries. The primitive Christians did use it in their assemblies; so Tertullian testifieth, Lib. Dec.; and they did it especially in receiving the eucharist. So Chrysostom witnesseth, Hom. 77. in John 16. "We do well", saith he, "to kiss in the mysteries, that we may become one." This custom, for good reasons, is laid down, and the Romanists, in room of it, keep up a foolish and superstitious ceremony, which is to kiss the pax in the mass.

The churches of Christ salute you: he sends, besides his own, the salutations of others also to the Christians at Rome; and that, first, of whole churches, and by and by of particular persons, Ro 16:21-23. By *churches*, here, he principally means, the churches in Greece, where he then was, of whose good affection to the Christian Romans he was well

assured.

Romans 16:17

Ver. 17. He shuts up the Epistle with a seasonable admonition, which he reserved to the last, that it might be the better remembered: it is, to beware of those that *cause divisions and offences*. By the former, some understand those that corrupt the doctrine of the church; by the latter, those that violate the discipline thereof: others refer *divisions* to faith, and *offences* to manners. There are that like neither of these distinctions, but, think he only cautions them against church dividers; and mentions scandal or offences as the effect or fruit of church divisions. He seems to aim more especially at those who, together with the Christian faith, did obtrude upon believers the ceremonies of the law, as necessary to salvation; of these he often complains as enemies to the gospel and cross of Christ: see Gal 1:7 Php 3:2,18,19 Tit 1:10.

Contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; i.e. that you have learned from those that first taught you and converted you to Christ:

q. d. You have been instructed in the true doctrine of Christ; and there are some that would innovate and teach another doctrine, that broach opinions that are contrary, or, at least, beside the doctrine which is pure and apostolical, and so make divisions and factions amongst you: of such as those he speaks what follows.

And avoid them; here are two precepts with respect to innovators and church dividers. The first is, that they should be marked. The word signifies such a marking, as a watchman useth that standeth on a tower to descry enemies; he marketh diligently all comers, and giveth notice accordingly, for the safety of the place. The second is, that they should be avoided, or declined: the like counsel is given, 2Th 3:6,14 1Ti 6:3-5 2Ti 3:5 Tit 3:10 2Jo 1:10. The sum is, the church should excommunicate them, and all sound Christians should turn away from them, and shun their society, that they may be ashamed.

Romans 16:18

Ver. 18. In this verse you have a reason of the foregoing admonition, together with a description of the seducers, whom they should mark and avoid. He says, they are such as *serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;* i.e. they serve themselves rather than Christ. Though they pretend to be the servants of Jesus Christ, and give themselves out for his ministers, yet they aim at nothing but their own commodity and advantage. A further account you have of such persons in Php 3:19 1Ti 6:5 Tit 1:11 2Pe 2:3.

By good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple:
q. d. As Satan insinuated into Eve, by pretending he wished her good; so these seducers pretend they aim at nothing but the good and benefit of those with whom they have to do: with smooth and flattering words, they praise both the persons and doings of those whom they would insnare, (so much the word *εὐλογία*, here used, imports), and by this means they impose upon *the simple*, i.e. the over credulous and unwary, who do not mistrust any deceit or hurt. The word here rendered *simple*, properly signifies such as are not evil, or that are incautious, and not suspicious.

Romans 16:19

Ver. 19. *For your obedience is come abroad unto all men:* q. d. As for you, your ready embracing of the gospel, and conformity thereunto, is generally taken notice of by all that mind such things: see the like, Ro 1:8 1Th 1:8.

I am glad therefore on your behalf; I rejoice to hear of your soundness and teachablehess; I do not therefore speak this to accuse, but to caution you.

But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil: q. d. Take heed that you be not cheated by seducers, that they do not abuse your tractableness to draw you into errors. He exhorts them to join prudence with simplicity; to be so harmless and simple as not to invent false doctrine, and yet to be so wise and skilful as to be able to discern truth from falsehood; to be so innocent as not to deceive, and so prudent as not to be deceived: see Mt 10:16. He prays for the Philippians, that they may have this discretion, Php 1:9,10, and exhorts the

Thessalonians thereunto, 1Th 5:21.

Romans 16:20

Ver. 20. *And, &c.:* q. d. And to encourage you to be watchful, I dare promise you shall be successful.

The God of peace; so he is called, Ro 15:33.

Shall bruise Satan under your feet: the word signifies to bruise by treading; it imports the conquest that the Lord gives his people over Satan and all his wicked instruments, that divide, seduce, or oppress his people; the promise is that they shall overcome him and them; they shall deal by Satan and his agents, as Joshua and his captains did by those five kings, Jos 10:24; see Re 22:11. This promise plainly bears upon the first grand promise, in Ge 3:15, that Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman, should bruise the head of the serpent; for it is by virtue of his bruising the head of Satan, that he is subdued and brought under our feet. The seed of the woman, in their own persons, as well as in their representative, shall bruise the serpent's head.

Shortly, or suddenly; though now he rage, yet ere long he shall be thrown down. Some refer this to the day of judgment: others, to the time of Constantine, who overthrew idolatry; and that it is not only a promise, but a prophecy also of the conversion of the Roman empire. There are that think that the apostle doth comfort here the believing Romans, by telling them, that the dissensions raised amongst them by means of Satan's malice and subtlety, should be shortly quenched and reconciled; and that it was effected partly by this Epistle, and partly by the apostle's labours afterwards amongst them.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you: as he began this Epistle with wishing them *grace and peace*, so he ends it. He had said, Ro 15:33,

The God of peace be with you; and here he saith: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* He was once and again shutting up his Epistle, but having more room and time, he makes some short additions and supplements, as it is usual with those that write epistles. This salutation he

was wont in the end of every Epistle to write with his own hand, 2Th 3:17. It is repeated, Ro 16:24. Hereby he intimates the necessity of the grace of Christ, therefore he prayeth for it again and again. See Poole on "Ro 1:7".

Romans 16:21

Ver. 21. As before he saluted divers persons himself, so now he sendeth the salutation of others to the church of Rome. This he doth to show the mutual amity and love that is and ought to be between Christians; though they are divided in respect of place, yet not in respect of affection and goodwill. He begins with *Timotheus*, or Timothy, whom he calls his *work-fellow*, or fellow helper, viz. in preaching and propagating the gospel of Christ. This shows the humility of the apostle, that he dignifies so young a man with this title. This is he to whom he wrote afterwards two Epistles; you may read more of him, Ac 16:1-7, and elsewhere.

Lucius: Origen and some others are of opinion that this was Luke the evangelist, who was the inseparable companion of the apostle Paul, and was with him about this very time, as appears by Ac 20:5; and here he is called Lucius, according to the Roman inflexion. Others think that this was Lucius of Cyrene, of whom you read, Ac 23:1.

Jason; this was Paul's host at Thessalonica, Ac 17:5,7; the same, as some think, that is called Secundus, Ac 20:4, the one being his Hebrew, the other his Roman name.

Sosipater; the same that is called Sopater of Berea, in Ac 20:4.

My kinsmen: see Ro 16:7.

Romans 16:22

Ver. 22. *Tertius*; this was the apostle's scribe or amanuensis, *who wrote this Epistle*, either from his mouth, or from his papers: he put in this salutation by the apostle's licence.

Salute you in the Lord; i.e. I wish you safety from the Lord.

Romans 16:23

Ver. 23. *Gaius*: we read of more than one that bore this name; there was Gaius of Macedonia, of whom you read, in Ac 19:29; there was Gaius of Derbe, of whom you read, Ac 20:4; he is most likely the person here meant. There was one of this name whom Paul baptized at Corinth, 1Co 1:14; and there was another Gaius, to whom St. John wrote his Third Epistle: whether any of those were the same, or whether they were all different persons, is uncertain.

Mine host, and of the whole church; i.e. he entertained the apostle, and all Christian strangers that passed that way. That Gaius to whom the apostle John wrote, is commended for the like hospitality, 3Jo 1:5,6.

Erastus the chamberlain of the city; or the receiver or steward of the city; one that had the management of the city's stock or public treasure. The city was Corinth, from whence the apostle wrote this Epistle. There *Erastus* is said to abide, 2Ti 4:20, possibly to attend upon his office. Yet we find, Ac 19:22, that he was one of them that ministered to the apostle, and was sent by him hither and thither, as he had occasion, which would not well consist with his being chamberlain or steward of so great a city; therefore some are of opinion, that he is so called, because that had been his office in time past. So *Abigail* is called *the wife of Nabal*, 2Sa 3:3, because she formerly stood in that relation to him.

Quartus; this is no word of number, but it was his name: we had Tertius in the foregoing verse; and we read of Secundus, Ac 20:4. Histories also speak of the name of Quintus, and Sextus, &c.

Romans 16:24

Ver. 24. These words are the very same which you had, Ro 16:20, only the word *all* is added. Some have thought, that the former was written with the hand of Tertius, the scribe or notary, and this with the apostle's own hand. He seems to be like a loving and tender father, who bids his children farewell once and again; and being loth to leave them, returns a second and

a third time to discourse with them.

Romans 16:25

Ver. 25. He concludes all with an excellent doxology; wherein, first, he describes God, and then he ascribes eternal glory to him. He describes him by two of his attributes or perfections: the first is his *power*; He is able to establish you; i.e. in grace and in truth; to keep you from falling into sin and into error. The Scripture often attributes our establishment unto God: see 1Th 3:13 2Th 2:17 2Th 3:3 1Pe 5:10. Our own weakness and Satan's power are such, that unless God did establish us, we should soon totter and fall: see Ro 14:4, and the notes there. Our establishment is further amplified by the instrumental cause thereof, which is the *gospel*; touching which, several things are here to be noted. First, he calls it *my gospel*, because he was the preacher and publisher thereof: see Ro 2:16, and the notes there. Secondly, he calls it *the preaching of Jesus Christ*: which may be taken actively, for the preaching of our Lord himself; so the doctrine of salvation is called, the word that was *spoken by the Lord*, Heb 2:3: see Mt 4:23 Mt 9:35. Or rather passively, for the gospel which was preached concerning Jesus Christ: see Ro 1:1,3, and the notes there. Thirdly: He calls it a *mystery*, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest: see parallel places, 1Co 2:7 Eph 3:9 Col 1:26. Some restrain this to the calling of the Gentiles; but it is better understood of the whole doctrine of the gospel, concerning the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, &c., which, although it was in some sort made known under the Old Testament, yet, in respect of the present light and revelation, it was a hidden *mystery*.

Romans 16:26

Ver. 26. Concerning the *revelation* of this *mystery*, four things are further recorded:

1. The means whereby it was made known; viz. *the Scriptures of the prophets*; see Ac 10:43 16:32 28:23.
2. The authority by which it was made known; *the commandment of the*

everlasting God.

3. The persons to whom it was made known; the Gentiles, or the inhabitants of *all nations*.
4. The end for which it was made known; viz. *for the obedience of faith*; i.e. that it may be believed and obeyed: see Ro 1:5 15:18.

Romans 16:27

Ver. 27. The second attribute in the description of God, is his wisdom; he is said to be *wise*, and *only wise*. See the like, 1Ti 1:17 Jude 1:25. So he is said to be *only true*, Joh 17:3, and to be *the only Potentate*, 1Ti 6:15, and *only to have immortality*, 1Ti 6:16. And this doth not exclude the wisdom of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, but the wisdom of the creatures. He is said to be *only wise*, because none is as wise as he, and all the wisdom of others is from him; the wisdom of men and angels is but a ray from his light. Again, he is said to be *only wise*, because he is originally wise; his wisdom is of himself; yea, his wisdom is himself.

Be glory through Jesus Christ for ever: here he ascribes eternal glory to God. You had the same before, Ro 11:36. Only here is added, *through Jesus Christ*, to show that our praise and thanksgiving is accepted of God through him: see Ro 1:7 Eph 3:20,21.

Amen: this word is six times before used in this Epistle; Ro 1:25 Ro 9:5 11:36 15:33 16:20,24. It is a Hebrew word, but retained in all languages. It cannot be translated without losing much of its weight. It may be taken three ways:

1. As a name, and so it is a name of Christ, Re 3:14.
2. As an adverb: so it is used in the beginning of speech, and signifies verily; or in the end of speech, and so it notes assent. Therefore it was used of old by the Jews, not only at prayer, but at all the sermons and expositions of their rabbins, to testify that they assented and agreed to all that they taught: see 1Co 14:16.

3. As a verb; and so it is as much as: So be it, having the nature of a prayer: hence Jeremiah said *Amen* to the prophecy of Hananiah, though false, concerning the sudden return from the Babylonish captivity, to show how earnestly he desired it might be so, Jer 28:6.

Written to the Romans from Corinthus, (and sent) by Phebe servant of the church at Cenchrea.

This was not added by the apostle Paul, nor by Tertius his amanuensis, but by a later and unknown hand; yet there is nothing in the Epistle itself, nor in any ancient or modern writer, that may induce us to question the verity thereof.